



P I O X E R L
F O U R L

A u g u s t 2 0 0 6

PIXEL FOUR

August 2006

pix-el (pīk'səl, -səl') n.

The basic unit of the composition of an image on a television screen, computer monitor, or similar display. Short for *Picture Element*.

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AMDG

To receive an e-mail notification when a new issue of *Pixel* is published, send a message to catchpenny@mw.net. This is a notification list only; I don't send the zine as an attachment.

Requiscat in pace to rich brown (aka "Dr. Gafia") fanzine publisher, fanwriter, and fanhistorian, who died on July 6, at 64, from complications following surgery.

I never met rich in person, and knew him only through his writing. I never saw any of his earlier zines, but I well remember *Focal Point*, the newszine he and Arnie Katz published during my fannish salad days, and how I eagerly looked forward to it plonking it's way into my mailbox every other week.

When I rejoined fandom a few years back, I was not at all surprised to find rich still very active, although almost exclusively in the on-line venues. rich was kind enough to allow me to reprint (with some modifications) a lengthy piece he wrote as a message to one of the newsgroups in *CPG 5*.



“Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of hamsters?”

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Notes From Byzantium

ERIC MAYER

Needles and Pains

I've been putting off going to the doctor. I'm good at that. It's something I can manage even when I'm feeling under the weather – particularly when I'm feeling under the weather.

It's been more than four years since I've seen a doctor. Not counting the time I saw my own doc tooling down the street in the red Corvette he won in the Internet bodybuilding contest. I ducked into the Post Office before he spotted me. I was afraid he'd stop and chide me about missing my prostate exam or whatever other humiliating and painful procedures I'm supposed to submit to regularly at my age, as if having the Grim Reaper creeping up on my ass isn't bad enough.

Doctor Life (yes, that's his real name) retired and headed to Las Vegas, breaking the speed limit the whole way no doubt, so my HMO has probably sent my records to some other medical professional I won't go to visit. My new doctor will just have to keep wondering whether any living human being could really be as skinny as my chart indicates.

The HMO better have found me another doctor, considering what I'm paying for self-employed coverage and how little use I make of it. Seems like a waste, but who wants to get their money's worth out of health insurance? Does anyone insist on an extra colonoscopy because they can get it free?

I guess I derive some benefit. The HMO keeps me healthy during regular business hours without my ever showing up there. Evenings and weekends I might feel like I'm on my last legs, ready to stagger to the phone and schedule an appointment, if only the office were open. But next day, come 9am, I've made a miraculous recovery.

Everything to do with medicine terrifies me. A tray filled with mysterious stainless steel instruments, the chilly room with the examining table into which such trays are carried, the antiseptic smelling corridor leading to the examination room, the waiting area whose door opens onto the corridor – a glimpse of any of these and I've got butterflies in my stomach.

Did I say "butterflies?" More like buzzards.

Not that I'd mention a symptom like that to a doctor. He'd reach for one of those stainless steel torture devices in the tray. Or order a blood test. That's the first thing they do these days. I'm told that a lot of our doctors are natives of India. Mine are all from Transylvania.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but what I fear most – fear with a gibbering Lovecraftian terror (just to mix my horror genres) – are the needles – whose points are not nearly fine enough.

My dread has little to do with the pain, which is negligible even for a wimp like me. No, I simply have a phobia. The idea of sharp metal piercing skin and muscle and, in the case of an unsteady hand, perhaps even bone (my bones are too close to the skin for comfort), makes my flesh crawl. And sticking a needle into moving

Illustrated by
BRAD FOSTER

flesh has got to be dangerous.

As for when the needle's used to draw blood...well, I don't even like to think about that obscene probing for the vein. Never mind crawling flesh, the idea of having blood taken sets my whole body in motion toward the nearest exit.

Perhaps my irrational fears of both doctors and needles goes back to my childhood. I grew up in the fifties, when penicillin was doled out like chicken soup. At least it was at Doc Smith's.

Our family's physician, when I was in grade school, was an elderly gentleman, whose wire rimmed eyeglasses and small, clipped mustache, bespoke an earlier era, the same era from which his knowledge of medicine had been derived. He prescribed mustard plasters and cod liver oil. He probably kept a jar full of leeches.

He had, however, kept up with medical advances in one respect. He knew about the miracle drug penicillin. (He probably read about it in *The Saturday Evening Post*.) When you went to visit him, you were rolling up your sleeve (or dropping your pants), practically before the office door closed. It didn't much matter what you went in for. You sneezed and out came the syringe. A cough called for a jab. Upset stomach. Must be the flu, a dose of penicillin will set that to rights. I suspect his patients would've felt cheated and downright unloved if Doc Smith hadn't shot them up.

This created a dilemma for me. Whenever I needed time off to catch up on *Truth or Consequences* and *The Price is Right*, I had to develop some malady that prevented me from attending

school without being serious enough to warrant a trip to the doctor, who, inconveniently, lived right across the street. I had a lot of headaches as a child.

Exactly why I first developed my horror of injections is hard to say. It may be because they used to hurt more than they do now. Needles were considerably thicker in the distant past. A lot closer to prehistoric flint drills. With my spindly arms and bony butt, I didn't offer much of a target. No matter where I got stuck, it felt like I'd been stung by a yellow jacket, which I also have a phobia about.

Then too, old Doc Smith wasn't a dab hand at administering injections. He wasn't a dab hand at anything since he was missing three fingers, the result of a youthful indiscretion



with a firecracker. There's something vaguely unsettling about a doctor without all his fingers. I still recall the grotesque sight of those pink little stubs awkwardly manipulating the syringe.

After Doc Smith retired, I was dragged kicking and screaming, to Doctor Miller. He was younger. A big heavysset chain smoker, he never made it to Doc Smith's age. Although his medical training was more up to date, he also relied heavily on penicillin. He had all his fingers but no bedside manner.

He used to get annoyed just because my bloodcurdling screams caused patients to bolt from the waiting room in panic. Once, as he filled the syringe and I ululated, he scowled at me and growled.

"What are you screaming about? You don't have any reason to scream. Last year I was giving an injection to a boy no older than you. I didn't notice it was a rusty needle. It broke off and the end stuck in the boy's arm. Now he had something to scream about."

You can imagine how this raised my spirits. No doubt the unfortunate boy was given more penicillin to ward off an infection.

In my opinion, penicillin is overrated. It isn't nearly as good for one's health as, for instance, reminiscing. Simply recalling my boyhood trips to the doctor makes me feel in the pink, even if I am slightly green around the gills.

I reckon if I keep taking the same treatment I can avoid going to the doctor for another four years.

Hamster Noir

Never fall for a rodent.

They might gaze at you adoringly and squeak like babies squeeze toys. But in the end, a rodent's just a rodent.

When my buddy and I spotted three hamsters in a box at the library auction we forgot all that. The fever gripped us. We had to have them. The bidding was furious. One dollar. A dollar fifty. Two. Three. Four dollars. Five. Six dollars. Going once for six dollars. Going twice. Sold!

Three weeks allowance blown on three balls of fur. I had a dime and four pennies left in my jeans. I suppose my buddy and I should've

stopped bidding against each other back at a buck twenty-five.

The plan was to trade the little fellows back and forth, so we could both experience the indescribable bliss of hamster ownership. The first night they were going to stay in the basement at my parents' house. For hours, we watched the cuddly critters chittering and cavorting in their aquarium. Then we went upstairs and turned out the lights.

Regrets always show up with the sun.

Next morning when I went downstairs the first thing I noticed was the blood. Too much blood for the wood chips to soak up. Then I took in the rest of the scene.

I had a strong stomach. I drank root beer fizzies before breakfast. But I'd never seen anything like the carnage in that aquarium. One of our pets lay sprawled on its back, belly ripped open, eyes glazed. Another furry body was crumpled in a corner, much too far from its head.

I was glad we hadn't named them yet. It would've been worse if it had been Squeaky and Baby with their guts hanging out.

The survivor – the killer – chattered and hissed and bared its teeth.

Isn't it always the way? You give in to a pair of dark imploring eyes and next thing you know someone's head is lying in the wood chips.

Why had it happened? What had started the fight? Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of hamsters.

My buddy and I carried the aquarium through backyards and up the railroad tracks, a long way, until we came to the swamp, and then we walked down a muddy track into the woods, until the path gave out and we couldn't go any further. That's where we dumped the murderer.

He plopped onto the ground, paused, twitched his head to stare at us through those black killer's eyes, wrinkled his bloody snout and grinned. But it wasn't a nice grin. Then he turned and rolled straight into the woods like he was on wheels.

Hell on wheels.

We knew that sooner or later he'd meet up with a circling hawk, a stray dog, or a hungry, feral cat – God help them. •



THE TRUTH ABOUT HAMSTERS.

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Much Nothings About Ado

LEE LAVELL

Teaching

Much keeps being said about the sad state of education in the United States, and much of the blame is placed on the teachers. As a former teacher (of almost forty years), I am here to refute that.

First, let's start with the usual staff of a school, excluding such support staff as clerks, cafeteria workers, custodians, and aides. There are three: teachers, instructors and administrators. Now this may be a bit different from what

you expected. Who are these instructors, you may ask. This brings me to my first point: what is the difference between an instructor and a teacher?

The way I see it, teaching is an art, instructing is a science. A teacher teaches, whether she is in a school or not. It is part of that person's being. If something needs to be learned he or she is there to help. It is almost automatic, and it is an inborn "talent." Some may be better at it than others, and it may take training to develop some skills, but the teacher has an innate connection with the student to see what is needed to accomplish whatever goal is being worked toward. The teacher is willing to talk to the student, listen to the student, do what he or she can to inspire, guide, encourage, motivate. The teacher's satisfaction comes with the achievement of the student. The last thing most teachers want to be is an administrator.

The instructor is the opposite end of the pole. He or she goes to school, learns techniques and follows them as best as possible to the letter. All students are generally the same

to them and must be instructed in the same way. An instructor would love to climb up the ladder, become a principal, consultant and on up the chain of command, where they can impose new techniques and theories on the teachers. These generally don't work because they don't have that elusive "contact" with the student.

One of the best examples of this that I can think of in my teaching years was the attempt at "New Math." Any primary teacher (and I was one of those) could tell you it was doomed to failure from the beginning simply because you do *not* introduce an abstract to a child before the concrete.

Another important concept to the "instructor" mind is the detailed lesson plan. All details for a week must be carefully outlined with the proper current educational gobbledegook. There is only one problem with this. Children don't follow lesson plans. Some learn things faster and Monday's lesson has also covered Tuesday's and even Wednesday's. So, if you follow your lesson plan you are holding the children back. On the other hand, some classes have problems with a lesson and it may take several



Manfred Klein

days and different techniques for them to master it. But if you follow the lesson plan you have to go on ahead whether they've understood it or not. Certainly, some sort of plan needs to be left in case of a substitute, although I found that the majority ignored them anyway.

The teacher teaches the child and his or her greatest joy is the progress of that child. The instructor teaches the achievement test and his or her greatest joy is their own success in doing so.

So while the teacher stays in the classroom with the children he or she loves, the instructor has climbed up into control of the system and imposes those rules that treat children like dough on a cookie cutter line. Since this doesn't work, they keep changing the system, tweaking it one way or another, but because they don't understand children as individuals they just make things worse.

And that's where we are now. This is not the only problem with the current educational system but it is a large part of it and until it is corrected things cannot get better.



One of the schools I taught at, back when I was unretired, had a wing that had been added on rather sloppily, as many things in the Indianapolis Public Schools were done. It had been built in two sections and the parts had been joined together poorly so that after a few years they began to separate slightly, leaving a small crack in one corner. The crack was between the teachers'

lounge and a second grade room. One day I was on my break, sitting in that corner grading papers when I heard "Whooo - whooo - woo - woo - woo." This went on for a bit, and finally, annoyed, I turned to the corner and said sharply, "Stop that noise!" I heard a faint shuffle and silence from then on. Later I told the teacher of the second grade room about the incident and she began laughing. It seems that a boy in her class had been making silly noises so she had sent him to the corner. After a bit he came back to her rather frantically, asking to go back to his seat now and that he would be good. Can you imagine being small, being bad and being sent to the corner; you continue being bad and the CORNER scolds you! I've often wondered if rumors went around among the kids that the corner was haunted.



Now that I have reached my "advanced age" I find I have some completely useless things stuck in my mind and I have no idea why they remain there when I would prefer much more utilitarian things. For instance, I still remember my phone number from when I was a small child. What in the world can I do with that useless set of numbers and letters? Even more useless, I still can recall Jerry Hunter's phone number from back in the Fifties when he was sixteen years old and living with his parents. Don't mention a

cement mixer around me, for I most likely will respond "puttee puttee." That's bewildered a lot of people. I had to memorize the prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* when I was in High School and I can still recite the first few lines - in Old English. (Thank goodness we didn't have to learn *Beowulf* !) Also stuck in my mind is a stupid piece of doggerel which I read once and it has never gone away.

*Last night I held a little hand,
A hand so soft and sweet.
I thought my heart would surely break
So wildly did it beat.
No other hand unto my heart
Could greater solace bring
Than that hand I held last night:
Four aces and a king.*

Now you've read it. May you be cursed with it and let it leave me! Finally, certain lines from TV shows have stuck with me for no reason like "Whatever you do, Emily, don't look in the dishwasher." So there I am with all this clutter in my mind and I can't remember where I put down my coffee cup. Sigh... •



Thoughts While Dwelling

DAVE LOCKE

One of these days we'll have to get up the ambition, not to mention the cash, for moving out of this apartment-building life. I keep saying that, knowing full-well that owning a house means all sorts of unpleasant things like mowing the lawn, painting, fixing leaks in the roof and the faucets, taking care of miscellaneous carpentry and electrical problems, and suchlike. But at least I could put up a fence around the house and keep people out. It's not that I dislike people, you understand, it's just that I'm not overly fond of *some* of them.

Last Sunday I was awakened at the ungodly hour of nine in the morning by someone who was blowing a car-horn beneath my ear. (To be more exact, not to mention truthful, the horn was blowing in the driveway just outside our bedroom. But that's about the same thing.) I put up with that for about ten minutes. Toot. Toot toot toot. Toooooot. Toot toot. Then I got up and wrapped a bathrobe around my morning body, put slippers on my sleeping feet, and went out for coffee. Phoebe was in church, as was Brian, and I enjoy my peaceful Sunday mornings. Coffee. Eggs over easy. Toast. The Sunday paper. Hit

the showers, get dressed. Do some writing or stenciling until 12:25 when the gang gets home. Then a dip in the pool before a light lunch.

I enjoy my peaceful Sunday mornings.
Toot. Toooooot. Toot toot toot.

I let the pot of water be cognizant of the fact that it had to boil, and went outdoors for the paper. Toot toot. The paperboy had missed our door by only about ten feet. I picked up the paper, but instead of returning I walked to the gate. Toot toot toooooot. I cut across the lawn, with my paper in hand, toward a blue car with its nose in the driveway. Toooooot.

It was one-half of our apartment manager. The female half. Five-feet eleven, 250 pounds. Sitting in their car, blowing her horn. Toot.

I stood there on the front lawn, ten feet from her, and watched her play with the horn.

"You having a problem?" I inquired, in my politest early-morning thrown-out-of-bed voice.

"My husband. He's so deaf I don't think he can hear me."

I turned around and walked away, choking down the comment that she could have walked to Riverside and got him in the amount of time she'd been leaning on the horn. Walking the fifty feet to Apt #1 didn't seem like too much of a sacrifice on a Sunday morning.

So I walked the fifty feet, opened the screen, and beat on the door with my fist. The other half of our apartment manager, the five-feet two, 125 pound male half, came to the door and finished zipping up his fly.

"I have the feeling your wife wants you." I told him.

"What did you say?" he asked, cocking his right ear towards me.

"I believe your wife wants you," I screamed at him. In a subdued manner, of course.

"I can't hear you over that damned car horn, son," he said. "What did you say?"

I stepped over to his ear, cupped my hands around my mouth, and shouted "Your wife wants you!"

"Oh?" he said, stepping back. "What makes you think so?"



The male half of our apartment manager is often called upon to handle all the distasteful little necessities, like throwing people out. We had a couple here who seemed pretty nice when they moved in a couple of months ago. Their boa constrictor was something else again, though. I have no objection to seeing a couple walk hand in hand with a boa constrictor coiled around their necks, and I thought it was terrible that people would complain about this. Even I, however, had to draw the line at sharing the swimming pool with the damned thing. I had bounced out of the apartment and jumped in the pool, and when I surfaced I found the thing floating about a foot away and staring at me. I went back inside and took a shower.

Finally they got thrown out, and their snake with them. Our ½ manager proudly told us, during one of our twilight lounge-chair gatherings at the poolside, of how he had told them off and thrown them out. I had been outside at the time he did that, however, and it's a good thing he's so deaf. Otherwise he would have heard what they said back to him.



When we do get a house, and I suppose we'll come to that in time, it will be of the one-story type. I get tired of hearing the guy upstairs go to the bathroom, or his wife rearranging the furniture again.

Luckily we don't live in as cardboard an apartment building as does a friend of mine. He

says he lays there at night, absolutely fascinated by the couple who are making love just behind his bedroom wall. He said he came home drunk one night, and after listening to their amazing performance he sat up in bed to applaud and cheer. He says they moved out shortly after that.



I checked-out the matter of buying a house, just to get a feel for what that kind of thing entails in this state (California). Not too far from this apartment building there's a big sign that says REAL ESTATE. The sign is about six or seven times larger than the structure which it is hanging over. The structure was about four standard door-widths across, and maybe five or six door-widths long. I went there alone, because I didn't think there was room for the rest of my family.

As I opened the door, it swung into the front of the agent's desk. This at least had the effect of jarring him awake. He jumped up, trying to look alert, and the effect of this movement caused his chair to be thrown against the back of the building. It rebounded forward and caught him behind the knees, causing him to sit down again. He then leaned forward to his desk and picked up a pencil, as though the whole thing had been intentional. I felt like applauding his performance.

"I was just wondering," I told him, "what kind of house we could get in this area for

around \$30 thousand."

"You're looking at it," he said.

Seeing that I looked rather depressed, he added, "But you only have to put \$250 down."

I went back home.

"What did they say?" Phoebe asked me.

"They said we'll stay in an apartment a while longer," I told her, while listening to someone pushing their chair back from the kitchen table in the apartment above us.

"Why? Is the down payment too big?" she shouted, above the noise of someone using their garbage disposal in the adjacent apartment.

"No, the houses are too small," I screamed over the sound of someone bouncing down the stairs outside our apartment house.

"BE QUIET DOWN THERE!" someone hollered, through our ceiling.

I whispered to my wife, "But I'll try again tomorrow." •

Originally published in 1973 as an installment of Dave's "Difugalty" column in *Yandro*.



Found In Collection

CHRISTOPHER GARCIA

If you could boil “Found in Collection” down to one thing, it’s boxes that haven’t been opened in years. The museum is full of them; hundreds of them from the last thirty years. There are boxes with old hard drives, boxes of documents, boxes of employee records (and you wouldn’t believe what they got away with paying back in the mid-1980s) and even boxes of old brochures that really should have been destroyed a long time ago. And then there are boxes that folks just left behind full of drawer junk, magazines, pamphlets and more.

The museum was a real innovator in having a bunch of brochures scanned into a Mac with an extra hard drive. Visitors could print the brochures of various other Boston attractions. For some reason, we still have all that paper in one box. One of the things listed on the Mac as being available was a pamphlet for NorEasCon 3, the 1989 WorldCon in Boston. Sadly, it wouldn’t launch and I couldn’t find a copy of the printed version. Still, it was nice to know that it existed.

Now, I’m not sure why or how, but I come across something I’m often looking for when I go

into the boxes. I was working my way through a few, just for kicks, and I came across something that I thought was wonderful. It was a stack of zines held together by an aging rubber band. The zines were 27 issues of *Amra* from the 1970s and 80s.

Amra was one of those zines that you hear about sometimes from the old timers and you might never have seen. It’s a zine dedicated to Sword & Sorcery, and with wonderful amounts of art and a contributor list that just makes your eyes want to roll up in your head. There were articles from Jerry Pournelle, L. Sprague deCamp, Jerry Broadman and many more, not to mention the art of such legends as Tim Kirk, George Barr and even good ol’ Tim Powers. It’s an amazing collection of people. But even with all of this, I had a serious question: why did we have it.

It was obvious that this was not the original box that the donation had come in. It was a Mr. Boston Mixer box which dated from the mid-1990s. I looked through the rest of the stuff in the box and found three interesting clues: the first was a scrap of paper with an

address on it, the second a piece of mail and the final a button.

The address was for the NESFA Clubhouse. According to their website, this location was the clubhouse they bought in 1985 and not the Belmont clubhouse. I looked it over and discovered that the address seemed to be on what was once a mailing label. This only helped me to figure that the donation must have come in after 1988 or so.

The piece of mail was an offer of donation from a Monty Wells. I looked him up too, hoping to find an email address, and discovered that he had passed away in 1998. That’s another dead-end in the investigation, but a historian like me will go on sniffing until the bacon is found! The offer was for a few old tools to use in exhibit design, and a bunch of small items. No computers, no documentation, nothing. I looked at the button and discovered the truth.

The button was from 1999’s Boskone. Boskone’s a big deal con and I realised that it must have been then that the donation had

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Whither Fandom?

TED WHITE

Yes, you're right. The first installment of this column really didn't get very far in the "whithering" of fandom. Or even of fanzines. Maybe it's the wrong title, or the wrong topic for this column to pursue. Or maybe it's such a weighty topic that it will take many installments of this column to deal with it. Yeah, that's the ticket.

When I started working for The Collecting Channel (a short-lived dot-com, which worked me hard and paid me well) I had Arnie Katz as my immediate boss. It was he who taught me my job there - which was to write around 2,000 words of fresh copy for the website every week-day. Now, that doesn't sound like much in the way of wordage, just by itself, but 2,000 words about *what?* The real task, I realized, was to keep coming up with fresh topics to write about. And here Arnie's advice was invaluable: "Divide your topics up, Ted," he said. "Don't try to be encyclopedic in a piece. Every topic divides itself into sub-topics." In other words, don't try to say it all in one piece. That way one topic might yield half a dozen short pieces. Each piece suggested others. Looked at in that way, the supply of topics or ideas was endless. (It turned out

that I often spent half my working day *re-searching* the short pieces I wrote.)

Thus, my approach to this column. Like a blind man warily circling an elephant, I shall be reporting here on different aspects of the whithering of fandom, microscopically subdividing my topic until it stretches into infinity.



With one exception I've never thrown away, or otherwise disposed of any of the fanzines which I've received over the past 55 years. I have shelves of fanzines (A - G) and many boxes of fanzines, and with the exception of those alphabetized and up on shelves, I have no idea where any given issue is. That's deplorable, but not uncommon. Those who, like Robert Lichtman or Ned Brooks, have their collections neatly sorted and filed, and can put their hands on any fanzine without difficulty, are in a distinct minority in fandom. Most of us don't "collect" fanzines as much as we accumulate them.

Mind you, I once, in my idealistic youth,

assiduously sorted and filed the fanzines I received. I even kept them in color-coded file folders. But that was long ago and far away. Since then a number of fans have "sorted" my collection, helped themselves to "duplications," and left my collection in increasing disarray. So, for practical purposes I don't have easy access to most of the fanzines I have.

Which is why I am so pleased that Taral has been scanning and archiving *Energumen* on the eFanzines site. I have most if not all issues *some-*



William Rotstler

where in my house, but now I can access them whenever I want on my computer screen.

It's fun to go back and read those issues already up at eFanzines. My memories of the fanzine were cumulative and obviously based on the most recent issues (not that any of them can be considered "recent" now), and it's interesting to go back and look at the early issues and see how much they evolved. For instance, *Energumen* had the reputation of being impeccably laid out and reproduced, but this was yet to occur in the earliest issues, which had that scrappy look far more typical of the fanzines of that era.

More important is the content of *Energumen* and the way that evolved. *Energumen* reflected an era in which the fans and pros still mingled far more than they do now. In the 1970s not one pro had his own website for his (or her) adoring fans to worship him at, much less a celebrated blog. Pros *had* to mingle with fans at conventions and in fanzines then, if they wanted any feedback on what they were doing. So we see all manner of Big Name Pros hanging out in *Energumen*.

Of course, that was a time when the pros dominated the pages of Richard Geis's fanzines, as well as Ray Fisher's revived *Odd* and Frank Lunney's *BeaBohema*, and they cropped up in a variety of others.

I was among them, straddling the fence as both a pro and a fan. I'd write columns for Geis's many-titled zines, and *Yandro*, mostly about pro stuff (in one such edition of my "Trenchant Bludgeon" I earned Harry Harrison's undying

enmity for revealing what he was doing under a pseudonym), while editing *Egoboo* with John D. Berry and writing much more fannish stuff for its pages.

And I had a column in *Energumen*, too. If you'd asked me a few months ago, I'd have told you that my column was in most issues after its inception there – but I'd have been wrong. In fact, it's in only one of the issues currently up on eFanzines, #9 (out of 13). (But for some reason, the addendum to #8, called *The Last Word* – an exchange between Ted Pauls and myself – and what I mark as the actual beginning of my column, has not been added to the eFanzines site.) Memories sometimes play us false.

Which is why it's nice to have those issues of *Energumen* archived and accessible to us all. And anyone indulging in a little "whithering" about fandom or fanzines will find much in those issues to consider. Like, the fact that *Energumen* was never stuck up or pretentious about itself or in its presentation of pros. It remained somehow essentially fannish in nature, even when getting heavily into Serious Professional Topics.

And my first proper column in *Energumen*, "Thots While Lawn-Mowing," in #9, was concerned in part with celebrating and appreciating the digressive writing style of Elmer Perdue, a major fan of the '40s whose acquaintance I made in FAPA in the '50s. I described how Elmer ("God" to his friends) would seem to write about a variety of unas-

sociated topics, seemingly at random, only to offer in his final paragraph a sentence or two which would tie them together brilliantly. I can't claim his brilliance, but I did adopt the style – in that column and more generally.

I was lucky to actually know Elmer over the years, to the point that in the '80s he would occasionally send me tapes of jam sessions he held at his house. Elmer played "stink finger" piano and jammed with the more traditional-style jazz musicians of his age.

Although he was originally from Washington, D.C., by the time I knew him Perdue was a long-time resident of Los Angeles (and had a job as a civil engineer which enabled him to know virtually every city block in Los Angeles). But in his youth he'd made trips to Harlem, where he not only could indulge in the occasional jam session, but in the "reefer" which was then available in pre-WW2 Harlem. Elmer was probably fandom's first pot-head, although he was perhaps better known, regrettably, as one of fandom's major alcoholics.

At the 1972 Worldcon in Los Angeles I had an opportunity to hang out with Elmer at a private room party where marijuana was smoked. In the course of our conversation I brought up his writing style and told him how much I admired it. In return, Elmer told me a story of which I cannot remember a single detail now, but which superbly encapsulated that very style which I have described and so admired.

He did it off the cuff and on the spot, and with evident delight. And that's how I prefer to

remember Elmer Perdue.



Last issue I mentioned sending a LoC to Chris Garcia on *The Drink Tank* #69, which he hadn't published. I creebed a bit about that.

Within a day of *Pixel* #3's posting on eFanzines, I had a query from Chris. He said he hadn't received my LoC, and could I please send it again? I was happy to, and even happier when Chris gave it a place of honor in *TDT* #86. Which only goes to show you that even Old Fans And Tired, like myself, still get off on a little egoboo.



Just a bit up there I said "last issue." There was a time when I would not have written that. There was a time – in a distant fan universe – when I would have said "last ish." Fans routinely spoke of their "ishes." It was part of the fanspeak of the time.

I learned fanspeak – "egoboo," "fmz," all the terms of the day – from the letter columns in the prozines (another vanishing term). *Startling Stories*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Planet Stories* – all had excellent letter columns, dominated by the better known fans of the day. A part of fandom existed or took place in those letter columns, paralleling those parts of fandom which took place in fanzines, with the same participants. Prozine lettercols were a bit like a modern fannish e-list in terms of the conversa-

tions which took place in them between fans – who directly commented on each others' letters.

For someone who was just starting to read the prozines at the end of their heyday for fannish lettercols (in 1951, when I was 13), they were an excellent introduction to fandom. They offered a primer in fanspeak.

Of course fanspeak has continued to evolve. Terms like "LoC" were introduced later – in the early '60s, in that case – and one of my favorites, which has gained a wide currency, is "pub my [or your] ish," which dates from the late '60s.

The person who coined this phrase was an obscure New York City fan named Fred Phillips. Fred was a guy who wanted to be entertaining, and towards this end he had memorized whole sides of comedy records, which he could then spout, rapidly, at the drop of any hat, anywhere. The first time you heard him do this, it was entertaining. Fred sounded like a funny guy.

But after a while you couldn't help noticing that this was pretty much *all* Fred did. He didn't so much hold conversations as he plugged in borrowed comedy schticks when called upon for something to say. And, after a limited time with Fred you'd heard all his comedy bits, and knew them as well as he did. After a spending a limited time with Fred, you began to find him tiring and annoying. And I use that universal "you" advisedly: *Everyone* found Fred tiring and annoying.

For this reason the Fanoclasts unanimously agreed that Fred Phillips did not belong in that group, and would not be invited. Because bi-weekly Fanoclast meetings alternated, on Friday nights, with biweekly FISTFA meetings, and the latter were open to anyone, Fred was not unaware of the Fanoclasts and the fact that, try as he might, he could not gain entrance to that now-fabled club.

And he *did* try. He probably approached most of the members of the Fanoclasts individually to ask for their help. But nothing worked for him. Finally, in desperation, he cried out, "Can I join if I pub my ish?"

"...pub my ish" had its genesis in Fred's plaintive cry. It was an odd little phrase, at once clumsy and ill-spoken, and yet so appropriate, so fitting as fanspeak. It seemed to sum up so much about fanzines and fandom. "Pub my ish" almost immediately became a Fanoclast catchphrase.

"What're you doing tonight?" I might ask Mike McInerney. "I think I'm gonna pub my ish," Mike would say. Or I'd tell John D. Berry, "Why don'cha come over tomorrow and we'll pub our ish," referring to *Egoboo*, the fanzine we coedited.

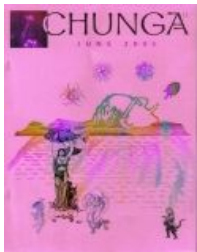
And over the years the phrase gained currency. I've heard it from the lips of British fans whose fanac never crossed paths with that of the Fanoclasts. It's become a fannish universal by now, a phrase uttered by fans worldwide.

But as far as I know, Fred Phillips never did pub his ish. •

Pudding-fanciers Unite

PETER SULLIVAN

Winston S. Churchill is alleged to have once refused dessert by saying “Take away this pudding, it has no theme.” Well, after last time’s World Cup theme, this time I’m afraid it’s back to vanilla reviews again.



Chunga 12 (Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, carl juarez)

Chunga has an interesting approach to the “Paper or PDF?” debate – the paper version (or the “Souvenir Uncorrected Edition”) comes out first, with the PDF version appearing on efanzines a few weeks later. So *Chunga 12* isn’t actually on the website as I write this, but should be there Real Soon Now.

There’s an awful lot of TAFF this issue, not (as both *Seinfeld* and *Father Ted* would say) that there’s anything wrong with that. Lead article this time is what is allegedly the final installment of *Harrison County*, Steve Stiles’ much-protracted report of his 1968 TAFF trip. This episode is written in the style of the *Goon Show*

– not sure if Steve was a *Goons* fan before his trip, but it’s a remarkably accurate pastiche, you silly, twisted, boy, Steve. Umm, if this is really the final installment of the 1968 TAFF trip report, does anyone have the nerve to write to scifi.com to claim the \$500 bounty for finished trip reports? (I realize that they’ll probably deduct the extra \$250 for reports published “within 5 years”.)

There’s also a reprint of Mr. Stiles’s “TAFF Terror Tales 3” newsletter, done in the style of George Herriman’s *Krazy Kat* cartoon strip. And the final TAFF pitches of this year’s three TAFF candidates were eventually published on the trufen.net website in order to get them out before close of balloting, but (as per the original plan) also feature in this issue of *Chunga*.

As well as some other articles, there’s also the usual fine lettercolumn, featuring letters from both of the *Banana Wings* editors, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer. In some ways, it’s unsurprising that there had to be a recount on the FAAn Best Fanzine Awards between these two zines – if *Chunga* is “the best British zine

published in Seattle,” then equally *BW* is “the best Andy Hooper-lead group combo-zine not actually lead by Andy Hooper.” Or something.



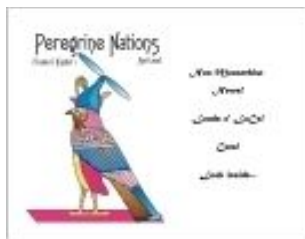
In A Prior Lifetime 12
(John Purcell)

This issue kicks off with an interesting reprint of a Garth Spencer fan history article, saying that fan groups, especially those involved in large conventions, are inherently chaotic, in that groups will grow, feud, split, and grow again. By contrast, fanzine fandom has survived precisely because of its lack of over-arching hobby organisations, rather than despite it, and postal games fandom has much the same “positive anarchy” fan history. I guess the problem is that you just can’t run a mid-to-large convention as a “positive anarchy” (not without annoying the hotel, anyway), although it will be interesting to see how the proposed Year of the Teledu convention in 2007 works out.

John contributes some fanzine reviews,

looking at the fan fiction fanzines (i.e. those that publish amateur science fiction stories). Not really my area of fannish interest, but just goes to show what a wide range of material fanzines can cover. John also kicks off a new book review column, dedicated to obscure or hard-to-find science fiction and fantasy books. The letter column has a number of familiar names, including John Nielsen Hall, Jan Stinson, Lloyd Penney, Leslie David, and Eric Mayer.

One of the more interesting features of John's fannish activity is that, much like Chris Garcia, one zine is not enough. In between each issue of *In A Prior Lifetime*, there will usually be at least a couple of issues of *...and Furthermore*. This features early letters of comment on the last issue, plus any further thoughts from John. I'm still not sure whether *...and Furthermore* counts as a "real" fanzine (although I'm uncomfortable by the elitism that this statement implies), in that it's more like a web-log in disguise. Although perhaps not as obviously so as Richard Geis' (now discontinued?) *Taboo Opinions*.



Peregrine Nations 6.1
(Jan Stinson)

This zine has had a rocky schedule this past year, due to Jan's illness, but rather than just skip the missing issues (which is what I would have done) has

now caught up, with four 'quarterly' issues in the first six months of this year.

The centerpiece of this zine is the letter-column, which always leads off the front of each issue. It's long and (mostly) friendly, and seems to have a different structure to a lot of other lettercols, in that correspondents seem to be addressing each other rather than the editor – the overall style is more like mailing comments for a large, informal APA than a traditional lettercol.

There's always some good articles as well, a good mix of faanish "slice of life" stuff and more sercon-related material (including book reviews) that wouldn't be out of place in a Cheryl Morgan or Bruce Gillespie publication. And Jan just about manages to keep to her resolution not to fan the flames of a potential fan-feud, although not without mentioning her resolution not to fan it several times. Good stuff.

Obligatory disclaimer: I have been helping out with printing and posting the paper version of recent issues, hence the variety of interesting postmarks.



Procrastinations 1
(John Coxon)

Now here's a rarity. Usually these days a new fanzine title on efanazines.com is just a sign that David Burton has gotten fed up with his old ti-

tle again, or that Chris Garcia had a spare afternoon. *Procrastinations*, by contrast, is a brand new fanzine from a brand new fanned, John Coxon. The fact that John is 17 years old – exactly the same age at which I first turned a mimeograph handle - makes me all misty-eyed and nostalgic.

Interestingly, John discovered fandom through an initial interest in Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. This has been a not uncommon route of entry for British fans, ranging from Claire Briarley to Joy Hibbert (and believe me, that's quite a range).

John contributes a couple of articles, including one that claims that t-shirts "are fandom's answer to tribal tattoos and circumcision," a good line, managing to combine both humour and a hidden inner truth. There are also a couple of good guest articles from fellow ZZ9 members Douglas Spencer and Max.

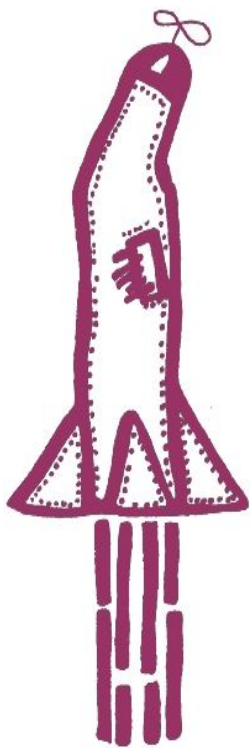
Nowhere in the issue (that I could see, anyway) does John really address the issue of why he's doing an e-fanzine, rather than just livejournal postings, or the other myriad of electronic fanac available these days.

A sickeningly good first issue, and I hope that John sticks around, both in ZZ9 and fanzine fandom generally. If only because we'll need someone to be the curmudgeonly old geezer in the corner when the generation of fans from the 2005 Worldcon's YAFA take over the faanish world in ten or twenty years' time.

Continued on page 26

Dave Burton and His Papier-Mâché Spaceship

JIM LAVELL



David Burton

"Hey gang," said jovial Dave Gorman, "let's build a space rocket and journey to the moon!"

"A bully idea!" cried Dave Burton.

"Jolly fun!" ejaculated Dave Lewton, somersaulting twice to give vent to his emotions.

And thus it was that the three Indianapolis Daves built their spaceship of papier-mâché, using manuscripts rejected by *Yandro* and borrowing a great deal of gunpowder from Harry Warner, who was dy-

namiting termites in his attic. But because they had not planned ahead the spacecraft was quite small and it was not large enough to hold three. The three Daves drew lots and as it so often happened Burton won. The others took their disappointment in good grace.

"Burton will represent us all!" said Gorman.

"And a splendid job he will do!" Lewton chimed.

Burton hung his head shyly and, with a pleased expression flitting about his lips, climbed aboard the space capsule. A small crowd had gathered and as Lewton struck a match a cheer went up. Even Harry Warner waved his cane.

"Right on!" shouted Gorman.

"Double right on," yelled Lewton. "And a double rocket!" he added, causing some merriment over his nimble wit.

Suddenly a cloud fell across the little band of brave experimenters. A stranger, wearing a

dark suit and a severe countenance, approached the intrepid heroes.

"Just what do you think you're doing?" he demanded, lighting a reefer.

"I'm journeying to the moon in our spaceship," Burton replied courteously.

"We made it ourselves!" explained Lewton.

"With verve and alacrity," said Gorman.

"I don't give a damn what you built it with," said the man nastily. "You can't go to the moon without authorization. Has Congress voted you funds? Are you affiliated with NASA? Did you get clearance with Agnew? The Air Force? NBC, CBS, ABC?"

"No' will serve to answer all your questions," answered Burton. "We intend no disservice to our country, but acted out of boyhood's eternal quest for adventure."

"The spirit of the pioneers," recited Gorman.

"The impulse to dare the unknown," affirmed Lewton, blowing out the match which was burning his fingers.

“There will be no flight to the moon this day,” grumbled the intruder, “or it will be jail for you, my fine lads.”

“My goodness,” Burton was heard to mutter.

“Gee whillikers,” chorused Gorman and Lew-ton.

“What a shame,” Burton mumbled as he climbed out of the capsule. “And after our hours of pasting and cutting and such. Here, sir, do take a look inside and observe how well we have designed the interior.”

The government man mounted into the capsule for a look, tossing away his reefer. It fell into the gunpowder and – BALOOM! – and SWOOSH! With a mighty roar and a streak of flame the government man was off into space without clearance, flight plan, or authorization.

“Jehosophat! What a splendid sight!” hollered Gorman gleefully.

“Right on course,” observed Burton coolly, for he was, as usual, level-headed even at such an exciting moment.

“Our little project has not been a failure after all,” avowed Gorman, clapping the others on their backs.

“Though it’s a pity,” Burton said with a frown, “that one of *us* could not have made the journey.

But he was already planning a new adventure. •

Reprinted from Microcosm #13, August 1970.

Found In Collection continued from page 10

come in. Perhaps the three things were related: Monty Wells’ family, following his death, arranged to send some stuff to us and they included the donation offer letter with it. But that makes no sense because 1) I was there in 1999 and would have been the one dealing with the donation and 2) why would they have sent us a letter that was already in our possession since it was a letter from Wells to us? I had no idea what to think.

While I was digging around I discovered another box marked MITSF. I was interested as to what this might be and I looked through. There were a bunch of random notes on Robots in Science Fiction and a few printed searches for things that we might have used in the Robots exhibit in the Boston Museum.

Now it all made sense...if you think like me.

In the early 1990s, we put up a robot exhibit and we must have gotten a bunch of materials from the MIT SF Society. They must have given a bunch of things to use in the exhibit, probably old zines and the like that they no longer needed. Perhaps they had to take a few boxes of mixed items to get the few items they wanted. That happens to us all the time in the museum game. So, there were a bunch of *Amras* just stuck in the same box. When the museum was moved from Boston to Mountain View, they boxed things up according to topic. There were boxes that came from various

groups that were labeled. They must have had a NESFA/MITSF box or two that all this stuff got put into. My guess is that the label and the letter were probably a part of a file on Monty Wells and maybe he was our contact between the museum and NESFA and they put it in and when someone did a pass through the boxes to find if there were any donor records, grabbed the file and these had fallen out. That’s a strong possibility.

So, that was my detective work for the day. True, I stretched that day over a couple of weeks, but it’s not easy being a shamus in Converse All-Stars. It’s even harder to be one when people expect you to be actually doing work. •



Epistles

LETTER COLUMN

Andy Porter

Just read the new issue – hell, I read all three, plus the final issue of your previous zine – on eFanzines.com. I absolutely love your design: it's everything I was always trying to do with my own zines, in those heady pre-computer days of the 1970's and 80's, when all I had to work with was type from Frank and Anne Dietz's Luna Publications IBM Composer, and all headlines done with several thousand dollars worth of Letraset and a really steady hand. And let's not forget the trusty non-repro blue pen and the burnishing tool.

I'm not likely to forget any of those, along with drafting boards and light tables, Exacto knives, and rubber cement and later hot wax since I worked in the commercial art field for a decade before the advent of computers. There are still times when I think it would be easier to do a mechanical paste-up on a page rather than doing it on the computer, but they're few and far between.

At the last place I worked, about 80% of the jobs involved duplicating already-print-

ed items; we had create new art – copying the original design – so we could generate new flexo plates (either rubber or polymer). So it was important to match typefaces exactly, and transfer type was your friend in that case. We had thousands and thousands of sheets, from all the manufacturers.

Personally, I find one of the great things about doing a zine on the computer, whether print or digital, is that it eliminates the need for the editor to re-type articles and letters!

The format reminds me of some of Alpajpuri's more inventive days, when he had one issue with one side in the traditional 8½ wide by 11 high format, and the other side just the reverse, like a demented Ace Double. They were joined at the staple – a problem you're never going to have!

Interesting that you mention Paj (Paul Novitski). He and I were good friends during my previous stint in fandom, and for several years afterward. When I lost all my fanzines (including my own) during a move in the 1970s, I man-

aged to keep a 2 or 3 inch thick folder of correspondence from Paj, plus a complete run of his APA-L zine and smaller personalzines, and a copy of the very issue of his genzine that you mention – Carandaith Seven. I got in touch with Paul a couple of years ago, and he's running an organization that promotes Zimbabwean music.

I have one correction on *Pixel #2*: there's an uncredited piece of artwork there, on page 11. It's by the wonderful and talented Cora Lee Healy (aka C. Lee Healy), whose color artwork I used on *Algol/Starship* and later *Science Fiction Chronicle*, and whose b&w pieces graced the insides of both my zines. Alas, Lee made her living as a pizza delivery person, and is permanently gaffiated. She didn't even show up at Con José,



Manfred Klein

though she still lives nearby. I don't think she's done any artwork in years.

I meant to include a little blurb asking if anyone recognized the signature, but obviously I forgot. I found that piece of art in a small cache that Lee Lavell had from the early 1970s, and neither she nor I knew who the artist was. Thanks for the opportunity to rectify the omission, Andy!

Eric Mayer writes about discovering Brad Foster's more erotic side, but Brad has been doing that sort of artwork for years, and apparently surviving on it. For years now he's been selling his spicier works at Worldcon dealers tables. I've bought a whole bunch of his Goodies here, as well as other stuff, including *Spicy Tales from the Bible*, *The Chronicles of Nola*, *One Year's Worth* (365 pages of his art) and a few other things which we can't mention in a family fanzine. He also had a bunch of his artwork in those 1980's pornographic digestsized letterzines, and, as I vaguely recall, there was a "First Encounter with Aliens" center-spread in, was it *Shaggy*? Yup, alien/human orgy, watched over by fretting little robots.

Didn't know that Dave Locke hailed from the Adirondacks. I spent several days last year in Elizabethtown, east of Lake Placid, visiting SF bookseller Lloyd Currey, and only after I got back to NYC discovered that Sarah Prince lives one town further west. I even briefly entertained thoughts of finding a place to live there, until I was reminded of the facts of the matter: it's unbearable because of black flies for much of

the year, and cold and isolated — with good shopping and hospitals sometimes hours away — with treacherous winter driving conditions. And I'd have to learn to drive and buy a car, something I never learned because I live in NYC.

Who is this Andrew Porter that Chris Garcia writes about? Could it be...me? Yes. Actually, one of the reasons I changed the name of *Algol* to *Starship* was because besides no one knowing how to spell or pronounce it, I'd also get people thinking it was a computer magazine. Even got a subscription from Communist China once because they thought they were getting the *Algol Bulletin*, published by the University of Glasgow. Actually, *Algol* is the name of a variable star — *Al Ghul*, because the Muslim astronomers thought it was the eye of a demon winking at them in the night sky.

Those were good issues of *Algol* he writes about. The zine didn't go offset until #16, in 1970, so the issues he had were either all dittoed or a combination of ditto and mimeo, with offset covers. I intend, eventually, to scan in all the issues and make them available here on eFanzines.com. They were, I think, mailed in envelopes starting with #9 (Bergeron cover) or so, so there'd have been no mailing labels to trace.

Like I said, an excellent zine. Since I got my new iMac six months ago, and then DSL in February, my eyes have been opened to a whole new level of fandom and fanzines. This was a good one. •

Chris Garcia

Love the cover. It's very much the type of image I'd use in *The Drink Tank*, only much better since you have an idea of design in your layout unlike me who just throws stuff where the lines intersect. I like this Kyle Hinton. I must ask for some art from him.

Kyle is my nephew, and he's made tremendous strides for someone who only started drawing a couple of years ago. Although his interest in zines and fandom is marginal, I'm sure he'd be pleased to get a request for artwork.

Eric Mayer is a good guy and a great writer. I love the metaphor of the tar-baby as fandom. I've tried to get out, but they keep pulling me back in! Sorry, just had to do that. Truth is, I've only passed in and out several times but it's not like I actively stopped thinking of myself as a fan. I'm not sure why that is. I'd love to see some of those mini-comics he was talking about. I always go to WonderCon, the largest comic con in NorCal, and ignore the big stars (mostly) and get my hands on every tiny comic I can find. I've been a fan of the Indy Comic scene ever since I discovered Slave Labor Graphics (which was weird since they're located in San Jose and I didn't find them until I was living in Boston!). I've seen those Brad Foster comics, though not since I discovered that I actually like Brad's work (I was blind for so long!)

Ted White is the man. I'm glad he mentioned that he had sent me an LoC for Issue 69 since it

had never actually made it to me. *Pixel* saves the day! I'll be running it in the next issue of *The Drink Tank*. I'm so very interested to see what he has to say. I can't argue; Ted White is the guy to go to when you want a real view of what fandom is at any given moment. I've had a lot of folks say that Arnie and I are far too frequent, which is understandable, but I've also had a few people (non-fannish types mostly who read me because they know me from any number of places) who say they want daily issues. Even I'm not that crazy. Hey, Ted's LoC resend just got to me. It is great!

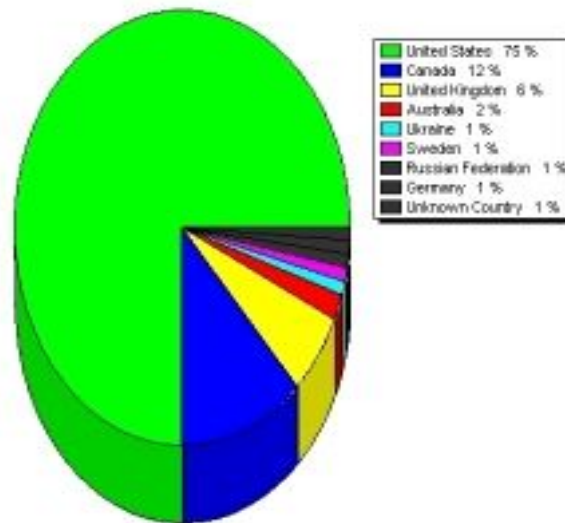
I've witnessed the outboard motor thing that Dave writes about. I've seen it when I was working in Boston on the Esplanade. The Charles River isn't exactly the best river to fall face first into. I've never caught a Northern Pike of any size, but the one I had on the line once was nearly as big as a St. Bernard. I released it to encourage World Peace. Sadly my camera was broken, so there weren't any photos, but still you can take my word for it.

Take my word for it, I never trust anyone who says "take my word for it."

Allow me to translate Peter's comparisons to the World Cup into terms Americans might understand. *Ansible* is The Oakland A's, *Banana Wings* is the Boston Red Sox, *Borealis* is the Tampa Bay Devils Rays, *The Drink Tank* is the Seattle Mariners, *The Tangerine Terror* is the Toronto Blue Jays, *Vegas Fandom Weekly* is the LA Dodgers, and *SF/SF* is the San Francisco Gi-

ants...only without all the steroid fuss. I'd do it in terms of hockey teams for the Canadian readers, but I'm not well-versed enough.

Once upon a time, in a fandom far, far away, such a "translation" would have been more reasonable. I've mentioned before how crogged I am that there's such a relatively global readership for fanzines these days. Certainly there have always been people outside the US reading American zines, but in the mimeo and postage stamp days it would have been far beyond my meager financial means to distribute a zine outside the US. The graphic shows



a breakdown of readership by country. (Statistics provided by FAB – the Fanzine Auditing Bureau, an organization I just now made up).

*For the most part, the breakdown is pretty much what I'd expect. What I find interesting, though, are the countries that aren't represented in the statistics, like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. The first two could represent US civilian or military personnel in those countries, looking for a little diversion. The last, I'm sure, was probably a visit by a low-level bureaucrat who had been informed that *Pixel* was a journal of hard-hitting science and technology that might have printed an article on nuclear weapons construction. Imagine his surprise... (And now, if I haven't done it before, I've probably triggered an NSA algorithm that will immediately scan all past and future *Pixel*s because I used three middle-East countries and the words "nuclear weapons" in such close proximity.)*

Wonderful issue, and a great lettercol. I see that we're seriously starting to break that old "eZines don't get response" thing. •

*It does seem to be improving, but I still think it could be better. *Pixel* is read/downloaded by somewhere between 100-150 people each issue, but only a handful send in letters. And none from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, or Iran about nuclear weapons. (Damn, I did it again!)*

Lee Lavell

Where is your editorial, David? Is that little tiny thing at the bottom of the masthead supposed to be it? Let's hear more from you! Oh, and by the way, congrats on your showing at Corflu.

I don't always write something for the zine, and I don't feel any need to have something in each issue. I don't write quickly (just ask my few regular e-mail correspondents!) or particularly well, so if I don't have something specific that I want to write about, I generally don't.

"Notes from Byzantium": As I've stated before, I'm not really into comics, graphic novels or whatever. One thing I've found a bit disturbing is that mundanes see no difference between comics and the old pulps. I am familiar with dingy shops that existed many years and sold back issue pulps. That's where I got a lot of my collection.

"Whither Fandom": I will be interested to see where he goes with this. As an "old newcomer," I'm just starting to catch up with current fandom so I don't have any idea where it may be going, since I don't know where it's been for the past twenty-five years or so.

"The Silly Season Blues" reminds me of something that happened to me and Jim many years ago. We were one of those "idiot tourists". We decided to visit Houghton Lake in Michigan, which is a very large lake. For some stupid reason, forgotten now, I wanted to go fishing and

Jim humored me, even though neither of us knew anything about the sport. So, we rented bait and tackle and a small boat with an outboard motor and thankfully, also oars, and off we went. After a couple of hours it started to get cloudy, and cloudier, and cloudier. "Hmm," we thought. "Storm coming up. Better head back." Jim fired up the motor and I said, "Our dock's over there." "No," said Jim, pointing in the opposite direction. I doubtfully bowed to his opinion and off we went. After a bit it became apparent that I was the correct one so we headed back in the opposite direction. We were about half way there when the storm hit and at the same time we ran out of gas. We could see summer cottages on the nearest shoreline and headed in that direction. Waves were washing into the boat, which I was frantically bailing out with the bait can. "Row!" I'm screaming to Jim. "Bail!" he's yelling at me. "Row!" "Bail!" We finally made it to a small private dock where the owners rushed out, dried us off, gave us coffee and doughnuts and gas to get back when the storm was over. I shall forever be grateful to them.

"Found in Collection": I'm still going through things in my attic. How about a class photo of my aunt with Irene Dunne.

"World Cup Wallchart": Clever idea to compare zines to teams. What's next, Sullivan?

A note about your layout this issue, David.

While still beautifully done in general, I found that, while previous issues had an almost architectural feeling to it, this issue seems to be a little looser in concept.

As in, not much concept. To be honest, sometimes I "work" an issue to death and get a little tired of it before I even publish it. I typically change the layout of an issue two or three or more times, and last issue I didn't like anything I was doing so decided to use something I thought "serviceable."

And, by the way, harking back to my gripe that I made far back in the Fifties: Female nudes you have. Where's the male equivalent? •

Sheesh; use one illustration of a buxom female showing ¾ of a nipple, that ties in directly to the text and I'm Larry Flynt or something? I have nothing against male nudity – I've been nude myself on a few occasions – but until Alicia Austin returns to fandom and sends me some illos, I doubt I'll be publishing any real nudity of any sort, male or female. Say, your Aunt and Irene Dunne wouldn't happen to be nude in that photograph, would they?

Eric Mayer

I don't now what a digital painting is but I liked the cover by Kyle Hinton. Unusual for a fanzine and takes advantage of the color capabilities of ezines. As does Brad Foster's illo. And I see some *Goodies* have been unearthed and good ones too. Course with those there who's going to be able

to keep their attention on the writing!

By “digital painting” I meant one that had been done completely on the computer in a painting program, not one that had been created in the traditional manner and then scanned in.

Dave Locke’s article about his family running a tourist place at Indian Lake reminded me of how my parents ran a lakeside picnic grove for a few years. I can’t recall much about the patrons. The last summer we were there was the year after I finished third grade. I was in my own world. Frogs, crayfish, minnows. Those were what interested me. Not stupid adults. Although if I had noticed any adults falling out of boats I would’ve rolled on the ground laughing. Reading about it now I laughed. But I’m too old to roll.

We did soap up in the lake early in the morning. Every few days a few pans of water heated on the stove would be added to the cold water in a big tin wash tub for a “real” bath, but donning swimming trunks and wading out into the lake with a bar of Ivory, just as the sun came up, with mist rising off the water, was my usual routine. Considering the mud stirred up and the floating green scum and aquatic weeds, and leeches, I’m not sure how cleansing it was. The Ivory floated though. That was neat. You haven’t lived til you’ve floated soap on a lake. Much more impressive somehow than when it’s floating in a bath tub. Surreal, to an eight year old.

Interesting to hear how Ted fits fanzines in. Finding room for fanac can be a challenge. (What was the name of that sf book? *Time*

Enough For Fanac?) I used to find time to do fanwriting in the office back in the early eighties. Now that I work at home I have the opposite problem – I have to force myself not to be reading fanzines when I should be working. My solution is to only read about three zines. I have an ensmallled fandom.

Too bad about those *Algols* Chris found in a state of decay. My own zine collection is in the state of New York, left in the house I rented and which was subsequently demolished, somewhere in the landfill beneath the entrance to the Irondequoit Mall in Rochester. Chris seems to think ditto is particularly prone to mold, Hecto I could understand. With all the gelatin that comes off the sheets are like petri trays.

I’m damn sure not driving anyplace with Lee Lavell. We’d end up in the Bermuda Triangle. I once had to drive from western New York into Vermont. Consulting road maps – remember them? – I identified an easy route. Just stay on US 4. I mean US 4. United States 4. A national highway. Turns out it looked better on paper. There it looked continuous. The



map didn’t show all the turns off one road and onto another. Off one street, down the block and turn right, to another one way street with cars parked on both sides. US 4 my ass. Finally I missed a turn and the two lane macadam keep narrowing until I ended up at a weedy pair of ruts going up the side of an unplowed field. Honestly. I finally found my way but I don’t trust the national highway system anymore.

Clever zine reviews by Peter Sullivan. But which zines are like England or the US? I nominate my twenty year old dittoed *Groggy* as like the United States squad – fading fast into invisibility. I have to watch out reading these games zine reviews though. From time to time I’ve found myself drawn to games. I used to love board games as a kid. I flirted at various times with historical simulations (when they were on paper) and more recently computer text adventures. Not to mention baseball simulations of one sort and another. •

John Purcell

David, what a lovely, lovely zine you have here. Delightful cover. I really like the style.

I really enjoyed reading Eric Mayer’s “Notes from Byzantium” this time around. It made me a bit nostalgic for those times thirty-some years ago when Steve Glennon, Lee Pelton and I used to make used bookstore runs around Minneapolis and St. Paul once every month or two. Found a lot of cool stuff, too, but nothing supremely interesting happened like what Eric wrote

about. This article was a fun way to give people like me some more background into Brad W. Foster's artistic pedigree. The man's style is unique and – dare I say it? Yes, I do – zany. Great stuff.

I really didn't get that into underground comix and all, but I enjoyed the rare copy of the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*. Now, that was a funny book. Of course, being in Minn-stf, we had our very own Reed Waller (who co-wrote it with Kate Worley, I think) doing *Omaha, the Cat Dancer*, which was another wonderful comic with style and humor. Reed was also a fun guy to hang with, and man is he a wonderful musician, too! If you ever get the chance to hear him play and sing at a con - like Minicon - do so. Reed does a dead-on version of "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes."

Ted White's column strikes a familiar chord with me. "Whither Fandom?" indeed, considering what the Internet has done to our little corner of the universe. It has definitely changed it in terms of the kinds of zines we fanzine people put out. Ted mentions two of them: either the strictly PDF versions of a paper zine or the e-zine, which is usually laid out like a traditional zine. I'd like to add the webzine, which can usually be had over on efanazines.com in PDF format as well, but if you choose the HTML format, it's a fanzine set up like its own website, complete with hyperlinks to editorials, letters, stories, articles, reviews, to say nothing of related links that will take you to Trufen.net, Fanac.org, or even the faneditor's own home page or Live

Journal site.

It's a whole new world out there for us fanzine types. Without a doubt, the speed and ease of zine production and distribution has empowered some of us to pub away as fast as we want to; Ted mentioned this a few issues ago in a loc he wrote to my zine. I cannot disagree with his assessment; there is no doubt in my mind that I couldn't possibly afford fanzine publishing at my current rate if I was still limited to typewriters, word processors, and a xerox machine, let alone a mimeograph. The old way is so cost prohibitive nowadays that it would be obscenely expensive to produce a large-circulation zine any more.

Also, it is so hard to keep up with how fast these zines - PDF, HTML, or whatever - pop up on the Internet. It is staggering; just ask Lloyd Penney how far behind he is. What else do you think caused the soon-to-be-designated-immortal Lloyd Penney-style LoC? It sure as heck wasn't the US Postal Service, that's for sure!

Dave Locke makes me pine for the pine-covered shores of Minnesota lakes, where my family used to fish constantly for eight months out of the year. (The other four months were for the hard-core ice fishermen, which my family was not.) A great story about the guy who forgot to draw up the anchor before starting to row. I have seen people do this myself. It is truly a funny sight. Thank you for reprinting the tale. It also needs to be mentioned that the tale of the "fish that got away"

is a standard fire pit staple when camping on the shores of a northern Minnesota or Wisconsin lake. Fish grow to Brobdingnagian proportions upon the retelling. If you happen to be fishing in Canada, however, there is no need to exaggerate: those fish really are that huge!

"Much Nothings About Ado": I have never gotten lost on my way to a con. Steve Glennon and I almost missed our exit going to ByobCon V in Kansas City back in July of 1975, but Steve literally two-wheeled his car onto the exit ramp at the last second so fast that I didn't have time to get scared.

If I ever ran across a box of fanzines or old SF mags from any era at a garage sale, I think I would wet myself. Even seeing them in irretrievable condition would be a joy. It really is sad that some people just don't understand the concept that some people's junk is another person's treasure. My parents certainly fell into the first category.

I really liked the way Peter Sullivan linked these fanzines to World Cup teams. Very clever. (Speaking of which, I have been enjoying the World Cup very much; soccer is one of my favorite sports to watch and play.) But Peter makes me wonder which countries would be analogous to my zines: *In A Prior Lifetime* to France, then *And Furthermore* to Guyana? Or maybe they'd be lumped together like Trinidad and Tobago. Makes me wonder, and I shouldn't do that, either, since it gives me headaches.

In your response to Chris Garcia's loc, you said you listed Dick Geis instead of me. You flat-

ter me, sir. To be honest, I didn't think much of your initial comment at the time because Dick Geis used to crank out a lot of his *Taboo Opinions* at a rapid rate.

That picture of the kitty at gun point on page 19 is cute, but makes me wonder what he was doing. Stealing from the milk bank? •

Lloyd Penney

I've got a couple of issues of Brad Foster's *Goodies*, plus the whole run of *Olivia*. I envy Brad's ability to think up the most erotic of women, and commit that image to paper. You never know who you'll meet, or what their accomplishments will be. Locally, I have three friends who went on to big careers in SF and astronomy, namely Robert J. Sawyer, Ed Greenwood (both well-known SF or D&D authors) and Prof. Paul DeLaney, head of the astronomy department at York University in Toronto. I went to school with Robert and Ed, and Paul is my oldest fannish friend, having met him through the local Trek and SF clubs in Victoria, British Columbia, where I got my fannish start. Did I think these three good guys would ever make [it] this far? No, but I am glad [they] did, and I just wish I could have kept up with them, instead of just dropping their names in a LoC...

Whither fandom? I see it becoming more and more Balkanized until each group will not know the others. I see media fandom growing while lit fandom is languishing, and anime fandom will beat them both out for the majority of

fannish types. Or has all of this already happened? Ted, I don't think you have to worry about Chris not using your LoCs. I think the LoC you refer to did appear. Then again, he's probably produced two issues since I started writing this loc of my own...

The more I read Dave Locke's article about tourists in Indian Lake, the lower my opinion went about these people. Yup, I'm a city slicker with little knowledge about how to fish a lake, but I have had some experience with boats... I hope the people described are just pulling down the intelligence curve a little, because I think the lot that Dave describes are breathtakingly stupid. And, given that this article was written in 1974, I would guess that the usual tourist hasn't gotten any smarter since.

I've only been to two Midwestcons, and both in the past decade, and the only problems we've had were driving through lengthy construction areas. The Interstates are a fine system of highways; they'll be terrific when they're done. And, because we were so new, we were there by ourselves. Mike Glicksohn helped smooth over the outsider jitters the second time, but as much as time has gone by, I think we'd still be by ourselves if we were to go again.

I think the US Interstate system is actually "finished" for the most part – particularly since the beautiful section near Glenwood Springs, Colorado has been

completed after decades of work – and the construction you'll encounter these days is either repair work or revamping existing sections for unplanned for/unforeseen additional traffic. Given that, I doubt they'll ever be done.

My LoC...it's my prerogative to contradict myself if I wish, and here, I wish. A good, close friend of mine knows how many locs I produce each year, and said that the only way anybody would ever see this would be if I placed all my LoCs in a blog (he recommended LiveJournal). Well, I have followed his advice, and in spite of my fateful words, "Who needs a blog when I've got everyone else's lettercol?", now, everyone else will see all my LoCs in a blog. A few days ago, I set myself up a LiveJournal at lloydpenney.livejournal.com, and right after I finish this LoC and e-mail it to you, I will install it in my LJ. That way, another part of my letter will be more true...if you want to find out what's happening with me, read my LoCs. And now, if anyone is interested, you can read all my LoCs. This is just an experiment to see how it goes, and how people react. •

Joseph T. Major

"Notes from Byzantium": I thought it was ironic that *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* began as a satire of Marvel's obsession with mutants, and before long, everyone and his brother was putting out a satire of *TMNT*. The shelves were clogged with stuff with titles like *Mildly Mi-*

crowaved Pre-Pubescent Akido Gerbils. But then, what with all the TV, action figure, etc. stuff, *TMNT* became a parody of itself.

So Brad W. Foster is up there with Dick Geis, Earl Kemp, Bill Rotsler, and other Faanish Jiants? Well well. (I saw a Bill Rotsler movie once and it explains the ozone hole, going by the female performers' hair.)

"The Silly Season Blues": My grandfather liked to fish. He liked to fish with my cousin, who now has retired and is a professional fishing guide. (Some day I may tell the strange and terrifying story about them, my grandmother's cats, and the eel.) I think Mr. Ike chose to fish with his grandnephew (the cousin mentioned above) because I have absolutely no fishing ability. However, the one time I did catch a fish, I

did not catch it in a normal fashion, but unfortunately for my sense of the absurd I did not catch it the way the guy Dave Locke reports on did. I don't know if that would be embarrassing or amusing.

For some reason, the bit with the bears makes the late Timothy Treadwell understandable. As you know, Timothy Treadwell was a bear whisperer whose ambition was to be finally eaten by a bear - and he got his wish. (See the documentary *Grizzly Man* or Nick Jans's book, *The Grizzly Maze* for more.)

"Found In Collection": You know, one of the reasons Andy Porter changed the name of his zine was that he was always getting requests from people who thought it was about programming. I suppose someday, if not al-

ready, there will be a site dedicated to dead computer languages. And COBOL, which is harder to kill off than cockroaches.

Lee Lavell: I have a set of CDs with all the issues of *MAD* from the beginning up to 1999 or so. After which, as we know, it went really downhill. They even have ads for other peoples' stuff in it these days.

Reply to me: The former Inquisition is now called the Sacred Congregation for the Defense of the Faith. It got a new head recently, as the former head, Cardinal Ratzinger, got a promotion. •

Pudding-fanciers Unite continued from page 15



Vegas Fandom Weekly 79
(Arnie Katz)

No full review this time, but I do need to make space for a correction. Last time I wrote, "Even if all everyone ever seems to talk about are things

that happened twenty years ago." (This was actually more a reference to Argentina and Maradona's (in)famous "Hand of God" goal against England in 1986 than it was to *VFW*, but

such are the perils of wandering into the desert of over-extended metaphor and getting trapped in the tar-pits of inappropriate simile.) Arnie has e-mailed to point out that the "20 years" tag only really applied to 4 out of 33 items in the issue in question, which is fair enough. Not that focusing on things that happened 20 years ago is necessarily bad anyway, says my inner fan-historian (and Sandra Bond). •

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