



PIXEL TEN

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 7

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PIXELTEN

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BOB AND WEAVE

David Burton

To borrow a phrase a friend of mine used to use half-jokingly, it's probably the "height of epitome" for an editor to have the temerity to publish an interview with himself in his own zine (see "Dialog With Two Fans" in this issue), but there you have it. And I guess it may not be entirely inappropriate, since this issue *does* mark my third anniversary of publishing a zine.

I don't remember who first suggested doing the interview. I remember that the topic came up during one of our bi-monthly lunches. I'd re-printed Dave's "Dialogs" with Walt Willis and Buck Coulson from years past, and I admired the job he'd had done on those interviews. I was also keen on getting Dave to write something new for the first time in over a decade. But the idea languished for some months, maybe as long as a year. Whoever brought it up initially, Dave asked me several times about doing it, but I always said I wasn't really interested. When Dave asked once more last fall if I was "ready," again I said I didn't think so. But a few weeks later decided it was probably the only way I was going to get him to write something new and original for *Pixel*. After this nadir, the only way to go would be up, and I hope to convince Dave to continue with this feature in upcoming issues of *Pixel*, hopefully with people who have something to say.

* * *

It's once again time to cast your votes in the 2006 FAAn (Fanzine Activity Achievement) Awards, fanzine fandom's

equivalent of the People's Choice Awards, to be announced at Corflu Quire in Austin, Texas on February 11. This year the categories are: Best Fanzine, Best Fan Writer, Best Fan Artist, Best Letterhack, and Best New Fanzine Fan. All the activity needs to have taken place in calendar year 2006. One change this time around is that all votes must be received prior to the convention, which seems to me to be a Good Thing. You can get an official ballot at efanazines.com as a PDF, although you can also just mail your votes to Murray Moore at corflu24faan @ yahoo.com (remove the spaces around "@"). You can vote for your top three choices in each category; votes must be received by January 31 to be counted.

It's a truism that "egoboo is the currency of fandom" since no one gets paid for fanac, and for most die-hard fanzine fans, winning, or at least placing highly, in the FAAn Awards means more than winning a Hugo. The number of votes cast last year was pitifully small – many more folks read zines than voted. So why not take just a few minutes and think about what you've enjoyed during the past year and fire off an e-mail to Murray with your votes and say "Thank You" to the publishers and writers and artists whose work you've appreciated?

* * *

Those who know me know that I "enjoy" a rather impecunious financial situation. That is, I'm generally stone broke. Not that I'm a spendthrift by any means; just that I currently make *barely* enough money to live on month to month, with little left over for anything resembling luxury items. And yet, as I manfully struggle to raise myself *up* to the poverty level, I realize that there are many, many people who are less fortunate than I am. I have a job, a roof over my head, and I typically eat a couple of times a day.

I do what little I can to help those in more dire circumstances. About six years ago I ran across The Hunger Site on the Internet,

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NOTES FROM BYZANTIUM

Eric Mayer

Illustrated by Brad Foster

Pillars of the Community

Last week after I had spent a couple hours on the roof of the sun porch nailing down patches, I found myself writing about a sixth century stylite who will appear in our seventh Byzantine mystery.

Pillar saints were holy men who sought to mortify the flesh and commune with God by retiring from the world to dwell on top of columns. The practice originated in the fifth century with Simeon who, according to Evagrius in his Ecclesiastical History, lived atop a 60 foot high pillar (40 cubits) for thirty years after having spent seven years on a shorter column. Others soon followed Simeon's example. Saint Alypius reportedly stood upright on a column for 53 years, until his legs gave out, and then spent the last 14 years of his life lying down.

Walking around a roof would seem like good preparation for imagining what it must have been like to perch on a pillar and although I didn't stay up there for nearly as long as a stylite would have, since I'm afraid of heights it seemed a like forever. Writers are supposed to draw on their own experiences, after all, and this experience seemed apt.

However, when I began to ponder what I might have learned on the roof that could be transferred to my fictional holy man I

encountered difficulties. True, I felt rather more exposed than normal to the breeze and the ground appeared to be a long way down. But I didn't have to actually get on the roof to realize things like that.

Then too, I'm not a holy hermit, let alone the particular holy hermit I was trying to imagine. In fact, a Byzantine holy man who disliked heights as much as I do would probably have chosen a less elevated form of self abnegation – cave dwelling for instance. On the hand, I could also see how he might decide to torture himself with fear for the glory of God.

But having to guess rendered the whole roof exercise kind of worth-



less.

It may be that I was not sufficiently observant while up there. I didn't pay enough attention to my emotional reaction or look hard enough for telling details. I was too busy keeping track of where the edge of the roof was. That would certainly have been a telling detail if I had lost track, even if I may not have lived to tell about it.

Maybe I could really get inside a stylite's head if I stood on my chair for a week. It would probably make the cat nervous. (And if I stood on the roof for that long the neighbors might notice.)

I once listened to a short woman who had written a fantasy novel about a tall hero explain how she had carted a stool around the house and kept standing on the stool while going about her business to see how it would feel to be taller.

Call me lazy, but that seems like overkill. I wonder if she actually had any revelations a few inches off the floor that she couldn't have reached by a simple thought experiment?

There are writers who won't set a book in a locale they haven't visited and if they have to vacation for weeks in exotic lands – well it's a tough job but someone's got to do it, even if only part of the expense comes off the taxes.

But since the sixth century Constantinople Mary and I write about has been obliterated by the passage of time and buried beneath yards of rubble and new construction, there isn't any question of traveling there. I have lived in New York City and so I just imagine Constantinople circa 542 as being like New York City circa 1979, but with horses rather than taxicabs, hotdog vendors rather than purveyors of grilled fish, and stylites rather than Hare Krishnas.

Come to think of it I suppose the top of a stylite's column had the same olfactory character as the 42nd Street subway station.

There'd be no way I'd ever find myself in the same kind of spots John does anyway. The closest I've ever got to an imperial banquet was to have high tea at the Trump Tower. And John will insist on venturing down dark alleyways. Never mind authorial responsibility. I draw the line at dark alleyways.

Sometimes it's best just to use your imagination.

Red Squirrel

The other morning I saw a red squirrel on the neighbor's deck. At first I figured I must be mistaken. Red squirrels aren't common in this part of the northeast, or at least they don't commonly live where they can be seen. On a few occasions when I was a kid I spotted one in the big maple trees in front of my grandparents' house. Aside from that I've never caught a glimpse of one around here.

As I stared out the window the squirrel raced along the railing then leapt to the branch of a pine and vanished into the boughs. There was no doubt of its russet coat. And it was too small for a fully grown grey squirrel.

I haven't had a glimpse of the red squirrel since, although it must be living nearby, and probably others as well. I suppose there's a lot that goes on in the woods around the house we never know about even if we can call up the news from the far corners of the world with a mouse-click.

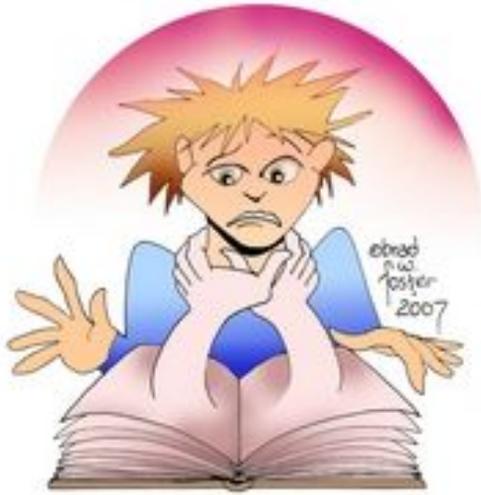
Mary noticed a bobcat going by a year ago. I've never seen a bobcat in the wild but they're out there, doing whatever it is bobcats do, even while I type.

I have glimpsed foxes, both red and gray and a couple years ago a huge black bear rambled around the backyard in the middle of the afternoon. He was after the bird seed in the neighbor's feeder. It's odd that an animal the size of a bear would consider bird seed a treat. I hope if I meet any of our wildlife when I'm hauling the trash down to the road just after dawn it's the red squirrel and not the bear.

It's Not Nice to Grab

My mother used to say, "It's not nice to grab." She was correct. As a writer, I'm sick and tired of being told I have to grab, grab, grab. You're done for (or so it's said) if you don't grab the reader in the first paragraph, or better the first sentence. Or why not the first word, or the first letter... "T--" Oh...zzzzzzz... "T's" so common and boring... "X" ...that's better...

I have no reason to disbelieve agents and editors when they say they'll toss a manuscript after a few lines if it doesn't grab



them. But are we writing for agents and editors or for readers?

There's a good reason agents and editors want to be able to judge a book by its first lines. They're swamped with manuscripts. They need to weed through them quickly. Snappy beginnings serve their purposes. But as a reader I don't need instant gratification. I select books

by reading the jacket copy or a review, opening them up to sample the writer's style. Once I pick a book I figure I'll like (and I never do that by opening one book after the next to find the best hook) I'm quite prepared to give the writer a little time.

A novel is a long and complicated thing. That's part of the beauty of it. The ability to write a first sentence that grabs a reader reveals little or nothing about the ability to put together the subsequent tens of thousands of words that make up a novel.

A catchy opening is like an advertising slogan. Does it make sense to select writers for publication or representation on the basis of how good they are at writing advertising copy? Well, since we're also told (by some) that our main job as writers is to sell, sell, sell, maybe that makes a sort of warped sense. Not to me, it doesn't, but maybe to someone.

As I'm finishing up the first draft of our seventh novel I am grateful that our editor (and the first reader) for Poisoned Pen Press obviously didn't approach their selection process with such an attitude. We had to rewrite the first chapter of the first book about five times and the first line still doesn't grab. The half a mil-

lion words that have followed in that book and the others have been pretty well received, though. If the folks at Poisoned Pen had tossed our manuscript after the first line or the first paragraph, all our books would still be sitting on our hard drives and in our brains. And my brain would be getting uncomfortably crowded.

Who Needs Spelling and Punctuation?

Because I write and possess a degree in English Literature people are surprised when I admit to knowing next to nothing about subjects like spelling and punctuation. The notion that in order to write publishable material one needs to be able to spell and punctuate correctly is nonsense, probably put out by English teachers and grammarians.

Shakespeare couldn't even spell his own name the same way consistently. And so what? Here's how much sense spelling makes. "Phonetically" can't be spelled phonetically.

Rules of punctuation are almost as useless as spelling. I just write sentences the way they sound, using commas and periods. The way I figure, a period represents a full stop, while a comma is a momentary pause.

I never use semi-colons. A semi-colon is a punctuation mark that can't decide whether it's a period or a comma. It's a mark of dithering and confusion. An apologist for run-on sentences. The mark of the writer for whom a simple, straightforward sentence is not good enough. (On the other hand, someone once said, "A writer who uses semi-colons is not a hack.")

You think I'm going to spellcheck this before I run it? Ha! I laught in the face of spellcheckers! •



Dave Locke's
**DIALOG WITH
WITH TWO FANS**

A Chat with David Burton

To introduce a fan editor – and primarily that’s what Dave Burton is – within the pages of his own genzine would require more chutzpa and fewer brain cells than I currently possess. And much of what you don’t know or can’t remember about him is revealed along the way as this Dialog progresses.

Truth in advertising forces me to divulge that, besides Dave regularly publishing moss-covered reprints of my fan articles from the last four decades, we also correspond and on a more or less bimonthly basis we meet halfway between Indianapolis and Cincinnati and have lunch while resolving the problems of the fan universe.

You could say that we’re friends, except probably that neither of us would admit it because we like to believe that we’re more choosy. However, if we did admit it, possibly it would go far toward explaining why I’m willing to resurrect this Dialog with Two Fans column and do at least one more installment.

So let’s go “chat” with Dave Burton.

Locke

Back when you were a pup you were in fandom for a few years.

When, where, and why?

Burton

Let’s see, the first evidence I have of any fanac that I did is a little two-page Tolkien fanzine called *Lumenn #1*, dated June 16, 1969. I was 16 and a junior in high school. Tolkien fandom was my entrée to SF fandom. I don’t recall where I first heard about fanzines (probably a prozine) but I subscribed to Bee Bowman’s Tolkien zine *Hoom*. She reviewed SF fanzines, so I started sending off my sticky quarters to those that sounded interesting. One of them was *Yandro*; Buck and Juanita got me in contact with Jim and Lee Lavell, who were really my fan mentors. That summer I also connected with Dave Gorman, who was coming to Indianapolis to go to computer school. And somehow Dave Lewton and I got together as well. It wasn’t long before “the Three Davids” decided that forming a club was the thing to do. I’m not certain Jim and Lee’s hearts were really in it (they’d been through two previous incarnations of a local club) but good souls that they were they helped us anyway.

The plethora of Davids were all interested in publishing fanzines – Gorman was more serious (maybe because he was older at 18) and wanted to publish a sercon fanzine about the New Wave. I became much more interested in the faanish side of fandom, and Lewton was somewhere in between. After watching us flail away for a couple of months as we tried to publish fanzines using a local photo-offset printer and me using an antique Sears mimeo I’d picked up somewhere, the Lavells went out that winter and spent a lot of money buying a brand new mimeo, and Lee taught us all how to use it. Eventually she realized that she’d just spent a couple of thousands bucks on a “toy” for three teenage kids, so she started publishing her own excellent genzine, *Embelyon*.

I started publishing my fanzine, *Microcosm*, in February 1970, and the 14th and final issue appeared in September of that year. It was a crazy fanzine – I could never decide whether I wanted to be publishing a personalzine, which were very popular at the time, or a genzine, or what. I changed my idea virtually every



*The Editor as a young fan
(Sept. 1970)*

issue. Must've driven the readers crazy. I also changed the publication schedule all the time – issues were variously done weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, even some sort of bizarre “tri-weekly” schedule! It went from being a real crudzine to being a fairly decent fanzine.

Why did I find fandom so attractive? You know, Dave, like most teenagers, I was looking for a place to fit in; for approval, mostly. What I found in fandom was a group of people who were generally willing to accept other fans based on what they did, not how old they were. I was 16, it was the turbulent 60s, and like most kids, I didn't get along particularly well with my parents. Fans were willing to treat me as an adult (as long as I acted like one) and would even, to some extent, overlook a certain amount of immaturity. It was a nice refuge for someone who didn't feel they were getting much validation at home. Even though I did plenty of goofy things, I never felt that the Lavells (in particular) treated me like a kid. Heck, Jim was pretty much a big kid himself, and Lee had spent so many years as a teacher that she just naturally had an awful lot of patience. Fandom was also a great place to channel my creative urges; I did a lot of writing and drawing – none of it very good, but all of it great fun.

Locke

Why did you leave?

Burton

I really don't know why I left fandom. It wasn't that I suddenly became unhappy with fandom, or anything. I suppose, after a year of really intense fanac (both in print and with the local fans in person) I was just burned out. I got involved with a group of counter-culture mundane friends, and just sort of gradually drifted away from my fan friends. Even after I stopped publishing *Microcosm* I would still go to the club meetings, but by the time I left for college in 1971 I'd pretty much lost contact with everyone.

Locke

So then you went about being a certified Mundane and three decades slid by. Something then moved you to reanimate your fannish persona. When, where, and why?

Burton

I'd made a half-hearted attempt to reconnect with fans when I first got on the Internet in 1995. I even found an e-mail address for Arnie Katz and contacted him; but I changed providers almost immediately so I never knew whether or not he'd even replied. A few years later – well, 2003 to be exact – I went “looking” for fandom again, and had much more luck this time. Found efanazines.com, and a listing of Robert Lichtman's zines and contacted him. Again, I was looking for a creative outlet. Most of my working career up to that time had been spent doing fairly creative things – 12 years as a commercial artist, and 10 years as a staff writer for Ziff-Davis. When I got laid off from Ziff, I took a fairly menial job as a delivery driver just to keep my head above water (and 5 years later I'm plugging away at it...), and it's pretty mind-numbing work. So I needed some outlet for what creative “juices” were still flowing, and fandom seemed like the answer.

Locke

Elaborate on “commercial artist.” Not in regard to who you

worked for or what assignments you did, but in terms of the kind of art that you're comfortable being at least moderately versed with.

Burton

Actually, "commercial artist" isn't entirely accurate, but when I talk about it that's the term I use because most people have at least a vague idea what it means. For most of those years I was really a "production artist" and a lot of the work I did wasn't terribly original. Essentially I would take rough designs done by someone else and generate the finished art so it could be printed. Or in the case of my last job, duplicating exactly an already-printed design so new plates could be made. I worked variously for an medium-sized ad agency, a typesetter, and a manufacturer of flexographic printing plates, so I worked on a lot of different types of projects, from national print ads to grocery bags.

I don't have enough formal art training or talent to be a true commercial artist. I skated through 4 years of art classes in high school, but never pursued fine art any further. Oddly enough, my early fanzines stood me in good stead. When I quit college the first time around I decided that I wanted to work for an advertising agency. Without much knowledge but a lot of determination, I literally knocked on the door of every agency and art studio in town until I found one that would hire me. For my "portfolio" I used some pieces from high school and the fanzines I'd published. The things you'll do when you're young... I've done my share of true design work - where I worked on it from conception to finished art - but for a lot of my career in that field it was the exception rather than the norm.

Mostly what I'm comfortable with is pure design - I think I have a modest ability to take disparate elements and put them into a hopefully pleasing design. There are those who think that if you have good written material, the aesthetics aren't important. I can only speak for myself, of course, but I know that no matter how great written material might be, if it's wrapped in an unattractive "package" I'm not likely to read it. Heck, I've quit reading otherwise good books because I couldn't stand the

typeface they were set in. That's one of my goals with *Pixel*: to present good writing in a visually pleasing format.

Locke

Dispassionately, but with idiotic care, compare your two fannish incarnations and synthesize what you liked best and least about each of them.

Burton

Well, the main difference, of course, is age. I was 16 then; I was 50 when I got involved with fandom again. Hopefully I'm a little more mature, although I wouldn't swear to it. I certainly don't have the "goshwow" attitude about fandom these days that I did then. On some level, fandom isn't as much "fun" now as it was then, only because it isn't completely new to me.

On my first go-round, I was much, much more involved with fans in-person than I am now. Back then I would be over at the Lavells three or four times a week (if not more often) and chances are there would be (besides Jim and Lee) a couple of other fans there as well. Now, other than seeing Lee a couple of times a month and you and I getting together every couple of months for lunch, I don't have that personal contact. In my salad days I was interested in all of fandom - fanzines, conventions, hell, even talking about science fiction. Today, publishing *Pixel* is pretty much as "involved" with fandom as I want to be.

Coming back after 30 years was something of a shock for me. I was surprised at how many people I knew - or knew of - back then were still active. I was sad to see that so many people from those days had passed away, and how many have died in the three years I've been back. One of the first things I noticed was that fandom had certainly "greyed." In the late 60s/early 70s there were lots of young people - teenagers



Microcosm #1

and those in their 20s. That isn't the case today, and I think fandom suffers from a real lack of vitality because of it. It's largely a bunch of old farts (me included) who've been there, done that.

Locke

That's all revelatory, but let's look again at the question. What did you like best on the first go-round? Was it the fanzining or the in-person contact? I note you stuck with the latter just a bit longer, but on your second fannish appearance it was apparently the creative outlet of fanzining that you were after. How do you view your interaction between the two areas, and while you're mucking about with that swampish question, how do you maintain balance to keep burnout from having its way with you again?

Burton

I suppose that as a budding curmudgeon, I'm a lot less social these days than I was as a teenager, so the in-person contact with other fans isn't as important to me now as it was then. I have about zero interest in attending any conventions other than Midwestcon occasionally. Since there are some fans I'd definitely like to meet and chew the fat with and conventions are about the only way I'm likely to do that I am, as they say, "conflicted" about it. Besides Midwestcon, the only convention I'd like to make is Corflu sometime. But I really dislike traveling, and I don't fly so unless they're awfully close to Indianapolis in the future, I'm unlikely to get there.

Fandom back then was new, it was fun, and I just couldn't get enough. I wanted to experience it all. Fandom literally became a Way Of Life for me for a year or so. Most of my mundane friendships waned – if I was doing anything or going anywhere, it was usually with other fans. These days, while I still find fandom fun, I wouldn't have the energy or probably even the inclination for that level of activity.

I felt some remnant of that first flush of excitement when I "found" fandom again, and of course I tended to over-do it a bit. I quickly decided to limit my fanac so I didn't burn out this time

around – I want to be involved for a while. I've dropped out of three APAs including e-APA which I founded, I belong to but don't participate very much in a couple of fan listservs, and I've shelved some other fannish projects. So *Pixel* is pretty much it.

Locke

By now every fanzine fan knows that you're a maestro when it comes to fan pubbing. Before he passed away, although it wasn't among his final words, Bill Bowers was quite taken with your pubbing endeavors. And looked forward to getting together with you to talk shop. Alas, that didn't happen.

With regard to *Pixel*, and *Catchpenny Gazette* before it, talk a bit on whether or not your design efforts have been at all inspired by past masters of fanzine production. Like, just for one frinstance, Bill Bowers and *Outworlds*.

Burton

Well, right off the bat I don't think of myself as a maestro or anything like that. As I said before, I think I have a modest talent for designing things, and I guess these days that means a zine. I'm not trying to be self-effacing or anything; I'm old enough now, and I've been "doing" design long enough to realize that, as the eminent philosopher Harry Callahan said, "a man's got to know his limitations."

I'm really sorry that Bill and I never got together. The only time I met him was at Midwestcon in 2004, and we talked very briefly. But I knew he wanted to talk with me further, and the feeling was mutual. As you know, you and Bill and I talked about getting together, but we never managed to do it before he died, and I regret that.

I can't say that I've been influenced by any zine in particular, past or present. I'm pretty visually-oriented, and virtually everything good I see (fan or mundane) influences me one way or another. I tend to like clean, straightforward design, and I think that certainly is evident from *Pixel*. I'm not a big experimenter when it comes to design; I think you can look at any of the fanzines I've done in the past three years and recognize it as one

I've worked on. Bill was certainly more experimental, even to the point of doing audio and video versions of his zines. I'm not likely to do that, but I think it's interesting when someone else does it.

There are some really good looking fanzines being published right now. carl juarez does an excellent job with *Chunga*, and I like what I've seen of *Banana Wings* as well. Pat Virzi floored me with the first Corflu Quire progress report. One of those things I look at and say, "I wish I'd done that!"

Editorially, I don't take a zine as a model, either. I know this probably sounds pretentious as hell, but my real "model" is *The New Yorker* of the 1930s, and more specifically founder and long-time editor Harold Ross's "editorial philosophy" – he would have hated that term, I'm sure. Ross would be on my Top Ten list of people I would visit were time travel possible. His idea was, basically, get a group of good writers together and let them write, keeping the tone fairly light. (Ross called anything too serious "grim." *The New Yorker*, of course, evolved into a much more "grim" magazine than Ross first had in mind.)

Guy Lillian reviewed *Pixel* in a recent edition of *The Zine Dump* and said, "Where's the editor?" Meaning, I assume, that my personality wasn't plastered all over the zine. Although I didn't have a problem with it in the old days, I'm not particularly comfortable being the "front man" in a fanzine today. I'd rather the zine evolve and develop it's own personality based on the contents, rather than having it "imposed" editorially. I don't write something for every issue – or even most issues – because I don't write that well and I certainly don't write quickly. I think the writing in *Pixel* is at a fairly high level, and if I weren't publishing it, I probably wouldn't be a good enough writer to be in it.

Locke

I was in fandom one month when I published my first genzine. No editorial in it. As the years passed by, hitting each other in the buns on their way down the chute, I more and more strongly came to realize that my favorite part of other fanzines was often the editorial. A decade later, after a metric ton of experience as a fanwriter, for my second solo genzine title (*Awry*) I decided to

make the editorial as strong and enjoyable a part of the wordwhipping mix as I could. Considering that I published authors such as Dean Grennell, Bob Tucker, Milt Stevens, Cy Condra, David Hulan, Ed Cox, and Tina Hensel, I was kind of doomed from the start. But I did have some success, and certainly a lot of fun.

Burton

At the risk of turning this into some sort of mutual admiration society, you could certainly hold your own in the group of writers you listed.

Locke

Well, thanks for the kiss. Too bad this is my week to be heterosexual.

Burton

Hell, the only reason I agreed to do this dialog was to get you to contribute new material to a fanzine in what, more than a decade? Hopefully it'll pry the door open and get you to write more new articles in the future, if only these dialogs.

Locke

March 14, 2003 was my last new article (<http://xrl.us/ubdf>), which I sweated out for *Mimosa's* final issue. And – unless, of course, inspiration strikes – that date may well stand. While a Dialog requires some small measure of work on my part, it's not as labor-intensive as writing either an article or an editorial.

Speaking of the latter, I can't say that my personality was "plastered all over the zine" as a consequence of doing an editorial. My design sense accounted for more of an effect that way, and the editorial was just an editorial; one more piece of writing in a zine filled with writing. But it did add what I thought was a necessary part of me to the mix. As do responses in a lettercol.

Let me assure you that you do write well. On not writing quickly...it's been many years since I've been able to write quickly

... but that's part of the price you pay for doing a genzine. It's more than just an assemblage of other people's material. I had the same reaction as Guy when you stopped doing an editorial in every issue, though I'd have phrased it differently because from the design standpoint I can feel your presence on every page. But I feel the editorial is a key element, and I do recommend you return to presenting one, which is an unasked for piece of advice you can take down to the nearest JiffyLube and tell them it needs a serious greasing.

Burton

Let me clarify just a bit – I didn't mean the "plastered all over the zine" comment as pejorative at all. I like quite a few of the zines today that are either entirely or mostly editor-written and have a really clear sense of "presence" about them. Although I think it's always been true that fanzines display more personality than a magazine, fanzines today seem to inject even more of the editor's personality into them than they used to. It also seems to me that zines today are a real blend of the old-style genzine and personalzine. There don't seem to be very many of the whopper genzines that used to be published – zines are smaller, maybe more "intimate" in a sense, and that allows the editor's personality to come through more clearly.

I guess I'm going to stick with saying that when I have something I want to write about, I will. I just don't want to write something to be writing an editorial, though.

Locke

Although you indicate you're not experimental in design, that may depend on who's looking at *Pixel*. If you're looking at it from the standpoint of knowing your own bag of tricks, perhaps, but if others are looking at it I expect most of them will perceive more of an effort in this regard.

Burton

When you say, regarding the design, that "if others are looking at it I expect most of them will perceive more of an effort in this

regard" that may well hit the nail on the head. Designing and laying-out each issue is my main kick in doing a zine; for other faneds it may be secondary. I've spent way, way more time than any rational person would in trying to wrangle some marginally adequate (but free) software into doing what it wasn't really designed to do. After three years I'm just now getting to the point where I feel I can get a page laid out without having to spend a couple of hours (or days) figuring out how to get some aspect of it done. In a way I suppose I feel that what I "say" with the design much of the time takes the place of writing an editorial. If that makes any sense.

Locke

Still, "design" covers a lot of ground. How about the material makeup of the zine? Do you foresee, or are you thinking about, any shifts toward adding either different types of material or making more creative uses out of elements which the Internet theoretically offers to fanpubbing?

Burton

What about the future? Well, I guess that depends on what day you ask me. On one day I want to turn an issue of *Pixel* into a "mainstream" zine; that is, one that doesn't have any real connection with SF or even fanzine fandom. The next I'll want to make it even more fannish than it is. I suspect in the long run that as long as the current crew of writers is willing, the content will remain pretty much the same. It's a good mix – about half the material is fandom-related, and about half has nothing to do with fandom or science fiction at all. I keep thinking about doing a Web version of the zine, and I've spent (again) quite a few hours playing around with ideas. It all boils down to not wanting to give up control, though. I find merit in each issue standing on it's own, being a complete little "something" that's locked in place, unchangeable. A Web version would be too amorphous for me, I think. Plus, since my jones is designing the thing, I would have to make a lot of compromises doing an HTML version. I'm not a big fan of PDF in general, but it is at this point pretty universal, and

the closest you can come to a paper zine in a digital format.

Locke

I think you're right. If you're going to port a deadtree zine into the digital arena, PDF is as close as you can come to maintaining full stylistic control. Anything else would seem to be fanpubbing on the half-shell.

But let me ask, do you see anything Out There in munzines (mundane/mainstream fanzines) which offers something new and, perhaps, viable to fanzine fandom? Is there something, in either material or presentation, which the hard-charging fanpubber might consider playing with?

Burton

I don't know; I don't think so. Mainstream zines took their inspiration and concept from SF zines, and from what I've seen I don't think they've done much innovation in the overall model, actually. Certainly they've moved it to other genres, and in some cases maybe taken the format in different directions. I'm not sure how healthy the "zine scene" really is these days. From what I can tell, it isn't much healthier than *our* fanzine arena – if anything, mundane zines have shifted even more than fanzines to the paperless digital models. They seem to have by-passed the "digital/paper" idea I was talking about altogether and are either still deadtree or are published as Web sites or blogs – there doesn't seem to be the middle ground (of PDFs substituting for paper) that you find in fanzines today.

One of the things I think today's fanzines lack is diversity. There used to be lots of different types of fanzines published – sercon zines, faanish zines, zines that were a mix of the two, zines that were good, zines that were bad, zines that were mediocre. Personalzines, newszines, clubzines, genzines. Zines put out by teenagers, by adults, and by greybeards. Today, with the exception of Chris Garcia and one or two others, most zines are the work of middle-aged or older fans. There were more people contributing to zines back then, too – more writers and more artists, more people writing letters of comment, more people reviewing zines. Sure, fanzine fandom has gotten smaller over the years, but

I'm not sure that accounts for all of it. It isn't hard to look at fanzines today and see that zines today are awfully "in-bred." Particularly (but not entirely) true of the digital zines – we all seem to "share" a lot of the same contributors. With a smaller pool of possible writers and artists, faneds are "competing" for a finite resource – I don't see how the number of fanzines published could get much larger than it is right now, unless a zine was entirely editor-written. And I sure don't have any idea how to finagle more people into contributing. I've certainly asked my share of people and been politely turned down. They don't seem to be contributing much elsewhere, either, so I suppose it wasn't just that they didn't want to write for *Pixel*.

Locke

In-bred. We seem to have also gravitated toward more writings about fandom. Not that there's anything wrong with writings about fandom,

(continued on page 24)



Michael Croup

*The Editor as a not-so-young fan
(Sept. 2006)*

WHITHER FANDOM?

Ted White

The Jeff Redmond affair has left a variety of detritus swirling about in its wake.

I started to receive spam from PETA, a “charity” with which I am not in sympathy. The spam implied that I’d been signed up to their mailing list, and gave me a link to that list, to which I had indeed been “subscribed.” Before I unsubscribed myself, I checked out “my” profile on the site. It turned out to have no personal data about me at all – not even my gender had been checked – but it listed both my email address (correctly, of course) and this postal address:

Ted White
77 Blvd
San Diego, CA 92175

I have to wonder what that’s all about. I mean, I guess Jeff didn’t know where I live, not even what part of the country. So he had to make something up. But “77 Blvd”? That’s not even plausible. Did he intend to type “Sunset”?

Dan Steffan emailed me from far-off exotic Portland, Oregon, to tell me:

“I read with great interest the quote from Jeff Redmond about

the ‘article’ he ‘wrote’ about Frank Frazetta and his regret that he would never meet the artist in person ‘because of his death.’ Fortunately for him, Mr. Frazetta is alive and still painting – though he has had to teach himself to use his left hand since a series of strokes gave him permanent weakness and a tremor in his right hand.

“A quick visit to the artist’s website even has a posting from October that features one of the new paintings. Looks like living and breathing Frazetta to me.”

You know, I had wondered about that, but Redmond wrote about all the research he’d done on Frazetta, so I assumed he knew something I didn’t know. Now I really have to wonder about him. I read his piece in *The Drink Tank*. There’s nothing about Frazetta being dead in it, and it is a nice long piece. Doesn’t really read like a *fanzine* piece, though.

Then I got an email from Jan Stinson:

“Dave Burton kindly alerted me to your column in *Pixel 9*, which I’ve read and responded to for Dave’s next ish. I’m sending this msg to 1) let you know I’ve added your email to my address book so we can skip the Allowed Sender Request dance and 2) let you know that what Jeff Redmond told you I was doing vis a vis legal action is a complete fabrication. I’ve notified him that I caught him lying about me to you (what possible reason could you have for fabricating the message Jeff sent you? I asked myself, and had no answer), and his email has been deleted from my address book. I will not have anything further to do with him.

“I’ve also alerted Chris Garcia (as the current N3F president) and the N3F Yahoo! Groups list owner of Jeff’s actions in this regard.

“Dave has also told me he plans to print my apology to Art Widner in the next *Pixel*, for which I’ve already thanked him. I now thank you for asking him to print it in *Pixel 9*. That was very decent of you.

“We’ve not, to my knowledge, ever had reason to be at odds. I hope this incident won’t cause that to change.”

When Bill Burns posted Jan’s apology to Art Widner on Fmzfen, I immediately forwarded it to Dave and asked him if

there was time to add it to *Pixel* 9. Alas, less than a minute later I received notification that the issue had been posted to eFanzines, and shortly Dave told me the same thing, adding that he'd put it in this issue, where I trust you'll find it.

In any case, I'm happy to reciprocate Jan's closing thought.

* * *

"Steve," I said to Steve Stiles, for that was his name, "have you noticed that I have begun quoting dialogues between us?"

"Yes, Ted," said Steve Stiles. "I have noticed that. I noticed you did it in the last *Pixel*, and in the second Corflu Quire Progress Report. Why is that, Ted?"

"Well," I said, "dialogues like that are the very backbone of fannish writing, as you may have noticed over the years."

"Indeed," Steve nodded sagely, "I had noticed that. You and Terry Carr used to do a lot of that, back in the days of *Void*."

"For the past ten, twenty years I have been writing the occasional dialogue, which you may have read, between rich brown and myself."

"That did not surprise me, Ted," Steve Stiles said, using his mouth. "You and rich were pretty close and you saw each other frequently, playing cards and all that." Steve does not play cards.

"Exactly," I riposted. "But, as you know, rich is no longer with us."

"In body," Steve interjected. "I'm sure he's with us in spirit."

"Yes, yes," I said. "I'm sure he is. But I am not a psychic. I am not a medium. I believe people would look askance if I wrote dialogues between rich and me now."

"You could *try* it, and see what happens," rich said slyly.

I continued, as though uninterrupted: "And for that reason, I have adopted you, Steve Stiles, as my new dialogue partner."

"It makes sense," Steve said, nodding. "After all, you've known me nearly as long as you did rich. And you and I are now the only remaining Original Fanoclasts in this area."

"Precisely," I said. "It makes sense."

"But, Ted?" Steve said. "You know I really did smoke dope with

Wally Wood, my hero, a couple of times."

"Yeah, well, I can only approximate your side of the dialogue, Steve," I pointed out. "After all, it *is* only fiction."

"What about now, then?" Steve gave me a quizzical look. "Are you making up what I'm saying right now? Even as we stand here facing each other? Hah?"

"No," I told him, "but when I write this up, I will write it as I remember it, and of course I'll make some of it up. But it will be in character – *your* character – and your memory is no better than mine, so..."

"Ted," Steve said, "you need a segue into your next topic, and it's a fact that I really wish Elaine and I could get to Corflu this year, but it's just financially impossible, you know, what with the car bills, and my root canals, and..."

* * *

Corflu Calling!

As I write this Corflu 24 is only a few weeks away. As you read this, it's even closer – or maybe already past.

I can still vividly recall a party at Constellation, the 1983 Worldcon, where a young and enthusiastic Lucy Huntzinger seized my arm and twisted it behind my back. "Allyn and I are starting this *brand new convention for fanzine fans*," she told me, "and you *have* to come!" Allyn was Allyn Cadogan, the editor of the hot new genzine, *Genre Platt*. With a third fan, Shea, they were putting on this brand new convention at the same Oakland, California hotel when had hosted the 1968 Worldcon, which I fondly remembered (ah, the Summer of Love Plus One!).

"Ted," Lucy told me, "you are an exemplary fanzine fan. It's really important that you come! We need to get this convention off to a good start!"

So I did. I flew out to San Francisco in early 1984, stayed with my buddy Jerry Jacks beforehand, and then checked into the charmingly disintegrating old hotel for what was at that point a unique convention experience.

Lucy, Allyn and Shea had some interesting new ideas for their

new convention. Some caught on and some did not, but they created the template for successful Corflus to follow.

The first idea was one I initially poo-pooed: Picking the guest of honor's name from a hat. I recall the general hilarity when Terry Carr, who was drawing the name, pulled the first one out. "Mike Deckinger," he said. Terry, like me, remembered Mike as a long-gafted fan from New Jersey. Assuming it was a joke, Terry discarded that name, and pulled out another one. "Mike Deckinger," he read, his voice incredulous. "Oh, come *on*," he said, and drew a third name. And that too was Mike Deckinger's. But I don't think anyone had filled the hat solely with Mike's name. I think Terry was putting the slip with Mike's name on it back into the hat (or someone else was), and Terry just kept pulling out the same slip. What none of us knew at the time was that Mike had moved to San Francisco and was in fact a member of the convention. He showed up the next day.

But finally Terry pulled out another name: Pascal Thomas, and thus the French fan was Corflu's first GoH. He gave a charming presentation Sunday at the banquet, another incipient Corflu tradition.

The idea was a simple one: In the context of a fanzine fans' convention we are all peers, all equally deserving of the honor. So one among us is picked by lottery. This happens the Friday evening of the convention. The chosen GoH has until late Sunday morning to come up with something to say or do at the midday banquet.

This bothers some people. They don't want to be selected. They have a horror of addressing the assembled members of the convention, all of whom are at that banquet (it's included in the membership fee). Several years ago one of them, Frank Lunney, offered a bribe to that year's Corflu chair if his name would be omitted from the hat. The idea caught on, as Corflu committees embraced the idea as willingly as several members did. The bribe is typically a few bucks -- maybe five. (I always suggest it be more -- maybe \$20.)

I've been to every Corflu thus far. (For years Art Widner and I were in a running competition of sorts as the only two people

who had attended every Corflu. But in 2002 Art missed the Annapolis Corflu, leaving me the Last Fan Standing.) And for years I watched other people's names drawn from that hat, confident that I would continue to beat the odds. But after twenty years of this, I got my comeuppance. In 2004 my name was drawn from the hat, to my complete surprise and the sniggers of my friends, all of whom were glad it hadn't been *their* name that was drawn.

Not a problem for me. I don't have a problem addressing audiences. And I do it every year anyway, during another traditional part of the banquet.

That's because I supervise the selection of the Past President of the FWA (Fanwriters of America). This is where the members of Corflu pick the President of the FWA for the just-past year. (This year we will select the President for 2006.) This tradition actually began at the 1984 Worldcon in Los Angeles, but became a part of Corflu at the second Corflu. For the complete history of the FWA and its Past Presidents, see:

<http://www.corflu.org/history/fwa.html> .

The Gang of Three had some fresh ideas for programming, too. To begin with, they mounted several "tracks" of programming, but had concurrent program items going on *in the same room*, in different areas. The program items themselves were seminar-like, with people sitting in groups, the discussion led by one person, but relatively informally.

Terry Carr and I had been assigned to conduct a "class" in stenciling art, using shading plates, lettering guides, etc., with all the materials nicely displayed on a table in our program area.

But no one *came* to our program item. Everyone in the room was sitting clustered around Dave Hartwell, discussing a topic I've now long forgotten. Terry and I could see how things were. We joined Dave's group.

That was the last Corflu to have multiple program items scheduled concurrently, but the seminar approach continued, off and on.

I've been responsible for programming three Corflus. The first of those was Corflu 3, which I put on with rich brown and Dan &

Lynn Steffan (we were “The Desk Set”).

At the first Corflu rich brown attended with his then-live-in girlfriend, Linda Blanchard. I was in their room hanging out and getting sercon with rich when Linda said, “You know, I think Corflu is a great idea, and I think we should do one.” “We” in this instance was, I thought, Linda and rich -- who then lived in Northern Virginia not far from me -- so I volunteered to help them. I saw the idea of bidding for a Corflu as Linda’s. She recalls it differently. But she approached Lucy or Allyn about the idea of bidding for the second Corflu, and was told that they wanted to do one more Corflu -- to, I guess, permanently establish it -- but “we” could bid for the third.

So we did. But by then Linda and rich had broken up, leaving the con in rich’s and my hands. So we roped in the Steffans.

Also at the second Corflu Bill Bowers told me he wanted to do a Corflu in Cincinnati. I told him rich and I were lined up for number three, so why didn’t he bid for number four, which is exactly what he did. This established another tradition: that of not getting into “bidding wars” over Corflu, but waiting and taking turns.

In any event, I set up the program at Corflu 3 to be analogous to an issue of a fanzine. It had an actual poster-sized cover, a table of contents, a brief editorial, and (if memory serves) three “articles” presented by various fans. After each “article” would be a “lettercol” of response from audience members.

I thought it went over well (the following year Bill took it up a notch by having his program become an “issue” of *Outworlds*, videotaped by Larry Tucker, and eventually issued before Bill’s death on DVD), but I was disheartened by the fact that a sizeable minority of the convention members skipped the program to spend Saturday afternoon sightseeing in Washington, D.C.

This brought home to me the fact that Corflu attendees are by and large jaded con-goers who have learned to skip most convention programming at *any* convention they attend. It made me aware that Corflu programming has to overcome this urge and hold its members for the program. This is best done by catering to Corflu attendees’ needs, with fresh programming

ideas, or, as a last resort, by locking them all in the program room.

I also did the programming with Dan Steffan at Corflu NoVa (1994), which was chaired by Alexis Gilliland and Rich Lynch, and I will be doing it at the upcoming Corflu Quire. I’m doing it this time because I feel bad about all but railroading Pat Virzi into running Corflu Quire, which I did in Toronto. I felt guilty about pushing all that work onto Pat’s shoulders, and volunteered to do the programming in response to Pat’s anguished call for someone to do it.

Actually, I’ve been really impressed by the way Pat has gone about handling and setting up the Austin Corflu. She is enormously capable and level-headed and has been doing everything right. Her two Progress Reports for Corflu Quire are models for anyone who follows her. I hope I can pull my own weight with the programming.

When it started, Corflu was something of a novelty among conventions, a cozy niche for fanzine fans at a time when those of us who were into fanzines were only beginning to realize the extent to which we’d been marginalized by conrunning fandom.

Now, twenty-two years later, Corflu has assumed the mantle once worn by the Worldcon, as far as I’m concerned. It’s become the place to hold our annual “family reunion” for what is now being called Core Fandom. As the date for each year’s Corflu approaches you hear people saying, “Are you going to Corflu this year? I’m going!” There’s been a lot of buzz recently among the more active eFanzine publishers, from Chris Garcia to John Purcell, and a goodly contingent of Brits will be in Austin this year as well. I’ve known most of them for years, but even I am excited to be meeting for the first time the semi-legendary Graham Charnock, aka Cartledge, aka The Old Man (on YouTube). He will be accompanied by accomplished fanartist Harry Bell, one-time editor of *Maya*, Rob Jackson, and Harry’s girlfriend, Pat. Plus Pete Weston, Ian Sorenson, and Many More.

So here’s hoping I see *you* at Corflu – if not this year’s, then next year’s for sure. •

Alternate View

Janine Stinson replies to Ted's column in the last issue

The following correction from Jan, posted to the Fmzfen mailing list, reached Ted and I too late for inclusion in his previous column.

"I am sending a semi-public apology to Art Widner via this list, because it is very likely, after a day's search for the relevant quotes, that I may have misattributed words to him that were written by someone else. It's a semi-public apology because the entire world is not privy to this list.

"Art, if you read this (should someone forward it to you, as I don't know if you're a listmember), I'm sorry. I did something I try hard not to do – shoot my mouth off – and the only excuse I can give is acute personal life problems. I will try harder not to write that sort of message in future, and most especially not without the relevant quotes to support it."

Jan's specific comments about Ted's column (quotes from Ted's column in *italics*):

"Redmond wandered into Fmzfen apparently courtesy of the N3F and Jan Stinson."

I don't specifically recall telling Jeff he should check out the Fmzfen list, but I probably mentioned it in passing to him at some point. So, what Ted wrote is nominally true.

To my knowledge, and having checked my recent e-mails on this topic to Jeff, I never said, by direct or indirect wording, that I intended to consider a "legal action" against anyone concerning the exchanges about my post to the Fmzfen list, which I did give Jeff permission to post to that and the N3F list. I wish I had never given that permission.

I do not now and do not plan to hire an attorney to advise me on pursuing harassment and/or stalking charges on anyone. I never said that, never wrote it, never thought it. It is an out-and-out lie.

I never asked him to help me in pursuing any supposed legal

action against anyone. This is another lie.

I have not been the recipient of the spamming attack that Ted describes as coming from Jeff Redmond. Reading this column was the first I'd heard of it, as I've been unsubbed from the Fmzfen list for several days now.

I agree with Ted in his characterization of Jeff Redmond as a troll. Not only has he lied about what I said/wrote to him, but he's also badmouthed another Neffer on the Fmzfen list who had no opportunity to speak up in self-defense because the person was not a Fmzfen member. Jeff has a very clever way of taking facts and writing about them to make himself look good and the target of his writing look bad. I knew this, but I never (perhaps naively) expected him to actually concoct lies.

I have a list of all the messages I've sent since June 23rd in my Sent folder in my email program, so I *know* I never sent messages to Jeff that said what he claims they said.

Were it me, I'd toss Jeff Redmond off the N3F list, revoke his club membership, and ban him from ever joining the N3F again. But that's not my decision to make.

"I don't get it, Ted," Steve said, shaking his head. "What's your point? Is it about the N3F, Jan Stinson, or this Jeff Redmond guy?"

"All of the above, Steve," I said, giving Steve my Buddha look. "All of the above." I folded my hands across my lap and smiled. "It's the N3F, you see. It sucks new fans in, promising them All Of Fandom, and giving them a fearful, paranoid backwater instead. To the extent that they 'succeed' in the N3F, they are bound to it. If or when they stick their heads out and interact with other parts of fandom, there's some culture shock."

Since Ted hasn't been an N3F member for many years (if he ever was; memory fails here, so someone please correct me if needed), he hasn't seen how the club currently conducts itself, but has seen only glimpses of it through certain members, myself included. These glimpses don't, in my opinion, provide an accurate picture of the current N3F. Yes, we do have many members who find the N3F, join, and never get any more involved in fandom as a whole. But we do have several members who have gotten into other areas of fandom besides N3F, and some of these

people are now club officers. As the current N3F president, Chris Garcia has tried to inform the membership about other aspects of fandom besides the N3F. Various club bureaus offer information about other aspects of fandom. It's not like the N3F is saying to prospective fen, Come join us and we'll give you All of Fandom right here in this little box called N3F. We are, however, trying to give people new to fandom in general an idea of what comprises fandom, in all its variety, and let them choose for themselves. From my perspective, the reason N3F tries to retain members is so that those with experience can be available for future generations of those new to fandom, to provide that same information. I've changed my views of the N3F's supposed purpose over the years, because it's become obvious that there are too many gateways to fandom for the N3F to encompass in one organization, so it would better serve new fen as an information resource as well as a casual meeting-place for fen who want to hang out, so to speak.

It's very likely that Ted and I will never see the current N3F in the same way, and I can be content with that.

"Okay," Steve said. "That's Janine Stinson. What about this Redmond troll?"

"I gather he was her protégé of sorts. I think he maybe suckered her in with his gift for gab, but I dunno. I mean, maybe she saw him as some kind of Pro or something. As for what he was, well, does anyone set out to be a troll?"

Well, no, that's not me.

I never considered Jeff Redmond as my protégé. He does have a gift for gab, and can be very friendly in his e-mail writings. He has had some novels published (and we'll please not devolve into the definition of a publisher here, okay?), but if I'm inferring Ted's use of Pro correctly, no, I never saw him as a Pro, in the way that I see Cherry or Ellison or Asimov or Heinlein as Pros.

"Who knows what Jeff Redmond was, and what he became in response to the treatment he got? Did he join the list in order to disrupt it? Or was that just the way things played out? If some people hadn't challenged him right off the bat, would he have made all the same Wrong Moves?"

I think Ted has a valid point here. I was still a Fmzfen list member at the time Jeff first started posting (though I don't think I got all his posts; I get the digest version, and this function at Yahoo! Groups sometimes leaves out postings), and the initial reaction was akin to a group of sleepers suddenly awakened by someone very loud. In my opinion, the initial reactions were abrupt and not particularly well-considered. There could have been more diplomatic responses, but that didn't happen.

Ted has once again clarified a rather muddy situation, and I thank him for taking the time to do so. I enjoyed reading this column installment and look forward to reading more of Ted's work in future issues of *Pixel* and, perhaps, elsewhere.

Jeff Redmond, on the other hand, is very quickly going to be a former correspondent of mine. I cannot tolerate liars.

I've received information which indicates there may be mitigating circumstances concerning Jeff's actions. Since the proof thereof is not within my reach, I can't verify it. But I would like to give him the benefit of the doubt, in case it is true. He wouldn't be the first fan with personal problems, and he certainly won't be the last. •

SOMETHING

Harry Bell

Something has been digging in the garden. I first noticed it about a week ago. I was putting out some seed for the birds when I saw a pile of earth by the path. Then I spotted another pile a little further along.

Something had burrowed under the path. *Something* frantically digging, piling up the earth. What could it be, that *something*? I remembered the rat I'd seen a while ago. Had it returned to live under the path, near my daily piles of birdseed?

For the next few days, I watched out of the window for signs of the rat. Or *something else*. But nothing seemed to spoil the tranquility of the garden and the birds showed no sign of being alarmed by that *something* living under the path.

Perhaps it wasn't a rat. It occurred to me that the two excavated piles of earth were very near what I'd always supposed were the entrances to the home of the woodlice. Perhaps *something* had burrowed under the path in pursuit of the mice.

I went to look. The earth showed signs of having been dug out in a frenzy. A blood frenzy? Stones had been pulled out from under the path as if some horrid force were

desperately trying to reach the cowering mice. The two tunnels created by that *something* were large enough for... what? A rat certainly, but what else? Might *something nameless* and *vile* even now be tunneling not only under the path, *but under the house*?

At every opportunity I looked out of the window in the living room. When doing the dishes, my mind was not so much on cleaning the crockery, but on staring out of the window, searching for whatever might have dug those hellish holes.

At night, I caught myself peering into the darkness, the lights off in the house the better to accommodate my search. As I stared into the blackness, the light from the street lamp shone through the tatters of Winter foliage and as the chill breeze moved them I fancied I saw *something move* on the path. I stared until my eyes ached from the effort, but the movements seemed only insubstantial shadows.

Days have gone by without signs of any further digging. Today I pushed some of the earth back into the burrows, blocking the exits. I'll check again in a few days to see if they remain blocked. Maybe I will have sealed the fate of whatever dug its way under the path.

But what if that *something* has indeed tunneled on towards the house?

This morning I thought I heard scratching under the floor of the cellar. •

NOT SMOF

Christopher Garcia

I was at a fan-filled party a while back, drinkin' Hot Toddys and generally making conversation and dropping names as I went along. There was this young filly name of Marisol who I was chatting up. I set my odds at 20-to-1, but I went in to the chat anyhow. I'd seen her at various cons and such so I had a lot to chat her up over. After a while, she asked me a very strange question...

"What kind of fan are you?"

That's the kind of question that'll stop me dead in my tracks. I mean, how do I answer that? How could I completely define my fannish life in a simple, succinct way that would still allow me to flirt later in this same conversation? I could say I was a fanzine fan, but that's not nearly enough. I'm also a media fan, a collector, a con-going fan, a club fan, etc., etc. I had to think for a while and then it hit me.

"Well, I'm not a SMOF." Was my answer.

Sadly, that night my horse did not come in.



That experience got me thinking about my fandom and my place in it. I'm an OmniFan I guess. I like to live in a big fandom with all sorts of nooks and crannies where I can spend time. I'm not a guy who really has a 'Core Fandom.' I'm a guy who has a lot of friends in a lot of areas and loves to float between them. I've spent time at Anime cons, at CorFlu, at WorldCons, writing zines, in APAs, and even working on conventions and I've always had a good time.

And it's that last thing that scares me. You see, I've always prided myself on not being a SMOF. The Secret Masters of Fandom, that brave fraternity that runs cons, aren't bad folks. Hell, some of my favourite fans are SMOFs, but it's not for me. I'm not the kind of guy who can successfully put together a convention of my own, but recently I've been helping out a lot of folks with their cons. BayCon, the convention that made me Toastmaster in 2005, was the first. I wanted to have a place where the few of us fanzine fans could gather and chat and maybe read a few zines. I told this to the chair and thus I was made head of the Fanzine Lounge. That was OK; it was a discrete position, no responsibility outside of the con itself, really. It was a small part that, if it didn't go right, wouldn't affect the con too much.

But as soon as I volunteered for that, I started getting more and more requests. Soon, I was running the Fanzine Lounge for Westercon, doing the newsletter for another con, and helping with programming. I didn't mind, I've got enough time on my hands to help out, and the folks asking are usually good friends of mine, but I sorta realised that over the last couple of years, I've been heavily recruited.

It's not bad for folks to think of you when they're planning things, and inclusion is always a good thing, but it's troubling that at times it can feel like I'm being pulled into other areas specifically because I'm the young guy on the scene. And I'm OK with it...as long as I'm not a SMOF! I have terrible dreams where I wake up and am told that I'm chairing a WorldCon and I need to get a hotel contract signed before noon, when the dealers need to start setting up. I've woken up in a cold sweat at the thought of having the word Division Head next to my name. That's scary for a guy who has no real organizational ability beyond having enough friends who he could con into doing a bang-up job that I can take credit for!

So, I'm not a SMOF, and I'm hoping I never will be. When I told this to a few folks at a BASFA meeting, one of them came back with an excellent point.

"You know Chris, you could make history by being the first non-SMOF to ever chair a WorldCon." •

BEING FRANK

Peter Sullivan

FAAn Awards Special

The Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards are fast approaching. This year's ballot form is now available, and close of voting will be 31st January – which means no voting during Corflu this year. The results will, however, still be announced at Corflu as usual, this year on 11th February. I'm guessing that the main reason for the earlier deadline is to give awards administrator Murray Moore a chance to count and validate the ballots ahead of time.

Why do the FAAn Awards matter? In some ways, there's no reason why the FAAn Awards should have any credibility at all. Although the likes of Cheryl Morgan and Kevin Standlee (rightly) complain about the low proportion of potential Hugo voters who do actually bother to vote in the fan award categories, it can't be denied that the turnout for the FAAn Awards is an order of magnitude even lower – there were a massive 24 voters last year. All I can say is that, to me, the FAAn Awards seem to give 'better' results than the fan Hugos – even if it's only 'better' in terms of matching my own prejudices/preferences. However, if enough other people agree...

So, in no particular order (other than alphabetical), here's a list of possible contenders for this year's top slots in the Best Fanzine category. I have determined this short list by a scientific and robust process I refer to as 'guessing.'

Banana Wings (Claire Briarley & Mark Plummer) last year - 2nd
This fanzine suffers when it gets nominated for the Hugos due to the lack of any kind of online presence. Conversely, with the FAAn

Awards electorate, this is probably a plus. In that, although the average FAAn voter downloads the vast majority of their fanzines these days (whether from efanzines.com or elsewhere), there's always the sense that this is a kind of guilty pleasure, and that a real fanzine is one that the editors have printed and posted to you. The main content theme for *BW* is fandom itself – conventions, fan funds, other fanzines and so on. Over the past few issues, there's been a bit more about science fiction as well, although it always seems to be introduced in a somewhat apologetic fashion. I feel that a fanzine that discusses the concept of fannish underpants ought to be less apologetic about its own sercon woolly vest.

Chunga (Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, & Carl Juarez) last year - 1st
Last year's winner, on the back of two good issues in 2005. There's also been two issues in 2006. The January one was mainly focused around the 2005 Worldcon in Glasgow. Whilst the June issue was also fairly Brit-centric, with the final part of Steve Stiles' TAFF report, recounting his 1968 trip (to put this into context, the 1968 British Eastercon is the first that I theoretically could have attended – at the tender age of 5 months. Sadly, I didn't make it. But hey, if I'd known Steve was going to be there...), the 2005 TAFF candidate manifestos, and a Graham Charnock article. You can see where the cracks about 'the best British zine to be published in Seattle' come from, although of course this presupposes that being a Brit-style zine is in any way, shape or thing a bad thing.

The Drink Tank (Chris Garcia) last year - equal 11th
This zine has evolved considerably over the year. At the start, it was almost, for want of a better description, a group personal zine, covering some very personal stuff from Chris' troupe of friends. The middle part of the year was dominated by 'Chris for TAFF,' with the consequence that the abortive 2006 TAFF race is probably better documented than any of its more successful brethren. Towards the end of the year, Chris's other interests, especially film, came more to the fore again. But the most

remarkable feature of this fanzine is the frequency – a total of 50 issues, including a massive issue 100 in the middle. The FAAn Awards shouldn't just be about effort, but the combination of frequency and quality ought to score rather higher than it did last year.

eI (Earl Kemp) last year - 5th

Likely to score even better this year. Both because it's a well-regarded zine generally, with several Big Name Fans listing it as their favourite. But also because of the massive last issue, the revised edition of *The Compleat and Unexpurgated Who Killed Science Fiction?*, as reviewed last time. Given that the original version of this won the 1961 Hugo Award, there would be something appropriate about the revised version snaffling a 2006 FAAn Award. And that's without even considering the other five issues this year of this very popular fanzine.

In a Prior Lifetime (John Purcell) last year - equal 18th

This zine has sort of snuck up from nowhere over the past year. If you include John's in-between issues of *...and Furthermore*, this has probably been the third most frequent fanzine this year, behind *The Drink Tank* and *Vegas Fandom Weekly*. The biggest theme has been personal family life, which John writes about entertainingly, and with a high degree of candour (I don't think I've ever seen the sentence "Our cocktail masturbates" in print before). Beyond that, John has been writing about his own personal fannish history, and doing a great deal of skill activity for 'Chris for TAFF.' The latest issue also includes an interview with Kevin Standlee, which gives some interesting insights into all the baggage that comes with being involved organizationally in a modern Worldcon.

Peregrine Nations (Jan Stinson) last year - equal 11th

Picking up in frequency, after a 2005 performance that was badly affected by illness, this notional quarterly actually managed six issues this year. The strongest part of this fanzine continues to be the lettercolumn. As I've noted before, it seems to be one of the

few lettercols in fandom that is 'multi-channel' – in that letter writers seem to spend much of their time discussing other people's letters; whereas other fanzine lettercols tend to talk more about the articles or editorial. The whole effect is to produce something as much like a section of APA mailing comments than a traditional fanzine lettercol. Of course, just like APA mailing comments, this does lead to a tendency for topics to drag on – please can we stop discussing how hobbits would have looked after cows now? Also, kudos to Jan for neatly avoiding what had the potential to be a fairly nasty feud, putting her side of the case once and once only, with no names mentioned, and then refusing to discuss the matter again.

Science Fiction/San Francisco (Jean Martin, Chris Garcia et al) last year - not placed

Notionally a local events and news zine, this has a substantial fandom-wide readership, as evidenced by the wide range of names that appear in the lettercolumn. In fact, just about the only part of fandom not represented in the letter column is the Bay Area itself – I guess that locals tend to give their feedback face-to-face rather than via LoCs (or eLoCs). The layout has mostly stuck to Jack Avery's initial design, and is ideal for reading on screen. In addition, *SF/SF* makes excellent use of photographs, something that's much easier to do with electronic fanzines than with paper (unless, of course, you have unlimited access to colour laser printing).

Vegas Fandom Weekly (Arnie Katz) last year - 4th

VFW may not have been quite as frequent this year, but still had two absolute stand-out memorial issues, one for rich brown and the other one for Bob Tucker. However, obitfandom, especially for people you have been close to, is inevitably draining - although there have still been thirty issues in 2006, which is hardly a slacker's pace by any stretch of the imagination. There's still this dichotomy in *VFW*, in that although the Las Vegas fandom events are still the official focus of the zine, it's becoming more and more (in terms of articles and lettercol) a more general

fannish discussion zine, with a strong bias towards fanhistory. For someone like me, who finds fanhistory fascinating, this is absolutely fine, of course.

I realise that I've just listed 8 possibilities for an award with only three voting slots, but... •

The 2007 FAAn Awards Ballot (Murray Moore)
annual, PDF, 8½x11"
<http://efanzines.com/FAAn/FAAnAwards2007Ballot.pdf>

Banana Wings (Claire Briarley & Mark Plummer)
quarterly, paper, A4
e-mail: fishlifter@googlemail.com

Chunga (Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, and carl juarez)
bi-annually, paper or PDF, 8½x11"
<http://www.efanzines.com/Chunga/>

The Drink Tank (Chris Garcia)
weekly, 11 x 8.5", PDF
<http://www.efanzines.com/DrinkTank/>

eI (Earl Kemp)
quarterly, PDF or HTML, 8½x11"
<http://www.efanzines.com/EK/>

In A Prior Lifetime (John Purcell)
monthly, 11 x 8½", PDF
<http://www.efanzines.com/Prior/>

Peregrine Nations (Jan Stinson)
quarterly, PDF, 11x8½"
<http://www.efanzines.com/PN/>

Science Fiction/San Francisco (Jean Martin & Chris Garcia)
twice-monthly, 11x8½", PDF
<http://www.efanzines.com/SFSF/>

Vegas Fandom Weekly (Arnie Katz)
weekly-ish, 8½x11", PDF
<http://www.efanzines.com/VFW/>

Dialog With Two Fans *continued from page 13*

and whether or not there is I've certainly cast forth a few of them myself over the decades, but it does serve to remind me of a Vonnegut quote from 1977: "I think it can be tremendously refreshing if a creator of literature has something on his mind other than the history of literature so far. Literature should not disappear up its own asshole, so to speak."

Back in the more golden era, when we used typewriters and were punished for our typos by having to smell corflu, it often seemed that many faneds would generate their own unique pool of contributors (and I definitely include the fanartists in that). People you didn't see around everywhere else, or even anywhere else. As happy as I was to publish Ed Cox, David Hulan, Milt Stevens, and Bob Tucker, I also published names you just didn't find anywhere else at that time. Such as the excellent fanwriters Cy Condra, Dean Grennell, and Tina Hensel, and the latter two did columns for me. And they wrote about what they were motivated to write. *Yandro* had Liz Fishman. *Energumen* had Rosemary Ullyot. Etta setta rah.

And I find more than a good touch of that sort of thing in *Pixel*. It helps to make your zine stand out.

There, that wasn't as painful as you thought it might be, now was it? A rhetorical question.

Appreciate working with you on this. And now that we're through surprising those who both remember this Dialog series and thought it was an entrenched part of the past, we can leave them to spend two seconds pondering whether or not it's back for another cycle of existence. •

PIXELATED

Lettercolumn

Illustrations by Manfred Klein

Notes from Byzantium

Chris Garcia

Eric talks about Advent Calendars. Evelyn loves her Advent calendars (she gets two!) and I remember loving them as a kid. She has such a great time opening up the little drawers and pulling out the piece of chocolate before turning the drawer around and completing another little piece of her puzzle. I saw a Simpsons Advent Calendar and I must get it for next year.

I always wanted to write a comedy children's book called A Half-Mexican Christmas. Basically, it'd describe a regular Christmas where the grown-ups sit around telling jokes about Mexicans and drinking beers. I never said it would be a good book.

Lee Lavell

Ah yes. Christmas lights. Not long before this Christmas I was being driven home in the evening after a rather intensive eye exam which left me with massive spider-webby haloes around any shining lights. Between car lights, Christmas lights and traffic lights I felt as if I were in the middle of a giant Christmas tree. I suppose that if this had happened in the summer I would have compared it to a huge fireworks display. I never put up Christmas lights around my house. By the time school was out, with the kids being so Christmassy there, I had had it. I always said that if I did put up something, it would have been a big sign on the roof that

said "Bah Humbug." Now that I am retired I can enjoy all the festivities again.

John Purcell

Eric's ruminations about weighing *Groggy* to make sure each copy would make the one-ounce cut in postage rates reminded me of when I did the same sort of thing with *This House*. Eric was smart, though, by limiting his copy-run. My mailing list exploded to the point where I actually bought a bulk mailing permit for myself; from 1979 to 1982, *This House's* domestic circulation was around 250, and another 60-some copies went elsewhere around the globe (mostly Canada, England, and Australia). The permit allowed me to do this, but it required a lot of work on my part: sorting by zipcode order, alphabetic order for more than one piece going to the same zipcode area, and so on. I think it was worth the effort, though, because the locs and zines I'd get in return was a lot of fun. But there is no way that I'd do a paper-zine like that now. Can't afford it. Of course, I couldn't afford it then, but I was single and full of a lot more energy back then.

My dad put up Christmas lights once when I was a kid. We had two fir trees standing on each side of our front porch at good, old 3381 Sumter Avenue South, and I think it was something like 1968 when dad wrapped with colored lights. Looked neat, too; the red, green, blue, and yellow lights shining out in the darkness made our little home a bit more festive - until two mornings later when we noticed that about a dozen bulbs were missing. Some stupid kids stole them, smashing them on our sidewalk or out in the ice-covered street. Down came the lights, never to go back up again. This is probably why I have never been one for X-mas light decorating.

Chris Garcia

garcia at computerhistory dot org

Lee Lavell

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Eric Mayer

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John Purcell

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Lloyd Penney

penneys at allstream dot net

Lloyd Penney

I've noticed this year's decorations were mostly white, blue and a lavender light that many people seem to like. I prefer all bright colours, but some people are nearly sedate about their Christmas decorations. Hey, where I come from, blue light is a beer...

There have been several instances of political correctness gone awry, with publicly displayed Christmas trees being removed or placed elsewhere for fear of offending other religions or Christian groups who do not openly celebrate the holidays. These groups, to their credit, have no idea what the PCists are thinking of. Many have said that the wish for a Merry Christmas is heartfelt, and they return the wish, even if it is not of their faith. There is Hanukkah, Diwali and Kwanzaa, and these winter holidays bring joy to many. Only the PC are pushing Christmas to the background; most of us know that Canada and the US are predominantly Christian, and Christmas would be the dominant holiday celebrated.

Actually, if the US and Canada were predominantly Christian then Easter would be the biggest holiday, since theologically it's of greater significance. It's much harder to wrap commercialism around crucifixion and resurrection than around the gift-giving of a birthday, though.

Much Nothing About Ado

Eric Mayer

Lee Lavell's pinata story was great. I remember we had a pinata made for us once in grade school, for a class celebration. It was hung from the ceiling in the gym/auditorium and we all danced around it and then began beating with our mop handles. Now here's a tip. If you make a pinata out of papier mache, and you want to fill it with candy, do not wrap the candy in plastic wrap and then build the pinata around it and let it dry. That is not how they get the candy into the pinata. (It would seem.) Our pinata broke OK. And out dripped the gooey mass of candy slime. Some treat.

I don't know if I want to thank Lee Lavell for the memories. I mean, do I ever remember Green Stamps! Am I that old? I used to love helping my mom put them in the books and counting up the books. One time they were redeemed for a Super 8mm movie camera mostly for me to use. I don't recall when the movies were a dime though. Ours, just down the street, cost all of 14 cents. And, yes, milk was delivered to the door and the bottles would freeze and pop their caps when it was too cold and you went out to the porch too late. Of course, even then I wouldn't drink milk without Nestle's Quick or something of the sort mixed in it to kill the fresh-from-the-cow flavor.

Chris Garcia

What's amazing is that I've never first hand experienced any of the stuff Lee was talking about except for ENIAC, which I get to dust once a month.

John Purcell

I really enjoyed reading Lee Lavell's Christmas pinata tale. The image of that indestructible pinata swinging around mocking the determined faces of the kids, is one that I easily picture in my mind. Now *this* is a priceless Christmas memory.

Her mention of *Mad* magazine and its companion, *Panic*, brought back memories: loved *Mad*. For Christmas this year my wife gave me the *Mad Magazine Game*, which is basically anti-Monopoly: the object is to lose all of your money! Haven't played it yet, but it's a load of fun reading the board squares and everything. Plus, it's in English and French, making this even more ridiculous. Whoever would have thought playing a board game based on *Mad* magazine would be educational (as in learning a foreign language)?



Whither Fandom?

Eric Mayer

The fact that Jeff Redmond (fugghead or not) is associated with N3F says absolutely nothing about N3F. Fanzine fandom has managed to produce plenty of fuggheads over the years without any assistance from N3F. Should SF Fandom be judged by Claude Degler? Tossing Jan Stinson and Andy Porter into the mix wasn't very edifying either. The whole conglomeration seems to be straining to find some larger meaning that isn't really there. You know the ground's getting shaky when the writer starts speculating about people's motivations. We flat out cannot know why others do what they do, unless they choose to reveal it. Mostly we attribute to others motivations which serve our own view of the world. At least that's been my experience.

I haven't had any involvement with N3F. I can't say it would appeal to me since I dislike almost any form of organization. But I can see how it might serve a purpose to welcome neos.

Parts of SF Fandom were not very inviting even when I got involved in the early seventies. There have always been quite a few fans who are sure their way is the only way and are willing to accept newcomers...provided the newcomers agree 100% with the oldtimers who know everything. Those with rigid definitions of fandom aren't in the majority but they tend to be extremely vocal and pushy about their views.

Over the years I've been a serial hobbyist, going from mini-comics, to road racing, to orienteering, to computer text games and all those hobbies (all of which I suck at to varying degrees) are far more welcoming to newcomers (and were to me) than SF fandom. One reason is that what counts most is participating in the activity. If you draw a mini-comic, run a 5K, do an orienteering course, or program a game you are a full member of the club. Even if your drawing is crude, or you run slowly, or get lost in the woods, or your code is buggy. Newcomers aren't vetted by a rigid and loud minority for some fuzzily defined attitude (i.e. faanishness) or assigned a subjective rank of membership. (All fans are equal but some fans are more equal than others.)

So I can see how N3F could be a good thing. If you want to be in fandom, if you join and participate you're in. Unlike some parts of SF fandom, it is not judgmental or subjective in who it accepts.

I'm not saying the organization has actually done that well (I don't know enough about it to have an opinion) but only that its stated goals sound perfectly reasonable to me.

Chris Garcia

I love comics. Comic Book fandom has always been an interesting place and the over-lap is really big even today. Adrienne Foster did a Wonder Woman-themed zine and is still a regular fan. I did my time writing for various comic zines in the 1990s, and the site where I do my wrestling reviews is primarily a comic book site.

Ted brings up the Jeff Redmond affair. I'm so sorry I left a trail of breadcrumbs to a place where I've never been (the Fmzfen list) for him to follow. The biggest problem with Jeff is simple: he's a guy who loves attention and finds that causing strife is an easy way to go about it. Sadly, he's targeted folks who I really like for his recent attacks, which is the only way I heard about it because when Jeff forwarded me a message, he'd altered it so I decided to follow rule number one and not go to the list, but instead ask Bob about it direct, which really cleared things up. It also made me very annoyed that Jeff had been stirring up the pot for a while and had dropped my name more than once.

The email I sent to Jan that she responded to basically said this: The N3F made mistakes and we're still paying for them and one of those reasons is because we take things too damn personal. We're a flawed group, I know that and I've tried to make others understand that's the case. There are long discussions about slights that happened three, four and five decades ago on both the N3F and the Mainstream side of things. That's sad to me who actually enjoys both sides of the divide.

As far as the N3F goes: it's an island inside of fandom. Yeah, I know it's been a joke for decades (and it really needs a better punchline), but that doesn't mean that there's no point or that it's full of folks who know nothing of fandom (in fact, there are several people in it that are deeply embedded in mainstream

fandom) and that also doesn't mean that there are nothing but good eggs with shining souls. There are jerks and confused souls and Saints and Sinners and the unwashed masses in the N3F as there are everywhere. I came to the N3F through mainstream fandom, which isn't different. In fact, most folks came to the N3F through conventions. Fanzine fandom is seen by many as insular and brusque and high minded and difficult to crack. I've seen pieces of that, but I've also seen that folks in our wonderful little world are wonderfully nice and if not completely accepting, at least willing to let you play along. I'd love the N3F "come to Jesus", as it were, but I don't think it'll ever happen.

I'm free of the N3F's Presidency in ten days, and I'm glad, but I still hope that we can make the N3F a better place and actually bring our members closer to the fannish mainstream well, not all our members. There are always bad eggs and sometimes they drop your name at every opportunity.

Lee Lavell

Comic fandom and comics in general: One thing I have discovered recently is that mundanes are completely confused as to the difference between comics (or graphic novels) and the old SF pulps. They consider them the same, which is like saying that novels and films are the same, despite the fact that one is a discipline based on words and the latter on visual input. As for the N3F I was rather amazed that it was still around when I emerged from my gafiation. It had its small place when I entered fandom in the early fifties. I did join and it did sort of get me caught up on fandom in general as a complete neo, but I quickly dropped out after my initial membership. I never even considered getting involved in the politics or bureaucracy.

John Purcell

Once again Ted White has contributed a very interesting "Whither Fandom?" installment. The way he's constructed this one is very effective and totally fannish; conversing with Steve Stiles to introduce, segue, and conclude topics is neat. I really don't get this N3F enmity, though. Back in my *This House* days, I

used to trade with *Tightbeam* when Donald Fransen was its editor. Thanks to reading fan histories and talking with fans who were once in the N3F, I understand how it all began and what happened in the past, but I really don't have any bad vibes about it at all. In fact, I am rather noncommittal about the organization. My experience is that fandom has this built-in disorganization mode that resists any and all attempts to organize it. Others have said this before, so I'm not an original thinker here, but still no matter where you go in fandom - N3F, WSFA, WSFS, LASFS, Minnstf, name the group - one will always find people like Jeff Redmond. In My Humble Opinion, fandom in general is better off without people like him who would rather be antagonistic toward fans instead of joining in the fun. *sigh* I guess I just don't understand the mind of fen.

Lloyd Penney

Yup, I knew the name Jerry Bails, for both comics and fanzines. I might have seen something about him when I attended conventions in the Detroit area many moons ago, like ConFusion and Conclave. The N3F...I will not criticize if, for I have little experience with it. What you say about its mentality in the late 40s/early 50s, about welcoming people to their idea of fandom, is not new at all. Years ago, Yvonne started a local convention which has gone on to be the big Trek con in town. I won't repeat the cruddy politics that meant the convention was taken from her, but years later, when we reappeared on the scene to help out the chairman of the time, one of the thieves caused a scene and publicly welcomed us back to fandom, and shook our hands. He had no idea how stupid he looked, but it certainly didn't stop him. I guess we all have our ideas about what "fandom" consists of, a very subjective definition. I observed the Jeff Redmond debacle without participating...trolls come and go, and that's probably the best way to



label that event.

Found In Collection

Lee Lavell

Finding things one has forgotten about or of having no memory of keeping can be quite surprising. Those convention membership cards that ran with one of my recent columns are a case in point. I found them in a card case in an old old *old* favorite purse that had been stashed away in the bottom of a box in the attic. I also found my N3F membership card, my first voter's registration, membership cards to local SF clubs and to teachers' organizations and my admittance to the first astronomy course held at Butler University's then brand new observatory and planetarium. It was really weird to come across them after so many years!

Lloyd Penney

Chris Garcia! Do you still want that Comptometer we have? You say you've got several lying around the Museum, but we'll try our best in the New Year to give you more of a description of the beast, to see if it's something you could use. Or, I'll find out if there's a Canadian version of the computer museum...

I Feel A Draft

Eric Mayer

Dave Locke's story reminded me of my draft physical. This wasn't a dry run, mind you, but an exam for Vietnam, our useless bloodbath of that era. I got my draft notice the day before Christmas. I knew I would fail, thanks to bad eyesight and being ridiculously underweight. (I never had a date in high school but I didn't get sent off to Vietnam either, so I guess that was a fair trade.) Even though I knew I'd fail, it was scary. I recall the blood taking routine. I was so pale and emaciated, a doctor hovered over me when I'd sat on the bench asking whether I didn't want to lie down and meanwhile the 180 pound guy sitting next to me keeled right over. The funny part was, after they found I was

about fifty pounds underweight I was called into a private office where a doctor worriedly talked to me about the dangers of starving oneself. I hadn't. In fact I weighed what I've always weighed, even though my appetite hadn't been very good in the days leading up to the exam. It just seemed weird the military doctor being, apparently, genuinely concerned about my health when he'd been testing me in order to send me overseas to be shot or blown up in the jungles.

John Purcell

Once again, Dave Locke reminds us that any subject is fair game as fannish writing material, especially medical problems. Some of the funniest stuff ever written in fanzines is based on medical conditions the author has suffered through. I think this is because fannish writing requires a healthy sense of humor when considering life and its trials. Yes, we are indeed protected by our Shield of Umore. Thank great ghu for that, says I.

Being Frank

Chris Garcia

Wonderful stuff from Peter as always. I loved *Science Fiction Five Yearly* and I'm planning on doing something special for CorFlu using it. After reading *el 29*, I made a list of the most important pieces of fan-published stuff ever. *Who Killed Science Fiction?*, *The Enchanted Duplicator*, *Why is a Fan?*, *Ah, Sweet Idiocy*, *Warhoon 28*, and *A Sense of FAPA* (if that counts).

Lee Lavell

I found Peter's column much more interesting this time around since he delved a little more deeply into each fanzine. Keep up the good work!

John Purcell

Great zine reviews, Peter. I don't



think it's possible to summarize *el #29* in a mere two paragraphs, but this is a valiant attempt. Maybe I'll go into it more in depth in my next issue. Dunno. We'll see what happens in January.

Pixelated

Lee Lavell

Personally, my favorite movie monster was Gamera, that giant turtle that flew whirling on a jet-propelled shell. Whenever I wanted a good laugh, I'd look for a Gamera movie.

Lloyd Penney

Ah, Joseph Major mentions one of the most beautiful zines ever produced, *Astromancer Quarterly*. Hand-coloured papers and inks, great writing; I had my first column in that zine, even though it only lasted two issues. Joe Maraglino was the nominal editor, even though the source of all those colour papers and inks, plus all the myriad fonts and great software, and all the labour in creating, came from Tim Pruitt. It was the Niagara Falls in '98 bidzine, and I wish it had continued, too. Joe, as the editor, had a bad habit of taking my writings and rewriting them to suit himself.

Miscellaneous

Lee Lavell

The cover photo by David Lewton is fascinating. What is she, anyway? I keep expecting her to open her eyes and stare at me. Very unsettling. I love the way you carried the theme of magazine covers throughout the issue. And, of course, Brad Foster's illos are incomparable.

Lloyd Penney

A curious question to fandom's historians...when did conventions change from registration cards you held onto to show and gain admittance to various rooms, to a registration badge to pin to

your clothes? Did someone just decide that if your reg. card could be pinned to your shirt instead of being held in your hand all the time, the card would be in better shape until the end of festivities, and serve as a souvenir? •

Bob and Weave continued from page 3

and I've been a daily visitor ever since. This is, frankly, charity-on-the-cheap, although I would still participate in the site even were I more well-off financially and could do more charitable giving directly. The way The Hunger Site works is that you click on a button, some small ads are displayed, and the advertisers donate a certain amount of money; and donate even more if you click on their ads. In addition to The Hunger Site (providing food for hungry children), from there you can also go to The Breast Cancer (providing mammograms for poor women), The Child Health Site (providing health services for children), The Literacy Site (providing books for poor children), The Rainforest Site (buying and preserving rainforest land in South America), and The Animal Rescue Site (providing food for animals in shelters).

To be honest, a single click (all you're allowed per day) doesn't do much – a cup of food for a child, a few feet of rainforest purchased, a half a bowl of food for a shelter animal – but in aggregate (the sites get thousands and thousands of clicks per day) it adds up. On a recent day, 139,000 cups of food were donated, 5½ mammograms paid for, 1,400 children provided with some basic health care, 800 books given to poor kids, 940,000 feet of rainforest saved, and 7,000 bowls of food were provided for animals in shelters. And when you add those figures up over a year's time, it's impressive. And all at the cost of a couple of minutes of your time and a few clicks with the mouse. <http://www.thehungersite.com> •