



PIXELTWELVE



Edited and published monthly by David Burton
5227 Emma Drive, Lawrence IN 46236-2742
E-mail: catchpenny@mw.net
Distributed in a PDF version only.
Available for downloading at efanazines.com thanks to Bill Burns.
A Noah Count Press Publication.
Compilation copyright © 2007 by David Burton.
Copyright reverts to individual contributors on publication.
AMDG

Editorial deadline for *Pixel Thirteen*: April 28, 2007.

“The old timers ought to be off in a corner crabbing about the young whippersnappers who’ve taken over.”

Contents

Cover: photograph “Lost Mate”

by Jen Woll [thejwo.deviantart.com]

(slightly “Ted Turner-ed” by me)

- 3** Dave Locke’s *Dialog With Two Fans – A Chat With Eric Mayer*
- 11** *Whither Fandom?*
Column by Ted White
- 15** *Much Nothings About Ado*
Column by Lee Lavell
- 17** *Found In Collection*
Column by Christopher Garcia
- 19** *Pixelated*
Lettercolumn

Dave Locke

Dialog With Two Fans

A Chat With Eric Mayer

An introduction? Do we really need an introduction for someone who is a columnist in this digital fanzine? No, probably not. At the very least, background would be drawn out along the way, much like trying to walk a cat on a leash.

Locke:

Let's start this off with the hard stuff. Who the hell are you?

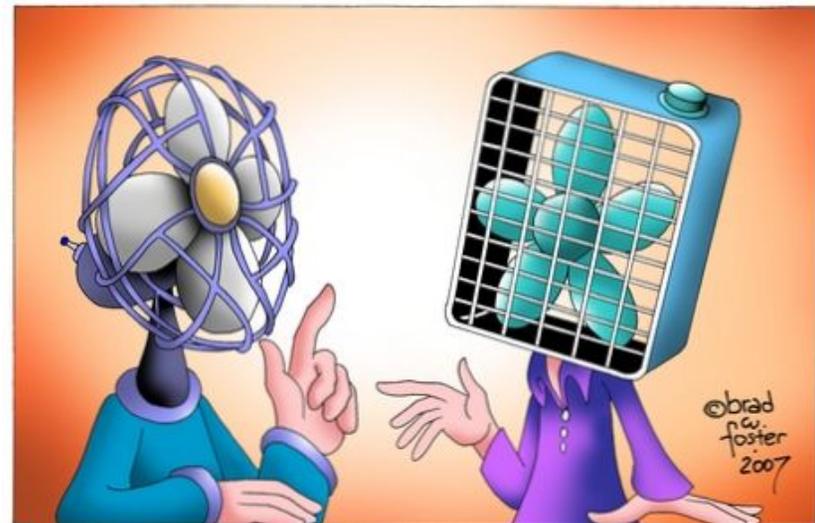
Mayer:

That is hard. How about why the hell should anyone reading *Pixel* be interested in me?

Of course, I know some people are interested in fanhistory and what would fanhistory be without us footnotes? During the early seventies to the mid-eighties I churned out hundreds of letters of comment, dozens of fanzine articles, quite a bit of artwork and published thirty-some issues of my personalzine *Groggy*. What people remember best seems to be the hecto work for *Groggy* and the humorous reminiscences about my childhood.

Mind you, very few people will actually remember me. I always hung around what some consider the fringes of the hobby. I was a regular participant in Donn Brazier's monthly *Title*, by far the most innovative and original fanzine I've ever encountered. In the beginning I wrote a lot for Mike Gorra's fanzines (*Banshee* and *Random*) and later for Brian Brown's *Sticky Quarters* and Eric

Bentcliffe's *Triode*. When I recall fanartists, Jackie Causgrove's hand stenciling comes to mind and when I remember writers who impressed me I think of Ed Cagle. I guess the fandom I enjoyed and participated in was different than the fandom you'll see evoked in most fan histories.



Brad Foster

Locke:

That sounds much like the fandom I used to foof around in. It's different now. But, hey, I still remember it. And I'm not all that much for reading fan histories, anyway. So then what happened?

Mayer:

I drifted out of fandom and through various equally obscure endeavors like publishing mini-comics and writing computer text adventures. Despite my best sporadic and desultory efforts, I never quite managed to evolve from fan to dirty pro. Finally I had the good sense to marry a published author and for the past fifteen years Mary and I have co-authored mystery fiction. We've moved from short stories (in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* and various anthologies) to a series of novels set in sixth century Byzantium.

For a living, I write articles for legal encyclopedias like *Corpus Juris Secundum* and *Pennsylvania Law and Practice*. Since 1994 I've been doing it as a freelancer which is a precarious existence but sure beats punching a corporate clock as I did for years.

Locke:

I know all the names you dropped up there, though I met only three of them, and all three left us many years ago. Old Bone Donn Brazier blew through Los Angeles one time, in the 1970s, and called to see if I was interested in going out for coffee. We met and had a most enjoyable chitty chat session; hell, I even remember that the coffee was good. Very personable fellow. Jackie, even before I met her, was one of my favorite fanartists, as well as being a whiz when it came to hand-stenciling artwork. And pubbing fanzines. Plus, of course, we lived together for over two decades. Ed Cagle and his wife, Sue (both gone now), were two of the best people I've ever met. Twice I had lengthy visits with them, the last time when I was with Jackie. And definitely Ed was one of my top favorite fanwriters, too.

It seems like I've known you since the days when I'd walk out back to take a crap in what looked like a pine coffin standing on end. Probably not quite that long, though. When did you tumble into fandom, and how much credit do you give it for honing your fine wordwhipping skills?

Mayer:

During the summers, when my parents ran a picnic grove in Pennsylvania, I had to walk out back to use one of those upended coffins. So we have something in common. I remember as a kid being leery about perching on the seat because I was a skinny little thing, the hole was large and it was a long way down. There was enough light to make out the faintly glistening lumpy surface of the ordure below. I used to hold tight with both hands to the edge of the seat. I'm not sure what that has to do with tumbling into fandom.

Locke:

I'd hate to draw a parallel, myself. In my case, the incident I most recall is from back in my youth at the tourist business. We had campsites and, therefore, outhouses. I was back in the campsite area, at night, talking to some customers when a young girl began screaming from inside one of the outhouses. Most of us started racing for it, though the father passed us all like we were crawling. Getting up there, we found she'd taken a flashlight with her and then dropped it in the hole. It landed with the lens facing straight upward, illuminating the inside of the outhouse roof. I don't know why she was screaming, unless it was too reflective of a light at the end of a tunnel. The next morning, it was still illuminating the outhouse ceiling. Can't imagine why there had been no rescue attempts.

But I interrupted. You were saying?

Mayer:

Did the porcupines used to gnaw holes in the sides of your outhouse looking for salt? Oh wait. Fandom's the topic.

Locke:

Fandom to outhouses to porcupines. Might be a progression there.

Mayer:

I discovered fandom around 1972 thanks to the "Clubhouse" column in *Amazing*. It was pure chance. I never saw the magazine on the newsstands but I came across a pile of coverless copies on the bottom shelf in the back of a used book store. (Exactly the kind of

illegal sales Ted White railed against in his editorials). Just my luck. Probably that dusty stack of skiffy mags was the only portal between Wilkes-Barre and fandom.

When I read that “Clubhouse” column I was intrigued by the descriptions of these odd publications called fanzines. I began sending off my sticky quarters. *Amra* from George Scithers was the first zine I received (I loved sword and sorcery) but it was Bill Bower’s *Outworlds* that hooked me. I’d never seen anything like that. The way it was produced (mimeography) the artwork, the style of writing – it was an artifact from another world. And I was certainly on the lookout for another world. Any other world. (Wilkes-Barre remember...)

As for developing my wordwhipping skills...well, if I hadn’t stumbled across fandom I doubt I would have continued to develop my skills at all. I wasn’t enthused about writing for local magazines and newspapers and I wasn’t skilled enough to sell to larger markets. The Internet, which gives everyone an excuse to write and some kind of audience, wasn’t around. If not for fandom I would have had no incentive to keep writing. Earning a couple of college degrees, marrying, starting work, and having kids would’ve given me every incentive not to write. If you don’t write, you can’t develop your skills.

However, while fandom kept me whipping the words, to some extent it encouraged me to whip them the wrong way. Writing faanish articles isn’t good practice for writing anything other than faanish articles. In fact, if you have in the back of your mind any ambition to write professionally, fanwriting is almost certainly a bad idea.

Locke:

Well, as you note, if you don’t write you can’t develop your skills. All writing, up to a certain point, is practice. Probably fanwriting is better than composing grocery lists and Christmas Cards, and maybe even better than writing professionally by manning the obit desk.

Mayer:

That’s true. Fanwriters have a lot more leeway in choosing what

and how to write than, say, columnists for local newspapers, which is what I was doing when fandom came along. The problem is, fandom will reward writing that in almost any other context would be considered poor, simply because it is faanish or because of the personalities involved. Fanwriters face the danger that rather than learning, they simply repeat the same mistakes that have garnered them praise before. Of course if your sole aim is to write for fanzines then there is no reason not to keep doing whatever works for your chosen audience.

Fanwriting has some peculiarities. When you write a fan article you know pretty much who you’re writing for. You share a faanish background with them. You’re acquainted with the same people and the same in- jokes and use the same jargon. Plus, fans take a familial interest in each other. Fanwriting is a bit like writing a letter to your mom. The best fanwriting exploits our familiarity with each other and our shared faanish culture.

On the other hand, when you write a book or a story or a magazine article, beyond maybe knowing you’re writing for readers who like a particular genre, you’re writing for total strangers. They don’t know you, or care about you, or necessarily share your background. It’s entirely up to the writer to engage the readers’ interests and find some common ground.

I was fortunate in that there were quite a few fans around (like yourself) who were willing to accept essentially mundane essays about my family, my childhood and so forth as being close enough for fanac. Those essays gave me the chance to hone some useful skills. If I had been confined to writing strictly faanish material – which I also did and enjoyed doing – I might’ve learned nothing but bad habits.

Locke:

There’s a lot to be said for that.

In 1987 Vonnegut noted *“It’s very helpful if you’re painting or telling a story to assume your readers know something.”* In fandom there definitely is much of a shared background, and on the dark side allusions and fanspeak can be overdone. Sort of like pouring charcoal fluid directly on the burgers. On the sunny side, a more reasonable sprinkling of fan esotericisms can be an allurements.

And, about this time last year, David Hulan wrote: *“One of the great pleasures of getting involved in fandom was finding a large number of others who enjoyed reading as much as I did, although I’ve also reflected that it’s probably a good thing that I didn’t get into fandom until I was 23, or I wouldn’t even have the social skills I do.”*

Mayer:

Sad to say, I got into fandom when I was 22.

Locke:

16, here...

Which one or three pieces of the writing you produced for fandom are you the most fond of, and how come?

Mayer:

My favorite is a faanfiction piece – “Babylon If.” Judged as a short story it’s painfully inept but for what it is, it works (well, for me) and it sums up what troubles me about fandom. Most importantly though, Walt Willis chose to include it in his final *Hyphen*. Walt’s writing and publishing and the manner in which he conducted himself made him my faanish hero. If he’d asked to reprint my grocery list I’d consider “cat chow, milk, 2 tins beans” my best work. Years later Garth Spencer reprinted “Babylon If” again for a convention program book. The fact that people seem to like it makes me like it. That’s what writing is all about.

I also am fond of “To the Pole With Mashed Potatos” a humorous essay I wrote about the adventures of feeding my kids when they were babies. When I decided to finally make an effort to write professionally, I started by marketing fanzine essays and that was my first sale to a national magazine – albeit a small national magazine – *Baby Talk*.

Both of those pieces, by the way, were published in Brian Brown’s much underrated *Sticky Quarters*.

Locke:

Speak a bit about your experiences with the wonderful hobby of pubbing your ish. Which parts bring fond memories, and which parts make you sometimes think you should have taken up hang-gliding?

Mayer:

There were times, in the middle of a print run, when the hecto gel came loose and flopped out of the tray, spraying purple gobbets all over the kitchen. Even then, I never considered taking up hang-gliding. I’m afraid of heights. Deep sea diving maybe. Squid ink can’t be as bad as hecto dye.

Actually, though it could be infuriating, I loved the challenge of getting a decent print using ditto masters and a pan of gelatin. I developed all sorts of esoteric techniques both for registering the colors accurately on the master and for coaxing the maximum number of copies out of the gel. Techniques of absolutely no value to anyone but me. Producing the artwork was probably what I enjoyed most about pubbing my ish, particularly since, at that point, I was about the only fanned who’d use my less than polished art. Most of the fanneds who’d begged me for art had either reached puberty and gafiated or moved beyond crudzines.

Making little magazines and helping others make them by sending contributions was the best part of fandom for me. My friends and I used to draw comic books and sell them on the playground at recess when I was in grade school. I ran through countless boxes of crayons making illustrated books. (Space travel and futuristic machines figured prominently so I was always working with stubs of silver, copper and gold.) Publishing a fanzine was simply a continuation of what I’d always been doing.

I’ll admit, preparing a ditto master isn’t any fun when you type with three fingers and stapling and addressing were tiresome, but even doing those tasks I had the satisfaction of feeling like I was moving forward with the process. The only part of publishing that I truly disliked was that I couldn’t afford either to print or mail more than, on average,



Eric Mayer – mid 1990s

sixty or seventy copies. That was a perfectly sufficient audience for me and I got remarkable amounts of feedback but I would've liked to have been able to reach a larger portion of the community, to be a little more involved, on my own terms, with fandom as a whole.

Locke:

Except for a stint in e-Apa, pubbing of any sort seems to now be a part of your past.

Mayer:

I'm not going to agree with that because if I did I'd probably doom myself to being inspired to start a new zine before this talk hits *Pixel*.

Locke:

Oh, okay. But the writing continues. You now seem to be relatively enchanted with what a blog offers to you, and I see that Dave Burton likes it and has twisted your arm and seized your blogging efforts as material for *Pixel*. Speak on the subject of you writing a blog. For you, what is the lure? And does it satisfy your crifanac jones in a way similar to how *Groggy* used to do it?

Mayer:

No. I've been waiting for my man on the corner of the world wide web for over a decade and he hasn't shown up yet. Then again, probably what I'm really jonsing for is to be twenty-five again.

I started blogging, basically, because, like Mike Hammer says at the end of *I the Jury*, "It was easy." With the JournalScape site I use, all you do is put your words in a box and click a button. For someone used to wrestling with hecto gelatin that's amazing. It says something about me, I guess, that I couldn't resist the chance to spew my prose into the world just because it takes so little effort.

Locke:

Indeed. I've certainly spent a lot of time online *writing*, but before I got online I spent an equal amount of time writing and a large additional amount of time *processing* the writing. As the years tumble along, with new technologies hitting each other in the ass on

their way down the chute, the processing time gets reduced to almost zero. Now it consists mainly of hitting the Send key. More and more I appreciate being able to just get down to the essence which is the writing.

Mayer:

Yeah. I guess I monkeyed around with repro techniques mostly to get my writing out in a palatable form. I haven't had the urge to try to learn how to use the graphics software that would substitute for my ditto machine and tray of hecto gel and make the "printing" easy as well.

When I published *Groggy* one of the parts I most enjoyed was filling up spare pages with mini-articles, maybe only a paragraph or two long. My finances and printing method limited the size of each issue to what I could jam onto 6 sheets and I felt that a selection of small pieces lent a little variety, plus, if I was going to go through the hell of printing a page every inch was damn well going to be packed with verbiage. No doubt I was thinking of E.B. White's "Talk of the Town" bits for *The New Yorker* in which he said so much, so well, so concisely. I also enjoyed this sort of writing because it was usually done at the last minute and more spontaneous. (I gather this kind of material used to be more prevalent. Redd Boggs kicked off an old issue of *Skyhook* I looked at with a series of such snippets, some decidedly unfaanish.)

So my blog is pretty much what I would be putting in *Groggy* today if I were still publishing. It satisfies my desire to do that kind of writing but it doesn't feel like fanac. Probably because the blog simply isn't located in fandom, doesn't attract comments from fans or count toward "membership" in Fandom. Which, actually, is kind of a shame.

To me blogs can be personalzines for the electronic age. LiveJournal has a faanish blogging community but the whole ethos seems to derive more from LiveJournal than from fandom.

I could cobble my blog entries together into a fanzine but Dave compiles them so much more attractively in *Pixel* than I could. To be honest, the stuff I write about is marginally acceptable as "fanac" only if presented in a faanish context.

Locke:

What else do you find...likeable, interesting, amusing...in fandom today?

Mayer:

I can't give much of an answer to this question because I read so few fanzines. I'm out on the fringe of the fringe and might be missing all the good stuff.

One thing I do love about today's fandom is electronic publishing. In fact, to keep things from getting out of control, I've rather arbitrarily limited myself to e-zines. Electronic fanac has made pubbing your ish more democratic than it used to be. Thanks to Bill Burns' generosity in providing a fanzine repository at eFanzines any fan with access to a computer can publish a fanzine for free. Readership is limited only by fandom's perception of a fanzine's merits, not by how much the editor can afford to spend on printing and postage. If not for e-pubbing I doubt you would've seen *Pixel* finishing second in the FAAns. Dave probably couldn't have afforded to reach sufficient readers frequently enough. The same could probably be said of Arnie Katz who came in third with *Las Vegas Fandom Weekly*.

As far as specifics, I love *Pixel*, a classic genzine, beautifully designed and perfectly balanced (for me) with enough faanish material to make it feel like a fanzine but enough mundane stuff so that the faanishness doesn't rot your teeth. I also enjoy John Purcell's old time perszine *In A Prior Lifetime* and Chris Garcia's various maniacally enthusiastic activities.

Locke:

You've already named Ed Cagle. It was my Daugherty Project to put together a collection of his work. I assume we both can name several very good fanwriters from those days. What active fanwriters do you currently enjoy reading?

Mayer:

Active as writers or as interviewers for *Pixel*?

Locke:

This isn't much when it comes to writing. This is, as Kurt

Vonnegut would phrase it, mostly farting around. But there are active fanwriters. Who do you enjoy reading these days?

Mayer:

On a regular basis I enjoy the writing of the two fans I've already mentioned, John Purcell and Chris Garcia. Very recently I've read some things by Chuck Connor that were full of energy and good sense. I have to admit that these days I tend to judge fanwriters almost entirely on whether what they say interests me. Whether a writer is "good" or not is largely a matter of individual taste.

At the risk (or should I say the certainty?) of sounding like an oldphart, while the level of fanwriting these days strikes me as being uniformly high, no fanwriters have impressed me in the same way that Walt Willis did or Charles Burbee or Bob Tucker. Generally speaking, current fanwriters do not shape and structure their material very much. They give an account of the convention they attended, or what happened at a club meeting, but they don't look to make a story out of it. The approach is less creative and more journalistic. I'm sure it's more accurate. In a lot of old fanwriting the reality lay mostly between the lines, but that was obvious and it made for fun reading.

I don't see as many humorous essays of the sort that used to be common, like your essays which Dave has been reprinting in *Pixel*. I've read "faanish" essays but they almost invariably seem forced and overwritten, imitations of what has already been done, repeatedly, a long time ago. I don't find anything inherently funny or inspiring about faanish buzzwords.

Then again, I may be looking in the wrong places. Perhaps Dave's readers will show me what I've been missing.

Of course, I should talk. What do I write today but tiny blog snippets? So I'm as guilty as anyone.

Locke:

You're someone I've never met, which isn't too surprising since these days my congoing is limited to the local Midwestcon (I've attended 57 cons, but only 4 in my first ten years in fandom) and I don't believe you've ever been to a convention. Is that correct? Have

you met any fans at all?

Mayer:

Ah, now, although I maintain that I have never “attended” a convention (and had I hung around fandom I might have laid claim to Harry Warner’s record for consecutive years of convention avoidance at the beginning of a career) I will admit to having, however briefly, “been” to one. As a matter of fact I first saw my wife Mary at Chambanac, in, if I recall right with my terrible memory for dates, 1991. We met in the lobby and went right up to Lan Laskowski’s room. We had known each other through fanzines for years and had been corresponding. Actually I needed somewhere to leave my coat. I also walked into the dealers’ room and said hello to Buck Coulson. I was driven over to Chambanac by Dave Rowe and Carolyn Doyle, with whom I was staying. I had stopped at Brian and Denice Brown’s on my way out to the Midwest.

I’ve also met Mike Glicksohn and his wife Susan Manchester and quite a few of the Toronto crew and even saw Paul and Cas Skelton in Toronto. When I was going to school in New York I lived not far from Arnie and Joyce Katz who had kindly rescued me from the Chelsea Hotel and helped me find an apartment in Brooklyn. I went to some fan meetings attended by such luminaries as Andy Porter, Jerry Kauffman, Moshe Feder, Gary Farber, Bill Kunkel and Ross Chamberlain. Tim Marion was a regular visitor at my Brooklyn apartment and he even helped me move.

Heck, I’ve met almost as many fans as you could meet in the first 30 seconds of arriving at Corflu. And they can all vouch I’m not a hoax, even if they wish I were.

I doubt I will add many fans to my collection. I’ve never cared for traveling or driving and the older I get the less I like those activities.

Locke:

It’s about the same here. Plus I’d much rather visit fans at home – theirs or mine – than travel to a convention to sit on plastic chairs or the edges of beds or on the floor, or lean against railings or walls. Also, since the total farce of punched-up airline “security” began, I haven’t flown and don’t intend to if it isn’t absolutely necessary. There are too many people I *know* who have gotten caught up in the

infuriating fallout which we regularly read about with regard to airline travel, and if I were in the position of any of them it would likely be worse for me simply because of the way I’d react to it. I mean, you know, after hospitalizing two or three airline security people, saying “they deserved it” probably wouldn’t make the extra charges go away.

Mayer:

The current police state of airline security insures that I won’t fly. Me and authority just don’t see eye to eye. If I tried to fly to Las Vegas for Corflu I’d probably end up in a prison in Cairo. Not Illinois, either.

Locke:

Mike and Susan, and Paul and Cas, are very long-time friends. During which of the Skelton’s visits to this continent were you in Toronto?

Mayer:

It was 1990 or 1991. I don’t get along any better with dates than with authority.

Locke:

Some fans like this question, others don’t. If you could be asked any question in this *Dialog*, what would it be and how would you answer it?

Mayer:

How would you like the million? Cash or electronic transfer?

No, seriously. I might ask: What do you find most surprising about fandom today?

How old it’s become.

I’m not surprised everyone’s aged but I’m surprised the hobby has grown old. Fandom started out as a bunch of enthusiastic teenagers peering into the future with wide-eyed wonder. Now it’s a lot of geezers staring steadily into the past. Or so it sometimes seems.

This is not to say I’m against people who’ve been around long enough to witness fanhistory writing about it. I love history. I write

historicals. One of the things that first piqued my interest in fandom was that it possessed a history. Nor am I against reminiscing. A large portion of my own fan essays have been about my past. But there's not enough balance. The old timers ought to be off in a corner crabbing about the young whippersnappers who've taken over.

I suspect that there aren't as many young people entering fandom today and I doubt that's going to change. Sharing reminiscences might be fun but why should a young person, or for that matter anyone else who wasn't part of the events under discussion, be all that interested? If our hobby is mostly remembering what we did in the good old days then it's closed itself off permanently to anyone who wasn't there.

The tendency to measure every bit of fanac by how much it resembles some revered work from that same shared past isn't calculated to attract newcomers either.

If trends continue the day will come when the last fan on earth sits alone in a room and no one knocks.

One thing is certain, the fans who are writing about what they did in the fifties (or seventies!) aren't going to be around in fifty years to write about how they wrote about the fifties in 2007 and then what?

Maybe it's just me (yeah, usually it is...) but I think fandom could use some new blood. More fans like Chris Garcia, or better yet half his age. A dozen fans like John Coxon (or even a dozen more fanzines from John).

Just to sound like a miserable old coot myself, when I got involved in fanzine fandom, I was contributing on one hand to Mike Gorra, who started his zines while in high school, and on the other hand to Donn Brazier who was nearing retirement age when he was publishing *Title*. And that was great. When we're young we can learn from the experience of those who are older and older people can often benefit from a shot of youthful enthusiasm. One of the things I loved about fandom was its diversity.

Pubbing your ish, just for the joy of it and to communicate with others who share your interests – and without all the pretense that seems to afflict most amateur publishing – is an activity that I suspect plenty of people – yes, even young people – might still find attractive. But I'm not so sure that fanzine publishing is the face of

fandom that potential newcomers see, at least not to the extent it was when that "Clubhouse" review column hooked me.

Locke:

An enjoyable chat, Eric. Might even have a few things tossed into it which are worth pondering on, though probably the pondering should be done with idiotic care.

Take care, and keep writing that good stuff. •

True Life Tales

A horrible man from Indiana dies and is sent to Hell.

The devil puts him to work breaking up rocks with a sledge hammer. To make it worse, he cranks up the temperature and the humidity.

After a couple of days, the devil checks in on his victim to see if he is suffering adequately.

The devil is aghast as the Hoosier is happily swinging his hammer and whistling a happy tune.

The devil walks up to him and says, "I don't understand this. I've turned the heat way up, it's humid, you're crushing rocks; why are you so happy?"

The man, with a big smile, looks at the devil and replies, "This is great! It reminds me of August in Indiana. Hot, humid, a good place to work. This is fantastic!"

The devil walks away to ponder the man's remarks. Then he decides to drop the temperature, send down a driving rain, and torrential wind. Soon, Hell is a wet, muddy mess.

Walking in mud up to his knees with dust blowing into his eyes, the man is happily slogging through the mud pushing a wheelbarrow full of crushed rocks. Again, the devil asks how he can be happy in such conditions.

The man replies, "This is great! Just like April in Indiana. It reminds me of working out in the yard with spring planting!"

The devil is now completely baffled but more determined to make him suffer. He makes the temperature plummet. Suddenly Hell is blanketed in snow and ice. Confident that this will surely him unhappy, the devil checks in on him.

He is again aghast at what he sees. The man is dancing, singing, and twirling his sledgehammer as he cavorts in glee.

"How can you be so happy? Don't you know it's 40 below zero?" screams the devil.

Jumping up and down, the man throws a snowball at the devil and yells, "Hell's frozen over! This means the Colts won the Super Bowl!"

Ted White

Whither Fandom?

Let me make a little list

It was more than ten years ago that I first gained access to a computer. This occurred at my place of employment, a high-end T-shirt company (it made the *Far Side* shirts), where I was employed in the front office, so to speak. At a certain point we were all given email, ostensibly for internal communications, but it was open to any and all email. And I discovered and “subscribed” to two “lists.”

One of them was *Elephant Talk*, which was set up for the benefit of fans of King Crimson, my long-time favorite progressive rock group. It exists only as a moderated digest; no individual emails. It is basically a letterzine. I used to print each digest out. I have a two-foot high stack of them taking up space in my living room.

The other was Timebinders. I joined it at Gary Farber’s urging.

People like Gary, Bhub Stewart, and Lenny Bailes had been after me for years to acquire a computer of some sort and join the discussion groups of the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, like GENie. Toward that end, they sent me printouts of various discussions,

hoping to intrigue me.

But they did not intrigue me. What I saw mostly turned me off.

Later, rich brown showed me some printouts which might have been from rec.sf.fandom and I had a similar reaction. There’s an old and mostly forgotten catchphrase from the radio days of my youth which occasionally comes back to me: “Not funny, McGee!” When I read those printouts my reaction was “Not clever, McGee!”

So I wasn’t disposed to join Timebinders, but Gary bullied me into it. And, of course, he was right.

At that time the list was hosted on a Midwestern fan’s own computer, and the list had a variety of “subscribers,” some of whose names I knew and some of whose I did not. Since I was using an office computer, I printed all my email out, and I responded to posts on Timebinders exactly as I would to a fanzine: with the paper copy beside me, checkmarked, to comment on. The “reply” and “quote” functions of email were then exotic and arcane to me.

I brought home all those email printouts, but in a fit of late-’90s housecleaning I threw most of them out, full of contempt

for my own obsessive packrat tendencies. It's very liberating, you know, to cast out something you've been obsessively hoarding. It's like a weight off your back which you'd carried for so long you'd forgotten it was there – until it was lifted.

So I can't quote the lengthy exchange I had with a fellow who simply refused to believe that the word "sercon" had ever been a pejorative. I cited the fan who coined the word, Boyd Raeburn, to no avail. I'd run into an unbridgeable generation gap: a fan who refused to accept the *existence* of fanhistory. But it was odd to run into such a fellow on a list ostensibly devoted to fanhistory.

In early 1998 two things happened, not quite but almost simultaneously. The first was that I lost my job and direct computer access. The second was that Timebinders temporarily shut down when the computer hosting it shut down. Timebinders was non-functional for a month or two. I drove out to my daughter's house in Sterling once a week and piggybacked her

AOL account to download *Elephant Talk* and sign up for the new, revived Timebinders.

This wasn't a very satisfactory arrangement for me. I hated the AOL email interface. And once-a-week access kind of defeated the immediacy of the Internet. An old buddy gave me an unneeded computer, a 386 upgraded to a 486, running Windows 3.1. I was enchanted! I had my own computer! In a short period of time I had an Internet connection for it (a second phone line), and then my ISP (a small local company, for which I did some

work) gave me a Pentium 1 machine which ran Windows 95, and I felt like I was in The Big Time. (We will not digress here into hard drive and memory upgrades and other unspeakable horrors.)

The upshot was that I had a lot more time, during the summer and fall of 1998, and I was a significant factor (but far from the only one) in the increase of traffic on what had once been a sleepy little list. While the early Timebinders might see as many as a dozen posts in a single day, it might also see only one or two on some days. But by the summer of 1998, there might be as many as 50 posts a day – or more!

What had happened was inevitable. As more and more fans got computers, more and more fans joined Timebinders. Timebinders was the only "fannish" list there was, then, the only game in town. What had started out a sleepy list devoted to the minutia of fanhistory had become a forum for fandom.

Like fandom itself, the members of Timebinders were a diverse lot. Some were primarily SMOFs by inclination or aspiration. Others hadn't been to a con in years. There were clashes every so often. Some sparks flew. I was involved as often as not. It got intense at times, but it was fun. It was *fandom*.

I was reminded of what fandom had been like in the early '50s, when I'd discovered it: it gradually dawned on me that the most happening fanzines were published for FAPA, and that the biggest names in fandom were in FAPA. I applied to FAPA's waiting-list in the fall of 1954. FAPA's Secretary-Treasurer then was Redd Boggs, whose *Skyhook* was one of the best fanzines of all time (and still is). In early spring of 1955 he wrote me to tell me that I was in. Please send your dues and your required activity.

Within a year or two that was no longer possible. FAPA was restricted to 65 members. What had been a small waiting-list in 1954 was a much bigger one by 1956. By the 1960s a typical waiting-time on the FAPA waiting-list was *five years*. Why? Because everyone in fandom had found out that FAPA was The

Tim Kirk



Place To Be.

It was much the same with Timebinders in 1998. It had become The Place To Be, marking the transition of fandom from print to the Internet.

However, the new host of Timebinders objected. Not a member of Timebinders himself, he took upon himself the task of informing its members that their posts were too often off-topic, and their traffic annoyed him, or his server, or maybe both. "Pipe down in there!" he shouted at us, as if he was our parent or guardian and we were all rowdy teenagers having a sleepover in the rec room.

Fans being fans, he was met with a jeering opposition. But something else was also occurring.

Until then a list was dependent on its host and its host's server. But in late 1998 a new company called E-lists popped up. This company offered to host lists *for free*. You just had to put up with a minor amount of advertising at the bottom of each post. Suddenly *anyone* could run a list. All it required was enough savvy to figure out how the whole thing worked – not rocket science – and the desire to do it, to act.

Two fans seized the opportunity. In January, 1999, two new lists were launched. Victor Gonzalez started up the Trufen list, and Gregory Pickersgill started up Memory Hole. Timebinders didn't cease to exist, but it did cease to be the only game in town. Many of its members also joined Trufen and Memory Hole.

Things have evolved since then. E-lists was taken over by Yahoo Groups. Topica also began hosting lists – but with less features than Yahoo offered. (Yahoo offers each list a files and photos section where list-members can post and access pictures and written material. Yahoo also offers calendars which automatically remind list-members of events.) More lists appeared, some, like Third Level, offering more specialized niches (SF fans interested in transit systems on that list, run by Moshe

Feder). The SMOFs got their own list. Private and even secret lists were set up.

It was suddenly very much like '70s fandom and the proliferation of apas – large and small, public and private, and some both exclusive and secret. The parallel was inescapable.

I mentioned one list a few columns back. That was Fmzfen. Bill Burns runs that list now (with, I think, Dave Locke) but it had started life as Pickersgill's Memory Hole. Greg decided it wasn't going in the direction he wanted, he'd been disgusted by a dust-up with Richard Eney (whom he threw off the list, but Eney rejoined as "Dirk Larkin"), and he offered the list to whomever would take it, with the sole proviso that they change the name. A new name was discussed by list-members and the shift occurred.

People who are on more than one of these lists have noticed that activity is sporadic and to some degree cyclical. What will happen is that a topic will be broached which inspires heated and extensive discussion. Exactly which topics will do this is impossible to predict. Sometimes it is the emergence of a new person on the list. Jeff Redmond had the effect of energizing the Fmzfen list for several months, for example. But as I write this the list is quiescent again.

A list which is far more active, averaging hundreds of posts per day in the summer months, is IntheBar. Here again the origins trace back to Gregory Pickersgill, who, after he abandoned Memory Hole, started up Wegenheim (named after a German helmet he collects). The list was



William Rotsler

supposed to be devoted to collecting (fanzines and helmets, basically), and had a heavily British tilt. Unfortunately for Greg, the conversation became increasingly free-ranging, involving as it did a number of UK fans from the '70s, long gafiated and newly revived by access to a computer and the ease of dealing with a list. Both old friendships and old enmities arose, but the posts were lively.

Too lively for Greg. He threw everyone off the list, took it private, and allowed many to trickle back – with several conspicuous absences.

In the meantime, one of the gafiated fans Greg had revived was Harry Bell, one of the better fanartists of his era. Harry seized upon the essence of what a list was – a giant convention party, essentially – and moved the new exiles from Wegenheim IntheBar. This was an inspired idea and metaphor. The cry, “he’s in the bar!” has echoed through convention halls since the early '50s. Many British conventions center upon the bar. And the ebb and flow of conversations on a list is not only like those in a large party, but like those in a bar.

Bars can get noisy when everyone is having a good time, and IntheBar can be like that – which accounts for the occasionally high volume of posts. Lots of one-liners – but, for a change, rather *good* one-liners. I won’t quote any here, though – for two reasons. The first is that it’s a private list (new applicants must be approved by Harry), and I haven’t gone about getting the necessary permissions from a half dozen different people to quote their bits, and thus *can’t* quote them. But the reason I haven’t motivated myself to get those permissions is the sneaking feeling that, quoted out of context, they might strike many of you exactly the way those old GENie printouts struck me.

There was an example of that at Corflu this year. There was an unusually heavy IntheBar presence in Austin – both of Brits and Americans. Within the list a fund had been gotten up to bring

Harry Bell over, and Rob Jackson and Graham Charnock accompanied him (as did his charming girlfriend, Pat Mailer – who has a classic fannish name). Rob Jackson put together a program item which consisted of six segments of exchanges from IntheBar, printed out in script form so they could be read aloud by as many of their original authors as could be rounded up (something Rob is good at).

Some people enjoyed it, but others did not. My own complaint was that too many participants read their parts too quickly, often virtually incomprehensibly. Graham Charnock was the sole exception. He spoke his lines naturally, and projected well. Nonetheless, some in the audience were less than thrilled by what they heard. They got up and left. I think the exchanges, the badinage, when stripped of their context simply weren’t sufficiently amusing for some people.

So, whither fandom? Whither lists? Each list is a community of sorts, although there’s a lot of overlapping and blending. And the greater community which populates all the lists is largely, but not exclusively, drawn from what we now call “fanzine fandom,” or maybe “core fandom.”

But lists as such may not be much less irrelevant to fandom than apas, when you consider the bigger picture of blogs, Live Journal, MySpace, YouTube, and so on and so forth. For the younger generation IMing and texting on cell phones have replaced email, leaving us in the older generations behind with our reactionary old desktop computers.

These days Gary Farber, having pissed off too many people on Timebinders before it split into three, is no longer active on any of the lists. He has his own blog. He no longer mingles with the rest of us in online parties. He sits in his own room and awaits our visits. Maybe it’s just me, but I don’t consider that an improvement in his situation. No doubt he would disagree. •

Lee Lavell

Much Nothings About Ado

Teachers

I have written previously about what is wrong with teaching and also about what I call the teaching gene. Now I would like to express some of my thoughts about what is right about being a teacher.

I taught in the public school system for almost forty years before retiring. For the most part I loved it despite many of the drawbacks. Teaching can be one of the most rewarding professions one can enter. To see one's students grow and progress under one's tutelage is a wonderful thing. I taught in the primary grades and I think nowhere else is that growth more apparent than in the younger years. It is a time when the teacher can have the greatest influence, not only in academics but just in life itself.

I have had children come into my classroom hating school and all it represents and with careful guidance watched this attitude turn around. A couple of examples: I got a boy in first grade who had entered my school as a kindergartner and had immediately established a reputation by cussing out the principal of the school. When he was assigned to my room I immediately thought, "What did I do to deserve this?" However, with a great deal of patience (and a healthy dose of love) his attitude changed. I asked his sec-

ond grade teacher how he was doing and she told me he was just an ordinary little boy. A girl transferred in to my school with horrible records. She was a retaineé still reading in the pre-primer; her records indicated severe discipline problems. Obviously there was a lot of frustration involved. I worked with her on her reading skills and by January things finally clicked in for her and she jumped to her grade-level reading skills. Along with that, the discipline problems disappeared.

Much of what a teacher does has nothing to do with academics proper. A lot has to do with understanding each child and finding a motivation for them. This can be any number of things, for each child is different. I've had children where you had to listen to their complaints – just listen; they wanted to be heard – before they were ready to learn. Sometimes a sense of humor was the only thing that would motivate them. Some children respond to competition, others not. I've had classes that were gestalt learners and other classes where each child was an individual. Peer pressure can be important. I am reminded of a third grade class that I had which had had a "reputation" since kindergarten. That whole rotten grade! One teacher even transferred away from the school

rather than face them. In my room I found that the children loved to dance, so I established a last-fifteen-minutes-on-Friday dance routine providing *no one* in the class got into trouble that full week. It worked. I think they lost their dance only once that whole school year. When you're not fighting discipline then you can get down to the academics of teaching. I rather imagine the school administration would not have approved of this, but I was never caught.

Teachers are said to act *in locus parenti*. That is, we become their away-from-home parents and we feel that responsibility. We have to be there when a child sobs on our shoulder because Dad just walked out on the family. We are there to detect health problems that haven't been caught at home. We contact social workers when we see signs of abuse. We celebrate their birthdays, and achievements and commiserate with their woes. It is no accident that a student will often call their teacher "Mother" or "Grandma" (although the first time the latter happened I grew a few extra gray hairs). Teachers feel this responsibility very deeply.

Many people say that teachers have a "cushy" job: short hours, no overtime, all those vacations. Hah! Teachers spend many hours beyond the regular teaching day preparing for the school day. This usually includes working through one's break and at least part of their lunch hour. No overtime? Well, no paid overtime anyway, but plenty of the unpaid sort such as teachers meetings, PTA meetings, and assorted fundraisers that the school puts on. Yeah, that long summer vacation. It's without pay, you know. In any other line of work it would be called being laid off. And of course teachers spend a lot of their own money supplementing supplies that the school system won't pay for. Teachers just accept this as part of the job.

Being a teacher is not an easy profession, but it is one that is extremely rewarding. I wouldn't have changed my job for the world.

Triviata

Sometimes I get a little paranoid about TV and think the programmers are conspiring against me. How? You ask (or don't ask). Well, it's thisaway. I never watched *Ally McBeal* when it was in first run. However I would occasionally drop in on an episode on one of the cable channel's reruns of it. What I would see would be Christmas episode with the "Short People" theme. No matter when I watched, there it was: "Short People." I finally gave up trying to watch that show even though I am a David E. Kelly fan. So, things went along until one day I was channel surfing and dropped in on *Dharma and Greg*. It was the episode with them up in the attic with dolls. Again, no matter when I tune in *Dharma and Greg* (which isn't often) there they are up in the attic with dolls. I am sure that these shows must have had more than one episode, so see? I'm being conspired against.

* * *

Coincidences are just that, coincidences. I realize that, but some just plain seem weirder than most. Of course I have my own personal weird coincidences. One of them involves basketball and wisdom teeth. Thanks to the movie *Hoosiers* most people know about Indiana's obsession with high school basketball and the all-state tourney (which was spoiled when the state went to class basketball), When I was a senior in high school and my school (Tech) was in the sectionals, I cut my first wisdom tooth. Tech won the sectionals that year and went on to the regionals the next weekend, and I cut my second wisdom tooth. We won the regionals and went on to the semi-state and that weekend I cut my third wisdom tooth. Well, Tech lost in the semi-state and I got no more wisdom teeth until two years later when Tech did advance to the finals and then and only then did I cut my fourth wisdom tooth. I guess I should be grateful that there were only four weekends in the tourney. The prospect of a fifth wisdom tooth is not at all appealing! •

Christopher Garcia

Found In Collection

There's a fine line between historical importance and total triviality. That's the line you are supposed to examine most closely if you're an historian. I am an historian, which I still find kind of odd, but I've certainly learned one thing: there's nothing that's not worth remembering.

I hear you say "That's flat-out crap, Mr. Garcia!" and I respond, "Consider the matter of Napoleon's Button." Now, you've got a choice between a written description of the button, several photographs of the button, an exact replica of the button, or the button itself. The order there is important because going from last to first is the order of preference. A write-up isn't terribly useful if you're looking for something like the presence of snuff or some such, while the real button is the only real way to find that out. On the other hand, the expense of storing these things is in order from cheapest to most expensive. It costs a lot of money to keep real artifacts, while you have space on an average computer for millions of write-ups on objects. It's never an easy thing to make decisions on what should be saved and what's just junk that you can throw away.

I don't like to make those decisions. I think everything's useful to hold onto and even though there's little to be gained from some

holdings, you never know when something will provide more than you expect. The case in point is my copy of the at-con newsletter from Con Jose.

You see, I was having a debate with myself. I wasn't sure how much programming I'd done at Con Jose. I knew I'd done at least one game show, had done a panel with Richard Foss, Vernor Vinge and Kevin Roche, and a couple of other smaller ones, too. But for some reason, and I'm not sure why, I thought I'd done a bunch more. I also thought that I'd done some sort of game show. Now, we're not even five years out and I'm barely remembering things. I didn't have a blog then, I was writing for fanzines, and I wasn't recording my life 1/10th as much as I am now. I sorta forgot about looking up what I had done (as a part of making some programming recommendation for BayCon/Westercon this year) and went about my work.

Now, my BArea Fanzine Lounge collection isn't terribly large. There are a few hundred zines, mostly recent but a few from as far back as the 1940s, focusing on the stuff that will catch folks' eyes on a quick scan of the room. I try to rearrange the boxes every couple of months, just in case. As I was going through them, I found a pair of Con Jose's at-con newszine. I looked it over and I

found on the back of the first a bunch of tally marks with names above them. They said Allen, Dave, Audience and David. I went over them and tried to remember what they meant. I opened the second one and I found a notice about a game show called the Technobabble Quiz.

If you've ever sat up in the middle of the night and screamed the name of the drummer for Rush, which you'd been trying to remember for a week, it was one of those moments. I'd hosted the quiz at Con Jose and had used the newsletter as my scoring pad. It tallied more in the audience category than for any of the players. I re-added and then noticed that I'd made an interesting mistake. For two of my tallies for the score of David Levine, I'd put 5 lines followed by a cross instead of 4 followed by a cross. David had actually outscored the audience by a single point. Now, if I hadn't been so tired at the con, I probably wouldn't have made such a mistake.

So, I will officially re-announce that The Technobabble Quiz held at the 2002 WorldCon which had been previously announced as having been won by the audience was, in fact, won by David Levine. I would like to apologize to anyone this inconvenienced.

Without that single piece of paper, I'd never have known the foolish mistake I made. A write-up of the document might have copied the markings down, but how knows for sure, its always up to the transcriber. The photo of the thing would have shown the markings, but anyone other than me wouldn't have known that Dave Howell is always Dave and David Levine is always David. The replica would have the same matter, but since I kept the real thing, I knew exactly what it was and what it meant.

And that's why we keep these things around. •



The Heart-Rending Saga of Mildred and Earl

From the Internet, submitted by
Beth Hinton

Mildred, 93, was despondent over the recent death of her husband Earl, so she decided to just kill herself and join him in death.

Thinking it would be best to get it over with quickly, she took out Earl's old Army pistol and made the decision to shoot herself in the heart since it was so badly broken in the first place.

Not wanting to miss the vital organ and become a vegetable and a burden to someone, she called her doctor's office to learn her heart's exact location.

"Since you're a woman," the doctor said, "your heart is just below your left breast. Why do you ask?"

She hung up without answering.

Later that night, Mildred was admitted to the hospital with a gunshot wound to her knee.



Pixelated

Lettercolumn illustrations by Manfred Klein

Joseph T. Major

jtmajor at iglou dot com

You ask, “Why are we in such a hurry about everything?” I can’t speak for others, but I find that if I’m not in a hurry, I get even farther behind.

“Much Nothings About Ado”: In *Sleeper*, one of the satirical points was when the sleeper discovered that smoking and eating fatty meat were good for you...

What happens is that a study, usually with a small and occasionally not statistically significant group, has a result that shows a minuscule difference. This gets reported as a significant difference by a researcher in quest of bigger and better grants; which in turn is expanded into a Great Threat by an ill-educated and sensation-hungry press. Then another study takes place...

“[Health] care has become so expensive...” Tell me about it! I keep track of what I’m paying and what I should be charged and if I had to pay for my health care myself I would be spending half my pay on it. At least. But then there are so many external costs loaded on to the system.

“[They] don’t exist except to email each other.” Hell-o! Grandpa! Three words for you: **Massively Distributed**

Collaboration. Email is like totally dead. To quote such.

And the sad thing is that people who live this life are so thoroughly and totally connected that they have absolutely nothing to say to each other or anyone else. Fred Pohl discussed in his memoir *The Futurians* (and when’s Volume Two coming out, Mr. Senior Science Fiction Writer?) the ways of mundane apans; he visited some amateur press association people who were not Fans (apas began outside of Fandom) and observed that their apazines tended to be entirely about how they were produced – the problems of typesetting, how to get a press working properly, that sort of thing. And now kidz who are into massively distributed collaboration have all this equipment, all this instant communication – and all they use it for is to discuss how up-to-date they are because they can communicate instantly. The more things change... (See <http://xrl.us/u7vn> for a comic version of such.)

“No longer is space travel that ‘crazy Buck Rogers stuff.’” No it’s been there done that so what else is new?

“Notes from Byzantium”: After reading of this Theory of Everything, I immediately went and communicated it to the five matter-creators in our house. They said <purrr>.

The day before *Pixel* came out, we cleaned out the litter boxes.

We have five cats and ten litter boxes. Now Eric has explained why.

“Words I Remember”: But those terms – “you’rn” for “yours,” “dear” for “expensive,” “mind” used as a verb, and so on are perfectly natural to me. What’s wrong with yew, boy? Come heah and let me set you to rights now.

“Found In Collection”: Chris Garcia should watch the auction scene in *The Cocoanuts*. The shill (Chico) ends up outbidding every one else, and admits he can. That’s what Mr. Hammer (Groucho) gets for trusting him. Why a duck, anyway? •

Eric Mayer

maywrite2 at epix dot net

What’s most striking about this issue is the spectacular show put on by Brad Foster. Wow! The cat physics cartoon sums it up better than my words. The Doc Smith poster is an essay in itself. I finally have an image to go with “little buggers” and “Rescue Mission” could easily be a cover or a a big poster. Eye-catching design and a really playful and imaginative use of images. Thanks Brad!

Not that Jen Woll’s cover is anything to sniff at. The black and white cover forms a nice contrast to Brad’s color illos. Excellent design found in nature.

And who is Manfred Klein? The little illos you’ve been featuring from him are also very good and rather varied.

Manfred is a professional typographer who does a large number of “dingbat” (or picture) fonts that he distributes for free. They’re the source of his illustrations in Pixel.

Moving on to the writing, Lee Lavell is right when she concludes that unless we get over our propensity for war all our

advances will come to nothing. It probably is true, as she says, that our society is more tolerant than it used to be, although we hear more from the intolerant loudmouths. Perhaps it is just the last gasp of the hate mongers who are furious and desperate watching their comfortable world slip inexorably into history.

I grew up reading SF but never imagined the sort of future I live in, although it is definitely stfnal. Has to be if landing on the moon is history. The Internet amazes me. Search engines provide us all with an extra brain. Today we can answer almost any question that occurs to us instantly.

Reading about how depositions and the like are edited to make lawyers and judges sound better was interesting. I don’t know if Ted edits transcripts from hearings. I’ve been at tape recorded hearings where the judge edits reality as he goes along. Witness says something, lawyer objects, judge says “strike that” and when it’s transcribed all anybody sees is the version of the facts the law decrees. I don’t think the law is quite the ass Dickens said it was. The law’s pretty foxy at looking out for itself. Anyone who takes anything legal at face value is an ass.

Chris Garcia is as bad at auctions as me. When I was a kid my buddy and I bid against each other at the library auction for some hamsters we then shared. Well, it wouldn’t have been any fun winning an auction without a bidding contest and no one else wanted the lovable rodents, who fought until only one was left alive. At least Chris’ riddle book isn’t a bloody corpse.

Nice in-depth review of *Trap Door* by Peter Sullivan. I have purposely chosen to limit myself to fanac I can download in electronic form. It’s a way to keep my activity from getting out of control. Also, I prefer efanazines. I still recall my frustration at not being able to afford to



send Groggy out to fandom at large. •

Robert Lichtman

robertlichtman at yahoo dot com

Thanks to Peter Sullivan for his lengthy, detailed review of the new *Trap Door!* In it he writes: “It’s a well-known cliché that retired people, after the first few weeks/months, wonder how they ever had the time to go to work, and Robert’s editorial this time shows that he’s no exception to this. In his case, this is probably even more acute, in that previously he had been living away (as the lesser evil compared to a daily commute of over sixty miles in each direction). So the first priority was to move back home.” Perhaps I didn’t make it sufficiently clear in my editorial, but until my retirement Carol and I had *never* lived together despite the long-term nature of our relationship because of the commute (or job change) that would have been involved. We spent weekends and vacations together, but otherwise I maintained a full-time apartment in Glen Ellen. If I’d been living with Carol all along, it wouldn’t have taken the entire month of August (as I reported in my editorial) to move.

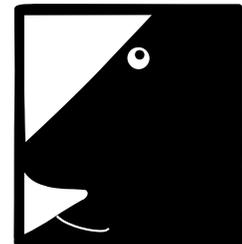
Of Harry Warner Jr.’s fanzine collection Peter writes, “It’s been sold intact to someone in Texas – whether an institution or an individual is not clear.” It’s now been learned that it was an individual to whom the collection has been sold. In a recent fanzine John Purcell reported that he’d spoke with Halbert Hall, curator of the SF and fanzine collection at Texas A&M, who said that it was bought for “research purposes” and would be kept intact. This mystery buyer’s identity may soon be known. Meanwhile, I’ve been wracking my brain trying to figure out who in Texas fandom would have the kind of money and storage space such a purchase would entail.

Noting that Dan Steffan wrote and provided artwork for his

“Long Beach Bounce” travelogue, Peter observes that “Getting artists to illustrate their own pieces always saves hassle for the editor.” That’s true, but it’s not always what they want. In past issues artist contributors have requested that another artist do the heading for their written pieces. I’m happy to go that extra mile to keep *all* my contributors happy.

Peter notes that this issue’s letter column has “a significant number of fen relegated to the ‘We Also Heard From’ section at the end.” Originally it was going to be longer, but items that simply couldn’t wait until the next issue (Ted’s piece on rich brown and Gregg Calkins’s on Tucker, to name them) kept showing up that demanded the space devoted in my original drafts to letters—and in addition, given the two-year interval between this issue and the previous one, it seemed right to restrict the number of comments on old material to the most pertinent and well-put ones.

Elsewhere in the issue, I found it mildly schizophrenic that Lee Lavell expresses contradictory views in the two separate sections of her column. For instance, she writes that “...with all the new medicines and technology, health care has become so expensive that it is almost unreachable and the cost of effective health insurance has escalated right along with it. So, while health care has improved dramatically, a lot of people can’t afford to take advantage of it.” And then later she states, “Science has brought us many advances in medicine. Not only are many horrible diseases like polio and smallpox now virtually eradicated thanks to vaccines, but surgeries are quicker, simpler, and much less invasive. Sure, we’ve got AIDS to worry about now, but advances have been made in its treatment so that it is no longer a death sentence. Hopefully a vaccine will be found soon.”



While my own position is that the present state of the health care system is truly screwed – Americans who are lucky enough to be insured pay far more per capita for less comprehensive coverage than anyone else on the planet, and there are far too many people who have no insurance (either their employer doesn't offer it or they can't afford the hefty premiums on their own) – you can't have it both ways. Until we acknowledge health care as a basic human right and are willing to put our collective money where our beliefs reside, there will continue to be this sort of disconnect.

Lee has another mixed message, too. First she says about burgeoning technology in the computer and communications field (comparing it to mail sent on paper): “Now, thanks to the computer and the Internet, we have email and instant messaging and Palm Pilots and Blackberries and what-have-you. All very nice but look also at what the computer has done to the readers of this era. Sometimes I think they don't exist except to email each other. With the computer and the Internet have come information and more information and sometimes information that we don't want people to know. So we have hackers, and identity thieves, and viruses, and worms. But do we take the time to correct all this? No, we just go ahead and make faster and more powerful computers so the thieves, and viruses, and worms will have more to deal with and we will have more to cope with.” On the next page, though, she writes, “Communication: Wow! Who would have thought this even just a few years ago? I am not just talking about communication between people bypassing snail mail completely. I refer to the communication of ideas, of information. Facts are literally at our fingertips now if one has a computer. We can find out things instantaneously and from all fields all over the world. Sometimes these facts can be a bit scary but they can no longer be hidden for the most part. And from information comes progress.” There's no denying that, but why creep about the speed of computers and the expansion of *availability* of information on

the one hand and celebrate it on the other.

Thanks to Eric Mayer for the link to Publishers Bindings Online, of which he writes, “The site is well worth browsing for a glimpse of an era when even commercially produced books were an art.” And I agree: this is a truly awesome Website I've already visited a couple of times admiring the full scoop and power of the many images available there and which I have bookmarked for future browsing. Such artistry does occasionally appear in books from mainstream publishers these days, but it's more common to find it in small press work and always a job to discover it.

In his column this issue Ted White writes that Pat Virzi “revived the idea of Corflu doing a ‘fanthology,’ but instead of a best-of from a previous year's fanwritings, she had Robert Lichtman assemble a collection of F. Towner Laney's best writings, *Ah, Sweet Laney*, and did an outstanding job of graphics design and publication.” Indeed she did, but it was never going to be a collection from one previous year (and if it had been, the by-the-year fanthology series left off with the volume covering 1994).

In private correspondence with Pat after the subject was broached on one of the lists and I'd sort of offered to do a “Best of '40s Fanzines” collection, I wrote a letter of clarification about the title: “I think that ‘Best of the '40s’ would be a misnomer for this fanthology, because there's no way I can possibly take the time to go through everything in my files in any meaningful way in the time available, especially given that I also want to get a new *Trap Door* out. So what it'll be is something like ‘Good Stuff from the '40s’ instead. I've got a couple things in mind already: Laney's long account of the Pacifcon (first post-WW2 Worldcon, held in L.A.) which I think has never been reprinted, and Jack Speer's ‘Investigation in Newcastle,’ which I think was last reprinted in 1962 (in *A Sense of FAPA*).”

But then I began digging further: “Yesterday I spent a couple

hours diving around in my fanzine collection, guided by my own list of what's there (looking for fanzines published in the '40s, of course). An interesting pattern emerged that gave me something to think about. As you know, the first item already copied for the '40s anthology is Francis Towner Laney's long report on the 1946 Worldcon, held in L.A. and the first post-WW2 Worldcon. At every turn in my delvings I kept coming up with more and more *good* stuff by Laney. Hmmmmm. Back in 1959 Terry Carr published a fanzine called *The Stormy Petrel*, containing articles *about* Laney, who had passed away the year before. In his introduction he wrote: 'When I first heard of his death I immediately thought of doing a collection of his works, similar to *The Incomplete Burbee*. However, I knew that others had thought along similar lines even before Laney's death, and that Laney had emphatically nixed such ideas on the grounds that much of his writings were legally actionable.' That was in 1959. Forty-six years later *everyone* Laney mentions (except for Ackerman and Daugherty) is dead. If I were to do a Laney collection instead of a 'selected '40s' fanthology, I would watch out for any negative mentions of those two gentlemen; but other than that the coast is clear."

And Pat went for it. In retrospect I didn't do as well as I might have in eliminating Towner's talk of Ackerman and Daugherty, but I think that's the only failing of a collection that's been extremely well-received and the creation of which I'm pleased to have been a part.

In the letter column Claire Brialey brings up that not so nice Mr. Redmond and his misbehavior that got him kicked off the Fmzfen mailing list on which he landed late last November with a forward of some typical Internet quotes from something called StrangeCosmos.com. He hadn't been announced as a new member by moderator Bill Burns, and I was the first to respond: "Huh! What? What is this doing here? Who are you?" Bill replied to me: "Jeff just signed up for the list, having written an article on

Roswell for Chris Garcias *The Drink Tank*. I should have mentioned to him that this list is (mainly) for fanzine discussion." But before Bill posted that, Marty responded to me noting that the list's Website notes that Redmond joined up but that he knew nothing more about him. I replied to Marty: "Bill says he didn't tell Jeff that this site is devoted to discussing fanzines and fandom, but nonetheless forwarding some stuff from ghod-knows-where is hardly the right way to introduce oneself. But perhaps this is the custom in Grand Rapids, Michigan." Redmond took my last sentence and used it in the subject line of his next post and appeared to get the joke. Next, Andy Porter posted some stuff about Redmond he'd found while Googling around, including that Jeff was a member of the N3F. Trying to deflect some anti-N3F and defensive-about-N3F stuff that followed, I posted again to Redmond: "We hope you'll find something of interest here. That you're in the N3F at least tangentially suggests you might have heard of and perhaps even seen fanzines (other than their official publications) and be able to join in and/or learn."

I'm not going to go into full four-part harmony here about what followed. Ted's column in *Pixel* No. 9 does a good job of it. Suffice it to say that before long things had deteriorated badly and as Ted wrote Redmond was ultimately dropped from Fmzfen after it was discovered that he'd taken something I'd written on Fmzfen about Chris Garcia, added some insulting additional words, and forwarded it to Chris (who's not on the Fmzfen list) as though completely from me. We learned about this when Chris forwarded it all to me wondering what was going on since it didn't *sound* like me. Altogether Redmond was subscribed to Fmzfen for a little over three weeks.

But his antics didn't stop there. He created several bogus e-mail addresses that were supposedly *mine* (in one case substituting the number one for the lower-case L in my real address, something hard to spot superficially) and began

spamming some people with weird forwards from strange places on the Web. And he also signed up some of us for right-wing and downright Nazi hate sites. Perhaps the most benign one of those was PETA, a group whose aims I partially sympathize with but I deplore their high-handed methods. I still get some of that, although it now all ends up in my spam folders. Claire concludes her comments on Redmond: "As Ted and Jan both commented, maybe Jeff Redmond would always have behaved thoroughly badly in fandom, and maybe he even started out on Fmzfen with such intentions; but I, too, will never be entirely sure how much of his behaviour was shaped by the way he was greeted there." That's true, but his behavior went well beyond the pale in my view as a victim of it. He took great pains to characterize those of us who questioned his opinions and activities as never having grown up, but what he did in the end revealed that it was he who has serious self-control problems. John Purcell also mentions Redmond in his letter: "It seems as though 'the Jeff Redmond affair' is coming to a resolution, one that is very much against Mr. Redmond, who did receive, I noticed, a vote for Best New Fan on the FAAn Award tally sheets." I took that to be a joke vote, in much the same way FAPA members will occasionally cast votes in that group's annual egoboo poll for members like Randy Everts and Norm Metcalf as "best humorist." John goes on: "As we all too painfully know, there are those who seek recognition in fandom by being assholes, or at least through playing devil's advocate from time to time. For folks like this, negative recognition is still recognition, a tradeoff that I, for one, don't subscribe to." In this regard Redmond reminded me of the late G. M. Carr, who pissed off plenty of people back in the '50s with some of her pronouncements, most famously her anti-Willis tirade that led to Walt dropping out of FAPA and declining a nascent fund that might have brought him to the "South Gate in '58" Worldcon. She was proud of her activities, acknowledging in

essence that negative egoboo is better than none. I'm with you, John, in not falling for that delusion.

We'll let Robert have the last word here, and bring to an end further discussion of Mr. Redmond in these pages...

In closing, I want to thank you for reviving the monthly genzine. You're doing a great job, although as others have said I'd like to see more of you in it. (But in your "defense" let me note that the focal point fanzine of Fifth Fandom, Art Rapp's *Spacewarp*, and the focal point fanzine of Sixth Fandom, Lee Hoffman's *Quandry*, both of them monthly, also had relatively little editorial presence in many issues. But they presented good material, as you do.) Whether you're writing for the fanzine or not, keep up the good work. •

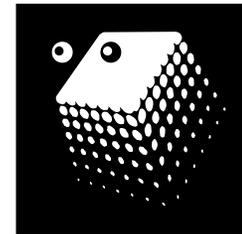
John Purcell

j_purcell54 at yahoo dot com

Congratulations on the second place finish for *Pixel* in this year's FAAn Awards balloting. You have a fine zine running here, and there are a lot of us out here who appreciate your efforts. Keep up the fine work, and who knows? Maybe you'll keep the same title for more than 15 issues.

After much ~~hypnotic~~/persuasion by a couple of people, I've decided to defy fate and retain Pixel as the title indefinitely. Although after the second place finish, I did briefly entertain the thought of changing it to Avis.

Interesting cover photo by Jen Woll. Not as surreal as last issue's cover, but still quite cool. You've got good taste in cover art/photos that sets the tone well for the



zine inside.

Lee Lavell's musings cum rant are sadly true. Here in College Station, everyone seems to be in such a rush and a sign of the times is the ubiquitousness of the cell phone. It is really bad here. Not only do people drive one-handed with their cell pressed hard against one ear with the other hand, or two-handed while wearing those headset phones, but I have seen joggers on cell phones, bikers (motorized and pedaled) on cell phones, skateboarders on cell phones, and on campus it is really bad: the moment class is over, out come the phones and students of all ages – the older generation can be just as bad in this regard – start yakking it up between classes. We have signs on all classroom doors that state “Turn all cell phones and electronic devices off before entering classroom” for a reason. I make it a point to take out my cell just before class starts and turn mine off as a demonstration of this. Pretty much all students comply, but I know there are some who don't bother; instead, they turn their ringers off leaving their phones on vibrate mode. Oh, well. At least in class you can't hear them vibrate – unless it happens next to a sensitive part of your anatomy, but I won't go there...

Here at the Purcell Petting Zoo we have that full page “Cat Physics” cartoon by Brad Foster copied out and posted on the wall. It is all very true, especially the part about the creation of matter. Experience has taught me that there is an inverse logarithmic proportion at work, food to waste material, here. Compounded by the multiple cats we own, this becomes a rather important issue that requires daily maintenance. Eric Mayer is also correct about the increase of a cat's weight while it sleeps. Again, there is a cumulative effect when multiple cats are involved; one is easily pinned down in bed, at the mercy of swishing tails and sandpaper tongues that will lick at any exposed human flesh. At four in the morning, this can be rather annoying, or at worst, a sign that the food dish is empty.

Just try to get up to refill the dish when you're weighted down like this. Not easy. We humans are so at the mercy of the cats that own us.

Now that I've met Ted White up close and in person, I can actually hear his voice speaking as I read “Whither Fandom?” every issue. I have total agreement with him about the recent Corflu: it was very well-organized, and a Good Time was had by all. Thank you, Pat Virzi, for doing such a splendid job running the show!

Not only that, but the manner in which the next four year's worth of Corflu locations was settled is a testament to the spirit of Core Fandom. It was more or less an on-going conversation in which like-minded fans simply hashed it out in friendly debate. Nobody's feelings were hurt, and it sure sounds like Vegas is going to have a big turnout next year, if I'm reading the signs correctly. I am going to be there, that's a fact. At least, I hope so.

Funny stuff that Ted shares with us about his job for that court reporting company. People say the darnedest things, don't they? When I worked for an auto insurance company nearly thirty years ago as an assistant underwriter, silly claim statements were always shared around the office. It really is amazing what people will say on the record. Thank you, Ted, for the chuckles.

I can envision what those BASFA meetings/auctions are like now that I've been around Chris Garcia. His bidding face is frightening; I saw it in action at Corflu's auction, even when I bid against him for a handful of British TAFF report zines. Chris gave me a dirty look when I upped the stakes. Fortunately, he acquiesced, and focused his attention on the next lot to come up for auction.

Finally, I think that “fannish sensibility” we're talking about in the loccol makes for some of the best fan writing. I do hope you are successful in continuing to pub such work in *Pixel* over the coming issues. It is good stufh, and most of us enjoy such writing.

Robert Lichtman's *Trap Door #24* is a prime example of this; most of the articles therein are about non-fannish things written with "fannish sensibility" and make for very entertaining reading. This is the kind of writing that I enjoy, too. I will try to do my part along these lines. •

Lee Lavell

leelavell at comcast dot net

I'll do my best writing my LoC this time. Reading is still a bit of a chore at this stage of my recovery from the eye surgery but I have managed to get through Pixel 11 at last and enjoyed it muchly.

"Notes from Byzantium": Carrie, my cat who doesn't like to cuddle, decided that she would sleep on my hip while I was trying to rest in my head-down post-op position. Her weight made the whole thing even more uncomfortable and getting her off while maintaining the position was nigh on to impossible.

Regions have their own pronunciations and colloquialisms. "Bugger" is quite familiar to me, as are "dear" and "mind". My late husband referred to toys as "play-pretties" which I thought was delightful. Rural Indiana, when I was growing up had their own pronunciations (although things may have changed more recently). For instance, the flower, *peony* was pronounced "pine-ee," the town of *Pimento* was called "Pie-mento" and *Versailles* is referred to as "Ver-sales" (to hell with the French). *Terre Haute* was then referred to as "Terry Hut."

Since I retired I have reverted to my summer, non-school schedule. I have always been nocturnal in nature so I sleep all day and wake up when it gets dark. Since most of the world is diurnal, it wreaks havoc on my sleeping habits when I have to make appointments during the day.

"Whither Fandom": I am reminded of a story I heard once about a teacher or some such discovering that the children who

were practicing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," were singing one line as "They are trampling out the village where the grapes of wrath are stored."

"Found in Collection": About the only bidding wars at auctions that I have been involved in have been at Worldcon art auctions, where it seems I would invariably pick the one piece of artwork in the whole collection that someone else also desperately wanted so I either had to give up on getting it or pay an unreasonably high price (compared to what other pieces were going for) for it. But I did manage to get Freas' "The Fighting Philosopher" (and Ghod took my picture with Freas afterward, too!).

"Being Frank": Enjoyed this installment much. Glad to see Sullivan going into greater detail. I would like to see some comments on layout, artwork (if any) and general presentation of the zine.

"Pixelated": I agree completely with Eric Mayer that fandom needs young fans. It should be the duty of us "geezers" to cultivate these young'uns and steer them into the various forms of fandom. Too often now, it seems to me as a back-from-the-dead fan, that they are simply swallowed up by their local area clubs, et al, and are not encouraged to express their own individuality to the world via fanzines, articles, LoCs etc.

One final note: I was saddened to hear of the death of Lee Hoffman. She entered fandom around a year or so before I did, shocking the fannish world by being – gasp – a girl! Because of this I made sure I was known as Lee Anne, not wanting to be thought of as either a rival or a copycat. Nevertheless, I was always thought of as one of the other Lees in fandom.

I could make more comments but my eye is getting very strained just doing this much (which has taken several days just to write). Macular holes can be a real drag! •