

PEREGRINE NATIONS



VOLUME THREE, NUMBER TWO



In This Issue:

Silent eLOCutions / Art by Alan White / 3

Collegiate Zen and the Pennsylvania Turnpike by E. B. Frohvet / Art by Trinlay Khadro / 9

Pub Crawl: Fanzine Reviews / Art by Jukka Halme / 14

Free Book Deal Update / Art by Sue Mason / 16

A Brief Look at a Crossover Mystery Series: Nancy Atherton's Aunt Dimity by Lyn McConchie / 17

Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up? / Art by Sue Mason / 18

Artists:

Alan White / cover

Sue Mason / TOC

William Rotsler / 13



peregrination, n., *L.*, A traveling, roaming, or wandering about; a journey. (The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, Avenel Books, New York: 1980).

This issue of *Peregrine Nations* is a © 2003 J9 Press Publication edited and published by J. G. Stinson, P.O. Box 248, East Lake, MI 49626-0248. Copies available for \$2 (NEW PRICE!!!) or the Usual. A quarterly pubbing sked is intended. **All material in this publication was contributed for one-time use only, and the copyrights belong to the contributors.**

Contributions are welcome in the form of LoCs, articles, reviews, art, etc. in two methods: e-mail to me at tropicsf@earthlink.net (please use Peregrine Nations in the subject) or via regular mail. **No attachments unless previously arranged.** Clearly scanned artwork is also welcome. Main articles should be around 800-1,200 words, reviews 200-500 words. Queries welcome.

Next editorial deadline: Sept. 20, 2003.



Silent eLOCutions

Lyn McConchie

23 May 2003

Re: Sheryl Birkhead's 'de-bleating sheep' episode with the State Board. No, you don't usually do that to sheep. In fact it's very frowned on here for dogs too. In New Zealand you'd have to convince the vet that it really was a final resort before they'd go ahead. And we definitely do not cut Doberman's ears either. All the ones you see here have lovely floppy tulip ears, and that includes the show dogs too. Makes them look a lot nicer.

And "Riding a Raid" was great. Sigh. In the midst of hearing/reading about so many marriages which didn't work, it's so good to know now and again someone gets it right. But then you also wonder why, when that's so, one half of the partnership has to go to soon? And is it truly better to have loved and lost than never loved at all? Guess I must be an optimist forever as I think it is, but increasingly I think people are shifting to the other POV and feeling that it isn't, at least, not in forms of marriage. I wonder if, in the future some 50-100 years hence, we may not simply have contracts of temporary cohabitation and shared children, based on ordinary business contracts of either 2- or 5-year rollover. By then a real lasting marriage will be regarded as a sweetly old-fashioned aberration. Yet — from what you wrote — it sounds to me as if your 'aberration' was the best thing ever and I only wish for your sake it had lasted twice as long. [*Thanks for the nice words. Considering my parents have remained married to each other for over 50 years, as were my mother's parents (my father's mother died before I was born, I think), I don't see 18 years as an aberration, just beyond the current average. It wasn't a perfect relationship, but we seemed to suit each other.*]

Must dash, weather is closing in and I need to get down to the shop and back before it starts pouring — as the forecast promises. Lambing has just begun too, and the sounds of lambs are heard from afar — actually not that afar, most of the ewes are in the hay paddock by the house but I have to check everyone twice a day minimum and that's due too.

Joseph Major

I am sorry to hear of your husband's death. It must be terribly hard. My deepest condolences.

Jukka Halme reports (brags?) that Finncon draws several **thousand** visitors. Wow. I wonder what the reports from their Eurocon will be like? We are waiting . . .

Poul also added that Saint Dwitch persuaded the Anthrophagi to wait until after Friday to eat him. (Nowadays, of course, they wouldn't have to.) [*Um, Poul who? Anderson?*]

When the Borja cardinals moved from their homeland of Spain to Italy, they changed to the Italian spelling, of Borgia. When the Duke of Gandia moved back, he took the local spelling back.

Incidentally, there are known descendants of Cesare. He had a legitimate daughter, who married the Baron de Bourbon-Busset, like his father-in-law descended from the clergy, in his case a French Archbishop who was also a Capetian, a relative of the King. There are still Bourbon-Bussets in France.

No, it was Saint Josaphat. Hail, oh jewel in the lotus flower . . .

Other churches do canonize saints. For example, the Russian Orthodox Church (the branch Outside Russia, originally, but I believe the domestic branch has agreed) canonized the Holy Saints and Martyrs Tsar Nicholas, Tsaritsa Alexandra, and their children.

For what it's worth I have fulfilled the wish of Lloyd Penney. At least the one he admitted to in your pages.

Talking about size ("Size matters not," said Yoda, who was obviously not a publisher), if Peter Watts is boggled by the size of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, I understand that Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (#1 in sales at Amazon.com and wait until it actually goes to press) is **EVEN BIGGER**.

To **Lyn McConchie**: "Welcome to the real world." This is a dangerous world, and the dark side of modern technology is that the evil ones now have more means and more targets.

Commentary on Charisma I leave to the expert in our family, Lisa. If Lyn McConchie had wanted to see a champion, she could have come to the Kentucky Horse Park. At the time they had Bold Forbes, who had won the Kentucky Derby in 1976. They still have big money winners Cigar and John Henry.

Contest #4: "I lift my lamp besides the golden door" of the euthanasia parlor, and Poul Anderson, Gordon Dickson, Harlan Ellison, Frank Herbert, and Keith Laumer explored the Five Fates of Douglas Bailey who went there to die. Original idea by Laumer. In the separate publications of the story in the prozines, the character was named "William Bailey". Won't you come home?

Joseph Major (again) / May 27, 2003

My observation, back in the late sixties, was that when two DC heroes met, they went after one or the other's or both's super villains. When two Marvel heroes met, they had a fight. Apparently little or nothing has changed.

"St. Issa" came via Islam, in which one of the Predecessor Prophets to Muhammad (pbuh) is Isa bin Maryam. The polytheistic infidels know him as "Jesus" and believe the most absurd and extraordinary things about him. May peace and the mercy of God be with you. [*Enlightenment! Thank you!*]

"Which Las Vegas Corflu", E. B. Frohvet asks. Corflu 2004!

I think the deletion of *Ansible* made the opening for *Emerald City* (*Plokta*, *File 770*, *Challenger*, *Mimosa*, and *Emerald City*) [for the next fanzine Hugo awards possible]. [*Probably. But my question is, why did an online-only (as far as I know) fanzine get nominated ahead of SF Commentary?*]

The prize for Contest #4 was received with much pleasure. Now on to Contest #5:

In The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress, Mannie Davis takes Stuart LaJoie to a bar and proceeds to give him a lecture on economics. Namely, how the cost of the snacks available there is added to the cost of the drinks, so in spite of what the sign on the bar says, the customer still pays for the food. There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch. (And I didn't even have to mention the author's name.)

You say of *Challenger* #17 that you didn't recognize the cover subjects. If a short man with a black beard of Assyrian luxuriousness appears at your front door, flee. It will give you a little more time before he pummels you to a pulp, bellowing "You have never heard of me, the great Professor George Edward Challenger, Discoverer of the Lost World! How can such a rudimentary infinitesimal mind continue to function!" . . . [*Good thing I kept Kenn's baseball bat ...*]

George Edward Challenger is the hero of three novels and two short stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes): The Lost World, The Poison Belt, The Land of Mist, "When the World Screamed", and "The Disintegration Machine". He is an exceedingly brilliant and exceedingly violent, both verbally and physically, biologist. You will thoroughly enjoy all these works, except perhaps The

Land of Mist, which reflects a little too closely Doyle's spiritualistic beliefs. [*Nah, I like the ghostly stuff, especially when it's done well. Poe is one of my heroes.*]

There is one Murphy's Law of Combat (at least) that should be mentioned: 0. Friendly fire . . . isn't.

I can't say much about "Riding a Raid". It speaks for itself. Oh, the grief that such fine writing should be evoked by such a tragic event. [*It was difficult to stay away from a maudlin tone; it seems I found the right one, and thanks for the kind words.*]

See you at Torcon. Guy Lillian wants to have a big fanzine get-together dinner. [*Ask him first.*]

Lloyd Penney / June 27, 2003

It's taken me far too long to respond to the April issue of *Peregrine Nations* (whole number 9, I believe), but I finally have the time to get it done. Let's get past the crudzine cover [*What, you didn't like it? Waaahaaaaaa! <G>*], and the astounding, amazing Schirmeister cover, and see what's inside...

The differences between Florida and western Michigan must be quite apparent. I hope you're finding fandom in that area. [*Haven't had the chance to start looking yet, but plan to do so before the year's out.*] Toronto fandom and Detroit fandom used to be quite close, but that was some time ago. One of the Detroit area conventions, Conclave, has been moved to the Lansing area.

Something in Eloise Mason's loc struck a chord with me...as in any area of fandom, and there are many, we find the level of activity we can sustain and afford. There are some people, bless 'em, who can produce a fanzine on a regular (or irregular) basis. There are others who contribute with articles, artwork or locs. There are yet others who just plain like fanzines, and bless them, too. In decades past, we've been exclusive; I think we've been more inclusive lately. Some may disagree, but no matter your activity or inactivity, if you like fanzines, you're a fanzine fan, and we thank you for your support. I hope my copy of *Rain on Cherry-Blossoms 3* will appear soon.

Can't believe I mixed up *Pub Crawl* and *Zine Dump*...that'll teach me to write locs late at night.

The SARS thing was overblown from the beginning, and everything is safe. Please do come; Yvonne and I would love to see you. [*See my editorial later in thish.*] I believe when I was referring to a Las Vegas Corflu, I was referring to next year's convention. I'd still like to go, but cheap flights are still rare.

I did indeed received the Eleanor Arnason book, and many thanks!

Here's something you might want to spread out over the next few issues ["Things You'd Love to Say at Work..."]. I also get many things online or through offices, much like the Murphy's Laws of Combat ... some of these should be on buttons and sold at Worldcon! I actually do have number 36 on a button! ["How do I set a laser printer to stun?"]

I remember the 2000 Worldcon in Chicago...we were given special commemorative ribbons to wear on our badges as remembrance of Joe Mayhew. One party we attended I remember thinking it was a little sedate until we walked into the main part of the suite. On a credenza, surrounded by books, cartoons, a specially designed cane and a goblet of his favorite drink, was Joe's cremation urn, with his convention badge in front of it. We wore those ribbons proudly. We knew that Joe was looking forward to Torcon because he hadn't been to Toronto since his childhood; he'd been a seminary student there. We took two more ribbons, and will wear them on our Torcon 3 badges.

Torcon is about two months away, and as much as we are looking forward to attending a local Worldcon, we will also be happy to see it over and done. Worldcons have a tendency of turning local fandoms upside down, and this one is no different. We're on the outside looking in, in spite of our heavy involvement with the original bid, so we're putting the best face on it, and will be at Torcon to see our friends worldwide.

John Hertz / May 19, 2003

Thanks for PN 3/1 with new address just in time. MANY thanks for re-integrating fanzine reviews...Thanks also for kind words about my writing. Be strong & of good courage. I do know what TANSTAAFL means ("There ain't no such thing...") but I don't want the Clute book. I do want more issues of PN, please. [*You are a sweet man, Mr. H.! Lucky for you, I'm not done with PN yet, so there'll be more coming as long as I can keep putting them together.*]

John Hertz / July 14, 2003

Wow, colored propeller beanies!

Thanks for your kind words. Regency dancing at Torcon 3 is scheduled for Saturday afternoon.

I have some thoughts about your swallows [*sent in a haiku*], which I'll send separately. Hope you're resettling well.

In the Fanzine Lounge at Westercon LXI, Patricia Diggs the hostess had printed *Peregrine Nations* from the Internet but I brought a paper copy with real color (hers was b & w so color less real?) [*The original was done in color, so no, the color version's the "real" one. Nice of Ms. Diggs to have printed out PN; I wonder if my sample zine copies ever got set out. If I recall correctly, someone from that con contacted me via regular mail and asked if I'd like to send samples of PN and contact cards, which I did.*]

Paul Di Filippo / May 20, 2003

I was very touched by your memoir of Kenn. He seems to have been a wonderful mate & I'm glad you guys had almost 20 years together.

The move back to your home state seems smart & bound to help in all ways. I hope the adjustment went smooth.

Here's my book that's up for a Hugo at Torcon. If I should win, cheer loud! [*And a damn fine book it is, too!*]

E. B. Frohvet / May 18, 2003

A footnote to my article on the C-130: During the recent Iraq war, U.S. forces were dropping elite commando teams all over the country, anywhere they chose. How? With loud noisy helicopters? Alas, no. The MC-130 adaptation, fitted with muffled engines and state-of-the-art ground-effect radar, would sneak in leisurely at altitudes under 200 feet and make a quick landing on any available hard surface — a road would suffice. Drop the ramp, dump off a couple of armed Humvees and a squad of Rangers, and be back in the air within a minute. The basic airframe design, almost fifty years old, proves yet again its infinite versatility. [*"Jolly Green Giants Forever"?*]

The Joan Vinge story inspired by the Doors' song was indeed titled, "The Crystal Ship" — in the collection *Eyes of Amber*. In an author's footnote, Vinge states explicitly the song was her inspiration. [*I didn't find any mention of this in PN 3.1 — to what does it refer?*]

As has been observed before, I think the Article Pool is a fine idea which probably will not work. If you choose, you're welcome to use any of my pieces in PN. [*See this's TOC*].

Wow, a lot of just-barely-covered tits on Marc Schirmeister's collage cover. Very Mardi Gras.

The album I have is *Frank Marino & Mahogany Rush Live*, with Jim Ayoub on drums and Paul Harwood on bass for the power trio. [*Thanks — I couldn't remember why the name sounded familiar and*

guessed it was GFR. Their guitarist was Mark Somethingorother, as I now recall.] I believe at some point Frank's brother played second guitar with the band. If Frank Marino ever played for Grand Funk, I'm not familiar with that. Every once in a while someone rediscovers great old stuff and re-records it. Juice Newton in the 1980's did a very accurate cover of "Angel of the Morning" — okay, who was the original on that? [Merrilee Rush — *too easy for this baby boomer.*]

At the risk of seeming a peon, the recipe for Lemon Broccoli Chicken is on the back of Campbell's Cream of Broccoli soup, or that's where I got it. Cook up a couple-three [yes, folks, *this is an actual measurement in Southern cooking*] pieces of chicken; add a can of the condensed soup, juice 5f two lemons, some pepper to taste, and enough water to get the sauce to the consistency you like. (Or, just make the sauce and add rice, for a vegetarian dish.)

Well, now we know how the state of *Ansible* affected the nominations: four Usual Suspects, and something called *Emerald City*, which I see you have heard of, but was news to me. [EC is Cheryl Morgan's fanzine, which I believe is now only available on the Web. I repeat my offer to those not online: If you know of an online-only fanzine (or suspect it's offered only online) and would like to see a copy, send me an SASE and I'll send you a list of what I have on hand.]

Sheryl Birkhead: Really, veterinarians have to apply separately for licensing in each state? I bet you have to have malpractice insurance, too.

Good grief, Charlie Brown. "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch." Heinlein, The Moon is a Harsh Mistress; it's explained in the bar scene in Chapter 11, when Mannie takes Stu for a drink after the trial. I rattled all that off the top of my head except the chapter number, which I had to look up. Evidently we have different views of Heinlein, judging by your LOC in the recent *Quasiquote* (#5). In my view, for better or worse, Heinlein remains the standard against which SF is judged. John Varley, John Barnes, Spider Robinson, and David Palmer were all hailed in their time as "the next Heinlein." [Yes, and where are they now? Which has nothing to do with Heinlein, and everything to do with advance hype. Heinlein is Heinlein, there are no others, and while you may choose to use his work as a standard by which you judge all other SF, I have other standards. The key ones I use are: 1) Does the writer make me read past the first page?; 2) If yes, can the author make me read past the first chapter?; 3) If yes, do I get bogged down anywhere?; 4) Do I keep reading anyway because I'm too deeply hooked to stop at the bog?; and 5) Does the ending of the book make me want to go find more of the author's work, or throw the damned tome at the nearest wall? Depending on the answers I get, I will like, love or loathe any particular book, even by authors I follow closely. There are writers whose work sometimes disappoints but never betrays, and there are others whose worked I admired greatly in their earlier periods, but who have recently let me down by playing it too safe. I find the plaint of "This is what the public is buying, I have to make a living too" just a bit precious; I take the view that artists (which includes writers) should be pushing their readers' limits as well as their own, however they can, and if it means they have to take a day job again for a while, then so be it. Multi-book series can be done well (GRR Martin) or they can be done as pap for the masses (Robert Jordan), or they can try walking a middle ground (Cherryh's *Foreigner* books). But there's that blasted soapbox again — let's put that little troublemaker away for now...]

"Murphy's Laws of Combat" gave me a smile, as well as a memory or two. "Incoming fire has the right of way," indeed.

I think the whole "sidebar" thing is a hyper-fhannish tradition; they do it a lot in *Wabe*, too. I received at least one zine where the format was such a mess of sidebars and conflicting fonts that it was virtually unreadable ... I think the "longtime fen" were talking about the legendary Irish fandom of the 1950's/early 60's... I used to get *Nova Express*; its extremely narrow focus and total lack of interest in interacting with other fans turned me off. Still, there are so few sercon fanzines that it's a net loss...

The cover of *Challenger* #17 was explained in the editorial on page 4...[I know that.]

Political correctness would suggest that I ought to enjoy the violent-noir-punk stylings of Steven Barnes, because the author is black. [*I believe that “political correctness” ought to be renamed “brainwashing”; that way, everyone will know exactly what it is and how it operates, and impressionable young folk may not be so eager to blindly follow it. Then again, cults also play on the young’s need to fit into a group apart from the one to which their parents belong. Should we then call it the PC Cult? Hmm. Could be confused with computers...*] In fact, that sort of thing just doesn’t interest me. As to why my disinterest in that sort of thing is compatible with my interest in military SF, it’s the difference between violence for violence’s (or personal whim’s) sake, and organized violence under strict control for political ends. I see them as two quite different things. [*Agreed. Which is why, while I liked the characters some in Iron Shadows, I thought the book was just okay. It would have been better as a comic, I think.*]

If you have a taste for cold weather, you should find ample in Michigan. [*Been here and done that twice already, which is why I came back for more.*] For my part, I’ve had my fill of cold and snow; if I were to move, it would be south. Tastes vary. [*Warning: You’d probably hate the Keys.*]

Your tribute to Ken was amazing. I will say nothing more about it, except: every one who has taken the oath and worn the uniform is my brother and my sister. Farewell, brother. Keep in touch, sister. [*Natch. You ain’t getting’ rid of me **that** easy ...*]

Trinlay Khadro / May 31, 2003

The collage cover was great — I like doing collages too... At my current job I don’t have as much break time, so my time to draw is more limited — hopefully I’ll be able to shove a few things in the envelope w/this LOC.

Thank you for letting us meet Kenn through your report — the photo of Kenn and Jamie, especially.

“Dating fannishly” refers to dating a fellow fan, and doing some fannish stuff together. Like catching “Metropolis” at the local Movie Palace...

I tagged along with Henry Welch to Corflu in Madison for part of the day Sunday — not the sort of con I’m used to but I did meet Karen Johnson and got Ted White to rave about his garden (mulch).

Isn’t St. Therese somehow (visions & some such) associated with roses? (vaguely recalled from my weeks as a stencil cutter for the memorial place). [*Yes, as is the Virgin Mary, if I recall right.*]

I’m always tickled by the response to the origami. I’ve been doing origami with my dad since I was little and never stopped. I’m not real sure where the pattern for the rocket came from — but the dragon is my own design. The picture frames I think came from the book The World of Origami by Isao Honda.

Imho, haiku are a great form of poetry — the only kind I can do any justice to when I write poetry. My free verse tends to be rather lame.

The Milwaukee Art Museum has an extensive, highly-appreciated and highly-regarded collection of “outsider art”/folk art. None of the artists has any art training — clearly evident in some of the work; but on the other tentacle, all are very well-done & designed. They sometimes capture an emotion or idea much more adeptly than a trained artist & all clearly contain passion. These aren’t “artists” but just the same, people who don’t have a decision about whether or not to make art. [*That’s the best definition I’ve seen for a true artist.*]

[*For the edification of all, and especially those who missed that ish, the Khan’s pleasure dome was in Xanadu. Re: Free Book Deal question’s answer, in a previous ish.*]

I’m tickled my teapot drawing got some appropriate fannish use. The original drawing is about 6 inches tall for the teapot & used for a silkscreen project. The swirly design ... was adapted from a pattern on a Native American pot at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Museums and art books are great resources...

My dad had bladder cancer almost 20 years ago — he had some very extreme treatment after it came back (radiation) and now is cancer-free for all that time. He was **extremely** fortunate and we are all aware

of it. The one relapse he had was not symptomless AND it didn't spread. They followed him & tracked his health for years with both blood & urine tests. All the tests meant a 1.5-hour drive to the specialist at Big City hospital — and 1.5-hour drive back home. I think he was also very fortunate that his small-town doctor was willing to make & encouraging of the referral to the Big City doctor. If they'd insisted on treating him locally I don't think he'd have survived.

Tonight I'm visiting with my uncle, KT is out with friends, but Uncle & I are enjoying "Samurai Jack." (Good Ghu! I love this show...) Wednesday evenings some local fans get together for anime — current series are "Hikaru No Go" and "Naruto" but we've also enjoyed "Rurouni Kenshin" and "Kiddie Grade" (middle-school girls saving the universe...) Friday evenings is a fannish social and games night at another fan's home. I don't think I've ever had such an active social life...

KT got a kitten for her birthday. Miss Kitty is named "Megumi" and she's a sweet black and white tuxedo cat with a white droplet on her nose. She's very lovey & likes to sit with us while we're online or watching TV. At night she sleeps with one of us & then the other but sometimes gets hyper. She also likes sucking on ears of sleeping people, but I think she'll outgrow that. Elric, the ferret, quickly befriended her and they are great buddies. When we first brought her in, he made sure she knew to use the litter box. :) [Good ferret! Want a treat?]

COLLEGIATE ZEN AND THE PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE

An essay on family dynamics and engineering history

by E.B. Frohvet

[In my youth, when my family lived in Maryland, every summer we'd make the trek to Michigan to visit relatives and go camping at Orchard Beach State Park on Lake Michigan's eastern shore. To get there, we always took the Pennsylvania Turnpike. E.B. Frohvet's article brought back many fine memories of that fabled roadway, and because PN is about journeys, among other things, this piece fits well here.]

It gets chilly in Erie, Pennsylvania. On a related topic, what is it with women and maps?

The problem goes back to 1999, when my cousin's younger daughter was a junior in high school, and started shopping around for a college. Sparing you the lengthy details of that process, the one she eventually selected, Mercyhurst College, is in Erie, Pennsylvania. Erie is in the far northwest corner of the state, on the lakefront, a long way away from where Lani's parents live in Virginia. (In full, "Mary Alana", shortened to "Lani" before the ink on the birth certificate was dry.)

Aside from being cold, Erie is a long way from anywhere – well, actually, it's less than two hours from Cleveland, if that counts for anything.

I say, fairly often, "my cousin Lynn" as if she's the only one. In fact I have hordes of cousins, cross-cousins, once-or-more-removed, cousins-in-law, on both sides of the family. My mother was the youngest of five children and my father the second youngest of four, all of whom were prolific. My mother's eldest sister had ten children. I don't know any of these people. I've been introduced to, and even embraced by, total strangers at funerals with a tossed-off "And this is your cousin Fred..."

I don't know why Lynn and I have stuck in each other's lives. We just have. Not as close as brother and sister, perhaps closer than the average cousins. There have been times in the past when we didn't see each other for months at a time. Even now, a few weeks might go by without our speaking. But sooner or later one of us will pick up the phone, and we simply resume the easy friendship dating back to childhood.

In any case, after Lani chose Mercyhurst, her parents had to drive her up there in the spring of her senior year of high school to check it out; once in the summer for a mandatory orientation session; and again in

the fall for her to begin school. After the third trip, my cousin's husband, who loathes highway driving, begged off; which left Lynn in the position of driving the entire trip herself. This came up in casual conversation and I said, "Oh, I'll drive up with you."

(Not to get ahead of my tale, but although Lani has a license, she is afraid of highway driving. Apparently she attempted it once on a family vacation, made a wrong turn, and her parents and sister all yelled at her, and now she's afraid to try it again.)

This conversation may have taken place at Thanksgiving or Christmas. In any case, my cousin mentioned it several times over the ensuing months, as if to confirm my agreement. Each time I would say, "You have a road map of Pennsylvania, right?" Each time she assured me she did. Fast forward to May, the morning we are supposed to depart; I ask the same question, and it's, "Uh, no."

So I walk up to the neighborhood filling station and buy a map. Driving up from where she lives in Virginia, Lynn arrives at my door at 9:45. A quick cup of coffee and we hit the road by 10:15. Having examined my map I figure it somewhere around 375 miles; and although it's nearly all highway driving, I guess anything under seven hours will be satisfactory.

A brief dissertation on the nature of roads: Paved roads (at least outside of cities, where some were paved with brick or cobblestone from a very early date) were imposed on top of, and to some extent incorporating, a pre-existing system of dirt horse-and-wagon trails. The system of "national" numbering and building/rebuilding of U.S. highways was imposed on top of that, and partly utilizing the existing road net, from the 1920's. Beginning in the 1950's the Interstate system was plunked on top of, and incorporating, the several layers already in place. (And there are still places in the U.S. with unpaved or gravelled public roads.) Bits and pieces, names and numbers, of all the previous patterns have been retained.

As an illustration, U.S. Highway 40 is "Pulaski Highway" east of Baltimore, "Monument Street" in part of the city, and "Baltimore National Pike" on the west side. All of these are still in current and legal use, e.g. as mailing addresses. Where Route 40 passes about four miles north of my home, it is entirely distinct from Interstate 70, a few miles further north. Some eight miles to the west, however, the two highways merge into one, and the same road is both 1-70 and US-40 as far as Hancock. Incidentally, much of the US-40 incorporated an existing road built largely along the right-of-way of the "Old Cumberland Road", which in the early 19th Century was one of the major horse-and-wagon routes into, and eventually over, the Appalachian Mountains into the West.

In practice it's not that difficult today. There are road signs. A quick hop up Route 29, the major north-south axis of the Columbia/Ellicott City area, onto 1-70; crank it up to 70-75 MPH, and the first stage of the journey was an easy run up to Hancock, Maryland. Beyond Frederick the ground starts to rise, gently but steadily. We passed by Hagerstown, but I figured neither Lynn, nor Harry Warner Jr., would be greatly pleased if I diverted from the former's errand to visit the latter, so we just kept rolling.

There may still, for all I know, be an actual town of Hancock. This is in the narrowest part of the state, where Maryland is pinched to about five miles wide between the Potomac River, the border of Virginia, and the Mason-Dixon line, which divides us from Pennsylvania. (Messrs. Mason and Dixon were the surveyors who, in the early 19th Century, settled a territorial dispute between the two states by drawing an arbitrary straight line and saying, "Here." Amazingly, in litigious America, everyone has accepted that decision to this day.)

For highway travel purposes, however, Hancock is noted for an awesomely retro 1940's truck stop, where we paused long enough to gas up and switch drivers; and as the point where 1-70 and US-40 abandon their 90-mile marriage of convenience. US-40 continues west toward Cumberland, Maryland, but 1-70 takes an abrupt turn north into Pennsylvania. In about 30 miles, 1-70 will bestow its favors on

another highway, becoming joint with 1-76 for about 100 miles before (fickle bitch) abandoning yet another consort to head west for Wheeling, West Virginia.

It is 1-76 from the Philadelphia suburbs, to the state capitol of Harrisburg, on up past Pittsburgh; and was originally built to link those three cities; but it has an older name and a more interesting place in the travel history of the 20th Century: The Pennsylvania Turnpike.

If you think of the Pennsylvania Turnpike as just another highway, perhaps you have not fully considered the question. Among other oddities, it is to this day a toll road, still generating a modest but steady income for the state for 70 years. More to the point, however, the Pennsylvania Turnpike is an historical and engineering artifact: this is the template, the archetype, upon which the whole Interstate system was modeled.

In the 1930's, a state-of-the-art modern highway might have as many as two lanes in each direction. (I can show you places where fairly important, US highways are two lanes.) Traffic going opposite ways was seldom separated by more than a painted stripe. Every side road, farm lane, and private drive exited right onto the main road, with or without benefit of stop signs. A driver had to be alert to incoming, crossing, or left—turning traffic – not uncommonly, pedestrians or livestock! A sustained speed of 35 MPH was excellent progress; and as for finding gasoline or food, the traveler was pretty much at the mercy of local commerce and/or his own ingenuity.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike took **all** of that and threw it out the window.

The Turnpike is almost the first of the modern divided, limited-access highways – no worries about tractors or horse-drawn wagons pulling into traffic at 3 MPH. This is explicitly a through highway, it's typically 20 miles or more between exits. If you want to travel local, use side roads. It was engineered well beyond the typical ability of vehicles at the time: except on the steeper sections, you can cruise it at a comfortable 65. You don't have to leave the road to find necessities. Every 40 miles or so there's a service area with fuel and food. Of course now most of them are franchised junk food, Arbie's or McDonald's, rather than creatively bad greasy spoon diners, but still.

I'm told that as late as the 1950's, people came to drive the Pennsylvania Turnpike, not from any desire to go to Harrisburg, but simply to admire it. You can still buy postcards. It's really amazing, how far ahead of its time was this road.

Coming north from Hancock, 1-70 runs into the Turnpike at Breezewood, formerly a natural stopping point between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, still noted for its collection of cheesy 1950's motels. You pick up a ticket at the entrance, turn it in when you leave the Turnpike, and the rates for each exit are helpfully printed on the ticket. (Note the advantage of the on-road service areas. You don't have to stop, pay a toll, gas up, then stop for a new ticket.)

From Breezewood it's an easy run about 80 miles west to New Stanton. At one point the Allegheny Tunnel punches straight through the heart of a mountain. Basic brute force 19th Century engineering, but it gets the job done. If memory serves, we stopped at the last service area before New Stanton long enough to get some coffee and switch off drivers. At that point we stayed with the Turnpike bearing off northwest toward Pittsburgh, while 1-70 parted company in the direction of Wheeling.

It must have been somewhere just before that, as I was still riding passenger, that we passed a farm where a small herd of buffalo were grazing peacefully in a fenced pasture. On several occasions we saw deer standing at the edge of the woods right next to the highway; and if for some reason you should take up the hobby of collecting dead road-kill possum and raccoons, the highways of western Pennsylvania are your place.

The Turnpike passes east of Pittsburgh. You can tell from the map, not the view. Just on what you can see from the road, you'd never guess there was a sizable city nearby. Looking down-stream from the bridge over the Allegheny River, there's a rather scenic view of lots of trees and one or two other bridges.

About 12 miles west, the Allegheny and the Monongahela come together to form the mighty Ohio River – hence “Three Rivers Stadium”, though I believe they tore that down recently.

About 25 miles further on, at a place called Cranberry, the old Turnpike passes blindly under the new Interstate-79. Why, in building a newer highway, the Pennsylvania Department of Highways didn’t build a modern interchange so you can get from one road to the other with minimum inconvenience, is beyond me. But they didn’t. Commercial interests may have played a part, there’s a shopping center and several gas stations who may have wanted their piece of the action. In any case, one pays one’s toll leaving the Turnpike, and threads through a couple of miles of side roads and traffic lights before finding a way onto I-79. It is not blindingly difficult, though I’ve often wondered if there may be some genetic deficiency in the Frohvet’s DNA where “sense of direction” should be. I seem to be the only one in the family who can read a map.

I did note that Lynn arranged it so that I drove through the Cranberry interchange both ways.

Once onto I-79, it’s a straight and fairly level run north about 100 miles to Erie. We arrived at the Red Roof Inn (a cheap chain motel adjacent to the Interstate, with semis rolling past thirty yards away all night) a little after 4:30. Elapsed time, 6 hours and 20 minutes, 361 miles; three brief stops, none longer than five minutes. You do the math.

It so happened that Lani had finals all that afternoon into early evening, so there was no point in going straight to the college. We went down to the lakefront and walked around for a while. Erie, Pennsylvania, is actually a pleasant little town in an early-1950’s-architectural sort of way. Of course it was May, every community probably looks better in May. I wouldn’t care to visit there in January. Lani told us later that during the winter it sometimes snows every day for a week at a time.

After a while Lynn and I had dinner at a restaurant on the lakefront, “Smuggler’s Cove”. If you’re going to be in Erie, you could do worse. The salad was pretty good, though I personally like some sliced raw onion in my salad; when I mentioned it to the waitress, she said I should have asked. Lynn had the perch; I ordered “walleye” which is apparently a local delicacy. This proved to be a pleasant but rather bland fish, rather like tilapia; the chef had imaginatively touched it up with a pineapple sauce to lend some zest to the dish. Colcannon (a basic Irish dish, mashed potatoes mixed with boiled cabbage) and sauteed squash. I’ve had much worse meals at far higher cost.

So it was about 7:00 before we arrived at Mercyhurst College. This is a very pretty campus. It was originally a Catholic school for women, and is still predominantly female, though Lani says they are trying to recruit more male students. (There are four or five other small colleges in the area, including -- by an odd coincidence -- Gannon College, which my dentist attended.) I’m not certain what is the current extent of Mercyhurst’s affiliation with the Catholic Church. None of my family are Catholic.

Lani spent her freshman year living in Baldwin Hall, which is a mandatory, all-female freshman dorm. After your first year, you can make other arrangements -- starting her sophomore year Lani will be sharing a two-bedroom campus apartment with three other girls. It was of course the end of the school year, so parents and other adults were helping people move. Still I was a little taken aback by the casual ease with which we were admitted.

“I’m Lani’s Mom.”

“Okay.”

“He’s with me.”

“Okay.”

Lani seemed tired but glad to see us. Naturally her room was all the way in the back, which meant that every item – pretty much everything she owned – had to be carried the entire length of the building, downstairs, and out to the car. Her roommate had already left, which at least simplified things. Two teenagers had lived most of a year in a space slightly larger than your broom closet; plus furniture,

computer, stereo, one of those little refrigerators, and Lani's skis. Everything except the furniture had to go.

Of course I lived three years in much less agreeable conditions, and with fewer possessions, but that was the Army. Educational, none the less.

Lani had reluctantly agreed to store in Erie all the stuff she wouldn't need for the summer, so we got all that loaded that evening. As it turned out, the only storage place anywhere near campus was owned by people who lived miles away, so you could only get stuff in and out by appointment. Lani swears she told them "sometime between 9:00 and 10:00" the next morning. When we got there about 8:45 no one was there and the building securely locked. When we called, the woman said in a bored manner they would not and could not be there before 10:00, take it or leave it. The typical Frohvet temper kicked in, Lynn told them to go to hell.

We schlepped everything back to campus, loaded bags of clothes and (apparently several miles of) computer cable on top, and took it all. I suggested that next year Lani get a place closer to the door. Lynn kept muttering about "ignorant bitch" as the car began to sag a little at the axles.

My cousin's car is a Chrysler minivan which can carry nine people – I've been one of the nine. On this occasion there was barely room for the three of us, Lani sharing the back seat with the refrigerator, and occasionally having to shift something in the back so we could see out the rearview mirror. She claimed about ten hours' sleep the three preceding nights, and dozed most of the way back.

We basically retraced the same route back, stopping at the same general intervals for gas, coffee, and driver changes. We could still get the minivan up to 70 MPH on level ground. The substantial extra weight was noticeable as we got into the hill country. It was kind of The Little Chrysler Minivan That Could: "I-think-I-can, I-hope-I-can, you-better-shift-down-a-gear-so-I-can." On stretches where it was continuously uphill for three or four miles, even on rather mild slopes, we topped out over some hills at 40 MPH. The last run down through Maryland, I spent over an hour trying to get around a white Plymouth with a Jesus-fish on the back. Every time I'd get in a position to pass, the woman would speed up; every time we hit a slope, the weight in the minivan would prevent me from passing. When we got back to Columbia, the white Plymouth made the turn for Route 29. I said if she turned at my exit, I'd shoot the bitch. A mere figure of speech, I assure you.

In spite of the extra weight, the return journey took only ten minutes or so longer than the outbound trip. We arrived in Columbia/Ellicott City before 5:00. All three of us were so tired that instead of going to a decent place for dinner we just went across the street and got a pizza. Reinforced by that, and by the arrangement where I drove the last lap into Maryland, Lynn and her daughter set off on the last lap to Virginia by 6:00 and arrived home before 7:30, long before Lynn's husband had looked for them.

Most of Lani's stuff is stored in her parents' basement for now. Someone (not me) will have to sort through it before the new school year begins.

Lynn says that for the next trip she's going to rent one of those Ryder trucks, hand Lani the keys, and say "Have a nice trip." That is not actually such a heartless idea as it sounds. They live in a semi-rural area. Lani is a nice kid, but essentially a small-town girl from a rather sheltered childhood. At some point she will have to learn more independence, to be less dependent on her parents. (On a couple of occasions I have offered to take her out highway driving so she can get some experience at it without being yelled at; so far she has refused.) However, the fact that she chose her own college far away from home is a step in the right direction; she has seemed noticeably more mature and self confident this last year.



However, the other week my cousin called me (to discuss some other subject entirely) and in passing added: "How do you feel about driving to Erie this fall?" I don't really mind, it's a break from my otherwise humdrum life. If you pass a blue minivan on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, wave as you go by.



The Pub Crawl

Fanzines du Jour

[*In the interest of saving space in this, I'm putting everything together and not separating new zines from established ones. Numbering generally indicates the "age" of a fanzine anyway. Anyone not online (she repeated ad nauseam) who wants to see any of the e-zines listed below can contact me.*] Fanzines received since the last mailing of PN:

ALEXIAD Vol.2 No. 3, June 2003 // Because of Lisa Major, I've taken to watching the Triple Crown races with more interest. We were robbed of another Triple Crown winner when the weather went bad and Funny Cide lost the third race; I was rooting for that horse, big time. Joe lavishes readers with varied and incisive book reviews, and I was pleased to see he wasn't bowled over with The Years of Rice and Salt and did like Jacqueline Carey's Kushiel trilogy. I must admit to being weary of his polar exploration jonez, though; Joe, can you find a new hobbyhorse?

ANSIBLE 190-192 // Declaring his zine as a semi-prozine candidate for Hugo purposes doesn't seem to have altered editor Dave Langford's views on how to edit and design *Ansible*. Just as well, since it was this very format that garnered him so much fannish attention in the first place. With the May (189) ish he begins mentioning Torcon 3 (the next Worldcon, for those who've been asleep) in his con listing, and recently in an Internet mailing list he mentioned he plans to attend said Worldcon, which leads me to wonder whether the con listing has been those he's planning to attend, instead of all the cons actually happening.

BENTO 14, February 2003 // The cover says it was produced for the 2003 Potlatch, and their Web site has no more-recent ishes (look it up with Google, you lazy ones), but this'll do nicely. I'd heard a lot of good things about this zine, and wasn't disappointed in reading this. Editors Kate Yule and David Levine employ sharp wit, clean lines and highly readable material (from themselves and others) along with topical and/or decorative artwork. My favorite piece this is "Vampires at the Airport" by Andrei Codrescu; he's not fibbing, I've *seen* these people. I look forward to more ishes.

CHALLENGER 18 // Stop Press! Guy Lillian Pubs His Ish twice in the same calendar year!! Very funny Linda Miller cover starts off another packed ish with Guy's ever-popular variety of topics and writers (Trinlay Khadro, Greg Benford, E. B. Frohvet, Mike Resnick, Terry Jeeves, and Guy himself). Good to hear Guy and Rosie had such a splendid time down under, and I look forward to reading the trip report.

CHUNGA 4, April 2003 // The content has improved (Lesley Reece, Stu Shiffman), a welcome change, and the art is still good (possibly better, since I got more giggles per page this time). But, but ... I thought I was reading prose by Ulrika O'Brien in "Rain City Tangler" until I reached the end and realized that it looked more like a continuation of Andy Hooper's "The Journal of Federation Studies" which immediately preceded it. The format was similar, though not the content. Most confusing was the "(Andy)" at the end of the penultimate item in the "Tangler" article. I'm not familiar enough with Ulrika O'Brien's writing style to discern it from Hooper's style, apparently. It seemed to me that the article title and byline were grafted onto a piece written by someone else. I hope this was a case of the former, because the latter would expose a major editorial gaffe. I got this copy in the regular mail, which was nice, since it seems I've attained the mailing list. Future wishes will, I hope, continue the improvement trend and end the confusing one.

CRAZY FROM THE HEAT #1 // Those madcap Las Vegnants are at it again, having whelped a group-mind calling itself the Trufan Ten and reaching fission with this first ish, dated January 2003. Nothing further has emerged, so it appears we have another once-a-twelve-month fanzine to peruse. This one is a fun ride, with a smooth layout, great art and worth-reading pieces by Ross Chamberlain, Joyce Katz, Aileen Forman, Cathi Wilson, Ken Forman, Arnie Katz, John Harden, Woody Bernardi, Ben Wilson and Derek Stazenski, many of which focus on the Westercon trip several of these folk made in 2002. Lotsa Rotslers, too. Go get your own at efanzines.com or write to Joyce Katz (if you want the address, write to me).

DE PROFUNDIS 365-367, June-August 2003, from the LASFS.

FANZINE FANATIQUE, Spring 2003.

FILE 770, June 2003 // Mike Glycer returns from the dreamland called fatherhood to finally pub another ish of his chock-full-o'-news fanzine. This one has wads of conreps and, though many are dated (from 2002 events), they're still worth reading. And, of course, an update on Sierra Grace.

THE KNARLEY KNEWS 99, April 2003 // Just two articles this time from Sue Welch (on Zanzibar) and Rodney Leighton (on fanzines; and for the record, when Rodney wrote this column, my husband was still alive, so no calumnies should be aimed at him), since there's a bundle of LOCs in this. All Ghood Stuph.

LIGHTNING ROUND 4, 12 May 2003 // Alexander Bouchard seems to have found a way to pub more often with this electronic fanzine. This perzine has LOCs, this time, and AB ranges widely across subjects of interest to him. Worth a look, certainly.

LITTLEBROOK 2, April 2003.

NEITHER RAIN, NOIR MURDER... 3, July 2003

NICE DISTINCTIONS 1 and 2 // Arthur Hlavaty continues to pub an e-mailzine, albeit with a new title. This one has more book reviews and a bit more general news, but the personal stuff is still very readable, especially the ICFA conrep. The absence of art doesn't bother me with this perzine, probably because it's delivered via e-mail. Hlavaty's absorbing writing style continues as well.

NO TIME, NO ENERGY & NOT MUCH TO SAY 8 and 9 // In which dwain kaiser takes time off from his fannish recollections to pay tribute to the late Harry Warner, Jr. — nicely done, sir. I'm also grateful for the kind words about PN in #8 (mighod, am I really “fannish”???). Available via efanazines.com, or contact me (I have several ishes).

NO AWARD 13 // In between two screamingly funny covers (front by Schirm, back by Rotsler), editor Marty Cantor injects the readable articles we've come to expect into his usual slick design scheme. I liked the color scheme so much I printed this one out on light card stock. It's a lot like twilltone, except the surface is smoother. Always a pleasure to peruse.

QUASIQUOTE 5, April 2003 // The ever-sizzling Sandra Bond gifts us all with another ish of her fine genzine, with articles by herself, Earl Kemp, Mark Plummer, Ron Bennett and David Redd, along with the welcomely-lively lettercol (in which she graciously call my recent missive “a peach of a letter” — aw, shucks!) established in previous ishes. Certs, 'tis better to have an abbreviated *QQ* than none at all.

TRAPDOOR 22, May 2003 // Retitled “Astonishing Trapdoor Stories” for this all-fiction ish, editor Robert Lichtman presents “Sense of Wonder” by Gordon Eklund and “Invasion 1949” by Charles Burbee. All I can say is, Faboo, Mr. L. Loved it!

TWINK 30, Final Ish // E.B. Frohvet announces he is withdrawing from the ranks of faneds for the nonce, and while I'm sorry to see *Twink* dematerialize, I can understand his reasons for ending its run. More kind words about PN are in the zine reviews here, for which I'm again most grateful. Do stay around, good sir. You would be missed if you left.

VANAMONDE 503-507 (Dec. 31, 2002 to Jan. 38, 2003) // While the time lag can sometimes be disconcerting (too used to reading newspapers with more recent dates, that's me), editor John Hertz manages to make each ish worth parsing through one's brain. Interestingly, after reading *Vanamonde* I feel as though I've just eaten a very nourishing meal. Replete, one might say. May such repasts continue.

VISIONS OF PARADISE 95 (*Halcyon Days, The Passing Scene, Wondrous Stories*) // More kind words about PN, and thanks for those to editor Robert Sabella. Note I have reabsorbed my fanzine reviews. Always readable, *VoP* continues this tradition with a well-stocked lettercol, and the first installment of Fei Fei Li's travel journal, along with Sabella's usual self-penned (is that an anachronism now?) articles. No mutant enemies here. That's an in-joke, sorta.

The Free Book Deal Update

Contest #5 Winners: The question for Contest #5 was: “What does TANSTAAFL stand for?” The correct answer is “There ain't no such thing as a free lunch,” no caps required. Some people thought this was too easy, but I still got fewer than ten entries for both contest categories combined. I really do send out these books, folks. It's not a hoax

The online winner is Don Anderson, who will receive Encyclopedia of Science Fiction. The regular-mail winner is Lyn McConchie, who will receive Science Fiction — The Illustrated Encyclopedia. Congratulations to you both! Your prizes should be on their way to you by Aug. 4, 2003 (the day after I finish this article).

Contest # 6 Is Announced: The question for Contest #6 is: In Andre Norton's Moon of Three Rings, what is the name of the wolf-like alien animal which the visiting spacer-protagonist becomes? Correct spelling counts!

Answers must be postmarked no later than Sept. 20, 2003. All correct answers (if there are enough to warrant it) will then be divided by category, and a name selected from each pile. Paper replies can be on pocsacrds or in letters, doesn't matter, as long as they're legible and contain the entrant's name and regular-mail address. Good luck to all the participants.



A Brief Look at a Crossover Mystery Series: Nancy Atherton's Aunt Dimity

by Lyn McConchie

Aunt Dimity was an interesting woman. The author has managed to write eight of the mysteries involving her to date, all in crossover format. You see, Aunt Dimity is recently dead when the series starts. So you have a ghost theme. There is usually a good solid romance as well, and a mystery. That isn't always a murder, but it **is** always a mystery.

The books began with Aunt Dimity's Death, an amusing and involving read in which Lori, who was raised by her mother on what Lori believed were the tales of a mythical Aunt Dimity, finds – after her mother's death, and just as things were getting really difficult financially – that Aunt Dimity was a real person who was Lori's mother's best friend and has recently died in England, leaving property and a lot of money to Lori.

But that isn't the whole story. Somewhere there has also been a great tragedy in Aunt Dimity's life and something has to be done about that. Lori hasn't only inherited tangibles, she has also inherited a mystery she must solve and a grief which must be laid to rest.

In doing so she finds love, a new country, and new friends. She also finds Dimity may be dead but she isn't lying down just yet. The first book and the latest were my favorites as personal preferences, but all are excellent and if you like this sort of mix, you'll love the series. I re-read the first book most often, as I've always enjoyed the background of a mix of present-day and Second World War-time Britain. In this case, with the mystery going back to those times, I love this one in particular.

In some ways the whole series is a little old-fashioned, a string of real English cosies set in a small village with British characters, little sex (and none graphic), and the violence is usually subtle or muted. But the series is often funny, always well written, and the characters have a believable life of their own.

The series is not static as to background or characters lives as some series can be. In book one, Lori finds love with the son of her lawyer in America. Bill comes out to England later in the book to help with both Aunt Dimity's estate and the mystery Lori is trying so hard to solve for someone she has come to care for even if she isn't officially about any longer.

Book two, Aunt Dimity and the Duke, diverges from Lori. It is more the story of Emma, who, when her lover dumps her for a younger woman, goes on a garden tour and finds a mystery and the healing of her heart combined with a Stately Home, and a garden in need of renovation and attention.

This one really is a typical English cosy, with a couple of eccentric old ladies, the Duke, a castle with landscaped grounds, an ancient family mystery, and love in the end. However it does fit neatly into the series as Emma becomes Lori's good friend and much of the action takes place near the village where Lori and Bill now live. It includes the eccentric sisters from Book One, who play a crucial part in this second book, and who are a delight as characters any time they appear.

Book three reverts to Lori and her life, where the series has remained ever since. Aunt Dimity's Good Deed begins with Lori who has now been married two years. Unfortunately Bill, her husband, is something of a workaholic, and she is gradually seeing less and less of him. But then her father-in-law whom she adores, comes to stay when Lori's other arrangements fall through, they go on a trip, and he vanishes. Lori must find him, solve a very old mystery, and reconnect with Bill.

So far there are eight books in the series and Nancy is showing no signs of stopping. I hope she doesn't any time soon as I am enjoying the series greatly. In addition to those already mentioned, the other books are Aunt Dimity Digs In, Aunt Dimity's Christmas, Aunt Dimity Beats the Devil, Aunt Dimity: Detective and Aunt Dimity Takes A Holiday, which is due out in hardcover sometime this year. They are published in the USA by Penguin Putnam.

I really recommend the series to those who would like a mix of ghost, romance, and mystery. All sections of which are given equal time – to the detriment of none.

The last one out in paperback, Aunt Dimity: Detective, harks back in many ways to Agatha Christie and reminds me of her book The Moving Finger. In Detective, Lori finds that a recently dead woman has been responsible for great unhappiness as she gossips about the village, spreading misery with her often greatly exaggerated stories. The dead woman was, it appears, an unrivaled expert in making whole mountain ranges out of a minor molehill, and on occasion she was not even above outright lies to destroy those who offended her.

Lori teams up with the vicar's nephew to find how the woman died, if it was murder, and if so, who killed her, and incidentally, just how much truth there was in the malicious tales she spread far and wide along with possible blackmail. That book too comes to a very believable and highly satisfying conclusion.

It is in her on-going interaction with the spirit of Aunt Dimity that the series spills over into genre. The method of communication is not unknown but here is well handled in a way which makes it acceptable to the reader. The spirit of Aunt Dimity is wonderful; believable, amusing caustic, and endearing in turns. If the books continue at the current standard then I have no hesitation in recommending the series to any reader who likes a good ghost story, a romance, OR a mystery.

I met the author when I was doing a signing in San Diego in 1995, (she was doing a signing ahead of me) and she too is a very pleasant person. For those who may be interested she has a website, **aunt-dimity.com**, and those who enjoy visiting author sites are likely to find that is a good use of their time as well.



Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up?

Editorial

Sixty-four days after arriving in East Lake, I still have unpacked boxes lying around. The essentials have found their places in the new house, but I haven't been able to get all the bookshelving into place yet because the damned ear kept acting up. Finally I'd had enough, and called the acupuncturist my parents recommended after hearing her speak at a Kiwanis meeting. After two treatments, I think acupuncture can

help me. I still get dizzy, but it isn't as intense, and as long as I follow my rest regimen along with eating properly (low salt, not a lot of greasy stuff, etc) and taking my meds and supps, I have been able to do more in the last two weeks than I had done in the previous six. I am encouraged by this change. As I said to my mother last week, any improvement is a plus. However, one thing I have to remember is to rest after seeing the "needle lady." Acupuncture works over time, redirecting the qi in the body, and this can cause symptoms which are being treated to recur, though with less severity in general.

I chose to try acupuncture because my best friend from high school said it helped her husband get rid of vertigo (I don't recall if the root cause was ever discovered). My acupuncturist said that she's had some good results with treating people with vertigo, and she's pleased that I'm responding so well so early. I'm not cured, by any means, and perhaps never will be, but if I can get two extra days out of every seven that are nearly-normal, then I'll be happy. The alternative is surgery that may not work, and I'd have to go to Detroit to have that done since no other doctors closer to me perform the procedure.

In this area of Michigan (the northwestern part), the Little River Band of Ottawa (Odawa) Indians was recognized within the last decade or so as a tribe by the federal government. They've purchased land and built a casino and resort which has brought a lot of money into the county, and the tribe is now the county's third-largest employer. During the annual Forest Festival held over the July 4 weekend (Thursday through Sunday), the Band held a Jiingtamok, or pow-wow. My son, my dad and I went on the Saturday to see the afternoon grand entrance and listen to the hand-drum contestants, as well as stroll around the dance circle's perimeter and see what the vendors had to sell.

We were surprised to hear the announcer ask, after the Grand Entrance, for all veterans to come down and dance a circuit or two. My dad and I, both veterans, looked at each other. "Shall we go down?" I asked him. Then my son started pulling on my arm, so I turned to him. "You should go, Mom," he said. At that point, a woman behind me stood and began making her way down the bleachers, having been encouraged by her friends to join the dance. "I'll go for us both," I said to my dad, and stepped off the bleachers to join the other woman.

The tradition, as the participants did it that day, is to go down and shake hands with the other participants, and announce either branch and length of service, or the unit with which one served in combat, whichever applied. A veteran, by government definition, is any person who has served in a branch of the armed forces, regardless of whether he or she saw combat. I found myself shaking hands with chopper pilots who'd flown missions in Vietnam, naval officers who'd served on ships in the waters off Vietnam, soldiers and Marines who'd been to Kuwait and Iraq. 98 percent of them were in fancy-dance costume for a later contest. I didn't feel out of place for a second. They were a welcoming and friendly group, and I felt very comfortable among them.

The drummers and singers began their song, and the group of dancers and veterans (some being both) started to double-step clockwise around the dance circle. I hadn't taken five steps when I saw my father hobble over to join me. He's had both hips replaced due to an inherited degenerative disease, and hadn't thought he could manage getting out of the bleachers, but he made it. I held onto his shoulder and he used his walking stick for balance, and around we went, twice.

Something so basic and yet so deeply rooted in human tradition as dance was a connecting point for half a hundred people that day. I was very happy to be in that place, at that time, with my father and all those others with whom we danced. My dad said he'd never participated in any kind of Native American dance before, and the fact that we did it together is something else we can share, which is a very special gift for me. I'm very grateful for it.

Otherwise, things are rumbling along. I've joined FAPA and sent in my first contrib to the OE, so I may be "seeing" some of you there when the August mailing comes out.

Several of you I **won't** be seeing in Toronto in late August. After looking at where my money was (still spread between two banks) and how much was left, it was obvious I couldn't afford the travel arrangements that would best suit my medical condition. The only way I could have done it was to have had someone else drive me all the way to Toronto and back, or get free airline tickets roundtrip for two. Neither option was available. Additionally, it dawned on me that going to a Worldcon so soon after my husband's death might not be the best thing for me; grief tends to make one do unadvisable things, regardless of what common sense advises. I might have spent too much money, or decided that one beer was no problem even with the meds I take, or something else reckless. Being in a crowd of some 5,000 isn't my idea of a calm event, either. "If I go to Toronto, then I can't do this thing," I realized, "and there are several other things that I ought to get done first, like health insurance, and school stuff," etc. Selah. Boston looms. There are other, closer events as well.

The stack of Delap's still awaits my perusal; I bought them in an online fanzine auction to find out if they'd generate an article suitable for fanzine use. I also have in mind an article about a film which I haven't seen discussed anywhere, but I need to re-read the story on which it's based. I can't do that because not all the books are unboxed yet — the vicious circle reveals itself yet again.

I'll get to it, though, eventually. Once this ish of PN is out the door, I'll have time to do things like put up shelving and unpack books, write that article I promised to Guy Lillian, work on a slightly longer FAPA contrib for the next mailing, read more books, write more reviews, etc. As long as I have writing somewhere in my life, I'll be happy.

I've had to recreate my mailing list due to computer problems, so there may be some people getting this in paper for the first time. If you'd rather go get the online version yourself, or will do so to save me paper and postage, kindly let me know so I can change your status to "online" in the mailing list. Thanks in advance. —Editor