

# Askance<sup>2</sup>



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# Askance

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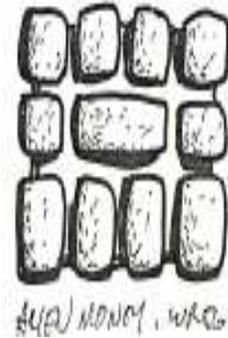
homepage: Don't even ask. I've given up on that idea for the time being.

This is another Post-Modernist Production, meaning that it will never be *completely* finished, so to speak...

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member: fwa (since 2007!)

# ben used natterings

## what to say...

Well, the first issue was well-received, and so for all the damning praise heaped upon this fanzine, I thank you folks from the bottom of my carhardts. You can find these reader comments back in the letter-column, of course, but one thing that Alexis Gilliland said in a brief response – which he sent to me along with a couple wonderful cartoons, thank you so much, Alexis! - got me thinking.

What Alexis said was that he “read and enjoyed [Askance #1], but didn’t find the one comment hook to justify a composed letter.” He did say that Brad Foster’s cover was “outstanding,” about which the fannish press has thus far been unanimous.

However, there is a shred of truth in his observation that he “didn’t find the one comment hook to justify a composed letter.” In reviewing the first issue, I have to admit that while it is a very attractive zine, cleanly laid-out with fine contributions, it does lack the in-depth kind of article that one can find in, say, *Banana Wings*, *Plokta*, *Chunga*, or *Challenger*. Does my saying this mean that I desire to produce a zine along those lines? No, it doesn’t. All I am pointing out here is that I can see Alexis’ point: some fans will not write locs unless something substantial, like an in-depth essay on the characterizations in *Eureka* or some such sercon-type article, really piques their interest or knees them in the gonads.

On the other hand, I wanted to present a first issue that I was proud of, and I am. *Askance #1*

## fannish sensibility, my ass...

Over in *Pixel* – the 11<sup>th</sup> issue’s letter-column, to be exact - David Burton and I exchanged



had a lot of good material in it, and I wouldn’t change a thing about the issue. However, in the future, there will be material in these pages that may provoke, titillate, or annoy people to the point of submitting their locs and articles punctuated with pithy points of pusillanimous punditry. Or something like that.

At the very worst, I might regale you folks with all sorts of my opinions about science fiction, fantasy, the Fan Hugos, and so on.

After all, this is *my* fanzine, isn’t it?

⌘

commentary about the type of fan writing that we find to be the most entertaining. The twelfth

issue followed this discussion vein in Dave Locke's "dialogue" with Eric Mayer. All of us – both Davids, Eric, and I – seem to be of one mind as to what we find to be the most entertaining fannish writing. Apparently, it is this:

We all enjoy reading and writing about various topics, but when the writer uses a little observational humor, a touch of sarcasm, and has a slightly skewed view of things, that raises our enjoyment level of that piece of writing. In our collective minds, good fan-writing does not have to be solely about science fiction, fantasy, or fannish activities (cons, clubs, etc), but it does have to be written *well*. Quality truly does matter.

As far as trying to define "fannish sensibility" goes, I think this can best be described as writing about something with an attitude that looks at it with a slightly skewed view – askance, if you will. Usually this incorporates humor that gently ribs someone or something, and which tends to utilize fannish references and shared experiences. This is what makes fan writing like *The Enchanted Duplicator*, major con and trip reports, or *Ah! Sweet Laney!* so enduring. We have been there, done that, know them, and, as a result, we understand. This makes a huge difference between regular writing and fan writing.

So then what do we do with a piece like Grant Canfield's architecture internship story from *Trap Door #24*? Why do we consider this fan writing? Is it only because it appeared in a fanzine?

I bring up this particular selection because it covers a subject that seems to have nothing to do with fandom, except maybe that many fans have held down crazy jobs in their lives, sometimes putting their lives on the line (as Grant relates in his article). For myself, I worked in a pig packing plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, for four and a half years, and there are easily a handful of articles I could write about that experience. The topic certainly isn't fannish in the superficial sense, but if I wrote such a piece with the kind of

humor we expect to read in a fanzine, then it would probably be considered fannish writing.

Now, here is the question I put to you, my gentle readers: if that pig packing plant article of mine was eventually published in, say, *Iowa Monthly* magazine without changing a word from its original fanzine appearance, would you still consider it fannish? To its new, non-fannish readers, it would not be fannish at all. It might amuse, astonish, amaze, thrill, and teach readers about what it is like to work alongside legal and illegal immigrants in a pig packing plant, but they would have no concept of the "fannishness" or the "fannish sensibility" that fueled its composition. It would be just another "real life story" written for a state-wide or regional publication.

There are many examples of fan writing that I could point at to illustrate my case even further, but that is rather unnecessary here. The bottom line is that any writer who cares about his or her craft will try to put their best effort into writing something, be it an essay, interview, book review, diatribe, or simply telling an entertaining and/or thoughtful story. The effort taken will show, and reader enjoyment shall result. What more could we, as mere readers of fanzines, expect of the folks who write for fanzines?

A fannish sensibility can be A Good Thing; in fact, I believe it can be indispensable. In the hands of a good writer, timeless material could easily be the result. Bob Tucker readily admitted to rewriting nearly all of his fan-writing. And other naturally gifted writers like Willis, Shaw, Carr, and Burbee have extolled the virtue of working at their craft.

Ah, sweet fannish sensibility. Not only does it make sense, but it leaves behind wonderful material. Nothing finer, if you ask me, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

**Age does not diminish the extreme disappointment of having a scoop of ice cream fall from the cone."**

- Jim Feibig



## who's in this issue

There are a few individuals who decided to join these ranks this time around. Once again, in alphabetical order – which is probably the best organizational tool for something like this – here are the brave ~~fools~~ people who contributed their talents to this issue:

### Bill Fischer

Not only did Bill submit the latest installment of his cartoon strip “Figby,” but he also sent in something that I simply had to include instead of holding it off for the next issue. In a prior e-mail, Bill told me he has been playing around with PhotoShop, and the result is *Wikiphilia: The Fried Encyclopedia*. And that is really all I dare say, so I will stop there.

### Charles E. Fuller II

Yet another selection from that venerable apa to which I belong, SNAPS, here is a recent contribution written by one of its regular members. [Side note: SNAPS is the Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society, and the OE is Arnie Katz. New members from outside Nevada are encouraged to join. (How's that for a plug, Arnie?)] Charles usually begins his apa-zines with some kind of essay – his apa-zine is entitled *Profane Revelations* – and a couple distributions ago, “Chaotic Motion” appeared. I thought it deserved a larger audience, and so here it is again, only now for wider consumption. Read and enjoy.

### Lloyd Penney

When he's not writing locs, this erstwhile Canadian letterhack can usually be found working on some convention or conference, maybe even lending his voice talents to various commercial projects. Most of the time, though, Lloyd reads fanzines. Then he locs them. Sometimes I think Lloyd *eats* fanzines and his locs are the excretory results of his digestion of that fanzine's contents. No matter. He's back with another installment of “Penney for Your Thoughts,” his regular appearing fanzine review column. Such a nice boy!

### Robert M. Sabella

As any regular reader of Bob Sabella's fanzine, *Visions of Paradise: Wondrous Stories*, will know, this guy loves to create lists in the grand tradition of Bill Bowers and other fannish pioneers. Face it, Bob loves lists. Well, I do too, and it is with great pleasure that I present an article of his that includes not one, not two, but *three* – count 'em: **three** (3) – lists. Such a deal I have for you...

### Alan White

What can I say? This fine gentleman responded to my request for cover art with what I believe is one of the finest pieces he's ever produced. A denizen of Las Vegas, that literal “hot”-bed of fannish activity, Alan produced a rather largish fanzine called *The Delineator* during the early 1980's. He's not pubbing that zine anymore, but he does do very nice artwork, such as the header for Lloyd Penney's fanzine review column. It is my hope to not only have future covers from Alan, but maybe run a four-page portfolio of his artwork some day.

Now, onward to the zine!

# Feldergarb! Two in a Row!

For the first time in nearly twenty years, I attended the same convention in consecutive years. Back in the day, it was a given that Minicon was on my perpetual convention-attending calendar; in fact, from 1973 to 1992, the only years I believe I missed Minicon were 1986 (living in Los Angeles then), 1990, and 1991 (Living in Des Moines, Iowa, during those years). But this year, to celebrate my 53<sup>rd</sup> birthday on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, I not only released the first issue of this fanzine, but I also attended AggieCon 38 here in town, making this convention the first back-to-back years of a con for me since the late Eighties. Go figure.

This year's edition was actually a lot more fun in a personal sense because having the previous year's experience prevented me from having delusions about what to expect. This time I actually knew what the con was like instead of working off decades-old convention memories. As a result, I was able to relax and just let things happen.

Time was, that was the only way to fly. I used to know so many different people attending a certain con that it was a no-brainer that said con would be a good time. This year at AggieCon 38, I think going in with no preconceptions helped a great deal. There were certain goals I wanted to accomplish – such as meeting some Cepheid Variable club members so I could chat them up for artwork and contributions for my fanzine, set up an interview with Joe Lansdale, and maybe meet Richard Hatch, the Media Guest of Honor – but for the most part, I knew that my son Daniel and I would spend x-amount of time in the computer gaming room, wander the huckster room, grab some snacks and drinks in the con suite when desired, and go to the concerts (two



bands were slated to perform over the weekend). Those goals were mostly met, and a basic Good Time was had.

Once I saw the program book and the badges, I knew that I had to find and talk to Lars Doucet. As you can see from the accompanying scans of these items, Lars has a pile of talent, especially adept with the use of photoshop. This was exactly the kind of thing I was looking for: art by local fans. I was able to find out that Lars is a student at Texas A&M University and was also at the con, but I never found him. With any kind of luck, by showing his work in this zine and posting it on-line, he may come out of the woodwork and contact me, but I doubt it. The registration area on the second floor of Rudder Tower did not have a message board *per se*, so I didn't have that option for contacting him.

Instead, I had to rely on the old tried and true method of wander-and-read-nametags. It sort of worked, but Lars eluded my gaze. No matter. Just having these scanned items by him are worthy additions to the zine.

One of my other goals likewise failed to be met, that of meeting the media Guest of Honor, Richard Hatch. Getting him to come to AggieCon was a bit of a coup for the concommittee, and they kept him busy, as the program book showed.

My reason for catching up with Richard Hatch was totally fannish in nature; I brought along my Corflu fanzine bag, in which I had a dozen copies of *In A Prior Lifetime #20* and a half-dozen copies of *Askance #1*, plus a printout of *Science Fiction in San Francisco #1*, which had a picture of Jean Martin in the arms of Richard Hatch. Well, he had one arm around her shoulders, but she's so dang petite and **cute** that it's silly. I wanted him to autograph that zine by the photo, mainly to see if he remembered Jean, and then taunt Jean with this in a loc to *SF<sup>2</sup>*. Alas, this was not meant to be, *cheri*.



*the original BSG cast: Maren Jensen, Dirk Benedict, Richard Hatch, Lorne Greene (1978)*

The reason why I wasn't able to pull off this "funny" was because the con committee kept changing rooms throughout the entire 4-day weekend. My big chance to get Richard Hatch's

signature on *SF<sup>2</sup>* was squashed by a room change that I was not aware of. On Saturday, I ran over to Rudder 401 at 5:30 PM for the "Lost Trailers of Galactica" presentation that Hatch was mc-ing, but when I got there, a hand-written sign on 8"x11" paper informed me that it had been shmushed together with the "Q&A Session with Richard Hatch" at 3:30 PM in Rudder 301.

I Was Not Amused.

As it turned out, this was a recurring problem with the con. They kept changing rooms, and the Powers That Be need to come up with a more efficient means of announcing programming changes with things so spread out over six different floors between two buildings connected by a second floor walkway. It is a great convention set-up, but a lot of area to cover, and with the game of musical event rooms the concommittee played, that got a bit aggravating in short order. Hand-written notes taped to walls just doesn't cut it, In My Humble Opinion. But, I am not a con organizer, so we'll leave it go at that. Still, it was disconcerting, and I hope the concommittee learns from this experience.

Despite the last-minute changing of venues for various panels and such, the main areas of the con remained constant. The huckster room was bigger than last year's, and so had even more fun stuff to eye-ball and faunch over. Dan bought a beautiful matching 3-sword set to hang up in his room (which has a dragon and castle motif). I met Joe Lansdale in the huckster room, and got his e-mail address so that I could do an "interview" with him that way in case we couldn't get together over the weekend, then I gave Joe a copy of *Askance #1*. The art show was a bit bigger than last year, too, and had some really superb artwork displayed. Being the consummate fan-editor that I am, I was able to talk with a few of the artists and got either their business cards or e-mail addresses in trade for a copy of either *Askance #1* or *In A Prior Lifetime #20*. Here is hoping some of them come through with some art for the zine someday.

However, our weekend was mainly driven by the gaming room. Dan and I spent a lot of time each

day and night in the computer gaming room, which was also the site of the mini-Schlock Film Festival - short, home-made films that Cepheid Variable sponsors for public viewing. The main Schlock Film Festival is held in the Fall, I think, but this year the club wanted to get more folks involved by showing what was submitted specifically for the con. Some of these were pretty funny. "Happy Birthday" was a Living Dead/Texas Chainsaw spoof that was alright, but my favorite was "Dance," which was a choreographed fight scene on the TAMU campus between a ninja and an overweight ballerina in a pink tutu. It was strange and silly, and had everyone in the room howling.

We were able to take in both weekend concerts. The Eyeshine Band from California played Friday night (9:30-10:30 PM). and Dan wanted to hear them. They were pretty good, too. Their songs unfortunately have a tendency to sound alike. Also, their vocalist has one of those high, reedy voices with a hint of sandpaper that bugged me a little, but the group is anchored by a solid drummer and a bass player who is really excellent; his fingers were all over the fret board of his Ibanez 5-string bass. Dan liked them so much that I bought their CD *How about that?* for him, then Dan had the boys sign it. Highlight: Eyeshine did a pretty good power-trio version of Flock of Seagull's "I Ran."

Saturday's main highlight was the Ghoultown concert at 9:00 PM. The best way to describe this band is Goth-Country. They are all fans, and their drummer is the brother of one of my students in the semester just ended. He's pretty good, too; not as good as the drummer for Eyeshine, but still damned decent. Ghoultown has a full-blown stage show, complete with smoke machine, props, their logo on the back wall of the stage was an ox-head skull with spike-studded bands around each horn, and they were all dressed alike. They put a whole new spin on the phrase "Men in Black." Each member of this 5-man band wore black denims, black leather vests, black leather cowboy boots (with spurs, of course), the bassist wore gun belts slung over each shoulder, and so on. I took notes from time to time, mainly about the songs. You have

to love a song set list like "Return of the Living Dead," "Man with No Legs," "Attitude," "Buried in Deep" (their latest CD title), and "Killer in Texas." These boys were definitely entertaining. After their show, Dan and I called it a night, debating whether or not to return for gaming on Sunday.

As it turned out, Dan and I decided not to go back down to campus on Sunday morning, opting instead for relaxing at home.

So I never had the chance to meet Richard Hatch, or get that in-person interview with Joe Lansdale. Oh, well. Dan and I accomplished our basic weekend objectives, and thus were satisfied with the results.



Overall, AggieCon 38 was a pretty good con. The Dead Dog party Sunday night was around the other side of the circle I live on, so I swung by for a few minutes or thirty to see folks and thanked them for a decent effort. I also playfully chastised them for not letting me run a fanzine room. Maybe next year at the 39<sup>th</sup> edition. We shall see.



# Chaotic motion

by Charles E. Fuller II

Back in the spring of 1972, my mother brought home something interesting from a swap meet. It was a soda-pop bottle that had been pressed into service for another use. It had been filled with a liquid that made swirls when shaken, but settled out to just the colored fluid when it had been sitting long enough.

Mom had confidence in me. She was certain I would be able to copy it.

Mom was right.

Studying the material that made the swirls, I suspected right away what the metal sheen substance was, aluminium dust. I had been working with aluminium dust for some time by early '72. The context was, however, very different than bottles full of amusing fluids.

About four years prior, one of my uncles had loaned me his pyrotechnic manual. It had in it an assortment of formulas. The ones I was interested in I copied on the photocopy machine in the school library. To give an idea how long ago that was, consider this: the copies that machine made were *negatives*. Worse, they came out with some sort of solvent on them that made them smell bad. I still have the notebook those

copies eventually went into. One of the formulas really caught my attention. It caught my attention because it had in it nothing that would have been controversial. In this context, "controversial" is defined as having to be eighteen to be able to purchase.

Potassium permanganate plus aluminium dust was listed there as a flash-cracker powder. Student Science Service would not sell me the critical components listed in the other formulas, potassium chlorate or potassium perchlorate. They would, however, sell me all the  $\text{KMnO}_4$  I could afford. The aluminium I got down at the local Standard Brands paint store. It was sold as "bronzing powder."

The potassium permanganate served as an oxidizer and the aluminium as a fuel. The result is a quite energetic, in fact, downright pyrotechnic, burn.

I tried it; it worked. Sitting in a pile, the mix would make a really nice flash when suitably ignited. I did, however, have a bit of an accident with it that burned off the hair on my right arm from about the wrist to elbow. The resulting flash-burn looked and felt like a bad sunburn, and until I washed off the ash, it smelled *really bad*.

The  $\text{KMnO}_4$  / aluminium dust mix had none of the frustrating problems associated with attempting to make homemade black gunpowder. Grind up the  $\text{KMnO}_4$ , weigh the amounts, mix them together, and you have a flash / flash-cracker powder that *works*.

So when mom brought home that bottle, I was already familiar with the swirling effect that aluminium dust makes when it is dispersed in a fluid.

I had first noticed the visual effect when I was cleaning residual aluminium dust out of beakers and mortar and pestles. I had simply washed out the lab equipment with soapy water the same way one would wash dirty dishes. The technique works, but produces some interesting effects. Like potassium permanganate produces a beautiful purple color when dissolved in water, and aluminium dust swirls.

It took a bit of experimenting, but within a day or two, I had a workable copy of the "Trip Bottle," as the swap meet purveyor of the material called his product.

A few months later, I was in mass production and selling them at the Long Beach Drive-In swap meet.

I had re-named the product "Motion Potion" which seemed as good an appellation as any. Motion Potion sold well, and I found myself making more money than I ever had before in my life. In fact, it was money from Motion Potion that paid for my Colt Python.

In the early days at the Long Beach Drive-In swap meet, I sold the bottles for either fifteen cents each or two for a quarter. This may not sound like much, but recall that these were the days when one could still buy gasoline for less than thirty cents a gallon. Sell a hundred bottles in a day and it adds up, especially since they cost no more than a few cents each to make.

One of the things that made my sales of Motion Potion possible was my uncle working as a



delivery driver for the Cliquot Club soda-pop company. Uncle Kenny sold to the family, and just about everybody else in sight, his firm's product for just over cost. Naturally, I made a big point of collecting all the empty bottles I could. Eventually my sales location moved to the swap meet held at the Saugus Speedway in Saugus,

California. (It's not far from Magic Mountain.) There, I had some days where I sold over 200 bottles, and the price had gone up to 25 cents or five for a dollar. I also met a girl there from California City with whom I had what one might call a summer romance in the summer of '73.

One thing that I noted with amusement at Saugus, when I was first setting up, there would be a seller or two who would buy one bottle with a ten or even twenty dollar bill. It took me a bit to figure out that those people were simply making change. To me, however, a sale was a sale, and I made certain to always carry lots of change.

Other lessons experience taught me were less positive. One was that as soon as one heard a compliment, there was not going to be a sale. People who compliment your product never bought it. Some even seemed to be under the illusion that their compliment meant something.

Another bitter lesson was that people never came back.

Over and over again I'd hear, "I'll be back." It was a lie. I heard that lie literally hundreds of times over the year or so it took for me to get sick of it and do something. What I eventually did was to respond to the "be back" with the truth and say, "Nobody ever comes back." The result was that maybe one in eight or ten would then buy it. This was a great improvement over the number who would have otherwise come back, zero.

Long since, I'd learned an assortment of techniques to facilitate production of Motion Potion bottles. The most critical of these was simply to do one step on a bunch of bottles at once. Set out, say, a case of bottles, put the water in all of them half full, then the drop of surface-tension breaking fluid (aka emulsifier), and shake the bottle to wet the inside, then add the food coloring, then the aluminium dust, then cap each bottle with your thumb, and give it a good shake. Remember, the bottle is only about half full. The reason for only filling them half full is so the ingredients can be easily shaken together. Last, top the bottle off with water to about the same level as one sees soda-pop bottles filled.



Capping the bottles did not prove to be all that much of a problem. I charged extra for bottles with corks in them because corks cost money down at Shock's Hardware. The Cliquot Club bottles used a screw-on type crown cap. When I could convince people to just unscrew the caps to

open the bottles those caps worked just fine; I recycled by painting them with spray primer and screwing them back on. Unfortunately, many of my friends and relatives could not be reprogrammed, and insisted on mutilating the caps by removing them with a bottle opener.

For ultra-secure bottles, I double-sealed them. This technique consisted of ramming a cork in as hard as I could, and then sawing it off flush with the top of the bottle. I then put on the crown cap, usually with glue.

One thing about Motion Potion was that it was less likely to escape from confinement than most beverages. There being no carbon dioxide as there is with beer or soda-pop, there was no pressure in the bottle to confine. The only way the fluid escapes from a Motion Potion / Chaos Bottle is either for the bottle to break, or for the cap to be deliberately removed.

At the time, old-fashioned crown-cap bottles were still very common. I had two ways of resealing these bottles. One was to buy new crown caps from a local brewing supply. I purchased a Sears bottle capper to apply these caps with. (In fact I still have it.) The other technique, and by far the more popular, was, as noted above, corking them.

Once, when I was about to cork a batch of bottles, I saw something that filled me with dread. One of the bottles I had been about to ram a cork into with the heel of my hand had a hairline fracture down the neck. If I had rammed in a cork into that bottle's neck, it would likely have split and unzipped my hand and possible my lower arm. After that, I put a small wooden block between the cork and my hand while ramming in the corks.

When I was in the peak of my Motion Potion production, a friend made a suggestion. He gave me a five-gram bottle of a dye called "indigo carmine" and suggested that I try it for coloring Motion Potion. Indigo carmine is used for staining certain types of cells in biology. Simply dissolved in water, or Motion Potion, it made a really beautiful blue. The dye was also non-permanent and, from what I read, non-toxic.

That five-gram bottle of indigo carmine went a long way. I estimated at the time that I made over 1000 bottles off it. That was good because, by the standards of the time, indigo carmine was expensive, about fifty cents per gram. I must have eventually purchased another thirty grams of indigo carmine.

From the mid 1970s to when I moved here, Motion Potion was an on-again, off-again type of thing. I would make some and either sell them or give them away. Mostly what it brought me was a lot of fun.

The first time I took Motion Potion fannish was in about 1984. I had been doing a garage and storage reformation and had run across some of the stored materials. I made up a few dozen and took them to LASFS. It was a pleasant surprise when the bottles sold out and assorted of my fellow LASFSians placed orders for a bunch more.

There things stood for several years. Aluminium dust had gotten harder to find, and suitable bottles had gotten a bit scarcer. So there things lay until 1999.

This time it was an unpacking that brought to light the materials with which to make Motion Potion. I made a few and gave them away to assorted of my co-workers. They loved them!

I brought a few bottles to SNAFFU during this time frame. This was where the name was transmuted from Motion Potion to Chaos Bottles. Ken Forman had a bottle of the stuff he'd picked up at some con or other and called it a Chaos Bottle. I figured one name was as good as the next, and without a doubt, "Chaos Bottles," or "bottles of chaos," was more fannish than Motion Potion.

It was via the SNAFFU connection that the bottles reached their next phase. In late 2002, I brought some to club meetings and gave them away. One fellow SNAFFU member thought they were very interesting and asked how they were made.

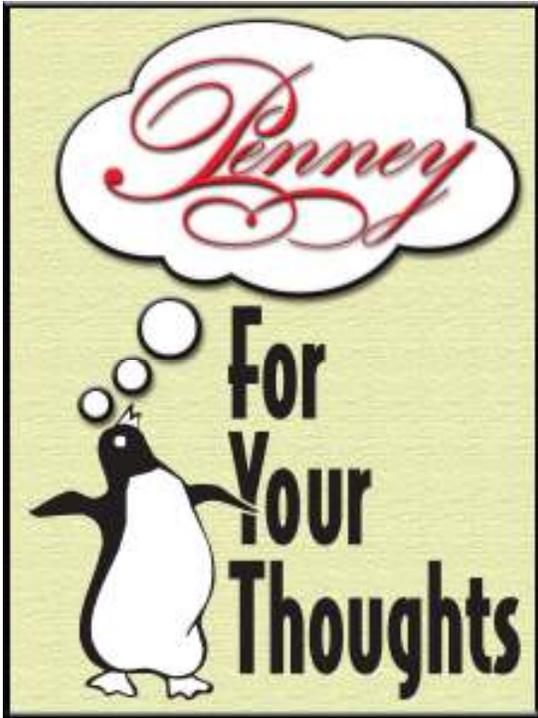
This fellow club member had something professional in mind. What was needed was something to keep her classes amused on the last day of the semester. Since teaching of any sort is invariably right out on the last day, it had to be something amusing.

Yes, I know, the procedures of how to make Chaos Bottles are not all that complicated. But there are an assortment of little details, like filling the bulk of the fluid in two stages, which make the processing easier and production faster. So, instead of just telling the formula, or even writing it down, I showed the ancient secret of Motion Potion, a.k.a., Chaos Bottles. The results inflated my ego beyond recognition. The bottles were a huge success, to the point that co-workers wanted to know how to make them and one even talked about writing an article on the topic. More, even with the notoriously short attention span of the American teenager, there is now in the school a sort of institutional memory about the bottles. The students know about their making on the last day of class and look forward to it.

The making of Chaos Bottles went fannish in a big way soon after. SNAFFU funds were earned on a large batch of bottles made in a group production effort in early 2003.

Plans were made to put Chaos in something classier than empty Miller Beer bottles. Unfortunately, those plans were prevented from coming to fruition due to an exercise in behavior that would be familiar to anybody who has read Desmond Morris' classic book, *The Naked Ape*. Dominance does, I guess, have its drawbacks.





## **Fanzine Reviews**

**by Lloyd Penney**

I've been reading Charles Stross lately - *Accelerando* on eBook, by the way - so I've picked up some amazing ideas and a few good words. One of them is *eigen*, which means "special, distinct or separate" in German. So when it comes to Randy Byers' new zine *Way*, I'd call it an eigen-zine, separate and distinct from its origins, Randy's LiveJournal, and heading off in its own direction. (I'm waiting for a publication to come in the mail called *Eigenzine*. It's probably a Charlie Stross fan club newsletter, who knows...)

It's always good to see a new zine, and I've not subscribed to Randy's LJ, so it's all new for me. I am thinking that an LJ is a good place to put essays and articles that are still in development or in its final polish so that it gets some feedback from those who might not read zines, so old-fashioned, after all... Perzines are hard to gauge, so perhaps I won't, other than to say to publish

one is good for you, and allows you to Pub Your Ish. As almost always, a Seattle zine is of a fine and eye-pleasing design.

Great artwork is inside... Taral Wayne, Stu Shiffman, and lots of Craig Smith, whose fine squiggle I haven't seen in a while. Looks like he was at Corflu this year; he captured it in a few good illos. And the actual writing? Personal history, recent happening, movie discussions, and talk at Corflu. I get some good words, so no bad words from me on this zine, Mr. Byers... I say, contact this guy and ask him for his zine! You won't be disappointed.

I have here Volume 8, No. 12 of *The Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin*. I've been receiving this publication for years, and it is always worth some comment. Randy Cleary is the current editor of the *SFC Bulletin*, and there's always convention reviews and southern US fan news to peruse.

I wouldn't call this a gateway for SFC members to jump into the great fandom out there, but it is a perfect gateway to find out what's happening in their own pretty great fandom, Southern fandom, and all its activities. Inside are con reports, often from Randy or Tom Feller, fanzine listings, again from Tom Feller, southern con listings, club listings, and a letter column. There are often con flyers copied and stapled to the mailing. It is a regional zine/newsletter lots of other regions could use. Maybe it's the Southern *SF/SF* long before *SF/SF* came along. Art for this issue is from Randy Cleary, who should have appeared on a Hugo ballot for Best Fan Artist before now. It's a good zine to read and a valuable reference, regularly updated, for the Southern fan.

Just received the latest issue of *Plokta*, #37, so why not? The newest issue sure doesn't look like a *Plokta*... Alison Scott provides a fine ATomic cover to start.

Set the Wayback Machine, Sherman, to April 1, 1972, and let's go to Chessmancon, the Eastercon for that year. (There's even a 1973 TAFF ballot thrown into the zine for good measure.) Volume 23, No. 1 looks like the usual zine typed up on a typer, except for the tell-tale colour photograph. We get into the regular *Plokta* further on, and there the usual shot at IKEA (Yvonne's got her own IKEA experiences to relate, so it's good to know there's someplace she could publish it), and a regular loccol.

Great Sue Mason illo on the back...I would have gotten away with all of this, if it wasn't for you meddling kids! I especially like the British Dennis the Menace in the shot. This issue is a little shorter than most at 12 pages, but I'm not complaining. This zine is always fun, even if the international post offices snack on them from time to time.

Sue Jones is the editor of *Tortoise*, and I get the feeling she's a little alone in the midst of British fandom. She doesn't seem to have much contact with other British faneds, but that doesn't stop her from producing an interesting zine, issue 23 this time.

Sue is the main influence on this zine; the other is her alter-ego, her pet Siberia, the Imaginary Tortoise, and the zine gets done, mostly with Siberia's nagging. And, to assuage Siberia, a lot of the zine is tortoise- and turtle-based. The zine is a very personal one, so there's tales of Sue's life, discussions with Siberia, articles from her and sometimes her Australian boyfriend, and some travelogue about her several trips to Melbourne. There are various reviews and the loccol, and a few zine reviews. It is a light read, but also an enjoyable one, and Sue is someone I'd like to meet someday, if only there wasn't so much geography in the way.

Sue, put these out more often than yearly! I know life gets in the way...

Way / Randy Byers, ed. / [fringefaan@yahoo.com](mailto:fringefaan@yahoo.com)

*The Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin* / Randy Cleary, ed. / [rbcleary@bellsouth.net](mailto:rbcleary@bellsouth.net)

*Plokta* / The Plokta Cabal, eds. / [locs@plokta.com](mailto:locs@plokta.com)

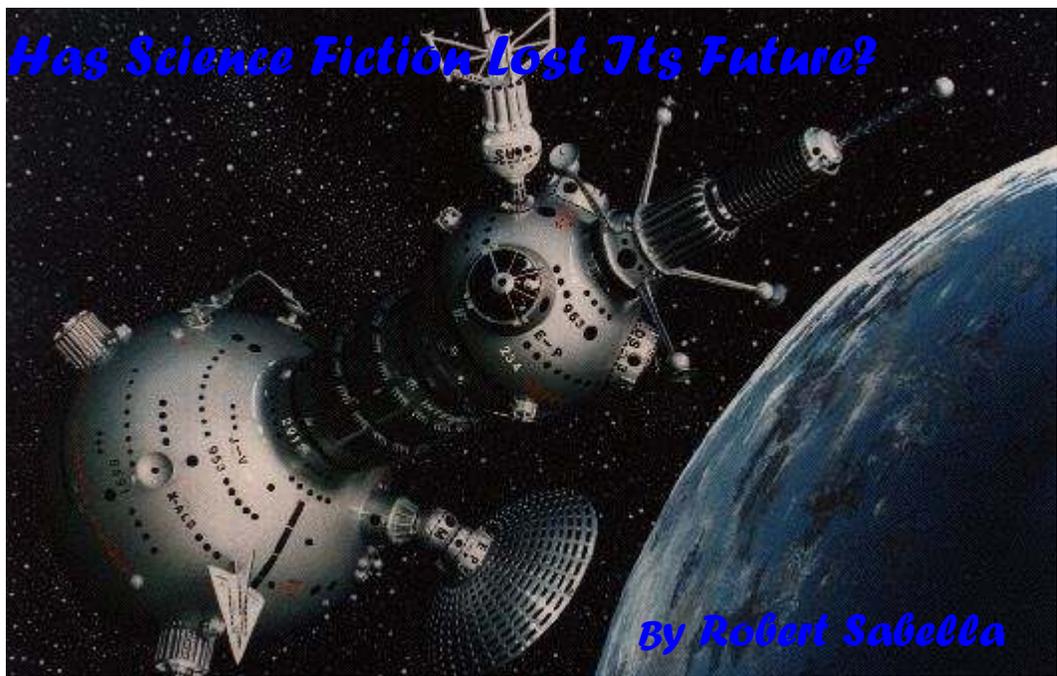
*Tortoise* / Sue Jones, ed. / [sue.tortoise@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.tortoise@btinternet.com)

\* \* \* \* \*

**Fanzines received & reviewed:**

- Alexiad* #32 (Vol. 6, No. 2)
- Ansible* #237 - 238
- Cargo Cult Books and Notions* (March/April, 2007)
- Challenger* #25 (hardcopy)
- Drink Tank* #121-125
- Einblatt!* (April & May, 2007)
- File* #770:149
- Halcyon Days* #114
- The Knarley Knews* #123
- MT Void* #1434-1440
- Orphan Scrivener* #44
- Picofarad* #8
- Pixel* #12-13
- Plotka* #36

- Procrastinations* #3
- Science Fiction in San Francisco* #42-44
- Some Fantastic* #11
- Surprising Stories* #14
- Taboo Opinions* #94-100
- Vanamonde* #668-682
- Vegas Fandom Weekly* #95
- The View from Entropy Hall* #38
- Visions of Paradise* #113-115:
- Wondrous Stories*
- The Zine Dump* #15



All right, I confess that is an intentionally deceptive title intended to pique your curiosity. I am not speaking about the future of the genre *per se*. I am speaking about the popularity of science fiction stories whose main concern is the far future as opposed to the past, present, or near-future. While it would be almost impossible to analyze all published sf novels, I have decided to use the Hugo Award for Best Novel as a snapshot of sf trends. Consider the following data:

From 1960-1990, 74% of the 31 Hugo-winning novels were set in the far future, while only 26% of them were set otherwise:

Far-Future settings (23)	Near-future, present, past, fantasy (8)
Cyteen	Neuromancer
The Uplift War	Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang
Speaker for the Dead	Stand on Zanzibar
Ender's Game	The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress
Startide Rising	The Wanderer
Foundation's Edge	Here Gather the Stars
Downbelow Station	The Man in the High Castle
The Snow Queen	Stranger in a Strange Land
The Fountains of Paradise	
Dreamsnake	

Gateway	
The Forever War	
The Dispossessed	
Rendezvous with Rama	
The Gods Themselves	
To Your Scattered Bodies Go	
Ringworld	
The Left Hand of Darkness	
Lord of Light	
...And Call Me Conrad	
Dune	
A Canticle for Leibowitz	
Starship Troopers	

However, from 1990-2006, the trend reversed with only 35% of the 17 Hugo-winning novels set in the far future, while 65% were set otherwise:

<b>Far-Future settings (6)</b>	<b>Near-future, present, past, fantasy (11)</b>
A Deepness in the Sky	Paladin of Souls
Mirror Dance	Hominids
A Fire Upon the Deep	American Gods
Barrayar	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
The Vor Game	To Say Nothing of the Dog
Hyperion	Forever Peace
	Blue Mars
	The Diamond Age
	Green Mars
	Doomsday Book
	Spin

Why did this happen? I suspect one incentive was Cyberpunk, whose main focus was near-future extrapolation based on contemporary trends. This first became popular in 1984 when William Gibson's *Neuromancer* swept the major awards. The 1980s and 1990s were also the decades which also saw the

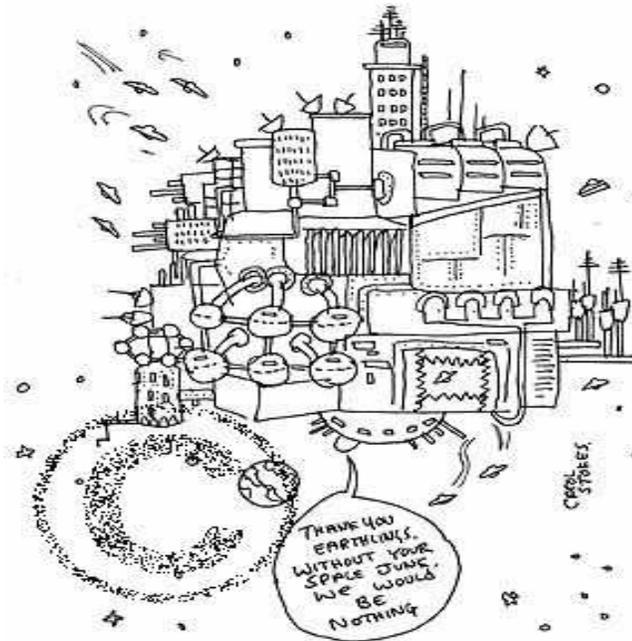
incredible growth in popularity of fantasy (which won 4 of 5 Hugo Best Novel Awards starting in 2001) which now sells more books per year than science fiction does. Those decades also saw the growth of alternate history (set in the past) and slipstream (mostly contemporary).

In recent years, the trend has not shown any signs of slipping back to the far future though. Of the 15 Hugo nominees for Best Novel the past 3 years, 6 have been set in the far future:

Year	Far-Future settings	Near-future, present, past, fantasy
2005	The Algebraist Iron Sunrise	Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell Iron Council River of Gods
2006	Learning the World Old Man's World	Spin Accelerando A Feast for Crows
2007	Blindsight Glasshouse	Eifelheim His Majesty's Dragon Rainbows End

Granted, the Hugo Awards are only snapshots of current trends in science fiction, but with the evidence from those awards showing such an overwhelming shift away from the far future, it is hard to believe that is not a genre-wide trend as well.

And for those of us who grew up loving the far future, that is a sad future to envision.






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### once again, the regional convention calendar:

**A-Kon 18: Giant Robots Attack:** June 1-3, 2007. Dallas, TX // An interesting name. “The Southwest’s largest Anime convention.” Dealers room, guests, seminars, workshops, video rooms, gaming, et al. write to – Phoenix Entertainment, 3352 Broadway, Suite 470, Garland, TX 75043.

**SoonerCon 2007:** June 8-10, 2007. Oklahoma City, OK // Science fiction, fantasy, and gaming con. GoH: Stephen R. Donaldson; Artist GoH: Keith Birdsong; Toastmaster: Selina Rosen. write to – SoonerCon, 6006 S. Western, Oklahoma City, OK 73139

**ApolloCon 2007:** June 22-24, 2007. Houston, TX // In its fourth year, this is one of the area’s biggies. GoH: C.S. Friedman; Editor GoH: David G. Hartwell; Artist GoH: Jeff Sturgeon; Filk GoH: Graham and Becca Leathers; Fan GoH: A.T. Campbell III. Write to – ApolloCon, P.O. Box 541822, Houston, TX 77254-1822

**San Japan:** July 13-15, 2007. San Antonio, TX // “Japanese Anime and Culture Convention.” No contact info given. Held at The Holiday Inn Select, 77 NE Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78216.

**Conestoga 11:** July 20-22, 2007. Tulsa, OK // “Oklahoma’s largest literary science fiction and fantasy con.” GoH: Laurell K. Hamilton; Artist GoH: John Picacio; Toastmaster: Elizabeth Moon; Fan GoHs: Richard & Michelle Zellich; Special 1632 GoH: Eric Flint. Write to – Conestoga, Inc., P.O. Box 700776, Tulsa, OK 74170-0776

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*This is that part of the zine in which faithful readers sling their verbal epithets in my direction. Even so, I am pleased at the response the first issue received. As you will see when you read further, just about everybody was blown away by Brad Foster's cover on **Askance #1**, and the general response was most favorable. So let us plod onward and see who said what about the first issue.*

*Leading off is an old fannish friend of mine, someone who has always made critical – yet positive – comments about my zines. Let's have a rousing round of applause for our old friend from Toronto, Canada, that hairy man in the Aussie hat, **Mike Glicksohn!***

2 May 2007

From: "Mike Glicksohn"

<[mglick@interlog.com](mailto:mglick@interlog.com)>

I have a strange sense of *deja vú!* I've more or less been out of fanzine fandom for about 15 years and here I have a brand new fanzine from a fan I used to know in the old days and it has a lovely cover by an artist whose work I greatly admired 'way back then. Am I doing the Time Warp again? (I hope you get this: I think there's an underscore in your e-mail address but the underlining makes it hard to be sure. Oh well, if it comes back I'll print out a copy and send it the old way.) *{Obviously, I got your e-mail loc, since here it is in print.}*

Then I momentarily wondered if this was a different fan altogether when you mentioned working on your doctorate from 2002 on. I thought "my" John Purcell would have finished his degree long before now, but when I read on I see you haven't exactly been goofing off since

1991! Good luck with the PhD and the new fanzine (but if only one can be a success, make sure it's the fanzine!)

When we were on strike in the early winter of 1975 we amused ourselves while picketing by playing "Botticelli." No stripping, though, as it was below zero (F) and snowing!

I've only made it to one Corflu (you can probably guess which one) but I enjoy reading about them. Your report was well-written and frequently entertaining but provoked very little in the way of meaningful feedback. I don't agree with your contention that people were extra excited about #24 "because Austin, Texas was a lot easier to get to than Toronto, Canada" but such judgments are relative, eh? I also noted that two lines on the bottom of page 6 were repeated at the top of page 7. Stupid computers. That probably wouldn't happen if you were using stencils and a Selectric. And lastly, it is my strictly personal opinion that real fen don't drink Cream Sherry!

Linda's description of some of the eateries in Las Vegas had me doing two things: (1) salivating, and (2) wondering if anyone in Las Vegas weighs less than 300 pounds. Linda mentions a group that meets at various restaurants.

There's such a group here too, called The Serial Diners, but they are working their way alphabetically through the restaurant listings in the Toronto phonebook. So they usually don't know how big the place is and often don't know what sort of food to expect. It's always struck me as weird, but they seem to have fun each week.

I guess it's a sign of my times that I needed a magnifying glass to read "Figby."

I believe a good fanzine reviewer needs two things (1) a wide awareness of the fanzine scene, and (2) the critical ability to evaluate the style and content of the fanzine in question. Lloyd certainly has the first but while his column was entertainingly written I found it lacked some substance when it came to discussing the actual contents of the issues he wrote about. Still, it was a fine first column and will only improve as Lloyd finds his voice as a reviewer.

I've not run across Teresa Cochrane until now (but then I've not run across the vast majority of fans who have found fandom in the last 15 years) but she writes well and certainly seems to have understood the essence and mythology of fanzine fandom in a very short time. I admit to not knowing how a blind person can read books (unless in braille of course) and fanzines (none in braille) or use the Internet but obviously it can be done and I'm extremely impressed with what Teresa has accomplished so far.

I wasn't aware Eric Mayer was back in fandom (it's probably over 20 years since we were in contact) but that's because I have no contact with fanzines via e-mail. I don't "decry" e-fanzines but I'm not interested in that medium (I may even be the guy Mark mentioned.)

Thanks for putting me on the DTR: I'm amazed but flattered that you thought of me.

**MIKE**

*{I happen to like Cream Sherry as a desert-style nightcap. It is a sweet, tasty way to finish off an evening of delightful camaraderie. However, bheer is, and will always be, my preferred con beverage.}*

*Au contraire, mon ami; it is I who is amazed and flattered that you located my zine. Mark Plummer actually wasn't referring to you as the fan who only wanted to receive paper fanzines. As of yet, that person has yet to respond to this issue, so we shall see if that fan will remain on the DTR (Dead Tree Roster) after receiving his third issue. You are safe in this regard, Mike, now through at least the fourth issue. Lucky you.}*

*Rising from the depths of history – or at least taking a break from producing **Drink Tank** on the job – is my favorite Corflu roomie,  
**Christopher J. Garcia!***

17 Mar 2007

From: "Chris Garcia"  
<[garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:garcia@computerhistory.org)>

Well, *Askance* is finally here. I'm glad to see it since *In A Prior Lifetime* and *And Furthermore* were both great and I figure you wouldn't replace those two with anything less than greatness. And I was not underwhelmed at all.

You start with that Brad Foster cover. You bastard! I had the good luck to run a Brad Foster cover on *The Drink Tank's Second Annual Giant-Sized Annual* and it was a marvel.

And then you had to go and drop that piece on your cover! It's the best cover I've seen in ages with the wonderful colour and general Brad Foster awesomeness! Well played, Brad. Well played, indeed.

I love your CorFlu report. Unlike mine, which was part dark comedy routine and part general report, you managed to put out a real report with some great pictures and good writing. I have to note that your energy level between that first and second photo of the two of us seemed to have dropped. It might have been me. To maintain my powerful energy level I suck the life-force from those around me. I probably should have mentioned that earlier. It was a great time, though. Don't you think? *{This begins to make sense. I have been wondering why it's taken me so long to get back up to speed since Corflu. Does this mean that you really suck?}*

You got a bunch of Vegas folks to let you reprint some of their great stuff. I've been reading Linda Bushyager since the early 1980s when Dad taught me to read using old issues of *Granfalloon*. I remember that Roxanne Mills

article, I think from *VFW* but it might have been from *SNAPS*. It's good stuff. And as always, Teresa Cochran, that deviless who stole the Best New Fan from me, gives us another wonderful article. I hope she starts a zine soon. I'd love to see her stuff more frequently.

It's a great looking zine. It actually feels different than either *AF* or *IAPL*. You've done it again, good buddy!

## CHRIS

*{That is exactly what David Burton said, too. The funny thing is that I wasn't trying to create a different "feel," so I guess it happened on its own. This just goes to prove that certain types of zines- genzines vs. perzines vs. apazines vs. whateverzines - exude a persona fen have come to expect from such a zine over the years. Fine by me. All I care about is producing a fanzine that people enjoy and will contribute their talents to. What more could I ask?}*

*{Oh. Before I forget: CHRIS FOR TAFF!*

*{Here we go again...}*

*Someone who has become an unwitting frequent contributor to zines returns. At least in this zine, the chances of him moaning about the New York Yankees are greatly reduced.*

24 Mar 2007

From: Eric Mayer <[maywrite2@epix.net](mailto:maywrite2@epix.net)>

It would be pretty hard to imagine a better beginning for a new fanzine than that cover by Brad Foster. I am loving Brad's e-zine forays into color. Having done black and white fanzine drawings for so long, it must have been hard for him to avoid just colorizing his work but to my eye he really uses the color in its own right. Wow!

Although your account of Corflu was interesting and gave me a welcome, vicarious glimpse of a few folks I know via fanzines, being a non-congoer there's little comment I can offer. I fear the social inter-action required would have me paralyzed. Generally I can deal with one person at a time. Not crowds. I did attend a couple of Deadly Ink mystery conferences, but those were day-long affairs and I was scheduled to do panels and book signings, which means I had specific tasks, aside from freeform socializing, set out for me, so it was manageable.

I also can't say much about Linda Bushyager's essay on restaurants. I'm not much for eating out.

Fancy restaurants make me nervous. Even being waited on makes me uneasy. My ideal place is a little local diner, except I'm vegetarian and such places don't normally have much of a vegetarian menu. Mostly I stick to Chinese take-outs and pizza parlors, both of which can satisfy my preferences for lack of meat and lack of ambience.

I enjoyed Roxanne Mills' follow up to her article about her amazing sense of smell (which I thought was one of the best fanzine articles I've read in the past couple years.) *{I completely agree!}*

My own "super hearing sense" is the ability to hear deep bass noises from vast distances. Noises like the thump, thump, THUMP, THUMP of a boom box or a neighbor's stereo. In today's world that is definitely a sort of negative super "power" because not only can I hear such sounds, but I cannot force myself to ignore them. When I lived in apartments it drove me crazy. The weird thing is I am not in the least bothered by sounds like incessantly barking dogs or traffic.

Mind you, with a cat and a ferret in the house I should think Roxanne would be hearing a lot more exciting noises than the tinkling of a bell but then I have never owned a ferret.

Have to admire Teresa Cochran. I don't know how much I'd read, let alone write, if I were blind. It's, to be frank, unimaginable to me how folks with severe disabilities manage to accomplish so much. But I'm really confused about this whole new fan thing. Theresa had got one of my votes for new fan last year! So I'm glad she won this year. And that Chris Garcia won last year, but not again this year. Should I just keep voting for Pete Sullivan until he wins?

Nice to see Lloyd Penney's zine reviews. Reviews really help to give fanzines a sense of being part of a community.

A few general points seem to call for comment. First, there's no doubt that a paper fanzine is a different sort of thing than an e-zine so I can appreciate those who want to preserve paper zines as an art form. A lot of the mythos of fandom revolves around fanzine reproduction, not surprisingly, since the repro aspect generally took as long and tended to be more arduous than the writing and drawing part. In fact, considering the mundane stuff I filled my own fanzine with, most of what made it a fanzine were the repro techniques of ditto and pseudo hectography. When you go to electronic distribution -- or in



your case when the paper version is not, if I gather correctly, the primary version -- you lose that important aspect.

Nevertheless, I prefer what is gained, particularly the fact that quality of the production and availability are no longer predicated on what the editor can afford by way of printing supplies or postage costs. I was always frustrated by my inability to participate more fully in fanzine fandom due solely to the fact that at the time I was publishing, first as a student and then trying to support a young family, I didn't have sufficient discretionary income. So, probably as a reaction, I have made a point of confining myself, this go round, entirely to what I can receive or propagate electronically with no exceptions.

With regards to various mentions of publishing frequency, I should point out that starting in 2000 Mary and I have put out 43 bi-monthly issues of our newsletter "The Orphan Scrivener." Although designed mostly to convince our publisher we were doing publicity in support of our mystery novels (a must these days) it is 90% fanzine. Each issue consists of a brief intro and farewell from Mary, with an essay by each of us, and a scant paragraph of news/publicity stuck in the middle somewhere. Since it is by two fans, Bill Burns has kindly placed the whole archive on eFanzines for anyone who may be interested.

I haven't covered everything. I guess I'm getting old. But it's a fine first issue and I hope enough of the old time faanish etiquette survives that you receive an electronic mailbox full of LoCs.

**ERIC**

*{Fannish etiquette is apparently alive and well; I have indeed received a nice amount of electronic responses. As a matter of fact, more paper zines are arriving at a faster rate, which I like. And may I make a plug for **The Orphan Scrivener** here: I enjoy reading it, and hope more folks go to eFanzines and check it out.}*

*This time around, no dueling loccers from separate rooms and computers, but **Mark Plummer** had some interesting comments to make about the debut issue.*

25 Mar 2007

From: Mark Plummer

<[mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com](mailto:mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com)>

This is, I assume, Chris Garcia's fault, but *Askance #1* with its coverage of Corflu Quire seems curiously dated. Corflu was, what, six weeks or so back now, and Chris wrote it all up in half-a-dozen places within about twenty-seven-and-a-half minutes of the convention ending leaving me rather with the sense that the conversation has moved on. Corflu is just so \*last month's\* story.

It's the time compression thing that comes with online fandom, I suppose. Whereas once we'd have to wait for people to come back from conventions with extravagant tall-tales for the stay-at-homes which would appear in convention reports -- like yours -- weeks or months after the event, now we can follow it blow-by-blow on LiveJournal or the like, and with larger conventions the remote viewer might be able to get a better big-picture impression by taking advantage of the godlike omniscience that comes from distance.

On-the-spot coverage and immediate reactions seem to be very much the thing these days. Towards the end of the second Plokta.con in the UK in 2002, the organisers collected digital photos from the attendees and arranged them into a slide-show and so on the Sunday afternoon we all sat down to watch what we'd been doing for the preceding two days, which might have been slightly more interesting if it wasn't for the fact that I could remember. Still, for all the instant reportage that dominates these days, I think there's still a place for a bit of distance coverage, especially when, as in the case of this Corflu, it was a damn good convention. The relatively low attendance (by general convention standards) means that a fellow attendee such as myself can easily map my own experience onto yours,

almost to the extent that when you're describing a particular exchange I can sort of mentally picture you \*just over there\* by the food table while I was sitting \*here\* on the sofa by the keyboard or whatever.

And in fact maybe Corflu's getting a kind of second wind at the moment, after that initial flush of immediate post-convention reactions from Chris and Randy and so on. Just yesterday, we received some photos in the post from Joyce Scrivner -- real photos, printed onto photographic paper and everything -- and one of them even seems to mirror Geri's photo of you and Chris on page 12 with Claire playing the part of the animated one. It may even be one of those intersections I was just talking about as I think I can actually see myself in Geri's picture, above and to the right of your left ear.

If Corflu is indeed getting its second-wave reactions that may be just as well as I'm not entirely sure where the zeitgeist is now, what's this month's story. About two weeks ago it was jelly and space hoppers, although even then that was a fairly localised zeigeist but now? In the UK, it may be the looming Eastercon, less than two weeks off now, which combines the sense of anticipation before what you hope will be a really good party with the tension presaging a parachute jump into enemy territory. I always get the shakes before a drop. I'll let you know how we get on, always assuming we can fight our way out...

Best etc,

**MARK**

*{We can probably blame a lot of things on Chris Garcia, but electronic fanac has certainly brought an immediacy we've never known before. Here it is, three months since Corflu 24, and back in the day, this is the time when all of the Corflu reports would be plopping into mailboxes all over the world. Electronic communication has definitely speeded up the process, but I don't think that's a Bad Thing. The nice memories from Corflu should keep me going for a while yet.}*

*Hey! Teresa Cochran returns to these pages with a loc, proving that she knows how the system works. Oh, how the kids grow up so quickly nowadays...*

29 Mar 2007

From: "Teresa Cochran"

<[flyingfox692003@yahoo.com](mailto:flyingfox692003@yahoo.com)>

James and I received *Askance* on Tuesday. It's now Thursday, and I've downloaded it to read on my PC. I enjoyed the con report a lot. It captured the spirit of Corflu 24 quite admirably. It was great meeting you and having such a wonderful conversation. That's one thing I really like about fen; such interesting and intelligent folk.

I must tell you, however, that the title of my SNAPS zine is actually "Bat Signals," named for the tiny, wee ultrasonic squeaks that many insectivorous bats produce when they are echolocating or communicating with each other. *{My fault, there. Thank you for the correction.}*

Did you know that bat droppings make excellent fertilizer? Ask any farmer, and they'll tell you. Maybe this will be a prophetic occurrence. I'm talking a lot about producing my first per-zine, as you know, and hopefully, it will happen real soon now. I have an idea for a column; I'm just not sure what will lead it off.

Thanks for a most entertaining zine, and good luck on your academic adventures.

**TERESA**

*{I have now completed the first draft of my dissertation proposal and registered for Fall '07 research coursework, and thank you for the well wishes. I am going to need all the help I can get!}*



*Another first issue contributor checks in, with some advice to us fan-editors who tend to compress art to fit space. But I will let Brad Foster chastise us in his own words.*

4 Apr 2007

From: "Brad Foster"  
<[bwfoster@juno.com](mailto:bwfoster@juno.com)>

Still catching up on mail and such, and meant to drop you a note before this to let you know my print copy of *Askance #1* arrived last week. Thanks so much for that, AND for such great repro on the cover. I loved it on that slick stock, very nifty!

And, after that, I do also have a minor complaint/quibble/bit-of-advice, in regards to the other piece of art by me in this issue on page 26. I thought it looked odd when I came across it, not the drawing I had sent you. Then realized why: you had "squashed" it down to fit the space. I'm running into this more these days with people putting together their zines using a computer, and having access to the ability to change the shapes of images. I would like to stress, not just my own art, but for all artists, that it's really a warping of the image to do that. Changing the size of an image proportionally to fit is one thing, but to actually change those proportions is pretty much a no-no, without checking with the artist first, as it does radically change the image. Think of it as if you were editing some text, but by changing the words you changed the meaning. It's the same with artwork. In this case, my thin tall figure is now short and squat. I know you didn't do it with any intent to change it in such a way, so wanted to call your attention to it for future reference in handing graphics. *{I apologize for smushing the Daryl illo too much; it was inadvertent, and won't happen again. In fact, you and other readers should hopefully notice I'm using larger illoes and such this time. I think the larger sizes not only do the artwork justice, but also make the zine much more visually appealing.}*

On your opening editorial, I love how you put "leisurely" in quotes in referencing to the idea of doing a zine with a bimonthly schedule. I've personally always felt that fanzines really don't need to worry too much about hitting a hard and fast publishing schedule, just to the nature of how the material is gathered. I'd rather a zine show up "every so often", as long as it contained the material that the editor felt was the best they

could put together at that time, not simply what they had managed to get in, and then "had" to print because of a deadline. So, don't worry if you can't get it out every other month, just have fun with it all and give us the best you can each time. Relax, it's just a zine, it's supposed to be fun!

Much to do now, getting ready for the Deep Ellum Arts Festival this weekend. And, after last weekend with a half rain-out, looks like THIS weekend they are predicting rain to start, but then a return of winter with cold temperatures. Who the heck came up with the brilliant idea of holding these art festivals outdoors? Sheesh!

stay happy~  
**BRAD**

*{This bi-monthly schedule really does feel much more relaxed, and gave me enough time to gather some fine material for not only this issue, but the next one, too.*

*{Good luck with all of your artistic endeavours. How did the Deep Ellum Arts Festival go? Maybe you can regale us in these pages with a report from the artist's perspective.}*

*Like a breath from the past, the following loc came the old-fashioned way: in the mailbox. That certainly brought back memories. And it is a good loc, too:*

31 March 2007

E.B. Frohvet  
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506  
Ellicott City MD 21042

Well, the receipt of *Askance #1* was a pleasant surprise. If a LOC counts as "The Usual" (apparently it doesn't to some faneds), here I am. for the immediate future as a "dead tree" fan. Sort of like collecting firewood: hey, it was dead already before I got there.

College Station... Texas & M? They did about as well as might be expected in the tournament. I confess I had never heard of Blinn College, though I can tell you where Mercyhurst College is.

Where do I sign up for plunging into a lake with bikini babes? I can provide the lake... Idle curiosity: Have you any familiarity with the

International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, annual event in Florida? Janine Stinson and I have differed over it, I calling it a “weekend off for slumming academics.” *{I like that!}*

Pardon the grammatical critique, but “I could nearly stand it no longer” is an ugly sentence for an English teacher to have written... The phrase “dulcimer—in—a—box” would be unclear even if you had specified, hammer dulcimer, or Appalachian dulcimer... *{Both written for effect, Eeb. These are examples of what I meant by “fannish sensibility” in this issue’s editorial.}*

I was only in Las Vegas once, years ago, and found it amusing for a day or two, but my patience for that sort of thing runs out more quickly now. This area has some quite good restaurants, but lacks a good Dim Sum place, and a good kosher deli. (Let’s face it, we gentiles can’t make corned beef.)

Ah, a fanzine review column. In the recent *Banana Wings* #24, Steve Jeffery objected that there were few zine-review columns any more. (Apparently forgetting mine, of which I reminded him.) And the estimable Lloyd Penney probably knows as much about the current fanzine scene as anyone. Unfortunately I don’t have much familiarity with the zines actually reviewed this time, but the idea has potential. I might like to see shorter reviews of more zines, but that’s just me.

Teresa Cochran: Welcome to fandom. It’s a slightly different journey for each of us; but I suspect we have in common the experience of being oddballs in a mundane family.

Incidentally, John, page 22: I don’t even live in Texas, but I’m pretty sure it’s “Corpus Christi”, no final e. Nitpicking, but I learned my grammar/spelling/punctuation in schools that emphasized that sort of thing, and tend to notice when it’s not the way I learned it. *{OOPS!}*

Eric Mayer voices a worthy insight, that hobbies pursued too far can become chores. *{I made this discovery many years ago, too. It is an observation worth repeating.}*

In *Island in the Sea of Time*, S.M. Stirling uses “the Great Wisdom” to refer to an architectural site still well known in our own time. . . . This will reflect my taste, apparently more sercon and less faanish than yours, but have you considered

some actual material about SF? That seems to be a dying interest in fanzines.

Hate to point it out, but several people (myself and Joe Major to name a couple) have been referring to “the Langford Award” for years now. Sad to see something which ought to have been a positive force in fandom become a private personality—cult fiefdom.

Loved Lloyd Penney’s reference to the college bookstore which sells baby clothes. In this day and age, it seems like a sensible precaution.

Death to revisionist hyenas,

**E.B. FROHVET**

*{A science fiction fanzine actually discussing science fiction? Why the heck not? After all, I truly enjoy reading SF and welcome its discussion in my zine.}*

*In fact, Robert Sabella points this zine in that direction back on pages 15-17, and here he is again:*

10 Apr 2007

From: Robert Sabella

<[bsabella@optonline.net](mailto:bsabella@optonline.net)>

It’s Spring Break this week, so I’m catching up on my loccing, among other things. I was very pleased to see the first issue of *Askance*. A brand-new fanzine is always exciting for the promise of what it might contain, and *Askance* #1 starts off very promisingly from the very start with a fabulous cover. Art was always one of the strengths of *In A Prior Lifetime*, and apparently that will continue with your new title.

I enjoyed your discussion of your current educational situation. Good luck on the prelims, and the subsequent thesis. Part of me envies you, since I have always wanted to go back for the PhD which I abandoned 35 years ago, but I gave it up for a good reason: I was tired of math and did not want to spend the rest of my life researching it. And that still stands. I would like to go back in history, either East Asian or Italian, but if I do not have any time to loc fanzines now, where the heck would I find the time to take classes and study?

The Corflu report was interesting. I always enjoy attending cons vicariously (more so than actually attending them, to be honest, which is why I go to so few of them). Yes, your energy level certainly seemed to weaken as the weekend progressed. Not Garcia's though. How the heck does he do it? I never had nearly that much energy my entire life! I guess Chris is trying to live Neil Young's exhortation, "It's better to burn out than to turn to rust." We'll see how much energy he still has in another decade.

I enjoyed Lloyd Penney's fanzine reviews, and look forward to more installments. There are a lot of zines out there that I don't read, including several at efanzines.com, so hopefully his recommendations will lead me to a few new ones.

Keep up the good work. I look forward to subsequent issues of a zine that I'm sure nobody will look askance at (sorry, I couldn't resist!).

#### **BOB**

*{Sad to say, it appears that Chris Garcia is the Ever-Ready Bunny of fanac. Moss certainly doesn't stand a chance of growing in his shadow.*

*{Puns are always a welcome temptation. I can't resist them, either.}*

*Here is an interesting story about receiving the first issue from a good friend that I saw again at Corflu Quire, Hope Leibowitz:*

*14 Apr 2007*

From: Hope Leibowitz

[<tiki@interlog.com>](mailto:tiki@interlog.com)

Yesterday, in my mailbox, only slightly bent, was your new zine! I was a bit surprised that the cover wasn't in color. I guess I misunderstood, though I wasn't sure how you could afford to put a color cover on every one. I was so excited, that when I saw my mailman (I took it with me to read on the subway and he was still in the neighborhood, I tore it open to show it to him. It was a bit of a shock as I was expecting color. But I can always see it on efanzines.

So far I read the article by Linda Bushyager. I was at that Alize outing after Corflu, when Art Widner got the Grand Marnier. It was \$32 for one shot and I got to taste it. I didn't even know they came in grades. I got a \$27 sashimi appetizer. That restaurant is everything Linda said, and the service is amazing...

If you need to save the money on postage I could access it on the Internet, but I am less likely to read it than when I have a paper copy.

Thanks again for sending it to me! It looks great.

#### **HOPE**

*{Thank you for the kind words, Hope. If you don't mind, I will continue to send you print copies. If I can afford to make all covers of the print run in color, I will. Until that point, though, I will have to keep the amount of color covers down to around a dozen.}*

*Here's a fellow who doesn't write many locs, but he's a good fellow and a co-panelist at Corflu Quire – "The Fine Art of Letterhacking" panel with Ted White, Claire Brialey, Rich Coad, and myself – and it is always good to hear from him.*

*17 Apr 2007*

From: Jerry Kaufman

[JAKaufman@aol.com](mailto:JAKaufman@aol.com)

That's one brilliant Brad Foster cover. From the over-all concept to the lovely shading, it strikes me as among his best. It's a great start to a new zine.

I'm proud and humble to be among such a select group as those receiving *Askance* on paper. I'll try to be worthy.

I often feel the way you do at Corflu, that I'm bouncing from person to person, from conversation to conversation, like a ball in a pinball game. Did you light people up? Did you score points? Did bells ring when you bounced from one group to another? I feel like a pinball in a computer simulation running on a very slow machine, myself. Or at least I did at Corflu. I didn't feel like I was really connecting properly until Sunday at the banquet, and all too soon afterward I was at the airport, on my way home.

How like a Las Vegas zine *Askance* seems, what with all the material excerpted from its APA. I now know more about the Palms Casino's restaurants than I ever imagined I would, and if only I knew just where in Las Vegas it was, I'd be sure to avoid it. I may get to the city once or twice next year. Corflu's one possible destination; a limousine trade show's another. The latter will be at the Mandalay, which may be nowhere near the Palms.

Teresa Cochran turns out to be not quite so young as I thought she was; if she lived in the Bay Area for twenty years as an adult, I guess she isn't in her twenties. It was a pleasure to meet her and James Taylor at Corflu, and I hope to see them again next year. I also started reading sf in the short story form, borrowing many anthologies from my local library. (Of course, I read all the juvenile sf by Norton, Heinlein and Del Rey I could find, too.)

I hope that Lloyd Penney goes a little more into detail in future reviews. I like writers like Ted White and Andy Hooper, who often grapple with the contents of a zine, analyzing or reacting to the attitudes of the writers, editors, and artists. Having said that, I'm just pleased that he's doing more than a simple listing of contents.

Keep sending *Askance* this way - sooner or later your energy will rub off and we'll get *Littlebrook* done and in the mail.

#### JERRY

*{Lloyd will develop nicely as a fanzine columnist. He has the knowledge and the desire to do a good job, and I look forward to many more excellent contributions from him.*

*{Oh, by all means get **Littlebrook** back out! It is a nice zine, and I look forward to the next issue Real Soon Now.}*

*Not to be left out of this song and dance, here's the aforementioned **Lloyd Penney** defending his life:*

*1 May 2007*

The cover is one of Brad Foster's best pieces of artwork yet. The shadowing, the black, the spots of colour...very nice all around.

My bio...well, I got into fandom in late 1977, so I soon qualify for associate status in First Fandom. Around 1980, I got involved with the local apa, TAPA, as did some other members of Mpls fandom, and Mike Wallis was the OE. It was Mike who showed me some of the zines he was getting, and it wouldn't surprise me if he was on the *Bangweulu* mailing list. He showed me early issues of *File 770*, and the first fanzine I ever received was *Q36* from Marc Ortlieb. So, I figure I've been in the loccol about 25 years.

Ah, another Corflu 24 report, making me wish I'd been able to go one more time! At least I was

virtually there through the LJ, and I got to add my various two cents'. Murray Moore eventually did deliver my FAAn Award to me, and Pat Virzi had more paperwork to send to Murray, so I gather my nominee button is in Murray's care, soon to be picked up at a local pubnight, I hope. Yvonne has said that she would like to see me go to Corflu Silver in Las Vegas next year. That would be a great present, if she can pull it off.

Articles like the one Linda Bushyager wrote should help those who plan to go to Vegas for the next Corflu. The arguments and petty bickering online may be typical, but help nothing and no one.

We all find our level of fanac, whether it's a comfortable level, or a level we want to maintain. Eric, you might want to cut back some because of your own money-making writing activities. Don't let this drain money away from your wallet. I'm making sure that I have time to write locs, but it has to take a back seat to money-making. I have another assignment next week, three days long, and I've got to take it.

My loc...I have an appointment with my ophthalmologist tomorrow morning, and he will give me the okay to fly to Dallas... I hope. Shouldn't be any problem, but I will double check with him to make sure. And today, I went to my local barber for a trim, and she scalped me. Shortest hair I've had in decades. You might not recognize me, unless my hair grows back real fast...

#### LLOYD

*{I do believe that Mike Wallis was indeed on the **Bangweulu** mailing list. He was a real nice guy, too.*

*{Well, in a few weeks we will be together again for the first time up in Dallas. By then, I should have a haircut, too. The Shorn Twins strike again!}*



**I ALSO HEARD FROM these wonderful folks:**

David Burton; Mike Glycer; David Langford (the first person to answer my call for Greg Pickersgill's mailing address); Robert Lichtman (the second person to give me Pickersgill's address); Claire Brialey (the third place finisher in the Pickersgill Mailing Address Challenge); Guy H. Lillian III; Joseph Nicholas (giving me his mailing address, thank you very much!); Mike Scott (thank you, sir, for the addresses of the *Plokta* Cabal members); Alex Slate ("I am in the process of moving. At the end of May my new address will be 2014 Columbia Pike #14, Arlington VA 22204. Don't know what my e-mail will be, likely it will be either [alex.slate@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:alex.slate@pentagon.af.mil) or [alexander.slate@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:alexander.slate@pentagon.af.mil). I'll find out when I get to my new job.").



My doctoral committee.  
I think I'm in trouble...

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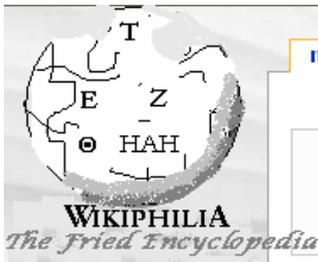
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**yet another segment of the regional convention calendar:**

**AtsuiCon:** August 3-5, 2007. Houston, TX // Another Anime con, this time at the Hotel Sofitel, 425 North Sam Houston Parkway East, Houston, TX 77060. No other contact information given.

**ArmadilloCon 29:** August 10-12, 2007. Austin, TX // Austin's major annual convention, site of this year's Corflu. GoH: Louise Marley; Artist GoH: Gary Lippincott; Editor GoH: Sharyn November; Fan GoH: Patty Wells; Toastmaster: Howard Waldrop. Write to – ArmadilloCon 29, P.O. Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755.

**Bubonicon 39:** August 24-26, 2007. Albuquerque, NM // Perhaps the Southwest's longest running con outside of Los Angeles. GoH: Vernor Vinge; Toastmaster: Jane Lindskold; Artist GoH: William Stout. write to – NMSF Conference, P.O. Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176



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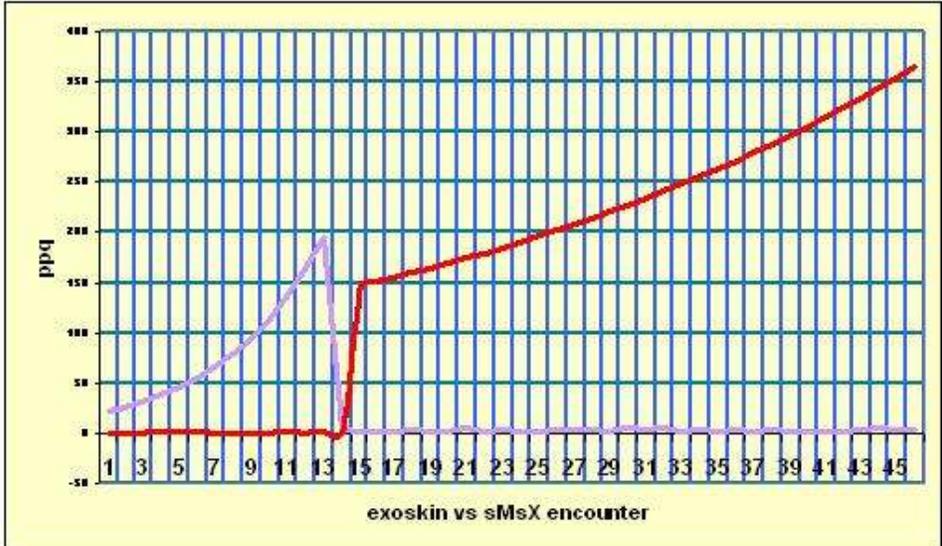
**PreCameron Epoch**  
**1.4-3.2 Jillion Years B.C.**(before Cameron)  
 Wikiphilia Article

PREE-KAHM-ur-ahn; *From archaic Greek: "Pre"- (before) "Cameron"-(Cameron Diaz)*

Nongeological era of minimal scientific importance; describes the time period before Cameron Diaz and "[post-perkinness saturation](#)" which enveloped [Southern California](#) in the late 1990's. The epoch was typified by megafauna of the genus, *thespia insipidia*, the most dominant form being the well-known Mega Ryannasaurus. Some authorities believe this to be a direct evolutionary precursor to Cameron Diaz, although the MTi DNA matching is incomplete at this writing.

**Dating**

By the PreCameron epoch, dating had already evolved to a fairly broad-based, transgender type of dating. Contemporary researchers are consensual in that most relationships were also. The only retardant effect of any environmental nature on this was the rapid rise in the use of *exoskins* by many organisms during dating. This is believed to have been an evolutionary innovation in response to the widespread [Hudsonian extinction](#) of the late 70's and early 80's.



[Fig. 1: Use of Exoskin v. sMsX Dating methods - note Hudsonian extinction at 13-15 uu]

Contemporary researchers caution that attempts to date some pre-Cameron fauna could be dangerous as the female of most species had the personality of voracious raptors.

Dating of events in this epoch is fairly complete, save for a few fossil specimens, such as [Deejay Dickclarkius](#) and [ZsaZsa Gaborii](#) which have resisted attempts at radiometric and chemical dating.

## **Climate**

CO2 levels of the time had increased significantly due to an increase in most mammalian body masses which were in turn engorged by silicon upwellings of tectonic significance. This was somewhat offset by the oxygen output in photosynthetic plants and [liposuction](#). The climatological result of this was higher average annual temperatures in the LA basin with increased levels of greed; core samples obtained since the early 1940's suggest that the entire substrate of the area was covered in warm seas of shallowness.



*Fig. 2: A Typical, PreCameron Landscape]*

## **Fauna**

Paleontological digs at the [Forest Lawn](#) and [Cedars of Lebanon](#) sites show that earlier extant species had succumbed to the climate change (see above). Gone were most of the gigantic (megathespus studiostarii) herbivores of the previous epochs. There was still a trace population of some of the truly parasitic orders, such as [Producerix Executor](#) and the lesser, *Producersaurus Bimbo-boinkerops*. At the end of the PreCameron Epoch, there were still a lot of people fauning on other people, but it was considered to be in rather bad taste.

Other species were extant during this period, as fossil digs at Wadi-Ben-Stiller indicate. The competition for food, territory, and residual contracts had all but saturated the PreCameron landscape.

It was at this juncture, according to paleothespiologists, that the watershed event, known as the Hanks Discontinuity, occurred. This heralded the end of the reign of the Mega Ryanassaurus. As the Hankian scripts evolved away from cutesy, romantic comedy toward epic dramas (the [Spielberg Onset](#)), the Mega Ryanassaurus' monopoly on the food chain gave way to the [Cameron Explosion](#).



*[Fig. 3: Recent Dig at Wadi Ben-Stiller]*

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## **See Also**

- [Cameron Epoch](#)
- [Mega Ryannosaurus](#)
- [Wadi-Ben-Stiller](#)
- [Silicon Upwelling](#)

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Good things are in the works. Besides the continuing exploits of “Figby” and Lloyd Penney’s attempts to shovel out from underneath the piles of fanzines cluttering his life, there is an article forthcoming from James Bacon in the third issue, and another most unexpected surprise.

If any of you have not yet read *Vegas Fandom Weekly #96*, I urge you to do so. Not only is it a wonderful fanzine with oodles of news about Las Vegas fan activity (well, that kind of makes sense), Arnie Katz’s zine also has fannish news in general alongside contributions from non-Vegas fans. In issue #96, I am one of those n-Vf’s. Arnie has basically convinced me to write the occasional column for *VFW*, which will mostly be comprised of short things I will write first for SNAPS (Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society; plenty of room for new members, folks!). But the article “Of Old Fanzines, Staple Wars, and Other Fancy Stuff” was not written for my SNAPS-zine; it was instead composed specifically for *VFW*. This article was all about how I found out that James Halperin, author of *The First Immortal* and *The Truth Machine*, was the buyer of Harry Warner, Jr.’s fanzine collection.

In a nutshell, here’s what’s going to happen. On May 26<sup>th</sup>, I will be in Dallas to meet with Lloyd and Yvonne Penney, who will be there for an International Space Development Conference (May 23-27, 2007) and have dinner with them. Earlier that day, I should be meeting with James Halperin for an interview (he lives in the Dallas area), which he has kindly agreed to do. We will be talking about his interests in science fiction, comic books, collecting, all in addition to the story of acquiring Harry’s fanzine collection. My goal is to transcribe and run the interview in the July issue of *Askance* in order to present to all a portrait of the man who probably saved Harry’s massive collection from the indignity of eBay or, at the least, the landfill of history. This is obviously going to be the main feature of *Askance #3*.



So that’s the low-down on the next issue. It promises to be interesting in more than one way. Like all of you, I am also looking forward to it. Until then, let’s keep those cards and letters – and artwork! – coming.

All the best,

*John Purcell*