

ASKANCE



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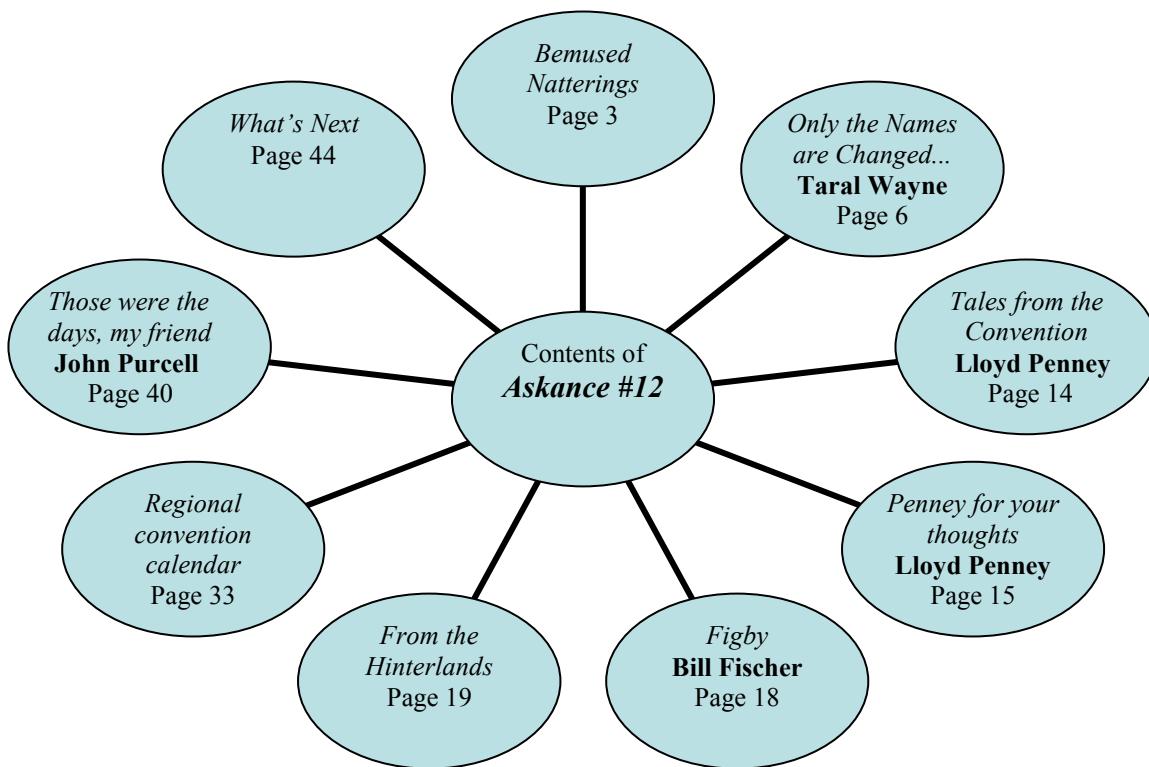
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Artwork:

Cover – Ditmar; Image googled “scales of justice” – 6, 13; image googled “behind bars” – 8; image googled “Penetanguishine” – 9; logo by Lloyd Penney – 14; logo by Alan White – 15; Image googled “Tom Swift” - 17; Image googled “sf conventions” – 33,37,38; image googled “Groggy Fanzine” - 28; clip art – 31, 32; image googled “reading fanzines” - 30; image googled “hour glass” – 40; Alexis Gilliland - 44.

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Bemused Natterings

In which ye humble editor plays with graphics, grumbles a wee bit about cover art, and assorted sundries as all faneds are wont to do betimes.

Not only that, it's a new year, and the end is in sight for my PhD. I guess it's time to get serious about that damned thing.

Yeesh...

Last minute changes...

As you have probably deduced by now, the cover of this issue is by Ditmar, not Dan Steffan. Unfortunately, Dan had simply too many other commitments that have eaten up his time. Fortunately, he has promised to do a cover for a future issue. With luck, Dan will have something done for the March issue, which is the second annish. In the meantime, feel free to send cover art, folks.

Well, sort of...

A few weeks ago, Arnie Katz and I were discussing via e-mails how we view and review fanzines, like considering what influences a zine to become what it is. The issue in front of you, replete with assorted visual tricks and doodads, is one result of our discussion. Another result will be in an installment of my fanzine review column in *VFW* in which I espouse on my fanzining theories. The next page has more of my thoughts on this topic.

Who's in this issue...

Ditmar (Dick Jenssen)
Thanks to Dick, there is a fine cover on this issue. Very nice work, always. There can be more, too!
Bill Fischer
What can I say? This zine is empty without its Figby. We love our lab assistant!
Lloyd Penney (twice!)
Usually it is Bill that double-dips in this zine. This time it's Lloyd's turn.
Taral Wayne
No artwork from Taral this time, but here is a very interesting article he sent a couple months ago.

Forrest J. Ackerman (1916-2008)

Along with the rest of fandom, it is hard for me to imagine what science fiction fandom would have been like without Forry. I never met the man, even when I lived in LA for a year (1985) and attended some LASFS meetings. Even so, his legacy extends far and wide, and there is no doubt that he affected my love for SF and fandom in one way or another. Thank you, Forry, for making this all possible.

Who was that lurking in your corner pocket last night?

Translation: “more bemused natterings”



I know, I know... You're all wondering what in the world has gotten into me, or what I've been smoking. Essentially, here is what's going on:

Since I have a bit of time before the next semester starts up, I decided to experiment with more graphic design on this zine not only to spice it up, but to have some more fun with it and to see what I could do.

Why this graphic play-time came to pass is a result of an e-mail interchange between Arnie Katz and myself largely because we differ in opinion over Henry Welch's fanzine, *The Knarley Knews*. My take: *TKK* is a good genzine and enjoyable on its own level; Arnie's take: *TKK* is an example of a genzine as crudzine. This “debate” will morph into a full-blown article, most likely to appear in a near future issue of Arnie's *VFW*, but I wanted to set some things down in print here in my humble zine. Essentially, Arnie's opinion is that a fanzine should be reviewed on its merits, and that it is the final product that counts. He also listed out four elements a good zine should have:

1. Is the fanzine well-written?
2. Does it have an appealing editorial presence?
3. Does the graphic design work with the content and also promote reader enthusiasm?
4. Is the content enjoyable and relevant to Fandom?

While I concur that these four elements should be present in a zine, my point is that any fanzine will evolve into whatever that particular person(s) wants the zine to be. Henry Welch produces a fanzine that reflects what his life is like: hectic, but he still pubbs his zine because he wants to stay in touch with fans, and also enjoys what he is doing. This is what I call the bottom line of fan-pubbing: ***you like to do it***. The physical appearance of a zine does matter, absolutely, but what if the writer/editor/publisher in question doesn't have the time to explore graphic possibilities, let alone getting an issue out on a self-imposed deadline? In Henry's case – any many other fans who have come before us and will arrive in later years – *TKK* is a means of staying in contact with fans (I am speculating here, of course), sort of the old concept of zine as letter substitute. Content and production values do matter, naturally. The problem here is defining two terms: “production values” and “matter”, this latter term being a subjective element best answered by the individual.

Case in point, look at this issue of *Askance*. For the first 11 issues its layout has been relatively stable and predictable, yet steadily improving, sometimes incorporating different designs, layouts, fonts, and/or what-nots with which I see fit to experiment. Most of the time I don't have a lot of time available to do this; however, it is now between semesters, so I have this important time element to play around with things. Still, I have always cared enough about each issue to produce a legible, intelligent zine. That, to me, is something which all faneds strive to achieve because we owe it to our readers. Content is, as always, dependent on what arrives in the mail and what I want or have to say.



So basically, this time around I just wanted to see what I could do with the graphic capabilities of our home computer. This is the kind of playtime that I enjoy, an example of what I mean by the latest catch-phrase of my life, “fanac is keeping me sane.” Believe me: this is so very, very true.

Attending cons may be few and far between, and pubbing *Askance* and an apa-zine once a month (*Nukking Futz* for SNAPS) has been extraordinarily therapeutic. Pubbing *Askew* for FAPA should help, too. Which reminds me: write check and send it to Bob Lichtman. Today!

Eschew obfuscation.

Still more bemused natterings

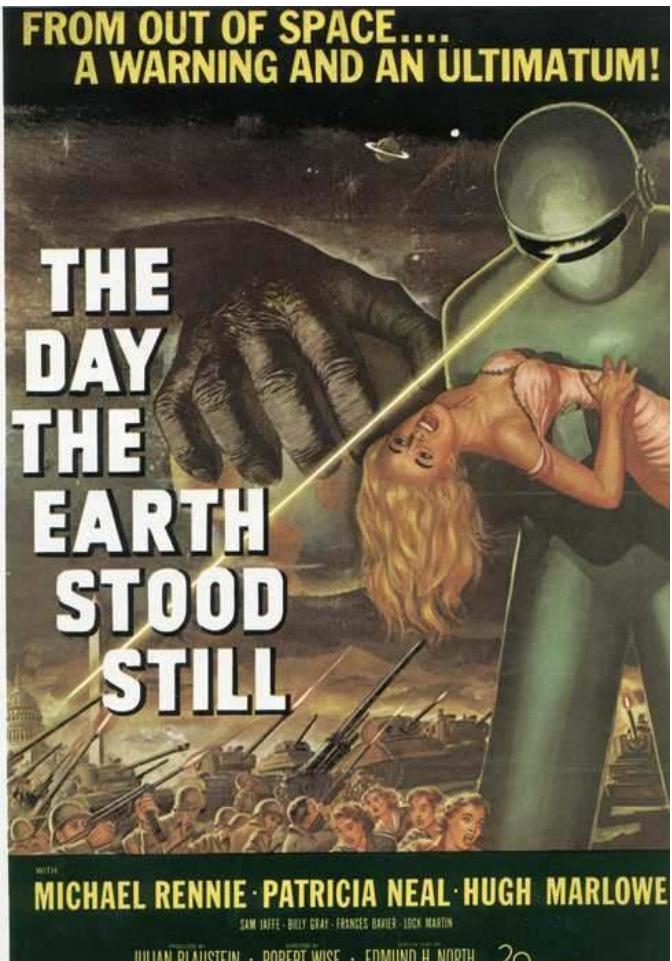
Is there a reason why Hollywood cannot think of new ideas for movies? Have they simply forgotten how to think or use this thing called "imagination" to create something different? My wife and I decided long ago that Hollywood has lost the ability to come up with new ideas, so what they decided to do is issue re-make after re-make, or fell whole-hog into the cinematic disease known as "sequelitis." You know what I mean here: things like Steve Martin doing Inspector Clouseau (badly) in a poor remake of the Peter Sellers classic *The Pink Panther*; or Will Smith's crappy *I Am Legend*, so loosely based on of Matheson's novel, which is almost as bad as his namesake only version of Asimov's *I, Robot* novel, plus nowhere near as good as the Vincent Price classic version *The Last Man on Earth* (1964) or the reasonable *The Omega Man* (1971) starring the late Charlton Heston; the dark 2001 Tim Burton remake of *Planet of the Apes*; should I bother mentioning the most recent *War of the Worlds*?; and I could go on, of course.

Some movies are conceived as a series, such as the epic *Star Wars* saga, or the Harry Potter books-to-movies, or the *Chronicles of Narnia* canon, The *Lord of the Rings* films, etcetera. In these cases, the "more than one movie" concept can be accepted, but there are times when an idea can be played out beyond its expected lifetime; witness what happened to the last three *Planet of the Apes* movies, or the *Star Trek* movies. Sometimes we simply have to let go and let live, get on with our lives, and try to think of something **NEW**.

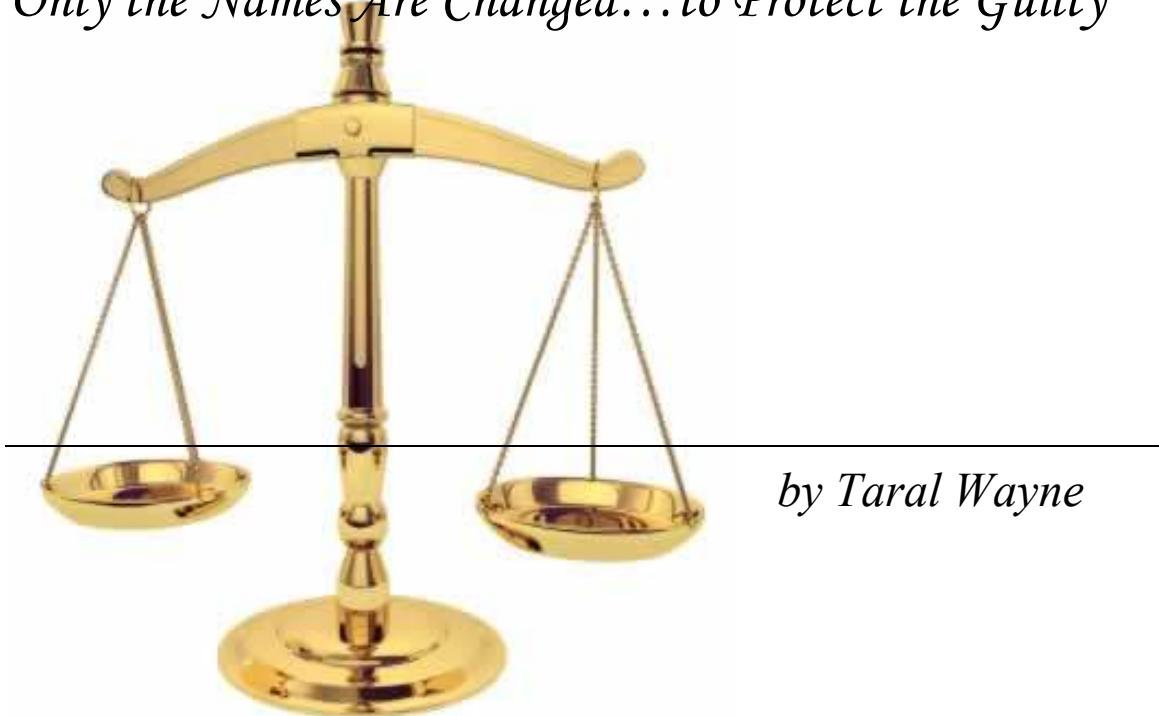
Which leads me to wonder why on Earth they had to go and remake one of my favorite science fiction movies of all time – and I'm not alone in this regard – the 1951 Robert Wise directed *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. That movie didn't rely on shoot-'em-up, exciting special effects to make its point. The tension, the – dare I say it? – drama between the characters and the message made that movie special. It was such a product of its time that my contention is the Keanu Reeves abomination reflects the tastes of the 21st century viewing public, which is, well, tasteless. To escape the horrors of the modern world, the current mass mindset desires to be literally "blown away" for entertainment. Very sad. Sometimes its fun, but too much is too much.

Try to understand that I do like the razzle-dazzle of current SFX technology; it's grand stuff, and when handled right – witness *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Bladerunner* and *The Fifth Element* – the effects set the mood and are an integral part of the story. *Dune* was a bit too much (turning that book into a movie was a hell of an undertaking), but I really don't want to go there right now. I just don't understand why they had to remake *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. By doing so, the film loses its punch, and especially its relevance to the era that produced it.

God help us all if someone decides to remake *2001: A Space Odyssey*.



Only the Names Are Changed...to Protect the Guilty



by Taral Wayne

The names used in this account are all fictional. While I expect there are those who would have no difficulty recognizing the people, I wish to keep the number of other readers who know who I'm talking about to a minimum.

Who remembers Kermit Duntz? He of the scary eyes and Beetlejuice personality, who formerly haunted conventions with his bagful of collected furry porn on CD? It's been a while since he's been seen, nor has he been missed by many. Even furries have their limit. Perhaps the highlight of his career was his banishment from Anthrocon, the largest and most important furry con on the East Coast. He was at the same time suffering under a temporary ban from a smaller con in the Pacific Northwest, and under consideration of a ban from the largest con on the West Coast. From that point his career has been something of a let down. His disks became a drag on the market, freely bootlegged on the internet, and selling like cow flops on a hot, muggy day.

Since then, Kermit has been on a quiet downhill slide that evolved from the fannish and tragicomic to the domestic and merely sordid. Earlier this year, unfortunately, he achieved a new low when he was charged with assault on his wife and son-in-law during an argument. No one was really hurt, allowing him to beat the rap. However, once placed on probation, he fell out with Immigration Canada.

His wife Lucretia had frankly been his only anchor point in Canada. After more than twenty years he had still not completed the necessary paperwork to establish himself as a landed immigrant. It was one thing or another – the bureaucrats in Ottawa would lose his application forms, he needed clearance from the RCMP, his birth certificate was missing from the registry back home, the laws covering immigration had changed in the meantime, and he'd have to start over. At least that was *his* story. You do have to wonder if it is possible for even government to be so monumentally incompetent and still run a country successfully. Other immigrants, fresh off boats and barely speaking English manage to gain their immigrant status, why would a white, middle

class, educated American have so much trouble? And why among WASPs only Kermit? Was it really only a conspiracy against him, as Kermit always hinted?

I think I'll just leave that to the reader's imagination.

Kermit was a New Yorker, and a shadowy figure in the fandom by all accounts, that other fans did their best to avoid. After a promising start writing for Warren Comics, and some early publishing ventures, he suddenly moved to Canada and married.

It was a sweet deal at first. Marriage didn't give him automatic landed status, but as long as Kermit was sponsored he could apply for it at leisure. Somehow, though, a relatively straightforward procedure grew protracted. Like perpetual motion, the more time went by, the less progress he made. It didn't matter. He could just go on rustling the paperwork from time to time, and there was a guaranteed roof over his head all the same. With a little nominal housework, and by occasionally bringing a few dollars home from under-the-table computer jobs, there were three square meals into the bargain.

Evidently the strain was too much.

The demands of his digital publishing empire had begun to absorb his time and attention totally. There was little time for anything as marginal as his marital relationship. Kermit was spending long periods on the road at the time, cruising from one con to another, trying to peddle his disks at any con that would take his membership money. Advice was wasted on him. There were bound to be *enough* furries at any sort of con to be profitable, he insisted. Comics cons, gamer cons, Trek cons, SF cons, crafts fairs, Wicca gatherings... he was determined not to miss a trick. He *did* make sales. Some at every event. By and large, though, not many; not nearly enough to justify the cost of the Greyhound pass he traveled on.

Kermit had his believers though. I was his Doubting Thomas, advising time and time again against nearly every notion as they struck him. One supporter of art on CD Rom bought into it by investing a sizable amount of money. I do mean a *sizable amount*. I could have lived off the sum Burbank invested for three or four years, without ever having to lift a pencil to paper to earn a living. The sensible thing would have been to use some of that money on new product, more to promote and publicize it, and put the rest in reserve until some of the outlay had been earned back. But that was not Kermit. The sudden influx of serious money only seemed to mean he no longer had to worry about selling. He spent it all, virtually at once, on as many new CD's as he possibly could.

Of course he incurred an enormous debt to the artists for the *thousands* of drawings he published. Most of the money, though, went right into the hands of the business that pressed the disks. Kermit the optimist knew beyond doubt that sales would cover his debts, so didn't worry.

That was about where things began to fall apart, of course. So many disks saturated the market. Most as well were aimed to niche markets such as furries who liked bondage, furries who were obsessed with cats or horses, furries who were transgender gays with military obsessions. Given a choice of a dozen new disks, people picked the two or three they wanted and the others stayed on the dealer's table. Compounding the problem, most of Kermit's sales were probably to other dealers, who often found themselves one of four or five tables selling exactly the same material. Then all too soon, the technology caught up with him. Anyone could burn a CD suddenly. Less scrupulous fans copied the disks at will, and uploaded the contents to bootleg sites so other furverts could have the art free. They said there is no intellectual property on the internet.

Not a single disk in Kermit's inventory was *not* furry, as well as pornographic to a degree that would delight a Roman debauchee. Once the furry market was spoiled, the disks had no other. It gradually dawned on even "Mr. Optimism" that his thousands of dollars worth of collected furry porn had no hope of earning back the money he spent, much less what he owed. His credit ran

out. He owed a couple of hundred artists many thousands of dollars, had no income of his own, and had squandered the investment.

Kermit always made the point that he had paid as many of the artists as he could, while sales were good. It never did seem to sink in that this didn't cancel out the large number who he never paid a dime. Nor that a number of unsellable disks offered as a substitute was the same as money for rent. Kermit seemed incapable of grasping just why the artists had it in for him.

Kermit was away from home several months that heroic summer, and no sooner would he return home than he hit the road again. While never away again as long as that first time, over the next two or three years he was on the road as often as possible. Absence did not make the heart grow fonder in his case. Lucretia wanted to kill him all the while he was out of town. Just why she forgave him every time he came back will probably remain a mystery known only to her and God, forever. Lucretia is no longer clear why herself.

Inevitably things had to come to a head. Lucretia began to complain that Kermit wasn't living up to his part of the deal – bad enough when he was away too long, but even at home he paid her little attention, let the housework go, and brought home *no* money whatever. She was actually spending more time with Roland, her Ex... and discovering him the better husband.

Worse, Lucretia suspected Kermit was seeing another woman. He was too. Whether or not there was any hanky-panky going on between him and his woman friend depends on who you believe. The wife was sure of it. The rumour mill said it was far from unlikely. Kermit said absolutely not.

Any idiot could see matters couldn't go on much longer, though, and they didn't. Toward the end of summer, Kermit and Lucretia had an argument over his lapsed housekeeping skills and whether or not she infected his computer with a virus. He hit her, threw her on the bed, and started choking her.

That was the moment that the grown son Adrian by her previous marriage decided to join the fray, shouting "Leave my mother alone!" Kermit obliged by strangling the five-foot-two Adrian instead.



Lucretia phoned 911 and the rest had the inevitability of a Greek Tragedy.

None of the dignity whatever.

Just an orange jumpsuit and a short stay in jail, waiting to face a judge for two counts of assault.

After a few days Kermit was released on bail. He wasn't out of the woods that easily, of course. There would be preliminary hearings, disclosure hearings, and practice hearings. Even if the charges were dismissed – no one was really hurt, after all – there was the little embarrassment

that without his wife's sponsorship, he was merely a visitor who had overstayed his welcome in this country by about twenty years.

Endora, the woman friend, put up the two or three thousand dollars to spring him. No duh, he couldn't go back to his wife, so from then on he had a choice of a men's shelter, or sleep on Endora's couch. Bad as a broken down couch was, in exchange for a roof over his head and his daily mac & cheese he was forced to baby sit. Kermit didn't take well to the kids, either. Vice versa. Worse still, the couch that was now his only fixed address was in a small town far north of Toronto called Bumpkin's Falls. Kermit was a New Yorker, remember. He took book stores, theatre, live music, restaurants, book fairs, street mimes and other high manifestations of culture for granted. He found himself in a place where the Aurora dances overhead, and bears keep you up nights as they go through the trash cans. What passes for culture in a place like that is the Beer Store, Poutine, and Hockey Night in Canada on the one channel you receive if you don't have a satellite dish.

He headed back to Toronto after what might have been a brush with a knife in a bar fight. He was brazen enough to phone Lucretia to demand \$800 to pay the clinic that treated the cut. *If* Kermit is to be believed. According to another source, he may have just come down with tonsillitis.

I had put him up a couple of times during the hearings for the assault charges, but my place is just too small for a full time roomie. Anytime I wanted to go across to the other side of the living room I had to pick Kermit up and move him aside. He had to be pried from the computer with a crowbar when I wanted to work. He slept even later than *I* did. And I'm the sort who hasn't seen morning since I was woken up to watch the second World Trade Center tower collapse. I had to suggest he find alternate accommodations.

After that he started living at the Salvation Army's men's hostel. That was where he was, as far as I knew, until much later. I did wonder why I hadn't heard anything from him in two months, but it's not like I could call him up to pry. Paradoxically, while Kermit was a passionate advocate of the internet for communication, he never responded to e-mail. So I went on assuming he was at the Sally Ann.



Finally, one day I got the surprising news he'd fetched up in the penitentiary at Penetanguishine, a three-hours' drive north of Toronto.

My guess is he got tired of sleeping with the winos, and went back up north to Endora's. A less jaundiced explanation would have him finished with his immediate business in the city, but compared to Bumpkin's Falls scraping your shoe on the curb would be urgent business. Unfortunately, once back north the hated babysitting chores and two difficult kids were waiting.

Opinions about the children are mixed. The politically correct view is that they are behaviorally mispositioned and have a mild learning disinclination... abnormalities of a severity as close to nil as a middle-class tax break . The other view seems to be they are malignant examples of how the human genome can go wrong. I have no way of knowing, being blissfully spared of their acquaintance.

Whatever the truth or approximation of it, one of the two wandered off into the woods while you-know-who was busy on Furry Muck with one-handed typing. Endora returned home and found a conspicuous shortage of a full complement of kids. She dialed 911 and the cops arrived with the sniffer dogs toot sweet. Just as the search was about to start, the missing son wandered in, none the worse for wear. Fortunately he hadn't been eaten by one of the bears mentioned earlier. Not

even nibbled on by a hungry porcupine. Didn't fall on any bone-breaking rock formations. Nor was he swept away over a seven hundred foot waterfall. All of which sometimes happen to experienced woodsmen, let alone children of questionable mental competence. But if the kid was in one piece, less could be said of Kermit after the chewing out.

But his neglect of the children wasn't why Kermit was arrested the second time.

It does seem that during the chewing out by Endora, he grew abusive, even threatening. The same two cops pulled into the driveway none too happy after she phoned 911 again. The number is becoming repetitious, no?

But neither was a violent outburst why Kermit was arrested again! Apparently, it had finally come to the attention of The System that The Wife had withdrawn her sponsorship. Kermit had no more right to be in Canada at that point than an illegal Mexican in East El Ay.

This time it wasn't just jail, to await a hearing. Kermit was lodged in the actual, bona fide penitentiary. As the news percolated out, one of his few friends phoned the prison. An operator confirmed Kermit was in their keeping. He could not be contacted. He couldn't be sent parcels or cash. He could receive money orders for some reason. The address for any such act of charity was mercifully not East Block, Cell 14, bunk next to Bubbah... It was a street number, so I *imagined* he was lodged in something like a men's barracks rather than a cell.. Ironically, it might have been very much like the hostel at the Sally Anne... except for the fence and guards of course.

Little did I know...

Evidently he was kept in "General Population". That meant a cell after all, and orange jump suits again. As though that weren't bad enough, Kermit made it worse by complaining. He was depressed. In response the guards moved him to "Isolation" with potentially violent inmates, where he slept on a plain metal bench with only a sheet. He complained next about his blood sugar. To be fair, Kermit is mildly diabetic and has to watch his intake. But rather than ask to be put on a restricted diet – which he didn't follow as a free man, anyway -- he wanted to see a doctor. The guards by this point didn't seem to care very much what he wanted.

His next step was to request a legal aid representative. The response would have been comical if it hadn't been also cruel. Kermit's story is that he was told to fill out a form for legal aid. But when he was given the form, he had no pencil. When he asked for a pencil he was told he'd have to fill out a form requesting one! Incidentally, as a non-resident of Canada he wasn't entitled to legal aid in any case.

So Kermit hollered abuse.

Of course, Lucretia (who was the source for much of this part of the story) pointed out that any amount from zero to all of this could be a lie.

She speculated that Kermit had been provoking the guards, possibly experimenting with the idea of "copicide". That seemed like wishful thinking to me at the time. However, a masochistic need to be hurt is well within his emotional repertoire, in my opinion. Later evidence would suggest that whatever was at the bottom of Kermit's ill manners, it was neither a desire for death by cop, nor a devious method of inflicting punishment on himself by proxy.

In spite of bad behavior, they released him after only a couple of weeks. I had a heads-up from Lucretia by e-mail only a few hours before there was a mysterious knocking at my apartment door at 3 a.m. the same night. Kermit.

He was dressed better than I had usually seen him. Gone were the worn greasy trousers, and spotted t-shirt. His glasses looked new as well, not the old pair that were wired together. All the same he was badly in need of a bath. An eye-watering pong on the man wasn't unknown. He was once said to have curled all the pages in a bookstore, just by walking in. But didn't they have *showers* in prison? (I don't say that just to be funny!)

To say I was surprised was an understatement, even knowing he was at large. Uncharitable I might have been, but the last thing I wanted was an overnight guest... or worse, one who might extend his stay indefinitely, one emergency after another as he had done the previous time. Safer not to let him in at all. But what can you do at three in the morning when there's nowhere a body can go?

I made it as plain as I could and still be arguably diplomatic, that when daylight came he'd have to leave. Kermit was okay with that. What he wanted was to contact some people, and needed a computer to go on-line. I breathed easier. If it expedited his exit from the country, I could go him that far. That's getting a little ahead of the story though.

On release he was bussed back to Toronto, and dumped without anywhere in particular to go. (Which would be why he came here.) That was far from the end of Kermit's troubles, though. He was obliged to meet a Removal Officer in a few days. No great surprise, he was vague about the issues that would have to be resolved between them. He hoped that he could still somehow shmooz himself into staying on this side of the border. But frankly, I doubt he was sure himself that he'd be here in a week's time.

In the event, he was given two weeks. Then he'd have to meet his Removal Officer again, either to announce his exit or beg for more time. So far he must have employed his delaying tactics a number of times, because after several more weeks he was *still* here!

While he wasn't going to go gracefully or any sooner than he must, Kermit seems to have at least accepted he *will* have to leave the country. He knows too, he won't be able to re-enter Canada for at least twelve months, once gone. Possibly longer, as his probation (from previous assault charges) is for two years.

The question I had to ask myself was, "why was he so friggin' determined to stay"? What did he have here in Canada it was worth hanging on to at all costs? He had no real friends. He was thrown out by his wife. He had no home. He couldn't be legally employed. He wasn't covered by our health care system, nor eligible for any sort of government assistance. He was one false step away from violating probation and going back to the slammer to stay. Surely he would be better off in his native land, even back in Staten Island?

And so we are caught up with the night of Kermit's unexpected appearance at my door.

Using my internet connection, Kermit contacted two parties on FurryMuck. The first was "Booze" [Alvin Glum] in Philadelphia. He's an awfully odd egg, but seemed alright the couple of times I'd met him. Kermit had stayed at Booze's place on previous road trips. If he cared to occupy it, there was a spare room waiting and the rent modest. That much quickly became a done deal. Philly is where is going when he finally has to go, and when he's there is likely where he'll stay for some time to come. Where it gets tricky is how Kermit is going to get there.

One option was for Booze to drive up to the Niagara Falls and collect Kermit's mortal coil at the border. In a second option, Endora might drive Kermit all the way to New York City, and Booze pick him up there. Only details. When he leaves, Immigration Canada will give Kermit his passport and a big shit-eating grin... *that's the big picture*. From that point he's America's problem.

*"Good mornin' America how are 'ya? Don'cha know me, I'm your native son?"*¹

In the meantime, however, Kermit needed money. It was no exaggeration when Lucretia told me by e-mail he had 26 cents and a phone card. Once he was finished with Booze, the next name on Kermit's list was a guy named Mr. Ed. Kermit writes, oh... shall we say specialized fiction for Mr. Ed that few people would stomach. (I've written a few pieces for Mr. Ed myself, come down to it, but I'm unwilling to get down and dirty the way Kermit is.) Should Mr. Ed be so good as to send an advance, said Kermit, forty or fifty thousand words would tide the author over. Of course, there'd be no possibility of creative writing at the men's hostel, and an internet café costs money. Kermit's strategy was to hie it back up to Bumpkin's Falls and Endora's couch, then see just how much equine themed pornography he could *turn out* before he was *booted out* of the country once and for all. Or for at least two years.

After that, I suppose, would come a triumphant return to the True North Strong and Free... want him or not.

You'd think that would be the end of the saga. It is to laugh. If Kermit is not one thing, it is simple.

The oddity about all this is how serenely Kermit appeared to have sailed through events that would frazzle lesser smut peddlers and goldbricks. There was an convenient measure of his state of mind – his scar. Only those who had seen Kermit lose it would have known, but Kermit has a compulsion to chew his forearm when he's frustrated or angry. Chew? Try gnaw practically to the bone. At times of sustained stress his arm looked like a bad blow-out on a rubber tire that had already come to grief having run over a monkey. He showed it to me that first night out of the slammer. Miraculously, it looked more or less like an old scar, not at all like a body snatcher caught half through the act. Clearly he hadn't been chewing on himself *at all* in the last few weeks!

I observed that prison life must agree with him... at least more than married life or babysitting. He didn't laugh.

Since then the situation has changed little. He has been granted one stay of execution after another to wind down his affairs, though he has practically none that I can think of. He arranged to collect some personal property from his estranged wife, though it was much over her dead body, and a pair of cops presided over their meeting at her insistence. News of Kermit's discomfiture had spread in the furry community, provoking malicious merriment and sadistic glee mostly. When informed he was at large, his ex-West Coast business partner Arch Burbank (who invested in the CD Roms) begged me to tell Kermit that he had thrown out the entire stock, burned all the sales records, smashed his computer, and moved to Sri Lanka. Anything that ensured Kermit wouldn't turn up at his door. Furries on the Westcoast have changed their phone numbers. Furries in the Midwest say that Philadelphia is too close and are installing new locks. Those on the East coast merely regard it as a sign of the End Times.

Kermit Duntz is going home.

Should anyone wonder, Kermit has read most of the raw material that went into this writing. As well, he is familiar with a piece of mockery called "Somewhere on FurryMuck" I also penned at his expense. Curiously, Kermit blamed someone else for that. Though I had my name clearly on the piece, I suppose he was more in the mood to be mad at the other individual than me.

¹ Steve Goodman, "City of New Orleans", better known performed by Arlo Guthrie.

But what aroused Kermit's ire mainly was that people took one issue -- Kermit's recent dose of self-inflicted difficulty -- as a chance to even old scores. Although my original piece said nothing about his CD's or his debts, a lot of readers gleefully rousted every skeleton out of Kermit's closet.

In all fairness, it should be noted that Kermit never claimed he was able to pay all the artists. The business was furry tits up (so to speak) before anything like the amount of money needed to pay everyone had been grossed. Nevertheless quite a few artists were paid, something that tends to go unnoticed. For the record, I was paid -- if he owes me a small back payment still, I owe him a commission that I never even began, so accounts between us pretty much even out.

Kermit claims many artists who were paid nevertheless insist they were not. Of that I know nothing, and can say nothing. There is supposed to be one case of an artist tired of waiting, who refused the money when it was finally offered.

The rancor has been morbidly fascinating. What began as a simple journal of continuing developments in the downfall of Kermit Duntz has turned into something of a witch-hunt. Old ghosts Kermit had thought safely buried have been resurrected to haunt him. Angry ghosts die hard, if ever. It's hard to decide where my sympathies lie. Surely not with Kermit, the chief instigator of his own misery. But is it with the gravediggers who gleefully dug up Kermit's entire past, to rattle the bones at him one more time?

I have to admit they played a catchy tune.

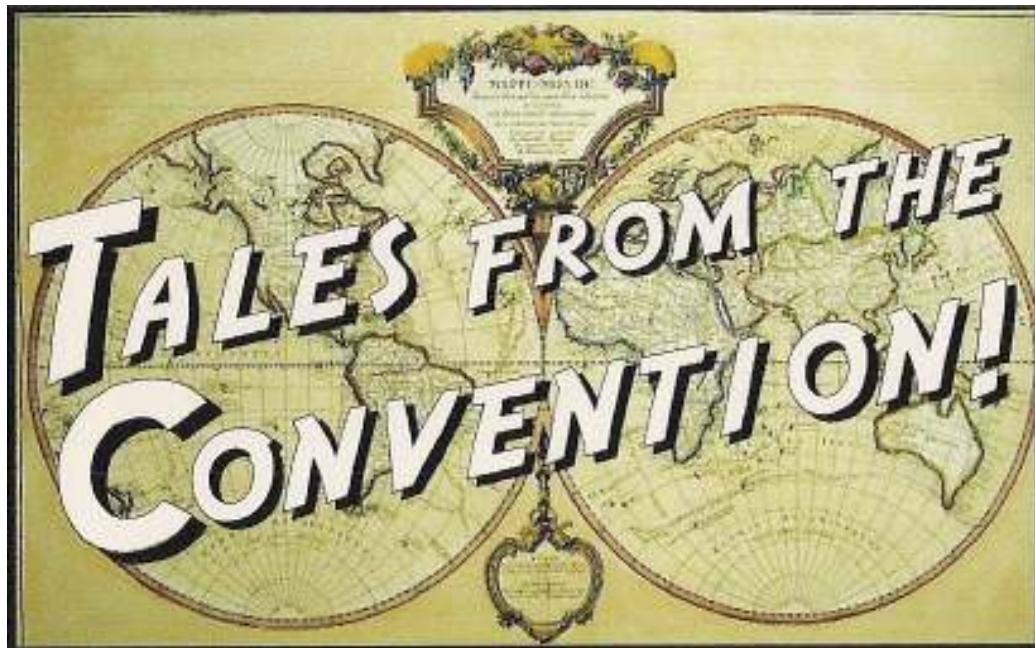
Hell, while I'm at it, I might as well confess my own questionable motives. I enjoy writing biting satire too much to claim to be entirely an impartial reporter. Twisting the knife is a high art. Be that as it may, the facts have been laid out to be the best of my ability not to distort, conceal, or sugar-coat them.

As Mark Twain said through Huckleberry Finn... Mainly.



"Out there – here (for an instant he was confused) – in space, one of the biggest and costliest ships ever built by men was devouring the miles at a velocity that had almost no meaning."

- A.E. Van Vogt, *The Voyage of the Space Beagle* (1939, 1943), p. 93 in 1981 Timescape edition



1 - Room for the Roomies

By Lloyd Penney

Some years ago, in the midst of our con-running careers, Yvonne and I took in some roommates to save a few bucks. To protect the guilty and save on their embarrassment, let's call them Joe and Lynda...

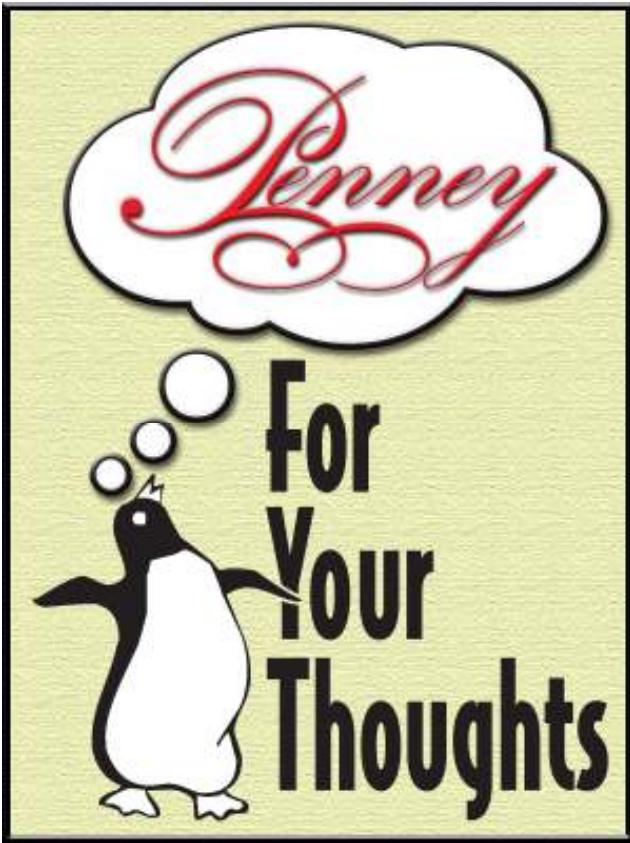
In saving those few bucks, we told the hotel we were staying in that we only had two people in our room, and as a result, we received only two keycards. Yvonne and I would be needing our cards, as we'd be in and out of our rooms regularly, and our roomies were out enjoying the con. Fine with everyone, we thought...

At one point Saturday, Joe asked me if he could borrow our room key, and I thought little of it; I was going back and forth regularly. Later on in the day, I realized that Joe hadn't returned the room key, and I hadn't seen him in a while. I found Yvonne and asked to borrow her key...she said Lynda had borrowed her key and hadn't returned it. We looked at each other, and the light went on. Our roomies had borrowed our key for a little, ahem, afternoon delight, and kept us in the dark. I needed to get into the room, as did Yvonne, and the room was officially occupied, and we were locked out. Needless to say, we were pissed off.

Yvonne and I headed to the hotel front desk, and we said that we'd lost our room keys (I guess we had, I suppose), and could we get replacements? No problems... Yvonne marched off to our room, with me behind her, stifling a laugh, and when we got to the front door, Yvonne, in true matron fashion, swiped the keylock, barged into the room, and demanded, "WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?" As if she didn't know...

Now, I was behind Yvonne, and I certainly didn't get to see what she saw, but I will never forget the sight of two skinny butts quickly disappearing over the side of the couch in the room, and two bewildered faces popping up after.

Good thing they were the forgiving type; we kidded them about taking the room keys for years. And for some, reason, they were never our roommates again.



Fanzine reviews

by *Lloyd Penney*

Alexiad is a fine fanzine from Joseph T. Major in Louisville, Kentucky. It's a very dense fanzine, with lots of small type, book reviews, Alexis Gilliland cartoons, and letters of comment.

The average *Alexiad* might jam up your inbox...I receive it as two large attached .pdfs, so on occasion, if my regular e-mail won't accept it, Joe knows to send them to my G-mail account, which can accept larger-sized attachments. It's not downloadable from eFanzines or Fanac.org, so a letter to Joseph will probably get you on the mailing list.

The publication designer in me might kvetch a little over the look of the publication...lots of grey columns of small type, often running to 35 to 40 pages each issue. Well, that designer in me can get over it, because there's lots of good writing within. The Gilliland cartoons are always a treat, and they also serve to break up the grey columns.

And now, the contents, very reflective of Joseph's varied interests and areas of true scholarship...they include horse racing and harness racing, Robert A. Heinlein, genealogy, European royal families, Roman history, alternate history, science fiction and fantasy, fandom, convention reports, current events, and candy bars. Quite the gamut. And, then, there are often crisp reviews of books from any of these subjects and more. And that's just the first half of the zine.

The second half is my favourite half, the letter column. It is always long and large, and full of interesting discussions about anything and everything. Joseph drops commentary into each letter, making it look more like a transcribed conversation. The sizable column is usually capped by a cartoon by Paul Gadzikowski, sometimes from his webcomic, "Arthur, King of Time and Space."

If you are of a scholarly bent, you will like the reviews and articles within the first section. If you are a reader, same section, with lots of reviews. And, if you are a science fiction fan, you'll find fannish news and the locol. If you want a solid zine, ask Joseph Major to put you on the mailing list, and be prepared to contribute. He is at jtmajor@iglou.com.

The newest *Chunga* arrived in my mailbox just the other day, so this is probably the best zine to handle next. I wish I'd been on the Apparatchik mailing list years earlier, but I am pleased to be on this mailing list. It's a pleasure to read, and a challenge to respond to.

There is a variety of good, fannish writing, about a variety of topics, or even no topic at all. Since when did we need something to write about in order to write? As was Minneapolis in an era past, Seattle seems to be the fannish city of the moment, with a modern bent to life there, the Science Fiction Museum, aviation museums, a busy fandom, and a number of fannish scribes to record it for posterity and for fanzine publishing.

Chunga is available as both paper zine and e-zine, and I am happy to receive the paper zine version. I have yet to issue 15, so I might be revealing some of my comments here before I can make them to the editorial triumvirate of Andrew Hooper, Randy Byers and Carl Juarez. The risks I take.

First, I've always enjoyed the variety of artwork in the zine's run, and in this case, there's also fine photography work, on the part of Alison Scott and a photo montage renaming Seattle as Torchwood West, plus photography with effects by Carl on the back cover. Brad Foster, Stu Shiffman and D West are but three of the fanartists within; others usually inhabit these pages. And then, the articles are varied. Andrew's Corflu Silver report with past desert episodes, the afore-mentioned Stu Shiffman on possible origins of Superman, Taral Wayne provides more expertise on Roman coins, and Randy waxing chairmannish on the upcoming Corflu Zed this March in Seattle, and I wish I could be there. One of the appeals of the articles in a fanzine is that you never know where they will take you, sometimes to a topic you never thought of before, or at least some topic you haven't thought of for a while, and *Chunga* rarely disappoints. I think we all appreciate the brain exercise, and this zine is a good workout.

Then, there's the local, and I usually have trouble getting into it. That's where the challenge is, to create something that with luck will inform, entertain, comment and elucidate and generally BS to my heart's content, and then get it in print here. Sometimes, I win, and sometimes, the local wins. That's the chance you take, every time. No, nooooo! Don't WAHF me.

I will even make comment on the publishing. This issue had lots of colour in it, and we all appreciate the cost of doing this, plus the willingness to pay for it, for which I say to Andy, Randy, and Carl, thank you for caring to do it. There's also colour all the way through this issue, too. Please, no one spoil my appreciation, and say that you stole the colour photocopying from work. Have a look at the eFanzines.com page for *Chunga*, if you haven't already seen them, and see if I'm wrong.

Contact information for these zines:

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c/o Lisa and Joe Major
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e-mail: jtmajor@iglou.com

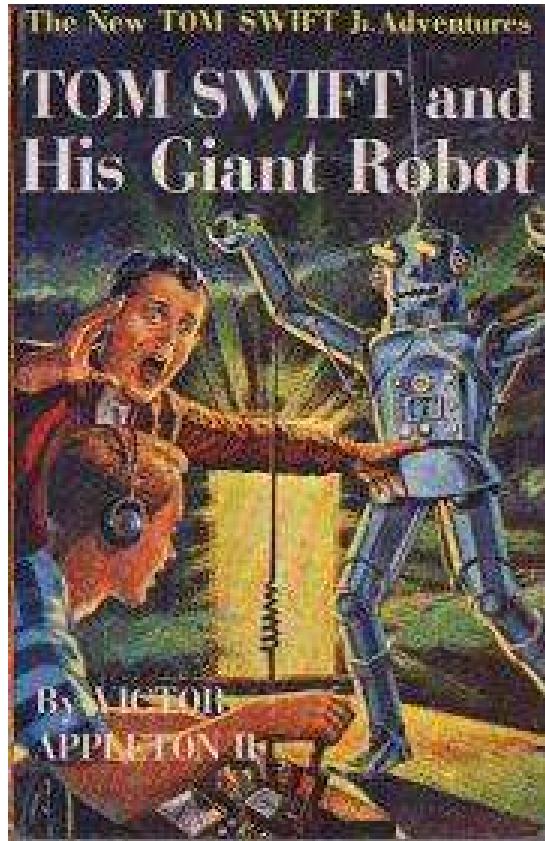
Chunga
Edited by Andy Hooper (fanmailaph@aol.com), Randy Byers (fringeفاان@yahoo.com), and Carl Juarez (heurihermilab@gmail.com).
Mailing address:

Chunga, 1013 North 36th Street, Seattle WA 98103.

Editors: please send three copies of any zine for trade.

Fanzines received via post offal or Tom Swift's electronic aether:

Ansible #257-258
Argentus #8
Arrows of Desire #1-4
BCSFAzine #427-428
Corflu Zed PR #2
Drink Tank #191-195
eI #41
Einblatt! (Dec. '08, Jan. '09)
Feline Mewsings #34
File: 770 #154
Futurian War Digest #9-25
Intersteller Ramjet Scoop (Oct., '08)
Mr. Monster: 4SJ Tribute Zine
MT Void #1521-1526
Nashville SF Club Newsletter (Dec., '08)
The Orphan Scrivener #54
Picofarad #15
Planetary Stories #13
Release the Hounds #1
Reluctant Famulus #67
Ribbons #4
Royal Swiss Navy Gazette #16
Science Fiction in San Francisco #77-78
SFCU #1
Space Cadet #12
Steam Engine Time #9
Surprising Stories #19
VFW #111-112
Visions of Paradise #135-136
WCSFAzine #16-17
Weber Woman's Wrevenge #1-30



So I've Read...

Voyage of the Space Beagle, by A.E. Van Vogt

Arguably a classic SF novel, this is a lot of fun, especially when the modern reader remembers that the initial stories date from 1939 and 1943. Light reading at its best.

Last Call, by Tim Powers

I would have to call this a modern fantasy classic. It is dark, disturbing, compelling. It helps to know poker before reading, but even if you don't, that's fine: Powers spins a fascinating tale that explores the boundaries between reality and fantasy.

"Mimes remind me a little of the traditional Christmas fruitcake. Something we all purport to hate and yet someone must like them because they both continue."

FIGBY by Bill Fischer





From the Hinterlands:

Letters from readers

Well, it appears I struck a nerve when I moaned and wailed lastish about only receiving five locs, albeit very good locs. This time around I got a bunch of locs and assorted e-mails from folks. In fact, the first one here is from a fan who's a bit out in the fannish hinterlands – literally – and the recipient of the 2009 Corflu Fifty award, Mr. Curt Phillips!



19310 Pleasant View Dr .
Abingdon , VA 24211

Dec 18, 2008

Hi John,

If I'd known that you'd only get 5 locs for Askance #10 I'd have surely sent one in on the theory that so few locs would greatly elevate my chances of avoiding the dreaded WAHF listing. You're probably in the same boat as the particularly attractive girl in high school who never got asked to the prom simply because everyone thought she must surely have been asked by 12 other guys already.

I can't read a fanzine *effectively* on a computer screen so I always just scan through the new zines at efanzines.com and print out the ones that catch my interest. Last summer I picked up a case of ACCO binders cheap at the flea market and I now have stacks of bound printouts of zines sitting around my office. You'll be glad – I trust – to know that Askance occupies a binder all by itself. (Some other zines have

to share...). How many total print copies do you wind up making of a particular issue? I'm hoping to do a genzine in time to hand out at Corflu ZED in March and I expect to print about 100 copies to take along. I'm already worrying about carrying all those zines in my carry-on luggage.

After reading your con report on FenCon I find myself wishing that we had a convention of that caliber here in Southwest Virginia. Most cons up here have guests from media, gaming, costuming, or other areas of interest, while you get a local con that has Greg Benford as a GOH! I'm jealous. After having read and enjoyed nearly all of his fiction, I hope to have a chance to meet him at a convention someday and hear him talk about writing, or physics – or just about anything, really. He's such an engaging writer that I don't think he could possibly fail to be an exceptional speaker. Thanks for describing James Halperin's Heritage Galleries and your tour of the Warner fanzine collection. Having once seen a small part of it in its native element (Harry's house in Hagerstown), it's good to know what's become of it since then. There ought

to be a copy of my own first fanzine there in Heritage Galleries if he truly has all of Harry's collection. That's something of a sobering thought for me. You mentioned the large number of zines that Harry accumulated over the years. On the afternoon I visited him in 1988, I noticed a large wicker basket in his living room near the front door. It contained about 20 large envelopes that were obviously fanzines. They were all still sealed in their envelopes, but fans can tell about such things, you know. When I asked, Harry admitted that those 20 zines were the accumulation of about 5 days since he was "a little behind" on his fanzine reading just then. So your calculation of 1.85 zines per day was reasonably close, I'd say.

I've enjoyed reading Lee Anne Lavell's memoirs and my only objection is that at the end of this section she seems to indicate that she's done, finished, and Moving Away From the Typer. That just won't do, Lee Anne. Now that you've pubbed three articles in a row you can't just quit like that! You're mistaken if you think (as you write in your last lines) that "I rather guess not many would be interested." Every fannish life is of interest simply because we all reflect Fandom in a unique and individual way. I hope you'll write more articles and I'd like to suggest that you join the Trufen discussion group on-line. Trufen is a group of about 175 or so mostly veteran fans and the discussions are conducted by e-mail in a very friendly and low-key manner, much like an apa (except with no activity requirement, nothing to print, and no dues.) There are old friends already on that list whom you know (I challenge you to visit and see) and new ones waiting to say hello. I can tell that you'd be a perfect fit with Trufen, and I think you'll enjoy the group too. Don't take my word for it; ask Dave Locke (whom I mention because I know that you write for Dave's zine *Time and Again*. Dave is the Group Moderator for Trufen and can answer all your questions. Give it a try by signing up at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/trufen/> and tell them that Curt Phillips sent you. (And if any other readers of ASKANCE read this and suspect that you too might enjoy the Trufen Group, then you're probably quite right and you should visit that link too.)

Your book review column covered an Ace Double that I've owned for nearly 40 years but have never read – and probably still won't. But the review was interesting and shows that even books that most folks usually overlook can still have an unpredictable appeal. This is the primary advantage of having a large collection of SF; you can often dip into it and find something that's surprisingly enjoyable. I've never read *The Proceedings; Chicon III* either, but that one I will indeed search out. I may request it via Inter Library Loan and who knows? I might receive the very copy that you found in the Texas A&M University Library. There have been other recordings made at many other Worldcons than the two that have had books published of the proceedings, of course. I made selected broadcast quality recordings on a huge reel-to-reel tape deck at the 1983 Worldcon and captured Dave Kyle's FGoh speech, Asimov's impromptu speech to the convention just before he won the Hugo for "Foundation's Edge", and several other things. But I've never even transcribed them, let alone published anything from them. Frank Dietz has a large collection of much older recordings that he used to make at conventions and last I heard he's never done anything with them either. I'd imagine that a *lot* of old Worldcon recordings exist out there if someone could just manage to ferret them out and actually do something with them. John, if you're ever looking for a Worthy Fannish Project, there's one to jump on...

A fascinating article by Earl Kemp on his memories of the '62 Chicago Worldcon. This one article would justify the publication of any fanzine all by itself. I still don't quite understand Hefner's heavy interest in the convention – unless he was using it as a way to get up close and personal to the best of the SF pros in order to recruit their best efforts in writing fiction for Playboy – which did indeed publish much excellent SF in the following years. Or maybe it was just that Hef was a fan himself and enjoyed the extra time spent with those pros. I wish Earl had told us something about that super-exclusive party at the Playboy mansion that he mentioned. Hef's never invited me to the mansion, and a vicarious tour by someone like Earl is as close to a visit as I'm ever likely to get...

You may have only received 5 locs on the lastish, but I see that they were 5 mighty good ones and that you managed to pub a powerful lettercol anyway. Nice job, John. A very good issue.

Best,

Curt Phillips

*[Many thanks, Curt. I am glad you enjoyed the zine. ** The number of print copies of this zine varies; it depends on how many contributors I have, plus who might have requested a copy. The most I have ever run off was 30 (the first issue). Lately I have been doing so on an "as requested" basis, and really want to do MUCH BETTER at mailing copies.]*

It is also good to hear from Bob Sabella again, who pubs Visions of Paradise, a zine you can find at efanzines.com. VoP has been running for many years now, and is an interesting look into his teaching experiences and comments on SF books, besides creating lots and lots of lists.



"Robert Sabella"
bsabella@optonline.net

December 14, 2008

Another interesting issue of Askance. Concerning "Bryan Campus student population is up nearly 8%", when Jean taught at County College of Morris. there was a direct correlation between poor economic times and an increase in attendance at the college. Since junior/community colleges are considerably cheaper than four year colleges, that is not surprising, but inevitably the increased workload falls on the faculty.

People show amazement at my workload, but I have little doubt that yours is considerably greater than mine with a fulltime teaching load, your doctoral studies, and your fanac. I am pleased that you are joining FAPA. Tom Sadler is probably joining as well, so there are two more fine fanwriters joining our little group. As

incoming OE, I will probably sneak a peak at both your zines as soon as I receive your packages in the mail! *[Well, I gotta get that check off to Mr. Lichtman and then send the first batch of Askews to you.]*

Five email locs is about average for me on an issue of VoP, but, of course, Askance has a much higher profile than my personalzine does (as shown by FAAn voting and the fact that VoP has not been reviewed anywhere in over a decade). I apologize for being part of the absent. I have also been seeking a topic for another article to write for you as well. *[No problem. The second annish is coming up Real Soon Now...]*

Your statement "The upper end projects out to Harry getting 1.85 zines – call it two – every day in the mail for 67 years!" is almost scary. In these efanzines.com days, not including FAPA I probably get about 2 fanzines per month! Twenty years ago I got a lot more, but I actually prefer reading most of my fanzines online.

You certainly hung around with a good crowd at Fencon. Although both Greg Benford and Guy Lillian are on the VoP mailing list, I would definitely be too intimidated to speak to either one of them in person (not to mention you!). That's part of the reason I have avoided most cons for nearly 30 years.

I too enjoy reading Alternate History novels. Did I ever mention to you that in the journal *Historical Fiction Review* they consider AH a sub-genre of historical fiction, much as fans consider it a sub-genre of f&sf? Obviously it falls smack in the overlap between the two genres.

I would be interested in your list of recommended AH novels which you gathered at the panel. While I have a long list of *Recommended Reading*, there is always room for a few more books on it. *[Sorry! I tossed my con notes shortly after completing the con report; all I can remember is a mention of Ward Moore's Bring the Jubilee, and assorted titles by Harry Turtledove. Joe Majors is probably*

the go-to guy for more names of current AH writers.]

I keep a list of Ace Doubles whose contents interest me, but I've never actually sought any of them out at the usual used book outlets (Pandora Books and Robert A. Madle books being my most common sources). I was pleased though that you reviewed some older books rather than brand new ones. There are dozens of outlets for reviews of new f&sf books, but it is rare to find reviews of older ones, even though there are probably hundreds of such books which are worth reading. That is why I try to include some discussion of older books in *Wondrous Stories* (such as a review of *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* in the current issue).

I also enjoy reading worldcon program books, and one of the perks of being in FAPA is that Peggy Rae Sapienza often franks conbooks in the mailings. The current mailing has the *Denvention 3 Souvenir Book* which is fascinating reading. I actually have about twice as many con books as worldcons I attended (which were all from the late 1960s through 1981).

Thanks again for a good issue. Happy holidays!

Bob Sabella

[The reason why I review old books is because it's fun, and also because I want to encourage others to review old or obscure SF&F for this zine. When I pubbed This House back in the 70's and 80's, I ran an occasional column called "The Obscurato" for such reviews; Denny Lien gave me a handful of fun reviews of books I had never heard of, and were justifiably forgotten. Let's see if anybody else wants to do this sort of thing again for Askance.]

Here's an e-mail from someone I haven't seen in ages, meaning when I used to attend conventions in the Midwestern section of the US of A. Give our friend Juanita Coulson a warm welcome, everybody:



From: "Juanita Coulson"
jcyandro@dragonbbs.com

December 9, 2008

Hola,

Lee Anne Lavell informs me there's some debate about the spelling of Midwescon. Well, for my decades than I care to remember -- 3 plus -- Yandro was being published and its editor and publisher and eventually junior "coulumnist" were attending Midwescon. I pulled out my file copy of Yandro for July 1957, where I reminisced about the recently attended Midwescon in my editorial column. (That particular year's Midwescon is firmly stuck in my memory because at the time I was very pregnant and sat out by the pool too long and got fried despite an overcast sky; everyone there got fried, as a matter of fact; at the Saturday night "banquet" held a few businesses down the street from the motel, Isaac and Harlan and Silverberg, et al, along with the rest of us, were definitely beet-complexioned.)

Unfortunately, we can't consult any of the founding lights of the con because they're gone.

Onward.

Juanita Coulson

[In a saner world, this would be the end of the "Great Midwescon/Midwestcon Spelling Debate", but fans being fans, we shall see about that! I tend to defer to those who were actually THERE, like Juanita and Lee Anne, so it seems to me that here's what happened:

Back in the Long Ago, Midwescon was founded in 1950, and was originally known by this name. I also Googled in "Midwescon" and found many references to this spelling; in fact, reading many of those entries convinced me that somewhere in the mid-1960s people started adding the "t", and the revised spelling stuck, probably because the name matched the geographic denotation of the con.

Like I said, this should end the discussion, but who knows?]

After I thanked Juanita for her e-mail, she fired off another one the following day:



From: "Juanita Coulson"
jcyandro@dragonbbs.com

December 10, 2008

Early fandom developed its own version of individ-speak long before the texters started smershing things into numbers and other interesting abbreviations. It's quite possible some members of the old farts' thin-on-the-ground legions did put a "t" into the terminology. All can I state flatly is that those with whom I dealt back then usually slurred it in writing just as much as us Midweserners do in speaking. (And yes, I've indeed heard it pronounced that way -- frequently.) The main thing about old time fandom was that there were damned few rules that couldn't be bent, broken, or simply ignored. I certainly did my share of that.

Lee Anne's also invited me into the modern version of zines, and so has Earl Kemp. I wrote a short account for him of old days...re a Midwescon. I don't recall how he spelled it in his e-zine, and quite frankly I don't give a rat's ass how he DID spell it. Hardly earth-shaking in importance. As I told Lee Anne, I bin there and dun that 'way too long to be much interested in retracing my steps in the electronic medium. I'm still extremely active in the filking sub fandom community, but not at all in zining.

Another possibility for your consultation: Steve Francis. He may not go back quite that far, but he has a good memory and maintains an interest in the old days in the Great Lakes fan region. (I've always preferred that designation, because, to me, Midwest implies Kansas and Iowa and Nebraska, etc., whereas we'un's is definitely surrounding the Lakes.)

As for my two cents worth, remember that Buck and I spent all those decades trying to persuade some over-enthusiastic young fans.

FIJAGH,

Juanita

[I will contact Steve Francis – hope he and his wife enjoyed their trip down under – and tell him you sent me. In the meantime, it is great to hear from you, Juanita!]

And of course, what is a zine nowadays without a loc from **Lloyd Penney?** Shorter, is the correct answer.



1706-24 Eva Rd
Etobicoke , ON
CANADA M9C 2B2

December 3, 2008

Dear John:

Another Askance is here, issue 11, and it's bigger than ever, a healthy size. Time to move through it, and whip up a loc. I will say right up front that Taral's always drawn some sexy skunks, but Schirm sure ramps it up.

Don't you hate it when work gets in the way of a good time? I certainly understand where you're coming from. I am all set to mark three months at SGS, and I still have my evening job at the Globe and Mail. that means approximately 53-hour weeks, and with travel time added in, about 3 hours each day, my weekdays are almost completely taken up with work and getting there and back. There are bits of downtime, and that's where I write the odd loc. Fanac does keep you sane, but it is also a time commitment to yourself instead of to others, and that's some work you don't mind doing.

I am still having fun writing locs after more than 25 years, and I know the finances behind e-zines, and the reasons we've gone electronic so much. But, many treat e-zines the same way we treat any other document we get in our e-mail...a moment's notice, and not much more. I make it a point to respond to e-zines, seeing how few actually do. Bill Burns may know that I visit eFanzines.com at least once a day to see

what's been freshly installed onto his fine website.

Oh, so we're offenders, are we? As long as we're equal-opportunity offenders, I guess that's okay...

It sounds like Jim Halperin is enjoying the Warner fanzine collection. Harry got all those fanzines in the mail, I guess whether he liked it or not. I have bought a few fanzines along the way, but 99.9% of all the paper zines I do have were sent to me in the mail. When did he get a portion of 4sj's collection?

It's been quite a while since I've seen anything by Real Musgrave in a fanzine, especially his Pocket Dragons. And, it's also been a while since I've seen David and Diana Thayer. I know Margaret Middleton from Little Rock from a ways back, but I cannot remember how... Cons like this one are few and far between, but any con for me is an adventure, and the possibilities for a memorable time are endless.

Lee Anne Lavell's story of the three Davids becoming their own fanpubbing empire...don't you wish there were neofans like that these days? Getting anything published online is so easy as to be done without thinking, but seeing anything relatively coherent online is getting more and more difficult all the time. I thought that LiveJournal might assist with that coherency, but more and more LJ is just an electronic diary. Long ago I would receive from the Indianapolis club *The Semi-Circular of Janus*, and even though Greg Dunn was the editor, I had thought that the editor of those I received was Janice Eisen... **[Not to be confused with Jeanne Gomoll's excellent fanzine, Janus.]**

As a long-ago costumer, I probably ran into Jon Stopa along the way. And, I do have some of the Chicon III publications, but not the post-con *Proceedings*. Wonder if you could scan the pages and put it on eFanzines.com? I don't think anyone would mind, especially Earl. I guess I had some idea of Playboy/Hefner's presence at Chicon III with ads for the magazine in the PRs, if I recall, but I had no idea there was so much

presence. Earl, it looks like you did a grand juggling act to keep that convention going. I wonder if any modern Worldcon chairs have had to this kind of juggling? I doubt it.

I'd like to get to another MidWestcon (that how I've spelled it in the past), but I have to wonder how many more of them there'll be. The clock is ticking, and those who stage it might not be able to stage it for much longer. Even in our own case, I can see the end of our con travelling days. I suppose I could whip up my own "How I Got Into Fandom" article, but I think most of us stumble across it; there's no recruitment office on the corner. Strike me down with an arkle, I dares ya...

I have gone to gaming cons, filkcons, costuming cons and space cons, usually to help out the friends (or loved ones) who are staging the event. I always find something to do...sometimes, there's an aspect of the con that interests me, or they are running something in a unique way that I must remember, or that con has something the ones I usually go to don't, or sometimes, the hotel looks interesting, and we might find it suitable for a convention in the future...

I'd like nothing better than to get down to another convention in Texas, and see old friends. I gather that Kim Kofmel is the chair of next year's Apollocon. I saw her at LAcon in Anaheim in 2006, love to see her again. Our convention season here is done until the spring, but there's another Canadian Worldcon coming up, and we are getting ready for it.

Lloyd Penney

[Gaming cons are simply not my forte, like costuming. Others enjoy them, and I will never begrudge their fancies. After all, fandom encompasses a lot of variety nowadays.]

[Apollocon is very nearby – a mere 90 miles, give or take – and should be part of my con agenda this coming year. Armadillocon would be nice, but we shall see about that one. Still, 'twould be loverly to see Al Jackson again in June.]

Here's the Trufan guru and editor/publisher of Time & Again, with assorted comments, some of which I actually paid attention to while producing this issue. How about that, eh?



From: "Dave Locke"
chimera@flashmail.com

November 29, 2008

John –

"In case anybody really cares, this is yet another Mythical Publication." No it isn't. I have it right here, in electrons, in front of me. That's *digital* publication, not mythical. Of course, if I turn off my Foxit Reader, it does go away. **[You're a looney...]**

You seem to be putting a bit more work into your graphical design. Askance looks better as you go along. If I may be so presumptuous, though, I definitely would recommend that you leave more 'white space' around your illustrations and logos. Okay, that sounds presumptuous and I apologize for it, but after nearly 48 years of pubbing I beg to be forgiven. A bit more attention to that particular point would actually work wonders in the design sense. From my lips to your ears: more white space... **[Point noted and taken. This time around you may have noticed an improvement in this regard.]**

"Behavioral Statistics"? Is that like ... what, determining there's no recidivism among reformed card cheats?

I think a low letter-of-comment response to a digital fanzine is the name of the game these days. And I noticed a dip with my last issue, too. Well, we know that digital zines have broken the mold on how LoCs interact with fanzines (and trading? There is no trading in digital zines). LoCs are now generated on a purely voluntary basis, and are no longer a currency of exchange. There are ways to encourage getting them, but I don't see any magic means of significantly strengthening the LoC/fmz relationship. Doesn't mean there isn't one, but it's not standing up and waving its hands. Well, not at me.

You mention certain types of articles which tend to draw more comment than others. I can remember Bill Bowers requesting "controversial" installments of my column for *Outworlds*, just to help pad out the subsequent issue's lettercol. Seemed to work. Certainly it worked better than my typical humorous fanwriting which, if I were lucky, might generate a passing comment from a few of the letterhacks. It wasn't until the Net came along that I saw "controversial" articles as being a rough equivalent of what in Usenet was called Trolling.

Lee Lavell's reminiscences on The Reincarnations Of ISFA made for interesting reading. I liked the sub-tale of the Three Davids, in particular. Of her own activity, she notes that "When Jim died suddenly of a heart attack in the early eighties even conventioning wasn't fun any more and I completely dropped out (although I still have my s-f collection) until I ran into Burton on the computer, so I'm just dipping a toe into the water. This current appearance may rate only a pothole." Now David Burton has faded away from fandom again, after a brief few years' reincarnation of his fanac, but it adds to his existing credit that he was a catalyst in Lee Anne dipping that toe back in. Although a fan since '61, my only gafiation was from 6/66-2/68. I've been more active or less active in various aspects of fandom as time thumped along, but that year and nine months was the only period I've Been Away.

Earl Kemp's remembrance of the 1962 Chicago Worldcon he chaired was also quite interesting. My first worldcon and first convention, both. The accompanying photo jogs the memory, and I do recall Sylvia Dees. That's a good photo. I also recall Robert Heinlein's Dig Me entrance wearing the white suit, and him Holding Court in his room with fans and the many fellow SF authors who showed up to greet him. Doesn't surprise me to hear Earl talking about dealing with Heinlein.

Earl calls his remembrances, based on reading The Proceedings, a reliving of "the whole sordid experience" despite "wonderful

memories" "coming to mind". He should have created "The Proceedings - The Good Parts Version". Or maybe he could call it "The Princess Proceedings – The Good Parts Version". **[That would be an interesting read.]**

Of course, you read this book about Chicon III and then approached Earl about it. I was amused at your wondering if it were worth the penalty to "lose" this library book and be forced to pay for it. I've occasionally wondered the same thing, but like you I've never proceeded to find out. Back when I had a lot of books I'd occasionally buy one at a library sale, but even acquiring it that way led to looking at it in a peculiar manner. I mean, there was a library book on a shelf, and there'd be people browsing the shelves who had never even heard of library sales. "You ever gonna get this one back to the library, Dave?" "No, we're working on starting a library branch here."

Lee Anne writes, in the lettercol, of second-hand book stores. They're absolutely wonderful for serendipitous grazing, though if I know what I'm after it's exceedingly difficult to find if I look to these stores to turn up a copy. When the Net came along, and the aggregating of these stores' inventory on places like BookFinder, I immediately began turning up books I'd been looking to find for ages.

But, when I think bookstores, my mind travels back to the "cigar stores" of the 1950s. When one or both of my parents would travel to the nearest large city, Gloversville, NYok, I'd be turned loose to shop for paperbacks to my heart's content. There were about five cigar stores in the city, loaded with tobacco products and porn and a few other things I had no interest in as a teenybopper, but the paperback and magazine selections were incredible. Sometimes I could barely carry my purchases. Used book stores? Never heard of them back then.

I enjoyed the issue, John, and extend the usual apologies for not tendering the apa equivalent of stating RAEBC (read and enjoyed but no comment) for each of the items which didn't hold me up by the leg and shake words out of me. There are fans who

take extra care to saying something about most everything in an issue, Ghu love 'em, but being a lazy sot I'm not one of them.

It provokes a warm smile to see a new issue of Askance posted to Bill Burns' eFanzines.

All best,

Dave Locke

[And it provokes a warm smile to receive locs on Askance posted to my in-box. I am so easy to please... () You are right in that is very hard to predict what kind of material will elicit locs from readers. For example, the fan-historical pieces in this zine have always garnered a decent response, as have been the Harry Warner, Jr. fanzine collection updates, so the response to Taral's piece leading off this issue should be interesting. What tweaks someone's interest may be an unbreakable subject in the eyes of many. Who knows?*

I don't think I would resort to trying to deliberately goading people into loccing by doing something like what Bob Sabella suggests: make a listing of "great" SF writers and include borderline cases to start an argument. That's not my style. I would rather pub interesting material and let things fall where they may.]

The Guest of Honor at the recent Fencon up in Dallas also wrote in, and shares a fun story of an encounter with Robert Heinlein.



From: Gregory Benford
xbenford@aol.com

November 27, 2008

Great issue, filled with fun stuff. Your con report brings it all back.

But you have an inferiority complex! You're a wide-ranging guy, full of enthused interest and fan lore, so of course people want to hang out with you. A big time fmz editor!

F'instance, *Askance* is better than any fmz published in that 1950s Dallas, including mine.

I liked Fencon more than any regional con I've attended for lo, decades. The masquerade, hucksters, merriment, etc -- all fine stuff. Russ Miller really knows how to run these things! The Fencon celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Souwestercon in Dallas, whose only survivors are apparently me, Jim and Al Jackson (a high school Dallas Futurian Society buddy and now a NASA physicist). I liked being GoH and seeing Jim's & my old high school, Dealey Plaza (the Dallas Book Depository is now a museum), seeing the King Tut exhibit and meeting many of the 800 who showed up. Souwestercon brought around 60 as I recall, including MZB & Forry Ackerman. How vastly has fandom grown...

Earl Kemp's Chicon I always regretted missing...couldn't afford it, as a junior in university, though I spent the summer working for Texas Instruments in Dallas. Still... I always found Heinlein to be a gentleman, though he might've been tough on con chairmen. The last time I saw him, a year or so before his death, I was arriving at Larry Niven's after a day of consulting in Hollywood, and wanted to go swimming, to wash the experience off. On my way to a bedroom, I heard a voice calling, "Greg! Greg!" -- and turned to see Heinlein on a cane, making his way across Niven's living room, to say hello. I remember thinking, "*Heinlein is hurrying to see me?!*" and feeling the rush of time, back to the era when he was the best writer I'd ever read. (Still pretty near the top for me.) I spent some hours talking with him then, stayed overnight and had great conversations the next day, too. I was stunned when he died. I'd known him over 20 years, since he invited me to his home in Santa Cruz, and it seemed not nearly enough.

I'm still a fan at heart. That's why Fencon worked so well for me. It felt like the old days...

Be sure Russ gets a copy of this issue!

Gregory Benford

*[*blush* Such kind words, sir. Many thanks. Also, Fencon reminded me very much of my conning during the 70s and 80s for the same reasons you gave. It was a very good con, one that I will be going back to in 2009.]*

Great story about RAH! I never met him in person, although at MidAmeriCon I was in the same room as he, but was too flabbergasted to get up the nerve to approach RAH. At least I did have enough presence of mind to take a picture, which is somewhere around here.]

Eric Mayer likes to cover many different points in his locs, and this next one from him maintains that practice very well.



From: "Eric Mayer"
maywrite2@epix.net

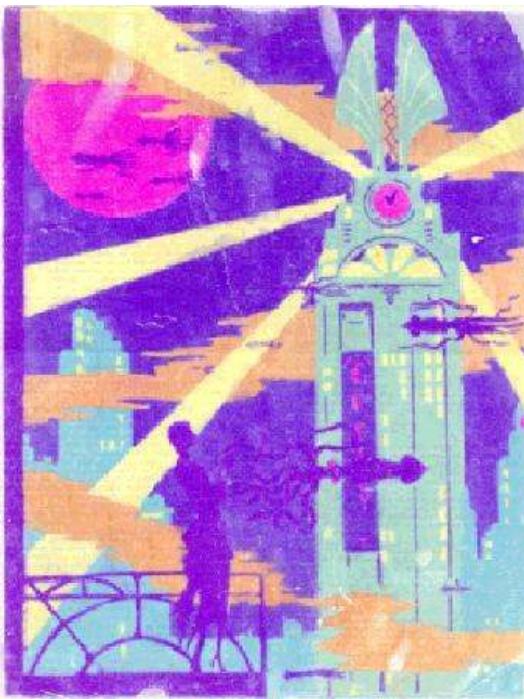
November 25, 2008

John,

You have been busy! I'm don't know how you manage the fanac you do. I couldn't. With me -- I have to repeat what I said in my last letter -- it isn't so much a matter of time -- simply by working and home and not needing to commute -- I save myself time, the problem is I'm not much at switching mental gears, or multi-tasking. Well, there's a bad mix of metaphor -- computers that multi-task don't have gears...But anyway, when I'm in the middle of a legal article, which involves a lot of pedantic attention to detail and *no* creativity -- I'd better not be dreaming up laws! -- I find it difficult to just put it away for the day and spend an hour or so on fanac. I'm still in legal mode.(Jeez, do I start all my locs with the same variation on a theme now? I am getting old!)

It's a shame about the lack of locs. You're not alone, I've noticed. Are we e-ziners all deluding ourselves? If not for e-zines, I wouldn't be involved with fandom. I'm not heavily involved, but some. This year I done done maybe 10 articles/columns and written about 60 locs. It feels kind of like the fandom I was involved in during the 1970s. But is anyone else reading the zines I do? Outside

you and Lloyd Penney and Chris Garcia and Lee Lavell? Chris gets few locs, and Dave Locke's *Time & Again*, another of my favorites, doesn't receive many -- nor did it's predecessors from Dave Burton.



I used to get 30 locs on *Groggy*, often more, every issue and that was a perszine that went to around 60 readers. Nothing wrong with ten people trading zines with each other, but the quality of the zines is really high and they deserve an audience. I suppose a lot of the energy goes into listservs and blogs, but I'm sure, as an editor, you'd appreciate a loc that was no longer than a typical blog comment just to show someone was paying attention.

Zines where fans can reminisce about their pasts or talk about sf seem to get better response, but those aren't my favorites.

I enjoyed Lee Anne Lavell's bit of personal history. The heyday of the Three Daves was right before I discovered fandom, so I missed Dave Burton's initial efforts. I did get *Gorbett* from Dave Gorman for awhile. I wish Dave Burton would resume his e-fanac. Can't Lee buy him a fancy new computer or something like she bought that fancy mimeo? I recall buying a hand cranked ditto machine from Sears, which was all I could

afford, but still, it seemed so cool to be able to do my own printing. Those mimeos and ditto machines were kind of like today's computer programs and different sorts of web sites and blogs...people will produce material mostly to give them an excuse to play with the programs. One thing I enjoyed about Lee's little history is that she somehow managed to write about her faanish past without ever once describing how she and her acquaintances were the center of fandom. A rare achievement.

I enjoyed your con report. Although I don't attend cons, and don't like con reports *per se*, I am still interested in reading accounts by people I know/like for the same reasons it's interesting to read about whatever mundane stuff they are up to. Pretty neat to get to hang out with the GoH the whole time. Maybe Greg thought you looked big and mean enough to keep the annoying fanboys away.

The Warner collection is kind of awesome to think about. My *Groggies* must be on those shelves someplace. The hecto covers would be among the brightest examples because I sent the beginning of the print run to the most frequent lockers. In fact, all the zines I contributed to, or received over the years, would likely be there. All your old zines must be there too of course. *[Oh, I know my old zines – This House, Ennui, Bangweulu – are in those boxes somewhere; it is going to be at least another year before the entire Warner fanzine collection is basically sorted. The real work starts after that.]*

Lloyd Penney does a good job with his reviews of web zines. I agree with him in that I would prefer *Challenger* as a pdf. Somehow I never get around to finishing a web presence, and I have a little trouble figuring out if I have seen it all. A pdf is a paper zine emulator allowing you to run a paper zine on my computer, just like an Atari emulator lets me run old Atari 2600 games on my computer. As a fanzine fan, I still like fanzines, but I just don't want the expense and hassle of paper. Websites do open up different possibilities, although they don't feel exactly like zines to me.

As for your reading, I haven't read any sf lately, though I did just finish Fredric Brown's

mystery *The Fabulous Clipjoint* which was pretty fabulous. I had to laugh about that Chicon book -- never checked out in 37 years! Is it any wonder, looking at the cover??!

What a great article by Earl Kemp. What he talks about is so far out of my experience I really have no comment except to say it was fascinating. One of the most interesting things I've read in a fanzine lately fo sure.

In the loccol, Dave Locke's success at Ping Pong makes him more of an athlete than I ever was! I have never played Ping Pong. I did use to love air hockey. Do they still have that in the arcades? **[We actually have an air hockey game in the garage. By the end of this semester break the table should be cleared again.]**

Lee Anne was lucky going to all those minor league baseball games. I did get to some of the Red Wings games when I lived in Rochester, NY although not as many as I should have. In a way, minor league games are better because you are usually much closer to the action. And hey, who says her father wasn't a church going man? Maybe his church was the ballpark.

Lee has a good point about comment hooks. It is all too easy to start arguments and receive locs you'd rather not read.

Like Lloyd I was never into organized sports as a kid, just informal backyard play. I participated in some organized sports for the first time in my forties when I did road races and orienteering meets. Participated" -- not "competed." My goal was to do it and finish.

I should also comment that Schirm's cover was excellent and Bill Fischer's contributions were as amusing as ever. Don't we all hate mimes? Actually, mimes remind me a little of the traditional Christmas fruitcake. Something we all purport to hate and yet someone must like them because they both continue. Seems a paradox.

Best,

Eric Mayer

**[A mime is a terrible thing to waste... (*)
My athletic prowess is diminished of late,
but I still exercise in hopes of staying fit
and healthy. Hockey, soccer, and
baseball were my sports, but I wasn't
good enough to make the best teams in
my younger years. Even so, it was a lot
of fun to play, which is the whole idea of
organized sports for kids.**

Well, well... It has been a while since Mark Plummer has written, as he notes in the next loc.



From: "Mark Plummer"
Croydon, UK

mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

January 2, 2009

I am acutely conscious that I haven't written to you about Askance since, umm, #4 which would have been back in September of 2007. There's no particular reason for this dilatory behaviour beyond simple laziness. Askance continues to be it's usual eclectic mix, invariably containing something of serious interest and equally something that just doesn't work for me at all. This probably only demonstrates that Askance is a product of John Purcell rather than Mark Plummer.

Mostly I'm now stirred to action -- and in defiance of the fact that it's bloody freezing in my house right now so apologies if my typing is more than usually erratic -- by your comments on the the Chicon Proceedings book and Earl Kemp's related reminiscences of the 1962 Worldcon. I've long been a fan of Advent:Publishers and generally pick up their titles when I stumble upon them but the proceedings volumes tend not to appear all that often. More specialist and thus smaller print runs, maybe? I only ever once saw a copy of the Chicon Proceedings and that was just over a decade ago at the 1998 UK Eastercon. As I recall, the price was a little steep, and so I didn't buy it for all that it was a copy with an unusual associational value. It had belonged to Ethel Lindsay who'd been the TAFF winner at the Chicon III and it had been extensively signed and annotated by other fans. It only now occurs to me that this is a little odd. Ethel had been *at* Chicon III

but the book must by definition have been produced after the convention (its copyright is 1963) so what happened? Was it passed around at some later convention and mailed on to Ethel? Of course, I now seriously regret baulking at this unique item over what only seemed like a high price, given that it wasn't exactly exorbitant and a quick search on Abe suggests that it's not a cheap book at the best of times.

However, in one of those odd little coincidences, *Askance* #11 appeared on efanzines on 23 November, one week after the UK's Novacon where I finally found a copy of The Proceedings: Discon edited by Dick Eney and published in 1965. It's really quite remarkable that somebody had the energy and enthusiasm to produce these books. The idea is obvious, and it (or something like it) occurs to fans again and again, but it usually fails in the execution. The first stage -- recording the programme items -- is relatively straightforward, but the actual transcription and publication is the tricky part. I wonder just how many convention panel recordings lurk in fannish wardrobes, lofts and basements, unplayed since they were originally recorded and on decaying media which is increasingly unplayable? In the early 1990s I assisted Nic Farey, then still resident in the UK, with sound systems for some of the Mexicons and we diligently recorded all the panels and presentations for a small press magazine publisher who'd announced his intention to run a special issue of transcripts. That never happened and who knows where the tapes now are.



Still, maybe they'll come around in time. During the run-up to the 2005 Worldcon somebody discovered that the SFCD (SF Club Deutschland, the German national sf

club) still have in their archives reel-to-reel tapes of the full programme content of Loncon II, the 1965 Worldcon. I don't believe anything was ever transcribed -- was it perhaps recorded with a mind to an Advent 'proceedings' volume, especially as most American fans would have been unable to attend? -- but the technology has evolved to the extent that it was possible to give every attendee of the 2005 Worldcon a CD including .wav files of some of those 1965 panels including 'A Robot in the Executive Suite' featuring Dick Eney, Judith Merril, Robert Silverberg, Terry Carr, James White, Ken Bulmer and Edmund Crispin and 'The Man on a White Horse' with Fred Pohl, Poul Anderson, Don Wollheim, Rolf Gindorf, John W Campbell, Mike Moorcock and Joe Patrizio.

Oh, a small point. In your review of *Earthrim* you say Nick Kamin is a pseudonym of Jon Polito. According to the 1993 *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction*, 'Kamin' was really Robert J Antonick. This seems to be backed up by my web research -- a rather grand way of describing googling "nick kamin" + antonick' -- and I can't really find anything to link Kamin and Polito beyond a PDF of a fanzine called, would you believe, *Askance* #11, so I think you may be helping to perpetuate a piece of internet disinformation there. But, based on what you have to say about *Earthrim*, I think we may both be giving this book more attention than it deserves.

And crossing the streams for a moment, you asked in an email to us about the economics of our shift from A4 to A5 (half-size) publication. For us, the main saving is on domestic postage. We now have a system where postage within the UK is calculated on both size and weight. Our downsizing means that so long as BW weights less than 100g it can ride on a regular 2nd class letter stamp (27p). Our old format, A4 and over that 100g line, cost 66p to mail so the saving is on our domestic mailing list is considerable. There's also a saving on the international copies too but at present non-UK mail is still priced on weight alone so it's not as significant. The saving on print costs is a little tricky to quantify as we shifted to A5 at about the same time as our printers upped their rates for the first time in years. As a result, BW costs about as much as it

ever did to print -- but if we hadn't downsized it would have cost us an unknown amount more.

-- Best etc.

Mark

[As it is written, All Knowledge Is Contained in Fanzines. Thank you for the info on who was really responsible for Earthrim. Truth be told, it wasn't a totally terrible book, just nothing worth jumping up and down about.]

Interesting info about the repercussions of the new format for Banana Wings. I thank you for sharing the info with my other readers.]

And here is Lee Anne Lavell to bring things to an end.



Lee Anne Lavell

November 25, 2008

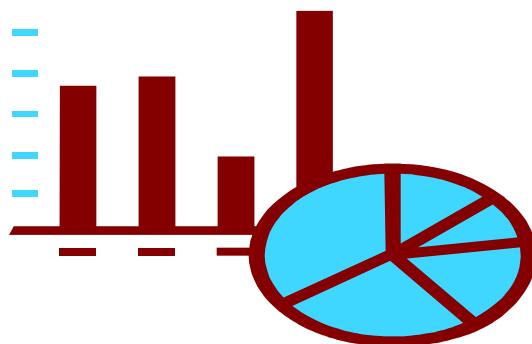
Greetings,

The latest *Askance* (11) finally appeared on efanzines. I was beginning to worry that your "November" issue might not make it until December. I realize that it takes a lot of effort (and love) to put together one outstanding issue after another, so the wait was well worthwhile.

Bemused Natterings: Out of curiosity, how many students do you have in your classes now, John? **[If I want to be persnickety about this, at the moment, none, since it's holiday break; but, for Fall, 2008 semester, I started with 133 students and finished with 125.]**

Your remark about the statistics course you are/will be taking reminds me of the *Standardized Tests and Measurements* course I took while I was working on my Masters Degree. It was mainly statistics, much to my horror. My mind does not work in a normal mathematical way. (Some might comment that my mind does not work in any normal way.) I have to struggle with the

concepts of what is going on and when and if I do finally understand it, I go straight from the problem to the solution without working out the procedures in between. (This presents difficulties in math classes where you know the correct answer but can't prove it.) Anyway, back to the testing course. After much angst and some tutoring I finally figured out what was going on, although I was very slow in working things out. Then came the final exam (for a class of 80+). There it was: pages and pages and *pages* of multiple choice questions, most concerning means, medians and averages. We had two hours for the exam and were told to do as many as we had time for. I looked at the test for a bit and thought, "Well, I either know it or I don't." So I finished the whole thing in twenty minutes, then sat around twiddling my thumbs for the rest of the time. Oh, incidentally, I made the high grade in the class. **[Why doesn't that surprise me?]**



Yes indeed, one really should send LoCs. I do try to send something if I find something to comment on. In the "olden days" one of the ways one could get a "free" copy was if you replied with a LoC or even just an acknowledgement of getting the zine. Nowadays there is no such incentive to write, except possibly the egoboo of seeing it in "print." I wonder if some sort of "reward" could be established for those who take the time to write a letter. Maybe some "super-fanzine," put together by a bunch of editors and presented to those who have sent in ??? many LoCs (whether printed or not). But that would require the concerted cooperation of a lot of fanneds and I wonder if that could ever happen.

I'm sorry to say that, at the present time I am not into either cons or conreports, so I just skimmed "FenCon, Fun Con."

Penny for Your Thoughts: Okay, Lloyd, you've lost me. I don't even know what a webzine is! Sounds interesting but I don't have any idea how access one, let alone how to navigate it. I am so ignorant....
[*Zines that exist only in .html format, thus readable only on a computer.*]

Half Shelf Life: But, but...Jon Polito is an actor...

1962 All Over Again: And that is why ISFA never had any desire to put on a convention!

Figby was as always hilarious.

Rom the Hinterlands: What the F happened to that first letter? [*Oops! My bad, but you're the only person to catch that.*]

Dave Locke: Yes, I know that there is a new bunch calling themselves Indiana fans. But, they are not Isfans and some of their ideas about ISFA are a bit bizarre. I was described in their newsletter/fanzine which was recounting the early history of ISFA, as being a "den mother." Hardly—I may have been many things, but a den mother! Good grief, I was barely out of high school! Also, one of their members describes himself as being a "charter member" of ISFA. Hardly. Oh well, *c'est la guerre! la vie!* or la de dah.

Concerning the Midwescon vs. Midwestcon thing, it was the general practice of fandom

in those ancient days to drop the "t" in their convention names. Sometime in the fifties or early sixties it stopped. Who knows why. Why not?

Looking forward to the next issue.

Cheers.....

Lee Anne Lavell

[Fannish courtesy once meant that if you got a zine in the mail, you should at least send SOMETHING back in return: loc, article, review, artwork. Some folks still practice that, for which I am definitely grateful, and I try to reciprocate in kind – when I have the time, that is. I rather doubt that a "super-fanzine" would work; your idea sounds sort of like an APA, but the typical reward of participating in fanzines is seeing your name in print. Egoboo is a heady treat.

As always, I thank you for the feedback and wish you the best for this up-coming year.]



A WAHF-ling we go...: Leslie David (e-COA: leslie_david@comcast.net), Nic Farey, Bill Fischer, Brad Foster, Bruce Gillespie, Alexis Gilliland ("Thank you for Askance #11. which arrived with the last of the Christmas cards, and a sneaky Comcast bill."), Arnie Katz, Guy H. Lillian III (who is groveling for locs for Challenger #29), Joe Majors, Tom Sadler, Barry Short. Thank you, one and all!

REGIONAL CONVENTION CALENDAR



Okay, so that's a Chicago convention, but I love the image and it goes so well with this section. Once again the con-titles are hyperlinks to that convention's homepage. For my paper-copy readers, I apologize. When provided, I include mailing addresses for the con.

Con-Jour

Gaming, Fantasy & Science Fiction Convention

January 30-February 1, 2009

University of Houston, Clear Lake

Houston, Texas

Greater Houston metropolitan area

GOH: Absurd

Guests: Glen Welch, Larry Friesen, John Moore, Scott Padgett, Kevin P. Boerwinkle, Richard Leon, Simon Nightingale, Paul Abell, Amy Sisson

While we do have gaming at our convention, that is not the only thing we have there. We also have guests on writing and fandom, and we will be showing sci-fi/horror/fantasy films.

Presented by the UHCL Gamer's Guild in partnership with the UHCL Film & History Club.

OwlCon XXVIII

Gaming, Fantasy, & Science Fiction Convention

February 6-8, 2009

RMC/Ley Student Center

Rice University

Houston, TX

OwlCon is an annual gaming convention at Rice University, Houston, TX, dating back to 1980. We will feature table top and live action role playing games, miniatures games and events,

historical miniatures, board games, card games, a dealers' room, and more. OwlCon 2k2 gaming events will include RPGA events, official tournaments for Warhammer 40k, Warmaster, Shadowfist, and Mage Knight, Matchbox-scale Car Wars, World of Darkness tabletop games, a Vampire LARP, a Call of Cthulhu LARP, a Crossroads fantasy LARP, and many other games with prizes galore! OwlCon will once again be swarming with official demo folks for various game systems to give you a chance to try some of their great games. We will also have open gaming, an anime room, a TV lounge running movies, some "all nighter" events, and our second annual OwlCon party and costume contest in Valhalla.

Ikkicon 3

Japanese Animation & Pop Culture Convention

February 6-8, 2009

The Hilton Austin

500 East 4th Street

Austin, Texas 78701

Anime Idol, Anime Music Video(AMV) Contest, Anime Poetry Slam, Dance Contest, Media Gallery (Artist Alley & Exhibitions), Dealers Room, Art Show, and more!

Starbase Houston Annual Chili & Dessert Cook-Off with Collectible Auction

One-day (1 PM-4 PM) annual fundraiser for Starbase Houston

(Perhaps Spring 2009)

Harris County Precinct 1

Christia V. Adair Park Community Center

15107 Cullen Blvd

Houston, TX 77047-6713

Houston, TX area

Cash Prizes and Awards for best Chili, Dessert, and Exotic Alien Dish. Starbase Houston's mission is to advance, promote, and sustain all the various facets of Star Trek, Star Trek Houston Fandom, and all things sci-fi. \$5 per person for food. There is no charge for entering the cook-off.

ConDFW VIII

A Science Fiction & Fantasy Event

February 20-22, 2009

Crown Plaza Suites Dallas - Park Central

7800 Alpha Road

Dallas, TX 75240

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

Author Guest of Honor: Jim Butcher

Author Guest of Honor: David Weber

The Expected Activities:

Art Show, Autographs, Dealer's Room, Con Suite, Panel Discussions, Gaming, Readings, Freebie Tables

And the Unexpected:

Annual Sci-Fi Spelling Bee, Pro Artist Drawing Challenge, Charity Book Swap, Hard Science Panels, Short Story Contest, Beauty Pageant...of Sorts..., "Late Night Double Feature", Sci-Fi Pictionary

Sponsored by the Texas Speculative Fiction Association

Furry Fiesta

Texas' only furry convention, and the first one in the state of Texas in over four years.

February 20-22, 2009

Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas - Addison
14315 Midway Road
Addison, TX 75001

(Dallas / Fort Worth / Metroplex area)

Dealer's Den, Artist Alley, Video Room, Charity, and more!

Chimaeracon 2009

South Texas Gaming, Scifi, Anime & More Fest

March 6-8, 2009

Crossroads Convention Center (South corner of Crossroads Mall)
4522 Fredericksburg Rd. (SW of I-10/Loop 410 interchange)

Balcones Heights, TX

San Antonio, TX area

Three days of fan-run, locally-organized game, anime and science fiction/fantasy events.

Game Genres: Old Skool, New Wave, Table Top, Miniatures, Card, Electronic, Scale, Role-playing, Live-Action Role-Playing

Game Titles: TBA

Features:

Special Guest(s); Costume/Cosplay Contest; Anime Room; Game Demonstrations; Vendors; Artist Alley; Door Prizes and more to come!

Charity: TBA

All-Con 2009

Multi-format convention featuring autographs, gaming, comics, & a burlesque show.

March 13-15, 2009

Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas - Addison
14315 Midway Road
Addison, TX 75001

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

For three days All-Con provides an umbrella of content supporting fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Renaissance, Anime, Costuming, Theater / Performing Arts, Mystery, Art, Crafts, Collecting, and Film Making. To help 'give back' there are several charity events at the convention every year.

REVELcon 20

The Little Con with the Texas-Size Heart

March 13-15, 2009

Houston, Texas

Revelcon is THE only fan-run relax-a-con/zinefest in the Southwest US. It's a fab weekend of vids, panels, art, zines, merchandise, food and fun! [Note - Revelcon is an adults-only/18-and-over con.]

REVELcon/Friends of Fandom Art Show

AggieCon 40

Oldest & largest student-run science fiction convention in the U.S.
March 26-29, 2009
Texas A&M Memorial Student Center
College Station, Texas

No guest line-up has yet been announced. Any questions regarding registration should be directed to Janell Kahl at janell.kahl@yahoo.com... please put AggieCon in the subject line.

Registration info at present for Full Con (includes program book):

- Non-Student.....\$30
 - Student (must show current ID).....\$25
 - Children (3-12 years of age).....\$10
 - Children (2 and under).....free
 - Single Day.....\$10
-

Anime Matsuri

Anime con
April 10-12, 2009
Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center
1601 Lake Robbins Drive
The Woodlands, Texas 77380
Greater Houston, Texas metropolitan area
Panels, Gaming, Anime Theaters, Dealer Room, Artist Alley, Contests, Club AM (the ultimate anime dance/rave), and more!

InstaCon 8

The Best Little Con about ConRunning in Texas
April 18-19, 2009
Crowne Plaza Houston Suites
9090 Southwest Freeway
Houston, Texas 77074
Sponsored by ALAMO, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Delta H Con

Gaming & anime con
April 24-26, 2009
University of Houston Main Campus
UC Center
4800 Calhoun Rd.
Houston, Texas 77004
Dealers Room, Artist's Alley, Art Auction, Art Show, Anime&DVD Screening Room, Anime Music Video (AMV) Contest (Rules), CosPlay [Graciously put on by Anime No Kai of UH], Manga Reading Room, Live Action Role Playing events (LARP's), Speaker Panels, Workshops, Bubble Room (Kid geared area), Collectable Card Games, PC Game Room, Role Playing events (RPG's), Terrain or Miniature Games (Mini's), & Board Games.

Conestoga 13

Oklahoma's largest literary science fiction & fantasy con

April 24-26, 2009

Radisson Tulsa

10918 E. 41st Street

Tulsa, OK 74146

Guest of Honor: Robin Hobb

Artist Guest of Honor: Real Musgrave

Fan Guest of Honor: Diana Bailey

Toastmaster: Frank Wu

Featuring: Art Show, Panel Discussions, Writers Conference, Dealers Room, Short Film Contest, Gaming, Fangs Fur & Fey Mini-Con, Friday night concert, Filksinging, Author Readings, Masquerade, Charity Auction, Panels, Podcasts, and the inexplicably popular Penguin Playhouse Theatre! Of course, this is only some of the many activities and events we have planned.

Cape!

Free Comic and Pop-culture Expo!

May 2, 2009

CAPE is a completely free 3-day event hosting over 80 guests including the most celebrated comic book artists and writers in the industry.

Dallas, Texas area

A-Kon 20

The Southwest's Largest Anime Convention

Anime, comics, cosplay, media, & gaming convention

May 29-31, 2009

(Metroplex area/ downtown Dallas)

Dealers Room, Guests, Seminars & Workshops, Multiple Video Rooms, Gaming & Tournaments, Premier Film Showings, Art Show & Auction, Autographs, Banquet, Costume Contest, Goodie Bags&Freebies, and Musical Concert

A-Kon is the oldest continually running, anime-based convention in N. America.

SoonerCon 2009: "Slideways in Time"

Science Fiction, Fantasy, Gaming Con

June 5-7, 2009

Oklahoma City, OK area

GOH: Eric Flint

Author Guest: Selina Rosen

4th year of the SoonerCon revival

This incarnation of SoonerCon is deliberately designed to celebrate all aspects of fandom. We don't intend to have a solely "books" or "TV" or "art" emphasis. The emphasis is on FUN.

Events include: Film Festival, Art Show, Gaming, Cosplay and Masquerade. Charity. Panel and Workshops. Video Rooms.



Bayou Wars XVII

Wargaming con
(Presumably June 2009)
(greater New Orleans area)

Diverse gaming experiences, sponsored tournaments, and special Guest seminars and panels.

ApolloCon 2009

Houston's Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Conference
June 26-28, 2009

Houston, TX area

GOH: Wil McCarthy

Editor GOH: Gavin Grant & Kelly Link

Artist GOH: Pat Rawlings

Music GOH: Amy McNally

Fan GOH: Al Jackson

Celebrating speculative fiction in Houston and the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing.

Panels, Art Show, Masquerade, Dealers Room, Gaming (including LARP), Filking, Book Exchanges, Short Film Contest, Media Room. Writer's Workshop.

Sponsored by the Houston Science Fiction Association, a 501(c)(3) organization.



Tokyo in Tulsa

Anime con

July 10-12, 2009

DoubleTree Downtown
and the Tulsa Convention Center

Tulsa, OK area

Con centered around Japanese Anime and Culture. We are also highlighting gaming (both video and tabletop), webcomics, writers, and popular culture. Otaku everywhere and of every persuasion will find something to do and be excited about! Tokyo In Tulsa is about coming together, having fun and celebrating our common interests. Will have AMV, cosplay, hall cosplay, etc.

Babelcon 2009

General science fiction, fantasy, & horror con

July 17-19, 2009

Cook Hotel & Alumni Center

3838 Lakeshore Rd.

(next to the lake on the LSU campus)

Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Anime fans will be glad to hear BabelCon has plans to expand their anime track to include several guests, Cosplay contest, and lots more panel discussions, instead of primarily showing videos. Plus we're working on a Horror track, an Author's track, and the Scinema Film Festival (various categories). This will be in addition to the Kids track, Indoor Ren Fair track, Sci-Fi track, Fantasy track, Science track, Paranormal track, and Games track (video and tabletop) from previous years.

BabelCon is a presentation of the Science and Engineering Education Foundation, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to Science education, using Science Fiction media to create interest. A large percentage of BabelCon's shows, panel discussions, demonstrations, and other presentations are related to Science and History.

AniMix 2009

Where Anime and Gamers Unite

July 17-19, 2009

Plaza Hotel and Conference Center

1721 E Central Texas Expressway

Killeen, TX 76549

(Killeen / Central Texas area)

Dealers Room, Artist Alley, Art Auction, Anime Music Video competition, and more! Above all the typical things that conventions have, we will have AniMix's original Final Fantasy VIII ball. So, bring your best FF costumes and show off during the ball. Also we will have video game Tournaments, table top gaming, new anime screeners, video game demos and lots of workshops and panels.

MechaCon V

Anime con

July 24-26, 2009

Hilton Lafayette

1521 West Pinhook Road

Lafayette, LA 70503-3158

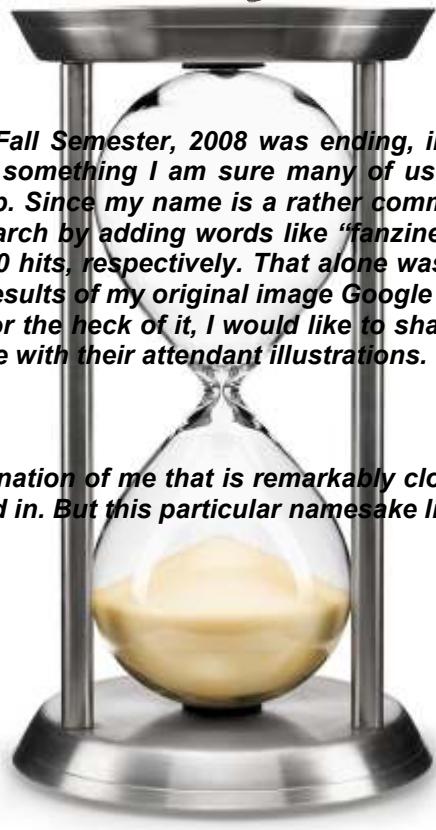
"[O]ffers anime and mecha fans of Louisiana and neighboring states a chance to gather in a warm and friendly setting to learn more about the culture of Japan and to share in the experience that is the anime fan culture."

Cosplay, Contests, Gaming, Video Rooms, Panels, Dealers Room, Artist Alley, formal/semi-formal dinner, and more!

A fan's lament:

"This is one of those times when you just don't know which con to go to on any given weekend."

those were the days, my friend



Not so long ago – just as Fall Semester, 2008 was ending, in fact – I took a break from computing grades and did something I am sure many of us have done: Googled in my name to see what comes up. Since my name is a rather common one – there were 93,000 hits – I then limited the search by adding words like “fanzines” or “fanzine fan”, and the results were 2,430 and 1,380 hits, respectively. That alone was interesting, but what really caught my fancy were the results of my original image Google search. All sorts of versions of me popped up. So just for the heck of it, I would like to share with y'all two of the more interesting results, complete with their attendant illustrations.

Leading off, here's an incarnation of me that is remarkably close in point of origin and the religion I actually was raised in. But this particular namesake lived a very remarkable life:

Δ



John Purcell

- [Home »](#)
- [History »](#)
- [People »](#)
- John Purcell

John Purcell was a prominent leader in the Roman Catholic Church in Ohio for much of the nineteenth century.

John Purcell was born on February 26, 1800 in Ireland. He migrated to America in 1818, and he became a private tutor for a family in Maryland.

He returned to Europe in 1823. He finished his education in Paris, France, and returned to the United States as an ordained Catholic priest in 1828. Purcell became vice president and then president of St. Mary's College, in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

In 1833, Purcell left St. Mary's College to become bishop of the diocese in Cincinnati. In this new position, Purcell dedicated himself to furthering Catholic education. He oversaw St. Xavier College, modern-day Xavier University, in Cincinnati for several years. He also established various programs to provide children in hospitals and orphanages with an education.

Under Purcell's leadership, Cincinnati emerged as a stronghold for the Catholic faith. A primary reason for this was the large number of German Catholic immigrants who had settled in the Cincinnati area during the early to mid 1800s. The Cincinnati diocese originally encompassed the entire state of Ohio, but in 1847 the diocese was divided into the Dioceses of Cleveland and Cincinnati. In 1868, the Diocese of Columbus was formed. Nevertheless, Purcell still had authority over these other dioceses. In 1850, the Catholic Church made the Cincinnati diocese an archdiocese, and Purcell became the first archbishop. One of his duties was to oversee the Cleveland and Columbus dioceses.

Most Ohioans were Protestants and some of them strongly disliked the Roman Catholics. Some Protestants contended that the Catholics were more loyal to the Pope than to the United States. Many Roman Catholics preferred to educate their children in private

schools rather than the public schools. The Catholics became a favorite target of the Know-Nothing Party during the late 1840s and early 1850s.



www.newyorkcivilwar.com/cdv_dennis.jpg

the economic depression of the mid 1870's many of these depositors went to Purcell and

Due to this opposition to the Catholic faith, Purcell often found himself protecting Catholics and defending their beliefs. In 1836, he participated in a public debate with several Protestant ministers, hoping to make Catholic beliefs more understandable to the Protestants. During the Civil War, Purcell actively sought recruits for the Union Army from his congregation and encouraged all Catholics to remain loyal to the United States government.

From the time of the Panic of 1837 through the Civil War, many Cincinnati Catholics gave money to Purcell for safekeeping. They believed that the Catholic Church had more resources available to safeguard their savings than they themselves had. During

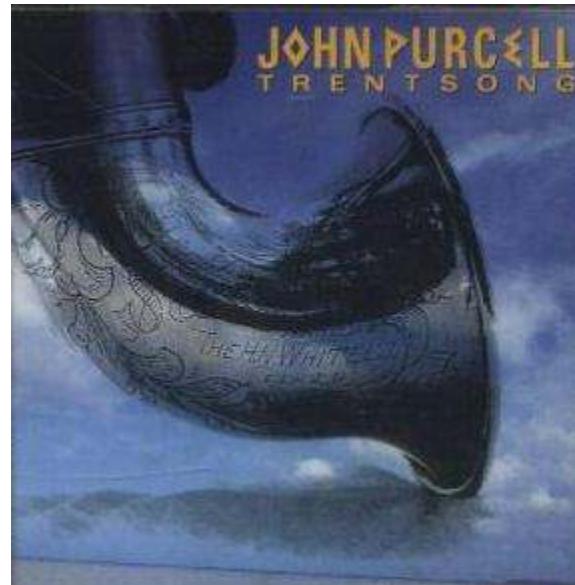
asked for their money. The Catholic Church had invested the money in several long-term investments, and Purcell could not easily return the money. Purcell was not personally liable for the money, but he regretted that he could not return it. He retired from his position soon thereafter and died on July 4, 1883.



Well, I thought that incarnation of me was rather interesting – a clergyman who also fought in the American Civil War - since my immediate family's ancestors (both mom's and dad's sides) immigrated to the United States from Ireland possibly as early as the late 1870s. We don't know exactly when they came over since immigration records are sketchy from that time period, but my dad's dad, whom I am named after, was born in New York City in 1898, and it appears that his father, a Thomas Purcell, was born in 1873 in Ireland, or so the cemetery records in NYC indicate.

*So I kept perusing the web hits and found a John Purcell whom I would love to meet someday since he is an accomplished musician. And a jazz musician, at that. Good heavens, I did that myself, playing jazz guitar in Big Bands up in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota in the early 1990s. I think it would be a hoot and a holler to record a duet album with him entitled **Doppelganger**.*

That would be a lot fun. This John Purcell plays reed instruments, primarily the saxophone. Lots of his CD's and albums are available on eBay and Amazon, so don't be surprised if someday I actually buy some of his music. Still, how cool would it be to jam with someone who shares my name?



Search: **John Purcell**

Find: **John Purcell**. Instant Search (free summary)

Public-records-now.com

John Purcell at Amazon

Millions of titles, new & used. Free Shipping on Qualified Orders!

Amazon.com/books

[Home](#) > [Library](#) > [Entertainment & Arts](#) > [Pop Artists](#)

- **Genre:** Jazz
- **Active:** '70s, '80s, '90s
- **Instruments:** Reeds (Multiple), Sax (Alto), Saxophone, Flute
- **Representative Album:** "Third Kind of Blue"



Biography

Though he hasn't recorded yet as a leader, multi-instrumentalist John Purcell has won praise and recognition for his playing on several sessions, most notably his work with Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition. He's an excellent soprano player, as well as an effective soloist on several other reeds and flute. Purcell can be heard on DeJohnette's [Album Album](#). ~ Ron Wynn, All Music Guide

A Member of the Group:

[World Saxophone Quartet](#), [American Jazz Orchestra](#)

Worked With:

[Muhal Richard Abrams](#), [David Murray](#), [Fred Hopkins](#), [David Sanborn](#), [Jack](#)

[DeJohnette](#), [Hamiet Bluiett](#)



But as we all know, such dreams are just that: dreams. Then there was this image that also came up on the Google search:

Yup. This is the kind of music group you would have most likely found me in back in my Minn-stf days. According to the notation on David Dyer-Bennett's website, where this photo is stored, this picture was taken at a party at Finagle's Freehold in 1981. From left to right are Sarah Prince, Curtiss Hoffmann, Steven Brust, me, and Emma Bull. The hand on the bass guitar belongs to Kara Dalkey, who plays bass left-handed. Trust me; I know.

In the words of the Mary Hopkin hit song, "Those Were the Days" (1968):



"Those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end; we'd sing and dance for ever and a day..."

What's next... What's next...

Well, what can I say? The next issue will be the thirteenth *Askance*, which makes it the second Annish. So far, there are no major articles set to run, thus there is a lot of room for folks to send something in. About the only things that are on tap are these items:

Figby
Penney for Your Thoughts
From the Hinterlands
Regional Convention Calendar
What's Next

Thinking about this, these items alone would run the zine to a 12-16 page length. A two-year's retrospective look at *Askance* could be interesting, besides padding the page length. But I have asked for articles from assorted folks, so we shall see what shows up in the mailbox.



The funny thing is that I am not worried about filling these pages. See, there are more conventions forth-coming that I can write about; one glance at the con listing in this issue should convince you of that. Plus my goal is to have the thirteenth issue ready for Corflu Zed, which will be held in Seattle, WA over the weekend of March 13-15, 2009, at the Hotel Deca. I have yet to send in my membership, but by the time this zine gets posted to www.efanzines.com or mailed out, that minor detail will be taken care of. It should be a fine time for all. Be there if you can. I hope to attend.

Other than that, other cons in the near future for *moi* are definitely AggieCon 40 in March, ApolloCon in June, and hopefully FenCon up in Dallas again come October. The problem with getting over to Austin for ArmadilloCon in August is that it butts up against teaching second summer session classes (if I do this) and when faculty needs to report back to campus to prepare for fall semester. Still, that is a convention that I would love to attend because I hear it is a lot of fun. We shall see.

So tune in again in a couple months for the second annish of this zippy zine. Be a part of the celebration by contributing articles, artwork, and letters. After all, any fanzine never gets this far without feedback. These 12 issues so far have been a lot of fun, and I look forward to producing *Askance* for quite a while yet. Thank you all for making this zine what it is. Until next time,

John Purcell