

WANTED! DEAD OR ALIVE:
ASKANCE #14



\$20.10 REWARD!❖

MAY, 2009

❖ In Australian Dollars, of course.

ASKANCE

Edited and published by John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926

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Brad Foster – 4; from Windycon website (and doctored up a wee bit) – 6; image googled “Aggiecon 40” – 11. 12; Lloyd Penney – 14; Clip art – 15, 28; Taral Wayne – 16, 18, 19, 22, 23; photo-shopping by John Purcell – 24; Alan White – 26; Image googled “hinterlands” – 30; Sheryl Birkhead - 33; image googled “hentai” – 35; photo by Ian Sorenson (taken at Corflu Zed) – 38; Leslie Hawes – 40; photo by Carrie Landers – 43; Daniel Purcell – 45; photo capture provided by Eric Mayer – 46.

Thank you, everybody!

Oh, bloody hell....

It once again appears that the time has come for me to put together another issue of this fanzine. Really, I don't mind, but things have simply very busy around here. Another semester is rushing to its close, which ultimately means I have been grading research papers every day and night, and finals week starts on May 7th. So much fun, tra-la!

The good news is that I Have A Plan. Since there are a total of 107 term papers to grade, I determined to grade between 6-12 papers a day provided, of course, that I start two weeks before finals began. So far The Plan has worked very well. One class is already done, and their final exam is May 13th. This weekend (April 25-26) I'll get another class done for sure, and be well into the class whose final is this coming Thursday, May 7th. So my Evil Grading Plan is working! *bwa-ha-ha-ha...*

And this is A Good Thing because there is this fanzine to slap together, and I have a fair amount of writing to do yet. For example, here's what I'm talking about:

I hate to do this, but...

In case you haven't noticed, most of the time I can find something good to say about some thing or some one. Even Aggiecon 40 this past March 26th -29th had some positives, but the vast majority of the con was extraordinary for its lackluster effort. A couple of my students who enjoy going to cons likewise felt this way, and their age bracket is the usual target audience for Aggiecon. My real commentary is naturally found in my Aggiecon 40 report later in this issue, but I wanted to take a moment here to mention that I harbor no ill will towards Cepheid Variable, the Science Fiction club at Texas A&M University here in College Station, Texas, that runs this con. In fact, this was the fourth year in a row that I have attended Aggiecon, and I thoroughly enjoyed the first three. I guess a 75% enjoyment factor isn't that bad. For the money, it is still a great deal and offers a first-time attendee a lot of things to consider. My hope is that the club will learn from this year's experience and come out swinging next year. Read more about this in "Death Spiral of a Con? Aggiecon 40 Report", which begins on page 8.

Natter up!

I meant to type "batter up" in that subheading, but the typo works.

A couple months ago I ran across, quite by accident, something called ZineWiki. Yes, you astute readers out there have probably figured this out very quickly: it's a Wikipedia site devoted to fanzines. The thing is, any zines that are published on any subject are listed therein, so it is an interesting site to peruse. The entries on science fiction and fantasy oriented fanzines are rather sparse, but I ran across my name in ZineWiki – imagine my surprise! – and noticed how minimal and very, very wrong the information about myself and my zines was. So I spent a few minutes over the next week updating myself. Imagine that. I had the opportunity to literally re-make myself.

That may or may not be a good thing. See, I am still debating whether or not to stand for DUFF next year. The big problem in making my final decision is writing my dissertation. My degree plan has hit a snag, which has slowed down the process a bit. Thus, instead of finishing my Doctorate at the end of this year (2009), it now appears to be some time in 2010. Stay tuned for further developments. Part of me wants to get that damned doctorate over and done with, and another part of me says "Australia!" over and over. Such a conundrum.

Who is in this issue

Not surprisingly, these are all return faces, and the issue contains more writing by myself than I intended, but that's okay. Here are the names of the responsible parties for some of the contents you are about to read:

BILL FISCHER

He may not be a trufan, but Bill truly has a fannish sense of humor. This issue he comes through with another installment of "Figby" celebrating (if that's the word for it) the 50th Anniversary of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. You Have Been Warned.

CHRIS GARCIA

It is always a pleasant surprise to get an article from this frenetic fan from the fan publishing frontier of the Bay Area. Apparently not conquering England as the 2008 TAFF delegate wasn't enough, now Chris turns his multi-talented hands to cooking. Count your fingers, folks; Garcia's in the kitchen!

LLOYD PENNEY

If a body wishes, one can follow Lloyd's loc-writing exploits on his LiveJournal – <http://lloydpenney.livejournal.com> – and lose count faster than Chris Garcia loses fingers on the cutting board. This time around, Lloyd gives a quick overview of this year's Best Fanzine Hugo nominees. Good luck to all of them!

TARAL WAYNE

In "Clip Show" (page 16), the 2009 Worldcon Fan Guest of Honour (Anticipation, in Montreal) explains just how prolific he has been as a fan writer these past two years. I knew he had been writing more than usual, but this article proves it beyond a shadow of anybody's doubt. *sigh* Montreal....



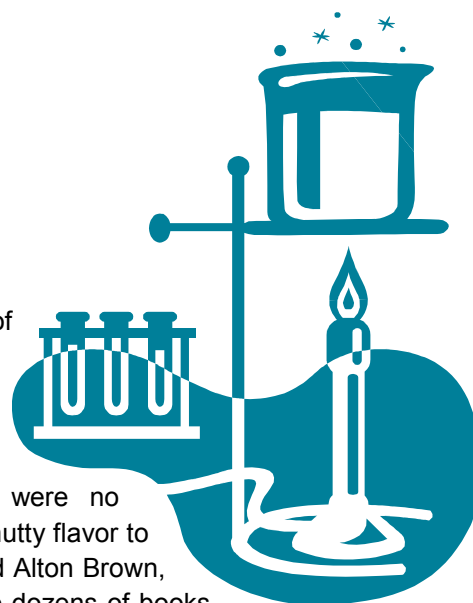
Just for shits and giggles – and to make *Askance* more readable and visually attractive – I made a few changes in the layout of this zine this time around. To tie in with the sort-of theme of thish (traditional fan activity, e.g., cons and fanzines) I decided to fore-go the use of justified margins like olde tyme zines, and also went with single-column format in the lettercolumn. As always, if you have ideas or material to ship my way, do it. Like any other faned, feedback is appreciated.

FLJAGH, dammit!!

The Science of Cooking

by Christopher J. Garcia

Bob Mussett started me on this road in a weird, backwards sort of way. You see, in the old days, 1992 or so, Bob was the cook. He spent a fair amount of time baking and grilling. In fact, when he was suspended for the last month of his senior year, he would invite folks over and make them muffins. He did a mean bacon-cheese corn muffin. He was always complaining that there were no cookbooks that didn't explain theory, like if you wanted to impart a nutty flavor to something, just add this. As time went on, there finally came around Alton Brown, *Cooks Illustrated* and the Food Science Revolution. Now, there are dozens of books written for regular folks on Food Science, and an entire network on cable dedicated to it! The big thing on Food Network is *Iron Chef*.



In the late 1990s, the idea of Molecular Gastronomy came up in the world of cuisine. It was a way to apply science to cooking in fun, new ways. There was an explosion in the use of things like sodium alginate and agar agar that came into regular use. Guys like Wiley Dufresne exploded on to the hip foody scene and we haven't looked back. *Top Chef*, on Bravo, has had it's fair number of MolGast contestants, including Richard Blaise and this last seasons heartthrob Fabio. They're always doing fun things with chemicals and food. The French have long had a technique called *sous vide*, where one cooks with the food vacuum sealed in a bag and dropped into water. This is a good way to do things that take a long time to cook. The MolGast guys on these shows love the technique.

And thus, as I have seen it on television, I must attempt to do it myself.

First off, the emersion circulators that are usually used to keep the water at a precise temperature run around 700 bucks. That's right, more than I paid for my last two cars put together. That would not be an option. I started thinking about how to do it one night while I was watching Evelyn and noticed that I'd put some chicken thighs in a ziptop bag to marinate with some soy, ginger and lemongrass. I looked at the bag, then pulled it open just a tad, squoze it down to get almost all of the air out and then popped a pan onto the stove with a bunch of water in it. I put it on the lowest setting and watched it like an over-bearing mother hawk. The water never came to a boil, I made sure of that, turning burner off and on a dozen times over the 40 minutes or so of cooking.

The problem with *sous vide* is that it doesn't impart any color to the meat, thus there's a lot of flavor left out. The meat won't dry out because it's sealed, but most folks use a blowtorch to give it some color after they've finished it in the bag. I didn't have that option, so I did the next best thing: the Broiler.

Since the broiler on Genevieve's oven gets insanely hot, I knew that I could put the thighs right below it for a minute and get the results I was looking for. I turned it on and waited about 10 minute, until I could feel the heat in the living room while I was watching *The Venture Brothers* episode *The Trial of the Monarch* (which was robbed of a Hugo nom!). Then I knew it was time. I took the bag out of the water, cut it open and then place the thigh on a tray under the broiler.

It worked perfectly.

This was amazing, as I'm not known for my cooking. I took a lot of foods classes in high school, but this was really cooking, something that took a little more cunning than making cakes or any simple thing like that.

I'm sorry. I shouldn't disparage bakers. They're just misguided...

Anyhow, Evelyn loved the chicken, and I was off to the races.

Now, at this point I had nothing. Nothing with which to do *sous vide* around my house. I decided to go shopping. The first thing was bags. You needed bags to put the food in so that you weren't boiling it, but gently warming it, more or less. I knew that ziplock bags were not the best option, they were typically sensitive to too much heat and weren't easy to get all the air out of. I thought that maybe those bags that

you wrapped around your turkey at Thanksgiving would work. It made sense, they were designed to be used in high-temperature applications and were big enough for anything I was likely to cook in them. I was pleased with this idea, and since it was right after Thanksgiving, they were on sale!

I took my bags home, got out my largest pot and started it warming. I'd picked up a package of flat iron steak to cook for the evening. I figured that this was the most forgiving cut as it always tasted cook. I decided that throwing some garlic, onion, ginger, shallots, fennel and a couple of habanero peppers would be a good idea. It

took me a while to put it all together, largely because I've got stumpy fingers and that makes my knife-work awful. So, I chopped best as I could and tossed it into the bag with salt, pepper, tamari (aged soy sauce, more or less) cumin, and ground mace (the outer husk of the nutmeg plant). It was a bit busy, but I thought they would all work together.

I tossed the stuff around in the bag, then to as much of the air out as possible with a pressing/twisting technique that I thought was really cool. It worked and I dropped it into the pot and waited.

I figured four hours would be good. I took the time to rewatch *Love, Actually* and then some episodes of *Sealab 2021*. Great show, very funny, very wrong. I checked in every five minutes or so. The thing liked to float, so I had to spin it to ensure that there was even cooking. This is usually not too much of a problem if you've got a real rig. After the four hours were up, I took them out.

They were Confederate Grey.

I fired up my broiler and put them under for a couple of minutes. They weren't grey anymore, but they hadn't taken on much color. I sat down, put on *WrestleMania 24* (Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels, an amazing match) and ate. They were good, very tender and full of delicious juices. The ginger was tasty, the onions were very nice, and the heat from the habaneros probably would have turned off most folks, but I loved it.



The next few days I spent thinking about how to do it righter. I thought that maybe I needed something that could be more easily controlled for slow cooking. I was in the kitchen, going through my stuff, and came across my Crockpot.

Now, why would a guy who rarely cooks own a crockpot? Let me put it this way: I've got a Mom. She brings things over, and thus, I own a crockpot. I didn't think of it before, probably because when you've never used something, you tend to forget that you have it. On Sunday morning, I pulled it out, put the steaks into another bag, added the same group of ingredients and put the pot on the lowest setting. I walked into the other part of my apartment and wrote an entire issue of *Claims Department*. It was a long write, about 20k words, but it was long enough that it gave a full 7 hours to the food.

This was not as good. I had pushed it beyond the limit, but worst, the bag broke. I pulled out the steaks with tongs, might have punctured the edge, but I like to pull the remainder and put it in a saucepan and make a bit of sauce. I got all the meat out, but when I tried to lift the bag out, all the contents fell into the water. I dumped the whole thing out. The steaks weren't tough, but there was graininess to the texture. The flavors had mingled quite nicely, especially the ginger which carried all the way through the meat and gave it a lovely bite. The habanero wasn't nearly as spicy.

The next three tries varied. The third try was much like the first, but I used a rib eye and it turned out OK. I went minimal with the fourth, a bit of lime, salt, pepper, cumin, mace and garlic. The fifth was the most interesting.

For Christmas, my Mom bought me a Seal-A-Meal, just like the pros use to do their *sous vide*. Of course, my Mom didn't get it to me until March. That's how we do things in my family. I figured that it was time to try a Porterhouse. I had dropped in a ton of garlic and just some lemon, salt, pepper and cumin. I put it in the bag, sealed it, dropped it in the crockpot on the lowest setting and let it cook for 8 hour, flipping it every hour. Somewhere along the way, likely in the first couple of hours, I must have hit the off button by mistake. This meant that there was no real cooking going on. It was basically a slightly warm marinade. I pulled it after all that time, and cut it open.

Raw.

That was a shame. I was either going to have to put it back in or come up with something new. I looked at the shelves I have and noticed there were some B&W Baked Beans. I put them into a pan, warmed them up and sliced the steak into thin strips. I tossed them into the baked beans and left it on the heat for a bit, making sure it got a little bit of actual cooking. It turned out great. The beans were helped by the slightly garlicky meat and the meat stood up in the thing. It was really cook and I did it again, this time on purpose, a few nights later.

The latest attempt went OK. It started with a simple choice. A little ginger, some mace, a bit of salt and pepper, and a little lemon juice. I put it in and it turned out very good. I had the timing down, but still, it wasn't perfect. I've got to work on flavor, probably getting myself familiar with more dry ingredients because the wet adds a level of sophistication on the Seal-A-Meal matter.

So, I've finally figured out that there is a right way to do it, but it has to be precise. That's what MoIGast has brought us: required precision. Just like the Babbage Engine, the require tolerances are beyond on my current capabilities. It's OK though, I can still bag me a pretty good steak.

- Chris Garcia



DEATH SPIRAL OF A CON?

AGGIECON 40 REPORT BY JOHN PURCELL

Aggiecon 40 technically started late on Thursday afternoon, March 26, 2009, at 4:00 PM with the Writer's Workshop. Besides that, the only thing happening was only the initial set up for the dealer's room, art show, etc., so I didn't bother. Unlike a "normal" SF convention, this one is held on campus at Texas A&M University, so there's no real con hotel, and the con suite is always just a meeting room set up as a lounge with snackables, sandwiches, some hot stuff (like chili and hot dogs), and soft drinks. That was in the process of being furniture arrangement Thursday night, so again, not worth the effort. Thus, around 5:30 PM yesterday (Friday), Dan and I grabbed his friend Peter on the way down to campus.

To cut costs - and also because I hadn't pre-registered before March 1st (something made me not do this) - we were only buying one-day passes for Friday and Saturday (passing on Sunday this year, since that is always a REAL dead day at Aggiecon), and I am glad I opted for this plan. At only ten bucks per person per day, we'd save \$20 in registration fees alone for the at the door full weekend rate. Not only that, after getting our badges, we learned that there was no computer gaming room (as in LAN set up) because at the beginning of March, the MSC (Memorial Student Center) sold all of their non-essential computers - which they have always graciously loaned to Aggiecon for weekend usage - because starting this summer, the MSC will be undergoing a multi-year, multi-million dollar renovation. So there was no computer gaming room this year. That supremely bummed out Dan and Peter sincethat is a major draw for a lot of the kids who like to attend the con every year. By this I also include the high school and college students in the area.

See, Aggiecon has become a con heavily oriented towards media and gaming in the past dozen years, even more so since the 21st century began. Call it a sign of the times. This doesn't bother me too much since I enjoy playing computer games (do this a lot with Dan at home on his Playstation 2, Nintendo, and X-Box; and PC games, too), but the thing that really sticks in my craw this year is the way I had to find out this development: in person and by asking around.

That should not have happened. Aggiecon has an on-going website, and I could not help but notice that quite a few sections of the site were woefully out-of-date, thus sorely lacking key information. Some of the site links I can understand: the photo gallery of past Aggiecons, history of the club, and such - yes, those are ongoing affairs. But not having the full weekend schedule of events posted (this had been done, I know from experience, for the previous three years) at least a week before the con is Not Good. All they posted on the site were a few major events, such as the Cosplay contest, the human chess game, and the perennial fave *Rocky Horror Picture Show* showings on Friday and Saturdays at midnight; none of the panels were listed at all, and the locations of some big events were not listed either. These postings have been done before; WHY weren't they posted this year? Not only that, something as majorly important as NO LAN GAMES should have at least been put on the home page. By the way, the site is still saying the

* See if something happens when you click on the picture. Don't forget to turn up the volume.

LAN Party exists as of this morning (date: 9 May 2009). Courtesy of the wonders of copy/paste, here it is (I have italicized the text):

LAN Party

Computer Gaming has undergone a marked improvement from last year. Computers will be provided, and we hope to draw a much bigger crowd this year. Check back here from time to time to get updates on the games we'll be playing and to find out more about possible tournaments.

Frag ya later.

Yeah.....This room usually has a couple dozen computers in constant use for the entire weekend. Not this year, though. With no computers available, no announcement was posted HERE -- in complete ignorance of their own statement "*Check back here from time to time to get updates on the games we'll be playing and to find out more about possible tournaments.*" They DID NOT update a very important piece of information, which will most likely cost the con a fair chunk of change. Daniel and Peter will not be returning to the con for the remainder of the weekend. And that's only two kids who also like to buy a couple goodies in the dealer's room. What about all of the other local teenagers from Bryan/College Station who usually attend every year? The console gaming room is woefully inadequate to handle the frustrated computer gamers, plus the board and LARP games hold no interest for this segment of convention attendees.

Now, in deference to the concom, I know that preparing for a relatively popular and moderately-sized con (on average, 500-600 members each year) takes a lot of time and effort. Not only that, maybe the MSC made their decision to sell their old computers within the last two weeks. That doesn't give the concom much time to find alternatives for computer gaming. So, how long would it have taken to update their website with this info, or even to put an announcement on Aggiecon's homepage that there would be no "LAN Party" this year? I can't imagine simple updates of this nature taking longer than 30 minutes. This is a major attraction of the con, and any information affecting it should have been passed along. Bad form all the way 'round, kids.

I know this may sound a bit like sour-graping since it affected my son and his friend, but Dan and Peter met up yesterday with some other school friends who like to go each year. One of the girls, Heidi, was dressed in an Anime outfit, and my plan was to get some photos of her and Dan's other school chums in their costumes Saturday afternoon when the Cosplay contest happened at 3:00 PM. That in itself is an odd time slot since it's accustomed position is Saturday night at 9:00 PM (I checked the program books for Aggiecons 37-39 for verification), which is then followed by *RHPS*.

On the positive side of things - which were many, I must say - the registration went very smoothly, the events laid out in their familiar meeting rooms, the Art Show was bigger with a lot of fine work on display, the dealer's room was about the same as before with a heavy media influence (no surprise there) and tons of comic books on sale for 50-cents each, and the silent auction benefitting Scotty's House had some really cool things up for grabs. The local SCA chapter gave one of their scheduled fencing displays Friday night, too. So in general, Aggiecon seemed to be moving right along. However, I wondered how their lack of website updating and loss of the LAN Party affected the con.

Not only that, another major problem looms for Aggiecon. Way back in my second paragraph I mentioned the renovations the MSC will be undergoing starting this summer. This poses a HUGE obstacle: where will Aggiecon 41 be held next year? The concom members I talked with over the weekend have no idea. At least, not yet. My guess is that their plan is to get past edition #40 and work with the University later. I

hope they start soon. There are convention venues in town that could handle the crowd; for one, the College Station Hilton has major convention facilities, and the Brazos Center could work, too, but that could be problematic due to its floor plan. In any case, I am interested to see how this will all play out later this year. Needless to say, I will post updates on my LiveJournal and in my fanzine, *Askance*. My other hope is that the Aggiecon committee will be open and communicative about future developments; based on the lack of on-line communication witnessed this year, I really hope they learn from their mistakes. It would be too bad to see a respected con like this be irreparably hurt.

One of the other fun things about Aggiecon was having the chance to meet one of my fannish friends, Pat Virzim the lovely lass who hosted Corflu Quire in Austin. Meeting Pat and her daughter Maddy Saturday was pretty cool. I hadn't seen Pat since Corflu Quire - not counting the virtual con suite from Corflu Zed in mid-March this year, obviously - and we had a pleasant chat over lunch at Freebird's just off campus. Maddy is a 19-year old Junior at TAMU majoring in something like virtual animation; I forget the exact title (I'll have to email Pat about this), but Maddy said that places like Pixar and Disney recruit heavily from this program, so that's pretty cool. I wish her the best of luck in her degree. They weren't attending Aggiecon, though; on Thursday, the right front end of Maddy's car was smushed in a parking lot accident on campus, so Pat came charging down to play the role of "Mood Uplifter / Emotional Supporter / Mom With Credit Card" for her daughter. Maddy's description of her rental car - a Chrysler PT Cruiser - was most amusing: according to her, the engine sounded like four hamsters in a slightly a-kilter plastic wheel with the pick-up to match. Oh, well. It is a temporary deal until her car is repaired.

We met just outside the dealer's room and walked over to Freebird's on a relatively cool and windy day for College Station (low 60's, winds 15 - 20 mph, with "ample sunshine", as the Weather Channel likes to phrase things), but quite bearable. I thought the weather felt great; Pat and Maddy wore light jackets while I proudly displayed my Corflu Quire t-shirt, which sports a delightful Harry Bell design. During the walk Pat and I compared notes on Corflu Zed - she gave me a package containing a Zed t-shirt, program book, Corflu Zed bookmark, a Corflu Zed pocktсарd, and the *CRY* anthology produced for the con. Totally awesome stuff - and I thanked her profusely, since I wasn't expecting anything like this at all - and I am totally looking forward to reading that fanzine anthology. Other topics we covered were other Texas cons, like ConDFW, Apollocon, Fencon, and so on, and rehashing our common link as Upper Midwest expatriates now ensconced in Texas; Pat has been in TX since 1982, and I have since 2001. No wonder she was wearing a jacket - she had become *A Texan!* Either that, or her blood has thinned out due to 27 years of living through Texas summer heat.

Lunch over - if anybody reading this ever comes to College Station, you really must eat at one of the three Freebirds in town; they have the best burritos I have ever tasted; try ordering the Monster Burrito and eating it in one sitting - we wandered back toward the MSC. Pat and Maddy were off to do some shopping - remember? Pat was "Mom with Credit Card" for the day - and then I went back to Aggiecon.

The internal debate to purchase a Saturday pass for ten bucks lasted not quite three minutes. That was all the time I needed based on observations after walking in. It was dead, deader, deadest. There was no vitality present. Normally, a good con has a vibe going, a palpable energy that fuels attendees and sparks the engines that run the con. For the past three years, I have felt this at Aggiecon. Not this year, though. It felt like people were simply going through the motions. I paid 50-cents to wander the dealer's room one last time, which gave me the chance to chat awhile with Jennifer Rhodes, the media Guest of Honor. She played "Grams" Halliwell, the matriarchal witch in the television series, *Charmed*, and also Winona Ryder's off-the-wall mother in the cult film *Heathers*. Other genre shows she has appeared in are *Quantum Leap* and *Third Rock from the Sun*. She told me her favorite role was being "Sister Gloria, the

Ninja Nun" in *Night of the Demons 2*. Since the first movie had done so well at the box office, Ms. Rhodes told me that her expectations were for the film to hit the big screens. Instead, *NotD2* went straight to DVD. We talked about that trend for a bit, then I thanked her for the conversation and went on my way. I think she appreciated the chat, too; she was sitting alone at a table with photo stills and such looking quite bored. I am not familiar with *Charmed*, but did enjoy *Quantum Leap* a lot. Jennifer Rhodes confided she liked that series, too, and she is definitely a nice lady with a long, distinguished acting career. I hope she continues on for many a moon.

Other than that, there really wasn't much going on. Normally there are a lot of folks wandering around in costume and all, and the Cosplay contest was due to start at 3 PM, so I was hoping to get some photos. No such luck. Hardly anybody was displaying. Maybe they were all getting into costume (it was, after all, about 1:15 PM at this point), but not everyone competes. The SCA folks were dueling again in the flag room, which is just below the main concourse where the dealer's, art show, and console gaming rooms are located. Even that was sparsely attended. A brief trip over to Rudder Tower, which housed the panels on floors 3 and 4, revealed a lack of attendees.

It then dawned on me that Aggiecon 40's Author Guest of Honor, Todd McCaffrey, was reprising his GoH-ship from last year! They couldn't get somebody different this year? Hmm... Not good. Dipping into the same well nets little difference. Even Steven Brust, my old buddy, was remarkably absent. Normally when he's not on a panel, he is quite visible no matter which con he's at. That was another Bad Sign. And *Rocky Horror Picture Show* bores me; I have seen it often enough over the years.



These observations, added onto the funk of the previous day's revelations, did not bode well for the rest of the weekend. So I passed on buying the Saturday pass and went home to take a nap.

At least Saturday night we were

able to have Penny's birthday party (she turned 24 on March 28th) before sister Josie treated her to a few hours of fun at Hurricane Harry's. Good on them. I am glad they had a fun time. Meanwhile, I watched the Iowa State University women's basketball eek past Michigan State to advance to the Elite Eight in the NCAA basketball tournament. Go Cyclones!

So that's what I've got to say about Aggiecon this year. It was quite the let-down compared to the past three years. And I am not the only person to make such comments about Aggiecon 40. Scott Zrubek, who admits to attending the con for many, many years, posted his blog observations, *A Mad Moravian (sort of)* <http://madmoravian.blogspot.com/2009/04/aggiecon-40.html>, on April 1st, noting that it "appears to have some life-threatening wounds, but it still can be saved. It will take a lot of education of Cepheid members

to save the con.” Scott further observed that the club held a meeting during the con, but was not privy to what was said since he was never a member of TAMU’s Cepheid Variable SF club. I think this next quote from Scott’s blog says it all:

I would really like for former students to take over running the con. That doesn't accomplish a goal of educating new conrunners, but it would keep the con running. It might also make the con tougher to run since it might not be possible to use the MSC as the venue.

I will continue to go to Aggiecon as long as they hold it. It is my main excuse to go back to A&M at least once a year. It’s an opportunity to see vast fields of bluebonnets and to eat at Los Nortenos.

Well, I don’t know about Los Nortenos being a reason to visit College Station, but it is good food. Still, I agree with Scott. Like him, I am definitely worried about next few years' editions since their traditional venue, the MSC, will not be available until something like 2013, probably sooner. We shall see what happens.

In the meantime, I hope the fannish grapevine does its magic and my comments here about their lack of updating their website with vital information about the con results in better communication in the future. Aggiecon has a long, storied history, and it would be a shame to see it wither away and die. This makes me wonder if this weekend I was witnessing the beginnings of its death spiral. Gee, I hope not. What a sad way to see a decent con end its life.



A sample of some fun art at Aggiecon 40 (March 26-29, 2009), College Station, Texas.

A Corflu Zed virtual con report

by John Purcell

Once again this year I could not make it to Corflu. Big bummer. This year's edition – the 26th one in the series, nicknamed “Zed” for the 26th letter in the English alphabet – was held up in Seattle, Washington, and was yet another hit with the fanzine crowd. And once again I lurked in the Virtual Con Suite, this time maintained by the Zeddites instead of Bill and Roxanne Mills, who began this fabulous institution at last year's Corflu Silver in Las Vegas. Of course, the venerable Bill Burns helped out in this regard during Corflu Zed, so the Virtual Con Suite was in excellent hands throughout.

They were even able to improve on the previous year's breakout technology by including a double-stream, which was really neat since there was a webcam up in the consuite and another webcam down in the main programming room. This was cool because then a lurker could bounce between the two feeds and follow a couple different conversations – or web chats/chat rooms, to keep with the lingo – simultaneously. Holy Technophile, Batman! We were multi-tasking on multi-streams! It came in very handy during the Sunday banquet: folks were in the consuite and down eating brunch before the FAAn Awards ceremony and speechifying. It was again fun to heckle people who couldn't hear us typing out loud.

As for the FAAn Awards presented after the Sunday feasting, here are the results:

Best Fanzine: *el*, edited by Earl Kemp

Best Fan Writer: Bruce Gillespie

Best Fan Artist: Dan Steffan

Best Letterhack: Lloyd Penney

Best Online Fanac Site: eFanzines.com

Best New Fanzine Fan: (*tie*) Jean Martin (*SF/SF*) and Kat Templeton (*retstak.org*)

These are all wonderful choices. It truly warms the cockles of my fannish heart to see Earl Kemp getting a muchly deserved FAAn Award for the best fanzine; *el* is a wonderful zine, and it is always an informative and pleasurable reading experience. Bruce Gillespie is likewise a deserving recipient, and I have always loved Dan Steffan's work (about that cover for *Askance*, Dan...). Nothing new can be said about Lloyd Penney except that he's one of the best current loc-smiths, and <http://efanzines.com> is absolutely a repository of fannish wealth. And a hearty congratulations go to Jean Martin and Kat Templeton. All in all, great winners, and that is about it from me. Not much of a virtual con report, but what did you expect? After all, it's not as if I was actually *there*, y'know.





by Lloyd Penney

#6 - There's Beer in Ottawa!

Many years ago, SF and comics fandom in Ottawa, and other places in central Canada, enjoyed a convention called Maplecon. The con is long gone, but it was our first out-of-town con, and it was among our first adventures.

One year, Ottawa fandom couldn't raise enough people to fill the Maplecon committee, so they asked me and Yvonne if we'd run the con suite. We'd had some experience with hospitality rooms at that time, and we had some equipment to bring with us, so we agreed, amid some objections from some Ottawa fans. Can't we do all of this ourselves? I guess not.

Our concom contact was Paul Valcour, and Paul wanted to bring back some old Maplecon traditions. For a number of years, the con suite had been dry. Good food, soft drinks, etc., but no beer. This year, there would be beer. Seeing this was our first year running their con suite, how much beer do you think we should buy, Paul? Paul decided on six 24s, 144 bottles or cans, and we thought that should be sufficient. Foolish us...

Maplecon gave us a challenge. We usually say that we can party anywhere, and we have, but Maplecon, because it was held at Carleton University, gave us a dormitory, common area and a few small bedrooms for the con suite. We did our shopping, hit the beer store, and headed for the university. We brought coolers and a box of equipment, and with a fridge available, we were in business. When we opened a few fans wandered in, and opened the fridge, and found lots of sodas, cold water and cold beer.

Oh, wow! COLD BEER! The word went forth... The grapevine works when it wants to, and in this case, it worked at near-light-speed. We didn't put our whole stock in the fridge, but did have our remaining stock chilling in coolers. The thirsty crowds raided our remaining stock, and by the time they were done for the night, they'd drunk us dry. Paul? We have a little problem...

Our surprised contact gave us more money, and seeing it was the Saturday of the con, we all decided that 12 cases, 288 bottles and cans, would do us fine for the rest of the weekend. Uh-huh... Even with opening the suite a little late, and putting out the beer around 1pm, the word still went out, and thirsty locusts descended upon us, and sure enough by the end of Saturday, every bottle and can was empty, even with trying to save some for the next day. Paul?

It is now Sunday, and at that time, beer stores in Ontario were closed that day; still are. However, Ottawa is close to the border between Ontario and Québec, and in Québec, beer is sold in the corner stores, or in Québec French, les dépanneurs. Early that morning, Yvonne and I got in our car, and drove across one of the local bridges from Ottawa, Ontario to Hull, Québec, and we drove just past the downtown area to try to find a dépanneur. When we did find one, the manager was just opening the front door. Our question was, "Ou est la bière?", or "Where's the beer?" "En l'arrière", or "In the back." We headed to the walk-in fridge area in the back of the store, we purchased eight cases of beer, and some flats of soda, loaded up the car, covered it all over with car blankets, and drove back to Ottawa. Why cover it up? According to the regulations of the province of Québec, we bought enough beer to be charged with importing beer without a licence. Shhh! Don't tell anyone!



The Sunday con suite was a success, and they once again drank us dry, which this time meant no leftovers. A few blessed us for getting their favorite Québec beers, and a few even discovered that even though they'd only drink microbrews or homebrew, some Québec beers were pretty good.

One thing I should mention...the con suite was in three different locations during the weekend. The university double booked several events, and as another group came in, the local authorities would come to order us to pack it up and move it to a new area they would designate, until the next double book...

One featured food I made for the con suite was a big pot of homemade chili, and we knew that we had some eagerly waiting its being served up. We froze the chili for about a week, and then bundled it up to bring up to the convention. I guess when it froze for a week, it froze hard. We stored it in the freezer compartment of the con suite fridge, and we took it out to thaw, and it didn't. We had a small microwave and a microwavable pot to go in it, but the frozen chunk of chili was too big to go in. So, with the help of a corkscrew and a friend's Swiss Army knife, I was able to carve the chili. White meat or dark?

It was like taking chunks off an iceberg, but we eventually heated up the chili and fed the masses, but in the carving of the chili, I broke that friend's Swiss Army knife. I apologized, and offered to replace the knife, but he declined, saying that the entertainment value of seeing me try to cut up this big, slippery hunk of frozen chili more than made up for it.

I am certain that while we kept the population of the convention happy and well inebriated, we also spent any profits the convention had, and probably much more. We headed home, with the committee pleased that we'd done such a good job, but if I recall, next year's con suite was dry again. I'm sure the convention treasurer made sure of that.

- Lloyd Penney

=====
"Hordes of icky, dead, zombie gerbils."

Clip Show



by *Taral Wayne*

I've been doing a little writing lately...

How's that for an understatement? While I'm in no danger of approaching records set by typer-fiends like Arnie Katz or Lloyd Penny, nevertheless I have been busy slinging words on paper by the tens of thousands over the last two or three years, and the body of work that has accumulated has taken on the aspect of a crusade to make myself over as a fanwriter, rather than a fanartist.

Of course, without Chris Garcia and **Drink Tank** I'd have a backlog of unpublished material that was as long as Dave Langford's list of Hugo nominations. Appearing in *Drink Tank* at all was mainly an accident. Frank Wu had an urge-out-of-the-blue to interview me, and being unaccustomed to anyone giving a rat's ass about what or why I draw, I answered all his questions at unbelievable, self-indulgent length. To my surprise, Frank was delighted, and Chris nearly beside himself with joy. Continuing through issues 153 and 154, "In Twiltone Yet Green" was the start of a long run in *Drink Tank*. Another 15 articles of various lengths followed, not counting locs. Chris has earned a well-deserved place with me as ground zero for any other low-tonnage bombs I may want to drop.

Among my favourite moments of literary fancy was a surreal "conversation" overhead on FurryMuck, between a new user and a seasoned sexual predator. And another was a parable about several generations of a family with a predilection to hear voices, and mistake them for Divine Guidance. It wasn't all laughs, though. I celebrated the election of Obama, castigated Canada's own self-interested and gutless government, parodied a bill in Congress to protect Christmas against the creeping secularism of Wal-Mart, and tried to explain the mysteries of String Theory and the Higgs Particle in words of three syllables or less.

Even as I proofread the final version of this current article, I'm composing "Looting the Worldcon" for Chris.¹

It was almost as much of an accident that I began writing for Arnie Katz's **Vegas Fan Weekly**. I had a few small pieces at liberty when Arnie "rediscovered me" a couple of years ago. Once I was over the shock of being rediscovered (when I didn't know I was missing), I offered him the lot. Included were some short items I had written on my on-line journal at FurAffinity. The first three or four appeared in VFW fairly quickly, starting with issue 104. Then I got the idea of writing a regular column. I had always wanted to write one of those legendary columns that everyone remembered, years later, as the highlight of focal point fanzine. So far I had only managed a couple of short-lived fanzine review features, and one on Canadian fan history that probably only Graeme Cameron and Garth Spencer remembered or cared about. I pitched the idea of "Fan Noir" at Arnie, and was given another chance at greatness.

The actual column was a piece I had written years before, on the history of the Ontario SF Club. (Who remembers OSFiC after all? What we remember of that long vanished club is Torcon II, Energumen, Susan Wood, Victoria Vayne, A Woman's Apa, and a certain fanartist well before his prime.) "OSFiC Revisited" appeared in issue 104, and (with one tiny proviso) I was delighted it saw print in a high profile

zine. The proviso is that Arnie, unfortunately, omitted all the footnotes that updated the history. *sigh* Shrugging mental shoulders, I arranged a reprint in R. Graeme Cameron's Canadian fanhistory zine.

The second column appeared in issue 108, with no hitches. It was one of my favorites. I wrote about my Grandfather's 1950's economy car, the unique toaster-shaped Nash Metropolitan. It was nearly large enough for two slices of toast in the front, and, as long as it wasn't concerned for circulation in its legs, another slice in the back. I had recently bought an exquisite scale model of one for my Birthday, with jewel-like detail and surprising operating features. (Working sunshades, radio aerial that telescoped, opening glove compartment, and all the usual perqs like fully wired engine and wheels that steer.) When I found a number of close-up photos on-line, I was inspired to write about it. Best of all, was a photo of my own that I could add. It showed my Grandfather's actual Nash Metropolitan, with him in the driver's seat. At age six or seven, I sat in the passenger side wearing a matching sports cap.

Another memorable, if short piece, was based on a sixteen-hundred-year-old Roman gold coin. I had always wanted one, and finally managed to buy a solidus of the emperor Honorius for a manageable price. (It was neither the first thing I'd written, nor be the last thing I'd write about coins from my collection.) I was still more pleased with "Aging Fandom," written in response to Arnie's lengthy and arcane theories of fan history in the previous issue. I had had a complex, sophisticated theory too, once. But expressing it on paper many years later, the theory seemed much simpler than I remembered it being in 1980. I found it necessary to divide up fandom into only five "ages," depending mainly on the aging of fans. What separated them was mainly forgetfulness.

But the magnum opus of Fan Noir (to date) is likely "The Fanwriter's Fanwriter." Not published as I write, I have my fingers crossed that it will appear in the first issue of Arnie's next epochal fanzine, **Quibble**. Having written so many words, it seemed auspicious to actually write about the act of writing itself. I wasn't far into it when I began to wonder whether I believed my own thesis, but persisted for several thousand words anyway.ⁱⁱ

Arnie is holding back another excessively long piece called "The Only Gameshow in Town" – 150 questions of varying difficulty that test your knowledge of fanhistory. I'm not exactly sure what his plans are for it.

I've found **Challenger**, edited by Guy Lillian (the Thud), a good home for some of my longer as well as shorter efforts. Among the longer was my first interview, "I, Fanartist," conducted by Sheryl Birkhead. Yes, it was Sheryl's fault that I seem to have begun a career of being interviewed. (A third will appear in an upcoming *File 770*.) **Challenger** was also a willing home for two related satirical stories dealing with the drawbacks of newfangled digital technology, as experienced by two book collectors in the not too distant future. (Last week, perhaps.) Another short piece records my skeptical thoughts on being chosen Fan Guest of Honour by the Worldcon.

At present, Guy possesses two articles for future issues. One is an odd bit of faan fiction about a decade of fan history that never was. I originally wrote it in the 80's and contributed it to Stu Shiffman's and Larry Carmody's undeservedly neglected fanzine, *Raffles*. While I was typing it into Word Doc (an on-going project for all my old prose), I rewrote and improved it as I went along. It's been 25 years or more since it first appeared, so I figure that most readers have either not seen "The Fabulous 'Nuffies," or have forgotten all about it. The other is newly written, and can best be described as a tongue-in-cheek explanation of how a Jack Lemmon movie inspired me to become an artist.ⁱⁱⁱ

I don't suppose I'll hurt anyone else's feelings if I confess that **Banana Wings** has been one of my favourite zines this decade. It is one of my favorites *not least* because the editors have published some of what I think my finest writing. It's hard to pick a favourite. I should start with "Into a Red Hole," perhaps, since I thought about how to write it for a number of years before attempting it. Everything I knew about, and thought of the brilliant SF satire "Red Dwarf" went into that article. I covered its highlights, discussed its weaknesses, quoted some of its best moments, and meditated on what might have been. It would have pleased me enormously if the cast or production crew had ever had the chance to read it.

Sometimes wishes *do* come true!

A little while ago I was informed that the cartoon I had done (of the crew of *Red Dwarf* being invaded by fans) had appeared on Robert Llewellyn's Twitter page. When I checked, sure enough, there it was. The actor who plays Kryten (the Mechanoid) had come across the art somewhere, but didn't know who did it. I twittered him. I was flattered when I heard back that he had been greatly amused by the cartoon, and was glad finally to know who had drawn it. I sent "Kryten" the entire article after that, of course. With any luck somebody will read my brilliant analysis of the show, and I'll be offered a contract to write a new series. Or, more likely, nothing will come of it. But for a brief moment I felt I had touched greatness...



Banana Wings published "Tea With Murder in His Eyes" a few issues later. This is one of the pieces I'm most proud to have written. It was a subject no-one could have expected, for one thing. Trying to set a noir atmosphere, I achieved near poetic heights at times, yet every word was drawn from life. Two issues later the good editors ran "Throwing the First Stein." No doubt I was preaching to the choir. (So to speak.) Nevertheless I felt the fine distinctions about science and religion are often overlooked in what easily becomes a partisan political struggle.

In the most recent issue, I changed direction again with "Merchant of Hogtown," a humorous tale, full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing but the power of BS and the credulity of tourists.^{iv}

If I can't say that **File 770** is one of my favourite fanzines of the decade, it's only because it has been one of my favourite fanzines for a number of decades. I've given Mike Glycer some of my best writing over the years. Issue 157 debuted "By-Line," a bit of tongue in cheek fiction about the 1950's TV show *Superman*, and a none too plausible stalker. In "La Dolce Vita" I demonstrated all the many reasons a sane person should never give a moment's thought to becoming an artist... but conclude that if you have the creative itch, there is really no alternative. In the most recent issue, Mike ran my personal thoughts on the dozen previous Rotsler Award winners. While not the most fun thing I've written, it could be one of the most difficult. Talking about artists and their art is a delicate matter. Despite what many of you think, we have very tender egos. We only act like Isaac Asimov with a new ten-book contract to protect our feelings from bruising. How, then, was I to say what I really think, and not drive a half dozen fanartists over the edge? Or, worse, have them thirst for my blood?^v

For me, John Purcell's **Askance** was a recent discovery. I don't think I'd heard of it until I stumbled over the title on eFanzines, and decided to download an issue. I liked what I saw, and sent a minor piece I had just finished. I think I asked if he minded if I did a colour cover for issue nine. John said yes, and I knocked myself out. As a follow-up, I sent a long piece about an acquaintance who had fucked up his life so thoroughly, and purposefully, that I thought therein lay a tale worth telling. Next issue John ran another piece about yet another colourful character I had once known, comparing him to fandom's inimitable Claude Degler – whether favorably or unfavorably depends on your point of view. My point was that perhaps he hadn't fucked his life up entirely by his own efforts, and that I may have thoughtlessly lent him a hand.^{vi}

Just how I started contributing to **Alexiad** I don't remember. My first memories are of writing locs complaining about its plain appearance, and my lack of interest, as a rule, in book reviews. Next thing I knew, I'd sent him a little piece on the first public roll-out of a full-size replica of Canada's mythic Arrow fighter plane, (which had been cancelled amidst much controversy in the late 1950's). I hardly recovered from the shock, when I sent Joe Majors an item on the buying power of ancient Roman denarii. Accepting that I was now a contributor, I followed that with some notes on Asimov's Foundation as a Gnostic conspiracy, and then a review of a recent collection of underground comics. What was going on here, I wondered? Why am I doing this? In answer I sent Joe a revisionist review of "The Dark Knight," and an old review of the film "Signs." I don't even like reviews, and here I am writing them, and Joe is publishing them. I want to know what this power is that he has over me.^{vii}

It's not quite as much of a mystery why I contribute to **Royal Swiss Navy Gazette** (and **Ish**) published by Garth Spencer. He would see something he liked, and publish it without telling me first... No, sorry... he only did that a couple of times. I let him because he's Canadian, and we denizens of the northernmost tier of states stick together like packing snow. I confess I would usually give Garth trivial pieces, and things out of print that he could present to a different audience. Nevertheless, I did write Garth one rather nice bit about how the Chinese missed discovering Europe by just *this* much, nearly a hundred years before Columbus. (Of course, we all know that when Columbus tried to pull a switch on them, he discovered the New World instead.^{viii})

Garth also re-treaded some of my longer articles in BCSFA clubzines. My "Red Dwarf" piece comes to mind. (But as the rest were before I began keeping this list, I pass over them in silence.)

Another Canadian zine I support is R. Graeme Cameron's **WCSFAzine**. (What is it about present-day Canadian zines that seems to favour such appallingly functional and un-aesthetic titles?) Graeme also publishes **Space Cadet**, with long intervals between issues. One benefit of zines outside the familiar circle is that you can use them to rectify mistakes. When VFW left the footnotes out of "OSFiC revisited," Graeme was only too happy to republish it *with* the footnotes that added much entertaining hindsight to the history.

Graeme has also been working through my short pieces on coin collecting. Finding that I enjoyed regurgitating what I learned about my ancient coins, I turned out quite a number of snippets, under the collective title "Pocketful of Histories." (I guess that's what it must have felt like to be Isaac Asimov.) Graeme has already used three – one on Elizabethan silver, and the other on a silver penny by Richard I. The third piece, on an Augustan As, appeared in *Space Cadet* rather than *WCSFAzine*. I presume the others will turn up like bad pennies, whenever there's a bit of awkward space to fill. Figuring he might as well have a clean sweep of them, I also sent Graeme all the remaining coin articles to reprint.

One of the odder things I wrote for *WCSFAzine* is a short account of a convention few have heard of, for good reason. Those who have heard of Prunecon seem to believe it was a hoax. But in lamentable fact, it was real. Another short original piece I wrote for Graeme described my unorthodox opinion on the origin of fanzines as we know them. (School magazines, if you must know.) As part of the *WCSFAzine*'s focus on Canadian fanhistory, Graeme reprinted a piece I wrote about the absentee GoH of Ditto 1, Boyd Raeburn.^{ix}



A fanzine I last saw in the 70's has made a surprise reappearance in the new century. This is Tim C. Marion's **So It Goes**. Tim asked me for a contribution, and it happened I had an article in very bad need of a home. Years ago, I had taken letters and apazine remarks of Victoria Vayne's, and wove them into "her" farewell address to fandom. Added to "her own words" was my own story of the rise and fall of Victoria Vayne. The piece had been shown to a half-dozen fanzine editors over twenty years, and no one had shown enough interest even to send the manuscript back to me, let alone publish it. I guess people weren't nostalgic enough about the 70's yet. Fortunately, time was in my favour. When Tim said he'd publish "Ghost Writing From the Glades of Gafia," I was so relieved that I wrote a whole new afterword on Victoria as she is today. (After nearly thirty years of gafia, not much different, actually.)^x

I dredged up an old illo I had done of Victoria in the 70's, when she had been GoH at a Wondaycon. How many of you remember that, I wonder?

Tim also asked that I illustrate an article of his. I've never been keen on illustrating to order. Without a thought, I referred him to another fanartist. Stu Shiffman has always been good at this sort of fannish ala carte illustration, and he was the first name I gave Tim. Unfortunately, Stu had other ideas and Tim e-mailed me again. Since Tim was finally giving my article on Victoria a long awaited publication, I was guilted into doing the illos. I gave terms, though. I wouldn't do literal illustrations from the text, but something of more general interest. What I created was four "scenes" you might see at a convention, with fans of mixed age and type, and a few clues that there was something a little odd about the whole thing. (There *was*. They were all *dead*.)

Just for a change of pace from fanzines, I responded to a call from Ken Fletcher to contribute to his pumpkin day festivities for **Spontoon**. *Spontoon* is a website Ken runs, dedicated to the age Dorothy Lamour and Bob Hope “Road” movies. The name is from an island group in the central Pacific, eternally living in the 1930’s, and dominated by seaplanes in sort of the way it is always the Victorian Age in Steampunk. Why pumpkins, though? Rather than pay any attention to the right answer, I simply wrote my own “learned” treatise on the history of south sea island pumpkin worship, and gave Ken that.^{xi}

You won’t find *Spontoon* on eFanzines, but you could try – <http://spontoon.rootoon.com/>

Back to more tradition-bound media.

It wasn’t my intention to write for Bill Wright’s **Interstellar Ramjet Scoop**, but when the subject of stamps with the face of Adolf Hitler came up in an issue, I couldn’t resist a loc. I had a fun advertisement from some magazine that sold stamps with the face of Hitler through the mail. In fact, I own a few myself. But I mainly wrote about other, off-the-beaten-track stamps, that honor comic book heroes, Winnie the Pooh, and Warner Brother’s cartoon characters. (Some of those I own have been signed by the actual artist who designed them.) By adding scans of all this to the loc, it grew into a short article.^{xii}

One zine I did want to write for was **Chunga**. I had just finished yet another article on coin collecting, about an unfortunate experience I had when I nearly discovered a \$3,000 coin that would only cost me about a hundred bucks to buy. Unfortunate? No, I don’t need my head examined. The bad luck part of the story is that it turned out to be a counterfeit. What a counterfeit, though! Fake though this “Judea Capta” type of bronze Sestertius was, it was a *300-year-old* fake. Worthless all the same, drat.^{xiii}

Chunga has an unusual distinction. It was the first zine in a very long time that asked for so many changes to another submission that I was unwilling to make them, and the piece was withdrawn by mutual consent. (Reminds me of the old days, when writing for fanzines wasn’t like selling dollar bills at half price.)

Enough issues of Steven Silver’s zine **Argentus** had piled up that I began to feel a little guilty about it. There was a small article I had written that I felt came out well, but had been published where I thought few fans would read it. I asked Steven if he was interested, and sent him the Word Doc. I presume it will be seen in the next issue. Since *Argentus* seems to be a reliable and popular zine, I ought to make a point of being more attentive in future.^{xiv}

There was another zine that was a little obscure to me, having only recently downloaded some issues from eFanzines. It was Tom Sadler’s **Reluctant Famulus**. The quasi Latin title amused me, even if I don’t quite see the connection. Alas, I had nothing on hand to send poor Tom! I had been retyping (and re-polishing) old articles of mine from the 70’s and 80’s though, and asked if he could handle a couple of those. He felt up to it, and I sent him a deft little thing about my penchant to find dropped change that had first appeared many years ago in *Scientifriction*. The other piece was a more ambitious work, that blended a long tiring car trip to an unnamed con with increasingly baroque dreams whenever I fell asleep in the passenger seat of the car.^{xv}

Something I had never expected about accepting Anticipation’s invitation to be their Fan Guest of Honour was that it would entail so much work. I have only myself to blame, mind you. I did push everything I could at them – a portfolio in PR 3, another in the souvenir book, a cover for PR 4, a colour t-shirt, a membership badge, and a design for the Hugo award. (It’s probably as well they chose a better entry. What if I had to present the Hugo to myself?)

In spite of all the unexpected work, I was delighted to be asked for a written piece for the **Anticipation Souvenir Book**. It would demonstrate my prowess as a fanwriter, not just as a fanartist. Just recently I had typed an old story into Word Doc, and touched it up considerably in the process. “The Last Mary Jane Story” had been written originally as a “gift” – a birthday present perhaps – to a friend. He was a big Star Trek fan. So I’d made him a substitute for the usual love-lorn Mary Jane in Star Trek fan fiction, with results quite a bit different than the usual romantic pap about teaching Spock to love. I had some misgivings about giving the Worldcon a spoof of Trek fan fiction, but it’s been over thirty years – I guess we can stop being self-conscious about that now. I also thought I ought to contact the old friend I had written into the story. He accepted my apologies, said he was flattered by the dedication to him I had

added, and demanded I take his name out of it or he'd sue! No need, I said... I had already changed the name.^{xvi}

Sigh... I *must* write something soon for Bruce Gillespie. His **Steam Engine Time** is one of the most impressive (if more serious than my taste runs to) fanzines out there. Serious or not, there are a couple of books I feel the need to review. So I suppose when I finish with this piece, I'd better get busy.

I thought I'd leave my contributions to Sandra Bond's **Quasi Quote** until last, since they are without a doubt the strangest. For one thing, Sandra has a dreadful secret. It's very doubtful that you know, or that many people know, that she is a closet... *furry*. Oh yes... no question of it. I had never met Sandra in her SF avatar. At one Anthrocon a few years ago, though, someone stopped at my table. I saw the shadow over the sketchbook I was working on, and I looked up. There was Sandra Bond, looking down at me. I recognized her name tag right away and we talked. One of the things I remember was her confessing that she hadn't really understood my art until she became a furry herself... or words to that effect.

Consequently, I felt Sandra's zine *Quasi Quote* was perhaps the most suitable place I could send "GoH." Maybe the only place. To start with, I have to explain that the article is my speech for the upcoming Worldcon, only *not* the Worldcon in Montreal in *this* 2009. It's my speech for the Worldcon in Minneapolis in the *other* 2009. "GoH" is set in that alternate time-line in which my fantasy world is real, and the extraterrestrial Saara Mar discovered the Earth in 1970. As you might guess, I would have been a different kind of fan had that happened, and perhaps you would all be living in a different fandom.

Yes, I know fandom was a little uncomfortable with my "fashion sense" in the 1970's. And I know that the wish-fulfillment side of things like "GoH" hasn't been kosher with many fans either. I'm not unsympathetic, believe me. However, this hasn't stopped me from writing whatever I damn well please. Since Sandra has published "GoH," I thought she might also be willing to publish another, unseen, piece from the same alternate history. "Vaster Than Empires" is about Saara herself, and a conversation between her and an eager beaver who runs the thinly disguised N3F. As well, I have a couple of much shorter pieces I might dig up and Word Doc.

As though you probably haven't had enough of this stuff, I'm writing a fresh piece about Saara and the Corflu she ran in Earth orbit, called "Five Will Get You Ten." Like it or not, there's no looking away this time. My obsessions are here to stay.^{xvii}

At last, we reach the most recently written of my literary outpourings, This Very Article.

I have to lay some of the blame for this piece on Mike Glycer. When I mentioned not long ago that I just might write something about the writing I've done, he said there was precedent. Remember those annoying shows where they take scenes from old episodes of *MASH* or *ST:TNG*, and frame them with about five minutes of newly written material? With a ready-made title like that something clicked – and I don't mean my TV remote. Take it or leave it, this is it – a reprise of a whole bunch of stuff you've probably read already – my very own "Clip Show".

LIST OF ARTICLES AND STORIES I'VE WRITTEN OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS

DRINK TANK

- "In Twiltone Yet Green" issues 153 & 154
- "Not the American Century" ish 161
- "Put Down the Brush... We Won't Hurt You" ish 162
- "A Blank Page" ish 163
- "A Parable of Faith" ish 173
- "Plastic & Paper" ish 179
- "Milestones" ish 185
- "Somewhere on FurryMuck" ish 186
- "Obama: On Election Night" ish 187
- "Think Tank: the Rotsler Folio" ish 188

“A Dialog With Faith” ish 189
“It Might Look Like Canada Again” ish 190
“Bill of Xmas Rights” ish 192
“School of Hard Knocks” ish 198
“Recent Excavations Turn Tolkien Over in Grave” ish 205
“A Day of Our Own” ish 210
“Looting the Worldcon” pending

VEGAS FAN WEEKLY (*Soon to be Quibble*)

“View on a Solidus” ish 100
“OSFiC Revisited” ish 104 (Fan Noir 1)
“Postcard from 1958” ish 108 (FN 2)
“One Fan’s Gafia” ish 110 (FN 3)
“Aging Fandom” ish 112 (FN 4)
“Boxing Day Blues” Idle Minds 2
“The Fanwriter’s Fanwriter” pending (FN 4)
“Piracy on the High CD’s” pending
“Only Game Show in Town” pending

CHALLENGER

“I, Fanartist” with a Hugo speech I never got to give, ish 22
“The More Things Change...” reprint ish 24
“Not a Moment Too Soon” ish 24
“You Heard it Here First” ish 27
“The Fabulous ‘Nufties’” reprint, pending
“Artistic Influence” pending

BANANA WINGS

“Into a Black Hole” ish 27
“Tea With Murder in His Eyes” ish 33
“Throwing the First Stein” ish 36
“Merchant of Hogtown” ish 37

FILE 770

“By-Line” ish 151
“And the Prix Aurora for Best Fanzine Goes to... No Award” ish 153
“La Dolce Vita” ish 154
“The Rotsler Winners: Personal Musings” ish 155
“Winding Road to Worldcon” pending (interview number 3!)

ASKANCE

“Clair de Loon” ish 9
“Only the Names Are Changed” ish 12
“Henry & Claude” ish 13
“Clip Show” thish

ALEXIAD

“On a Roll” v.6 n.1
“Pocket Change” v.6 n.2
“The Gnostic Foundation” v.6 n.3
“Moonchild & Others” v.6 n.4
“No Signs of Intelligent Life” reprint v.8 n.1
“Sleepers” pending



ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE (also ISH)

- “The Fanzine Tool Kit” reprint, ish 14
- “The Gnostic Foundation” reprint, ish 15
- “Not the American Century” ish 15
- “Cheng Ho Discovers America” ish 16
- “Essential ReFurence” reprint, ish 17
- “Get Furrries” reprint, ish 17
- “Bad Places” reprint, pending
- “Sticks at Nothing” reprint, pending
- “Camp Sights” reprints, pending
- “Splitting Hares” **Ish** issue 4

WCSFazine (also SPACE CADET)

- “On Fanzine Origins” ish 12
- “Prunecon: At Last the Truth Comes Out” ish 12
- “Pocketful of Histories: Elizabethan Silver” ish 12
- “OSFiC Revisited” reprint (with footnotes), ish 13
- “Pocketful of Histories: Richard I silver penny” ish 13
- “Boyd Raeburn: GoH Ditto 1” reprint, ish 16
- “Off the CUFF” reprint, ish 17
- “Penny Wise” pending
- “Views on a Solidus” reprint, pending
- “Pocket Change” reprint, pending
- “Tune In, Turn On, Fall Out” pending
- “Bending Truth With Mind Alone” pending
- “Pocketful of Histories: Augustan As”, **Space Cadet** ish 16



SO IT GOES

- “Ghost Writing From the Glades of Gafia”, ish 17

SPONTOON

- “Pumpkin Worship”, Spontoon website

INTERSTELLER RAMJET TIME

- “Stamps of Approval” Anzapa 247

CHUNGA

- “On the Face of It” ish 15

ARGENTUS

- “Cheng Ho Discovers America” reprint, pending

RELUCTANT FAMULUS

- “Burden of Gilt” reprint, pending
- “I Can Always Dream”, reprint, pending

ANTICIPATION SOUVINIR BOOK

- “The Last Mary Jane Story” pending

QUASI QUOTE

- “GoH” ish 8
- “Vaster Than Empires” pending
- “Five Will Get You Ten” unfinished



In which ye editor waxes philosophical and bemusedly on recent postal deliveries to his royal, yet humble, adobe abode in his LiveJournal posts.

April 14th, 2009 (2:09 PM)

Okay. Corflu Zed was held over the March 13-15, 2009 weekend. Today as I write this it is April 14th. In between was Aggiecon 40, albeit a disappointment, but a con nonetheless. These dates alone don't say much, but the truly unique thing about this particular time span lies in how many paper -- that's right, I said **paper** (remember that stuff? Usually white and flat, 8-1/2" x 11" in dimension, but that's not important right now) - fanzines I have received since Saturday, March 28th. That's the day that I met Pat Virzi and her daughter at TAMU, and over lunch Pat handed me a Corflu Zed Care Package. In it was a Zed T-shirt, the program book, and other goodies that included *Planut Stories*, the "Cry the Beloved Anthology" produced specially for Zed. In short, a big, wonderful fanzine. On paper. And it's delightful, let me tell you.

But then --- *THEN*, I say - I went back to Aggiecon to peruse the huckster room one last time, acquiring two articles on Cryonics from one table (not zines, obviously, but researched essays that looked interesting), and two small freebie publications that do meet the criteria of fanzines, *Tasty Flesh* by Martin Whitmore, and *Two Lumps* by Mel Hynes and J. Grant. They're fun little cartoon zines and I enjoyed them. How like the olden days when one would go to a con and have a fanzine or two handed to you. Very nice, even if they didn't appease my disappointment with this year's Aggiecon.

Even better stuff came in the mail the following week: *Banana Wings* #37 arrived on March 31st, followed two days later by *Vanamonde's* #773-778 from John Hertz. So far so good, I thought. After downloading *QuasiQuote* #8 and a couple other zines off www.efanzines.com, I felt as if I was doing quite well. Silly me. The dam broke the week after that.

On one day - Monday, April 6th, to be exact - I received two fanzines in the mailbox. You know what I mean: that brick structure with the built in old-fashioned mailbox out on the curb with Penny's flower trellis tied to it that the post office stuffs with bills, advertisements, and junk mail. These were Curt Phillips' *Smoooooth* #2 (a mere 23 years since the first issue) and Guy Lillian's *Challenger* #29. The very next day brought Tim C. Marion's *So It Goes* #17, and I have been slowly reading that one along with the newest *Challenger*. Big zines, those two. I couldn't believe my eyes; so many zines, so little time. Oh, life was doing so well...

But yesterday, April 13th, FOUR (count 'em, 4) fanzines arrived in the mailbox: *This Here* #11 (Nic Farey), *Motorway Dreamer* #6 (John Nielsen Hall), *Alexiad* (Joe & Lisa Major), and the first three issues of *Luna!*,

the official publication of the Luna Project (www.lunarcc.org) up in Dallas, Texas. This last one arrived with a note stating, "Dear Sir, having abstracted your name & address from *Banana Wings* 37, I am sending you the initial numbers of Luna! in case they might interest you. I apologize for any irritation this may cause you. Best regards, Chris D. Carson."

Irritation, be damned! I love it! Not counting the multiple issues of *Vanamonde* and *Luna!*, that's a total of **twelve (12)** different paper fanzines in only two and a half weeks!! So now I have a problem that I haven't had in positively years: finding the time to read and loc real, honest-to-ghu **paper fanzines** while grading papers as the semester rushes to its close in mid-May. Oy, such a dilemma; such a conumdrum; such a stack of zines to read!

This is unbearably cool. Fanzines: the spice of my life.

April 15th, 2009 (4:42 PM)

That's right: yesterday's mail brought another dead tree fanzine to my mailbox. This time it wasn't a new zine, but an old one. Tim Marion, who produces *So It Goes*, told me in an e-mail last week that he had a copy of an issue of *Cepheid Variable*, the zine published by fans who were members of the Texas A&M University science fiction fan club of that name. Since I am still researching - off and on - an article about that club, I agreed to pay the postage for this zine that Tim had. That's what arrived yesterday: *Cepheid Variable* #6 (December, 1971).

I haven't read all of it yet, but a quick glance revealed that it's not a clubzine. Instead, it appears to simply be the fanzine pubbed by Bob Stahl, and this particular issue has some good folks involved; articles are by Steven Utley, Darrell Schweitzer, Steve Miller, J. F. Peirce, George W. Proctor, Bill Kostura, and Annette Bristol, fan fiction by Lynne Hoverson, and artwork by Mark Gelotte, Bill Rotsler, Mario Navarro, Dan Osterman, Steven Utley (him again!), Buddy Saunders, and George Proctor (him again, too). The fanzine reviews include one of *Energumen* #9 and *BeABohema* #18, plus other fanzines, and the loccol has only locs from Harry Warner, Jr. and Steven Utley, but the editor apologizes for severely editing the locs because this was the second annish (gee, that sounds familiar...) and promises to include more locs in the next issue.

The zine is in great shape, and proves that the Bryan-College Station, Texas area has a long stfnal and fannish history to it. Getting this zine in the mail is rekindling the fan historian in me. And all along I thought I had thoroughly digested that guy...

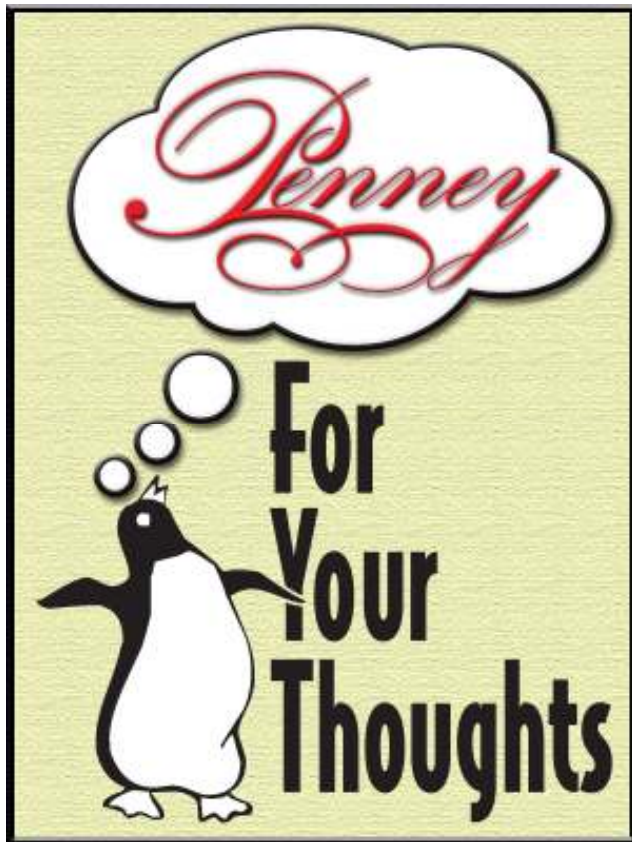
April 18th, 2009 (11:55 AM)

Yet another paper fanzine arrived two days ago: Tom Sadler's *The Reluctant Famulus* #69. That makes 13 dead tree zines in the last three weeks. I am impressed. So much so, in fact, that I'm cobbling these LJ entries about the paper zines into an arkle for the next issue of *Askance*, which is now under construction since it will be posted the first week of May. An interesting batch of articles, too: cooking adventures with Chris Garcia, a couple con reports by yours truly, Lloyd Penney's zine reviews and another installment of his "Tales from the Convention," and wait until you see **this** Ditmar cover. Yes, I am pleased thus far.

Editorial footnote: And I am still pleased – and still very much behind on my loccking. Oh, well.

=====

"I am both lazy and cheap. I don't want to waste time, paper, and ink."



FANZINE REVIEWS

BY LLOYD PENNEY

Worldcon time approaches, and we have done our fannish duty, and nominated for the Hugos, the silvery rockets that we launch at the worthy every year. Given that I am supposed to review fanzines here, Ye Olde Editorial Guy asked me to have a quick look at this year's nominees, of which there are six. There's a tie in there somewhere.

You'll notice, as I did, that the six nominees begin with the first six letters of the alphabet. Did we just look at the start of our collections and choose the nominees from the first Banker's Box or two? In the future, should we name any fanzines we might

start up with A or B or C in order to receive some Hugo notice? Not sure on that one. I shall make some short remarks on all six of the Best Fanzine nominees, just in time for Anticipation's PR4 to arrive at your mailboxes. I hope this might help.

A is for *Argentus*, edited by Steven Silver. This zine is a fun read, and usually has something esoteric for all to enjoy. Even though Steven writes most of each issue, I wish there was more of Steven in each issue. I also wish it arrived more than once a year, but with Steven's busy schedule as an editor, one issue a year may be the schedule he can reliably keep.

B is for *Banana Wings*, edited by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer. Recently, this zine moved from A4 to A5 in size, making it easier to mail, I imagine, and easier to hold to read. *Argentus* is mostly electronic these days, but *Banana Wings* is still paper. Plenty to do with British fandom, always of interest to me. Might need some more art here and there, but that's me being picky.

C is for *Challenger*, edited by Guy H. Lillian III. There's a few paper copies out there, but mostly, *Challenger* is on a website, which might make it a little difficult for some to read it, and know that you've read it all. There's lots of spirit in this fanzine, and Guy is always a welcoming editor, with a very positive attitude.

D is for *The Drink Tank*, edited by Chris Garcia. I respond to this fanzine just as fast as I can, and I am still about two issues behind. Lots of fast articles to go with those fast issues, Chris has a stable of contributors to draw upon, but I do get the feeling he slaps them out as fast as he can. He's just that kind of fellow. Lots of spirit here, too, and Chris is having just too much fun.

E is for *Electric Velocipede*, edited by John Klima. I admit that I have not seen this zine before, but after a quick look, it is a fiction magazine with a big web presence, and by the looks of it, a very loyal readership.

I think changes in the Hugo regulations and definitions (not sure of this) means that *EV* fits into the Best Fanzine category, in spite of *EV* being available by subscription in its paper format. Lots of original fiction here, plus poetry and some non-fiction articles. check out www.electricvelocipede.com.

And F is for *File 770*, edited by Mike Glyer, the pre-eminent fannish newszine. If I really have to comment on this fanzine, and tell you what it's about, well, all I can say is check out www.file770.com. It's regularly updated, and while the *File* is issued on a regular basis, the website winds up scooping the zine, which makes it look more of a yearbook than a newszine. Still, lots of good fannish news with excellent sources, and personal news with the Glyer family, and Chicken! to Sierra.

If anyone thinks those were left-handed compliments, I meant to make some critiques with both positive and negative slants. There's good and bad to everything, and the perfect zine (and faned) does not exist. All the editors involved in these zines have their share of major award nominations (John Klima has been nominated for the World Fantasy award 3 times). Mike Glyer has won 9 Hugos. The zines I read are much enjoyed, and I can't really compare apples, oranges, bananas and grapes and be fair. I can't really compare the faneds, either, it is such a diverse group. I have to go with my own desire to see that the egoboo be distributed, plus my own likes, and point to Guy Lillian for the silver rocket. He's received a total of 12 Hugo nominations in his lifetime, and has never taken the rocket home. Well, he's tried, but the rocket has had Mike Glyer's name on it. Let's give Guy something he's always wanted.

***Argentus*, edited by Steven Silver**

707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015
or e-mailed to shsilver@sfsite.com

***Banana Wings*, edited by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer**

59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CRO 7ES UK

***Challenger*, edited by Guy H. Lillian III**

8700 Millicent Way, #1501, Shreveport, LA 71115
Available for the usual, and money or submissions (of course).
Also www.challzine.net

***Drink Tank*, edited by Chris Garcia**

Hosted at www.efanzines.com
Or e-mail Chris at Garcia@computerhistory.org

***Electric Velocipede*, edited by John Klima**

Electric Velocipede, PO Box 266, Bettendorf, IA 52722
Website: www.electricvelocipede.com
Contact e-mail: editor@electricvelocipede.com

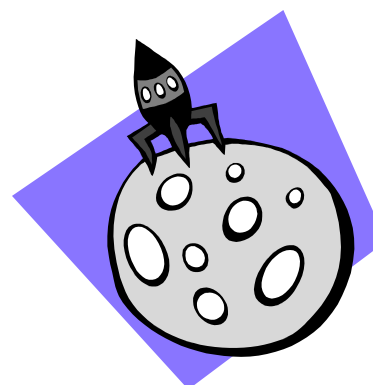
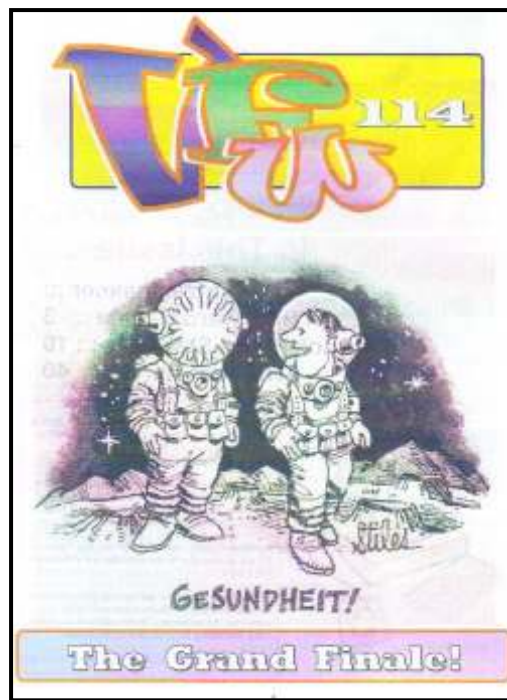
***File 770*, edited by Mike Glyer**

705 Valley View Ave., Monrovia CA 91016.
available for news, artwork, arranged trades, or by subscription: \$8 for 5 issues, \$15 for 10 issues, air mail rate is \$2.50.
E-Mail: Mikeglyer@cs.com
Website: <http://file770.com>

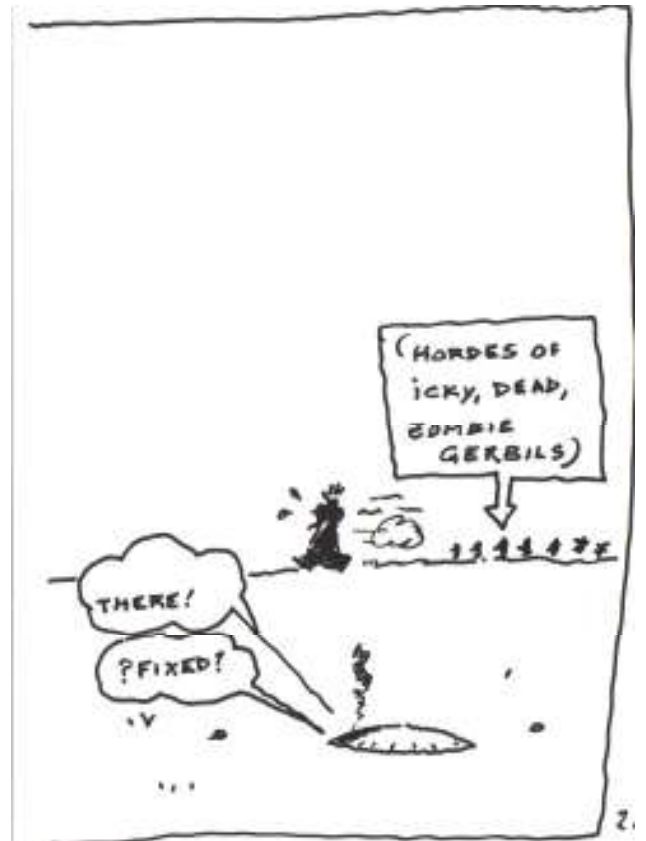
And now, that ever-present and ever growing list of fanzines received
either in the mailbox or viewed online:

Code: DT = Dead Tree Zine EZ = Electronic Zine

Alexiad #44 DT
 Ansible #261-262 EZ
 Argentus, Special Edition #2 EZ
 Banana Wings #37 DT
 BCSFAzine #431-432EZ
 Brick Fix #1 EZ
 Challenger #29 DT
 Consonant Enigma #4 EZ
 Drink Tank #205-213 EZ
 el #43 EZ
 Фаннастика Фантасйы #39-40 EZ
 Fanzine Fanatique, Spring, 2009 DT
 File 770 #155 EZ
 Hell, I'm Sixty, Part 2 DT
 Home Kookin'! #2-3 EZ
 Interstellar Ramjet Scoop (April, 2009) DT
 Journey Planet #3 EZ
 The Knarley Knews #132-133 EZ
 Luna! #1-3 DT
 Mid-Tennessee SF Society Newsletter #77-79 EZ
 Motorway Dreamer #6 DT
 MT Void #1536-1545 EZ
 Mumblings from Munchkinland #23-27 EZ
 Orphan Scrivener #56 EZ
 Pablo Lennis #257 DT
 Planetary Stories EZ
 Planut Stories (CRY the Beloved Anthology) DT
 Procrastinations #7 EZ
 The Reluctant Famulus #69 DT
 Royal Swiss Navy Gazette #17 EZ
 Science Fiction in San Francisco #82-84 EZ
 Smooooooth... #2 DT
 So It Goes #17 DT
 Southern Fandom Confederation Update #3-5 EZ
 Surprising Stories (May, 2009) EZ
 Tasty Flesh DT
 This Here #11 DT
 Two Lumps DT
 Vanamonde #773-782 DT
 VFW #114 (the final issue!) DT
 Virtual Tucker Hotel #23 EZ
 Visions of Paradise #139-140 EZ
 The Voice (John Coxon's Eastercon newsletter) EZ
 WCSFAzine #19 EZ



FIBBY by Bill Fischer



FROM THE HINTERLANDS



Ah, it is time for some pithy comments from pith-helmet wearing readers- in single-column format, to boot! This is a hardy crew, willing to take on the verbal assault from the Second Annish. I hope that those brave souls who dare read this lettercolumn and the rest of this issue will Get A Clue from these adventurous souls, and join in the chorus when I tell all these readers the words they need to hear: "piths off!"



Eric Mayer" <maywrite2@epix.net>

7 March 2009

Congratulations on your anniversary. I hope you took *Askance* out to dinner. Although I too often bemoan my lack of connection to fandom, *Askance* is a zine I really enjoy.

I seem to recall getting into fandom (to the extent I ever did get into fandom!) part way through 1972. That *Outworlds* you show in your editorial was probably the very first "typical" genzine I ever received. I had subscribed to *Amra* which looked a bit like a professional publication, but Bill Bowers' *Outworlds* didn't look like anything I'd ever seen. It wasn't produced in the manner of a commercially printed magazine and yet a lot of the material -- such as the cover -- was superb. I recall the cover being on thick, slightly textured stock. I know, I know. You can't get that effect in a pdf.

While I can appreciate all the various attributes fanzines can have, including physical ones, I agree with Graeme Cameron's loccol comments to the effect that the content is what is most important. Even when talking about content, I believe there is more to a fanzine than the elements critics generally focus on. What is most important, in my opinion, is the personal link that a fanzine can create between editor and reader. Who can say exactly what it is that creates that link? Meeting some supposed critical standard doesn't. The kind of paper the zine is printed on doesn't. I am sure the magic lies somewhere in the content.

Many of my favorite fanzines have been -- by some definitions -- crudzines. My own *Groggy* was

indubitably a crudzine. Heck, it was mostly printed on a hand cranked spirit duplicator and was practically illegible. It had almost nothing to do with fandom. I stuck almost entirely to my own artwork even though that was inferior to what I could have coaxed from superior fan artists. But since *Groggy* was a personal zine I felt that my own work fit better. I felt like it was best for me to stick to writing about exactly what I wanted. Which all meant that *Groggy* was very faanish or even very good, but it also wasn't much like anything else and, to me, that's a prime virtue in a fanzine. *{I always enjoyed getting Groggy in the mail. It was a good zine with a distinct personality, and also a proving ground for your developing writing skills. Don't sell it too short, Eric; a lot of us liked Groggy a lot back in the day. That zine was definitely You.}*

And by the way, good for Graeme for deciding to write locs. One thing ezines tend to lack, relative to ye olde paper zines, is locs. Some zines receive shamefully few considering the ease of email. During the past three or four years I've averaged only around a loc a week -- hardly a big effort compared to folks like you and Lloyd Penney -- but if everyone who reads zines wrote a loc a week, I reckon loccols would be a lot more robust. As Lloyd mentions in his loc, fanzine readers today need to be reminded not to participate passively. Askance, of course, has a healthy loccol.

Actually, my small amount of fanac these days mostly involves writing locs. In fact, when I discovered the existence of eFanzines I was struck by the paucity of letters to some of the fine zines I read and, being a product of the days when everyone understood the necessity of "the usual", I felt kind of compelled to send off some comments.

Nice reviews by Lloyd -- concise and with a unifying theme. He remarks in the loccol that he's not capable of KTF reviews, to which I say, great. KTF reviews do nothing but harm. They are employed by writers seeking to get attention in the easiest possible way while at the same time evading any responsibility for their gleeful nastiness because...gee...it's just a KTF review. Basically adolescent stuff.

As for self-googling, which has been mentioned, I have found there's a plethora of Eric Mayer's about.

Excellent article about Apollo 8. I recall buying the postage stamp of that view of Earth from the moon. Actually I recall waiting outside the Post Office with my dad years earlier so we could rush in and get sheets of the Mercury capsule stamp. A space craft on a stamp seemed incredibly cool to me back then.

At least you go to a con. And you say the Annual Assessment Conference was a mere 7.5 miles from you. I'm not sure how far I'd drive to attend such a conference. Nowhere near 7.5 miles. Well, actually for the free food and drink you describe I'd drive that far. And you also got free CDs of assessment software for grading. Wow. The old dart board's not good enough any longer? *{I am a bit old-fashioned when it comes to grading papers: I actually read every single one of them! And this semester that meant 107 of the fershlugginer things! Yeesh.... my brain hurts!}*

As you mention, baseball is here and how I wish the Yanks had let A-Rod go. First steroids, now an injury, and maybe the beginning of a steep, mid-thirties decline. At least its not like he's under contract for another nine years. Oh, wait.... Did you see the headline on the New York Post when A-Rod's drug use was revealed? "A-Hole." Now that's journalism...

Okay, you do know you interrupted my reading with this issue, so now back to my book. More or less the same sort of thing as *To the Lighthouse*, which we talked about recently *{via e-mails}*. Another one of those people going places books -- *Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*. Lovecraft could have taught Virginia Woolf a few things about the Elder Gods.

Eric

*{Virginia Woolf is one of those writers you have to get into the mood to enjoy. Of course, she could definitely put the reader into a mood, no question, but her stream of consciousness writing style took a lot of getting used to. Not that Lovecraft didn't take some effort, either. Given a choice between reading either Woolf or Lovecraft, I think I'd go with Lovecraft. Either way, I can only take reading their works in short bursts. It has been a long, long time since I've read **Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath**. He wasn't influenced by Dunsany when he wrote that, eh? (That's a joke, people!)}*

{Then, later that day....}

Saturday, March 7, 2009 10:22 PM

From: "Eric Mayer" <maywrite2@epix.net>

To: "John Purcell" j_purcell54@yahoo.com

To the Lighthouse was pretty good, but imagine how much better it would've been if, once they were in the boat and on the way, they were attacked by some Shoggoths. Or even better, an undead zombie goldfish.

Eric

{That sounds appropriate, especially so because of how Woolf committed suicide.}

*Not to be left out of the loop, here's a loc from the editor of that fine fanzine, **Alexiad**:*



Joe Major
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, KY 40204-2040
jtmajor@iglou.com
<http://www.efanzines.com/Alexiad/index.htm>

March 11, 2009

Table of Contents: "The Heat Death of the Universe" is a story by Pamela Zoline, a New Wave writer whose second story seems to have been sent in to *The Last Dangerous Visions* and it seems she wants to see how it is received before she goes on. As for the first story, it is about the extremely boring life of a suburban housewife who occasionally meditates on cosmic topics, until in the end she snaps and so does the world.

Editorial Natterings: 1973? That was about the time I first dipped a toe into the world of fandom, and indeed I remember those things that stirred you so. Those were the days, when the giants who set forth to rule the sevagram still walked among us. I recall well that famous Find the Pros party at MidAmeriCon, held in the pitch-black portico around the pool. Surprisingly, no one drowned.

However, a siege of unemployment made me FAFIA. Then, as my resources returned to par, so did my fanac. (Nevertheless, I did manage to attend every RiverCon and keep up a constant subscription to Dick Geis's *_Science Fiction Review* throughout.)

The Essence of the Human Spirit: Apollo 8: There are some things that are their own commentary; they say all that is to be said. Nothing will ever be the same again.

Henry & Claude: Which highlights a point. Fandom tends to attract abberants, mostly because Fans are so different anyway, and (at least once upon a time) had always been different. And then you get the sort of abberants who still have to be different. Which leads to people like Degler and Henry Argasinski.



On the other hand, another famous fannish legend, Joel Nydahl, he of Nydahl's Disease, actually came to MilPhilCon for a day. Somewhere I have a picture of him with Ted White. The brief visit didn't seem to have inspired him to return for good, but who knows? Argasinski might be interested, though from what Taral says, oooh I hope not.

I once did a Google Search on a particularly odd former employee from my current job. From what I could see, he hadn't changed that much. Shortly thereafter he put a password on his on-line resume. I wasn't the only person here who had been, er affected by him.

Joyeux Anniversaire: And *bienvenu* to you too, Robert, from the birthplace of Stanley G. Weinbaum.

From the Hinterlands: Chris Garcia discusses remakes. A film is a combination of the talents of a number of people, which is why a remake is so chancy. Compare the remake of "The Flight of the Phoenix" with the original. Come to think of it, read the book first.

And of course, some of the impetus for remakes comes from the corporate mentality. Someday, someone will green-light a remake of "The Wizard of Oz".

Lee Lavell: Interestingly, one of the popular events at the McMurdo Station in Antarctica is the "The Thing" Film Festival. John W. Campbell said of "The Thing From Another World" that it wasn't a bad movie, but someday someone should make a movie out of the original story.

Then too, there's Mike Royko's observation on the classic Universal horror movies — "Frankenstein", "The Bride of Frankenstein", "The Mummy", "The Wolfman", and "Dracula" — or technically what he said his son said after watching a movie marathon of them. Which was, "This is supposed to be frightening?" Standards change, or perhaps crumble under the barrage of slasher films.

What part of Southern Indiana was your father from?

Yes, we hope to see Lloyd Penney in Montréal.

I was the only Joseph Major in my Major family. Lots of "James Major" including my great-grandfather, grandfather, uncle, first cousin, and eventually his first son.

Me: Well-placed picture from "The Prisoner" I, I, !! I, I, !! I, I, !! I, I, !! I, I, !! I, I, !! I, I, !! Whatever.

They won't take my blood any more. Too many sulfa-based drugs in my system.

Dave Locke: Knarley snail-mailing his zine before posting it makes it a crudzine? That's what I've been doing for years. You ought to give *Alexiad* a try.

Namarie,

Joseph T Major

{Now that Alexiad is available at efanazines.com, Dave should be able to read your zine at his leisure. Once again, here is a fanzine that succeeds admirably at what it desires to do and be according to the wishes of its editor(s). Joe and Lisa do a fine job with Alexiad; in fact, it has one of the best fanzine lettercolumns around, IMHO.}

As the great white north slowly thaws out – should be doing quite well by now, I would think – here comes one loc out of many from our good friend and fanzine reviewer, this year's Best Letterhack FAAn Award winner, Lloyd "I'm loccking as fast as I can" Penney:



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

March 20, 2009

Yup, just getting around to it, loccking *Askance 13*. Best way to put covers to the 13th issue is to use the previous 12, hm? Ever since the FAAn Awards came out, I have been resting relaxing and smiling, but now that the mental batteries are a little recharged, it's time to attack the pile of zines that have accumulated.

Bemused Natterings...You're very welcome. It has been fun, and I am recalling the slight panic at an approaching deadline, especially for the fanzine review column. Would you like another Tale from the Convention? I think we are of the generation that values the written word in its simplest and easiest to consume, the linear publication that you read from the beginning and finish at the end. Simple to us, but perhaps not the best for a generation more used to scanning website and its scattered pages. John, I started writing locs around 1983 or so, so I did start off with a manual typer, but quickly graduated to an 8086 with no hard drive and two 5.25" floppy drives. I did spend some money on paper, envelopes and postage, but it was worth it, because people were pleased to see a new name in the locol, even if they had that typical look askance (where'd I get that word?) at the newbie in the zine.

Sorry, John, hafta put the zine on hold for the moment...the horror stories I hear about the numbers of unemployed, and how some of them have lost almost everything in short order, has me paying plenty of attention on the job hunt. Yvonne has some good prospects right now, but I am networking here and there, and in the meantime, to keep spirits up, I've been able to get more voice-work.

I must give Yvonne and copy of the Apollo 8 article for her files, although the repro isn't the best. 'Twould be interesting to hear the Benfords reminisce about Al Jackson, and tell us more about those Dallas boys...

More about Henry Argasinski...my only real contact with Henry was that he chaired my very first convention, Erincon 4 in Mississauga, way back in early 1980. I think I Googled him up some years back, and found that he was a real estate agent in Michigan, I think. We all go our way... And I wish I'd been able to get to Corflu Zed. I've won Best Letterhack five times now, and I've never been present when I'd won one. I know there's a nifty plaque coming my way; I hope someone picked it up for me...*{And congratulations are in order for you, sir.}*

No such thing as a crudzine any more. Even if the articles are garbage and the artwork is nothing but scribbles, they can be presented in such an eye-pleasing way. I enjoy the local, and I have been told that the letter column is the heart of fanzine fandom. I don't know how true that is any more, and there are times I feel what I do is ignored by some, but that's okay, I'm participating the best way I know how, while still dabbling in columns, articles and even artwork.

Hello, Lee Anne! Thank you for your comments on my column, and that makes it all worth while. I need to find some new fanzines I haven't reviewed yet. I get a lot of them, but I will need to do some research to get fresh meat, as it were... We do need to find more neofen. The ones who show up in Toronto, we befriend as soon as we can. We need fresh faces, and no one needs to be shoed away from something they recognize as neat stuff, the same way we do. I do think that at conventions, no one likes to be tagged as the new fan, and no one would place that tag on themselves. We just need to bring them into the fold asap, and make them feel at home and comfortable, even with a little bit of experience. (While I'm here, thanks to all who commented on my Tales from The Convention!. I bored my old audience, so I need a new audience to bore.)

I may know the Keith Taral refers to...by no means was my experience unique, and it is good to know that for every one who thinks they can go to a con for a little snogging, there's one person who will flick the light switch for another great convention story.

Joseph Major finally did get in touch with Bill Burns, and there is now an *Alexiad* page on eFanzines.com. I think in this case, I prefer *Alexiad* with the portrait orientation, rather than the landscape. I must agree with Lee Anne, the small type in an *Alexiad* can be a little hard on the eyes, but I just increase the zoom to 125% or so, and everything's fine. (John, I think someone might have referred to Joseph as Majors. Hope it wasn't me.) *{It wasn't. That person has been sacked.}*

John, you haven't been Googling up hentai and doujin, have you? That illo on page 43 isn't the usual type of artwork I'd find here. (Besides, I've been Brad Foster's cheesecake artwork...it's always looked good to me.) *{You've been modeling for Brad Foster? Now there's a side of you I've never known existed. As for "Googling up hentai", this is what I just found...}*

From Corflu Zed in Seattle, the FAAn Awards were handed out. You probably know the results by now... Best Fanzine: el, edited by Earl Kemp, Best Writer: Bruce Gillespie, Best Artist, Dan Steffan, Best Letterhack: Lloyd Penney, Best Website: eFanzines.com, Best New Fan: (tie) Jean Martin and Kat Templeton. Then, I found out that I am nominated for an Aurora Award in the category of Fan Achievement (Other) for fanwriting, and I hope I came close for the Hugo for Best Fan Writer. Add in the fact we've been asked to nominate candidates for TAFF, DUFF and CUFF, and I think we've had a stellar year. If we could both get working again, the stars would align...



Happy weekend, John, take care, hugs to Valerie for putting up with you, and see you in the funny zines.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney.

{Valerie says hello back atcha, Lloyd, and would like to hear your Scottish brogue again. Good luck with the voice-work. Let's hope the job market opens up RSN for you and everybody else Out There in need of steady employment.}

To wrap things up here in the hinterlands, let's turn it over to one of my favorite loc-writers of the past few years – which makes me wonder how many FAAn letterhack nominations she received; have those numbers been posted anywhere yet? – the lovely Lee Anne Lavell:



Lee Anne Lavell
<leelavell@comcast.net>

April 15, 2009

Greetings,

Sorry I am so late in responding to your excellent Annish. As I have mentioned before, I am a spree writer and occasionally run into brick walls when I attempt to write something, even letters. I am working my way out of it now, but I can't guarantee how interesting or coherent I will be.

Henry and Claude: It is unsettling to think that there could be a fake Claude Degler – even a failed one. When I first got into fandom, which was beyond the “Degler Era”, but not by much, I found that one of the first things that Indiana fandom had to live down was its association with Degler. I think that possibly one of the reasons ISFA always wanted to run “under the radar” in fandom was subconsciously (if a club can have a subconscious) it did not want to have any possible association with him. I have no idea how the current Indianapolis group feels. I am not even sure how much they know, really, about fannish history. I certainly hope it is more than some years ago when they asked Buck Coulson to introduce Ray Beam at one of their conventions. (Buck was tempted but managed to restrain himself.)

The Thin Veneer: I rather imagine many fans can relate to Arnie's experiences with his ins and outs and ins again of fandom. It is always interesting to me to read the “history” of other fans.

Joyeux anniversaire: Now, I really loved Bob Sabella's decade leaps in chronicling sf “history.” It is a very interesting and innovative way of presenting it and it surely reflects the spread that sf has made through the years from the initial stories and magazines all the way to multiple conventions and awards. *{I really enjoyed this, too. Bob's plan is to write one of these a year for Askance; personally, I'd like to see two of these each year, but that's just me.}*

From the Hinterlands: Only one comment here. **R. Graeme Cameron**: I quote: “I don't care what a zine looks like (tho, of course I appreciate beautiful art & layout, etc.) what I concentrate on is content.” That statement is an insult to both artists and editors. Art and layout are as much a part of the “content” of a fanzine as is any written material. To dismiss their contributions is condescending.

General layout this time around: Mostly excellent. The repro on “Figby” was vastly improved when I did my printout. Thank you. However, I do have a couple of quibbles. Your contents page was frustrating since you didn’t provide page numbers. And I still wish to gripe about your con notices being in the middle of the zine. I have to do my printout in two steps in order to eliminate those pages during a printout, since they have no application to me whatsoever. I am both lazy and cheap. I don’t want to waste time, paper and ink.

I liked the idea of running all your previous covers as your covers this time but I wish you had somehow managed to indicate this was issue #13 somewhere on the front. By the way, if you use this format for future annishes, the covers will eventually diminish to the size of an atom. *{Now THERE’S an idea...}*

As for everything else in the zine, interesting but I have really nothing to say about them at the present time. Looking forward to #14,

Cheers.....Lee Anne Lavell

{Many thanks for your kind comments and suggestions about the layout, Lee. I keep trying new things, such as this issue’s lettercolumn layout. Working with two-column format isn’t that hard, but doing a full-page portrait layout actually gives me a bit more latitude in making it more visually attractive besides being easier to read on screen: no need to repeatedly scroll down and back up.

{Now, I need to respond to your comment on R. Graeme Cameron’s comment regarding fanzine art and layout. In his defense, I don’t think Graeme was being “condescending” or dismissive. I believe – and he can comment back on this (in fact, I hope he does) – that what Graeme was saying is that he personally focuses more on the content of a fanzine than its context. Most of the time, so do I, but I love fan art and try to make Askance as visually attractive and readable as I can, which is what any fanzine editor should try to do.

{My editorial view here is that a fanzine is a balance between text, art, and layout. Both text and art (interior and cover) contribute their creators’ perspectives and personalities, while the layout of a fanzine is the expression of the editor/publisher, in addition to whatever said editor/publisher will write. Sometimes – oh, heck, a LOT of the times – this balance is one-sided, tipping the scales of a fanzine to either the sercon or fannish side, or in a direction that the editor/publisher didn’t expect. For example, I didn’t expect this particular issue to be so focused on SF conventions with a lot of material on fanzines and fan-writing. It just happened that way. Now the question is, how will people respond to it? The reaction to this last question should be interesting based on our brief give-and-take here in the loccol, which is what fanzines are all about, IMHO (gotta love that abbreviation, mainly because it is so true).}



Some other folks who sent e-mails and such were Guy H. Lillian III (who is still scrounging for locs and prostrating himself for *Challenger* material), Steven H. Silver (who sent in an article for my July '09 issue), and Eric Mayer (admittedly, out of alphabetic order, but he and I enjoy nattering about baseball).

“I’ve been Brad Foster’s cheesecake artwork.”

So, here at the end of the zine is the con listing. This is not in deference to Lee Anne Lavell's loc, but I think it simply makes more sense to put it here as more of permanent location for this recurring feature. Observant readers will probably notice that some of these have a 🍷 next to it. That emoticon means that I am planning to attend that particular convention. Now you will know which con to avoid!

Regional Convention Calendar



Here's a brew that I must try someday. I love the tag line.

[A-Kon 20](#)

The Southwest's Largest Anime Convention
Anime, comics, cosplay, media, & gaming convention
May 29-31, 2009
Sheraton Dallas (formerly the Adam's Mark)
400 N. Olive St.
Dallas, TX 75201

(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
Biltmore Hotel Oklahoma
401 South Meridian Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73108

Oklahoma City, OK area

GOH: Eric Flint

Artist GOH: Brad Foster

Toastmaster: 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.



[ApolloCon 2009](#)

Houston's Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Conference

June 26-28, 2009

DoubleTree Houston Intercontinental Airport

15747 John F. Kennedy Blvd.

Houston, Texas 77032

Houston, TX area

GOH: Wil McCarthy

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.

[Bayou Wars XVII](#)

Wargaming con

June 26-28, 2009

Radisson Hotel, New Orleans Airport

2150 Veterans Blvd

Kenner, LA 70062

(greater New Orleans area)

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

[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!



[Houston U-Con](#)

Comic Books, Gaming, & Collectors one-day con.

August 1, 2009

Northwest Community Unitarian Universalist Church (NWCUUC)

5920 Hwy 6 North

Houston, TX 77084

(Bear Creek area / northwest Harris County)

(Greater Houston metropolitan area)

The convention will primarily be Comic Books and Gaming but there is sure to be some Anime, Manga, Sci-Fi/Fantasy and Goth vendors and guests.

[Anticipation, the 67th WorldCon](#)

August 6-10, 2009

Palais des Congrès de Montréal

Montreal, Canada

Guest of Honour: Neil Gaiman

Invitee d'honneur: Elisabeth Vonarburg

Fan Guest of Honour: Taral Wayne

Editor Guest of Honour: David Hartwell

Publisher Guest of Honour: Tom Doherty

Master of Ceremonies: Julie Czerneda

Five days of programming on hundreds of topics from books to media, from art to costuming, from movies to television to anime, from science fiction to science fact, as well as an art show, masquerades, the Hugo Awards ceremony, dealer's rooms, and much more!



[ArmadilloCon 31](#)

Literary Science Fiction Convention.

August 14-16, 2009

Doubletree Hotel North

6505 N. IH-35

Austin, TX 78752

Austin, Texas area

GOH: Scott Lynch

Artist GOH: Stephan Martinere

Editor GOH: Chris Roberson

Fan GOH: Karen Meschke

Special Guest: Joan Vinge

Toastmaster: Scott A. Cupp

Panels, Art Show, Gaming, Charity, Full Day Writer's Workshop, Dealer's Room, and more!

ArmadilloCon is a literary science fiction convention held annually in Austin, with several hundred attendees. The primary focus of ArmadilloCon is literary science fiction, but that's not all we do -- we also pay attention to art, animation, science, media, and gaming. Every year, dozens of professional writers, artists and editors attend the convention. Sometimes they come to make deals, but more often they come to have fun!

Sponsored by the Fandom Association of Central Texas, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization



[San Japan 2.X](#)

Japanese Anime and Culture Convention

August 14-16, 2009

San Antonio, TX

Dealer's Room, Multiple Panel Rooms, Video/Table Gaming, Artist Alley, 24 Hour Video Room. 2 viewing rooms, gaming (both live action and computer) industry panels, and more. Further, trying to emphasize as a cultural convention, we will be bringing you panels, performances, and demonstrations of Martial Arts, Tea Ceremonies, Kabuki, Traditional Japanese games, and more! Come see what it's really all about!

[Bubonicon 41](#)

Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention

August 28-30, 2009

Sheraton (NOTE: Same hotel as last year)

Albuquerque, New Mexico area

GOH: Michael Cassutt

Toastmistress: Carrie Vaughn

Guest Artist: Peri Charlifu

Panels, Art Show, Dealers Room, Gaming, Auctions, Film Screenings, Readings, Autographs, Filking, Science Talk, Costume Contest, Green Slimes, Audience Participation Events, and more!

Each year, proceeds from Bubonicon go to worthy causes. In 2006, proceeds from Bubonicon 38 benefited the Roadrunner Food Bank, the Children's Hospital of New Mexico and the Williamson Science Fiction Library at Eastern New Mexico University.

[AtsuiCon 2](#)

Anime con

(Presumably August 2009)

Houston, TX area

AtsuiCon Cosplay, Anime Music Video Contest, Arcade Tournaments, Art Show & Auction, Hentai Art Show, Concert, Ero Genki Adult Cosplay, DJ Laen's Tokio Dance Contest, Card Dueling Tournaments, Panels/Meet & Greet, Hentai Fest, Dealers' Room, & more!

[AnimeFest 2009](#)

Convention and Association for fans of Anime, Music, Manga, and Japanese Pop Culture
(Presumably August 2009)

(Dallas, Texas [downtown Dallas] area)

Japanese Guests, Voice Actors, Manga/Comic Artists, Dealer Room, 24hr Video Theaters, J-Pop, Gaming, Art Show & Auction, Panel Discussions, Autograph Sessions, Film/Video Premiers

[FenCon VI](#)

A Fan-Operated Science Fiction and Fantasy Literary and Filk Convention in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area
September 18-20, 2009

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

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

GOH: Lois McMaster Bujold

Music GOH: Carla Ulbrich

Artist GOH: Kurt Miller

Fen GOH: Warren Buff

Toastmaster: Paul Cornell

Special Guest: Keith R.A. DeCandido

Plus many more guests!

Fan-run convention featuring dedicated Filk Track and Costuming Tracks, Demos, Gaming, an Art Show & Auction, Panel Discussions, Science Programming, our annual Short Story Contest, Open Filking, the legendary FenCon Cabaret, a Writer's Workshop, over 100 Program Participants, and Much More!

FenCon is a production of the Dallas Future Society, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of science, literature, and music for the future of all mankind.



A booth bunny
photo by Carrie Landers

[Realms Con](#)

5th Annual Anime Festival
(Presumably September 2009)

Corpus Christi, TX

Anime Dating Game, AMV (Anime Music Video), Anime Jeopardy, Cosplay, Dead or Alive Volleyball Tournament, The Katamari, Movie Rooms, Panels, Pool Party, Rave, Scavenger Hunt, Table Top Tournaments, Video Game Tournaments, Workshops, and SO MUCH MORE!!!

[ProtoCon 11](#)

NOTE: The path of Hurricane Ike had the eye going through the Bryan/College Station area on Saturday morning, September 13, 2008. Due to the dangerous conditions and the closure of the MSC for the weekend, ProtoCon 10 was canceled. As they said on their website last year, "We're sorry for the cancellation, we will try again next year." Now that it IS next year...

Gaming con
(Presumably September 2009)
Memorial Student Center
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas

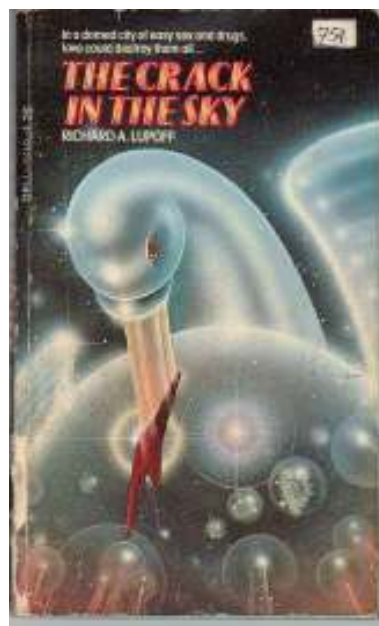
ProtoCon is an all-genre gaming convention run by gamers just like you. On top of all the games that everyone is familiar with and love to play, ProtoCon has an additional focus on independent publishers and prototype games. Our special events include the 2nd Annual Prototype Game Design Challenge, a Game Design Panel, and a live-action game design event (really, I kid you not).

We have a Dealers Room and a Game Auction on top of all the great gaming!
You can find the fun and familiar and the new and exciting all at ProtoCon!

=====

Off the shelf

Well, recently I read a really odd little book, the one pictured to the right. Published in 1976 and set in the far future year of 2000(!), it explores the ramifications of rampant industrialization, pollution, and the deteriorating social fiber of western society – in particular, America. Instead of writing a full-blown review of it, let's just say that as prophetic science fiction it falls flat on its face with a resounding "thud". Still, despite a tendency to proselytize every other chapter, Lupoff told an entertaining tale that picked up the tempo by the second to last chapter. Not one of his best efforts, but there are a few Tuckerisms in the book; one of these is the *Edgar Rice Burroughs Hour*, a state-controlled television channel that features programs of Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, and Carson of Venus.



That was the next book I read: *Carson of Venus* (1939) by Edgar Rice Burroughs (obviously), and very carefully, too, I might add. Each night I gingerly removed it from its Mylar™ sleeve – how it's protected, since this is my mid-60's Ace edition with a fantastic Frank Frazetta cover – and thoroughly enjoyed it. Naturally, each night it went back into the sleeve after I wiped my eye-tracks off the pages with a special chemically treated cloth.

So then I read selections from one of the books I recently snagged at the Half-Price Bookstore for \$1, *The Mammoth Book of Golden Age Science Fiction*, edited by Isaac Asimov, Charles G. Waugh, and Martin H. Greenberg. My favorite stories in here are "Time Wants a Skeleton" by Ross Rocklynne, "Nerves" by Lester del Rey, and "With Folded Hands" by Jack Williamson. Great stories – ten novellas – are in this book first published in 1989, but I have the Carroll & Graf 2007 paperback. The other \$1 book I just found (14 May 2009) is *Swords of the Steppes*, the fourth volume of the complete Cossack adventures of Harold Lamb. Naturally, now I must get the first three. For many years I have been a sucker for Harold Lamb stories, and for good reason: they're *fun*! This University of Nebraska Press paperback is in mint condition, too. Not bad for a buck.

The current non-fiction book I'm reading is *The Medieval Machine: the industrial revolution of the Middle Ages* by Jean Gimpel. Fascinating stuff. Once I finish it, I promised Tom Sadler a review of this book for his fine zine, *The Reluctant Famulus*. In the meantime, I shall keep reading, and hope y'all do too.

What's next

The next issue of this fanzine is slated for July of 2009, and already the contents are starting to arrive. So what has showed up in my in box? Well, let me tell ya, troops, lotsa good stuph:

As mentioned at the tail end of the lettercolumn, Steven H. Silver sent me an article – one of a series of articles he's working on, for that matter – about the silent movie star Mabel Normand. Great article, I might add. It reminded me of the time that Steve Glennon (one of my oldest friends in Minn-stf), Ted Muelhaupt (a fringe-fan friend of Steve's at the University of Minnesota), and I got thrown out of a showing of the silent classic *Intolerance*, so I'm going to write up that story. Then I asked another film aficionado, a certain Christopher J. Garcia, for an article about his favorite silent movie(s), and he's replied that he'll be on board. So the July issue is shaping up to be yet another theme issue of sorts. That works for me.

If all goes well, Valerie and I will be driving down for at least all of Saturday at Apollocon 6 (June 26-28), so chances are there will be a brief write-up of that jaunt. Our major reason for going is that Val has been busily creating little pieces of artwork – as in figurines, models, and such – out of the assorted odds and ends she has stored in her art supplies, plus various bits and pieces of nuts, bolts, machinery, springs, and other doo-dads. The end result is very steampunkish. In fact, she is getting together enough of these pieces to ship to assorted steampunk-oriented cons (the biggie is SteamCon (October 23-25, 2009). By bringing some of these to cons in this area, Val will be better able to assess the response and demand for her work. From what I've been seeing so far, it's really good.

Not only that, my 13 year old son Daniel has begun doing some drawing. Keep in mind that he enjoys Pokemon and a whole bunch of anime cartoon shows. Here is one of his latest efforts:



Not bad, says I. Of course, my bias is probably showing, but I think this ain't that bad at all. Now if only I can find that large fantasy pencil-sketch that Valerie drew – it's in the garage somewhere in all of her artistic supply stash; I know, I've seen it recently – that would make a jim-dandy wrap-around cover for a future issue of *Askance*.

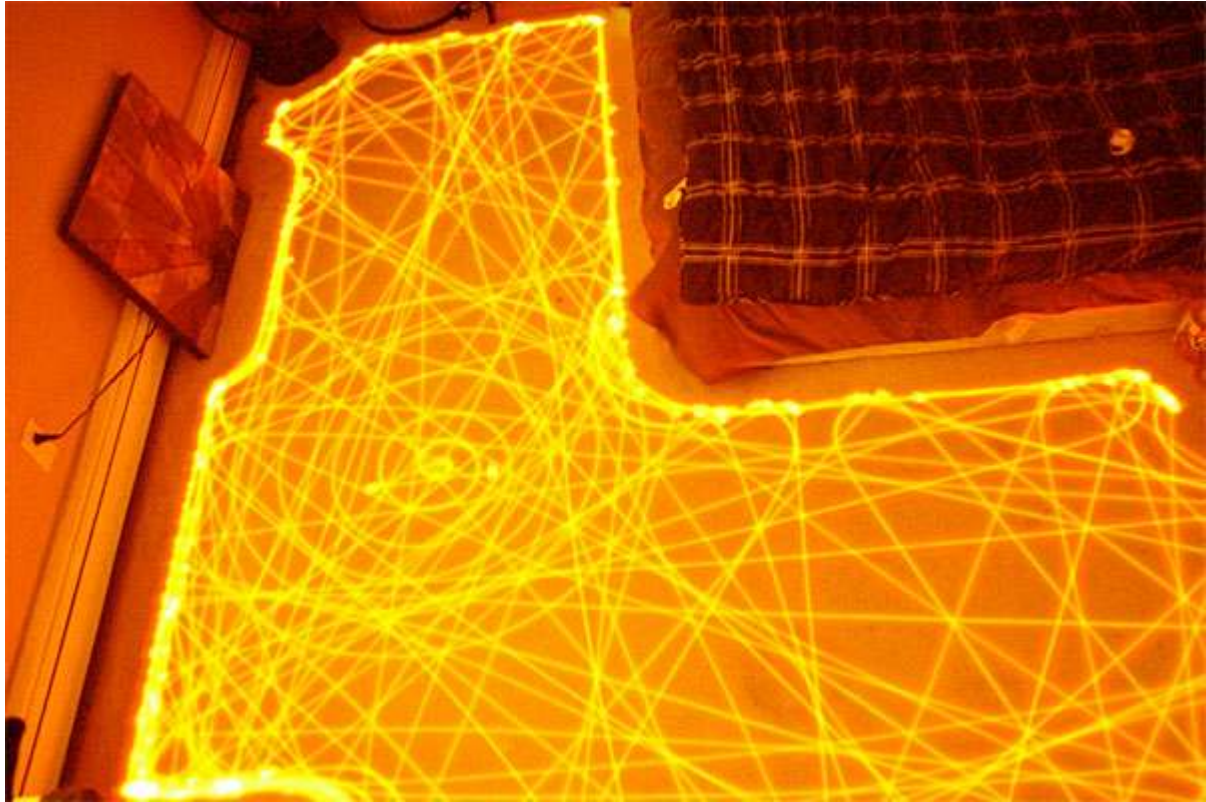
Gee. This is turning into a bit of a family-production, isn't it? No complaint from this quarter.

So that's the sort of malarkey I have planned for the future. At some point I would like to get back to working on that fannish musical, *The Sound of Fanac*, so I can have that project done, and get some other fan-writing taken care of this summer.

That all being said, all y'all (that's the proper plural form they use here in Texas) have a good time this convention season, and mayhaps I shall see some of you good folks at cons here in Texas. Have a merry one,

John Purcell

This is for Bill Fischer from Eric Mayer (remember the "I, Roomba" sequence of "Figby"?). This is a time-lapse photograph tracing the path a Roomba™ makes in its travels while cleaning a room:



Interesting, eh?
