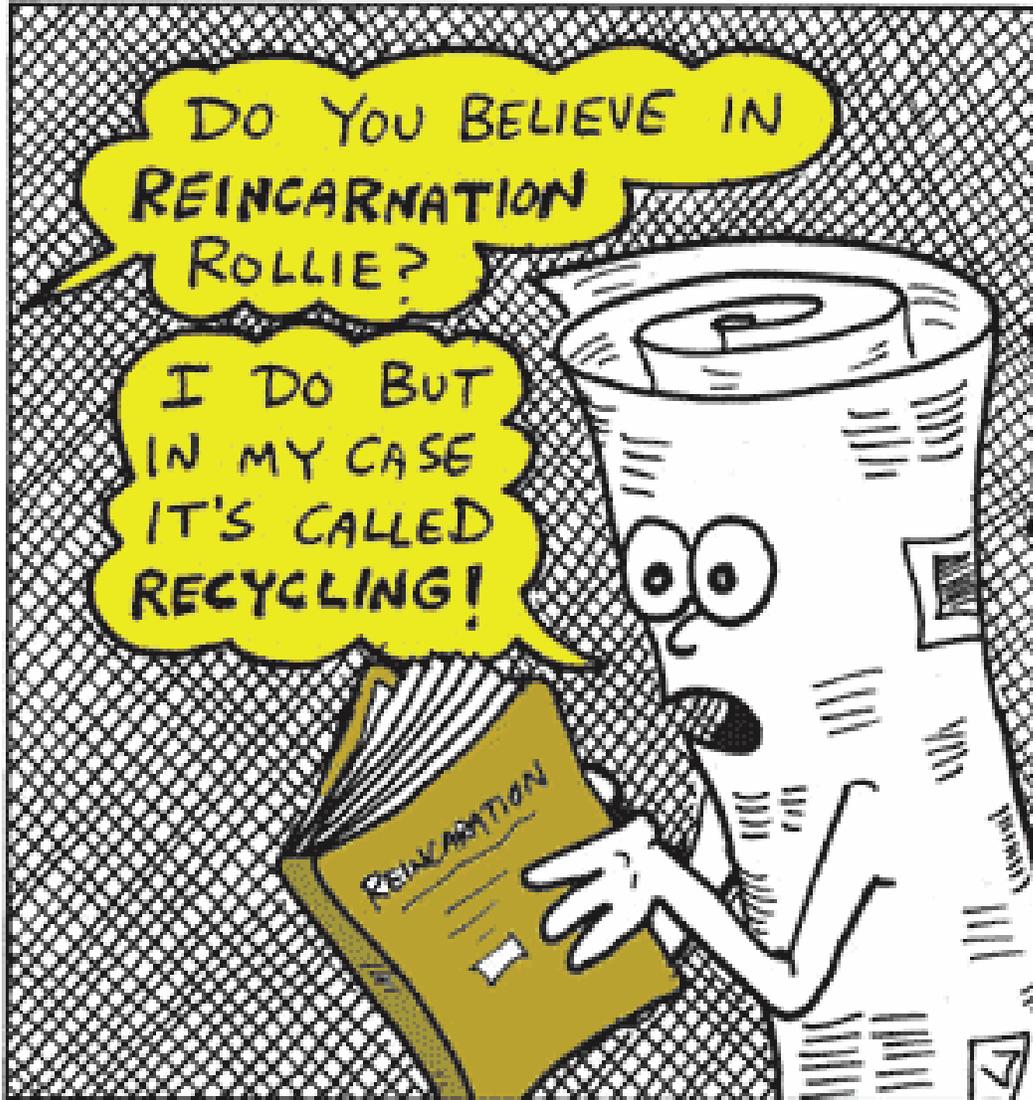


In A Prior Lifetime #11



May, 2006

A Special Post Not-Minicon 41 issue of

In A Prior Lifetime #11

May, 2006

As always, perpetrated by John Purcell
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Well, alright. The **WORD** is out: Corflu #23 is history, and Chris Garcia received the FAAN Award for Best New Fan of 2005. Other winners: *Chunga* won for Best Fanzine; Claire Brialey as Best Fan Writer; Steve Stiles was named Best Fan Artist; and Robert Lichtman was awarded the Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award for Best Letterhack. Congratulations to all! Also of note, is the fact that next year's Corflu, version #24, will be held in Austin, Texas, a mere two and a half hours' drive from my home.

So guess where I'm gonna be next year? I will give you three guesses, and the first two don't count. . .

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Bemused Natterings

Springtime is here, and the blue jays, orioles, and cardinals are all singing away, so put on either your red or white sox, maybe even long red stockings, and look royal before you meet the padre, you damn Yankee, you.

Yup. It's baseball season in America.

In *Vegas Fandom Weekly* #74, Dick Lupoff wrote about a couple of former major leaguers who were teachers at his high school: Al Verdel and Jake Eisenhardt. Now this is kind of a cool thing to me, being a bit of a baseball nut. After hockey, beisbol is my favorite sport; soccer comes third in my personal favorite sports trifecta. Dick's piece got me to reflecting on when I played little league baseball some forty years ago. One of the teams I was on *way-back-when* was coached by Cal Welch, who was in the Washington Senators/Minnesota Twins farm system for about five years, and had worked his way up to Triple-A ball as a left-handed pitcher before blowing his elbow out. Undaunted, he taught himself how to pitch right-handed, but he wasn't as effective. So he went to coaching his son Ricky's little league teams. Thanks to Cal Welch, I became a half-ways decent left-handed pitcher myself; Cal taught me how to throw side-armed, and I had a nice combination of a $\frac{3}{4}$ - delivery fast ball, change-up, plus a side-armed curve and screwball (when I threw it right). This delivery also explains my current rotator cuff ills, but that's another tale for another issue.

And now my son, Daniel, is in his third year of little league. Down here in College Station, Texas, they can play baseball year-round, and he's developing nicely as a solid defensive player, plus he's also a southpaw like his old man, so he's working on pitching (no real speed yet, but his accuracy is excellent) and being a switch-hitter (more power right handed, but a better eye left-handed). You can definitely say that I'm reliving my childhood through him, but all dads do this with their sons playing little league. I think every kid should play; if they don't, there's something un-American about them.



But he's doing fine. His team won their first tournament game last night 10-8, coming back from a 6-0 deficit with a six-run rally in the bottom of the third inning to tie, then going up 10-6 the next inning. It was an exciting game, and this coming Friday night, May 19th, his team, the Red Sox, plays the Indians in the second round. Should be another good game; I'll let you folks know how his team does in my addendum zine, *and furthermore*.

All of this baseball talk gets me to thinking of when I was kid in Minneapolis, going out to Metropolitan Stadium – now replaced by the Mall of America – to watch the Twins play. It wasn't the prettiest stadium, if not downright ugly, but to my brother and I, it was a piece of heaven on earth. Every time the Yankees came to town we went to every game in the series. I still remember watching an exhibition game against the Milwaukee Braves in the summer of 1965, and the place was packed; 45,000 people were there to see the farewell tour of one of baseball's greatest left-handed pitchers ever, Warren Spahn. When he was finally introduced, the noise was deafening; the hairs on my neck still tingle when I remember that night.

It was also great to watch my hometown heroes. The Twins had great teams from the mid-60s to early 70s: some of their players were Tony Oliva, Rod Carew, Camillo Pasqual, Vic Power, Jim Kaat, Jim Perry, Mudcat Grant, Dean Chance, and my personal hero, Harmon Killebrew. Great players, all.

Which brings me to July of 2004, when the All-Star game was held at Houston's Minute Maid Park. I took Dan down to the Fan Fair on July 9th, which was also the day of the homerun derby, and he had a blast, walking off with a total of 72 free baseball cards from all the vendors. We got a baseball autographed by a couple of Astros – both have since been traded – and I was able to see Killebrew from a distance; never got the chance to get his autograph, which was my goal and why Dan was wearing his little league uniform: he was playing on the Twins that summer. How cool that would have been, I thought, with visions of my childhood hero dancing in my head. But it wasn't meant to be, alas! Or so I thought then. . .

Long about 4:30 that afternoon when Dan and I were getting ready to head homeward, this young man with staff identification walked up to me and said, "I've been watching you and your son for a while, and thought that you two would like a special treat. Do you already have tickets for the homerun derby tonight?" My answer was a simple "No," at which this man produced two tickets for the event. Handing them to me, he said, "Have a good time tonight," and with that he walked off.



Inside Minute Maid Park, July, 2004, before the Homerun Derby

I didn't know what to say. Each ticket cost \$75! When I looked at Dan his eyes were wide and shining with anticipation. I immediately got on the cell phone and told Valerie what had just happened, and that we'd probably be home well after midnight. Needless to say, we had a great time watching Miguel Tejada win the homerun derby, but we also

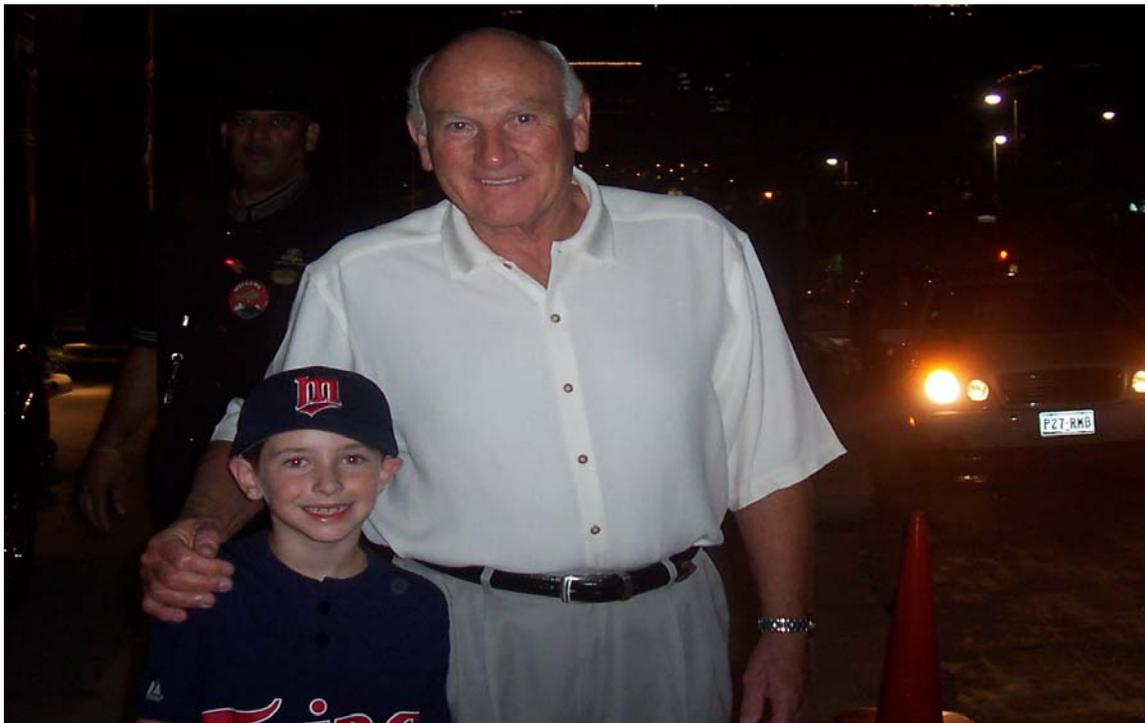
had the chance to see other sluggers like Barry Bonds, David Ortiz, Sammy Sosa, Albert Pujols, Jeff Bagwell, and others smack the ball out of the park. It was so much fun.

Afterwards, I couldn't remember exactly where I had parked the van, so Dan and I wandered around a bit, at one point walking past the entrance of a nearby hotel. An older gentleman was standing there, looking a bit lost himself, and from a distance I thought I recognized him. As we got closer, I realized that I was right: it was Harmon Killebrew! When we came closer, I said as calmly as I could, "Good evening, Mr. Killebrew." He smiled at us, and asked, "Are you from here?" I told him we were from College Station, but originally from Minneapolis, and that this was our first time in downtown Houston. Harmon then said, "Well, I'm trying to get to this restaurant for a late dinner, and I can't remember how to get there."

"Well, I can't remember where I parked, so if you'd like, we'll keep you company while I find our van and you find your restaurant."

"Fair enough," was his answer. So, for the next twenty minutes Dan and I walked and talked in Downtown Houston with Harmon Killebrew, my boyhood baseball hero. He is still one of the nicest gentlemen in baseball you will ever meet. He loved Dan being in his Twins uniform, and at one point Dan gave Harmon his baseball card: that's what they do with team pictures nowadays; you can have trading cards made of your kid. Killebrew got a big kick out of that. Even though I never got Killebrew's autograph - couldn't do it outside of the assigned All-Star Game venue (MLB rules) - I was still able to get a picture of Daniel with Harmon Killebrew.

So how cool is *that*?



Dust From the Attic Redux

Ah, Sweet Minicon!

There are so many of them in my memory banks that it's difficult to select something to write about. But, after thinking for all of seven seconds, I think Minicon 11, from April of 1976, will do just fine for a few good reasons.

It was really quite the time back then. Those were the days when the hotels that Minicon resided in were summarily razed for constructing newer edifices, not all of them hotels. Such was the fate of the Dyckman, Andrews, and Curtis hotels in the 1980s. It's a good thing that the first Minicon was held on the main campus of the University of Minnesota in the Men's Lounge at Coffman Union, otherwise a really important building would have been torn down. But, that one's still standing. The Leamington Hotel, site of Minicons 11, 12, 13, and 18 is long gone, too, and I have no idea what stands in its place now. For all I know, it's a parking lot now for the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, home of the Minnesota Twins and Vikings, also the University of Minnesota Gophers.



A rather clean version of downtown Minneapolis, as one postcard artist saw it in the 1940's.

The reason why I chose Minicon 11 to write about is because it was the first one to be held at the Leamington, which had been host to the Beatles for their concert at Metropolitan Stadium on August 21, 1965. It was a cool, old hotel with long hallways and easily accessible by bus. It even held a bar and restaurant, of course, and it was at Minicon11 that I began a personal tradition of enjoying fine fannish conversations over drinks in the hotel bar on

Saturday afternoons. Wonderful times with wonderful people.

The wonderful people who helped create these wonderful memories at that con were the pro guests of honor, Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, fan guests of honor Leigh and Norbert Couch, and toastmasters Jackie Franke and Rusty Hevelin. By the Spring of 1977, my con going had garnered a batch of friendships with fans from around the Midwest, such as Dennis Jarog, Phyllis and Alex Eisenstein, Joan Hanke Woods, Ross Pavlac, and other Chicago fans, Bill Fesselmeyer from Kansas City, Barney Neufeld and

Linda Moss from Cleveland, Lou Tabakow from Cincinnati, George 'Lan' Laskowski from Michigan, Bob Tucker (of course!), Jerry Boyajian from Boston... Wait a minute! Boston's not a Midwestern city! Oh, well. Jerry was a perennial Minicon attendee, so he counts. The main thing is, it was a great time when Minn-stf was enjoying a huge swell of popularity largely due to Minicon's reputation as one of the most fannish annual conventions. Minicon 11 was no exception in contributing to the club mythology. Part of this was because of Surgical Glove Fandom was born in the hallway outside the con suite on Saturday night.

Now, I have no idea how it started, or who brought them, but there I was, sitting on the hallway floor talking with Dennis, Barney, Jerry, Dean Gahlon, Laura Krentz, Lee Pelton, and others when an inflated surgical glove floated over our heads. The next thing I knew, an impromptu game of modified-hallway-sneak-attack-killer-volleyball erupted as about a half-dozen more balloon gloves were incorporated into the fray. For a frantic fifteen minutes it was loud and nutty, and a ton of fun. We were sweating and laughing through it all. The really cool thing was when we had calmed down a bit and Leigh Brackett came along then sat down with us to chill and chat. It was most amusing to talk with her while these inflated surgical gloves lazily floated through the air, and to see one of the pro guests of honor smacking a blown-up surgical glove without losing a beat in the conversation was a real treat. It really was a unique moment that I will always treasure.

This was also the convention when I started bringing my guitar for the inevitable all-night music jams in one of the con suite rooms. At first, I was very shy about it because I was very humbled by the playing ability of people like Fred Haskell, Mike Wood, Nate Bucklin, Reed Waller, and others. But, they blew me away by their willingness to let me play my songs - I only knew a handful of Beatles or Kinks songs at the time - and they quite often joined in! Those all night music jams will stay with me forever, and I will always be grateful for these fine, fannish friends. How I wish I could have been there this year to join them again.



Leigh Brackett and Edmond Hamilton, pro guests of Honor at Minicon 11, April, 1977. Photo by Dave Truesdale

Now, Minicon 42 next Easter Weekend may be a possibility...

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My idea of writing fan histories is to write social histories of local groups. I developed this notion as a result of personal inadequacies, bewilderment at the foibles fandom is heir to, and a felt need to find and fix whatever goes wrong. How my histories worked out, and how they were received, rather differed from what I expected.

I started doing fan histories when I was editing the *Maple Leaf Rag*. Some years ago, you see, I had another fit of Cosmic Responsibility and decided to start a national fan newszine. I live in Canada, which has about the population of California distributed over an area roughly equivalent to Siberia, so the fan centres are rather scattered. Still, there are perennial attempts to do a national newszine. Ninety-five percent of Canada's population lives in cities within a few hundred miles of the American border. There is nothing, really, to make us aware of each other, or of common fannish practices, except (most likely) the neighboring fan groups to the south.

But every so often, someone tries to bring Canadians together anyway. One such organ was *New Canadian Fandom*. The last *New Canadian Fandom* I had seen was dated January, 1983, and came to me in mid-summer, and Canadian fandom likes a convenient chew to bite off, and I had this notion that someone had to take care of details like fan news -- well, to make a long story short, I started the *Maple Leaf Rag*, and was chained to it until fairly recently. It featured some short fan histories on given communities, which I figured was one of the things To Do. Mostly, I figured that current news and history could serve as cautionary tales, or as good pointers for a lot of fan activities. I have this attitude that a history of whatever you please is not something you can only look at, you have to do something with it. I have this attitude that a non-organization like fandom, at least a local fandom, is yet a community and a system which functions in certain ways, and can be modified. (Like a lot of things, I did not convey this successfully -- but I'm getting ahead of myself; that comes later in this story. So. I had this notion that communications were pretty bad between fan groups in Canada (not an unwarranted assumption). I also had this notion that a lot of fans were jumping into projects that they planned badly, executed badly, sometimes turned into fiascos that poisoned the air locally, for other fans trying to do anything and all because useful information was not getting around. (You may have gathered that this is personal experience talking.)

MLR started out as a basic, stripped-down, current news sheet. A few pages, mimeoed and stapled, and sent out frequently. That did not last long: the historical information started coming on. Mind you, a lot of other, extraneous features were appearing. I felt obligated to present in the *Rag* any vaguely fannish material that came in my mail.

by Garth Spencer

After the first five issues, when people like Marc Gerin Lajoje wrote me a letter on the beginnings of the Ottawa SF Society, the fan-histories usually came in dribs and drabs of information from everywhere. (With exceptions. Nobody in Quebec or the Maritimes wrote to me for the longest time.)

Then appeared one of the reasons I ran into trouble: my urge to complete things. In late summer of 1987, I sent John Purcell my compilations of Vancouver and Edmonton fan history -- up to 15 pages apiece, or more, in photo-reduced columns -- which I struggled to complete over the prior 2 years. Biggest damn things I ever wrote, and I never got them published in the Rag. Apart from my obsession with scraping together and compiling documentary information, my fanhistories (when I started doing them) were attempts to write social histories. And that is the second place where I ran into trouble.

When you are a university dropout, you do not speak English; you speak Academese in a non-academic speech community. Underlying my writing was a whole host of assumptions -- fan activities demand a certain minimum of actual planning and execution be accomplished; it is a dire necessity to take care of essential details; your behavior is structured; we keep repeating the same old fuckups and never learning anything; we can look at what we do and do it right -- and, after four years of fan editing, I think I failed to convey them.

I could summarize everything I wrote for MLR as a plea: "If you fan-boys are going to do this here fan stuff, could you try doing it right? Making it work?" I could summarize my idea of fan history as an attempt to chronicle what didn't work and why, and also as an attempt to discover why fans keep doing things that just bugger them up. I even won a national fan award, without conveying these points! Well, maybe to a few people. But I began to perceive something ironic at work.

A peculiarity about Canadian stuph appeared about this time. Because I saw fit to do a fan news zine, mostly of, by, and for Canadian fans, a whole raft of readers went, "Oh, yeah. He's another Canadian nationalism freak. I'm not interested in that." Nothing I could do or say would undo their identification of MJR with a totally irrelevant head trip.

It sort of makes sense. Robert Runte occasionally talked about the Canadian-identity issue (doubtless none of you have heard of it before). For some time I was trying to revive the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards (actually, trying to make fans remember there was an award, and decide what they going to do with it). But I had rather a lot of being misconstrued. Until I can communicate better, it is not very helpful to ask whether anyone else learned anything from my fan histories.

Editor's note: I haven't finished editing the remainder of Garth's article, but Part Deux will be in the next issue, beginning with Garth's summation of what he has learned.



Fanzine Reviews

Roger Klein © 1992

There is a revolution in fan publishing going on. Or, to be even more accurate, there is an *evolution* in fan publishing going on. This particular fanzine is one example of what I'm driving at here; if it wasn't for the ease of desktop publishing - or simply using the various tools available with Microsoft Word, like I do (and still learning, I might add) - thanks to computer technology, *In A Prior Lifetime* would not exist. Well, maybe I shouldn't go that far, but this zine would never be published monthly if it wasn't for the technology available to us modern-day faneds. Sure, dead-tree fanzines still exist; the fact that I have recently pulled out of the mailbox in front of our house *Banana Wings* #25 and the April, 2006 issue of *Alexiad* is proof that these are with us. I, for one, hope they never really go away, either.

But there is no question that computer technology has forever changed the face of our beloved fanzines. In terms of layout and reproduction, the days of the crudzine may be gone forever. Content, not appearance, now becomes the primary means of evaluating a fanzine. In last issue's lettercolumn, Ted White wrote that electronic publishing has empowered people like myself, Earl Kemp, Chris Garcia, Arnie and Joyce Katz, David Burton, and others to publish as frequently as we wish. In fact, Ted went on to describe Bill Burns' website, www.efanzines.com, as a "win-win" situation: we get our zines ready, ship it to him, and Bill "publishes" our zines by plunking them onto his website.

So is this a good situation? I think it is. I agree with Ted's assessment that [efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) provides a "Central Location" for fanzine fandom. But it is not the only one. There are two other websites for fandom to use, creating a triple-star system (so to speak) for us to revolve around: www.trufen.net and www.fanac.org. Take all three of these together - ignoring the webzines like *Emerald City* or the blogs of fans, or homepages of fans, to say nothing of LiveJournal - and a fan like me who relies on the Internet as his primary, if not sole, means of fan activity can partake of Cyberfanac.

Each one offers something unique for the cyberfan to enjoy. Like I've said, efanzines is a central location where a print-minded fan can go for entertainment, and as an outlet for their

own need to write, to contribute to the on-going conversation that is fandom. No question: fanzines are an integral element for fannish dialogue. Trufen contributes to this, also. With minimal member support and input, Victor Gonzalez maintains a site that provides breaking news of general and specific interest to the science fiction fan community. A quick glance at the home page will show links galore and provides information about awards, conventions, fanzines, obituaries, voting, club activities, and whatever. It is extensive, and took me the better part of an afternoon when I first ventured onto the site to peruse only a fraction of all that it holds. Trufen.net is a wonderful service, and provides me with valuable information. For instance, thanks to my subscribing to headline and story news, I found out that my little fanzine received one third place vote in the 2005 FAAN Awards balloting, and that yours truly placed 12th on the Harry Warner, Jr. Memorial Award for Best Fan Correspondent of 2005. Gosh! In summation, www.trufen.net is invaluable in keeping up with the sundry happenings in the fannish community.

The same cannot be said about www.fanac.org, but this is almost a whole 'nuther beastie to consider. The tagline on Fanac's homepage says "Fan History Project," which this site most definitely provides. Whenever I need to do a bit of digging on a particular person, convention, find a photo, or whatever, I can usually find it on fanac.org. This site, coordinated by long-time fan Joe Siclari with Jack Weaver as the Webmaster, has a side-bar menu that can take an interested fan into all sorts of nether realms of fandom. This site does host some electronic fanzines - good ones, too, like *Ansible*, *Mimosa*, *Emerald City*, and *Plotka* - but not as many as you can find at efanzines.com. My favorite links here are those that deal with fan history. Rob Hansen's excellent history of British fandom, *Then*, can be found here, plus Dick Lynch's working outline on the history of fandom in the 1960's. As Spock would say, "Fascinating." Which it really is.

In My Humble Opinion, therefore, a well-rounded cyberfan would do well to start with these three websites. They are great repositories of modern fan activity and writing, plus archived issues of some of the best fanzines from yesteryear. From here, the eager cyber fan can locate a nearby convention or club and take it from there. Happy cyber-hunting, and enjoy.

www.efanzines.com - maintained by Bill Burns

www.trufen.net - maintained by Victor Gonzalez, and, I suspect, others too numerous to mention.

www.fanac.org - Joe Siclari, Coordinator, Jack Weaver, Webmaster.

Go and partake, young eager fen.

from the hinterlands

Once again into the breach we go, starting with a late loc from a fine fan from across the Pond, heading eastward, of course:

Dear John,

I have only now got around to reading your ninth ish, so if you were Chris Garcia I'd be around five issues behind. Its all I can do - I am old and time is finite.



Our house is full of gadgets too. Up here on the Bridge, the majority of it is hooked up to Sila's Big Computer, which comprises two stand alone hard drives (to compliment the two internal drives) two printers, (one of which is also a scanner and fax) an external DVD writer drive (for watching naughty stuff on? No , for dubbing naughty CD's) PDA, USB Hub, Camera the list goes on, but there is also Rockalog Bamboopa, my "robot" multi cd player , also used in the production of the aforesaid CD's - and that's just up here. In the living room, there's my (by now, ancient) hi-fi separates of Amp, Tuner, Tape Deck and CD Deck (once a state of the art audiophile system but that was in 1991) two DVD players a VCR and an LCD flat screen telly. Of phones we need not speak. We eschew computer games and have no kids at home so this is pretty modest by a lot of peoples standards. But there's another stereo in the kitchen. And another in the bedroom. I think we must be keen on music. Now the weather has warmed up, I can safely leave the half dozen or so remotes for the stuff in the living room on top of the amazingly low tech wood burner. Its about the only thing that doesn't have wires coming out of it. My wife Audrey even has an electrically powered armchair - we call it the Electric Chair, as you might expect. I know folk who are convinced that all the EMF generated by this gear is terrible for human health. But we've both been ill for years, so we reckon we are quite safe.

I read your con report of the College Teachers bun fight. I couldn't believe it myself, but I did. Would you like a report on the next seminar on enquiries into Accounts by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs I attend? *Hmm...Can I get back to you on this? That part of me that likes silly and irrelevant things is interested, but the better part of me is battling back.*

I endorse Eric Mayer's view re the term Core Fandom, which near as I can figure out emanates from Arnie Katz's usage. Why, when I was but a nipper of a Ratfan, any such aggrandizement would be drowned out by the cries of derision before the end of the sentence in which it appeared, because we were our own core fandom. In fact, the next time I see that term used, I may be minded to enquire who or what Core Fandom is.

If you've produced issue 10 yet, expect a Loc in about another two months - maybe.

Yours,
JOHN NIELSEN HALL

Actually, John, I accept locs no matter the time delay. Like most faneds, I am a firm believer in the philosophy that any loc, no matter how late, is a good loc.

So that brings us to a loc from someone I haven't seen in years, but that's fine by me. She's always welcome to write:



Hi John,

Thanks for the notice of your zine—I was able to open it and read it just fine, although in pdf format I hate columns! It's easy in a hard copy to move from column to column, it's a pain in the ass when reading an electronic document—all that scrolling up and down.

I loved the cover art. Very cool.

I had no idea that you were so into music—I don't think you ever mentioned it to me before.

Hmmm, I quit going to cons because of the media emphasis plus also the “freaks n geeks” aspect that any outside media stressed if they covered the event. It's the same thing with pagan events—when I go to them I always dress like Suzy Normal, so people won't think we're all a bunch of flakes. Most of the people I hang out with these days I met through the Bull Run UU Church in Manassas and if you didn't know they were pagan, you wouldn't know they were pagan—the exception being one of our gang of usual suspects who has Celtic triskele tattoos on her hands. Kate works at a call center. One of our other members happens to be a professional dominatrix. *Does she make house calls? Seriously, though, this is an interesting group of people to hang out with.*

Do current fans even read? I still go to the used bookstore as well as my local Books-A-Million which doesn't mind special ordering for me—saves me the shipping costs, and the library. One of the best public library systems I've encountered was when I lived very briefly in Raleigh, NC. Wake County has an excellent library system—they always had the latest publications, and their policy was that you could only keep new books for 7 days with no renewal. This guaranteed that the books stayed in circulation and you weren't on a waitlist for months.

LESLIE DAVID

I like that circulation policy; if there was a book I wanted to read, and someone constantly renewed it, well, that always made me mad.

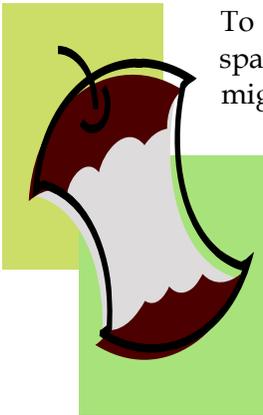
Shifting gears a bit, here's a missive from Eric Mayer, who just wants to get something off his chest - and I doubt if it's that professional dominatrix Leslie was just talking about!

John,

You'll find here some further thoughts on the "Core Fandom" business, and if I can manage it, they'll be the last I write down.

I've written some things here and there which may yet appear but it's occurred to me that it's just a total waste of time for me to allow myself to be drawn into such discussions. Actually I'm kicking myself. It's entirely my own fault. I'm old enough to know better. I guess it was kind of a reflex action, an automatic response from all the fanac I did years ago, but really, anything else would be more useful -- blogging, writing a short story, getting to work on the novel I don't know when I'll get time to write, or just penning a few pleasant, succinct locs, which is all I intended my active fanning to consist of this go round. (What really hit home -- I suddenly realized that the past few days I've been arguing with people about fandom, like it was thirty years ago, and I am supposed to be getting the next novel started. That's just stupidity on my part!)

I should've remembered that discussing fandom is a big part of fandom, or whatever you care to call it. But I imply can't justify expending any more energy on it at this point in my life. So we'll see. If I feel like I can participate comfortably without delving into such matters, great. However, when I read IAPL, before I caught myself, I was writing the following. I may as well send it. Feel free not to run it. I don't want to get people pissed off about things that are of no importance.



To me "Core Fandom" is an uninspired term. "Core" doesn't have very sparkling connotations. It's too mundane. That's just my personal reaction. It might work great for others. *I kind of agree with Ted White that "Core Fandom" works alright because it relates to our fannish roots and implies that fans aren't stuck on just one particular aspect of fandom. Otherwise, I dunno. Like you say, it's a personal thing.*

Worse, it isn't even descriptive. Fanzine Fandom at least gives an inkling of what it's identifying, what interest or activity fandom is associated with. I'm suspicious of definitions that are based on purely subjective criteria. subjective. The only things they define are the opinions of those proposing them.

For example, I don't buy the argument that you can identify fans by some proper, faanish attitude. Isn't that what Claude Degler and his cosmic minds was all about? When I was doing a lot of orienteering, the fellow who designed the T-shirt for our club's national meet brought a sample to the Board meeting. I about fell over. There was an O flag hanging from a tree and the motto: "Orienteering Is A Way Of Life." Lots of special interest groups develop social communities. That's not a differentiating feature. It's the activities the social groups develop

around that makes them different.

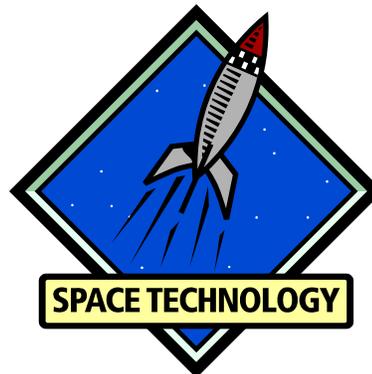
When I hear "Core Fandom" described I wonder is this really an attempt to describe and make sense of the reality of the confusing fanwhatsis that actually exists out there or is it rather an attempt to describe, and carve out of the reality, some desired fandom? The definitions of "Core Fandom" I have read are not so much descriptive as creative.

Of course anyone can form their own interest group/club/band of like-minded enthusiasts and include and exclude whoever they want. But, in my opinion any community that predicates membership on sharing attitudes dictated by a bunch of oldpharts doesn't have much of a future.

However, all the foregoing aside -- and this is the most important point, to me -- can somebody tell me **why** we need a label in the first place? Why we need to identify boundaries and who is a member etc? Seriously. I'm curious.

What is the point? Why is it necessary?
What is the attraction?

Are we going to be issued membership cards? Is there some clubhouse we can be barred from? What purpose is served by trying to define fandom? Admittedly, it might be an amusing intellectual exercise -- I've been playing -- but to what end? Does it add anything to your experience to be able to point and say "Fandom ends (or begins) here or this or that person is a "member" of "Core Fandom" or not?"



I find it all very peculiar. Since there is, in reality, no such thing as fandom or core fandom or fanzine fandom, whatever term is used affects only those who choose to accept whatever limitations it places on them.

Well I did enjoy the issue. I once had two cockatiels and the male was a mean SOB. My hand would be bloody after I reached into the cage to feed him.

Also, Derrida was interesting. I'd heard the name but didn't know anything about him. Now I know a bit, maybe.

Next loc, no discussion of Fandom.

ERIC MAYER

*We'll see if you don't. Anybody care to place any bets on this? == "What's the point?" you ask. The point is, I respond, is that fan just **LOVE** to natter on about themselves and their*

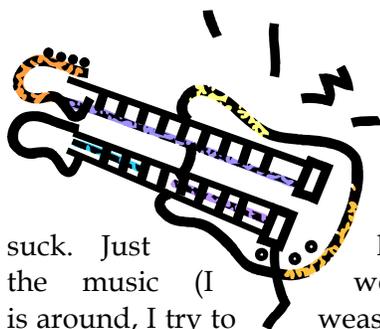
little universe. If anything, maybe that's what being a fan is all about: communication within and about our community.

And from the West Coast, came this letter from Chris Garcia zinging into my mailbox, picking up on the lead-off article from last issue:

So, I'm a big fan of great openings. That's not to say I'm a big Harlan Ellison fan, though the man does have some killer opens, but I don't think I've read a fanzine with a better first line than

"Our cockatiel masturbates"

Sweet Jesus, that's good stuff. I really was hooked to find out more about this dirty birdy and his filthy habits. You say that it was all fiction, but I'm sure that your feathery friend is a filthy prevert!



suck. Just the music (I is around, I try to whiskey flow)

On music! I love music, always have. I have no musical talent beyond the ability to sing any song like a lounge singer. That I can do like a mad man. I do a great version of "Go Your Own Way" like Bill Murray from *Saturday Night Live*. You should drop some of those old lyrics into *In A Prior Lifetime*. That would be awesome. No matter how much they

look at my issue about the Cardimums. I usually end up in one of won't call it filk) rooms at various cons, and whenever Steve Brust weasel my way into there as the music is about to start (and the

Speaking of Mr. Brust, nice review of Aggiecon, that is to say it seems as conflicted as your take on the entire event and it makes for a better review. I too would feel betrayed that there was no film room. I can't think of a con that I've been to other than Corflu that didn't have a film/video room or area of itself. Hell, *The Chick Magnet* got shown around the World because we kept sending it cons all over the place and it was all made possible by the film rooms. There are a lot of people that say that computer gaming rooms at cons are terrible, terrible things, and actually they're rarer than I at first thought they were. I can only think of three cons that regularly have them (two of which being student-ruin cons) but I do like them as a way to take a break and get a little time with my Evelyn when we're there together. She doesn't like the programming that much, so giving her a little time keeps her sane and lets her leave me sane.

Did Brust do *When I Was a Boy*? That's my fave filk song ever. It's the only one in the collection of The Computer History Museum. *For some reason, knowing this scares me. Just what in the hell is your criteria for accepting junk - I mean, stuff - for the museum anyway?!?*

I love Pixel. I'm excited for the next one (and have already dropped Dave my next contribution) and I do love the lettercol. It's nice to see Ted White getting more and more LoCs in the on-line zines (VFW, Pixel, IAPL, he even sent one to the Drink Tank).

You don't support Hollister in 2008? The only bid that has no chance of winning and doesn't want to (unlike Columbus which wants to and has no chance). We're a good bunch with a very good excuse for a party.

Good stuff, and not just because I'm praised for my constant work by Mr. White himself!

CHRIS GARCIA

So do me a favor and put together an advert for Hollister in 2008 and I will run it in here. == Ah, you've been tagged by the fickle finger of fate itself. Enjoy it while you can.

Back across the continent we fly, continuing apace until we reach the blighted shores of Britain, from whence the following spewed forth:

I seem to remember being taught at school about the importance, in writing, of the 'topic sentence.' The start of an article should set the tone of the whole piece, as well as attract the reader's attention, and get them to keep reading. (Or, alternatively, let them know there's nothing of interest here and they can just skip forward and start ego-scanning the lettercol.) I have to say that, in this context, "Our cockatiel masturbates" is almost the perfect 'topic sentence.'

Ted White will be pleased to know that I've dropped the "zeen" spelling. The killer came when I was doing the reviews for Pixel - I wanted to be able to use "zine" for postal games fan publications, and "fanzine" for the science fiction ones. Using deviant spellings of either or both just confused the issue. As noted elsewhere, the original purpose behind the alternative spelling was to enforce the correct pronunciation - there was a postal games zine called *A Zine Of The Times*, but the editor later recanted and co-published a zine called *Zine to be Believed* instead.

PETER SULLIVAN

To be honest, Peter, it was starting to bug me, too. I merely thought it was an affectation at first, but then I noticed that Lloyd Penney was doing it, too. Obviously, "zeen" must be a non-American thing to write. == Thank you for the kind words about the perfect topic sentence. It's still very true; I just flung a pen at Sunny because he was at it again. Maybe I will get him a little inflated birdie to stick in his cage. Feelthy leedul birdie!

Sneaking in the back door comes our favorite Canadian letterhack, Lloyd Penney, who likewise has interesting comments to make:



Dear John:

It's Friday, and it's catch-up day. Time to relieve the stresses on my inbox with lots of loc-writing today, and next up is *In a Prior Lifetime 10*.

I'd send you sunflower seeds in exchange, but I'm pretty sure that foreign produce wouldn't be allowed across the border, even in a tightly-sealed package. Welcome to an era of caution bordering on paranoia. Some would say that border's been crossed many times.

Other than getting Sunny a little rubber inflatable female cockatiel, I can only suggest something to lower his sex drive in his seeds. Is there an anti-Viagra for birds?

Toronto used to have a relaxicon many years ago, stage my Yvonne and myself and Mike Wallis, and it was called Opuscon, after the penguin in the Bloom County strip. After Mike moved to California, we let the con go because we couldn't afford to make it work. Some folks missed that convention, so they staged something called PseudoOpuscon. They held it in the same hotel, and it was so expensive to get in, we could only afford one day, and that was the only year it was held. We had ideas about reviving Opuscon, but most fans around here didn't understand the idea of a relaxicon. (At Opuscon 2, a friend screamed at us because there was no dealers' room or art show.) And, now that we are retired from con running, we

are thinking that the relaxicon idea is perhaps an old one, and not suitable for local fandom at all.

I like the idea of a core fandom or some kind of central group of fans (beginning to sound secret-masterish and all that, though), but most fans feel they are the central group for their own interest. Who am I to say otherwise? Local fans keep to their level of fanac, whatever satisfies. Yvonne and I have taken the time over the years to keep in touch with most fannish groups in town, and in the long run, even though I like that aforementioned idea of a central group, I'd rather be inclusive.

I agree with the review of *Pixel*; not only it is a pleasure to read, but also a pleasure to see. Part of my journalistic training included publication design, and *Pixel*'s design is a treat to the eye. These days, you'd have to try hard to come up with modern-day equivalent to a crudzine.

My loc...from the latest *Drink Tank*, I see that Chris Garcia is losing his inspiration. His father John is terminal with cancer, and the latest issue shows that today is the day the Garcia family takes John off life support to end his struggle. He's going to need our support and good words. His enthusiasm may be infectious, but he's still human, and even though he has plans

to write more issues in the next couple of weeks or so, I would hope he'd take the time to mourn and settle John's affairs.

Corflu 23 has come and gone, and there were 26 warm bodies in attendance, including Ted White. Even though there were supposed to be a number of activities on that never happened, it was a good time because of the people there. Ian Sorensen and Yvonne Rowse from the UK were there, too. The 24th Corflu is slated to be in Austin, so perhaps that's a con you can get to.

And then, there's Derrida...Jacques Derrida's idea about any finite idea being nearly impossible to achieve and is therefore infinite, may seem like a contradiction in terms, but I certainly learned that this idea was not a new one in philosophy. In my assorted philosophy classes in university, the ideas of the Mills, Schopenhauer, Hegel and Heidegger were presented in comparison with each other. But, that was back then. Today, Hegel and Heidegger are names mentioned in Monty Python's Philosopher's Song, and that's probably my loss.

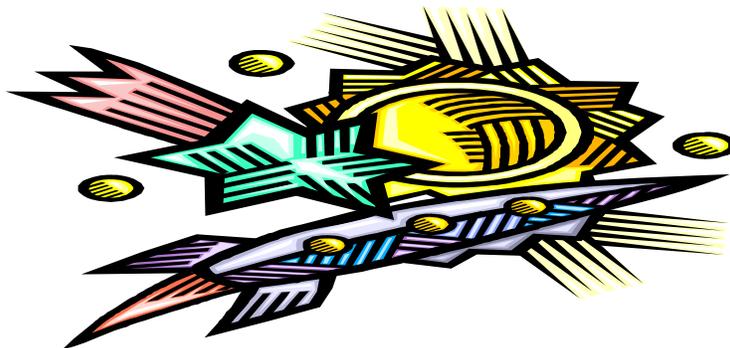
Take care, see you next issue. Right now, I'd like to go back to bed...ZZZZZZZZZ.....

LLOYD PENNEY

Sounds like a good idea to me, too - and it's 10:38 AM! Sleep is always a good thing. == I am very happy to hear that Corflu went well; small turn out, but that can be an advantage when everybody knows each other, so everyone relaxes and just simply enjoys each other's company. I certainly wish I could have been there, but next year's Corflu is a no-brainer for me. See you then!

I ALSO HEARD FROM:

David Burton, Guy Lillian, and Joseph Major.



FANZINES RECEIVED/VIEWED:

Drink Tank #75 - 80, Vegas Fandom Weekly #72-74, Alexiad (April, 2006), Some Fantastic (Spring, 2006), Science Fiction/San Francisco #21, Surprising Stories (May, 2006), Pixel #2. Visions of Paradise #105.

Some Closing Thoughts

Along with the new computer we decided to change servers - better deal in the short and long run - so we are dumping Earthlink as our e-mail addresses. We've switched over to Cox High Speed Internet, and what a difference that makes! In any event, as of **June 1st 2006**, fannish correspondence to me - locs, zines, and what-have-you's - will be taken at the following address:

j_purcell54@yahoo.com

I have had this address for about seven years, and really don't need any new e-mail addresses, so this is now going to be the repository for all fannish correspondence. Otherwise, snail-mail still works at the address shown on page 2.

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At this time, I most certainly want to thank all of you who wrote in, and providing me with some much needed fannish input and fun while the typical end of the school madness ran rampant through my life. It's been crazy, as usual, but I have come to expect this every April and May. Now all I have to do is hurry up and wait for my summer teaching assignments, if any. I may end up working a short-term job to have some kind of income for the summer months.



One of my other goals this summer is to do some serious writing of fiction and poetry, and make a sale by the time the next academic year begins. I realize this may be a bit of an unrealistic goal, but if I fudge it a bit and say by the end of the *year*, well, that will buy me an additional four to five months.

See, I believe in setting personal goals. They make sense to me, and give me a reason to keep on keeping on. Much like producing a monthly fanzine, it's a creative outlet that helps me maintain whatever sanity I have left.

Aren't you glad that I'm sharing it with you? Until next month,

John Purcell