

GENERAL SNOTWORMS, INC.
HATCHERY #74



GRANT



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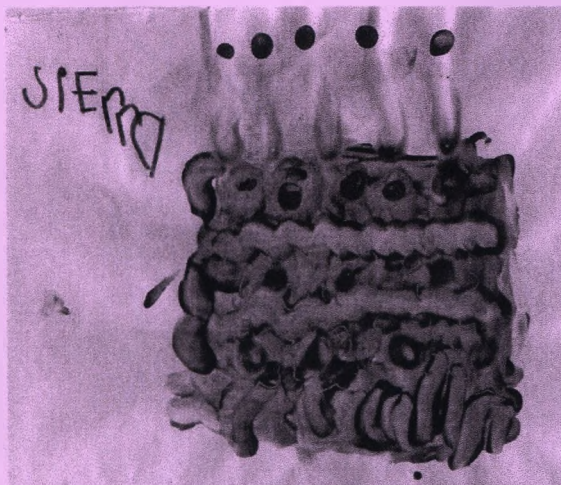
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Richard Lynch: (photo) 11

Nancy-Lou Patterson: 15

Theresa Pridmore: (photo) 16

Editorial Notes by Mike Glycer



Diana's Big Year: Diana's book is out, certainly the biggest news this household is likely to have this year. Later in this issue (page 12) I tell how hard it was to wait! And on the following page Tom Veal supplies a bit more objective view of things in the first published review of her book. (Thank you, Tom.) The appearance of the book kicks off a huge year for Diana's scholarship, with two Inklings-related journal articles scheduled to appear, and the launch of her website www.theplaceofthelion.com

The Sierra Comedy Hour: And our other family headline is: Sierra Grace turned five years old in February. We needed three parties to fully celebrate.

At this age Sierra loves jokes. When an issue of *Clubhouse Jr.* comes in she has me read its jokes to her, all sent in by the children who read the magazine. Quite a few are puns and the wordplay often goes over the head of a five-year-old. She always appreciates a good knock-knock joke, though.

Sierra discovered knock-knock jokes about a year ago when she had just turned

four, and her early efforts to make up her own sounded like this:

"Knock-knock."

I say, "Who's there?"

"Mister Potatohead."

"Mister Potatohead *who*?"

"Movie!"

Uproarious laughter – contagious, so I laughed just as loud as if it really had been the great joke she thought it was.

The punchline of her next knock-knock joke was, "Chicken!" Which quickly revealed that she understood the joke to be going through the knock-knock formula, then shouting a random noun with glee.

Well, she made me laugh.

I do look forward to the day when Sierra will get my jokes, although I guess by the time that happens I won't be reading Strawberry Shortcake storybooks to my 5-year-old. Everything the namesake character owns looks like a strawberry, or is red with green specks and I was pointing out examples to my daughter. The strawberry-shaped table. The strawberry-pattern wallpaper. The strawberry alarm clock...

Rotsler Award: John Hertz told me that when Maureen Kincaid Speller completed her term as a Rotsler Award judge she decided not to continue. We are very pleased that Claire Brialey agreed to let us nominate her to complete the panel and I'm sure SCIFI will quickly confirm her selection.

Over the years the award has been remarkably free of politics, but selecting Alexis Gilliland last year encouraged some folks on both sides of WSFA's difficulties to look for a political message in our choice. So I will now reveal our message: Alexis draws funny cartoons! End of story.

Changes of Address

Eric Lindsay, E-mail:

fijagh2007@ericlindsay.com

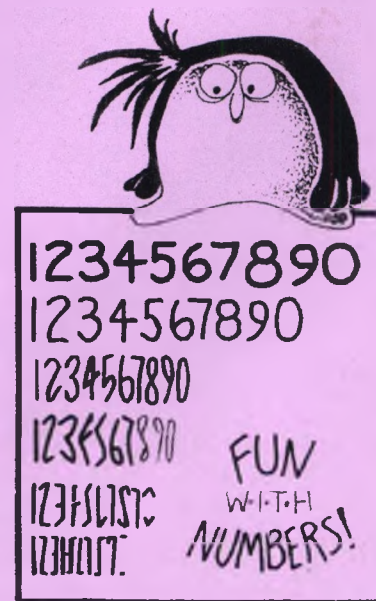
Bjo Trimble, E-mail: bjotrimble@gmail.com

Art Widner, 35501 S. Hwy 1, Unit 122, Gualala, CA 95445-5122

Eric Lindsay: "Oh yes, my email address has changed again, thanks to spammers (to the current year)."

Art Widner: "Didnt i give U my new snail mail address in LA at Worldcon?"

"Dont care abt junk mail, but hope i havent lost too many fanzines that i havent herd from in a cupl of yrs, that just got tost in the spam pile."



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FAAn Awards

The 2007 Fanzine Activity Achievement (FAAn) Awards were presented on February 11 at Corflu Quire in Austin, TX. The winners are:

Best Fanzine: *Banana Wings*

Best Fan Writer: Claire Brialey

Best Fan Artist: Dan Steffan

Best Letterhack (a.k.a. Harry Warner Memorial Award): Lloyd Penney

Best New Fan: Teresa Cochran

Full voting statistics have been posted at <http://efanzines.com/Corflu24/FAAnVotes2007.pdf>

I wondered how many people had voted and to what degree the winners dominated their categories. Since the published tally didn't foot its columns with vote totals I went ahead and manually counted the 47 names on the voter list and the 49 first-place votes they cast for Best Fanzine (hey I'm not auditing the votes, it is what it is).

Remember that FAAn voters are asked to rank their top three choices, and a first place vote is worth five points, a second place worth three, and a third place worth one. Of course, the weighted rankings allow the FAAns to be more nearly governed by consensus without the burdensome mechanics of an automatic runoff system (like the Hugos use) that would make ballot counting as complicated as a LASFS Board of Directors election and even less fun.

I've listed everybody who received at least five first-place votes in the FAAns to illustrate two observations about the outcome.

Best Fanzine: *Banana Wings* (13), *Pixel* (7), *Vegas Fandom Weekly* (6), *Chunga* (5).

Best Fan Writer: Claire Brialey (8), Chris Garcia (5)

Best Fan Artist: Dan Steffan (10), Brad Foster (7), Alan White (5)

Best Letterhack: Robert Lichtman (11), Lloyd Penney (7)

Best New Fan: Teresa Cochran (6)

Weighted voting for second and third places played a crucial role in two FAAn categories. In the Best Fan Writer category Chris Garcia was the fan receiving the second-highest number of first place votes, yet he finished fourth in the runoff. Then, in the Best Letterhack category Lloyd Penney won the runoff despite Robert Lichtman's lead in first-place votes, 11 to 7, because Lloyd scored points from a lot more second-place votes, 9 to 2. This pattern suggests people vote candidly and don't leave off strong second-place contenders in order to help their first-place choices. Because of that the FAAns seem to do exactly what they are designed to do, measure the depth of community interest in giving the award to a person or zine.



News of Fandom

A final note: I abandoned my plan to report that Rotsler had outpolled the only other dead fanartist on the list when further research revealed that the other fellow isn't dead. Never mind.

Next: Corflu Silver

Fanzine fans invented a convention of their own in 1984 and named it Corflu. Any fanzine publisher back then recognized the fanish word for correction fluid, a word evocative of the rich blue color and intoxicating smell of the potion used to cover mistakes on mimeograph stencils. Today the word still is iconic, a perfect choice as a convention name with the extra advantage that it can be repeated in public, unlike other words fans use when they make typos.

Now that Corflu has been held 24 times it must be admitted one implication of the title isn't true. When you corflu something more than once it means you've made quite a mess. Corflu the convention has proved the reverse is true, crowning with success return trips to favorite fan communities -- four times in Northern California, twice in Seattle, twice in Madison.

Las Vegas will have its third turn when Corflu Silver is held there next year, probably in April. The silver anniversary event will be chaired by Joyce Katz.

"She has appointed James Taylor as her Right-hand Man," reported Arnie Katz in

Vegas Fandom Weekly #93, "and me (Arnie) as her Left-hand Man. 'We're not much on titles,' Joyce admitted as she gazed benignly upon me from her newly erected Throne."

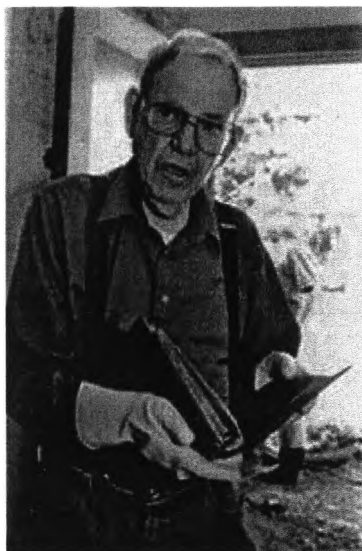
Joyce is presently offering attending memberships for \$50 (£30 for UK fans), supporting memberships for \$20. Funds can be sent via PayPal to Joyce Marie Katz; E-mail: JoyceWorley1@cox.net. Rate increases have yet to be determined and will depend upon the hotel deal she makes.

A post on the Corflu LiveJournal hints the next several editions of the con also will revisit past glories -- in Seattle, the United Kingdom and in the Silicon Valley/San Francisco area (under the aegis of Chris Garcia.)

Lloyd's Golden Tonsils

Lloyd Penney may have needed a bit of corrective eye surgery (see "Medical Updates") but his voice is golden and more in demand than ever:

"*Bastards of Kirk* should already be out on line, I believe. I can't seem to get my own copy of it, but I'll keep trying. My own voice work career keeps going... I had to give up on *Transit*, a student production at Ryerson, because of the eye operation, and post-production on *The Nastiworths*, another Ryerson student production, is halfway done. In about a week or so, I go for a full-day seminar on voice work through a company in Toronto called VoiceWorx, and they'll give



Dr. Jack Stocker

Really Late Katrina News

It's still worth mentioning that New Orleans fan Dr. Jack Stocker appeared on the cover of the November 21, 2005 issue of the *Chemical and Engineering News* and was the subject of a feature article about scientists impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Stocker is an emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of New Orleans.

The experience was nothing like he expected. "I had been through hurricanes in the past, and recall looking out in the street and seeing water up to 2 feet deep at the end of the block. Our kids went out with Ball jars and caught small fish in what was simply a lake from door to door as far as the eye could see."

His house survived the hurricane but was destroyed by water damage when the levee broke. "You look at it, and it's only the remnants of a house. The front big window is gone, with markings below it indicating that they searched inside and

didn't find any bodies.

"You look inside the house, and you don't know whether to laugh or cry. Something on the order of 20,000 books in my house are on the floor. All of them, of course, are ruined from the water. In some places, the rooms are at least 4 feet deep in books. And you can't get through the house or even into the house to see anything else. I am trying to retrieve what I can from some of the few things that survived."

Stocker told reporter Linda Raber, "I don't mind the loss of the books so much as I mind loss of photograph albums and letters from our parents that simply are not replaceable at any price. A lot of things that you, in your initial rush, want to save, you realize are not practical. Each one you decide to let go of, you have to say a personal good-bye to. These are things you've treasured all your life. It's not easy, I can assure you."

all who take the course tips and techniques on how to create your own cartoon voices. Toronto is one of the few cities in the world that has studios for dubbing anime into English, so some big anime voice artists are local. And soon, we'll hit the studio and tape WayKey WayKey!, the working title of a yoga CD for kids, where I shall be the happy, jolly English narrator."

British Newzine Heaven

The full runs of two British newzines from the 60's and 70's are now available online thanks to a heroic application of computer technology and a fanatical devotion to the Pope (er, cancel that last.)

Dave Langford led the effort to bring Peter Roberts's *Checkpoint* to the Web, including issues produced by Darroll Pardoe (#47 to #62) and Ian Maule (#63 to #73).

All 111 issues of Peter Roberts' British newzine *Checkpoint* are now available online at: <http://checkpoint.ansible.co.uk/>

This includes the first series of seven issues from 1969, and 104 issues in the second series from 1971-1979. Work was completed in a year-and-a-half, with the finishing touches applied on February 18.

Flushed with success, several fans moved on to webify all 96 issues of Ron Bennett's *Skyrack*, published 1959-1971. The work was carried on by Greg Pickersgill, Jim Linwood and Claire Brialey, with proofreading help from Bill Burns and some original text supplied by Robert Lichtman. Catherine Pickersgill helped prepare the webpage. The site explains, it only needed "hours of scan-

ning and OCR and some incredibly fast and accurate copy-typing from Ms Brialey." *Skyrack* is now available at:

<http://www.gostak.co.uk/skyrack/index.htm>

More Centuries of Fanzines

After I wrote nice things in the last *File 770* about three prolific fanzines, some other editors who have scored more than a century of issues demanded credit, too.

Lee Gold scoffed:

"You're impressed by fanzines that have hit issue #100? My bimonthly filkzine *Xenofilia* recently got to issue #111, but that seems paltry to me, because my monthly roleplaying apa *Alarums and Excursions* recently got to issue #376."

Lee founded *A&E* because Bruce Pelz asked her to get all that roleplaying talk out of LASFS' weekly *APA-L*.

Evelyn Leeper figures anybody who hasn't passed the millennium is just a piker:

"You talk about a fanzine reaching 100 issues. The *MT VOID* reached 100 issues on May 20, 1981. Of course, it was not called the *MT VOID* then--it was just the *Bell Labs Science Fiction Club Notice*. (In fact, we have only recently stopped referring to it as "the Notice".) We had not quite gone weekly by then, but we were close. We reached issue 200 on December 14, 1983, and were definitely weekly. We just published issue #1422."

The *Void* is primarily online, but I remember when they used to send me printouts. Evelyn assures me they're still sending paper copies to three subscribers -- including John

Hertz, "notable 'non-connected' fan.

Yvonne Penney Shines Among Stars of Space

Kofi Annan, Sir Arthur C. Clarke, Yvonne Penney.... Yes, fandom's Yvonne Penney joined some very famous company when her essay was accepted for publication in *The Impact of Space Activities Upon Society*, published by the European Space Agency in February 2005 in a landscape trade paperback format.

Besides Kofi Annan and Sir Arthur C. Clarke, the book contains essays by Dr. Ken Money, Vanna Bonta, Robert McCall, Don Davis, David Hardy, and many more professors and leading names in European, American, Japanese and other space efforts.

Yvonne wrote in her capacity as a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Space Society. Her essay appears in the "Challenges for Life" section, on page 27, and says with trufannish sensawonda:

"Hubble's pictures of the nebulae are breathtakingly beautiful. The panoramas of the Martian surface are unbelievable, as are the detailed pictures of Earth from the Shuttles and the Imax film from the International Space Station. The Earthrise from the lunar surface will always be an awesome sight for us, as it reminds us how fragile our planet really is, and how alone we are amongst the stars."

The hardcopy edition costs 10 euros from ESA, and even better, is available as a free download in PDF format from:

<http://www.spaceandsociety.org/index2.html>

Fandom's Tangled Web

Ah! Sweet Laney!

To raise funds for this year's Corflu, Robert Lichtman edited and Pat Virzi published a collection of Francis Towner Laney's fan articles titled *Ah! Sweet Laney! The Writings of a Great Big Man*. Should the ads begin "Despite popular demand..."?

The ancient LASFSian Francis Towner Laney cut quite a swath in his day, mainly through the literary cadavers of his feud partners. When his name is remembered now, it is usually for what he had to say about suspected homosexual members of the LASFS, views that are not only politically incorrect in 2007, but were unwelcome when "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" was published in 1948. Harry Warner Jr. wryly observed in *All Our Yesterdays*, "Any fan who has read Laney first and St. Augustine later has found the saint's work the more pallid of the two." And he added, "Laney didn't allow its reprinting during his lifetime, fearing that his mysterious immunity from lawsuits wouldn't be shared by any future publisher."

I've never seen anybody try to get fans to look at Laney's less controversial fanac before, though of course I've spent all my life in LASFS and maybe that was because the old LASFSians wouldn't want to and the new LASFSians wouldn't care about anyone who hasn't been on TV...

Robert Lichtman promises there actually is enjoyment to be had from reading the work of Francis Towner Laney. For spice he has also included one of the historically important, incendiary pieces. As his introduction explains:

"Some of the articles in this collection have been reprinted in various fanzines over the years, but for most this is their first airing since they were written in the '40s and early '50s. Since not everyone has access to the original fanzines or the reprints, they are included here for all to enjoy... (I can't resist noting, however, that 'Apologize, Al Ashley!' is the article that got Burbee fired as editor of *Shangri L'Affaires*.)"

It is a 132 page collection, the cover design and title page by Dan Steffan and interior illustrations by Bill Rotsler. The cost is (US) \$15 plus postage (\$5 to US addresses, \$8 to Canada, \$10 overseas.) Order from Pat Virzi, 618 Westridge Dr., Duncanville, TX 75116 (checks payable to Pat Virzi, or PayPal to corflu24@swbell.net)

The Voices of Fandom

Bill Mills' new website "The Voices of Fandom" invites everyone to share the fun Las Vegas fans have around the microphone, not

SMALL FILLERS
MAKE STRANGE
BEDFELLOWS-



only as listeners but as contributors. Those with Odeo online recorders can add their own voices to the mix. The site features fanish podcasts, historic soundbites and classic filk music. An oral history page plays short testimonials by various Las Vegrants in April 2006 about how they discovered fandom.

Mills' TVOF podcasts debuted in October 2006 with the Las Vegrants Audio One-Shot. He's kept up a monthly schedule since then. Mills rang in the New Year in *TVOF Podcast #4* by interviewing Arnie Katz about Core Fandom's ever-increasing comfort with electronic fanzine distribution. Arnie's comments are well worth the time to listen.

Arnie points out five top fanzines that primarily have an electronic presence. The Internet is propelling fandom toward a great divide, much like the advent of color television after which the kinescopes of the old black-and-white TV shows were often thrown away. Similarly, fanzines done in hardcopy that are not ported to the digital environment will eventually be lost. Unfortunately, some of the efforts made to do so have disappointed Arnie, who considers it a mistake to shoot JPG's of mimeographed pages because they are miserable to read. He believes the real value is having an interactive text format.

The February podcast boasts an announcement of the 2007 Faan Award winners and 2008 Corflu site choice, Jean Stine's reminiscences about David McDaniel as a filker. Featured from the collection of Barry Gold are 1960s recordings of David McDaniel performing two of Tom Digby's classic filk songs, "Shuttle Bop" and "Little Teeny Eyes," and a 1978 recording of Barry himself singing "Defenestration." Arnie talks about the San Diego Westercon that inspired Poul Anderson's "Bouncing Potatoes," which serves to introduce Bill and Roxie Mills' performance of the classic filk song

"The Voices of Fandom" website represents the latest technological leap forward in a tradition of audio fanac that began with wire recordings. As Harry Warner wrote about Charles Burbee in *A Wealth of Fable*:

"Around the end of 1947, Burb was recuperating from pneumonia one day when Cy Condra came visiting and brought along his wire recorder. When he was able to write for fanzines again, Burb explained how he reacted to the machine: 'It is not true that I am fascinated by the sound of my own voice being played back at me. I am not held spellbound. I am not enchanted. It's just that I'd rather listen to my own voice than anything I can think of.'"

Shelby Vick became the leading figure in the Fan Federation for Sound Productions, also known as Wirez, a national effort to make wire recordings and circulate them in the same way fans produced typescript round-robins.

Audio tape overtook wire, and is the medium in which Frank Dietz recorded part of Nolacon I in 1951 and much later Larry Tucker produced *Uncle Albert's Electric Talking Fanzine*.

The URL for Bill Mills' website is:
<http://thevoicesoffandom.com>

Hertz Launches Fannish Column Online

Collectingsf.com has launched a new column about fandom, "A Fan's View," written by John Hertz. In the first installment, titled "Distilled Spirit of a Classic Fanzine," John reviews *The Best of Xero*.



AMAZON SHORTS COMPLETES POSTING HAMIT'S *THE SHENANDOAH SPY*. ALL 14 PARTS NOW ONLINE

[From the Amazon press release]

The Amazon Shorts program for electronic literature at Amazon.com accelerated the publication of Francis Hamit's Civil War novel, *The Shenandoah Spy*, about the early career of Belle Boyd, the teen aged girl from Martinsburg, Virginia, who became the best-known Confederate spy and who was the first woman in American History to be commissioned an army officer. The fact-based novel had to be divided into 14 parts to accommodate its 43 chapters and more than 500 pages.

"At 49 cents per part, this is a tremendous bargain for the readers," Hamit said. "And it also allows them to sample the novel to see if they want to read the entire thing. It turns out that they do. We had several requests to accelerate the publication schedule, so that they could finish reading it. Of course, we were happy to oblige."

"I am also very happy to be part of the Amazon Shorts program. I think it's a great deal for readers. There are over 600 titles and over 400 authors there, and they keep adding more." Hamit added, "There are also requests for a regular hardbound edition and that will happen next year. It will cost more, of course, because print publication involves materials and processes we don't have to deal with in this electronic form."



"Belle's story is one I discovered when I was working for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* about 25 years ago. I always thought it would make a terrific novel. This first book in what has become a series of novels about the Confederate Secret Service and the women who worked for it covers the period between July 1861 and July 1862. Almost every character in it is based upon a real

person and it follows actual events fairly closely. My research involved not just the Official Records but also the diaries and letters of some of these characters. The central event is The Battle of Front Royal, which was the kickoff for Stonewall Jackson's famous Valley Campaign. Belle did significant duty for the South that day. Her actions, which included carrying a message across the battlefield under fire and making a situation report to Jackson, are verified by more than one source. This is why she was promoted."

Hamit acknowledges that Belle Boyd was a controversial figure whose deeds were later disputed. "I did a lot of research. Belle was attacked by the Northern newspapers during the war and by male historians after it. There was a fair amount of male chauvinism and just plain jealousy in what was written and said about her. Hopefully, this novel will set the record straight."

Hamit, who has a degree from the Iowa Writer's Workshop, is best known as a journalist, but for the last several years has written fiction and drama almost exclusively. He served in military intelligence during the Vietnam War. He currently lives in California.

Google Loses Again — The Implications

by Francis Hamit

(c) Francis Hamit 2007

[From Hamit's blog *thefightforcopyrightforwriters.org*, February 13, 2007].

You saw the news, I'm sure. Google has lost to the French and Belgium newspapers that sued over their unauthorised linking and copying of their content. Google is being fined daily, but plans to appeal.

Given the nature of that story I am not linking to any of the newstories about it. You'll just have to find it for yourself.

Google has tried to steamroller its way into a total domination of the Search function. They hold that they are conferring a benefit simply by listing web sites and their contents. That may be true, but they also diminish the value of content for paying customers by making it available for free. That creates a race to the bottom among

information providers.

Quality is sacrificed for quantity. Junk prevails in the marketplace.

The heart of the issue is, as always, one of money. Quality content is only supported by charging for its use. There is the pay-per-view model and the advertiser supported model and what my friend Jerry Pournelle calls the public television model where annual subscription fees pay for the entire site. (See Chaos Manor, the original blog.)

I put this up as a public service, and it doesn't make any money. I stopped asking for donations when I settled my cases. Most people, however, need to make something from their work.

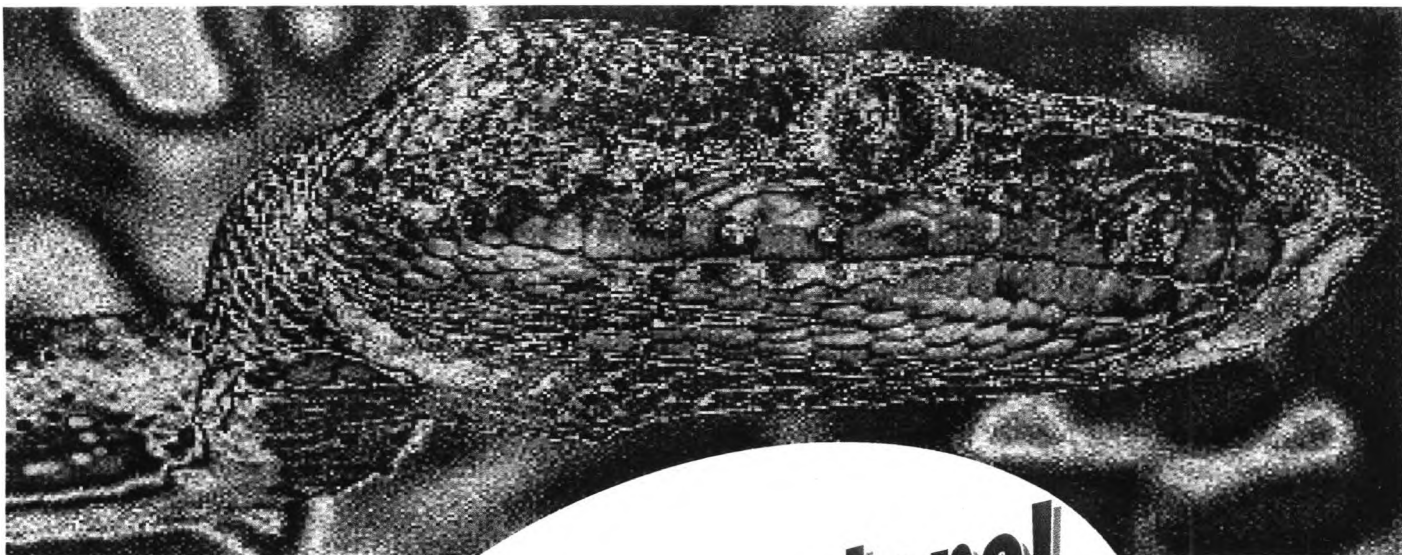
If Google is allowed to simply take content in an unrestrained way, they end up owning it. They sell ads supported by this content. The more search terms they have, the more attractive they are to advertisers...and they have competitors.

So, some lawyer might call their conduct predatory and worthy of an anti-trust investigation. Copyright law is a global law mandated by treaty and it has not kept pace with the rapid developments of the Internet technologies. Engineers have an attitude that anything which can be done should be done, but that way lies madness.

For everyone's sake, Google cannot be allowed to use its size and economic power to crush competition. Those old print media firms in Europe are doing all of us a service by standing up to them.

We can get to the kind of universal global information service that Google promotes. But they have to get serious and share revenues. They have to ask permission, as inconvenient as that may be.

The first rule of business is that a deal only works if it is fair to all the parties involved. Otherwise you will have lawsuits.



[Reprinted from Smofo's, with a new postscript by John.]

Anyway, I'm driving south on Beach Drive in Washington's Rock Creek Park last night [January 15], and just after I pass the Park Police station, my headlights catch a glint of scales in the oncoming lane just before I pass something that surely couldn't be a large boa constrictor... I turn around and pull up slowly and there, in front of me in the northbound lane, is a six or seven foot snake that sure looks like a boa constrictor (and seems disinclined to give way to oncoming traffic).

To keep anyone from running over the poor critter, I leave my car in the traffic lane, put on my flashers, and jog up to the police station. As I arrive, another motorist, who has also seen the snake is just about to pull away from the station. "Did you see it too?" he asks, and explains that he has told the police about the big poisonous (sic) snake in the road. I tell him that I'm about 90% sure that it's a big boa or other constrictor and probably not poisonous, but that I'm no herpetologist. Nonetheless, he clearly thinks that I'm just the "expert" the cops need and, just as he leaves, urges me to go fill them in.

The officer who comes to the door is clearly wondering what the heck they're supposed to do with the news of a big snake on the road, but he and another officer bring two patrol cars down the road. In the light of headlights and flashlights, we take another look at the snake, who has now decided that it doesn't like the attention and has coiled in on itself and started to hiss loudly at the intruders. "That's a big snake," the officer confirms (and thus relieves a few worries I'd

Snakes in a Lane!

by John Pomeranz

been having about my sanity). With the assurance that the snake is now safe from traffic and that the cops are calling D.C. animal control, I get back in my car and head home.

The article by Philip Rucker in the January 16th edition of the Washington Post gives the story after I left....

ROCK CREEK PARK

Slithering Snake Snarls Traffic

A six- to eight-foot-long snake that splayed itself across Beach Drive slowed traffic in Rock Creek Park last night before police safely trapped the critter, U.S. Park Police said.

The snake was discovered about 9:50 p.m. on Beach Drive south of Joyce Road, said Sgt. Scott Fear, a Park Police spokesman. After about a half-hour, officers laid out a trash can in the road to trap the snake. The snake slithered into the trash can, officers closed the lid and late-night motorists were spared a scare.

"We were able to get the snake out of the roadway safely for everybody," Fear said.

The snake slowed but did not halt southbound traffic on Beach Drive, he said.

Late last night, the snake still was inside the trash can at the Park Police's nearby Rock Creek Park substation waiting to be turned over to D.C. Animal Control officers, Fear said.

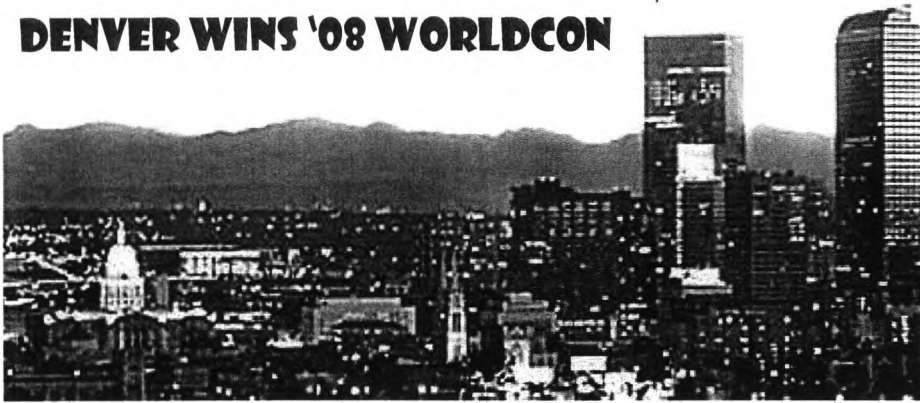
Officers on the scene were not sure where the snake came from but suspected that it was a python and that it might have been domesticated, Fear said. But, he cautioned, "we're not experts on snakes."

I realized as I drove away that I should have taken a picture with my phone. (I never think to use the thing as a camera.) It did, however, occur to me to use the phone to call the Washington Post and let them know about this, if only just to have a newspaper report to confirm that I hadn't just hallucinated the whole thing. (I also called WRC-TV, as I knew their station was nearby, but they were too close to air time to have a camera crew that they could spare to send.) Furthermore, it has since occurred to me that I had in the back of my car a couple of big tubs that we probably could have coaxed the snake into if I'd know that D.C. Animal Control doesn't think it necessary to come quickly when they're told that a seven-foot snake has been found. (I'm glad the cops on the scene were smarter than I was!)

The next time I'm driving along and find a boa constrictor crawling up the road, I'll know better.

Postscript: I traded emails with D.C. Animal Control a week or so later, and they reported that they had the snake in their care while awaiting its transfer to a rescue group (which was full up at the moment). The Animal Control office described the snake as "very aggressive" (which, under the circumstances, I think it had every right to be).

DENVER WINS '08 WORLDCON



Whether the headline for a story about the 2008 Worldcon site selection ought to read "Denver Wins!" or "Chicago Loses!" depends on which end of the microscope you're pointing at the result, it was so close.

Denver won the three-way race against Chicago and Columbus. In the runoff Columbus fell first, and after its votes were redistributed Denver edged Chicago 672-660 – a difference of just 12 votes (667 votes were needed to win.)

Denvention III, the 66th World Science Fiction Convention, will be held August 6-10, 2008. Lois McMaster Bujold is Guest of Honor. Rick Sternbach is Artist Guest of Honor. Tom Whitmore is Fan Guest of Honor, and Wil McCarthy is Toastmaster. Kent Bloom is chair. The main facilities will be the Colorado Convention Center and Adam's Mark Hotel.

Information about attending memberships rates, including discounts for individuals who supported the bid or voted in site selection, is posted at the convention's website: <http://www.denver2008.com/>

When a bid loses by an extremely narrow margin people can think of any number of "butterfly effects" that may have pushed a few critical votes into the winner's camp. Here are some popular ones:

Chicago had the highest hotel rates of the three bids. Some people were still grumpy that the Hyatt removed amenities like coffee pots and fixings from rooms during Chicon 2000. Artists and their friends never stopped talking about Chicon 2000's mishandling of the Art Show.

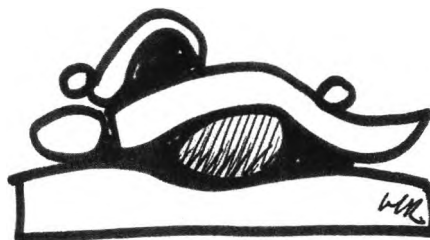
Another weakness, one you wouldn't expect from a Chicago political machine, is that it apparently didn't turn out all the local voters. Chicago's bid involved coalition of three Illinois convention (among many other fans), but several directors of the three committees may not have voted. Had they all voted for Chicago it would have just about covered the gap.

Looking at the wider geopolitical picture, some fans believe Denver was

helped by holding site selection at a western U.S. venue, the way Baltimore hosting the site selection in 1998 apparently helped Philadelphia beat Orlando, but the 1998 and 2006 voting patterns were quite different. The impact of Baltimore-area voters in 1998 was profound, with Philadelphia enjoying a 150-vote margin among ballots cast on the final day of voting. By comparison, at L.A.con IV, Denver collected only 24 more votes onsite than Chicago (425 vs. 401).

Some seemed to believe that Chicago suffered a disadvantage because "this was a remarkably low-turnout site selection," which also wasn't true. There were 1,561 votes cast in the 2008 site selection, more than in 6 of the past 10 races. In fact the 2008 vote was close to the average tally in 9 of the past 11 races (throwing out the 1999 and 2005 races won by Australia and Glasgow on the theory that North Americans are less likely to vote if they know they won't be attending the con.) The average of the ballots cast in the other 9 races is 1,621, only 50 more than cast in the 2008 voting.

Of all the conspiracy theories my favorite is the allegation that Chicago lost as the result of a "Wrath of Khan"-style parting shot by Columbus chair Kim Williams. Sometime in 2006 she reportedly wanted Chicago to agree to encourage its supporters to give their second-place vote to Columbus, while Columbus would tell people to vote Columbus 1 and Chicago 2. So during the ballot counting whenever a Chicago representative saw a bullet vote for Columbus (meaning second place left blank) they had to wonder



what might have been. Naturally, it's more likely that by declining the arrangement Chicago helped itself avoid the bad word-of-mouth that such a back-room deal was sure to generate. But let's not allow wisdom to spoil a good anecdote.

Worldcons in Times to Come

Let's review the bidding.

2009: The long-suffering **Kansas City** bidders who marched on after losing the 2006 race have their shot at redemption in this year's site selection vote. Can they overcome the less road-weary **Montreal** crew? And is there really an **Albany, NY** bid?

Margene Bahm's **Kansas City** committee includes Elaine Brennan, Parris McBride, James Murray, Paula Helm Murray, Ted Poovey, Jeff Orth, Keith Stokes and plenty of others.

Rene Walling, chair of the **Montreal** committee, is joined by Robbie Bourget, Brian Davis, Bruce Farr, Terry Fong, Eugene Heller, Peter Jarvis, John Mansfield, Linda Ross-Mansfield, Mr. Shirt (Michael McConnell), Nicholas Shectman, Marie-Astrid Walling, and René Walling. Their bid name "AnticipationSF" adopts the French term for science fiction in bookstores throughout Quebec, whose English meaning is equally satisfactory for this purpose.

A major difference between the two bids is the dates they propose to hold the Worldcon. Montreal would hold it August 6-10, 2009. Kansas City prefers September 3-7, 2009: Labor Day Weekend in the U.S.

There's also a web page bearing a modest proposal to hold the 2009 Worldcon in **Albany, NY** and limit attendance to 1,500. Paul Kraus says he was at lunch with some fans at Noreascon 4 "who were unfamiliar with the system of bidding on Worldcons. In trying to explain the system I made the mistake of saying 'If someone were to bid for a Worldcon in, say, Albany in 2009...' and before the words had left my lips Marc Gordon, Seth Breidbart, and Carl 'z!' Zwanzig had pulled out their wallets and thrown \$20 bills at me. Marc and the others thought this was a great joke mimicing how the 'Let's Do It Again in 2010, Melbourne' bid started (by the way, I was presupporter #22 for that bid). Then I refused to give them their money back."

A lot of years have passed since it has been safe to utterly dismiss a bid as a joke so I list it for completeness. (Hey, Hollister got 79 votes just last year so you could say its supporters basically determined who won the runoff for 2008 Worldcon!)

2010: Melbourne, Australia is the lone bidder for 2010. A committee chaired by Perry Middlemiss boasts many experienced conrunners, Rose Mitchell, Stephen Boucher, David Evans, Paul Ewins, Janice Gelb, Mark

Linneman, Allan Stewart, Julian Warner (four of them are past DUFF winners!)

2011: Seattle is bidding. There is a web page and a flyer, neither of which names any committee members. Not that the names are really a secret, and as the bid gets more serious they may even be advertised. They propose to hold the con in August 2011 at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center located in Downtown Seattle.

2012: The former Chicago in 2008 bid has emerged Phoenix-like from the ashes and become a 2012 bid. The committee reportedly mailed Valentines to its supporters containing this announcement:

"As with many great stories, endings also bring new beginnings. While this notice to you is the final act of our bid for the 2008 Worldcon...we also bring you news of the future. We wish to let you, the folks that we love, know that we'll be back and better than ever. We have decided to launch a new bid and will be campaigning to bring the 2012 Worldcon home to the town we all love. The new bid will officially get underway in 2008 at the Worldcon in Denver (Denvention3). We hope that you will love and support that bid as you have done this one. We look forward to your continued support!"

Some fans heard at last year's Balticon that **Washington, D.C.** had shifted its sights from 2011 to 2012. Martin Morse Wooster recently wrote, "As you know, Washington's Worldcon bid collapsed because in part there wasn't a hotel near our new convention center." Outsiders also have speculated that part of the reason is that Denvention chair Kent Bloom, a former DC smof, is making some of his friends very busy with his 2008 Worldcon. Speculation extends to the idea that a DC bid might be officially launched at Denvention. Meanwhile, the old DC in 2011 website has been abandoned and the domain name is up for sale.

The *Washington Post* reported in the February 19 issue: "With convention attendance decreasing and convention-booked hotel rooms fewer than predicted, politicians, developers and tourism officials are eager to move ahead with plans to build a 1,400-room hotel, the biggest in the city, connected by a tunnel to the convention center.

"Every day there's not a shovel in the ground is costing us business," said William A. Hanbury, president and chief executive of the Washington D.C., Convention & Tourism Corp., who estimates that the lack of a hotel has cost more than \$200 million in convention trade....

"Construction on the Washington convention center project was supposed to start this fall and be completed in 2010. But now the earliest that ground could be broken is next winter, that would be the hotel would proba-

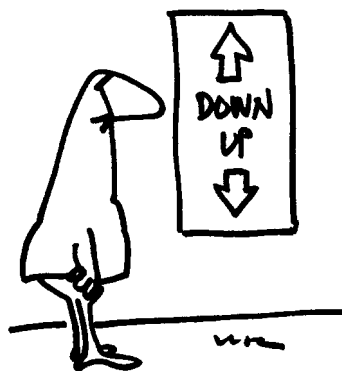
bly open in 2011."

In a companion article, the *Post* reported the Washington D.C. convention center expects to lose \$22 million in 2007. Wooster, who sent the clippings, adds "[Note] that the failing convention center is cutting their rates. Maybe this will make Worldcons here more affordable!"

2013: A **Texas** in 2013 bid "exploratory committee" is chaired by Bill Parker. Karen Meschke posted that they are looking at sites in Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio.

Craige Howlett announced his bid for a 2013 Worldcon in **San Jose** at the recent Smofcon in Kansas City, reported Jack Avery in *SFSF* 36. Although Howlett is a board member of San Francisco Science Fiction Conventions, Inc., the bid is not as yet being undertaken by the corporation that ran ConFrancisco and ConJose. "If I can prove to the board of SFSFC that there are enough people to back the bid, they will fully support me, but I'm not expecting their support until the summer of 2008."

Smofcon churned with rumors of a **Minneapolis** Worldcon bid. You see, 2013 is also the year 5773 in the Hebrew Calendar, so it would synchronize with the long-standing Minneapolis in '73 bid. Is anybody serious about this? Seth Breidbart is involved, which means pretty much anything might happen.



Medical Updates

NESFA archivist **Kelly Persons** was recovering from a broken bone in her ankle at the time of the February 4 NESFA. [IM 781]

Last issue should have reported **Mike Glicksohn's** good news, dating back to July. He wrote in a letter to *Vegas Fandom Weekly*:

"The surgeon says the biopsy was negative: no signs of bladder cancer and he's given me a (temporary) clean bill of health. So thanks for all those good wishes and good vibes you all sent this way: they seem to have worked!"

"I'll have to be tested every three months

and there's always the chance that cancer might appear on my left side but for today I can breathe easier than I have in months."

Porter Becomes Part of Medical Establishment

Report by Andrew Porter: Former *SF Chronicle* editor/publisher Andy Porter was diagnosed with obstructive jaundice on December 10th. He had a medical procedure two days later and was subsequently found to have a cancerous growth on his bile duct a week later. On January 19th, he had a "Whipple Procedure" (a Pancreaticoduodenectomy) which qualifies as major surgery, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York City.

He was discharged on January 28th, but subsequently developed complications which resulted in another hospital stay, from February 17th to the 23rd. Having lost 20 pounds in less than that number of days, a CAT scan showed fluid leaking from the incisions of the January 19th operation accumulating around the pancreas. A drain was installed, Porter was put on Cipro, and he was again discharged. Until the fluid dries up, all thoughts of chemotherapy have been postponed. Eventually Porter hopes to continue in the life science fictional that he's been living for the past many decades.

One good thing has come out of all this: Porter now weighs less than he did when, at age 18 in 1964, he registered for the draft. Lean, but not so mean. ++ *Andrew Porter*

Fannish Bookplates Online

Artwork by George Barr is featured in a recent entry at Lewis Jaffe's blog "Bookplate Junkie." There's also an example of a bookplate used by Ozzie Train, once a leading Philadelphia fan. The URL is:

<http://bookplatejunkie.blogspot.com/>

Joyous News

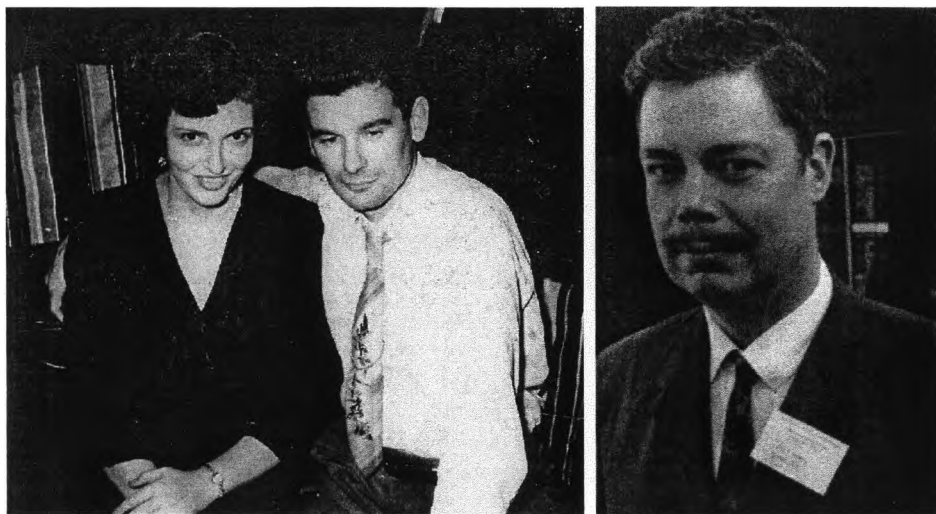
Joy V. Smith's article "Selling a Cool Book About the House That Joy Built" is #2 in the 2006 Preditors & Editors poll--Non-fiction category. Her short story, "Pretty Pink Planet," is #13 (tie) in the P&E Short Story SF category.

Chattacon Artists in Tax Ruckus

Artists who sent art to Chattacon (January 20-22) have now received a letter from the Tennessee Department of Revenue saying they are delinquent on 9.25% sales tax, which TDR estimates at \$500 (per artist), according to Bruce Miller on Smofs. The artists don't know whether Chattacon collected any taxes at the time of sale. Other Tennessee cons, such as LibertyCon, handle sales tax themselves.

FILE 770

OBITUARIES



Left: **Lee Hoffman** and **Bob Tucker** at Nolacon I in 1951. Right: **Richard Eney**. Both photos by Bob Madle.

Lee Hoffman (1932-2007)

Lee Hoffman died of a massive heart attack on February 6. Hoffman had many talents and interests. She became a "folknik" (fan of folk music) in the 60's and enjoyed a career as a novelist in several genres, while keeping up her interest in fanac.

Hoffman found fandom in 1950 and began to publish *Quandry*. *Quandry* promptly became a leading fanzine. Its contributors included the young Robert Silverberg. Not until Hoffman attended Nolacon in 1951 did fandom learn she was a femmefan.

Lee explained on her website, "I was always Shirley to my parents, but when I discovered fandom, I learned that fans made a lot of fuss about the dearth of females among their ranks at the time. I wanted my zine to stand on its own, without readers being prejudiced one way or the other because the editor was female. I decided I wanted a unisex name to publish under. My mother suggested Lee."

Lee prepared a slightly less dramatic surprise for the 1952 worldcon in Chicago (TASFiC). She entered the masquerade in a costume she had mimeographed in pastel

colors on cotton fabric, then stitched together into a tunic to wear over her slacks.

Hoffman was honored as Fan Guest of Honor at Chicon IV in 1982. For Chicon IV, NESFA produced *In and Out of Quandry*, a collection of Hoffman's writing. Kelly Freas supplied the cover art.

In November, 1951, Lee Hoffman started *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly* as a FAPazine, then in the 1980s permitted distribution outside the apa. Leading fanzine fans helped as guest publishers over the years, including Geri Sullivan and Randy Byers who co-edited *SFFY #12* in November 2006 (at 58 pages, the largest issue yet.)

In addition to her fan writing, Hoffman also published four science fiction novels and her story "Soundless Evening" appeared in *Again, Dangerous Visions*. She also wrote 17 Western fiction received the Western Writers of America Spur Award for *The Valdez Horses*, a novel that was made into a film starring Charles Bronson.

From 1956-1958, she was married to fan and editor Larry Shaw. She worked as an assistant editor on *Infinity Science Fiction* and *Science Fiction Adventures*.

Ron Bennett by John Hertz

[Reprinted from *Vanamonde* 709]

Bennett lived in Harrogate. He died in November (1933-2006). He was the 1958 TAFF delegate, nominated by Bob Pavlat, himself nominating John Berry; his TAFF report was *Colonial Excursion*. He was a Knight of St. Fantony. While Stephen Potter's *Gamesmanship* occupied us, Bennett began a fanzine *Ploy*, starting with *Ploy 2* to pique us into wondering who was so much worthier as to have received the previous issue. This zine naturally employed fannish minds, gave rise to complotynts and exployntations, and offered a source of ploysure some found ployperfect.

He published the newszine *Skyrack*, which name despite its lofty look meant actually *skyrack* = shire oak; he even pubbed an ish from Singapore. He kept a fictional elephant Cecil. He was a schoolteacher, later a bookseller; he sold pro writing of his own, some s-f and mysteries like *Singapore Swing*. Under his influence I found the U.S. soft drink Kickapoo Joy Juice. He wrote nine articles for *Mimosa*; to *Vanamonde*, "I meet too few intelligent, witty people who can carry the thread of conversation and keep side-tracking with humorous asides. Maybe this is the core *raison d'être* for my being in fandom." The comedian Danny Kaye, he said, was a distant relative. Perhaps distant in blood. May his memory be for a blessing.

Richard Eney by Robert Lichtman

[Reprinted by permission from the February 2007 *Fantasy Amateur* in FAPA]

Long-time FAPA member Dick Eney died of a stroke on December 22. He joined originally in August 1950, dropped out in May 1979, and rejoined in November 1981. He served as OE here on several occasions: November 1956 to August 1958, for one mailing in August 1960 on an emergency basis, and November 1962 to August 1963. As many of you know, he was also a SAPS member for a long time—joined with the 12th mailing back in 1950 and remained on the roster until he resigned in the 115th mailing. He was OE twice (14th through 17th mailings and again for the 52nd through 55th mailings).

He is probably most famous for producing *Fancyclopedia II* in 1959 and the second largest fanzine ever, *A Sense of FAPA*, in 1962. (The largest was also published by a former SAPS member, Richard Bergeron, who put out *Warhoon* No. 28, a 618-page compilation of Walt Willis's writings in fanzines, around 1981.)

In addition, he's infamous for carrying on

a nasty 50-year feud with Ted White while never stating his exact reasons for doing so and attacking anyone (including me) who came to Ted's defense. This leaves something of a bad taste for me personally, but doesn't detract from his considerable accomplishments in service of fandom.

David Alway

Filker David Alway died from cardiac arrest January 9, 2007 in Ann Arbor, Michigan immediately after returning from the GaFilk convention. He was 56. Alway had been unwell with a cough, intestinal distress and breathlessness, but still had able to sing and participate at the convention. His symptoms interfered with sleep so he and his brother drove home from the con through the night. Not long after arriving at his brother's house Alway asked for paramedics to be called. He died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital despite efforts to revive him. Dave's brother posted a lengthy account online that concludes, "He had a blast for the last four days of life, and then used his last hours to bring his little brother safely home."

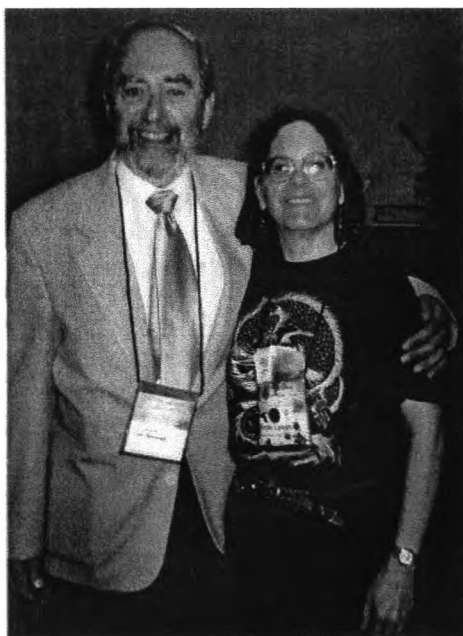
Rotsler, 10 Years Gone by Bill Warren

Didn't someone in this issue *File 770:148* say it would be interesting to see a biography of Bill Rotsler? I agree--but it's damned near impossible. Bill lived many lives, but he was just about the only person who crossed over between them. He grew up on a walnut orchard near Camarillo, and his best friend, the wonderfully-named Gerald Fitzgerald, was a scion of the Camarillo clan. Bill lived near Joel McCrea, and one time ran over McCrea's dog--with the actor watching. But Joel didn't get mad at Bill, instead blaming that damned fool dog.

Bill served in the Army, took art school afterward on the GI Bill. Mostly he worked in metal; supposedly, a church in Sedona, Arizona, still features one of his sculptures--but for the most part, their locations are unknown. Bill did not keep good records--of anything.

He was active in fandom in the late 40's and on through the 50's, drifted away from it in the 60's, came back after that. He was a photographer for years, often of naked ladies (his term), sometimes of other things--he told me about hanging out of a helicopter over the Hawaiian islands, shooting photos, and about being transported between two ships by breeches buoy. A lot of his photos appeared in below-*Playboy*-level men's magazines.

Then he directed some softcore movies: he and I were both stunned when in a video store on Vermont in Hollywood, we came



Ron Bennett and Nicki Lynch.
Photo by Richard Lynch.

across a section devoted to HIM. Several of his movies are available from Something Weird Video.

Then he wrote fiction. He read a story by someone, thought he could do better, and wrote his first completed work of fiction--which won him awards. He also wrote novelizations of movies and TV shows, including *Joanie Loves Chachi*.

Trouble is, as I say, being a man of many parts, he scattered those parts far and wide; without him to guide a researcher, it would be very hard to gather those parts together for an extensive biography.

He underestimated himself in the area for which he is probably now best known--his cartoons. He once told me that he had a book he wanted illustrated, but couldn't figure out where to get the illos. I assumed he was joking, and laughed. He became a bit peeved and wanted to know what was so damned funny. I was puzzled--WASNT he joking? No, he wasn't, he insisted. I said, but YOU could illustrate it with your cartoons. He was amazed--this thought had never crossed his mind.

Bill was married for a while, had a daughter, and she has a son; Bill didn't see his grandson very often, but had many uncompleted projects prompted by him. I can't

believe it's been ten years since he died.

Birth Notice

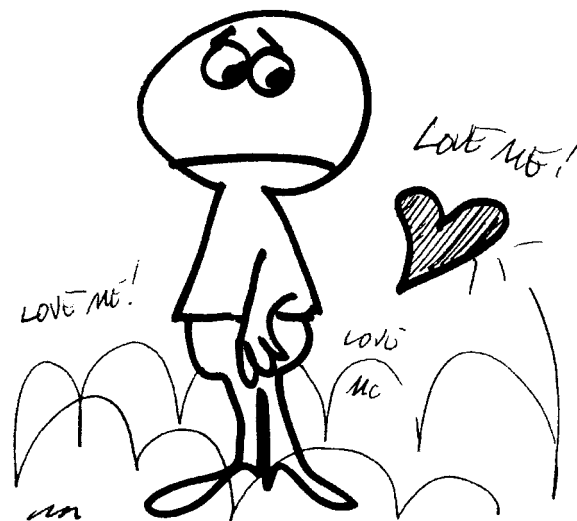
Anne Marie Loney was born to Vanessa and Mark Loney on Jan 11 at Calvary John James Hospital, Canberra. She weighed 3500 grams at birth. The mother and baby are doing fine, "despite Canberra's recent heat-wave" reported Mark. [Source: *Australian SF Bullsheit*, 2/2007]

Clipping Service

Teresa Méndez wrote in *The Christian Science Monitor*: "In 2005 the ABA registered 90 new stores. Last year there were 97, spanning the country from tiny, two-store towns to bursting metropolises. It's a recent shift, and one that should be heartening for famished bookworms. But it leaves one wondering, even worrying, about these novice booksellers, so new to a business where 2 percent is often considered a good margin of profit. Are they blinded by their love of books, harboring romantic dreams of earning a living? Is there even room in the cultural landscape for the independent bookstore? Is it worth the risk?" [Sent by John Mansfield]

Mark Leeper: People who know me are surprised that I do not drink coffee or tea. I drink a little hot chocolate, but I am very careful about it. The thing is that I rarely can see hot beverages are worth the risk. They are either too hot or too cold. Drinking a cup of piping hot coffee for me is a lot like mating is for a spider. You want to get close enough to enjoy the object of your desire but have to do it gingerly and pull back before it does you real damage.

Deb Geisler: Personally, I've found chocolate covered espresso beans and a nice drum set make me a very popular aunt.



It's a Book! Kent State Publishes Diana's Study of the Inklings Amazon Stands on Its Hind Legs and Does Backflips



Two heavy boxes from Diana's publisher landed on porch late in February and we could finally say – Diana's book is out! We shot video of Diana unwrapping the first copies. Sierra and a little friend put on fancy hats danced around the living room. There was ice cream for everyone!

The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community is Diana's study of the Inklings writing group. The publisher has been accepting pre-orders since last fall and the copies will be in readers' hands by mid-March.

It's a hardcover. Diana hoped the first printing would be in paper to keep the price down and so reach a wider readership. Instead, Kent State University Press conservatively chose to do a hardcover first edition to appeal to library buyers. Diana has done everything she can think of to market the book to friends, fans and scholars in hopes that a surge of immediate interest will encourage Kent State to consider a paperback reprint sooner than later. The early burst of sales did prompt Kent State to send out double the usual number of review copies.

Looking for other hints that pre-order sales were going well, Diana found that when Amazon gets a bunch of pre-orders it starts doing all kinds of wonderful pre-programmed marketing tricks. For example, Amazon keeps track of books selling well in pre-orders in more than two dozen sub-categories. Diana excitedly e-mailed friends last November, "I just discovered that *The*

Company They Keep is ranked number 14 on Amazon UK's list of 'Hot Future Releases.' How cool is that." It later reached #8. On February 21, Amazon (U.S.) had *The Company They Keep* ranked #55 on the Hot New Releases sub-sub-list for Literature & Fiction/ History & Criticism/ Criticism & Theory.

That same February day it rocketed back up the Amazon bestseller list from 602,000 to 117,449. Did you know Amazon ranks its entire inventory? I first heard that years ago when Tom Veal said his book on pension plans was something like the 800,000th best-selling book on Amazon. The website states these figures are updated hourly. How many sales does it take to move somebody half-a-million places in a day? I couldn't tell you although I hope the answer is *thousands*. Of course, it might be only one or two...

Maybe the jump happened because the cover art finally went online, the most eye-catching feature of any Amazon webpage. Cover art for Diana's book was finished what seemed to us quite late in the process and the image sent to Amazon in January. We haven't been this anxious and impatient for something to happen since Sierra was born.

The lack of cover art did not seem to have kept other internet marketing tools from running. David Bratman subscribes to Amazon's notification service and receives e-mail about selected authors or categories of books. On December 22, an Amazon robot

correlated David's past purchases with data about forthcoming books and sent him this e-mail:

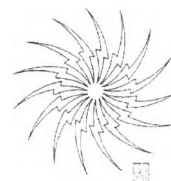
"We've noticed that customers who have expressed interest in 'Interrupted Music: The Making Of Tolkien's Mythology' by Verlyn Flieger have also ordered 'The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community' by Diana Pavlac Glycer. For this reason, you might like to know that Diana Pavlac Glycer's 'The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community.'"

Bratman sent a copy of the e-mail to both authors. Flieger wrote Diana: "Good for both of us! And thanks, David, for showing me the company I keep."

The Amazon website also bundles books in two-fer sales. When I've checked the progress of Diana's book I've often found it pairs up with scholarly works about Tolkien. I really like seeing Diana's book matched with the latest edition of C.S. Lewis's published letters, on the theory that Diana gets more help from the arrangement than Professor Lewis.

And don't forget the Amazon Associates program. Lynn Maudlin explained that as a member of the program she promotes selected mythopoeic books on her website and gets paid up to 8.5% of the selling price of items through these links. Lynn said the click-through purchase is credited to her site if something is bought on Amazon within a few hours.

Every Amazon customer knows the site doesn't simply offer to sell you books, it erupts with an extravaganza of visual bells and whistles the moment you show the least interest in any of the company's million products. Book buyers like me find Amazon's features alternately amusing, interesting or helpful. Never until Diana's book came on the market did I wonder expectantly about how any of them would change from week to week. Amazon gets exciting when your own horse is in the race.





Tom Veal Reviews

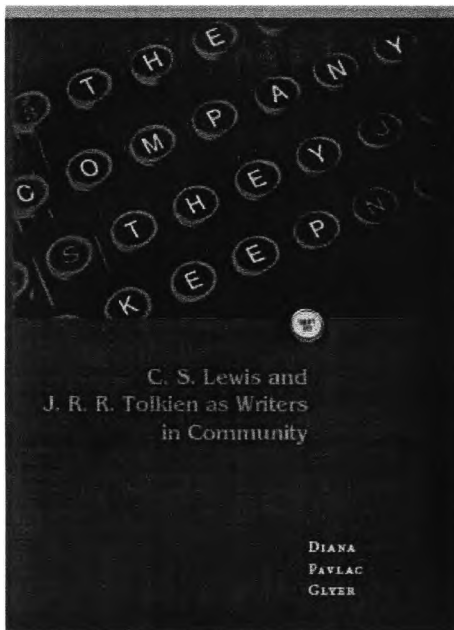
The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community by Diana Pavlac Glyer

The Inklings are not as famous as Opus Dei or the Bloomsbury Group, but famous they are, with their own entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and a well-regarded collective biography by Humphrey Carpenter. Any more-than-casual reader of C. S. Lewis or J. R. R. Tolkien has heard of them: a circle of Oxford friends, including Lewis, Tolkien, Charles Williams and others less well known, who met weekly in Lewis's college rooms to talk, smoke, drink tea, and listen to readings of one another's manuscripts. The group was the initial audience for *Out of the Silent Planet*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *All Hallows' Eve*, and at least fifty other books, essays and stories.

Inklings sessions flourished for over 15 years, from about 1932 (the exact date is obscure) through 1949. Though there was never a formal membership roll, identity as an "Inkling" was clearly important to the more active members. For that reason, the group has been the subject not only of Mr. Carpenter's book-length study but of innumerable articles by amateur and professional scholars interested in the various individual Inklings. One would think, then, that there was little room for a new book addressing fundamental questions. Strangely, that is not the case. The overwhelming emphasis of past work has been antiquarian: assembling rosters of "members" during different periods, describing the ambiance in which they gathered, and collecting anecdotes. The dynamics of the society – what it did and how it affected its members, rather than what it looked like from inside or out – have attracted less attention.

The reason for this superficial approach isn't hard to discern. The consensus view has been that the Inklings *qua* Inklings had more social than literary or intellectual heft. The group was "just a gathering of friends, an opportunity for informal friendly talk, an assembly of those who had much in common and much to share." Humphrey Carpenter sums up the conventional wisdom:

It must be remembered that the word "influence", so beloved of literary investigators, makes little sense



Left: Cover design. **Right:** Diana Pavlac Glyer.

when talking about their association with each other. Tolkien and Williams owed almost nothing to the other Inklings, and would have written everything they wrote had they never heard of the group. Similarly, Tolkien's imagination was fully fledged and the fundamental body of his ideas was sketched out before he even met Lewis. As he himself declared, his debt to Lewis "was not 'influence' as it is ordinarily understood, but sheer encouragement". Nor did Williams owe any crucial part of his thinking to Lewis or to others of the group. . . . [Lewis] alone can be said to have been "influenced" by the others . . . , but for the rest it is sufficient to say that they came together because they already agreed about certain things. [*The Inklings*, p. 160]

Supporting this opinion are statements made by the Inklings themselves. The most widely quoted, Lewis's "No one every influenced Tolkien – you might as well try to

influence a bandersnatch," is far from unique.

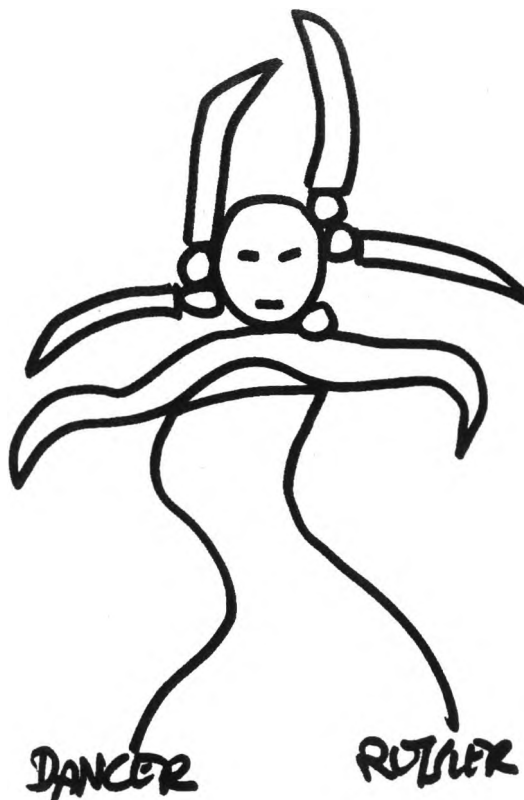
Instead of accepting these generalizations, Diana Pavlac Glyer has combed through the extensive, though fragmentary, evidence. She comes up with a very different picture, one in which the Inklings' Thursdays did a great deal to shape their literary works in ways both major and minute. Contrary to Mr. Carpenter, she avers that Tolkien and Williams, as well as Lewis, would not have been the same writers if they had not written within the "community" of the Inklings and specifically if they had not participated in regular reading and criticism of works in progress.

The Company They Keep traces a number of avenues of influence in ample, but not wearying, detail. The argument, it should be noted, is confined primarily to *literary* influence. The extent, or indeed the existence, of the Inklings' mutual intellectual, philosophical or ideological influence is a different topic. It surfaces occasionally, particularly when Dr. Glyer discusses Owen Barfield, but is of secondary importance.

As a paradigm for the Inklings' interactions, the author chooses "writers' groups," as filtered through an academic study that sounds quite dreary but is employed usefully here. The Inklings were not, of course, much like the neophytes who exchange critiques, either personally or often these days via LiveJournal, in the hope of developing into published authors. Almost all of them (Christopher Tolkien, J. R. R.'s son and assistant, and John Wain, whose work took a strongly non-Inklingsque turn, are the exceptions) were mature men, already established in their professions. The only one whose literary career was nurtured in the bosom of the group was C. S. Lewis's brother, Warren, author of several histories of the colorful goings-on at the 17th Century court of Versailles. Moreover, authorship was not really the center of their association. In fact, only seven – the Lewis brothers, Tolkien, Williams, Barfield, Nevill Coghill and the anomalous Wain – had any substantial output of *belles lettres*. The others wrote in a scholarly vein, in fields ranging from Roman Britain to the history of the British Liberal Party to medical research, or not at all. (An appendix by David Bratman usefully summarizes the life and works of each of the 19 "recognized" Inklings.)

Nonetheless, when presented with a new manuscript, the Inklings worked in much the same way as the composition-centered groups that Dr. Glyer uses as a template. She identifies four principal roles – "resonators" (ugh; the term is borrowed from the aforementioned academic study), "opponents," editors and collaborators – and shows how the various Inklings played them, mostly vis-à-vis the three best known figures in the group.

The first two roles, "resonance" and "opposition," are two complementary aspects of the same process. The allegedly uninfluenceable Tolkien offers the most carefully worked-out illustration. What he got from the circle who heard the "New Hobbit" read week by week was not "sheer encouragement" but a sense of direction that led to a story not at all like the one that he was naturally inclined to tell. "Without the Inklings, it is certain that we would have more details of Shire genealogies, more words in the Elvish vocabulary, and fewer stories of the Third Age of Middle-earth." The contrast between *The Lord of the Rings* and the *Silmarillion*, the latter completed long after the Inklings had dissolved, is telling. Tolkien cut much from *The Lord of the Rings* that the first hearers did not like, such as long stretches of "Hobbit talk" and a saccharine epilogue.



while emphasizing the elements of quest and adventure that he did not find especially congenial. There cannot be many readers who are ungrateful for the transformation.

Similarly, Charles Williams abandoned a new novel, tentatively titled *The Noises That Weren't There*, after the first three chapters failed to enthrall the Inklings. He then used some of its materials as the foundation for *All Hallows' Eve*.

[H]e read it to the Inklings, chapter by chapter, and then revised it in response to their criticism. Most scholars [more to the point, most readers] consider it one of Williams's finest works, and the Inklings played a significant role in it from start to finish. Tolkien notes, "I was in fact a sort of assistant midwife at the birth of *All Hallows' Eve*, read aloud to us as it was composed, but the very great changes made in it were I think mainly due to C.S.L."

At this time, one should note, Williams had by far the highest literary reputation of any Inklings. We tend to think of him as an obscure writer appealing to an exotic taste. In the 1940's, as Dr. Glyer reminds us, he was widely regarded as one of England's nonpareil men of letters. T. S. Eliot was among his fervent admirers. When Lewis called him, following his premature death in 1945, "the

great English poet of this age," he spoke plausibly. While the ensuing years have been unkind, and today, "It may be said that in offering this magnificent compliment, Lewis's gift for friendship is more in evidence than his gift for prophecy," it is remarkable that, at the height of his career, an acclaimed novelist paid attention to criticism from comparative amateurs, revised his work to please them, and profited by the exercise.

All Hallows' Eve serves also as an example of the Inklings' unpaid editorial labors. The alterations for which they are responsible, mostly proposed orally, are recoverable only when chance has left traces behind. Still, Dr. Glyer assembles a suggestive list, noteworthy for the fine sensitivity displayed by the auditors, as when Charles Williams's rebuke led the replacement of Treebeard's original expletive "crack my timbers" by the far more Ent-like "root and twig".

Collaboration is where the Inklings diverge from the "writers' group" paradigm. Fledgling authors are attracted by the idea of crafting a story together, but the process is very hard work, one place where many hands do *not* make light work. (This reviewer has co-written two books and *knows*.) Successful collaborators almost always join together early in their careers. The Inklings were past that stage, and, save for *jeux d'esprit* and a few editorial projects, their occasional ideas for collaborations fell through almost as soon as they were conceived. Lewis and Tolkien went so far as to devise a title, *Language and Human Nature*, for a volume announced for publication. If they went further, nothing of the labor has survived.

Dr. Glyer elides this point – I'm not sure why – by following the contemporary academic fad of stretching "collaboration" to embrace a writer's entire milieu. When "collaborators" means "agents, editors, friends, publishers, sources, and spouses", and even "other thinkers, historical events, and readers" (pp. 160–61), what is the word still good for?

The final chapter of the book leaves literary history for more theoretical territory and is disappointing after what has come before. It sets up what appears to be an opposition between "collaboration", very broadly construed, and the modern opinion, specifically rebuked by Lewis in *The Discarded Image* and elsewhere, that originality is the *sine qua non* of great literature. But that can't be the dichotomy that Dr. Glyer has in mind, for she puts very similar writers on both sides of it. Goethe and Shelley "celebrate the poet as one who invents within the rich, supportive

context of other writers and other works" (p. 219), while Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats "subscribe to the Romantic view of individual, inspired Genius" (p. 228). The confusion is probably mine, but I think that it is understandable.

Whether or not one calls what the Inklings did "collaboration," *The Company They Keep* demonstrates that many of their works owe a great deal to their Thursday evening fosterage. Insofar as we can judge, the effect was invariably beneficial. One might say that the Inklings illustrate "the wisdom of crowds." Individual evaluations did not always agree. Had Lewis consulted only Tolkien, he would never have written *The Screwtape Letters* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Hugo Dyson, a great authority on 18th Century literature, loathed *The Lord of the Rings*, and other Inklings had severe reservations about it. The collective judgment, however, again and again showed superlative taste and discernment. The average writers' group probably does not do as well.

Let me end with a final compliment and a minor complaint. Taking the latter first (chiasmus), the author buries too much significant material in her endnotes. To grasp her argument in full, one must inconveniently turn back and forth between text and annotation. On the positive side, her writing is almost completely free from the academic jargon that *infests* contemporary studies of English literature and that even the best-intentioned student is in danger of picking up from daily reading of Derrida-tainted nonsense. Not *utterly* free: One does stumble upon, "The Inklings grew in the transactional space between Lewis and Tolkien as they shared their original drafts with one another" (p. 43). There is also some funny business with pronouns, but I suppose that a straightforward generic "he" would give the ladies at an academic press a severe case of the vapors and is best avoided for charity's sake.

After finishing Dr. Glyer's book, the reader may well feel that her thesis is too self-evident to require so thorough an exposition. If so, he should reread the passage from Humphrey Carpenter with which this review began. That the meetings of the Inklings were not merely occasions for boisterous merriment, excessive tea drinking and occasional plotting against the spirit of the modern age has not been obvious to a great many earlier students, and those who have seen the Inklings as "influential" have said little about why and how. In the nascent field of genuine "Inklings Studies," as opposed to research devoted to particular authors and the elaboration of "Inklings fandom," *The Company They Keep* is a bold and successful pioneer.

++ Tom Veal



Eastern Time Zone News

Will the Real 770 Please Stand Up?

While we're celebrating other centuries of fanpublishing, let's not overlook the relentless march of NESFA's *Instant Message*, appearing 20 times a year. The issue count will reach 800 practically immediately.

I certainly enjoyed myself last June when I opened up *Instant Message* 770. For one brief shining moment it was Camelot as I remembered the time NESFA *really* did publish an issue of this fanzine when I was in Boston for some IRS training in 1983. Now that was a collating party!

Smocon 2007

Smocon 2007 will meet at the Hilton Boston Logan Airport, close enough to baggage claim that fans could lug their suitcases across the convenient skybridge (oh, don't be silly) or by taking the complimentary shuttle (exactly).

Geri Sullivan chairs the next installment of the annual convention for conrunners, to be held December 7-9. Its theme, playfully

described on the con's website as "The Marketing Secrets of Hari Seldon," is advertising and publicity. Pam Fremon will concoct an imaginative Friday Night Mixer – another Massachusetts Smocon once debuted the *If I Ran the Zoo* game in this slot. Priscilla Olson and Edie Stern will design the program.

Memberships are \$50 through February 28, 2007; then \$60 through October 31, 2007. They may be purchased online at <http://www.noreascon.org/smocon25/> or by mail through P.O. Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701.

Not Just Another Brick in the Wall

What does fandom prepare you for? Well, Donald Eastlake III was installed as "Worshipful Master of Tahattawan Lodge, Ancient Free & Accepted Masons" for the 2006/2007 year. Their rituals must feel quite relaxing after Donald's parliamentary experiences fending off Robert Sacks with one hand and Seth Breidbart and Kevin Standlee with the other.

Con-Version XXII

Calgary, Alberta, August 11-13, 2006

Report by John Hertz

[From Vanamonde 694-696]

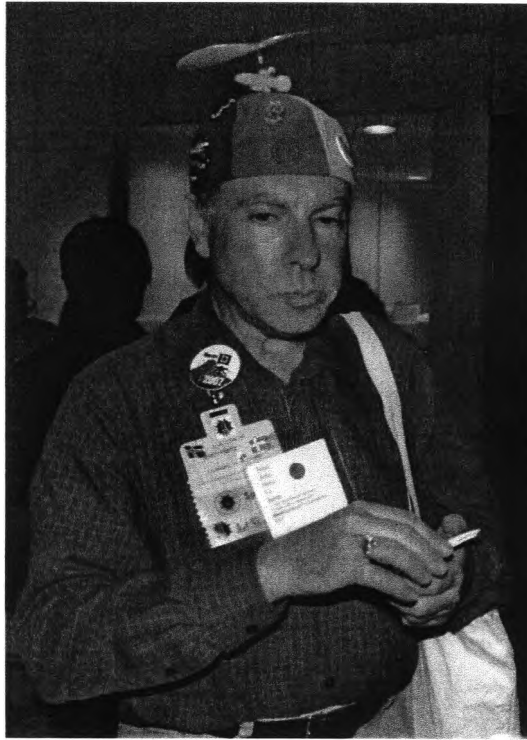
Ten kinds of cactus
In pots, and the check-in guards
Various polite.

To Con-Version XXII (Calgary, Aug. 2006; att. 600), as Fan GoH, I went on a day of airline safety hubbub, which luckily did not hinder me. As I flew I wondered what I had forgotten. As I arrived I was reminded Calgary might rain. But my hosts were kind. Rebecca Bradley's barbecue went indoors. I praised that food, her *couscous*, and two Sudanese coffee-pots, with whose use she indeed was good friends. Kent McKay, head of programming, was new: "I just volunteered to help, and here I am."

Next morn to Heritage Park, Calgarian history, with original and re-created houses, costumes, machines. I a city boy had never been in a grain elevator. That eve at Opening Ceremonies Phil Bacon introducing me cited my inquiring mind. Beside us were Author GoH Larry Niven, also David Weber (another Author), R. Scott Bakker (local Author), Adrian Kleinbergen (Graphic Artist), Jeremy Bulloch (Media). I spoke of generalism and participation. Applause.

At Regency Dancing a man said "This is much easier than I thought while I was watching." I said "It's a science fiction convention. Don't panic." A wealth of well-picked fanzines on a free-things table showed the hand of Dale Speirs. The Hospitality Suite was alive with good talk and good drink all weekend. Here came Jason Sallay in a black habit, but *cucullus non facit monachum*. A woman in pointy ears sang coloratura from Rossini's *Cenerentola*. A man and another woman taught a canon on *Non Nobis Domine*, certainly how I feel when Fan GoH.

When I had proposed Classics of S-F discussions, McKay said he was an Asimov and Bradbury fan, to which fine generalism I suggested *The Caves of Steel* and *Fahrenheit 451*, both of that astounding vintage year 1953. When we came to each I asked who'd read them, who'd re-read recently, and was gratified. Jennifer Kennedy and Blair Petterson with me for *Caves*. Petterson said Asimov wrote s-f everyone could read. Kennedy



John Hertz at L.A.con IV. Photo © 2006 by Theresa Pridemore.

attributed to Asimov that s-f lovers love humanity; in *Caves*, she said, that shines. From the audience: he knew not to write too topically. Another: how differently Daneel Olivaw and Lije Baley think. I said Asimov was the writer of the reasoning process.

Karl Johanson of *Neo-Opsis*, and Petterson, gave "Recommended Reading". This in some form is a standard and draws many. People like to hear what might be good to read and why you think so. Petterson brought a stack of books, handing each to the first asker. I got the Tom Reamy collection *San Diego Lightfoot Sue*. My Current Fanzines Review, two or three dozen spread over the table for talk. Niven's "Everything Ring-world", crowded. Questions about *Burning Tower* and *The Draco Tavern* snuck in. On "Is Space Opera Out of Tune?" he told how he and Pournelle once got a thick editorial letter from Bob Gleason, dined with him, took him upstairs, argued how all the letter was wrong, sent him home, and realized he was right.

In the Art Show, Theo Nelson had a series "Almost a Reflection of the Trans-Dimensional Divide", odd striped spheres rising through jagged space. Janice Blaine had ten goldfish in a school, with human, tragically feminine faces, "Damsels". Judging the Masquerade with me were Bullock, Liann Bailey, Angela Mash, and Teresa Taylor; Masquerade Director, Colleen Brennan. Best Craftsmanship, Novice, was Shawn Trainor as Anakin Skywalker from *Attack of the Clones*; Best in Class, Joss Nadiuk as Marv from *Sin City*; Best Craftsmanship, Journeyman, Duncan Carmichael as a Twilight Guard; Best in Class, Vanessa Wedge as Meru from *The Legend of Dragoon*; we gave no Best Craftsmanship, Master; Best in Class, Pam Bowyer and Jennifer Gerritsen as a *Harry Potter* "Dueling Club"; Judges' Favorite, Keith Allen as a Dalek (Master).

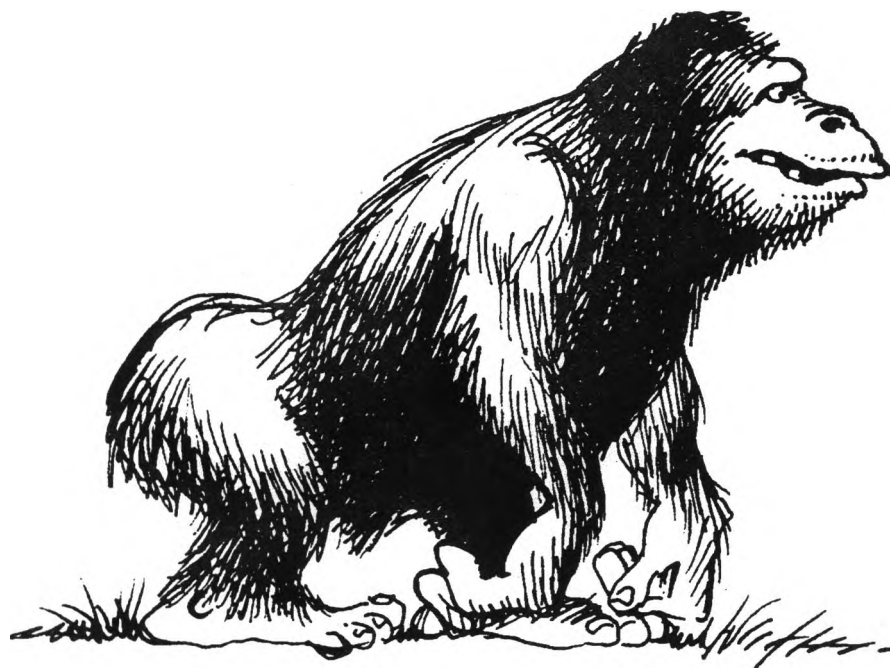
In the bar Weber said "When first designing space ships I missed a couple of decimal points. Some of the ships had the density of Styrofoam." The kitchen had closed. We sent for pizza, ordering two so people could avoid one another's evil toppings. I patriotically drank Crown Royal, feeding pizza to committee members I learned hadn't eaten.

Daylight. I led the talk on *Fahrenheit 451*, a book I could not help calling pyrotechnic. To atone I read aloud. A high-school teacher said pupils were the first to complain *Why do we have to analyze?* They wouldn't, I offered, if they found it fruitful. Not Dead Sea fruit. Off to see "Stardrives on a Budget". Niven, Jim Baerg, Johanson, Petterson, Chris Vikes. Excluding faster-than-light drives since we've no sign they're possible, the trouble lies in carrying fuel. We could use a Bussard ramjet if we could manage interstellar dust coming as gamma rays, and if we could reach 1,000 miles a second so the ram-scoop worked; but what if we arrived in a region of Space with little dust?

After Closing Ceremonies the host club held its Annual General Meeting, with by-laws revision proposed, and politicking, perhaps well scheduled when all the key persons wanted to get it over with. Eventually they appeared at the Dead Dog Party and gladly helped attack the remaining food and drink.

NOVACON 2006

HOW I LOST A FEW POUNDS ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL



REPORT BY JAMES BACON

This year's Novacon was a hive of activity. Novacon is the annual convention run by the Birmingham SF Group. It's in November and is a counterpoise to Eastercon, although smaller.

It was bound to be an interesting Novacon because Convoy, the 2007 Eastercon had announced that they were to cancel. A somewhat shocking vista upon the fannish horizon.

Well it goes back a bit more than that.

Part 1, the backstory.

In November I was on a diet, I still am, but that's beside the point.

The 2007 Eastercon was never in fit shape. In 2005, when bidding should have occurred, no one stepped forward with a bid. This is something that happens. Bids are sometimes very last minute, other times people are secretive. Generally one only finds out, especially if you are not 'in the know', when you see people standing up in front of a couple of hundred others to stake their claim.

Now allow me to explain about bids. In the United Kingdom the national convention is the Eastercon, and the membership of the current one empowers con runners to run another two years hence. There is no constitution, and definitely no rules. It's often described as organised anarchy, as fans won't

be organised yet they desire a level of organisation. It's all a bit, well high and mighty to be honest, and to my mind it's a bit much especially when there may be only one bid standing, but it's one of those tradition things and I have no solution and it can be a bit of fun.

For instance, when I was on a bid, I wore my boxer shorts on my head for the full session.

I can understand the arrangement if there are opposing bids, as there once were. Then some sort of quasi official selection process makes sense, otherwise we would have loads of Eastercons, well perhaps not, but that's the sense to it.

Now in 2005, there was no bid when it came to the bid session. I run conventions and was on that con committee but for whatever reason, when people did come along to put together what one might consider an emergency bid or last minute one, they did so in the corridors of Eastercon, but (and this sort of a fecks me over a bit) for some reason there either wasn't the opportunity or the confidence to announce a real bid, or something, and everyone went away from Eastercon in 2005, knowing that some people were doing something (called Convoy) for 2007 so that's OK, but that something hadn't been endorsed so no official con running, like getting full and supporting memberships

could

take place.

The fitness of

Convoy was further

affected by the choice of

said con committee to go back to the Adelphi hotel in Liverpool, a

fantastic hotel with a fannish history.

I can understand the desire to go to

this hotel. Its facilities are always

talked about as having an excellent

layout with one central communal

social area that adjoins all function

space, and for being a very grand

venue. At the same time, it is ac-

cursed with poor management, atrocious staff and alleged criminal activity.

Some people immediately people came out against the convention while certain others were vocal about going, which is fair enough as they are entitled to it, but the committee could have helped themselves a little more by engaging with these opinions. I was all for this convention and personally tried to address certain issues, and made enquiries, for instance about an incident at a different hotel (the one being used for 2008) that was misattributed to the Adelphi.

The controversy created a level of defensiveness on the part of Convoy, which is to be expected, as they saw people perhaps negative for negativity's sake. I did discuss this with Chris Bell, the Hotel Liaison for Convoy, who had a good amount of experience running conventions and from the outset had made it quite clear she wanted the Adelphi to work. Although Tim Kirk was chairman, many realized Chris Bell was an important aspect to the dynamic of the committee. I asked her to be careful of seeing that noisy percentage and neglecting to engage the percentage who were wavering, and perhaps had legitimate issues.

Anyhow, and it's something I disagree with, a year went by and then Eastercon bid ratification was once again taking place during Concussion, the 2006 Eastercon in Glas-

Sidebar:

Roomsharing With James by Max

James is the sort of person who runs Young Adult streams at Worldcons and Robert Rankin's fan club in the background, at the same time as championing TAFF, moving country, churning out articles and reviews for fannish publications worldwide and getting a promotion at work. In fact, I'm pretty sure he's got to be the only person to do so. Given this admirable enthusiasm and slightly disturbing tendency to steamroll any opposition to his latest greatest plan, I never thought he'd be quite such a sedate room mate.

James doesn't so much wind down as simply stop. He'll be sitting in a restaurant waiting for the first course to arrive, chatting away amiably one moment and the next he's dead to the world, face down at the table and a prime candidate for a quick round of human Buckaroo. When he goes to bed at a convention, though, he holds out for a few more minutes of consciousness, forcing his eyes open for long enough to skim through the latest stash of fanzines, send a text or two to Simoné and root

through the three ton bag of books he's had you bring up to the room on your last visit.

I don't mind this at all. I like to think I'm a fairly accommodating room sharer and I tend to push bedtime back to the last possible moment myself. The problem with sharing with James is that getting to sleep is a race, and he's damn fast. Eyes shut. Five, four, three two, one... launch snoring. "If I snore, just punch me," he says. "That's what Simoné does."

IF?! The first problem with this is I'm not actually that keen on punching a sleeping man, particularly when he's my friend. The second problem is, it doesn't work anyway. Neither do random shoves, they just elicit a grunt, a pause, and a continuation of the snores.

James laughed at me for putting on a hat to keep warm in bed but the muffling properties of said hat are a nice complement to the warmth it offers. If you're really fast and determined it is possible to fall asleep first and not be disturbed by the snores and if you're tired enough (going to bed at 4 a.m. and racing to be first in the bathroom and therefore into bed works well) then a decent sleep can be earned. I learnt fast and slept much better on Saturday and Sunday than on Friday.

What particularly surprised me about James was the lack of wakefulness in the morning. I know James to be a fairly early riser. He gets up stupidly early for work and he's frequently up and about before a lot of people at cons. When he stayed at my

house after a party he was among the first to rise. This led me to assume that he got up with reasonable ease when in fact he doesn't. While he goes from awake to asleep in seconds, the reverse is a slow process of warming up. I roomed with James' cohort and partner in crime. Stef, last year and waking him was simple.

Compare and contrast:

"Stef."

"Is it time to get up now?"

"Yeah."

Stef gets up.

"James."

Pause.

"JAMES!"

"Urgh?"

"It's time to get up."

"Urgh."

Pause.

"James?"

Pause.

"JAMES!"

"Yeah... in a minute."

It's a lot like trying to quell the snores. Ten minutes later, bleary eyed, he rolls onto the floor, shambles to his feet and bumps into the wall next to the bathroom.

"Urgh."

The inspiration for zombie-based con programming becomes clear.

We're sharing again at Eastercon. I'll pack earplugs.

gow. There were about 240 people in the room and only a few voted against the unopposed bid for 2007, Convoy. It was less who voted against the 2008 bid, so some would think from this show of hands that perhaps people were for Convoy, but what happened was those who didn't care or didn't want Convoy, just disengaged. This wasn't Convoy's fault – they were there to answer many questions and would have engaged, but this was only one stage in the process of gaining people's confidence, one has to reiterate the positives and of course engage and discuss the choice as frequently as possible, without getting frustrated.

Convoy made security and hotel two of their main missions, and to me they seemed to be addressing the issue adequately, although I had a hard time convincing others.

They still didn't engage properly I felt and I said it, I found out that the web and email engagement was also not great, but sure each convention to their own I felt and I had run many an Octocon with feck all web stuff, so it's not the be all and end all.

With the concerns still in the air people

were not joining as much as one would have liked. Then personal things take effect: the choice of guests was in my mind really rather disappointing, both after '05 and '06's wide selection and also with '08 having some big names along. Like everything I write, perceive and form an opinion on, this is my personal viewpoint. It's just when a panellist speaks over children, refuses to show respect for people who make an effort to actually run programme and then insult moderators by their behaviour, well one draws opinions. I never really made mention of it. I just wrinkled my nose and said I could think of more appropriate guests.

So although I joined, and encouraged others to do so, people in general were lax about joining. Now Vince Docherty said after analysis of the membership trend that the Eastercon would have been OK, which is interesting as it throws some doubt onto my perception of the lack of engagement being an issue.

As summer passed, LiveJournal became the place for people to raise issues. Unfortunately there was little or no engagement of

LiveJournal by the Eastercon committee. When issues arose about the hotel in July the immediate responses required to quash negativity were lacking.

A fan from Liverpool whom I highly respect posted links to news items that were featuring the Adelphi hotel. This didn't surprise me to be honest fans are very intelligent. The link went to the Liverpool *Echo*.

'Adelphi crimewave'

Jul 26 2006

EXCLUSIVE by Nick Coligan, Liverpool *Echo*

Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel
LIVERPOOL'S Adelphi hotel is single-handedly responsible for a huge increase in city centre crime figures. So many thefts are reported from the 402-room hotel in Ranelagh Place that it is making the city centre appear crime-ridden.

Tourism and council officials fear the hotel's reputation could damage Liverpool's image for Capital of Culture year. But their repeated pleas for improvements by Adelphi management to end the five-year crime-wave

have fallen on deaf ears.

Today it emerged that:

* Four out of every five city centre hotel room burglaries are at the Adelphi.

* Police advice on how to keep out criminals was ignored.

* Promised investment on security by Adelphi management never materialised.

Again this raised a number of queries and discussions about the likelihood of being broken into and the mathematicians had a field day.

Then this was posted.

Adelphi manager accused of racism by gym worker

Aug 3 2006

By Kieran Joglekar And Sam Lister, Daily Post

Eileen Downey THE woman in charge of Liverpool's most famous hotel was branded "racist" at an employment tribunal yesterday. Eileen Downey, general manager of the crime-hit Adelphi, is alleged to have discriminated against a black employee.

Edwin Coke, a gym worker at the hotel, claimed Miss Downey suspended him without pay during a theft investigation because of his colour. Merseyside Police found there was no case against the shift supervisor but he was demoted to menial duties, and relentlessly bullied.

Since January 1 this year, there have been 72 crimes at the Adelphi Hotel, 40 of which were bedroom thefts. In the other 14 city centre hotels, there were only seven bedroom thefts out of 62 crimes.

Now eventually I think the case was cleared, but one doesn't expect this level of news about an Eastercon convention. What was most concerning was the response some people had, who had dealings with the hotel manager who was the same the last time Eastercon was there, and if found true, it was mentioned it would not be surprising.

Then this was posted up, and it was noted that one is unsure what one could have done about this situation, but it just felt like there was a continuous flow of grim news about the Adelphi.

'Dead Man found in hotel pool'

Man dies after being found in Adelphi pool

Aug 31 2006

By Jane Woodhead & Michelle Fiddler, Liverpool Echo

Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel

A MAN has died after having being found floating in the swimming pool at the Adelphi Hotel.

The crisis-hit hotel said there was a life-guard on duty yesterday as the 25-year-old,

who was named today as Madhav Cherukuri, was discovered dead. News of the drowning came less than two months after the Adelphi was exposed as a hotbed of city centre crime and criticised for poor quality service.

Then one piece of good news came to light, note the date though.

Adelphi's £6m pledge to bring back glory days

Oct 9 2006

By Mike Hornby, Liverpool Echo

Britannia Inns is putting in new locks on bedroom doors at the city's Adelphi Hotel says Marilyn Vaughan, conference manager

THE Adelphi hotel has begun a £6m refurbishment which aims to transform its fortunes. Every room in the historic hotel is to be re-decorated and furniture will be re-upholstered. Owners Britannia Inns has also pledged to spend more than £100,000 on security improvements, including CCTV and new locks on the bedroom doors.

It comes after the ECHO revealed in July that 81% of all hotel room burglaries in the city centre took place at the Adelphi.

Sadly too late to save next year's Eastercon. One wonders how much bad publicity the hotel requires to actually do anything, given the first report was a number of months previous.

Meanwhile other fans were watching and Douglas Spencer, a gentleman whom I respect and feel proud to know was also looking out, but rather than just post comments he went on, as many a fan can to actively question things. He again used LiveJournal.

Douglas Spencer (dougs) wrote, @ 2006-07-28 12:51:00

An open letter to the Convoy committee I've sent the following email to the enquiries address listed on the Convoy website: emails to this address are fielded by an AI robot which makes guesses about which member of the committee is best placed to answer the email.

Adelphi Hotel in the news

On the Convoy website, it says

> Members of the Convoy committee no



longer tend to read any Internet discussion groups about Convoy or any other Eastercon.

Nevertheless, you may wish to be made aware that in various Eastercon-related places online, and in the comments section of individual people's web presences, some discussion is taking place about one specific news item, originally reported by the Liverpool Echo and subsequently repeated by the BBC, to the effect that the Adelphi is the site of 80% of thefts from hotel rooms in Liverpool.

The Adelphi manager, Eileen Downey, insists it's not a problem. She strongly implies that the hotel do not intend to take any action in response.

The police, the city council, the local and national media, and many fans seem to take a different view. Concerns have also been expressed by other organisations which have used the Adelphi in the past (various trade unions, the British Beatles Fan Club, etc etc).

It might be helpful if the committee could make some sort of statement, beyond those that already appear on the website or in TRI, to reassure existing and potential Con-

voy members that the committee understands and accepts that many fans believe there's a problem here which needs to be addressed, to explain that the committee takes these worries seriously, and to detail the steps that are being taken.

I've quoted the contents of this email on my own LiveJournal as a placeholder for any subsequent discussion.

I'm not a member of Convoy, but I am a member of nine Eastercons between 1993 and 2008.

DougS.

Of course Douglas raised a good point here, and it was a shame that the Convoy committee didn't use the opportunity to ask what they could do to alleviate Douglas' concerns and actively engage with him. One of the interesting developments from a con-runner's viewpoint is that this denial of the importance of the Internet will now be perceived as part of what Convoy 'did wrong'. They didn't do anything exactly wrong, they just could have done a few things better. I have no idea what the dynamic was that brought them to keep the Internet at arms length. They were working very hard on other fronts.

It doesn't help when people on other Eastercon committees say the following:
- we already have more members than they do...

So the word on the web wasn't good that's for sure. Things seemed to move really fast then.

Negativity about Convoy was gathering, and then of course came the statement, from Convoy, which really marked the ground around the middle of August. I read it and still re-read it with the view that Tim Kirk is intrinsically a very decent and hard-working person. I took his first line to heart. I hope subsequent readers do too.

Convoy - Hotel Security

I started this because I didn't want there to be no Eastercon in 2007. I still feel that way.

This has been brought to a head by a local Liverpool newspaper, which printed a story about the Adelphi. The story was picked up by the BBC and has caused a few members of fandom to get into a tizzy about the security position at the Adelphi.

Some people have suggested we are not taking security seriously, especially after this local newspaper report. So this is what I did...

The day I was told about the report, I booked some holiday from work at the start of the next week so I could find out what the facts were and see if they were different from what was reported.

I went to Liverpool Police website, tracked down the quoted officer, and sent an email to him through their system. I spent the next two days talking to various people in the Liverpool Police and tracing the origins of the story back to Liverpool Chamber Of Commerce. I then spent some time talking to people there - including Peter Jones who was interviewed by the BBC.

The gist of what I got strongly suggests that this is essentially a matter of local politics, further complicated by Liverpool being 'City of Culture' in 2008, and the city council having some problems related to this (see various reports in 'Private Eye' during the past few months).

The story was released as it was in order to paint the Adelphi in as bad a light as possible, to force management (which was strongly implied in the conversations I had to mean Britannia Hotel chain management) to pull their fingers out and get long promised improvements done before 2008. (Much of this work either was already in hand when

the story was printed, or had been put in hand, including invoices dated from previous months, within ten days of the story's appearance, but nobody from the newspaper seems to have felt it worth actually going to the hotel and looking, as our representative has done.)

Police figures indeed show that 80% of city centre thefts from hotel

rooms between April 2005 and April 2006 occurred at the Adelphi. However according to the Liverpool Tourist Information Accommodation Hotline between one third and one half of all rooms in Liverpool City centre are at the Adelphi - this is not excusing the 80% figure, but a figure of 40% would have been consistent with the number of rooms.

Chris Bell has been and talked with Eileen Downey (manager of the Adelphi) in person. If Chris had not been happy after that meeting we would have removed the Adelphi from our plans immediately.

We will be making a site visit before Novacon, and unless we are satisfied that the conditions in our contract have been met, we will address the concerns about security of those potential members of the convention who have not yet paid for membership, by cancelling our use of the Adelphi on security grounds. At that point we shall be forced to cancel the Eastercon and refund all membership payments, which if we don't have a large enough membership by then we will have to do anyway for financial reasons.

No, we are not joking. We are taking it as seriously as that. We have looked for other hotels, but they seem simply financially unviable at this point. If anyone can find us a hotel of a similar size that is empty over the Easter weekend in 2007, and offers a similar rate for function space, bedrooms and food, we would be interested to hear about their findings.

As we see it, there are now three possible outcomes to this situation:

1) We get what we have contracted from the Adelphi, and enough members to make it viable, and have ourselves a Convoy.

2) The Adelphi is unable to demonstrate to us that it has fully addressed all our security concerns, and we are forced cancel Convoy.

3) The Adelphi does its bit, but we have too few members to be able to fill the hotel to the level required in the contract, and we are forced to cancel Convoy.

Cheers,

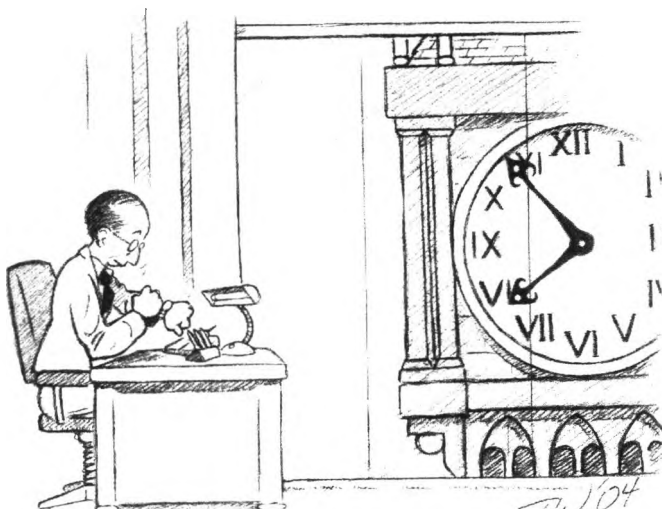
Tim Kirk

Chairman of Convoy

It's not an unfair letter and in fairness one can see that perhaps the con committee was getting it in the neck because of local politics. Unfortunately though they should have written directly to Dougs as well and engaged online.

It's clear that the committee were trying to find a solution, and even at this stage its obvious, well as I read it, that they would jump ship if possible.

I was at Worldcon at the end August and had a very interesting conversation with Vince Docherty. It was mostly about morale.



I sorta assumed that the committee would be working as normal, but I only then considered that perhaps that all the negativity, having to make such a hard statement and lack of communication would prove be a dysfunctional influence. I hadn't really thought about morale. Of course as we discussed it, one could understand if the Convoy committee had a siege mentality.

I was wondering about what would happen. I suppose I didn't really want to countenance such thoughts. You see thinking a committee won't succeed is a tremendous disloyalty in my mind, yet of course if one doesn't address it and here is the quandary, does one end up acting too late.

Vince listened and I talked, and vice-versa and I think that in my mind it became clear that no matter what happened, there would be an Eastercon as Brit Fandom wouldn't allow the Eastercon to not occur. Whether one could politely approach Convoy and state this, well that was another question, one I didn't have an answer to.

I wondered as did many, if the statement was meant to be an encouragement to get people off the fence and book memberships and hotels. Of course to me, it was saying there are 2-out-of-3 chances the con won't run.

I think this was how many people saw it. Of course if it was honesty, that's a good thing.

It was a hard place to be, as you can imagine. I felt truly sorry for Tim.

Then about two weeks before Novacon, on Tuesday the 30th of October, the shit hit the fan at high speed and Convoy announced their cancellation.

No one would have known that there was a strategy to their timing, although many people felt that by announcing the cancellation before the Tun (monthly London SF Circle gathering), prior to Novacon at least gave people an opportunity to get something going in the way of a rescue.

Unfortunately my own situation had changed too, and suddenly I had a great interest in their being an Eastercon in 2007. When I was chatting with Vince, I knew I had volunteered to be on the committee of a 2009 bid. By the time of the cancellation I had become the co-chair of a bid, which is a different level of responsibility.

Regardless I wanted an Eastercon in 2007.

That Thursday night was damn hard work, to be honest. Many conversations were going on, and Chris Bell bravely turned up,



to face questions, but mostly she received support. After all, fandom may be harsh place, but we see humility when it comes someone who has said *mea culpa* and react accordingly.

So there was much talk about what was going to happen next, but most importantly a way in which Convoy could legitimise any rescue convention.

I was aware that already some fans were happy with the idea of no convention, others were encouraging the idea of many local conventions to replace one big national one. Meanwhile, Mike Scott and Chris O'Shea were already working hard at finding venues, this seemingly the next bit of work required to help find a solution.

I really enjoyed myself to be honest, that must sound terrible. But so much was going on: phone calls being made, working out what could be done, and convincing and what not. The night flew by. I of course was only a small cog of everything else that was going on.

I always had faith that an Eastercon would happen, but it was important that it was legitimate and I made sure that an option I was suggesting would be watertight. Of course many voices were at play, and Chris O'Shea was working hard as he was actively touting the idea of a rescue convention.

Afterwards I posted the following onto the Eastercon yahoo group and it summed up how I felt:

Fri, 03 Nov 2006 00:10

I spoke to Chris Bell tonight...

Chris Bell came to the TUN tonight, she said she was along to apologize, and foster

conversation and was obviously very sorry about the current situation. That alone garnered considerable respect from me anyhow.

Keeping Mike Scott's points in mind, I spoke with her, which I said I would quote, it was hard, as I asked for an official line, and she was on her own, but she talked:

'When the situation is clearer we will what to do about how to legitimise a bid session for 2007. We are awaiting Novacon and hope that it will be clear then'

'Things are complicated right now, but the committee are aware clarification is necessary'

'It was important to cancel before the Tun, so people would talk, allowing a lead time to Novacon, where something will hopefully coalesce' end quote.

I couldn't ask for much more, give, that I put her on the spot, that she was on her own, but I could see she was genuine and most importantly she was happy to talk. Finally she said:

'We can't make this right, so we'll try and make it as not wrong as possible.'

I thought that said a lot, and gives something going forward.

James Bacon.

End post

Then I posted the following:

03/11/2006 00:11

Eastercon Hopes - James Bacon.

My thoughts and hopes on the situation.

I hope that one single alternative Easter convention comes to fruition from all the talk going on here. If there are a variety of suggestions and solutions, I hope they coalesce into one.

I hope that whoever runs this one con would accept the mantle of Eastercon.

I hope that at Novacon if this happens, that the Convoy committee can legitimise this convention, by passing responsibility onwards. Although unprecedented, I hope common sense will prevail and it will be deemed constitutional and acceptable.

I worry, there are many relaxacon/small cons on already next year, a sudden flurry of small conventions at Easter may impact upon already planned cons, be it Picocon, P-Con, Convivial II, Year of The Teledu, Gunner-Con, Mecon, Octocon... No one has considered these conventions.

I am all up for changing traditions. All it takes is a committee to have balls and implement change. I have no idea how having no

Eastercon next year will impact on the traditions that '08 and '09 and onward decide to carry on or change.

I would like to go to an Eastercon, next year, even if it's not huge. I don't want to have to choose between dozens of disparate cons all over the UK. I would like to see all my friends in one place.

James Bacon.

End post.

As you can see I used the opportunity to get something from Chris which might appease and also answer those with questions.

So as we went into Novacon, it was obvious to all that there would be much horse trading and if one wanted to help to ensure there was an Eastercon, this would be the place of business and suddenly it felt many people were bound for Walsall.

Part 2 Novacon itself.

It's terrible. I am a conrunner. I know I should book and pay my room ages beforehand, it's sensible, and I am often encouraging others to do so, so isn't it perverse that I had to arrange a room share and membership the same week of Novacon. I wonder now how many people joined in the two weeks before Novacon...

I was going mostly from a sense of curiosity. This wasn't going to be a normal Eastercon, it was going to be a special one, where an Eastercon would live or die, added to that, just as all the news about Convoy came to the fore, an Eastercon bid for 2009 came out of the woodwork.

Hayley Marsden, at 21, an event management student, announced her desire to chair an Eastercon and that she already had a hotel selected and negotiated. If one could feel trumped, this was it. I was impressed. Of course I immediately made contact. It was put to me that here someone was doing something crazy, the likes of which people would only expect from other crazy people.

Hayley was in a quandary. Her con bid required a two year run in, or it would fail as the hotel would require too much of a deposit, that not taking memberships would essentially bankrupt the bid if it was delayed for a year.

Now this sounds weird. I must chair an Eastercon. I must. I have so many ideas, and I have learnt so much. I read science fiction. That's my hobby. I read other genres, and other media, especially comics. But I am an



SF reader. I also appreciate sfnal history, I write and read fanzines, and I sometimes dislike the way people easily pigeon hole me as the fellow who does mad water pistol stuff. I have the support of some of the greatest conrunners in the country and with that in mind, I am hopeful I will do a good job.

Now, with this mission in mind, one would think that this would mean that I don't want any competition, but although logically that's correct, I don't work on logic. You see competition is great, it makes for interest, it gets people going. I welcome a competition, it's healthy and it's good and I want to win a bid, a real bid that alone would be an amazing start.

I also find that I admire Hayley.

So I had a number of purposes. I was one of many.

The hotel option was running thin. The Britannia in London docklands, although suitable, was not biting on a deal that would be viable, also another option closed down, and even Hinckley wasn't available. Everyone was abuzz about what was happening. The bids for 2009 were coming to the fore as well, as not only had Hayley announced her bid, but I was also actively making it clear I would be bidding as co-chair along with Peter Harrow, so the rumour mill was working.

Before hand I had also heard about a third bid, at the convention I heard firmer words and it became quickly apparent that this bid wouldn't actually come to fruition while two others were already on the go, and more to the point those involved started to position themselves with the idea that a 2010 bid would be more fortuitous.

I watched as a lot of talking went on. I felt that I had little to contribute, although my opinion was seemingly welcomed by some. I knew I would be foolhardy to volunteer to help with a rescue bid, what with my own bid on the cards. Of course, it's a double edged sword, and Hayley found herself volunteering as hotel liaison, which could work in her favour, and will garner respect and support, but I know my limitations and have a full time job, so I reckoned better to focus on the bid, while offering a supportive and common sense opinion from the sidelines.

It was good, Friday it was abuzz about the place as everyone arrived, and there was a great feeling about the convention anyhow.

I like Novacons anyhow. It's mostly Alice Lawson's fault, she encouraged me to go along, and as she is always involved. They are small cons, and I think this one had about 250 people along, which was a good showing. They are a mecca for fanzine fans, and one always knows you'll come away with a stack of fanzines, as I did this year.

Banana Wings #28 [32pp, A4], Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, CR0 7ES

Head #7 [27pp, A4], Doug Bell & Christina Lake, 35 Gyllyng Street, Falmouth, TN11 3EL

iShoes #1 [20pp, A5], Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpey, DY12 1NP

Prolapse #3 [21pp, A4], Peter Weston, 53 Wyvern Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2PS

Snapshot #8 [6pp, A4], Ian Sorensen, 3 Portia Place, Motherwell, ML1 1EL. Fanzine of the Teledu

So it was much chat and catching up to be had, and Hayley and myself had to make proper acquaintance, which was nice, she's a good lass, and we agreed that whoever won, and both of us are adamant that we will, that there would be room on the winning commit-

tee for additional members.

I chilled out in the bar on Friday night, there was some programming going on, and Novacon does have a single stream of programming, but really I spent most of the night in the bar just bouncing about, and as I felt myself nodding off, I went to sleep.

I was sharing a room with Max, which was good as she is a very good sort, and I get on well with her, although she sorta claims she isn't the easiest person to get to know or get to know well enough to get on well with, but I often think this is some sort of mechanism, as she's a rather fine person and good roommate, although I do try and solve or offer solutions way too much!

Saturday was good, as fanzines were pressed into my hand, the talk was all about 2007 and 2009, and bizarrely I started to introduce Hayley to various people I thought she should know. It was good and her bid is an interesting prospect the girl definitely has an interesting idea, although I see it as unthreatening as her *big tent philosophy* is something I concur with, although perhaps in a different way. (Yes Mike she actually said **BIG TENT** – what a quote)

The dealer's room was good, great value indeed, and Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey were there on behalf of Cold Tonnage Books and they had some bargains. There were also some free books, and I found one or two to my liking along with some free SF magazines. I found a *Galaxy* with a James White story therein, always good. The book auction was good fun, and again I scored very well on the book front, and was pleased with it.

I love getting book recommendations, chatting about authors and books and the dealers room is a place this always happens. As usual I came home with a huge stack of referrals and recommendations, and the extra knowledge that these are recommended by readers.

Of course I then discuss the same books as I tart them around in the bar or wherever. It's good to talk about SF books and writers even if it's just the scandal.

The item everyone was waiting on was the Eastercon panel, and there, much occurred. I had started to just watch what was going on and although I was interested in a fruitful result I needn't have worried too much.

Chris O'Shea essentially stood up to the plate, as ye Americanos would say, and said he would run an Eastercon. There was considerable talk and all endorsed his convention idea there and then. Despite other thoughts and ideas it all came to nought.

A mechanism was found whereby Harry Payne from Convoy agreeing to go onto the new convention committee could find a con-

sistency between Eastercons, and others agreed to help.

By the end of the session it was clear that concerns were ill founded, as many had stepped up, but I still hoped for more, I shouldn't have worried. It was a late conversation between Fran Dowd and Chris O'Shea that sealed the deal, Fran Dowd would co-chair.

Now this is a big deal. Fran Dowd is a powerful woman in her own right, but she has chaired TWO successful Eastercons and is very able, and it was as if there was a confirmation of authority when she joined. Others, equally able seemed to follow. There is something about fandom that attracts strong women but Fran is more, she is also a listener, and I always have an ear for her.

The core committee included: Co-Chairs: Fran Dowd/Chris O'Shea, Membership: Steve Lawson, Finance: John Dowd/Vince Docherty, Site Team Lead: Hayley Marsden, Operations: Eddie Cochrane, Convoy Representative: Harry Payne.

I noted at the time that Hayley had volunteered for another convention; the girl has gusto that's for sure.

Of course, I went around telling people about how young she is and courageous, yet very focused to run a convention and how amazing it is, and someone asked me what age I was when I was myself first on Octocon's committee, and I was of course 18 when I was on it first, and by the time I was 21 I was a co-chair, but sure no one in UK fandom really notices that part of my own SFnal CV, even if it was national convention with over 400 people along, and a new face is as good as a bird in the hand or something.

So Fran Dowd was onboard, that was a big deal and Hayley would obviously learn much, so in my mind there were positives all about.

Personally disappointing though was the fact that the administrators of TAFF had decided to yank the TAFF race, as the lack of clarity about what was happening would affect the race and those who wanted to run in it. I was really very annoyed by this, all for my own reasons.

It makes sense not to run the race, but due to my involvement with TAFF in the previous two years, I was aware of the effort many fans made on behalf of TAFF and there was a serious effort made at L.A.con IV to highlight the award and bring it to a new yet quite possible present audience. Anyone who attended Max's TAFF party can attest to that fact, and that we were the last party to close. Regardless the administrators made their decision a few days before Novacon, so that news was talked about a bit, but not as much as I would have liked.

Now Mike Glycer had asked me, and it's

his question which he foolishly posed to me that got this article in response, if Eastercons were healthy.

Well I would say they are. The interest in Hayley's bid, with her being the new girl on the block was very strong. I found out that another bid had been in the offing, but when they had heard there were already two others in the ring, they decided to pull back and wait a year, which makes sense really, but if there were three bids in one year, now that would be a big deal.

I think that there needs to be a continuation of the encouragement that some experienced fans are offering to younger fans. I think that con runners should always be looking to apprentices for want of a better word in order that they can propagate a succession plan, which naturally proceeds.

Of course there are always exceptions, and some people will just turn up and get involved no matter what age etc., but these are still people who need encouragement. Even if it's to read more books.

I had been trying to lose weight at Novacon, as I was on a diet and still am, I have lost about 11 kilos since October now, and I didn't want the convention to be a pound-piling exercise. This is hard as I eat quite a bit at cons to help the energy levels keep at the maximum. But I purposely monitored what I was eating and drinking.

First off, I decided upon no booze. This isn't hard really as the real ale drinkers who make up a lot of Novacons' membership ensure the unpalatable beer stuff is in evidence, and I ignored my favoured natural cider and pretended it didn't exist. This left me with fizzy water and lime cordial, which worked out at about 40 pence. So drink wasn't an issue.

This was good, because I got an email at 4 a.m. from someone who had too much to drink, which the next day I found rather amusing. It was actually coherent, but I laughed all the same at the slurring of the type.

I decided I would continue focusing on vegetables and fruit for food with as little meat as possible and avoiding the heavier carb-based veggies, such as my beloved spuds.

So I ensured at dinnertime that I was heavy on the veggies. Then late at night when they were dishing up those late night sausages and rashers in bread roles, I found they had veggie sausages so I opted for these without bread, which allowed me to have twice as many, which was excellent and not really the type of filling that you want after midnight, but it was much better than the usual pork sausages.

The evening quiz that Novacon, apart from the odd dodgy question where you'd

really need to be a Novacon committee member to know the answer was really quite good, and we ended up giving the chair a very hard time indeed, with a considerable amount of berating and cajoling and banter and booing. We were meant to have a team of 4 but I think we had eight and we still didn't win, but we came close and the craic was fantastic.

Afterwards I spent much time in the pleasant and refurbished bar area, chatting and hanging out with friends, new and old, and getting to know Hayley a little better.

But the real killer is the good old British Breakfast, this consists of rashers, sausages, pudding fried eggs, all in an unhealthy amount oil.

Like most UK hotels though, they offer other types of food. I went first for cereals and skimmed milk with some juices. Not too bad at all. Then I went for yoghurt, which are relatively cheap in the UK so were plentiful and fruit, both dried and fresh. Tea as well. So with extra portions of these healthier options I was well set up for the day, just like always, but I also felt I had a little bit more energy, which was required.

Sunday seemed to pass by quite quickly especially as so much was going on, and with no time at all, the closing ceremony was upon us and then Fran and Chris got up to talk about their convention.

Unfortunately there was some sort of debate of issue raised by Farah Mendelsohn about whether guests of Convoy should continue over to Contemplation.

Now I disagree with the idea that any new con committee should have to inherit the desires and vision of the previous con. Sure it's an Eastercon, but what's important to me as a con runner is that I apply my vision of how things should be and bring that to a realisation through hard work, listening to opinions and advice but making a decision myself. I would easily get disaffected if I had to agree to accept what I may consider a burden from a previous convention.

Whether a rescue Eastercon has such a responsibility is debatable of course, and I am sure many would have their own viewpoint. It seemed though that some of the guests would not be coming along anyhow, even if asked as they were committing based on personal agreements and undertakings.

It was an interesting exchange and many other people found it worth voicing an opin-



ion on the matter. I just observed.

I wonder is it wrong as a conrunner to be judgmental about people, whom really I don't know, but basing my judgement on the interaction and behaviour they display when at a convention.

I run young adult stuff, and there are some things I have come to deplore. Young people being spoken over, ignored by adults grandstanding. Moderators being treated with disdain – when they are trying to manage a panel to everyone's satisfaction and bowing and caressing egos. People speaking or treating those charged with minding the kids with any sort of disrespect – especially if it's dismissive and in front of children.

It's odd how I can feel such ire towards a professional.

So I just sat and observed and hoped that Fran made up her own mind on which guests they would have.

Then Peter Harrow and Myself went up onstage to talk about our Eastercon bid LX. It's the sixtieth Eastercon you see, but we can't call it Eastercon LX as we are only a bid, so its LX until we win or lose. Hayley got up to talk about Concordia and did a good job of it, although I was surprised that there was some audible unhappiness with her choice of hotel, which is the Birmingham Metropole next to the airport.

I found that odd, as it's as far away from anything as the hotel we were all sitting in was, and to be honest she has gotten a cracking deal from the hotel and she just lacks

committee, which she soon started to find.

I felt good introducing her to the likes of Farah Mendelsohn who seemed to end up joining Hayley on her committee and others were quick to step forward to introduce themselves. Of course offers of help and actually helping are two different things in conrunning as is volunteering to sign up and join a committee the ultimate sacrifice of time and energy, so its hard to know who was going to do what, but Hayley was being approached – which says a lot to people who wonder how new faces get treated.

The convention started to wind down, and we all went our merry ways. I got a lift from Steve Lawson to the train station and headed on my way.

As I mentioned Mike asked me about how Eastercons are – and hence this long write up.

Eastercons are healthy and will continue apace, people will still continue to volunteer. I expect that in 2005 when there wasn't anyone to actually run a convention – and Chris and her brave gang brought forward what they thought was a viable convention – it was a blip and it won't come around for a while again.

No matter who winds this years bid, there will be a losing bid, and although this is a negative thing and can be demoralising – it also means that those people will not have realised their potential and if they upon mature reflection come to see that what they failed to have had in 2009 could also be in 2010. That could well be me, and I hear that 2010 may have some people thinking all ready, bloody Scots – you just cant keep 'em down.

They may not be perfect and membership attendance will rise and fall. I am looking forward to Orbital in 2008 and expect that a London (Heathrow) location and a superb line up of guests including Neil Gaiman will bring many people in, and there are people out there who want Eastercons and who am I to argue.

The Fanivore

Marie Rengstorff

[Loc on File 770:146] I should not be taking this time, but you inspired/provoked me to answer. (Isn't that the usual way.)

I was looking through the pike that accumulates every year — stuff I want to finish, is really worthwhile, but can be put off. *File 770:146* was in the stack. First I read Keith Stokes on Archon 29. My fan roots began in Ohio, so I enjoy hearing bits on that part of the world from time to time. I particularly remember Judy Del Rey in a circle skirt which, on her, swept the floor. In that red and green plaid outfit she was a dancing doll with the energy of a minesweeper. I admired from afar and knew she would grow into somebody great, which, of course, she did.

But that is off the subject. Here sits the provocation. I wanted to correct your observations of Sierra's reading last year. I suppose by now you know that Sierra could read in English, despite your comment "but she doesn't actually read yet." My parents made the same idiotic comment, and I still remember the insult. Ask her to reflect back on that night of the Spanish book. If she remembers it, I bet she can tell you what level of reading she had achieved at that moment.

I learned to read at 18 months and remember the process very clearly. I memorized two books, *Cinderella* and *A Cat in a Hat*. (That is not the later, popular book. This was a tiny thing written in facing rhyming pages: This is a cat — in a hat. This is a fox — in a box. This is a pup — in a cup.)

From that little book, I learned to read nine words and the principles of phonetics. From *Cinderella* I learned: I, am, when, and, the, that, what, mouse, is, are, Cinderella, and probably eight or ten more. Since I had memorized the words on [every] page, I would sit in bed at night, find the words I could read and, using my memorized dialog, try to discover which blobs fell between the words I could already read. I tried to match my memorized dialog to the blobs at the bottom of the page using location and limited phonetics.

Personally, I felt insulted when my parents said that was not really reading. As an adult, I still consider that to be beyond simple reading. I think it is a skill many of adults never conquer.

I ran into the same thing with a French book as Sierra tried to explain to you regarding a Spanish book. I asked my mother to teach me the simple French words so I could study out the rest. She, of course, was irri-



tated by my request.

Later, when I was getting my Ph.D. and needed Graduate Record Exam proficiency in two languages to earn that Ph.D. in science, I used exactly that same procedure to prepare. I brought home a pile of children's French books from the UCLA library. I read two or three out loud to myself every night for three weeks. I knew many basic French words, and with the hotel of logic, phonetics, and cute pictures, and occasionally a dictionary, I figured out the rest of the words. By the end of three weeks, I had learned a fourth grade child's level of vocabulary. Before the children's books, I already knew past, present and future tenses, and could recognize words or endings implying such key concepts as "if" and "when," major issues in science. Many French majors did not have those scientific concepts. I find many English speakers cannot follow them in their own languages. Anyway, I blasted that test.

I have tried to teach other adults those tricks. Most simply cannot use them. I think learning to read that way really is a *natural* skill of bright children.

Ask Sierra about it. I bet, using a favorite book from a year ago, she can show you how she learned to read and how well she really was reading last Christmas.

The first book I could read, word for word, every single word, was *A Night Before Christmas*. That was a year later.

[[I love the story. I will ask Sierra and report back. I learned to read long before

going to kindergarten. I had a Golden Book about Disneyland that my parents had read a zillion times. Apparently I memorized the words and also, somewhat like you, learned to recognize the words in other contexts. For example, I could read and understand about half the comic strips in the paper when I was four. A few others, like Mary Worth, I could read but they didn't mean anything to me.]]

Tim Marion

File 770:148 arrived yesterday and I immediately started devouring it (obviously I should have eaten breakfast). I found it so engrossing that I recalled with some degree of shame that there were times in the (distant) past when I was so fanactive that I would actually have to put *File 770* aside for a while. It's certainly a good thing I'm gafiated now — gives me a lot more time for reading fanzines! (And yes, I know that makes no sense. Consider that fairly typical of the paradoxical nature of fandom.)

No real comments, other than to say that I'm glad that famous fan whom I've heard of for the past 35 years, Bjo Trimble, is in relatively good health. Shameful that someone who is so acrimonious toward her should start a death or dying hoax, no matter what she may have done to inspire such ire; with so many deaths in fandom nowadays, we surely don't need any false alarms.

Curious that you put a period in between my first and last name -- almost makes me consider permanently punctuating my name that way in order to gain extra attention...but I think someone is already doing it (in the recording industry, Indi.Arie).

I really appreciated Joe Major mentioning Frank Slaughter's (love that name) *The Deadly Lady of Madagascar*, which I once read in anticipation of the Wednesday night ABC movie-of-the-week. If the movie ever came on, I missed it, and I have only found one oblique listing since for a movie starring Roger Moore and Lee Marvin. Doesn't even sound like the same movie, really... Thanks for printing Joe's letter as well as his email address. Joe has since been kind enough to send me his lengthy treatise on the book.

Robert Lichtman asks the same question about current artist Ed Cox that I asked (or referred to) in a letter to the *SFC Bulletin* (the official organ of the Southern Fandom Confederation) a couple of years ago (about it being the same name as the famous, now-deceased, end-of-the-page doodle artist).



Since it confused me, and Robert is a from a generation ahead of me in fandom, I'm sure it was confusing to him as well.

I have a variation on "You know you're old when most of the people you know are dead." It is, "You know you're old when most of the stores you used to shop at have closed."

Chris Barkley's reminiscence of his past 30 years in fandom struck some resonating notes with me, particularly since we're about the same age. I recently learned, however, that the curse or proverb, "May you live in interesting times," did not necessarily originate with the Chinese.

Diana's "Snowbound in Morocco" was the most meaningful thing in the issue to me, so far. Her book also sounds interesting.

John Hertz's con reports, to me, read too much like how Hank Davis described the local science fiction radio show -- "Yadda yadda yadda, ego ego."

I very much appreciated Alex von Thorn's article, "Building the Worldcon Committee," as it was both informative and had a sense of humor. Other than that, I can only hope it is useless to me, as I hope never to have to either chair a worldcon or even be on a con committee. I respect those who engage in such activities, but I can't imagine myself ever doing so. It almost reminds me, when I was a kid, of a mundane friend (who claimed he wanted to write) who couldn't understand me pumping page after page out of my mimeo machine hour after hour. Convention committees require a different type of fan than I am, but I wish them luck. And I should mention, from an historical perspective, that it's amazing how complicated these things have become since the first few people worldcons back in the 40s (not that I was there, of course).

Martin Morse Wooster (whom I'm tempted to call "Martin Moose Worster," but only as a joke) writes an interesting con re-

port on Capclave, which is almost more interesting for what he did not say. He made me very curious about the "feud" or "conspiracy" that has removed Alexis Gilliland from WSFS and makes me wonder if it has anything to do with matters which were discussed in *File 770* before by Ted White and Keith Lynch (as well as Alexis originally). I don't mean to be such a stickler, but when Martin Morse Wooster claims that "This might well be the most slanderous and inflammatory one-shot since Harlan Ellison kneed the mad dogs in the groin" I feel compelled to point out that it was

Harlan who claimed to be kicked in the groin. In other words, Harlan claimed not to be the kicker but the kickee, and this was said in response to those who didn't acknowledge his claim that Seventh Fandom had begun. (Admittedly, I may be getting some of the details wrong here, as this all occurred long ago and it's been long since I've read about it.) Wooster would have done better, I'm assuming (I admit), by comparing Alexis's publication with one or two that were emitted at the time of the "Great Breen Boondoggle."

I don't know if I told you this or not, Mike, but I've begun a huge, mammoth project (which may take me much of the year) organizing all the different fanzines and apa mailings I have received, as well as others' collections I have accumulated, over the past 37 years. There are organized (by title, which is unwieldy) boxes in the living room on top of the china cabinet and unorganized boxes of fanzines and apa mailings in the living room closet, my room and the rest of the living room. One of the many zines I came across and perused was an unfilled issue of *File 770* from the early 80s.

File 770 sure has changed a lot in the past 25 years. Not just in terms of the transition from (excellent) mimeo on colored paper to (excellent) photocopying on white paper, but the death of a popular fan then (Susan Wood, by name) made front page headlines. Now the obituaries are a regular part of every issue. And somehow, I feel a little more dissipated by each fan death. Nobody told me old age would be like this --- fans and friends dying, cats dying... As John Lennon has said, "Nobody told me there would be days like these!" While I live on, albeit with deteriorating vision and receding hairline.

John Hertz writes an excellent eulogy to Bob Tucker.

Thanks again for the excellent and informative read, Mike.

Chris Garcia

File 770 arrives on eFanzines along with half-a-dozen other zines that piled up while I was down south almost getting run over by Iggy Pop on Hollywood Blvd. It's nice that I survived and am now able to start making up for lost time.

I can't wait to get a read at *The Company They Keep*. A friend of mine went to the LosCon panel about it and said she's super-excited. I'm working on a comedy piece about a writer's group made up of teens who weren't talented enough to start a band, so they turned to writing bad horror fiction. It'll play well in the sticks!

Sierra's doll and stuffed animals all have names that at least make sense with what they are. When Evelyn was 3 or 4, she had a habit of naming things strangely. She had a girl doll (which was actually supposed to be a baby boy doll) that she named Georgie. I once made a joke that only Evelyn could have a cross-gendered baby doll, which led Evelyn's Mom, Gen, to slap my arm. She also had Barbara-Bill, a large Elephant, Mako the Great White Shark (she'd been watching Shark Week) and Baba the Shrimp which she named because she thought it looked like Jaba the Hut and just badly remembered what Jaba's name was.

I'd been wondering what happened to Trufen. Things slowed a lot over the last year, but they are slightly picking up. I do miss Peter's articles, though. They added a bit of light and fire to the site.

I hadn't heard any of the Bjo's dying rumors, but it figures that she's doin' well. Sorry to hear she's dealing with fibromyalgia, though. That's tough stuff.

I'm supporting the HANA fund, and hopefully I can scrape together a little extra and help Get Harry Bell out to Corflu. There's a lot of little funds this year, so the money's gotta spread a little thinner. Still, sounds like good stuff.

That JETS ballot is really interesting. I've got no idea who is going to win, but there are some great names. I've read Abi Brown's stuff and Jukka's in FAPA with me. Should be a good race. With no TAFF this year, there's a lot of focus that can be put on the one-time fund.

I was on NPR a couple of weeks after Ben Yalow showed up talking about computer games. It seems that they have a producer over there who loves fandom as we spent half an hour after the interview ended chatting about the recent WorldCon and various zines. It was a lot of fun.

Next year (which starts in a day and a half) marks ten years since the passing of Bill Rotsler and the tenth person will receive

the Rotsler Award. I think the list of folks who have won the Rotsler so far is wonderful, though I wish that they'd do an occasional posthumous award again to those that have left us before the award was started. I can think of a few folks who would really fit the bill.

It's amazing at how much fanzine production has sped up among those of us who frequent eFanzines.com. There's a couple of weeklies (*The Drink Tank* and *Vegas Fandom Weekly*), there's at least two bi-weeklies (*SF/SF* and *And Furthermore*), two monthlies (*Pixel* and *In A Prior Lifetime*) and various randomly scheduled zines. It's a wonder any of us who write the things manage to get a break, but it's incredible that Bill Burns even gets to blink with the amount of stuff he has to post for us!

I love *The Knarley Knaws*. I didn't discover it until recently, but it's a fun little zine with so much good readin' to be done.

I'm sad to see *EmCit* go. It was a really good zine and Cheryl's a friend and a damn fine writer. I keep hoping I can convince her to write something for *The Drink Tank*, but it's not looking good.

I'm glad to hear so many of my favourite people have made it through the worst of their medical troubles. There was a distinct

lack of letters to my various zines when Lloyd's eyes took him out of the game.

I'm saying this now so that the world will hear it and know it is the truth: I will never chair a WorldCon. That is all.

Good on Tadao! I'm always glad to see folks who are actors actually acting. I've not done anything for ages (I think the last thing was a short where I had no lines) but one of my cameos is coming up on IFC in a month.

I wish I could have made TorFlu, but alas, I was bogged down with other stuff. Still, it sounds like it was a wonderful time. It was about 1/5 the size of CorFlucisco in 2005 (the only one I've attended) and this year's sounds like it'll be about a hundred or so with a lot of Brits coming over. I'm excited!

We lost a lot of fans this last year. Some widely known and loved (Bob and Fern Tucker, rich brown, Dick Eney) and some who were mere blips (my Pops John Garcia falls into that category) but they all suck. I'm just glad I got a chance to meet or interact with many of them over the years.

Sounds like an interesting Westercon. I've had folks say it was the most Westercon-like Westercon in ages. Sadly, I couldn't make it. I'll be at this coming year's edition, partly because it's my turn to run the Fanzine Lounge!

Robert Lichtman

First, I imagine Pat Virzi was not amused by Taral's footnote to his Toronto Corflu report that she "is still a hottie." That aside, I wish I had my copy of the *Toronto the Ghodd* CD, and for that matter the printed program book and other related materials from that Corflu. (And Ted White no doubt wishes he had his own copy of the one-shot Colin did there for which Ted hand-stenciled some artwork. I only have mine because Colin **had** to distribute it to FAPA to retain his membership.) I read that he's going to the Austin Corflu, and I wonder if he'll be besieged by an angry crowd for failure to come through with these items.

By now you've no doubt had many corrections about Dick Eney's real age at his death, which was 74.

The parts of my letter of comment in *VFW* No. 84 about Helen Wesson got reprinted in the December 2006 issue of *The National Amateur*, official publication of the National Amateur

Press Association, the oldest of the non-fan apas. There's a lot of other material about Helen in that issue as well. I don't know if single copies of this issue are available for interested parties, but contact information is available at <http://www.amateurpress.org>.

I hope you'll be publicizing *Ah! Sweet Laney!*, the collection of 29 articles by F. Towner Laney, that I edited and Pat Virzi designed and published last month. Full information is available at Efanazines, and a PDF with a sample article is available there as well.

Brad Foster

While I greedily yearn for the days of *File 770* coming several times a year, a semi-annual schedule will still work, so great to see the new issue.

First, add my congrats to others to Alexis on being award the latest Rotsler award. He's been sending his great 'toons out to zines long before I arrived on the scene, and the way things are going, he'll probably be spreading that creativity long after I'm gone!

I liked Tim [Davis]'s "The Tree of Light" essay. I've not done anything that huge scale, but every year I try to add one more string of lights to those going around the house and up on the roof. Every year I comment on how I think lights on houses are really nice, and wish they could be up year round. This year I was surprised when Cindy, the main defense against my getting too weird for the neighbors to bear, agreed that maybe leaving a string or two up in one area around the year might be kind of nice. Ha! The thin end of the wedge has been placed! Can finally getting the giant inflatable used-car lot gorilla permanently placed on the roof be far off?

Marie Rengstorff

No system is perfect. I was, once upon a time many years ago, treated rather rudely by a commercial publisher that got tangled up in the Star Trek fanzine industry. ROC/Penguin published one of my Star Trek/psychology articles in *The Best of Trek: 18* without a word to me.

I only found out by accident, on my middle-of-the-week birthday, when I went to the grocery store. I decided to buy myself a pumpkin pie and a silly book as gifts to myself. A busy Wednesday is not a great day for a birthday. A foolish gift is a delightful answer.

There, sparkling out of the book rack, was *The Best of Trek*. Perfect. No book could have been much more idiotic. But the story gets sillier. I picked up the book and checked





the table of contents. There I found one of my articles.

The article had been published several times before, in other magazines, for free, with my blessing, but I had always received my "copies." Besides, ROC/Penguin was clearly publishing my story for profit.

I wrote to ROC and asked for \$50 and three copies of the book. I sent the request in a jolly, and not-at-all-critical letter. I did not take the whole thing very seriously. I did not expect a check. I did, however, expect them to send the three copies of the book. Everybody else sent copies of the magazines that had previously published the article.

ROC never sent me a thing. Years passed.

After more than 10 years, I went online, found and bought three used copies of the book. They cost me ten to twenty-five cents each, plus shipping and handling. I do not have copies of all books containing my works. My pile will never compete with Asimov, but I have this one shelf where....

But that is an olde story. Several items in 770 #147 brought this experience back to mind. For example, "The committee's press release" on page 18 which began: "Forty years ago, on September 8th, 1966, Star Trek debuted on television." (A year that will live in...?)

On September 11th, 40 years ago, I started teaching college. Of course I was 12 when I first taught college. (If you believe that, I have a neat bridge from San Francisco to Maui for sale.) I never remember that the year was 1966, but the world never forgets. From time to time, something reminds me. The concept "40 years ago" came as a rude

awakening.

I remember watching the first episode on my mentor's brand new color TV. I thought the first episode of Star Trek was dingy. I still do. I was slow to warm up, but I was totally hooked by episode eleven. I remain so.

For now, 40 years later, I will take this new 770 and my dog to the beach for a more thorough reading (I will read 770, not the dog), after one last question. Why did Octavia Butler die? Yes, I read the part where she fell down. I fell down once this year and many times last year, mostly off my boogie board. I am older than she was and I am not dead from my falls, even from one bump down a lava rock. There must have been more to it.

Her story, "Bloodchild" was extraordinary. I think I read everything by her after that. Yes, she was a genius, whether she wanted to be or not. Any genius little girl born before 1950 ran into some problems from that "stigma." I wonder if that was even more a problem for a non-white brilliant little girl. I was waiting for more writing from her when I got the word.

Lloyd Penney

The Files may come a little further apart now, but that means they are more looked forward to. Here's some words about issue 148.

Congratulations to Diana on her new book. I wish I had something neat in print I could brag about, but I will lean on Yvonne's

publishing feat of a few years ago. Because of her involvement in space advocacy, she was asked to submit an essay on space advocacy and the connected industries to a proposed book of essay to be published by the European Space Agency. With some research on her part, and some proofreading on mine, her essay was accepted, and we received a large trade paperback in the mails. There were essays from Kofi Annan, Sir Arthur C. Clarke, and Yvonne Penney. I guess she can claim to have been published in an anthology with Sir Arthur, and she'd be right.

Sounds like Sierra enjoys regular performances of Stuffed Animal Theatre. Just for the record, so do we...

Bjo is dyeing, but not dying. She and John were great at LAcon IV, and we saw them again as Fan GoHs at Astronomicon in Rochester, NY a couple of months afterwards. They'll be around a long time yet. In Rochester, I got to tell Bjo for the first time about talking with Takumi Shibano while sitting in the Trimbles' living room just days before LAcon II.

It had been a while since we'd heard from Brian Davis re CUFF, so we'd thought that Brian hadn't been able to find anyone to succeed him in a CUFF election. Brian doesn't travel that far, seeing he lives in New Brunswick, and he gets as far west as Toronto, where he attends most years Toronto Trek (which, by the way, was recently renamed Polaris). It's good to see him well again, but I wonder how many people have any awareness of CUFF or any other fan fund.

I loosed every issue (that I received) of Cheryl Morgan's *Emerald City* because there was always something to comment on, especially about the sticky subject of Worldcon politics. I tried to go back to her website after she shut down EC, but it was already gone. And, I've seen nothing with her byline in any publication I get. I think fanzine fandom treated her badly, mostly because of her aims for her zine. I hope she will continue to write, and perhaps she does now, but guaranteed none of it will appear in a fanzine.

Ah, time does march on. Used to be that the *File 770* news column listed fannish achievements, new zines, club activities, etc. Now, they list medical problems, more medical problems, medical emergencies, etc. Fandom is forever, and these days, it sure feels like it. *ouch*

Alex von Thorn's article on organizing a Worldcon committee comes from two different angles... being on the Toronto in 2003 committee and the Chicago in 2008 committee. Seeing how difficult it was to be on the Toronto committee, I can only hope that his experiences with the Chicago people were

more positive. Some of his examples, I think I recognize some of his examples. In fact, I wonder if Alex is thinking of mounting another bid somewhere? By the way, I think the new San Antonio address is work-related and temporary.

I believe all of our L.A.con IV agency activities are done. All the refund cheques for Canadian members have been issued; I think there's still some yet to be cashed. I still have to check the bank account to see what's left to be cashed.

So many obituaries...it took me a while to learn of the passing of Jim Overmyer. I met Jim at a Michigan convention, and he would come up to Toronto for a number of years and conventions. He was quite recognizable; he was often dressed in lederhosen at cons. His nickname was Mr. Coffee, for he was usually drinking it, even walking the convention halls, and he often had coffee parties at cons.

The comments are a little dated, but I agree with Chris Garcia. There are so many good writers whose works we enjoy, so many of them we admire and respect, that there may not be enough opportunities to say thank you. Some of those great authors (and this applies to artists, too) go through their lives with some measure of respect, but don't get named a Grand Master or other lofty position, or win a neat trophy. We want to say many thanks, but sometimes, we don't get to it until it's too late. Then again, increasing the many awards and fancy positions may take away much of the lustre from the awards and positions with some measure of time and achievement behind them.

The horizontal ribbons at L.A.con made things a little hard to read, mostly because they were a little smaller, but the sheer numbers of the ribbons made up for it. It got to the point where if you didn't have a foot of ribbons hanging off the bottom of your badge, you just weren't trying hard enough. Many of us could stand outside, and tell which way the wind was blowing.

Just a few days ago, I received a letter of thanks from UC Riverside for submitting to them a copy of our CUFF trip report from some years back. At L.A.con IV, John Hertz had helped the SF collection with a section on trip reports, and had provided them with a reduced photocopy of the cover to *Penneys Up The River, and Other CUFF Tales*. When we got back, I promptly send the collection one of my few remaining copies, and through one miscue or another, I got e-mails before the promised letter arrived. It might also have been swirling about in the mail for a while. It was dated December, and arrived February 5.

Just for the record, Yvonne and I did get to the LA County Coroners' offices on N.

Mission, and my article about our adventures that day should be in an issue of *Vegas Fandom Weekly* RSN, possibly issue 93.

I think that's about all for now. Please greet Diana for me, and lotsa of hugs to Sierra...it's evident that of all the positions you've held over the years, Dad is probably the one you've enjoyed the most. Take care, and see you next issue.

Alexander Slate

Well, I did manage to get the latest *File 770*. It came down with Laurel on her recent trip from Dayton, where it was forwarded after being sent to the old Lasater address. And of course page 6 holds the change of address announcement. Don't worry, you aren't the only one. Everyone has gotten the change of address, but about 2/3 of the fanzines insist on being sent to the old address.

Of course, watch everyone correct their addresses now. The funny thing is I don't know how much longer I'll be here -- hopefully not long. I've accepted a job (a promotion - huzzah!) in Washington, D.C. This means that Laurel and I will be separated for a year or two more, but its too good an opportunity to pass up. Laurel and girls will remain in Ohio. When I am moving is still up in the air, due to government policy issues. Right now it appears it won't be until at least the end of March. I'll send out notices when I now when and where the new address will be. (I know, the grammar on that last sentence was horrific, but I'm gonna leave it that way anyhow [sic]).

Good to see another *File 770*. As you can tell, I'm pretty isolated, since it was only through that issue that I heard of the passing of Judith Ward, someone I considered a friend. Judith and I almost always disagreed on how to get things done, but we always knew and respected each others competencies. Judith was someone, who like me, always knew when things were headed for trouble. One thing about Judith, she never hesitated to suggest fixes, and always volunteered to help. Just like the Con Suite story in the zine suggests. Texas fandom would not be what it is without her passion and drive.

Joseph T. Major

Editorial Notes: Diana's new book: "We've learned that readying a book for publication is an endless series of crises." Tell me about it. It took about a year and a half to get *Heinlein's Children* ready for the press.

Obits: Both Tuckers — well, some say that some couples are like lovebirds, when one dies the other doesn't have long. Bob's

death has left Fandom bereft of its favorite uncle.

Dick Eney: And talk about deadline! He certainly took to the Net with a vengeance.

The Fanivore: Chris Garcia: It was unfortunate that Frankie Thomas died before he could be honored, but the supply of World-Con honorees rather exceed the supply of WorldCons. More and more GoHs will be GhostoHs, it looks like. And the "In Memoriam" will be the biggest part of the opening ceremonies.

Robert Lichtman: If Warner's house sold for \$100k and is now twice that, all I can say is that house prices must be a lot higher in Hagerstown! It did not look like all that big a place.

Lloyd Penney: Thanks for the news about Chaz Boston Baden's lapse in fanzines. I had begun to think he had been doing a TAFF bidzine.

Taral Wayne

I didn't know Diana was writing a book, let alone one on the Inklings (or is that the black harmonic group?). I'll have to keep an eye on the delete bins in a couple of years. (Nothing personal, but \$35 and \$45 books tends to keep them out of the hands of the peasants like me.)

I was at a party for Robert Charles Wilson & David Hartwell Friday. There I also met Larry Hancock, who was treasurer for Torcon. I asked if they were over their troubles and he said mostly. They've got a few loose ends, but have sequestered \$15,000 for "worthy causes," none of which he named to me. There's supposed to be another fifteen grand when they're sure all the bills are paid and the money is free & clear. I asked if they'd be interested in an archiving project, to ensure a set number of copies of the CD's I was producing. I was a bit set back by the answer. Evidently the committee has decided the money has to be used for causes "accessible" to the people who were members of the worldcon. This was interpreted to mean things like bringing guests to cons, or perhaps mounting receptions. But preserving old fanzines doesn't seem to be anything the concom thinks fans might be interested in.

I really don't like con fans... Fanzine fandom is marginal enough without the people who hold the purse strings and determining who gets their five minutes of fame making it *official*.

Joy V. Smith

I like the collage-type cover--lovely background and interesting, and I like the letter-

ing. Aggregate? Rocks? Asteroids?

The Company They Keep sounds intriguing; I know Diana will be grateful when it's finally out! And congratulations to her for getting those great blurbs! (Been there; didn't get any.) Wonderful photo of Sierra being read to; and I enjoyed the background on her toys' names. (They all gotta have a name.)

I'm aware of Trufen, though I'm not sure I've ever visited it. (So many websites.) Thanks for the update and the other news tidbits, including the various awards; I hadn't heard of the JETS or that *Emerald City* was closing down.

Useful, but scary, article on "Building the Worldcon Committee" by Alex von Thorn. I also enjoyed Taral Wayne's Corflu 23 report and graphics and "John Hertz's Westercon Notebook" with its inserted quotes. And the other con reports. And the two Christmas stories too. And Chris M. Barkley's "30 Years in Fandom." And all the photos.

The Fanivore: Okaay. I'll remember not to use OBE or the other orders in conversation. (That way I don't have to worry about getting it right.) Re: *Bastards of Kirk*, I'm not aware of this. Will it be available anywhere anytime soon? I remember *All in Color for a Dime*; I used to have it, but I don't recall coming across it in my last culling sweep. (I accumulate too many books.) I don't remember a *Xero* connection. Re: my LOC, in which I mention Michael F. Flynn's novelette (yes, I called it a short story in my LOC), I am in "Dawn, and Sunset, and the Colours of Earth" (two posts--Pagadan and Velvet--in the online segment, along with other online contributors, which were very well edited to incorporate the story line). Anyway, this story will be in a forthcoming *Years Best SF #12*.

The HANA announcement (Send John Hertz to Japan) makes a great back cover with the Japanese text. Is that one word?

John Purcell

Gorgeous Alan White cover. Simply gorgeous. He has sent me the cover for the second issue of *Askance* (May, 2007) which simply blew me away when I saw it. Alan has a talent streak a mile and three-quarters wide, and his work deserves some recognition. Time to start talking him up for Fan Artist Hugo, I guess. He deserves the nod, or at least a sideways glance.

As you have probably noticed over on eFanzines.com, I have folded the two e-zines I've been running at a break-neck pace for the last year, *In a Prior Lifetime* and *...and furthermore*. They were both a lot of fun to do, but I have my dissertation staring me in the face - in fact, there's a stack of texts and

note cards by my chair needing my immediate attention for the Literature Review chapter, and they're calling me incessantly (I'm coming, I'm coming! Hold your danged horses...Sheesh!) - so I felt the need to downshift my fan pubbing gears into first to make time for dissertation research and writing. I have said it elsewhere and I'll say it again: fanac is fun and a welcome diversion from the idiosyncrasies of academia. The new zine, *Askance*, will be out on March 22, 2007 (cover by Brad Foster), and will be a bi-monthly (for starters). My goal is to make this zine my release valve to keep me sane over the next year and a half, maybe more. We'll see how things play out.

Every so often something gets posted on Trufen.net, whereupon I get e-mail notification (a great feature of the site), and there are times when I peruse some of the old stuff still floating there. I do hope Victor can get back into the swing of things; it's a great service and a wonderful source of information. Thank you, Mike, for plunking information there when you can. I really don't want to see this site go the way of all flesh and have its bytes scattered to the Internet winds. Trufen serves a purpose, and I am one fan who appreciates its place in the fannish scheme of things.

Alexis Gilliland definitely deserves the Rotsler Award. I have no idea how long he's been at this sort of thing, but it has definitely been a few decades at least. Love his sense of whimsy, and Alexis has an easily recognizable style. Even though it's been many months since he received the award, my congratulations, Alexis. Keep on drawing! (Maybe even for my zine, *hint-hint*)

Mike, wasn't the birth of Hugo Gernsback the featured story in your first annish?

There are now many zines with well over 100 issues, which astonishes me. I think it is easy to accept the fact that modern technology -- e-pubbing, using computers to lay-out and create graphics, plus easy incorporation of photos into a zine, etc. -- has made this possible. Of course, it doesn't hurt to be single and have a pile of excess energy needing to be burned up, does it Chris? A hearty "well done" goes to Henry Welch and *Knarley Knews*. That is a fine zine that is well worth asking for. Just out of curiosity, too, Mike: when did *File 770* start? I think you had this sucker already running when I got into fandom the first time back in 1973, but I just can't remember exactly when it began.

[If you saw a newzine of mine in 1973 it was *Organlegger*. What Elst Weinstein and I started as a hoax newzine for Westercon (distinguishable from the real newzine by ours having a lot more news), I continued for awhile as a legitimate fan newzine. One of the events I reported was LASFS acquiring

its original clubhouse that year. The zine soon folded because in a burst of idealism I'd promised all the (miniscule) proceeds from subscriptions to the Bob Shaw Fund and couldn't afford to eat the cost of printing and mailing. I'd learned a few lessons by the time I started *File 770* in January 1978.]]

I really don't mean to cut this loc short, but I do want to thank Alex von Thorn for his insightful treatise on how to create a successful Worldcon committee. Sounds like the voice of experience talking here. His closing line best sums up how any con committee should operate: "We don't have to agree on every question to be able to agree to work together, and picking the right people to be in charge is one of the best guarantees of a good experience for both committee and attending members of the convention." Truer words were never spoken. Now if only Alex has suggestions on how to re-assemble fragmented fan groups after *hosting* a worldcon, well, there's an article that will also serve a practical purpose.

Taral's Corflu 23 report was greatly enjoyed, but I sure missed meeting him at Corflu 24 just passed. It was another great time, as I'm sure you've read all over LiveJournal and e-zines already. It sure felt like going home to me. I haven't had that much of a good time at a con since 1992. Of course, that *was* my last real fannish convention -- almost the *only* con I've attended since then -- but that's not important right now. As a result, I can't wait for next year's Corflu in Las Vegas; future scheduled Corflus are Seattle in 2009, England in 2010, and San Jose in 2011. Now I know where I'm gonna be for the next four years...

Many fine people have been lost in the past year, and all I will say about your obituary section is that they will all be missed. Some of these fine folks I knew -- like both Bob and Fern Tucker -- but I am also saddened by the loss of fans I never knew. Sure sounds like a batch of wonderful people.

Finally, to wrap up, I just have to say that I read and enjoyed John Hertz's Westercon LIX report, but have no real comments to make thereon. Same for the lettercolumn. As usual, you have put together a wonderful issue, Michael, and I appreciate your love for fan pubbing and keeping this zine very much alive. Take care of yourself, and continue enjoying Sierra. She sure sounds like a wonderful child. Kids keep you young, y'know. And so does fanac. On both counts, I speak from experience.

Brad Foster

[Loc on File 770: 146] Congrats to Schirm on receiving the Rotsler Award this year. His

style is so organically animated, rich flow of line and movement, not to mention nicely twisted humor. Well done.

Thanks for running that old loc of mine you found. *[[Déjà vu all over again...]]* We still miss Lori very much, so I'm glad those comments made it into print, into the "official record" as it were. Speaking of locs, I guess Taral sent his "Preening" comment before he saw my loc about how it was *not* me who said nudes were the way to fan-nishly. I actually agree more strongly with his final comment here, "I always thought it was the guys with the one-liners and puns who had it all." At one point I thought you should re-title the two art-related Hugo Awards. Best Professional Artist would become "Best Painter of Paperback Book Covers," and Best Fan Artist would be "Best Doodler of Weird Gags." Neither is totally true across the board, of course, but it does seem to go that way.

Sheryl Birkhead

[Loc on File 770:146] Hope Alex Slate's recuperation went as planned. Just heard that Fern Tucker passed away....

Taral is doing quite a service for fandom in getting the CDs and internet forms of fanzines available to the general populace (well, fandom in general that is). Thank you.

Both congrats *and* commiserations to David Levine. Not that it really compares, but once upon a time (out of the blue...I figured that a letter to me from a prozine indicated I'd let my subscription lapse) an assistant editor (who shall remain nameless) asked me to come up with designs to be used on t-shirts for their two magazines. I was shocked, in a good way, and promptly sent off two designs – having no idea if in fact that it was to be for t-shirts made any difference in how the design was made. Ah. The rapid reply was ecstatic, the designs were just what they wanted. Oh joy and rapture! Then I just waited. I had no idea how often one was contacted, but after about six months I figured I ought to write. I did. Sorry, aforementioned assistant editor is no longer with us and we have no artwork in the files. Ah, it was nice while it lasted. And nothing like it has ever happened again.

We Also Heard From

Jan van't Ent: After all the busy weeks surrounding last year's end (finishing work, holidays, starting work - and the usual fan activity involving Dutch fandom) I finally got around to reading your issue 148. Nice cover, wonderful contents, as usual - this

time Taral's piece on Corflu was the bit I enjoyed most, but I was also intrigued by the furor on OBE versus knighthood... I just did some digging on the web (all right, I googled) and found that Sir Clarke is a Bachelor Knight in that same OBE (see http://www.geocities.com/harveypooka/clarke_knighthood.jpg).

Ranks within that order are: Knight/Dame Grand Cross, Knight/Dame Commander, Commander, Officer, Member (there's more on e.g.

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/OutPut/Page4886.asp> or

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_the_British_Empire).

Just in case you wanted to know.

Lee Gold: Tamar Lindsay (Dick Eney's wife) later corrected her announcement of his death to say, "And this came as a surprise to me as well as others: he wasn't 69, he was 74. Somehow his birth year got changed on later paperwork."

Eric Lindsay: I kept hoping I would have some sort of news to send you, but life has not co-operated. Actually I'd prefer a lack of cyclones.

I see that cute baby stories are a suitable substitute for cute cat stories in editorials.

The way fanzines keep turning up on the web is great. Amazing to find so many being turned from atoms into bits.

I see we are back to feuds. I'm tempted to observe it is just like old times.

Dotty Kurtz: Thanks for *File 770 #148*, especially after reading "Snowbound in Morocco" by Diana Glyer. Such an inspiring story could have just as easily found its way into *Friends Journal* or a similar publication.

Alexis Gilliland: Regarding my letter in #146 which touched on Ted White's joining the WSFA after Lee had banned him from the house I thought it had been made obvious that Bob MacIntosh and Barry Newton were totally innocent of any wrongdoing. They did nothing more than handle a routine bit of business, they were not participants in the fight, and it would be appreciated if you could post this notice in your next issue.

Mike Glicksohn: When #148 arrived I promised myself I'd respond to it this time. I figured I'd send a loc but although I read the entire issue and was intrigued, amused, informed, entertained and saddened at different times, no loc formed mentally. (My lack, not yours.) So here's postage for the next issue instead.

Martin Morse Wooster: Although Darrell

Richardson's son is Darrell C. Richardson, Jr., he's always been known as Cole Richardson. Cole is a pretty active fan in the Washington area, and best known for his involvement in Burroughs fandom.

Also, your obituary for Darrell Richardson doesn't mention that Richardson was a pretty prolific author, well known for his biography of Max Brand and for his research in the pulps. I believe Richardson wrote over 30 books, including at least four published in the past decade.

Henry L. Welch: Thanks for the latest *File 770*. As usual, a fine issue. For someone who isn't publishing as regularly as you used to, you do manage to keep well-informed of most things fannish.

William Breiding: I did the math on your subscription and realized you are barely breaking even, even if your entire mailing list subscribed, and you are actually still publishing a good old fashioned money-pit of a fanzine!

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THE CAPTAIN'S HAT