



ANKUS 45

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Published by:

Bruce Pelz
15931 Kalisher St.
Granada Hills, CA 91344-3951

Phone: 818-366-3827

Fax: 818-366-7987

bep@deltanet.com

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PRIORITIES

Don Fitch warned me, shortly after he retired from the Los Angeles County Arboretum: retiring means you have less time for the Things You Want To Do than before you retired. It isn't that doubted him, back then while I was still working for the UCLA Library system -- I just hoped he wouldn't be right in my case. He was, of course.

Part of the problem is that the Things You Want To Do expand, and the time you have -- or think you have -- contracts. Then again, maybe it's just that your planning skills atrophy, or else they were always mediocre but now you have to admit the fact. In any case, you wind up having to prioritize the Things You Want To Do. And you've Been There Before -- back before you retired.

I've been retired since November 1993, more as a result of luck than any skill or planning on my part. More than four years. Certainly time enough to work on The Projects that for years were put off "until I retire." Right.

Well, there's the Fanzine Checklist, which started back in 1975. It started on punch cards which were run off on an accounting machine -- an IBM 403 for anyone old enough to remember the things. It had reached over 40,000 cards and become unwieldy, so sometime in the early '80's a friend transferred the whole thing to a mag tape and ran off a huge new list for me. And the project bogged down for lack of a way to update it. In the mid-80's one of the many friends who had been saying "Oh, I can write you a program to transfer that to a PC" for years actually did so, and the list wound up on six disks. Still in punch card format, of course. But all I would have to do was to import the files into dBase, change a few fields to

accommodate the new format, and start updating directly into dBase. On my little tiny computer. Right. I slurped the first disk in and tweaked the data for a while. Edited the format. Decided I'd need to re-do the size designation -- real measurements instead of letter codes -- which meant going back to the original zines. While I was at it, I could put the zines in file folders instead of just cramming them back into the file cabinet. (Thus increasing the storage space needed by about 1/3.) I did a couple of hundred, labeled the folders with computer-printed Avery labels, overran the file cabinet space and stuck the overflow in banker's boxes. And consigned the rest of the project to When I Retire.

By the '90's, computer space was cheap -- my machine is far from tiny. (I forget how many gigabytes the last upgrade Elayne and Jordan did on it has given me. More than I'll need for a while, anyway... .) I went back to the project, procured several more filing cabinets and stuck them in one of the backyard sheds. The Avery labels had almost all dried out and fallen off the folders, so I re-did the folders for the zines I could find, using the plastic-tape labels from a Brother label maker, and stuck them in the newly acquired cabinets. The "A" and Pre-"A" -- zines with titles beginning with punctuation or numbers -- file took up a whole cabinet. More than 10,000 pages of crud fanzines. (That doesn't count the titles in the old file that I haven't been able to find in order to update.) I started on the "B" file, meanwhile trying to keep up with the all-letter stuff that comes in via the mailbox, the LASFS's mailbox, and several friends who don't save their zines. It's not that hard -- a couple hours at the computer entering a stack, most of the time spent looking for information that ought to be in colophons, if zines had colophons, and measuring the weird sizes of paper. About twice that amount of time in the storage shed with the file folders and label maker and interfiling.

Then some other project interferes. The priorities shift.

Among the most time-consuming, there's the Bookseller Project. A year or so after retiring, I thought it would be fun to set up a bookselling operation for SF (etc.) books. I could get discounts on the books *I* want, charge off a few usual expenses, maybe lose money for a couple years, then either make a little money one year (to keep the IRS happy) before going back to losing, or just go out of business. It hasn't worked that way. I set up VERIP Books in May of 1994. (I tell most people it stands for "Vampires, Elves, Robots, & Interstellar Police" but ask anyone who works for the University of California what it really means.) Selling books to LASFS, and at a very few conventions I can drive to -- ones that aren't too exorbitant in their dealers table charges -- and selling to everyone at a discount, the operation hasn't lost money yet. And worse yet it's still fun. But it takes up a L*O*T of time.

I probably would have folded the bookselling operation after a couple years, but I discovered that the University of California at Riverside, whose Eaton Collection of SF is probably one of the best in the country, was willing to buy from me at the discount I could offer. And they take one of everything. Every SF & fantasy book, in every format. -- HC, T/P, MM, Audio, and even G/N. I drive to Riverside once a month with about \$1000 worth of books for Eaton. (I charge VERIP for the mileage and the parking fee... .) And the LASFS members buy lots of books -- even a few of the gamers read, amazingly enough. So does the LASFS Library (though they often wait until the annual Selloff-Before>Returns time.) And even UCLA got into the act,

buying 5 hardbacks a month -- my choice -- for their Current Reading shelf. (So far, after a year, I've only stuck them with one real turkey that I know about... .) So the operation has been running on its own money for the last year, and has even coughed up a profit. My only problem is: how do I get out even if I want to? I can return unsold books, but that only gets credit, for which one has to buy more books, and... . Anyway, the bookselling project takes a lot of time and is almost always a higher priority than the fanzine checklist.

Then there's travel, of which I do as much as I can. The limitations are either time or money, and both depend on Elayne's job. If she's working -- which she usually is -- we have a reasonable amount of money and not much time; if she isn't it's the other way around. She started a new job in December, and went in with the understanding that she'd be gone for three weeks this year -- one in January, one in May, one in September. January was a 7-day cruise on NCL's "Norwegian Star" out of Houston to what they are calling the "Texarribean." May will be a 7-day Alaska cruise on the Holland-American "Statendam" and September will be a week at the Expo in Lisbon. We also steal a few weekends here and there -- we'll be in Victoria, B.C., over July 4th -- and I get to conventions like Boskone and Midwestcon.

I'd like to fit in a couple more cruises each year -- I became a Cruisaholic sometime since we first got into the cruise ship scene back in 1989 -- but I don't like travelling by myself very much, and otherwise there are the limitations as stated. In addition to cruises, Elayne and I maintain a List Of Places we want to go, and we trade off dealing with the tops of our lists. Last year we went to Nordkapp/North Cape, Norway (top of my list), and to Newport, RI (top of Elayne's list). We probably shouldn't have done both in one 4-week trip, as that turned out to be too long for our health, but most of the trip was very enjoyable. I think it's my turn again, and I'm looking at how we get to Petra -- and when. I'm not sure I'm up to doing it as part of an entirely land-based trip through the Middle East, but there are cruises that do a shore excursion to Petra from Aqaba. Now if I didn't already have three trips planned for 1999 -- four if I include the Worldcon... .

In general, Travel gets Highest Priority.

In between, there are Errands to run -- people know you are Retired and therefore have lots of time -- and Household chores that seem to have increased in number and complexity recently (since, having Retired, you are Home All Day and obviously have lots of time).

Guess what gets Lowest priority? Doing fanzines. Even FAPAazines. Even FAPAazines needed to keep a tenuous hold on your last remaining APA membership. Weep, wail... .





DOWNSIZING

Over the years we -- Elayne and I, I don't think I can blame the cats -- have amassed collections, accumulations, and stacks/pile/heaps of Stuff. Every once in a while we move one such aggregation, usually into boxes and storage. Even less frequently we try to figure out a more permanent arrangement for Stuff that has overgrown its boundaries and thus intruded itself into our consciousness as Something That Must Be Dealt With **before it takes over the place.**

When the "Recent Unpleasantness" (as I call the January 1994 earthquake) threw everything around, it made a number of Permanent Disposal decisions for us, and forced a long-term decision-making for various aggregations that were not quite so easily destroyed as glassware and ceramics. The mounds of Stuff residing in the converted garage -- the (W)Rec Room -- were tossed about, some by the Unpleasantness and some by us while looking for a cat. The three or four broken bottles of red ichor were removed along with most of the Stuff the ichor had ruined. (It's Jerry Pournelle's fault, but that's another story -- Story 94P, if I recall correctly.) The rest sat there for a few years while we straightened everyplace else up. We shuddered whenever we opened the door into the (W)Rec Room. Occasionally a search for some item would result in a little excavation of Stuff. Then, taking advantage of my absence at the 1996 Midwestcon, Elayne packed all the Stuff into about 96 banker's boxes, trying to put papers (including fanzines and such) together and Other Stuff together.

The room was again accessible; the boxes were stacked in front of the filing cabinets that line the inside of the double-garage door, and could be used as Flat Space. (Which, as I'm sure you know, falls under TruFan Law 15: A Flat Space Gathereth Crud -- in this case, usually the display boxes for VERIP Books paperbacks.) I went through the boxes a few at a time, bringing them into the living room (about the only place with enough room) to deal with. Fanzines, unsorted, went in tightly-packed boxes to join the other 240+ such boxes in The Shed (storage shed #2, as opposed to #3 which has the filing cabinets of checklisted fanzines); Stuff related to Worldcons, Westercons, and Loscons went into three separate sorting boxes. Other sorting boxes were designated for "Publishing Material," "Worldcon Bids (give to Siclari)," "Other Fan History (give to Lynch)," "Take to LASFS," "Sell Off If Possible," and "Damned If I Know What To Do With It." Various Stuff also hit either the recycling bin (paper, metal, some plastic) or the trash can. I could get through sorting a box or two per night, but never do much about such sorting during the daytime (see previous notes on PRIORITIES.) Then the process would get interrupted either by an upcoming party we were scheduled to have, or the biweekly appearance of our cleaning person, and the sorting boxes would have to be moved to the nether regions of the house, where they'd be out of the way of whichever interruption was imminent.

Starting up the sorting again would, of course, have to wait until the job rose to the top of the Priorities List. This takes a while. There are still about 14 boxes to sort as of May 1st, most of them apparently fanzines. Maybe by this year's Midwestcon... .

The Misc. Stuff tends to accumulate in the dining room, and in the computer room. When a party is imminent -- we've stopped using the cleaning service -- all of this gets tossed into a box and hauled out to the (W)Rec Room, where it sits until I need Something That Surely Came In A Week Ago, or until the last of the Original Boxes is dealt with. With luck I can keep ahead of the boxes by sorting the Original 96 faster than the new ones fill up.

Then there are the actual Collections, of which we have Too Many. I know we're not the only ones -- everyone I mention it to says so -- but I'm older than most of the others with equal amounts of the things, so I've started earlier than they to wonder what to do about the things.

First: the Comics. This is the Second Collection -- I sold the first one back in the '60's, except for one or two titles. In 1996 I donated the first third (A through H) to UCRiverside. The Eaton Collection includes comics, and donations can only improve the collection. I had to evaluate donations myself, since the University is forbidden to do so, but there are several sources for comics values, so that's not as hard. We got a good tax deduction. The second third (titles I through P), which went last year, wasn't quite as valuable, but it was still worthwhile. And the last third, together with the magazine-size comics, will go by the end of this year. That will free up room in The Annex (storage shed #1) so the fanzine filing cabinets can expand there where they need to. For now I'm keeping CERBERUS, and I probably ought to sell the first 50 issues of SANDMAN instead of donating them, but we'll see -- frequently it is not worth the effort of finding a buyer to get the cash instead of donation credit.

There was an accidental benefit to not having got rid of the final third already. CBS Research in New York has me on their list as a source of information/material on SF and Fantasy -- they borrowed a couple fanzines last year for some show or other, though they wound up not using them. Anyway, they called asking if I knew anyone with old SUPERMAN comics, to use on the Seinfeld bio they're doing on May 15 -- old being defined as '60's in this case. I wound up shipping them a few late-60's and a couple early-70's comics via their FedEx account, and when they came back there was a note alleging there will be a credit on the show. 45 seconds of fame. Make that 3.

Then there's the collection of miniature booze bottles. I'd been collecting them for a number of years, and had a few hundred. when I mentioned the fact to John Sapienza at a con a couple years ago. He said he'd given up collecting them and would send me his. Five large boxes of them, each bottle individually wrapped in newspaper, showed up. I unwrapped the contents of one box, and counted about a hundred bottles in various degrees of filled-ness. Hmm... 300 plus 500... hmm... space available... hmm... . The next time I saw John I told him "Thanks -- you killed my collection." They've been sitting in The Annex for several years now, and a few weeks ago I unwrapped all of them, sorted them, and have begun disposing of them. The empties went to two fans who just like Little Bottles. Any Liz and Kim don't want can be recycled. The coffee-flavored boozes went to someone else, the Scotches went to a Scotch-

tasting party. (I drank the Scotch-based liqueurs, and the various fans made inroads on the rest. I abandoned the remainder on Our Host.) We'll drink up the others, variety by variety, and consign the empties to Liz & Kim. There are a couple rather rare ones I'd like to find a market for -- a complete set of Kibuki-head bottles of flavored saki, in the original box, for instance -- that I'd like to find a buyer for, but see above regarding being worth the effort. And I have to get someone to translate the Chinese label of one of the bottles -- for all I know it may be what our local liqueur fanatic calls "Essence of Burning Village." (I've tried that at his place -- it's drinkable, if only barely.)

The next collection to go on the block is what I've called Junk Food Junk -- the toys and such that the fast-food places give away with kids' meals or sell to adults stupid enough to want them. They took the place of the miniboozes on a set of four display racks in the (W)Rec Room; then they overflowed the racks at such a rate that even putting up the other two racks we have available wouldn't solve the problem for very long. Again, I give up. (Besides, the toys are getting even cheaper and cruddier than usual.) ((And the grapes are undoubtedly sour.)) Come the Holiday Season at the end of this year, they will go to whichever Toy Drive wants them -- with first option going to whichever Toy Drive Loscon has been dealing with for the past half dozen years.

Then there's the Playing Card Collection, which sits in two boxes, not even being available for display. There are souvenir decks, Tarot decks, Kids' Game decks, Weird Decks, and various decks where the court cards are special portraits. I've taken a few decks, those of no particular value or importance, and tossed them into the LASFS drawer of card decks for the Friday night Hell game. I've offered many of the rest for sale cheap. The Tarot decks and a few of the other, non-souvenir, decks will probably go the same route. I'll keep the souvenirs for now -- and the 5-suit deck Perdue gave me, which actually has Eagles. The deck is in poor condition, but complete, and with instructions for 5-suit bridge. Somewhere there should also be a double-deck of 5-suits, which Elmer also gave me. Maybe it's at the bottom of the second box, where I haven't rooted thoroughly yet... .

I got rid of the Mystery Books back in 1991, when Len and June Moffatt chaired a Bouchercon here and asked me to be FGoH. I asked for -- and got -- a dealer's table as one of the perks, and sold off all that the attendees would buy. The remnants are in boxes in The Annex, and are going to be carted to second-hand book stores for disposal at whatever I can get. (Most of them are book club editions, anyway.) I kept four authors: Leslie Charteris, Jonathan Gash, Ellis Peters, and Arthur Upfield -- three Brits and an Aussie -- and the Eight Feet Of Black Books that comprise the allegedly complete Agatha Christie collection Bantam published over a decade or so. Then, of course, we started building another Mystery Collection: Historical Mysteries. (Well, I already had the Cadfaels... .) So far it's only grown to about ten or eleven linear feet of books. I ought to publish the List, just to annoy someone whom I remember complaining loudly about my publishing Lists as my Required Minac... .

Elayne collected cookbooks, buying them from bookclubs and from every weird place we travelled that had a Specialty Cook Book for sale. A few years ago she pruned the collection, and boxes of them went away -- into The Annex. My rounds of the used book stores hauling

boxes of mysteries will also haul boxes of cookbooks. (In fact, a box of mysteries and a half box of cookbooks have found a new home already, leaving a twenty-dollar check in their place. Anyone want a 20-volume set of the *Grand Diplome Cookbook*, to clear out the latter box? I'll throw in the one yearbook volume that goes with it.)

These are far from all the collections, even beyond the SF books and the fanzines. There are still the Collected Comic Strips books, the Collected Comic Book books, and the Collected Editorial Cartoon books. We're keeping these, for now.

We dropped the Theater Brochures and Souvenir Booklets collection on the UCLA Art Library, and will take a tax deduction for it if I ever finish the paper work. The Musicals book collection -- remnants of a collection of books from the long-dead Theatre Guild Book Club -- will probably go to UCLA's Music Library, but I haven't actually asked if they want them yet. We pared the Stuffed Animal Collection down and gave the unwanted ones to other local fans (and a few to the Loscon Toy Drive); we're now much fussier about what we add to that collection, but we do still add to it. We picked up a Puffin during last year's Norway trip, for instance.)

I'm still adding to the Annual (and Presentation Pack) Postage Stamp Book collection, but I haven't been too assiduous about it lately. When we travel I pick up the annuals from other countries when I can, and if we have time in London (or in Victoria, BC) I try to find a stamp dealer to fill out the collection of UK Presentation Packs. (The new ones come in on subscription.) I'm more interested in the stamps when they have some of their history or background available -- thus I get only the Annuals and Presentation Packs. I guess there are a lot of English-speaking philatelists that collect such things, too, since many of the Annuals in non-English countries have English versions of the background material printed along with their own language ones in the volumes. (Norway and Sweden also have German.) And it makes one more collection about which I have absolutely no idea what I going to do. Probably leave it to the guy in the Van Nuys Post Office who runs the Philatelic Dept., as he is active in the various stamp clubs in the area, and would find the best home(s) for it.

Photographs from 40+ years, only the last seven or eight years' of which are labeled and in albums. The earlier stuff includes slides -- regular in carousels and 3-D in collection boxes -- and prints scattered all over.

Records, tapes, cds. Mostly folk music and Gilbert & Sullivan. (The 200-cd changer is almost full, after which I'll probably take out the G&S to make room for more folk music. Or get another 200-cd changer.)

The videotapes, the collection of Little Boxes, and the collection of Carousel Stuff are Elayne's problem, not mine. Same for the show tune recordings, with a few exceptions.

Stuff. We and it own each other... .





...

his mother turns out to be him; she dies, but three of her hundred children stay on; he falls off the Empire State Building; he falls off the World Trade Center Building; the bird is a fake; all twelve of them killed him; a truckload of them overturns, so people finally believe him; the seventh death is faked; they get back in time but don't realize it until almost too late; he makes her get on the plane; he was guilty and she knew it; he's killed, and she marries the planter...



Historical Mysteries Collection -- PART 1

Author & Lead Character(s)	Scene	Title	Publisher	Date
: ANTHOLOGY		Classical Whodunnits	Carroll & Graf	1997
: ANTHOLOGY		Crime Through Time	Berkley	1997
Alexander, Bruce: Sir John Fielding 1	1768 Eng	Blind Justice	Berkley	1995
Alexander, Bruce: Sir John Fielding 2	1768 Eng	Murder In Grub Street	Berkley	1996
Alexander, Bruce: Sir John Fielding 3	1769 Eng	Watery Grave	Berkley	1997
Chisholm, P.F.: Sir Robert Carey 1	1592 Scot	Famine of Horses	Coronet	1994
Davis, Lindsey: Marcus Didius Falco 2	71 AD R	Shadows In Bronze	Ballantine	1990
Davis, Lindsey: Marcus Didius Falco 3	71 AD R	Venus In Copper	Ballantine	1993
Davis, Lindsey: Marcus Didius Falco 4	71 AD R	Iron Hand Of Mars	Ballantine	1992
Davis, Lindsey: Marcus Didius Falco 5	72 AD R	Poseidon's Gold	Ballantine	1992
Davis, Lindsey: Marcus Didius Falco 6	72 AD R	Last Act In Palmyra	MysteriousPress	1994
Davis, Lindsey: Marcus Didius Falco 7	72 AD R	Time To Depart	Arrow	1996
Davis, Lindsey: Marcus Didius Falco 8	73 AD R	Dying Light in Corduba	Arrow	1997
Doherty, P.C.: Canterbury Tales 1	13xx Eng	Ancient Evil	Headline	1994
Doherty, P.C.: Canterbury Tales 2	1358 Eng	Tapestry of Murders	Headline	1994
Doherty, P.C.: Canterbury Tales 3	1356 Eng	Tournament of Murders	Headline	1996
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 1	1284 Eng	Satan In St. Mary's	Headline	1990
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 2	1286 Scot	Crown In Darkness	Headline	1991
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 3	1290 Eng	Spy In the Chancery	Headline	1991
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 4	1299 Eng	Angel Of Death	Headline	1991
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 5	1301 Eng	Prince Of Darkness	Headline	1992
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 6	1302 Eng	Murder Wears a Cowl	Headline	1993
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 7	1302 Eng	Assassin In the Greenwood	Headline	1994
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 8	1302 Eng	Song Of a Dark Angel	Headline	1994
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 9	1303 Eng	Satan's Fire	Headline	1996
Doherty, P.C.: Hugh Corbett 10	1303 Eng	Devil's Hunt	Headline	1997
Dukthas, Ann: Nicholas Segalla 1	1567 Scot	Prince Lost To Time	St. Martin's	1995
Dukthas, Ann: Nicholas Segalla 2	1815 Fr	Time For the Death Of a King	St. Martin's	1994
Eyre, Elizabeth: Sigismondo 1	14xx Italy	Death of a Duchess	Headline	1992
Eyre, Elizabeth: Sigismondo 2	14xx Italy	Curtains For the Cardinal	Harcourt	1992
Eyre, Elizabeth: Sigismondo 3	14xx Italy	Poison For the Prince	Harcourt	1994
Eyre, Elizabeth: Sigismondo 4	14xx Italy	Bravo For the Bride	Headline	1994
Eyre, Elizabeth: Sigismondo 5	14xx Italy	Axe For An Abbot	Headline	1996
Eyre, Elizabeth: Sigismondo 6	14xx Italy	Dirge For a Doge	Headline	1996