



idea
Number 14

© 1987
ZIEMER

Inside front cover
This is a blank page on the printed edition



**ART, PHOTO, &
LOGO CREDITS**

ATom: 136, 141–142,
160, 163
 Harry Bell: 37, 129, 131,
154
 David Dyer-Bennet:
24–36
 Ken Fletcher: 162
 Steve Jeffery: 137, 139,
147
 Meg MacDonald: 23
 Magda Rdest Nowak: 15
 Liz Phillips: 38–40
 Radosław “Rynvord”
Polański: 16–23
 William Rotsler: 158
 Geri Sullivan: 1, 3, 164
 Taral: 157
 Glenn Tenhoff, *Idea*
logo artist: cover, 2
 Daniel “Nelek”
Wojtowicz: 19
 Peter Young: 6, 8, 12
 Cecilia Ziemer: 44, 111
 Karen Johnson & Jon
Singer: proofreading
 “Remembering Deb”
credits on pages 45–46

Idea 14

Cecilia Ziemer: Pulling night along . . . front cover

Geri Sullivan: Editorial “Where was I, Jon?” 2

Peter Young: My worst day at work 4

Sandra Bond: “There I was, filling this hole,
Hole in the ground —” 14

Radosław “Rynvord” Polański: How did
I become the Father of Dragons? 15

David Dyer-Bennet, photographer:
Celebrating love – the wedding
and diamond anniversary of Arthur
Hlavaty, Bernadette Bosky, and
Kevin Maroney 24

Josh More: I should be sleeping 37

Liz Phillips: The great gaffe be #1:
An English knitter’s cast-on tale 38
Fillos by *Liz Phillips*

Howard Whyte: Alien connections 41

SPECIAL SECTION: Remembering Deb 45
 Her words... 50
 Deb online... 61
 Deb edited... 61
 Honors... 61
 Our words... 62
 Deb made jewelry... 88
(Detailed section contents on pages 45–46)

Geri Sullivan: Welcome back, *Idea*. 112

Readers: *every place i read your
goddamn fanzine* #1 117
 Park & LoC it 129

Cecilia Ziemer: Pulling night along
excerpt. back cover

Idea Volume 2, Number 14 **June 2024** **Geri Sullivan, Editor**

Copyright 2024 by Geri Fitzgerald Sullivan, Wales, Massachusetts, USA. All rights revert to the contributors upon publication.

A SMOTHRA publication. Member & Past President: fwa.
 Founding member: Minnesota Fanzine Recovery Act. Fellow of NESFA.

Where was I, Jon?

The penultimate sentence in the last installment of this editorial column began, “I intend to publish *Idea* 14 in 2024.” On efanzines.com, I was so bold as to say, “Going forward, I intend to produce two issues a year for as long as health, retirement funds, and fannish interest support that. Fingers crossed!”

Given my previous track record, readers could easily be expected to take those statements with more than a few grains of salt, yet here we are. Intentions becoming reality, and All That Jazz...

After the rush of pubbing my ish (see page 112), I might have thought the year would get off to a slow start. Or at least a calm one.

Oh, that’s right; this is my life we’re talking about. Winter and

spring travel included conventions in Chicago (Capricon), Boston (Boskone), and Las Vegas (Corflu). Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer accompanied me home from Corflu and we enjoyed a relaxing week visiting various Tree House Brewing locations (Charleton, Tewksbury, and Woodstock) as well as Altruist Brewery in Sturbridge followed by the amazing tap list and menu at Armsby Abbey in Worcester and a stop at Greater Good Imperial Brewing Company on our way back to Toad Woods. Because I was the driver for our Massachusetts beer week (which turned out to concur with the official Massachusetts Beer Week, pure serendipity!), it proved useful that my own beer consumption has been greatly reduced of late



Available for the usual from:

Gerri Sullivan
Toad Woods
idea@toad-hall.com

Or *Idea* can be purchased at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk), etc.

PDFs online at:
[FANAC.org](https://www.fanac.org)
[eFanzines.com](https://www.efanzines.com)

Send LoCs, contributions, surprises, and more to:
idea@toad-hall.com

If I might not have your signature on file (or you want to update it) and you’re loccing by email, please send a pocsarcd, TIFF, or PNG. Thanks!

Contributors:

Sandra Bond
David Dyer-Bennet
Josh More
Liz Phillips
Radosław “Rynvord” Polański
Howard Whyte
Peter Young
Cecilia Ziemer

Three dozen people contributed to and helped with the special Remembering Deb section; they are named in the separate contents on pages 45–46.

Please see page 164 for contributor contact information.

following some less-than-ideal kidney and liver lab results. Not that I've ever drunk all that much (save a certain trip to Glasgow for Intersection 29 years ago), but cutting back seems to be helping, so that's a thing.

Mark and Claire's stay was a terrific way to wind down from a mighty fine Corflu, and I look forward to seeing them again in August when we celebrate their Worldcon Fan GoHship at Glasgow!

Looking skyward

Early April found me driving to Texas for the eclipse. Despite a dubious weather forecast, it didn't disappoint. Ditto that just over a month later when the strongest solar storm in two decades resulted in widespread visible auroras. Toad Woods is down in a hollow; I thought I'd need to drive to the elementary school or some other open, flat area if it turned out there was anything to see. Nature proved me wrong about that and I was thrilled with the colors my iPhone 13 Pro Max picked up.



Solar eclipse diamond ring effect, 8 April 2024, Euless, Texas. Photo by Geri Sullivan.

Cecilia Ziemer, cover artist

Cecilia was a Bay Area fan and graphic designer. "Pulling Night Along" was among the pieces from Don Fitch's fan art collection that followed me home last November, most of them destined for future fan fund auctions and table sales. I love how it resonates with Sue Mason's FAAn Award-winning cover for *Idea* 13.

The elephant in the editorial is of course the fact that Deb Geisler died on 23 March 2024. All sympathy to Deb's husband, Mike Benveniste; her brother and sister, Doug Geisler and Libby Sudnick; their families; colleagues and former students at Suffolk University; and friends – so many friends – around the globe.

Idea 14 features "Remembering Deb" starting on page 45. This 67-page special section features her words, our words, a portfolio of jewelry she made, and references to a few of her honors and accomplishments. Heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to it.

See you on the Funway. – Geri

< *Aurora over Toad Woods, 11 May 2024. Photo by Geri Sullivan.*

My worst day at work

by Peter Young

5th November 2011: it was a day that began like any other. Woke up in one of the three Heathrow B&Bs I was using at the time, threw on the uniform, dragged a suitcase and shoulder bag across the street to catch a bus from an airport workers' car park to my office in Terminal 5. Coffee and breakfast in a staff canteen, ran into a few friends, checked work e-mails, finally made my way to the briefing room where all the crew for a flight will gather at an appointed time. I was flying on two aircraft types at this time, the Boeing 747-400 and the Boeing 777-200. We were on a 747 that day, my favourite aircraft type because the galleys are spacious and the safety and emergency protocols of the plane are remarkably simple and straightforward for such a large aircraft. It was always a pleasure to fly on, and that day we were to fly for twelve hours to Los Angeles: over Greenland, Newfoundland, northern Canada and down the west coast of North America to California.

On a British Airways 747 there should be fourteen crew but for some reason I can't recall we were going one down, which would have to mean some impromptu rearrangements of working positions. The scene is like those crew briefings you'd occasionally see in a *Star Trek* movie, but this is much quicker and more routine. The pilots are

elsewhere doing their own briefing, gathering weather and route maps plus fuel and weight data while we, the cabin crew, are huddled together in a briefing room deciding on our working positions, running through safety updates and a few compulsory drill routines that the Civil Aviation Authority understandably want us to keep fresh in our minds. It helps, after all, to be clear on what is expected of us in the event of say, a fire on board: what clearly delineated roles we take when fighting a fire; or what medical action plan is used when dealing with a medical incident. Any of a vast array of possible events can happen on any flight: of all the knowledge that is drilled into crew to prepare us for whatever may be encountered – fire, medical, evacuation – we probably only use around 10% of it on a daily basis; the remaining 90% has to be retained as a back-up for a day when it is needed.

Today will be one of those days.

The head of our crew today is a married middle-aged lady called Pauline, whom I have never flown with before but who, by the end of the day, I will have the highest respect for. She's been flying as long as I have – around twenty-five years – and clearly has kept her sense of humour intact. This sets a comfortable atmosphere amongst everyone, because the last kind of person you want as the head of your

crew is someone who can't take time to have fun with the job and instead is 'all business', because this is someone who will simply set their colleagues on edge. We are, after all, in the hospitality business, and ours can be a difficult job if that is the tone set in our first meeting as a crew, most of whom will not have previously known anyone else they are working alongside and may never meet again. It still depresses me that many crew leaders can overlook this simple fact even after all their own experience will tell them the same, that a relaxed and professional crew is an efficient crew. It is also a mutual support network: some may want to get away to Los Angeles when there are problems at home, but certainly not everyone, and we probably have one or two suicides in hotel rooms every year. Most importantly, we need to be there for each other because it can be a lonely and unforgiving job if you let it be that way.

When all the preliminaries are done we head out to the aircraft and board, checking safety and security measures are in place and preparing the plane for the boarding of our passengers. The plane will be almost full in every cabin. On this flight I am working in First, the top level brand we offer, and I have thirteen passengers to look after in the sharp end of the plane below the flight deck. I am working with two other colleagues in First, one of whom will be in the galley preparing all the catering; we, the remaining two, will be serving it.

On the Los Angeles route it's pretty common to have celebrities in First and today is no different: we have a pretty famous American rapper, a guy who goes by the name of Heavy D, and it's immediately apparent that he is a complete gentleman. All my other passengers seem happy enough.

The first six hours of the flight are uneventful, and all Heavy D wants from me is to keep his glass topped up with neat vodka while he watches movies, as he had eaten in the lounge before the flight and still was not hungry. After serving everyone their lunch I spend quite a bit of time chatting with Heavy D between movies, and he's interested in learning something about the life of a 'flight attendant.' When I tell him I live in Thailand at the same time as working out of London Heathrow, he becomes fascinated and I enjoy our conversation.

When a flight is going well with no problems I remind myself that "boring is good": I don't want danger or dramas up there. After the meal service is done the crew splits into two groups and each takes a few hours break, one group after the other. My working position means I am in the second group today, and by the time my break comes around all but Heavy D are already asleep in their First beds. The first group of crew returns from their break and I head off to the bunks for a few hours and try to get a little shuteye. I seem to remember just dozing, not actually sleeping.



British Airways Boeing 747-400. Photo by Peter Young.

There are eight separate bunks at the back of this 747, four grouped as split-level bunk beds and four lined up alongside each other with dividers, all in the same unit which is found at the top of a ladder beneath the plane's tail. It's customary for the crew manager to use the right-hand bunk of the four lined up alongside each other, just so that if they are needed for anything everyone knows exactly where this person can be found.

All is reassuringly quiet...

... until a PA is made in the aircraft cabin which is also put through to the crew rest area. "If there is a doctor of medicine on board the aircraft today, could they please make themselves known to a member of the crew." It wakes me

up fully because it indicates there's a medical emergency happening, but no indication yet of how severe. Soon after, a crew member comes up the ladder to wake up our crew manager, Pauline, to let her know what's happening. It's obviously serious enough that the manager would need to be woken from their break, and I overhear Pauline being told that we have a man in Club World on the upper deck of the 747 who is unconscious and receiving CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) with the use of a defibrillator. In other words, his heart has stopped. This is just about as serious as it gets.

As I was wide awake now in the next bunk I knew the crew involved could probably use an extra pair

of hands, and that the half of the crew who were not currently on their break would have enough to be getting on with already, so I got up alongside Pauline to head to the upper deck of the plane. I hoped, of course, that I wouldn't need to get involved and that the man would make a proper recovery with a reactivated heart, but having someone on standby to take over any role if necessary would certainly be good for the two upper deck crew on their own up there. So I volunteer myself. From the top of the stairs at the back of the upper deck cabin I could see up ahead the two crew members doing CPR, one steward doing chest compressions and one stewardess doing the breathing, both hunched over a big guy in the middle of the cabin between the two upper deck doors where there is sufficient space to undertake such a task. There was also a third person, a medical doctor who has, as requested via the PA, also volunteered himself to help and support. He was English, mid-thirties, and I soon learn he used to be a Virgin Atlantic crew member who now worked as a paramedic for the London Ambulance Service. This was perfect, exactly the kind of guy we needed.

The patient was an English guy in his late sixties or early seventies, rather obese, travelling to LA with his wife to connect to a flight to Honolulu to see their son. His wife, of a similar age, had noticed that in his Club World seat, reclined into a flat bed in 64A, her husband had

seemed inordinately still with a dull complexion. She had unsuccessfully tried to wake him and called over the crew, who had done what we call a 'primary survey' on him and quickly concluded that he needed immediate CPR, although they along with his wife had no idea of how long he had been in this state. Following this, at the same time as calling for the defibrillator, oxygen and a resuscitator kit, they had to somehow lift him out of his seat and place him on the floor, quickly beginning CPR without the defibrillator attached yet. When it had arrived it had been switched on and the defibrillator pads attached to his right chest and left side nearest the heart, between which an electric charge directly through the heart would be sent, all with the 'two breaths for every thirty chest compressions' ratio continuing at the same time. It's a complex thing to achieve, but with three people involved keeping to pre-defined roles it can be done without too much difficulty.

The man's elderly wife had wisely been removed from the scene and taken downstairs, away from the drama. She was, of course, visibly upset by the time I arrived on the scene.

We are told that doing CPR can be physically exhausting, and that if you have had to do it for as long as thirty minutes you're actually very unlikely to bring the patient back. As I waited for further developments, soon enough the stewardess doing the breathing for the man

was worn out after fifteen minutes and needed to hand over to someone else, so for me it was time to take over. I've done this a couple of dozen times in the training school already, once every year as part of our recurrent exams, but never before for real. If you receive good training, as we do, the training should take over and suppress any worries that you'll screw it up.

The other steward continued the chest compressions and the stewardess and I had to swap places within the 'thirty compressions' gap to keep a seamless rhythm going. I crouched down behind the man's head, positioning myself above him with a breathing mask attached to an oxygen bottle set to maximum flow. I start breathing for him, two breaths, and then there were another thirty chest compressions. All the time we were doing this the defibrillator was monitoring for a restarted heartbeat. If it detected one it would tell us and we would stop the chest compressions. Until we hopefully reached that point, we must carry on.

Meanwhile our volunteer doctor, the paramedic, was in contact with Medlink via the radio on the flight deck. Medlink is a very useful company based in Phoenix, Arizona, designed to offer support for crews in aircraft anywhere around the world when they've encountered a situation that goes to the limits of their training. But while we *are* trained for this eventuality, any professional input is also welcome. As we were very close to the flight deck



British Airways inflight defibrillator. Photo by Peter Young.

door on this occasion, and while this situation was ongoing it was decided to keep the flight deck door permanently unlocked and open if the paramedic needed to talk further to Medlink. He decided, with their agreement, that an adrenalin injection directly into the patient's heart might be needed. Our onboard medical kit carries all kinds of useful stuff for doctors that is not for use by the crew who all have limited medical training, not specialised. The doctor then accessed the side of the medical kit where such substances are kept and prepared the shot, and we paused CPR for around ten seconds while he delivered it directly into the heart before we continued with CPR. By this time the patient has already had around thirty minutes CPR with no effect, and it's hoped the adrenalin will give his heart a useful kick. We continued, but by this time we were aware of approaching a decision point. How much longer

do we carry on? The paramedic recommended no more than another fifteen minutes. A few of the patient's ribs will inevitably have been broken already from the continuous compressions, and his heart will probably be severely bruised so it's possible the adrenalin shot will have no effect. We agreed to continue until the defibrillator has told us 'no shock advised' three more times. And at that point, we will just have to... let him go.

After a further ten minutes and three more analyses from the defibrillator, with sadness all round we reluctantly agreed to stop what we had been trying to do. I physically ached all over, from all the breaths I'd delivered from an awkward physical position for around thirty minutes. We all gave each other sad and supportive hugs. The passengers all around us were completely sympathetic and a few were crying, both men and women. But it was time to do all the things that have to come next, because the plane was still about two hours from Los Angeles, somewhere over the Rockies in western Canada. We have to secure the deceased into a seat and strap him in with extension seat belts. We can't get him back into his own seat as it's by a window in a difficult position (and some of our Club seats are notoriously difficult to access), but there's an available flight crew rest seat in 60B. Pauline explained the situation to the man in 60A, and asked him if he'd object to us stowing the deceased body next to him in 60B. There's no objection at all, so I put

the seat into a flat-bed position and a few of us lifted his lifeless body into it, strapping him in with some extension seat belts so he can't roll off onto the floor. By this time, we all need a deserved break and let others take over from here. I decamped back to First Class and had a few minutes alone in a wash-room. Pauline went to deliver the bad news to the gentleman's wife.

And because we're already having to work one crew member down, there was still a service to deliver with no one to take up the slack on a full plane and no one who could reasonably be redeployed elsewhere. This was the weirdest part of the day for me: having to do an afternoon tea service immediately after doing CPR and having to leave a man for dead. And to leave the whole job to the other two crew in First would be unsupportive towards them and probably not doable anyway. I try to grin and bear it; I already know how ridiculous this job can be sometimes.

Word had got around the plane that there had been a death on board. Heavy D, still sober as a judge and still not wanting to eat anything despite now having consumed an entire bottle of neat Ciroc, asked me what's been going on. "Oh man," he said, saddened.

Still wanting to keep our bereaved lady away from the scene, we moved her into our one empty seat in First Class in row 4. Twenty minutes later, we have landed.

Our captain made an announcement, "You may have heard we have had a death on board today.

Unfortunately this means we will have to deal with Port Health and the Police before anyone is allowed off the plane. Thanks for your understanding and patience, we'll get you off this jet as soon as we are able but until then the Police and I will request that you please remain seated."

Three LAPD officers are on the plane first. They take brief statements from everyone involved, including myself. It doesn't take long for them to be satisfied there's been no suspicious circumstances. Several people from Port Health then board to assess the scene, and discuss things briefly with the crew and pilots. With the all-clear, our passengers are finally allowed to leave the plane.

In her seat in First, our bereaved elderly lady is asked to stay back to also speak with Port Health. As our First Class passengers were leaving the plane, several of them saw this sad lady in tears as they passed her seat aware that she was never there before and, putting two and two together, offered her their condolences. Heavy D was among them; he actually went down on one knee and held her hand while quietly saying something to her that I couldn't hear. I was impressed. She patted the back of his hand and said thank you. Heavy D got up and then gave me a hug, saying "Thanks for everything. It's been a real pleasure to talk with you." I wished him good luck and he left.

When all passengers were off the plane, our bereaved lady phoned

her son in Hawaii, having to tell him, "Your dad didn't make it." Her son was now going to fly from Honolulu to LAX to be with her, but this would take many hours to do. The BA ground staff arranged for a hotel room at the airport for the lady and, so that she will not have to deal with everything alone, Pauline offered to stay with her until her son arrived, and they left together before the rest of us. The Port Health people went upstairs to retrieve the body.

Now it was our turn to leave, and I'm one of the last to get off. As I went through the immigration channel the officer there told me, "Heard you had a death on board today. Sorry to hear that." Wow, word gets around fast.

In the baggage reclaim hall I saw one of our new, young stewardesses alone in tears by the baggage carousel. Oh, man, bless her, it's only her second trip as well. But it turned out she's not in tears because of what's happened, she's in tears because her suitcase doesn't appear to have arrived on the plane with us. Haven't we had enough drama today? All the other senior crew and pilots have already claimed their suitcases and headed off pretty damn quick for the crew bus, leaving her behind. This isn't good. So with Pauline busy elsewhere it was down to me to sort this. But after ten minutes of enquiries we eventually found an unclaimed crew case and took this to the bus instead, where it turned out one of the other crew members had taken

the wrong case by mistake. Minor issue resolved, but I'm pissed off with the three other senior crew for not looking after her.

We arrived at the hotel at Redondo Beach and, still in my uniform, I lay flat on my back on the bed for ten minutes silence. The bedside phone rang. It was a Duty Ops Manager back in Heathrow, ringing round the crew to see if we're OK.

"Yeah, I'm fine; ache all over from the CPR but generally I'm alright."

"How do you feel about it all?"

"Well... melancholy. But that's about it. I wouldn't say it was traumatic or anything. When you put it in perspective, if it had been someone in my own family, then yes, *that* would have been traumatic. But I'm good. I'm OK. Thanks."

"How do you feel about staying with the trip and working home in a couple of days? I'm putting no pressure on you, if you want to position back to London instead that's fine. I can arrange it and no more will be said."

"No, I'll be good to work. Thanks for the call, I appreciate it."

Pauline arrived at the hotel six hours later, in a taxi from LAX, and I happened to be in the lobby at the time, on my way out for a much needed rum and coke. The bereaved lady's son had arrived from Honolulu and everything had gone as well as it could have done, considering the circumstances.

The flight back to London two days later was fine, but I *still*

ached all over. The flight was met at Heathrow by three managers, offering all the support that might be needed. They gave us leaflets for counselling services that other BA departments offer to colleagues, if we felt the need to talk it through with anyone.

Then two days later while staying at my parent's house, my mobile phone rang. It was another Duty Ops Manager, following up on me. "Thanks for the call, I'm still good, I can work. No problem."

You hear many stories about when crew members need help from management and it's simply not there to be found with anyone: this is to experience BA at its impersonal worst. So I'm thinking in this instance, with this situation, I've been relatively lucky. I can't fault how we've been looked after, but it really does depend on who you get on the day. So I wonder, maybe I'll end up doing what I usually do, which is to internalise difficult things instead of letting it all out in one big rush, which I know I would find personally embarrassing later.

* * *

And there it should have ended, but there was more. A couple of weeks later I was at home in Hua Hin, Thailand. My nephew James and his wife Anya were visiting us. At dinner in a local restaurant in the evening James asked, "Have you had any famous passengers lately?"

I think back over the last few months. "Well, I had the rapper Heavy D on board in First Class

the other week. Lovely guy, really charming. Did a load of stuff with Michael Jackson.”

“Heavy D...? He’s dead.”

“No, you’ve gotta be thinking of someone else. He was fine, in very good health...”

“No, he’s definitely dead. Died a couple of weeks ago in LA.”

We immediately took out our phones to Google. Oh shit, it’s true. Died November 8th 2011, just a few days after that flight. A few days after he’d drunk an entire bottle of neat vodka in ten-or-so hours that I personally had served him, all while appearing sober as a teetotaler. That evening I checked on Wikipedia and a few Los Angeles local newspaper sites. All true, but everything online was pointing out that the coroner’s report was inconclusive as to the cause of death and there would need to be further investigation. So of course I was now thinking “Was it liver failure?” and “Shit, am I culpable?”

I occasionally checked on Heavy D’s Wikipedia page (real name Dwight Arrington Myers) for around a year after that, but there were never any significant alterations to his page relating to his cause of death. Then much later, in April 2024 while double-checking his date of death for this essay, I went back to look again and found:

“His death was initially thought to be connected to pneumonia. An autopsy report, released on December 27, 2011, stated that the cause of death was a pulmonary

embolism caused by a blood clot in a leg. He had also suffered from heart disease. Craig Harvey, chief of the Los Angeles County Department of Coroner, said that the blood clot that resulted in the [pulmonary embolism] was “most likely formed during an extended airplane ride”. Heavy D had recently returned from a trip to Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom, where he performed at a Michael Jackson tribute concert.”

* * *

And what of everyone else? I’ve never seen Pauline again. I remember her saying she wanted to retire in a few years, so she’s probably left the company by now. The crew I worked with to resuscitate the passenger: I can’t remember any of their names or faces; we never kept in touch. We are just a few scattered men and women who were randomly brought together one day and tried to save someone’s life, yet failed. I wouldn’t recognise them if I worked with them again; I could even have worked with them again already, and never known it was them. Such is the nature of our job: faces and names are too often fleeting, clear memories that make an impression can be scarce.

We did receive letters of thanks from our managers, and a letter of commendation from the London Ambulance Service paramedic who was impressed with how we went about trying to achieve what we ultimately failed to do. He said we were a credit to our training, which

is neatly synchronous because I too credit the training I have received.

* * *

And what of the man who had died? I learned his name, of course, and that of his wife from our Passenger Information List, a document not for the eyes of anyone who doesn't need to see it, and as he and his family were never in the public eye I'll respect their privacy and not reveal it here. But his was a fairly ordinary English name, also with the slight distinction of maybe being a little unusual, so he was easily found with a search engine: I think it was not beyond the realm of decent behaviour to seek out his name and try to learn a little more about a man whose life I once tried to save. His family had placed a brief loving obituary in *The Times*, he and his wife lived in Hampshire, and that's all I know.

* * *

This was all a long time ago – nearly thirteen years – but it still lives with me and I have told many people, especially colleagues, shorter and less detailed versions of this story, but whether it's healthy to do so or not, I know that I do carry it around with me. Not for sympathy when I tell the story – I never felt any need for that. But any time that someone I have known dies, even animals I have known personally and loved, I always feel the loss. I can't imagine working in a job that involves losing people on an almost daily

basis, such as in a hospital, however disconnected I may be from their personal lives.

So the thing I think about most with the loss of these two unconnected men is that while the death of the Englishman may have been a small but personally significant event for everyone involved, I notice that everyone who lived through it is now scattered with no contact, only retaining their own memories of those few hours. Nothing else binds us together, but I sometimes wonder what they recall of it or if my mind has edited out anything. I'll probably never learn where either of these two men I met that day are buried or were cremated, and a hundred years from now, no one on Earth will be thinking of this, there will be other deaths to feel loss over, and that anyway this is the way it's always been with the deaths of people only known glancingly. And I suppose this is the way it always should be: none of us were, after all, family, except that man and his bereaved elderly wife, and for all I know she may indeed have joined her husband by now. And no one else will be thinking of the surrounding people who were remotely connected with these two men in their last days or moments, but however remote we all are from each other now, we are all still somehow connected by it.

In my case, it just took a bad day at work to bring us all together.

“There I was, filling this hole, Hole in the ground —”

by Sandra Bond

Wars, climate change, politics, all that guffandstuff,
All of them displaced from the news this morning
In favour of the shock, astonishing announcement:
The Grand Canyon has disappeared.

Just like that.

Vanished.

Gone.

Much frenzied speculation from professionals and amateurs
About what happened, why,
And most of all, how, how, how.

Scientists say it took anything between
Six million and seventy million years
To gouge that gorge out.

It took just five minutes to fill it back in.

I suppose I should apologise to the world,
Because the reason it's gone
Is that quietly and surreptitiously, yesterday,
I tipped into the canyon
The ashes of the biggest man
With the biggest heart
That ever walked the earth.

I might have known
That even the hugest void
This planet can boast
Would not be vast enough
To contain Henry.

A photograph of a man with a beard and short hair, wearing a grey jacket. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera. On his right shoulder, a green plush dragon mascot is perched. The dragon has large eyes, a wide mouth, and several buttons or patches on its chest. The background is a bright, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

How did I become the Father of Dragons?

by Radosław “Rynvord” Polański

MAGDA RDEST-NOWAK

Rynvord with Kazimierz at the 2023 Skiercon in Skierniewice, Poland. Photo by Magda Rdest Nowak.

Not literally, I would say, but yes, I did! And it was unexpected – as unexpected as it may get, I suppose. It is no coincidence that the best and most ridiculous ideas sometimes turn out to be the most successful ones. This is the tale of one such idea that quickly got out of hand.

That time, when it all began...

The year was 2021. December. We were on the verge of formally submitting our bid for the Polish national convention – Polcon – during one of the oldest conventions in Poland called Nordcon. At that moment, as the vice-chair and head of the promotion team, I began to

ponder: how are we going to promote this event? A few years earlier, before the pandemic halted all considerable sized in-person gatherings, we used to have a convention mascot. We had almost forgotten about it, and it wasn't a conventional asset, but rather a hand-knitted mascot created by one of the old conrunners who was no longer involved. It had been borrowed to serve as an ambassador for Imladris and was mostly used locally in Kraków.

So, I thought, why not resurrect this charming idea of having a small plushy noble beast travel to various conventions, capture some delightful



Kazimierz at Wawel Castle, Kraków, Poland. Photo by Radosław "Rynvord" Polański.

photos, and perhaps share them on Instagram? Simple stuff.

It was the perfect time, as we needed something to kick off the promotion of the convention. We were not only returning after a long three-year hiatus due to the global pandemic, but we were also planning to return as Polcon for the first time ever.

That is when the concept, shortly called “Imladris Dragons,” formally began. What followed was unprecedented. We generated crazy ideas, each more ridiculous than the last, and almost all of them materialized as sparks of creativity. Allow me to share some stories from what unfolded after that brief month of December 2021, the month our mascot was brought into reality.

How to choose your bloody dragon

It is not easy to find a suitable candidate for a mascot, as became apparent quickly. Having an idea in mind is one thing, but bringing

it to life, willing it into this world, is another challenge. Originally, we considered having another hand-knitted dragon to represent the Imladris convention and Kraków’s local fandom. In fact, the dragon is one of the symbols of Kraków, as stated in local city legends. Therefore, it was more than fitting to have a dragon mascot, especially considering that we are fantasy fans, and our convention logo already features a dragon’s head.

Soon after the idea materialized, we began considering the logistics. What if we needed more of those dragons, but the person who created them was no longer available or too busy in the future? Or what if it took ages to get them to make one more for the convention? This became a bit of a turning point, prompting us to explore the world wide web for suitable plushies. The challenge was that many options were too commercial, and those widely used in Kraków as tourist souvenirs lacked the uniqueness we were seeking.

In January of that year, we scoured eBay and its local Polish counterpart, Allegro. We even purchased some stuffed dragons to test them out. Then one day, I stumbled upon something entirely new and refreshing. Not only was it unique in its design compared to the majority of dragon plushies on the market, but it suspiciously aligned with our logo design and some of the promotional graphics. It wasn’t too expensive either. I placed four

pieces in my online basket and checked out. Little did I know that this would be the last time it was relatively easy to find those particular plush creatures in the world.

Not more than two months later, when we started seeing signs of success with our new “campaign,” I returned to the online seller to potentially buy a few dozen more. To my disbelief, everything was long gone—on online auction platforms, webshops, everywhere. It was as if only one container was shipped to Europe from China, and the whole thing was a done deal. For a long time, we were pretty much confined to those four plushies.

The “slow but sure” rise of Kazimierz

The first dragon trip wasn’t even fandom-related; I took one of the dragons for skiing to a local ski resort in Szklarska Poręba, super close to Czechia. It was a fun weekend. I took a few pictures, posted them on Facebook, and the whole thing kind of took off from there. We decided to pretend we only had one mascot and quickly came up with a name thanks to our local fandom and a small Facebook contest – Kazimierz. And so, Kazimierz began to travel around some of the local conventions. He was sort of a con attendee, I guess, but not (yet!) formally given con badges.

I vividly remember one of the business meetings at the local SMOFcon in Poland, which took place in Zielona Góra. Some people from various associations were joining the local Polish fandom business meeting online via Discord. We set up another laptop for fun, dialed in, muted nevertheless, but pointed the camera at a small plush dragon as if he were part of the meeting. You can guess how hilarious it looked. I think this was the first time we realized how much we could push this concept in the near future.

Virality and the tale of one dragon. Was it one, though?

Conventions began to ramp up as the summer of 2022 was quickly approaching, and we received a message from a friend in a small town called Skierniewice, situated between Warsaw and Łódź. They asked if Kazimierz could be a formal

*Mieszko with Glasgow 2024 scarf >
in Kraków, Poland. Photo by
Radosław “Rynvord” Polański.*





Dragons help with Registration at the 2022 Kapitularz in Łódź, Poland. Photo by Radosław "Rynvord" Polański.



Dragons returned to Łódź in 2023 for Kapitularz Polconem, hanging out with friends like Random and having more fine times meeting fans. Photo by Radosław "Rynvord" Polański.

guest at their local convention. Not just figuratively as a guest—the whole package was on the table, including a guest picture and bio posted on the con website. I cannot express how delightful this idea was. After some brief discussion about how we could contribute to the con with such an esteemed guest coming to town, we came up with the idea to run a trivia quiz around dragons during that convention. It seemed like the only suitable form. Kazimierz had gone sort of viral in fandom and became a special guest at many more conventions that year. Around that time, we also confessed to fandom that there was more than one dragon. More than two, in fact. By that time, we had five dragons, recently purchasing big brother Mieszko for the other four. All of them were named after Polish kings and queens.

Postal perils a.k.a. Wanda's anxious journey

It was always a pragmatic project, so please don't get me wrong – we weren't sentimentally attached to the dragons, although they had become unique commodities, and losing one would have been a literal tragedy for our endeavor. I recall a particular instance when we had to transport Wanda, yet another dragoness, to Opole for another local convention. She was sent in a box via post. Rest assured, they sent her with a packet of cookies. However, I had trouble sleeping for a few days, worried to the bone that this would be that one time the postal

service would completely lose the package with poor Wanda and her cookies.

Most people expressed a significant interest in our dragons. The most frequently asked question, even up to the present day, is “Where can I buy one?” or simply, “How much for this dragon?” Obviously, we never considered selling them, but had we bought the whole container back in January, we would be much wealthier people now.

Dinosaurs or dragons, an identity conundrum

On another occasion, somewhere in Czechia, we visited Javoříčské caves. While I was taking pictures in a dragon’s natural habitat (duh!), someone loudly commented, “Look at this guy with a dinosaur.” They were called names, but that was the first (and not the last) time someone referred to our dragons as dinosaurs.

We began lending dragons to other fans in the Polish fandom who were gophers, tasking them with a very important mission – take as many pictures as humanly possible of the dragon plushie with con attendees.

Some trips were more special than others. Kazimierz



Vinga with dragons at Skiercon in Skierniewice, Poland in 2023. Photo by Radosław “Rynvord” Polański.

attended Chicon 8, the Worldcon in Chicago, where he managed to sneak a photo with the Best Dramatic Presentation – Long Form Hugo Award won by Dune that

year. He also traveled to Uppsala earlier in the year to visit Eurocon. Some of the dragons ventured eastward too, notably visiting Japan – not once, but twice! They hiked in the mountains in the snow, and they were also part of a kayak expedition with some fandom friends, landing in the river multiple times and proving, in fact, that they don’t like water.



Kazimierz at Chicon 8 with Dune’s Hugo Award. Photo by Daniel “Nelek” Wojtowicz.



Esther MacCallum-Stewart with dragons at Imladris Polcon. 2022 in Kraków, Poland. Photo by Radosław "Rynvord" Polański.

Astonishing and unexpected connection between Glasgow and Dragonball

When we finally arrived at our Polcon 2022 Imladris, they were gophing with the rest of the team. They had the opportunity to meet some special guests who arrived from Ireland and Scotland—none other than Esther MacCallum-Stewart, the chair of Glasgow 2024 Worldcon, and Fionna O’Sullivan, the board secretary of the European Science Fiction Society. If I am not mistaken, this was the first time in 2022 that all five of them were located in one spot, redefining what we should consider to be a “dragon ball.”

How to pimp your dragon?

Further customization was the natural next step. We invented character traits for each dragon, specifying the dynamics between them. Some dragons might envy each other, and others may have hidden romance going on. Yes, we even prepared to launch their tabletop RPG-style character sheets (and we will do that! eventually...). They did also receive two versions of digital avatars, helping us make them quite noticeable online as well.

The real excitement began when we started customizing the plushies themselves. Initially, there were some basic changes – they used to have very pointy, spiky noses, which we took care of, giving the plushies a bit nicer and friendlier overall look. We provided them with strings and carabiners for easier transport and mounting to backpacks, belts, etc.

Once I got my hands on some of the official Glasgow 2024 tartan, we prepared small cute scarves for each dragon, followed by Worldcon pin badges. Each dragon received their own small ID badge with a digital avatar and a name. Recently, we equipped them with commissioned travel mount bags for all of them as well.

On a quest for new dragons in the dodgy German webspace

Quite soon, we realized we needed more of them. Five was not enough anymore, and we were not prepared for what we would do if



Dragons pose for a group shot at home in Kraków, Poland. Photo by Radosław "Rynvord" Polański.

some of them wore off or, in the worst-case scenario, if we lost one. There were weekends when all five of them were representing the next Polcon around Poland. The extent of my search for dragons over the internet was, for a lack of a better word, unparalleled. It was a regular monthly hunt over all mainstream auction portals and vast numbers of webshops selling plushies.

There were some occasional hits (we managed to scoop one extra small dragon from a local auction platform, hence dragoness Bona arrived), but with no major luck in finding a good supply. For worse, as we needed them, but good as well—they truly were unique.

I spent over a year of constant searching and decided to switch to

overdrive—no longer just looking for dragons on the English web, but translating the phrase “green dragon plushie” into all possible European languages and approaching local EU countries’ sites as well. This proved to be an efficient strategy, and in late 2023, I stumbled across a dodgy German site, clearly reminiscent of the good 1990s of the early internet. With little hope, expecting a scam, and lighter by a considerable amount of cash in my pocket, I ordered four more substantial plushies, thus expanding our flight of dragons to ten specimens. To my absolute surprise, it was not a scam (though all signs in the world were pointing at it being one), and around September 2023, I had a day that can only be described as an



All 10 dragons took over the hotel lobby at Nordcon in Jastrzębia Góra, Poland, in 2023. Photo by Radosław “Rynvord” Polański.

early Christmas boxing day. Four majestic lizards landed on my table, ready for action, ready to be named.

Can plush dragons have genetic diseases? And other questions we never thought we would contemplate...

Around that time, we had some ideas about the names we wanted, and we also aimed to make them even more distinctive. One of the dragons got heterochromia, another one we decided would be a non-binary dragon and would be given the very special name “Morgan.” For one dragon, we left it to our

upcoming Polcon attendees to decide its name, and out of a hundred proposals, “Melchior” prevailed.

Nowadays, we run a series of quests for fans during that same original convention where the idea popped into my mind – Nordcon. If one completed the task they were given Belgian chocolate pralines as a reward.

The dragon saga continues. where will it take us?

Clearly, we have no intention of stopping. In fact, we are still waiting for the 11th dragon, which

is on an extended holiday in Brunswick, Germany (at my friend's place, one who actually helped close the deal with the presumably shady webshop). Will there be more dragons? I am lying to myself that no, enough is enough, but I don't know if I will be able to resist buying "just one more." I am so glad they are unique, and I think they should stay this way. If a few more containers arrive in the EU, that will be a shame. I did talk to the distributor this year, and they reassured me that the Chinese producer will most likely not continue the product.

Will there be more gadgets and trinkets for dragons? You can bet on it. Since I discovered you can buy properly sized glasses for dragon plushies, the sky's the limit.

But most importantly, they will keep traveling. Locally and abroad, they will promote Lesser Poland fandom, Imladris, and Polish fandom in general. If you wish to meet them and see how fantastic they are, you will be able to do so at Glasgow 2024 Worldcon and in Rotterdam during the next Eurocon. Or in Poland, at Polish conventions. And if you find one in Glasgow, they like trivia about dragons. If you share some, they may share back some of their treasures. Because they like both treasures and sharing!



The dragons couldn't resist the opportunity to pose with Glasgow's tartan rocket! They even invited some other dragon friends to do the same. Top photo by Radosław "Rynvord" Polański. Bottom photo by Meg MacDonald.



A woman with red hair, wearing a gold lace wedding dress and a white veil, is walking towards the camera on a paved path. In the background, another woman in a blue top and black skirt is walking away. Two peacocks are in the foreground on the path. The scene is outdoors with bamboo and other greenery in the background.

**Celebrating
love**

**Photos
by David
Dyer-Bennet**

Arthur's Best Man, brother-in-law Joe Cimmet, and Bernadette share a hug before the ceremony.

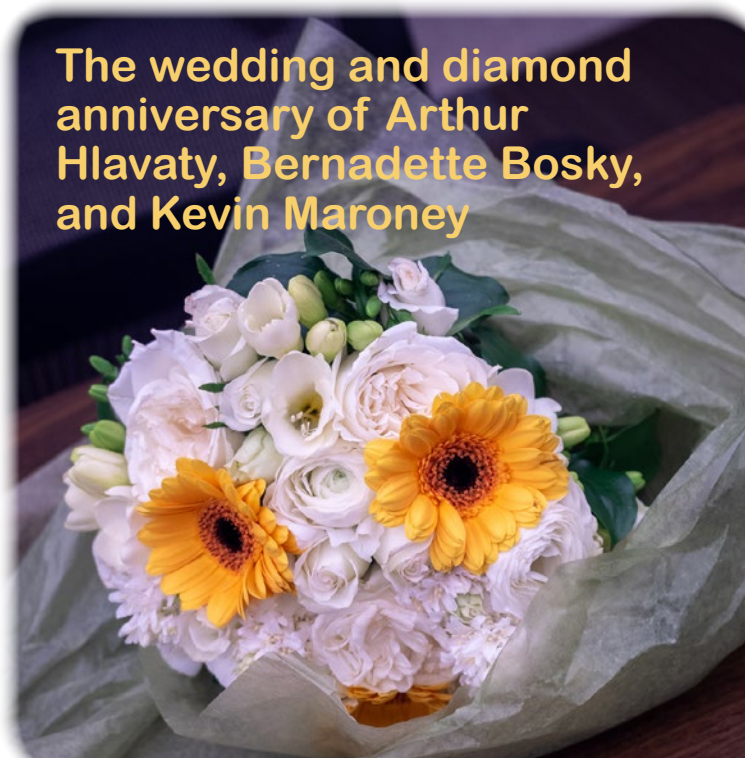


On 5 May 2024, Arthur Hlavaty, Bernadette Bosky, and Kevin Maroney celebrated their love and commitment to each other with their wedding and diamond anniversary (combined) at the Bronx Zoo in New York. In April 2024, they reached 30+ years with one spouse & 40+ with the other, for a total of 75 years. Many thanks to Arthur, Bernadette, and Kevin for for sharing the celebration here in the pages of *Idea* through David Dyer-Bennet's photographs of family, fans, and other friends gathered for the festivities. Equally, many thanks to David for the photos themselves. Enjoy!

The wedding and diamond anniversary of Arthur Hlavaty, Bernadette Bosky, and Kevin Maroney

LEFT: Peacocks lead the way as Bernadette and her sister and Matron of Honor Anita Bosky Vaughn make their way to Schiff Hall at the Bronx Zoo after some pre-ceremony photos.

RIGHT: Bernadette's bridal bouquet.





Kevin and Bernadette arriving at Schiff Hall at the Bronx Zoo.



Terry Maroney (Kevin's sister and Best Dude), Kevin, Bernadette, and Anita Bosky Vaughn (Bernadette's sister and Matron of Honor).



Arthur, alas, was hospitalized with pneumonia, so he participated in the festivities remotely.



Ceremony officiant Andy Duncan and Terry Maroney.



Officiant Andy Duncan, Kevin, and Terry Maroney as the wedding begins.



Anita Bosky Vaughn and Bernadette.



Bernadette's processional music was "The We of Me," by Suzanne Vega, with its chorus: "I belong to be with the two of you and we make three as a family. That's why you're the we of me, the we of me."



Kevin, Terry Maroney, and Arthur.



The ceremony.



Smooches.



*Andy Hickmott,
Bernadette, Adrian
Turtle, and
Vicki Rosenzweig.*



*Bernadette and
Geri Sullivan.*



*Arthur's nibblings Brian
Cimmet, Alison Cimmet,
and Stephanie Pontii.*



*Sue Allen, Lynn Duca, Daniel Eig,
Lynne Newman-Eig, and Lynn
"Lamb" Levy.*



Avram Grumer.



Kimberleigh Smith.

Geoff Hartwell with his guest Paddy talking with Ken and Shira Houghton at the reception. Eugene Reynolds at right.



Eugene Reynolds, Chris Quinones, and Lisa Padol.



Andy Duncan, Joe Siclari, and Edie Stern.



Joe Cimmet, Kevin, Bernadette, Arthur, Stephanie Pontii, Alison Cimmet, and Brian Cimmet.



Lydia Nickerson, Andy Duncan, and Terry Maroney.



For the cake cutting, Bernadette donned the propeller beanie veil that Pat Virzi had made for her and Dennis Virzi's wedding in 1987. Because fandom.

Kevin, Bernadette, and Vicki Rosenzweig.





Avram Grumer and Nancy Lebovitz.

Photographer David-Dyer Bennet on the other side of the camera lens thanks to a helpful guest.



Ken Houghton and Kevin.

BELOW: Kevin, Josh Kronengold, Avram Grumer, Chris Quinones, Lisa Padol, Bernadette, and Lydia Nickerson.



I should be sleeping

by Josh More



I should be sleeping, but instead I got to wondering if ouija boards were available in other alphabets, which led me to wonder if they were available in pictographic languages, and how big the boards would be in those cases, and how they'd group the pictorial concepts – so I had to search it up.

My question is, as of yet, still unanswered – but I do find it surprising how many people are comfortable confidently stating that ghosts will only try to communicate with you in a language you already know.

So now, instead of sleeping, I am wondering if ghosts go to ghost school to learn all human languages, what the pass rate is, and if there are haunting licenses. If so, who issues them and how are they renewed? Is there a CPE system? Who manages it? Is it volunteer-led? How easy is it to forge a haunting license? Do they do biometric identification? How do you do biometrics on ghosts? Are there “aura prints”?

Maybe some sort of substructure in ectoplasm that can be used like retina prints? ...

And for that matter, how do ghosts know what language you do speak? Do they just sort of float around until they have enough data to know how to talk to you? How much data do they need? Is it like cracking wifi encryption? Do different languages require different sample sizes, like WEP vs WPA vs WPA2? Can you hack ghosts? Is there a tool in Kali to do it? Do I need special hardware, like for wifi hacking? Are psychics and mediums just people with buggy firmware that sets their afterlife communication hardware to promiscuous mode so they function more like hubs than switches? Does that mean that channeling spirits is really just a basic network proxy? ...

Because we might be able to build some pretty cool stuff here.

Reprinted with permission from Facebook, 29 December 2023



“Actually, I am deeply unreliable,
but I mask it at times.”

– Claire Brialey

05 June 2024



An English knitter's cast-on tale

by Liz Phillips

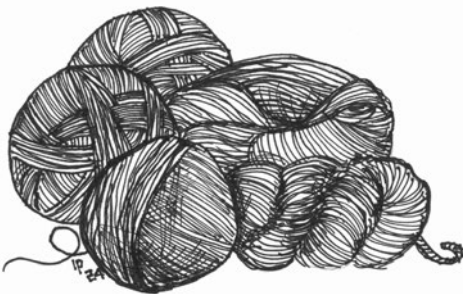
The last Saturday of April is International Local Yarn Shop Day. This time last year, I didn't know that. Neither did I know that a lot of fantasy and science fiction fans who love books also knit. There are ideas swirling around in my brain about the latter revelation.

After knitting more than 300 chemo lap blankets in three years for the cancer center that treats me, a friend suggested I move on from the bulky Bernat blanket yarn and try knitting "something more complicated – like socks or a sweater." I thought writing a fantasy novel would be an easier, better time investment, so I started writing first.

In the next five months, world building and knitting merged to become my muse. You may wonder, "What did that look like?" For me, it meant discovering my local yarn shop the same week my imagination spied a troll and two ogres standing on a stone bridge in the make-believe Kingdom of Earith. I started

writing and buying yarn! Specifically, sock ply merino superwash with a bit of nylon for stretch and strength – not cheap yarn loaded with acrylic. Certainly not "100% virgin acrylic" that makes you ponder silly things like promiscuous petroleum byproducts and the serious matter of which leaves a larger carbon footprint – recycled acrylic fibers or the brand new ones. Should anyone buy any garment or skein of yarn that is acrylic when so many natural fibers are available? The complexity of ethics caught my conscience faster than a Dracula ant can snap-jaw another insect to feed larvae in its ant nest.

When I was a teenager in the 1970s, knitting was called a domestic art, something the lady of the household did to make home a warm and cozy place for the family. Knitting was done at home or at an auntie's house while visiting overnight as it was ladylike. When I learned to knit, being bold like PBS Miss Marple knitting in plain sight in her garden or in public places was scandalous, something for the vicar's wife to talk about when she arrived on the sleuth's doorstep with a Dresden loaf in hopes of enjoying a cup of tea before suggesting one not display very personal behavior in the village.





Imagine my surprise last August when I walked into A Likely Yarn, my local shop, to be greeted by young ladies in their early twenties who wore t-shirts with slogans like “Knit happens” or “STFU when I’m counting stitches!” or “I knit. What’s your superpower?” When did knitting become a very public adventure? And the shop was gorgeous. So many colors! So many blended fibers in various weights. Some solid colors, some hand painted or variegated, and some self-striping. The smell of yarn hit my olfactory much the same way a used bookstore or pulp magazine collection hits a book collector. I thought of the smell of husband Curt’s book collection mingling with the bouquet of sheep, alpaca, silk, and cashmere dyed in a pleasing palette of colors. Brain overload!

According to Mark C. Griffiths, Ph.,D. (*Excessive Knitting and Addiction*, Psychology Today, January 2017), there is this thing that many women do after they go shopping. Unlike men, they comment to a cashier or a fellow shopper that their husband is going to kill them if they see all the bags. Others give part of their purchase

to a friend or relative to hold until a later time. They sneak their purchases into the house when nobody’s home to catch them. Like they are ashamed. Like they are dishonest or have shoplifted everything in the bag instead of paying. Guilt, fear, and anxiety have a negative impact on the purchase, regardless of whether the shopping was affordable. Investment in a new hobby or interest can cause anxiety, too. I came home with a bag full of yarn and double point needles and circulars. Plus, there was a little tote with everything I needed for my first sock class. No need to hide them. And if I felt sheepish about going crazy on my first visit, Curt was happy I had found something to do that made me happy.

Psychologists have studied the knitting phenomenon. Being a “knitwit” is no longer an insult. Research shows that knitting has positive cognitive effects on IQ, fighting dementia, calming nerves, reducing depression, relieving stress, and improving eye-hand coordination as well as improving balance. In chemotherapy patients, neuropathy is reduced, brain cells recover faster, and destroyed cells

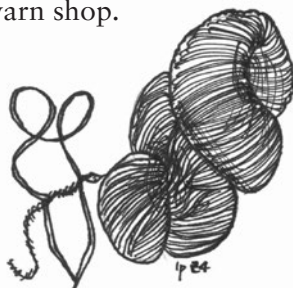
regenerate and mature with greater improvement showing up in blood-work. In other words, knitting improves a person's health as they age. On top of that, knitting provides a steady calorie burn of 100-150 calories an hour.

Another offensive reference to knitters and their passion for knitting items and garments for themselves or their loved ones is the vocabulary, which is similar to harmful addictions that include the uncontrollable need for drugs or alcohol or (fill in the blank). **Stash** refers to a collection of yarn, which may appear excessive since the average knitter has an average of four knitting projects going at once. Knitters get a **buzz** when they handle their collection of skeins, which are usually organized by color or weight or colorway artisan. But there is the scientific argument (Corkhill, B., et al. 2014 in a paper titled Knitting and Well-being. *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture*, 12(1), 34-57) that knitting and collecting fibers is a **constructive addiction** where the main harm is risk of carpal tunnel syndrome that is insignificant when compared to the mental wellness and physical health benefits the knitter experiences. Knitting is better than destructive addictions such as gambling, alcohol, and meth.

In five months, I've learned to knit great sock legs (heels are still too difficult to knit on my own). I've learned to bouclé knit a simple scarf. I'm working on a sweater and an ornate wrap using fingering

weight yarn! There are four project bags in a basket next to my recliner. And the spare bedroom, which became a storage area for a daughter's record and book collection, now has a 24-cube shelving unit full of yarn. So much yarn! I need another unit for the yarn that was carefully procured in March and reverently packed in vented yarn shop bags.

Yarn has changed my life! Visiting a yarn shop is an important part of any trip that takes me outside the house. On weekends, Curt always asks me if I'd like him to drive me to A Likely Yarn to look at a new shipment and sit with my knitting buddies for a couple of hours. Every single skein in my house has a story that I can tell you, but if you aren't a diehard knitwit like me, you'll nod off and have a lovely nap or wander off in search of Curt to see his collection, which I believe is now larger than the book collection at our town's public library. If you do knit and you visit, stash your latest project in your car so we can beat Miss Marple at her own game. We can knit in the garden or in the kitchen while we enjoy our tea and biscuits. And if you're really interested, I'll give you a copy of one of my Miss Marple sock patterns – after we get back from visiting my local yarn shop.



ALIEN CONNECTIONS

by Howard Whyte

In the Fall of 2023, my good friend Geri Sullivan stopped by my place, on the way to somewhere interesting, to see if I could help her with a problem. After the usual catching up period she opened a large basket to reveal a blue bundle. Not too big, but not too small either. About 30" long I'd guess. I suggested we open it down in my shop where we had more room and light to examine her object. Laying the bundle on my work table she began to carefully unwrap it, explaining that it had been damaged sometime ago at a hotel and she had hoped I could fix it... because that is what I do, fix things.

As she slowly unwrapped the object it revealed itself as some kind of body. Almost infant in size yet

a faded silver in color. As the face was uncovered and a stifled gasp escaped, I found myself looking at what appeared to be the body of an alien life form. Could this be one of the fabled aliens that was supposed to be housed at Wright-Patterson AFB? How did she come by this object? Geri revealed nothing. Fully unveiled now, it was obvious the object has suffered severe trauma. Both legs were broken and there was damage to one hand. Various bits and pieces had also been carefully collected.

The skin was hard. Almost as if it had been dried in the sun. The skin color was a faded, flat silver with some wrinkles from desiccation. But it was the eyes that were the most riveting. Black ovals with

Howard Whyte meets the alien in his workshop in Carlisle, PA. Photo by Geri Sullivan.





*The alien eagerly awaits Howard's expert restoration.
Photo by Geri Sullivan.*

no lids. Classic alien eyes, although sightless, seemed to look right through me. Clearly this was going to be a special project and I wondered if I were up to the task.

After Geri left to continue her journey, I went back down to my shop and stared at the body for quite a long time, trying to figure out how I was going to approach this repair/restoration. Gingerly I lifted it out of the blanket and placed it on the work bench. First item of business was to figure out how to reattach the legs, which had been broken and severed just above the ankles. The alignment had to be perfect, with no obvious marks of repair. It had to be structurally sound and able to support the rest of the body. Carefully I laid out the tools I thought I would need. Tweezers, clamps, wire, binding straps, small picks and the like. I didn't want to be in a situation where I needed something crucial and didn't have it readily at hand. Reattachment was going to be tricky enough without trying to find a tool at the same time.

Carefully aligning each leg to the foot, I cautiously applied some adhesive and secured the broken joint with binding straps. As that was drying, I turned my attention to the damaged hand. Among the various bits and pieces included I was able to find the right slivers and place them carefully where they

belonged. It sounds easy enough but each piece only fit it one place and only in one orientation. It was painstaking as each piece was tried and rejected until the correct piece was found and secured. And all the while I kept asking myself if this being had a name. Surely such a being that had traveled so far had a name, right?

As I continued with the restoration process, the body began to look as if it was healing pretty well. Gone were the gaps and gouges. Gone were the splinters of broken legs and fingers. Gone were the discolorations of age and neglect. Scarring was minimal. The skin began to appear more normal, if silver is normal, without the rough sandy appearance it arrived with. And still I wondered if he had a name.

Came the day it was time to place him upright in a standing position. Would the repairs hold? Would he be balanced so as not to topple at the slightest touch? Would he look "normal"? As I brought him up to the standing position, I sensed

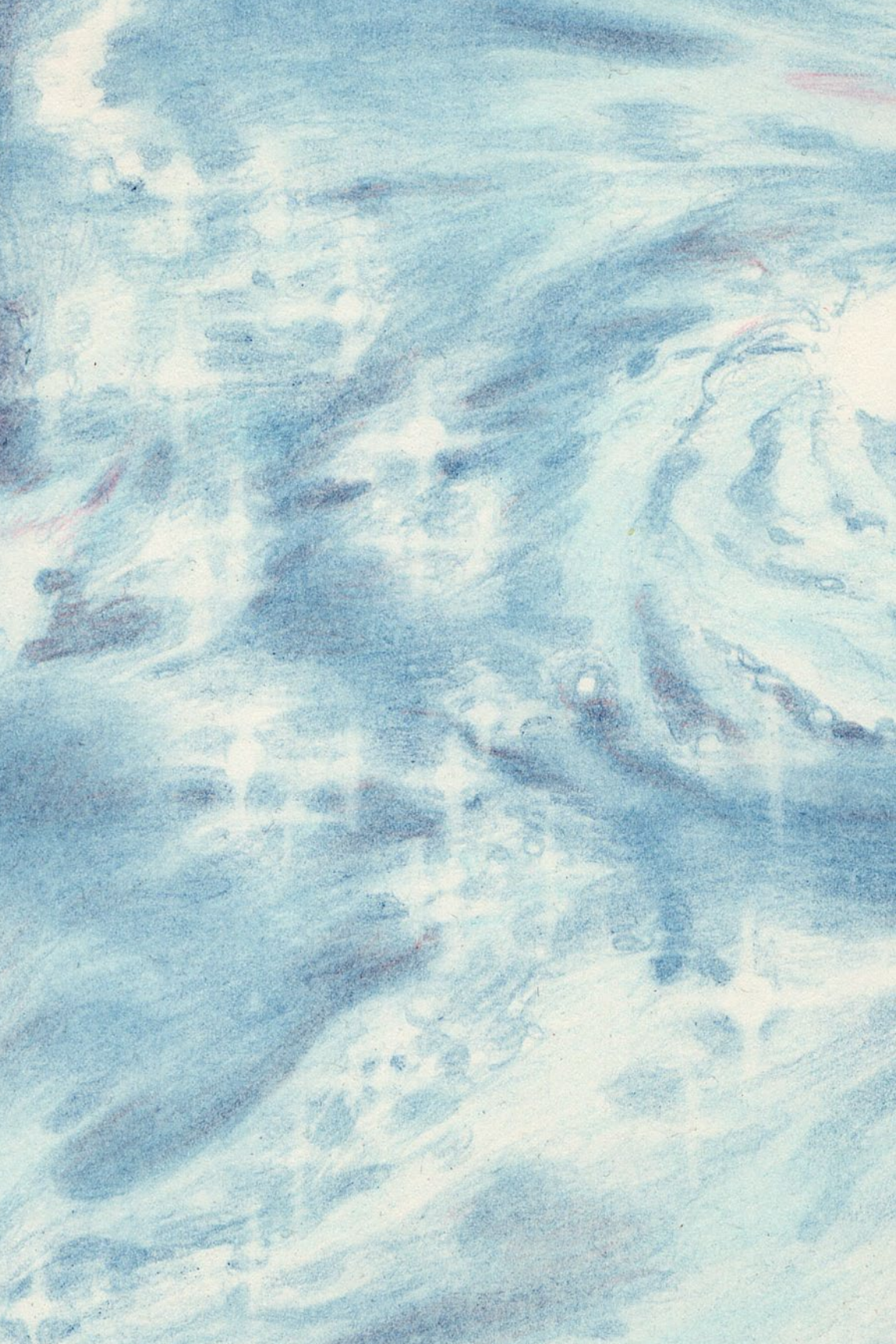
something special was happening. For so many years since his injuries he had lain quiet and still, wrapped in darkness. Now he was going to stand upright. A symbol of his species. An emissary from beyond. And suddenly, as the being attained verticality, I heard in my head, loudly and clearly proclaimed... “My name is Bart.”

I stood stunned at the revelation. Had I actually heard right? Did I hear it at all? Yes, I had. His name was Bart. “Hello, Bart” was all I could say. There was no other communication. Just silence. But now I knew his name. Bart.

It was some weeks before I could return Bart to Geri, but when I did, I introduced them as if they were meeting for the first time. “Geri, this is Bart.” “Bart, this is Geri.” Take good care of him.

Thanks to Howard Whyte's ministrations, Bart stands comfortably once more, welcoming denizens from near and far to his home in the Zeppelin Hangar at Toad Woods. Well, except for when he's off on a jaunt across a galaxy or three. Photo by Geri Sullivan.







**ART, PHOTO, &
LOGO CREDITS**

- Gloria Lucia Albasi: 83
- Michael Benveniste: 48, 56, 89–92, 94–97, 99–101, 103, 105–108, 111
- Ann Broomhead: 100, 104
- Sue Dawson: 80
- Gay Ellen Dennett: 69
- Vincent Docherty: 79–80
- Deb Geisler: 50, 60
- Pat Geisler: 60
- Lisa Hayes: 67
- Vicki Karns: 93–95, 98, 102, 104–105
- Mackey Funeral Home: 110
- Helen Montgomery: 68–69
- Jon Singer calligraphy: 48–50, 61–62, 89, 110
- Geri Sullivan: 45–46, 85–86, 88, 99, 109

Remembering Deb

A special section in *Idea* 14

- Introduction** 47
- Her words...** 50
 - Plague cookies Facebook post 50
 - The Olive Bill 51
 - Noreascon 4 rubber ducky press release 52
 - Throw-back Thursday Facebook post 53
 - The ConRunner: or There and Back Again 54
 - Pandemic Christmas Dreamwidth post 59
 - Thirtieth anniversary Facebook post 60
 - Light a candle Facebook post 60
 - Last Facebook post 60
- Deb online...** 61
- Deb edited...** 61
- Honors...** 61
- Our words...** 62
 - Jim Hudson 62
 - Elizabeth (McCarty) Upchurch 63
 - Jeffrey Green 64
 - Michael Lee 64
 - Janice Gelb 65
 - Kara Shemin 65
 - Leslie Turek 66
 - Charles St. Amand 67
 - Helen Montgomery 68
 - Gay Ellen Dennett (photos) 69
 - Randall Shepherd 70

continued >

Idea Volume 2, Number 14
Remembering Deb section

June 2024

Geri Sullivan, Editor
idea@toad-hall.com

Copyright 2024 by Geri Fitzgerald Sullivan, Wales, Massachusetts, USA. All rights revert to the contributors upon publication.

A SMOTHRA publication. Member & Past President: fwa.
Founding member: Minnesota Fanzine Recovery Act. Fellow of NESFA.

Idea and this special section are available for the usual from:
Geri Sullivan
Toad Woods
idea@toad-hall.com

Remembering Deb can be purchased at:
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)
[amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)
[amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)
and other Amazon outlets.

PDFs online at:
[fanac.org](https://www.fanac.org)
[eFanzines.com](https://www.eFanzines.com)

Send LoCs (letters of comment) to idea@toad-hall.com

This special section of *Idea* 14 is published with thanks to Janice Gelb for copyediting expertise on "Our words..." and to Janice Gelb, Karen Johnson, and Jon Singer for proofreading. Any errors that remain belong to the editor.

Our words... (continued)

Vicki Karns	71
Patty Wells	71
Edie Stern	72
Mark Plummer	73
Vicki M. Croce	74
Claire Brialey	75
Marianne Plumridge	75
Ben Yalow	76
David Weingart	76
Sharon Sbarsky	77
Joe Siclari	78
Vincent Docherty (photos)	79
Sue Dawson (photo)	80
James Bacon	81
gloria lucia albasi	83
Elaine Brennan	83
Geri Sullivan	84
Bruce Coville	86
Esther MacCallum-Stewart	87

Deb made jewelry... 88

Jewelry that Deb made was provided by Vicki Karns, Ann Broomhead, Geri Sullivan, and Leslie Turek, supplemented by Deb's jewelry box, project cupboard, and art show sales inventory. Photos by Michael Benveniste, Ann, Vicki, and Geri.

(Silence) 110



Mischa misses Deb, as do we all. Photo by Geri Sullivan, 29 March 2024



Deb, her mom, and siblings. Libby, Pat, and Su in front; Deb and Doug in back.

ABOUT REMEMBERING DEB

BY GERI SULLIVAN

Remembering Deb is a special section in the June 2024 issue of my science fiction fanzine, *Idea*, which I resumed publishing at the end of 2023.

A stand-alone edition was published for distribution at the June 22 Celebration of Life for Deb at Suffolk University in Boston, MA. It is also available as a PDF on the *Idea* page on efanzines.com and with other issues of *Idea* on fanac.org. The printed version is available from Geri Sullivan and on Amazon. The same is true for the full issue of *Idea* 14.

Idea thanks Michael Benveniste for his support of this project, Jon Singer for his calligraphy, and all of the contributors. As I worked on the layout, it was as if Deb kept me company. My memories of her certainly did. I imagined hearing her suggest noodging certain elements “one more pixel to the left.” There was laughter as well as grief.

Readers are encouraged to send comments and additional Deb memories to idea@toad-hall.com. Letters will be acknowledged and may be published in *Idea* 15 this coming winter.

Remembering Deb



Deb Geisler holding Berger des Chats (Cat Herder), a pattern-welded sword with a blade of meteoric iron, which Mike commissioned for her. Photo by Michael Benveniste.

Michael Benveniste, Deb's husband, announced on her Facebook page:

Dr. Deborah M. Geisler (Deb) passed away on March 23, 2024, at the age of 66 after a long battle with lung and heart disease. She was resting comfortably under hospice care at home before passing.

Deb was, at her core, a teacher. As a professor of Communication and Journalism at Suffolk University, she touched the lives of students for over 30 years. Deb never stopped caring profoundly about her students and the material she taught. She was also a science fiction fan and con-runner and made many friendships in that community. She was chair of Noreascon 4, the 2004 Worldcon [World Science Fiction Convention], and volunteered her time, experience, and snark to many other conventions. She was also the love of my life – we would have been married 33 years this October.

Deb is survived by her sister Libby and brother Doug as well as her extended family.

Deb Geisler
September 20, 1957 -
March 23, 2024

Her words...

Deb Geisler

Facebook, 1 April 2020

Plague cookies: spiced oatmeal cookies with raisins and craisins. Spicing = cinnamon, allspice, mace, freshly grated nutmeg.

Dessert...or breakfast!

Only in quarantine could I have three student appointments, chat with my department chair, deal with writing reports for work, make a batch of cookies, eat lunch, then have my next student appointments...without leaving my house.

Could be a hell of a lot worse. No whining today.



The Olive Bill

by Deb Geisler

Any time I say or type the words, “the olive bill,” my grandfather Shannon and my dad are alive again. It started sometime in about 1956. My parents were still newlyweds, but strapped for cash (as many of us were, at 22). They lived in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where dad worked at Montgomery Ward and mom wrote for the local newspaper (until a rocky pregnancy – me, as it turned out – forced her to quit).

On a visit to Bellevue, Ohio (where Dad was from and where Mom had finished her Omaha-initiated high school education and, incidentally, fallen for the bad boy of the class) (guess who) to see their respective folks, my grandfather had picked up a pack of cigarettes for my dad. When Grandpa got home, Dad said, “How much do I owe you?” And Grandpa said, “I’ll put it on your olive bill.”

The olive bill, of course, was to pay for the martini drop-ins the next time cocktails were served. Only the olive bill never came due. It was understood in our family that you never paid the “creditor” off in olives – you just made sure the next person you met who needed something got it. On the olive bill.

So. I rarely write this sort of folksy tale, but growing up in my family taught me about paying

forward. And as I read the wrangling over potentially exact wording for a PAF agreement that should never have to be written down, shades of the olive bill (with or without pimento) wander past my monitor. Olive bills aren’t formal contracts. They’re not precisely measured (as if, somehow, the size of the olive or its juiciness or the color of its pimento matters more than the olive).

Olive bills are an inherent belief that you don’t need to be specifically accountable to the people who put something on your pay-it-forward tab. Instead, they’re an acknowledgment that when you do something good for someone, they’ll turn around and do something good for someone else. You never pay off your olive bill. You pass the richness of your own olives off to someone who needs and can appreciate it.

Mark Olson said it in his original posting about the Pass-Along Funds: fandom loses if we need to codify our gifts to the future. We make an agreement – a gentlefen’s agreement – that we will do the right thing. When we’re not sure what that right thing is (or which of a myriad of right things we should do), why, we ask each other and work it out. It would be a very sad thing if our gifts to each other came to have paragraph and section numbers.

Originally posted to the smofs email list during a discussion about Worldcon Pass-Along Funds (PAF) and the possible need to further formalize the rules that govern the program. Reprinted in [Recipes for Disaster](#), published by Rune Press when Deb was Fan Guest of Honor at Minicon 39, April 2004.

This press release from Noreascon Four was written by Deb and sent to the convention's professional and fan media contacts on 31 July 2003. It was reprinted in a slightly different form in Recipes for Disaster, published by Rune Press when Deb was Fan Guest of Honor at Minicon 39, April 2004.

Thousands to invade Boston by sea

Aquatic invasion has Boston on high alert; supertanker, sailors make way for ducklings

A “floating flock of bathtub toys,” including the battered, salt- and sun-bleached remains of a flotilla of 29,000 rubber duckies, is expected to wash in to the shoreline of New England over the next few weeks, note oceanographers.

The duckies, which escaped from a container ship on a China to Seattle run in 1992, have made an 11-year trans-Arctic journey to reach Boston — only to discover they are more than a year *early* for Noreascon Four.

Floating along the Alaska coast, through the Bering Strait, wafting past Iceland, and drifting over the sink point of the Titanic, the yellow avian tub-buddies have continued their arduous journey, only to be disappointed at the end.

“We left in 1992, when we heard from our buddies at the Peabody Hotel in Orlando that Boston had started a new bid for a Worldcon,” quacked one anonymous fannish floater. “I don’t think you understand how long a trip that is for a rubber duckie with no bubble bath.”*

Curtis Ebbesmeyer of Seattle, a retired oceanographer who has been tracking the toys’ progress, told CNN that “Some kept going, some turned and headed to Europe.” Ebbesmeyer did not speculate on whether the small contingent of European-bound duckies was hoping to reach Glasgow in time for Interaction in 2005.

Although the duckies might be early, they will be able to get Noreascon Four memberships before the next rate increase, due October 1, 2003.

* Okay, so rubber duckies can’t talk. But if they could, they might have said that.

For Immediate Release

Noreascon Four
The 62nd World Science Fiction
Convention
Boston, Massachusetts
September 2-6, 2004
Guests: Terry Pratchett
William Tenn
Jack Speer
Peter Weston

P.O. Box 1010
Framingham, MA 01701
<http://www.noreascon.org>
info@noreascon.org

Any wayward rubber duckies arriving at Torcon3, the 2003 Worldcon in Toronto next month, will be able to buy their memberships at the Noreascon Four table in the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Boston-bound ducks, fans, alien life forms, and others with a credit card may purchase memberships online at the Noreascon Four web site, <http://www.noreascon.org>

And, of course, everyone can feel free to write us at our postal address, above.

Any rumor that Noreascon Four plans to deliberately re-release the stalwart duckies into the Gulf Stream in 2005, aimed at the United Kingdom, is a base, um, canard.

###

Deb Geisler **Facebook, 11 February 2016**

Throw-back Thursday, via FANAC.org: me, at Smofcon in Cocoa Beach, 2000. Ten minutes after this photo was taken, we filed our bid for the 2004 World Science Fiction Convention, which we won the right to host. This was the least tired I would look for 4 years.



The ConRunner: or There and Back Again

by Deb Geisler

"I feel thin, sort of stretched, like butter, scraped over too much bread."
Bilbo Baggins on the occasion of his 111th Birthday

– J.R.R. Tolkien

Steven asked me to write about how to avoid the attenuated feelings that come of being spread out over too vast an acreage in working on things fannish – of having, as Bilbo did, a burden that he wasn't even really aware of, but that was slowly turning him into a wraith of his former self. Steven noted, "I figure you'd be good since you've been in that place and have, from what I can tell, managed to extricate yourself."

And the answer is yes, well. I have a great deal of sympathy for Tolkien's hapless protagonist, who stumbled into a deal of work because he was flattered to be asked and didn't take time to consider what this would mean. Like Bilbo, I had my own Gandalf, convinced that there was more to this hobbit than met the eye, and that I would have the skills needed to best the trolls and wargs and dragons. Fortunately for my various nieces and nephews, however, mine is a tale

that ends with me, rather than one that embroils them in a multi-generational search for the antidote to ultimate evil.

This is *fandom*, after all, and not the stuff of legends.

So this bit of bitness is going to be an explanation of how one gets involved in a fannish treasure hunt (without pocket kerchiefs or thinking through supply lines), what can happen along the way, and when it is right to cry, "Hold! Enough!" (And, for the record, I didn't extricate myself until it was really far too late.)

If you want people to give you more and more responsibility and authority, prove that you can handle what you are given over a series of projects and slow stages. (Or, perhaps more honestly, if you want to suck someone into your con-running venture, ease them in with a series of tasks and great rewards of egoboo when they

Written for Argentus 11, edited and published by Steven H Silver, November 2011. Text is from the manuscript Deb shared with me 15 July 2011.

accomplish what you want them to do.) That was my path, starting in 1989, with an unexpected invitation to work on the Worldcon (my first con-running experience) at a fairly high level (woof!)...then continuing through the 1990s as our local group got me involved with Boskone and other Worldcons and a bid to host another Boston (or somewhere) Worldcon.

Along came 1998, and one of our people did an officer poll of the members: if we win the Worldcon, who do you want to run it? I still have the emailed results from that poll, and another one three years later when we *did* win the right to host the Worldcon in Boston. Of 35 responses, 34 people said they wanted me as the chairman.

That was...unprecedented in my life. Like many of us in fandom and con-running, I was the kid *not* picked when, as Janis Ian sang, "choosing sides for basketball." Suddenly there were people who not only liked me, but wanted to trust me with leading them and managing a million dollar project. So, like Bilbo, I said yes. Unlike Bilbo, I had some time for reflection...and thought I knew what chairing a Worldcon meant: what it would do to me, my friendships, my husband. Even so, I said yes.

So. So, so, so. We lost that bid. We *did* go out in a blaze of excruciatingly pink glory, but we lost none the less. Later, I would think, "Why didn't I slip away then?" And the answer was that no one blamed me

(well, except me); they treated me as a friend, still. They still wanted me as the president of the organization (although I refused to stand for re-election, it was nice to be wanted); they came to me with concerns and troubles (believing, naïvely, that I could make them right).

Our group was working on another project in the interim, and it proved to be more divisive than it would have been if we'd had a Worldcon in the works. The "treasure" here was not so vast (in terms of egoboo), but there was no longer the greater treasure of the Worldcon plunder to look for. And so people battled over petty things, did harm to themselves and the organization, and I grew lethargic.

And then, suddenly there was the possibility of another bid – shorter, more intense, for our own city. It re-energized people. They cast off the useless, petty squabbling, came together to get the job done, and there we were...another officer poll, and 34 of my friends said, again, they wanted me. So, I did it again. This time, I was that much less naïve, that much more aware of what bidding meant. This time, I knew that if we lost again, that would be the end of my time in fandom. Only this time we won.

Which is harder: facing the failed bid, or facing the job of actually *running* the Worldcon? My friends would tell you it is the former. The latter, they would say, is hard, but it is all about creating, not watching one's hopes go up in smoke.



Deb on the Iron Throne. When she posted this to Facebook 25 May 2015, she wrote, "Yeah, I know it looks like I belong there." Photo by Michael Benveniste.

What I learned from being the chairman of a Worldcon:

- (1) No matter how much you think you know about the job, you're wrong. It is taxing and difficult and exhausting in ways you never thought about.
- (2) You'd better really like your friends at the beginning. Some of them will disappoint you, because you thought you knew who they were. Every one of them will be who they are, but unless you can learn to help motivate and encourage and supervise them, that won't necessarily be a good thing. Personnel issues are down to you to take care of.
- (3) No one tells you the ugly little secret about major projects like this: winning can be just as devastating as losing; being successful can shred you just as quickly as failing. And even if they *did* tell you (and nobody did tell me), you probably wouldn't believe them anyway.
- (4) Former Worldcon chairman Martin Easterbook told me something really profound, about halfway through the actual five days of our Worldcon. (He said it wasn't original to him, and I think he credited another former Worldcon chairman.) "Deb," he said with a sad sort of smile, "If you chair a bad Worldcon, thousands of people will be mad at you. And if you chair a perfect Worldcon, hundreds of people will be mad at you." So you can't worry about every single unhappy person in the job – there are times you have to just let go, do your best for the largest number of people, and hope that's going to be enough.
- (5) Eventually, this will end. You have to keep your people moving in the right direction *after* the convention, too. Get the last bits taken care of, finish all of your obligations to everyone. But even so, when the actual convention is over, you'll just want to hide in a hole. This is normal. Listen to me: take the time for yourself afterward.

Be warned that, even if you do #5 correctly, I'm convinced, there is a

sense that you may have used up all of a vital resource, with nothing left to give. You feel...stretched thin. (I hadn't thought about the butter-on-bread line of Tolkien's until Steven wrote me about this article, but it is completely on point.) So, what is the single dumbest thing you can then do? That's right: get involved with more projects. That's what I did.

If you need to rest, rest. And if you've just come off of a major project, no matter how flattering it is to be asked, you probably need to rest. Get some other activities in your life. Pick and choose your projects, and have them show short-term results. Avoid situations that will be difficult for you emotionally. Don't listen to people when they say, "But nobody else has your credibility, your gravitas. They'll *listen* to you," unless you really *want* to become embroiled in the situation.

And if some tiny ass robot, no matter how cute, starts broadcasting a message from a tart wearing cinnamon buns on the sides of her head saying, "Help me, Obi Wan Kenobi! You're our only hope!" Walk. Away. No, I take that back. Run away. (As an aside, it both troubles and tickles me that Microsoft Word knows who Obi Wan Kenobi is.)

See, here's the important thing about that post-major-project feeling: some time later, usually a few months, you'll start feeling like you have energy again. You'll start missing the frenzy and forgetting the terror. Adrenalin rushes can

be addictive. But what you don't know – can't really know – is that this is a short-term burst. And when you wear yourself out *this* time, it will take longer to recover, and the spiritual and emotional deficit will be greater.

Okay, back to that wench in white wanting you to save the rebel alliance. She'll tell you you're unique and special and without you it will all falter.

If that's all true, then maybe it's meant to fail. I once wrote to someone about a situation where she was troubled and guilt-ridden because she seemed to be the only one who could keep a fan group going, but she just wanted to quit. She wanted advice about what she should do, because it wasn't fun anymore. My advice, "*Save you...*" If the group is meant to survive as a group, it will save itself. As for the club, consider what clubs are for: they are groups of likeminded people who gather together for fun and frolic and education and companionship. If this particular club is meeting the needs of its members, other members, seeing you stepping away, will step in and work to keep it together."

Alas, I didn't take my own advice. My friends needed me! I was convinced. Someone had to do the job, and you're the best hobbit for it! Gandalf said. And so, two and a half years later, I was taken out of our annual convention on a stretcher in the middle of the night, my heart a victim of misplaced feelings of obligation.

Thus began a rather slow process of extricating myself from con-running: finish this obligation, cut the related connection, cauterize the loose ends, move along to the next. By 2009, I had slipped entirely out of the fannish circles that were once my home, missing the people, but realizing that this was perhaps the best thing. Once, in fall of 2009, I showed up at a local work session, and three different people asked me what they should do about various con-running concerns. They weren't just seeking advice; they wanted someone to make the decision about what to do. That made me disengage still more – the knowledge that Princess Leia was lurking, somewhere, and I might be stupid enough to shine up my universe-saving staff again.

The simple matter is that nobody but you can decide how much you should engage. Nobody but you can determine your energy, your strength, your tolerance levels. Nobody but you has to pay the consequences when you push too hard, stress your marriage, or wake up the hotel manager in the middle of the night because something is wrong with your heart and you need an ambulance.

Over the last two years, I've tried twice to re-engage at light levels. Once was a failure – not because of what I did or did not do, but because of the people involved. There is this about going to the end of your rope and hanging on for dear life: afterward, you just aren't

willing to tolerate pettiness in the same way you once were.

The second re-engagement was to do a project, one single project, for the Reno Worldcon, Renovation. I felt some debt there (and for once, my husband even agreed the debt was real), so I agreed to work on the convention. (As I write this, Renovation is a month away.) But this is collaborative work with one other person, there's a clear chain of command, and I don't have minions. As much as I joke about minions, having them is a heavy responsibility if you're honest with yourself.

And *at* the Worldcon, I agreed to run slides for a performance, help at the gopher level, and just be a fan. That's damned important, I think: being a fan. Enjoying what Worldcon has to offer. Remembering why it's fun.

How can you avoid the sort of near-burnout (yes, it's still singed around the edges) I experienced? Here are some don'ts: Don't take on the weight of the fannish universe (that never works). Don't assume that you *have* to solve the problems, just because you *can* solve them. Don't angst over the things you have neither the skills nor knowledge to fix. Don't push yourself when you're long past your reserves, just because "someone has to do it." Who died and made you someone? Don't ever make the mistake of thinking you are irreplaceable.

And one "Do": Do listen to the people who love you. At the end of the day, when the convention's all over, who's going home with you at night?

One little pandemic, and I'm acting like a petulant 7-year-old

by Deb Geisler

Under normal circumstances, when my husband suggests he would get me an expensive present for Christmas and asks which of seven choices do I want...I'd pick the cheapest or the second from the bottom, because greed annoys me, I don't need the fancy one, and there are people who can barely afford food right now.

Not this time.

I snarled at my inner responsible grownup, picked the second best (because the best one is sized wrong for me), requested the color I like, and slapped myself upside the head (where that "petulant" description comes from) and told my inner adult to STFU.

Want a toy.

Pathetic, isn't it?

It's been a hideous and wonderful and agonizing and soulful and sad and joyful and divisive and unifying year. And I'm feeling like a kid who wants a new toy so I feel better.

Might blubber.

Gonna get the toy...and then be sure to help other people, make them feel good about life, make some cookies, support charities, be nice to my students, enjoy my

It's been a hideous and wonderful and agonizing and soulful and sad and joyful and divisive and unifying year. And I'm feeling like a kid who wants a new toy so I feel better.

friends and loved ones, and try to help some more.

And maybe on Christmas, but definitely by New Year's Day 2021, I'll sit by the fire, play with my new toy (no, it's not a car), and enjoy the great company of my cat and my husband. My husband – who also said that if we couldn't get the toy by Christmas, I should tell him what else I wanted, and I could have that. Too.

There are days when my worst nightmare is that I'll wake up and find out he has been a dream. Then I realize that my imagination is just not that good. :-)

Merry, Happy, Joyous. Play with a toy. Eat paste. Be well and safe.

Posted to Dreamwidth 22 December 2020.

Deb Geisler Facebook 20 October 2021

Thirty years ago today, Michael Benveniste and I exchanged vows and rings in front of a rabbi and a whole bunch of our friends and family.

That's worked out pretty damned well. By which I mean that I've been the luckiest woman in the universe for the last thirty years.

I cannot imagine anyone else to have survived the pandemic with, nor the disasters large and small, nor shared the amazements and victories, nor a hundred thousand other things we have done together with love and joy and unity and giggling.

Happy Anniversary of our hitching, Michael, my favorite husband.



Deb Geisler and her sister Su, 1961.



Michael Benveniste at home. Photo by Deb Geisler.

If life makes it possible for you,
spread some kindness
and love today.
There's too much unreasoning
hatred and brutality in the world.

Light a candle.

Deb Geisler
Facebook 17 February 2024

Deb's last Facebook post 19 March 2024

Before claiming something is impossible, it is useful to remember that, with enough thrust, pigs will fly just fine.

Deb online...

thesuffolkjournal.com/44458/news/in-memory-of-deborah-geisler-a-life-of-impact/ – In memory of Deborah Geisler: a life of impact, April 24, 2024

linkedin.com/in/deborah-geisler-9058865/ – Account has been memorialized as a tribute to Deb's professional legacy

<http://www.clearether.com/Deb/> – Deb's webpage for Minicon 39

mnstf.org/minicon/minicon39/M39_DebGeisler_chapbook.pdf – Recipes for Disaster – Chapbook published by Rune Press for Minicon 39, where Deb was Fan Guest of Honor. Deb's Mom's sweet roll recipe is here.

legionsofdarkness.com/ – Deb's Legions of Darkness website

Deb edited...

Holt, Tom. (2002). *Expecting Beowulf*. Deb Geisler, ed. NESFA Press
nesfa.org/book/expecting-beowulf/

Brin, David. (2003). *Tomorrow Happens*. Deb Geisler, ed. NESFA Press
Out of print. Currently available used from Abe Books and Amazon.

Coville, Bruce. (2008). *The One Right Thing*. Deb Geisler, ed. NESFA Press
nesfa.org/book/the-one-right-thing-2/

Renovation Souvenir Book (2011), Deb Geisler, ed. Reno Convention Fandom, Incorporated. fanac.org/conpubs/Worldcon/Renovation/Reno%20Program%20Book.pdf

Honors...

Deb became a Fellow of NESFA in 1999.

Fan Guest of Honor

ConCave 25 – February 27–29, 2004, Horse Cave, KY

Minicon 39 – April 9–11, 2004, Minneapolis, MN

ConQuesT 38 – May 25–27, 2007, Kansas City, MO

In memory of Deborah Geisler: a life of impact

Shelagh Sullivan, Editor-in-Chief • April 24, 2024

Professor Deborah Geisler first came to Suffolk University in 1984 and left an impact of generosity, humor and resilience for the students and faculty she worked alongside and taught for nearly 40 years.

Geisler died March 23 at the age of 66. She is survived by her husband Michael Beveniste and two siblings.

A graduate of Ohio University and Southern Illinois University, Geisler harbored a passion for journalism and communication. Above all, though, Geisler's heart lay with her students.

"She just was inspiring, compassionate, a true educator and she always made us laugh along the way," said Nick Edwards, a 2020 Suffolk graduate.

Fur Practitioner-in-Residence and Suffolk Journal adviser Charles St. Amant, who had Geisler in her first semester at Suffolk and went on to work alongside her, Geisler's



Geisler of Suffolk University
Suffolk community members remember Deborah Geisler for having a profound impact on everyone who had the honor of getting to know her.

Our words...

Finding a Superhero by Jim Hudson

Every superhero needs a good origin story. And we all know Deb was a superhero.

I was there at the beginning. But that was 35 years ago, and I know my memory isn't perfect. So let's look at the recorded history, from *The Mad 3 Party #35*, Noreascon 3's Hugo-winning fanzine:

Division Heads Meeting, May 7,
1989 (notes by Leslie Turek)

We received a letter in February from a Suffolk University professor of journalism, Deb Geisler, who expects to have some free time in the summer and is willing to help out. She also has a student, Babette Mortell, who would like to intern for us. Jim Hudson met with them and learned that they are fans who have strong computer and publication skills. Deb also has strong contacts (ex-students) at various local media organizations. They will come to the work session on May 17 to meet us and start taking on tasks...

So Deb & Babette came to the meeting in May. Deb presented herself as a mild-mannered college professor. (I think she was "mild-mannered" for the first five minutes; that went away fast.) But we all could tell that was a secret identity and she had superpowers.

Worldcons, by their nature, are always desperate for volunteers. Especially for volunteers who are intelligent, skilled, organized, and able to work well with others. And able to be silly.

We all quickly recognized that Deb was one of us. It took her a little bit longer to figure out that we were her people, but there were a lot of us. While my memories of the summer of 1989 are pretty jumbled, I know we kept giving her work related to her field. And jobs nobody else wanted to do (see "liaison with the film studios, below"). She kept showing up, doing those tasks, and taking on more responsibilities.

For example, again from *The Mad 3 Party*,

August 19-20: Program Booklet

...Meanwhile, Deb Geisler and [Leslie] ran a sort of control center where we kept track of the latest size estimates for each portion and worked out the layout of the book by moving 64 yellow stickys around on the wall. As pages were completed, Deb pasted them up on the prepared boards and added page numbers...

The tools have all changed immensely since then. But the need

remains for groups to cooperate and work under intense deadlines. Deb was a master at that sort of cat-herding.

She appears in the final committee list several times – for the pocket program, as the convention’s liaison with the film studios, and as Chairman Mark Olson’s Aide. The Aide job basically meant “follow Mark around and do whatever’s needed.” Sometimes

that was smoothing ruffled feathers, sometimes it was being a sounding board, sometimes it was just making sure that people got food. But everything was real-time and required to make the convention work.

I am so incredibly happy to have been part of introducing Deb to convention fandom, and vice versa. Among other things, it gave me a few decades to watch her superpowers in action.



By Elizabeth (McCarty) Upchurch

My first vivid memory of Deb was at Chicon 7 in 2012. It wasn’t the first time we’d met but it was the first time we had a long conversation about con-drama over a couple of smokes. I had actually quit smoking a few years back but the stress and bad feelings occurring at that con drove me outside, away from people and fortuitously into the company of one Deb Geisler. I wish I had listened to her that night. She was dead on with her observations, her ability to see people’s motivations, and she could gently, but with a purpose, guide someone to consider the best option for themselves. I can only imagine what an amazing professor she must have been!

In the years that followed, I became closer to Deb and to many of the Northeastern fans. I tried to get to Boston when I could, Arisia and Boskone conventions, dinner parties, and con comm program meetings. Deb and I would share

some snark, discuss current con-running problems, and she would unfailingly give me good advice. Deb had a way of working with people that allowed them to thrive in the best atmosphere without putting limits on their creativity. She was open to hearing new ideas and could make the leap to new practices that showcased them. There were times I volunteered and felt frustrated, and Deb would either laugh about it with me and get me to see the positive or she’d tell me to straighten up and fix what was *really* bothering me.

I wish I had been around to see her in action at Noreascon 4. While it’s easy to sit back and think “I bet she was a great Worldcon Chair!,” the fact that I’ve watched multiple Worldcon chairs come to her for advice and guidance over the years verifies she was. There was con-running, art appreciation and collecting, jewelry-making, cooking, and sending little gifts and care

continued >

By Elizabeth (McCarty) Upchurch (continued)

packages to friends when they needed her. Along with everything, though, was the deep love and respect between Deb and Mike. A true partnership among people who not only were friends and lovers but showed what marriage goals could be. How you each lift each other up and have each other's back.

Deb really made this world a better place to be in. She was so thoughtful and so genuine that you knew if she praised you, you had done good. If you got the laser

death, well, it was deserved. For me, Deb had a lot of good qualities in common with my late mother, with none of her bad ones. Which is probably why I felt so drawn to her. She was a rare combination of insightfulness, snark, gentleness, humor, caring, and strength. Knowing her and spending time in her company brought me such joy. She provided us with a great blueprint for enjoying life and the people we share it with. We should follow it and honor her.



Jeffrey Green on Facebook

Condolences is such an inadequate word. She was and is clearly held in a web of hearts, and may you find some comfort in that, for you too are held in that same web. Word of another friend now gone has become increasingly common...the actuarial inevitability. The line Robin Williams spoke in Dead Poets Society becomes increasingly poignant: "Carpe Diem!" "Live!" And that she did. I think of a road trip she and a bunch of our Ohio University forensics friends took to

NYC; about nine of us I think piled into my old '74 blue van after NFA nationals in Monmouth, NJ. She fondly reflected on those experiences on several occasions. She seized the day; she lived! That a few days before she would slip these "surly bonds of Earth" she would comment about the sword you had crafted for her from a meteorite was a testament of what you shared. I see her now, soaring through the firmament brandishing that great blade born of love and stardust.



Michael Lee on Facebook

My first Smofcon was the one in San Jose back in 2010, and, given my personal fannish history through the Minicon collapse and time with CONvergence, I went with a fair bit of skepticism. But Deb gave me a not short ride (and we didn't know each other at the time) from SFO and that was a very pleasant ride that I still remember very fondly, and it was a key event in my own fannish path.

By Janice Gelb

It's not often that I'm at a loss for words but it's hard to think of what to say about the passing of one of the wittiest, kindest, most generous, and just all-around wonderful people I've ever known. I know I am just one of a legion of people to whom Deb extended friendship, hospitality, support, and advice over many years.

I have so many memories of time spent with her and Mike: a road trip from Boston to Montréal through Vermont in 2009, attending the Rally to Restore Sanity in DC in 2010, a shared trip to Alaska with friends in 2012, numerous stopover visits to their place – I'm especially glad that we got to spend a couple of days with them in December.

When we did stay over, Deb made sure to have some of my favorite foods from the local kosher deli, and that's just one example of her thoughtfulness. You never knew when you might get sent or given something to show she was thinking of you, like flowers during difficult times or milestones. Just on the day after she died I had already missed her usual sympathy note about the

noise from the Melbourne Grand Prix (Formula 1 racing was just one of her many interests), and a costume for a party that day serendipitously included a themed pin she gave me.

And then there's the snark and the wit: We often exchanged a lot of acerbic comments during red carpet fashion events... and there's nothing like getting a message from a co-worker asking you about your run for the governor of California! During a recall election where a number of signatories was all you needed to get on the ballot, a friend had found a campaign site with a donation thermometer on my behalf, and I immediately knew who the culprits were.

I am not exaggerating when I say that in the month or so since her passing not a day has gone by when I haven't encountered at least one and often more things that I would have shared with her. Despite my always valuing her friendship, her death leaves a larger hole in my life than I would have predicted. She was a truly special person.

.....

Kara Shemin on Facebook

Deb was my professor in grad school. It was the early days of blogs and social media. She brought her unique perspective and taste to her curriculum and made learning so enjoyable. She was honest, real, and unapologetically, Deb. I will miss her snark, her wit, and her warmth. I imagine her without pain, commiserating with family and literary and pop culture icons unraveling the mysteries of the universe.

By Leslie Turek

I'll begin by asserting that Deb and I had a special relationship. "Wait a minute,' you might say, "Who are you to say that? Because Deb and *I* had a special relationship." And I have no doubt that you did, because Deb had a knack for making everyone feel special. (Well, unless you were a fool, in which case you were probably subjected to the sting of her scorn.)

Still, our connection was truly one-of-a-kind. Deb and I were the only two women who had ever chaired a World Science Fiction Convention in Boston. I had run Noreascon II in 1980, and we were lucky enough to convince Deb to take on Noreascon 4 in 2004. Managing a Worldcon presents a unique set of challenges and can truly be a trial by fire. Even though we might have different approaches and styles, and even though our conventions were decades apart, there was an underlying bond of appreciation and respect that was never broken.

The first time I remember interacting with Deb, aptly enough, was while working on Noreascon 3 in 1989, the Worldcon in between our two conventions. At a bustling work session shortly before the con, we had the job of pasting up one of the major convention publications. I say "pasting up" because this was an era before we had computers that could do the layout. After working out what was going to fit where, we'd have to run the paper strips of

typeset text through a hot wax machine, then affix them to a backing sheet with the help of a light table to get the alignment right.

The job was tedious and meticulous, and required concentration and good communication while the chaos of con preparation was going on all around us. It was not the kind of job you'd normally want to try to do with a stranger. But much to my delight, I discovered that this new person was an excellent collaborator – she was reliable, competent, focused, efficient, hard-working, and fun. We knocked out that challenging task, and formed a friendship in the process. So I like to joke that we bonded over a hot waxer.

Over the years that followed, I learned of her many other virtues. I had a great deal of respect for her judgment and valued her insights. A Facebook post just didn't feel complete until Deb had commented on it. She was a great cook and a warm and welcoming host. She had a snarky sense of humor and would set up silly web sites just for the fun of it. She enjoyed fast cars and appreciated beautiful arts and crafts. She created jewelry and generously gave her work away. We shared tickets to concerts and shows; Simon and Garfunkel was the best, but I enjoyed introducing her to Once. She was very sweet to me and only hit me up once for help on a convention; that brought me out of retirement to run First Night

at her Worldcon. I wouldn't have done it for anyone else.

Many have experienced her gifts as an educator, but the side I saw was how much she loved her work and her students, and how sad she was when health problems forced her to give up teaching. But she kept up her positive attitude in spite of the troubles she was dealing with. She was blessed with a loving husband whom she did not take for granted, expressing her gratitude for him each day. Finally, she was a good friend. Even though she was younger than me, she felt almost like a big sister.

She was the friend who would drive miles out of her way to give



Past Noreascon Chairs Leslie Turek & Deb Geisler at the Worldcon Chairs' photo session at Loncon 3 in London in 2014. Excerpted from the full group photo taken by Lisa Hayes.

you a ride home from a medical procedure.

She was the friend who would lure you to her home for a photo session that you would later learn was a secret ploy to create a batch of bobble-head dolls based on your likeness for your guest of honor stint at the Sasquan Worldcon.

She was the friend who would listen to your amateur piano playing and make you feel like she was really enjoying it.

She was the friend who would be there for you in any type of difficulty.

She was the friend who you really didn't want to lose.



Charles St. Amand on Facebook

I had the great privilege of not only having Deb as a teacher but also a colleague. She had a huge impact on my career by being a wonderful, caring teacher and also by helping me get an internship at The Patriot Ledger that would set the foundation for my 31-year career in daily journalism. When I returned to Suffolk full time as Practitioner in

Residence in Journalism in 2018, Deb once again was instrumental in helping me settle into a new career. I will always be grateful for her support and encouragement 40 years ago and in recent years. I have lost a hero, but she will continue to influence how I face my students in the classroom and halls for as long as I am a teacher.

Helen Montgomery on Facebook

I'm currently reeling from the news that Deb Geisler has died. Deb was a fannish mentor, someone I could always go to when I needed some guidance. She was wicked smart, wicked snarky, and I can't quite fathom that I won't get to talk to her again. My heart goes out to Michael Benveniste and Deb's family, because I know if I'm hurting this bad, they are devastated.

Deb wasn't able to come to Chicon 8 [the 2022 Worldcon that I chaired], but she sent me a really lovely and supportive email shortly before it, including "I hope things on the day run smoothly, goofily, charmingly, and joyously" and the reminder that we weren't going to please everyone and that was okay.

In January 2014, she knew I had the lumpectomy for the breast cancer, and sent me a gorgeous flower arrangement. You'll notice that there's a purple butterfly in the arrangement. While the flowers are long gone, the butterfly remains at my desk, held in place by a magnet.

In August of 2015 we got to spend time together in Glacier National Park en route to the Spokane Worldcon. We had a wonderful dinner, and huddled



The purple butterfly from Deb's flowers remains on my desk to this day.

Photos on this page were taken by Helen Montgomery.



Flowers from Deb Geisler following my lumpectomy.

together for warmth during our open top red bus tour through the park.

The fact that Deb Geisler and Peggy Rae Sapienza died nine years and one day apart leads me to imagine the two of them are now hanging out somewhere in the universe. Peggy Rae's lawn is freshly mowed and decorated with Deb's flamingos. The two of them sit together, smoffing and snarking, while watching their minions working hard to bring their plans to fruition. As it should be.



Dinner in Whitefish, MT near Glacier National Park in August 2015. Photo provided by Helen Montgomery.



Photos by Gay Ellen Dennett



Deb not only made jewelry (see pages 42–63), she taught friends how to make jewelry, too. These are the first pieces Gay Ellen Dennett made with Deb's instruction, guidance, and help.



By Randall Shepherd

Remembrances of Deb include when I first got to know her working on the LoneStarCon 2 Worldcon back in 1997 where she was the liaison to Jeff Walker, who in those years before movie studios running trailers on the internet hosted the very popular “It Came From Hollywood” program item with lots of trailers, scoops on upcoming films, and tons of swag.

I first heard the quote “not my circus, not my monkeys” from Deb. (I feel certain it was at a Smofcon.) I enjoyed Deb’s sense of humor and her snark. I found it hilarious and repeated to friends when I got home. They proceeded to get me a t-shirt printed with a carousel on it and the quote. In the vein of the “Dave Kyle said you can’t sit here” ribbon, I think I need to get one that says “Deb Geisler said I can wear this t-shirt.”

We shared an unusual link. About six or seven years ago Deb posted a story about a happening in northeast Ohio. More specifically in North Ridgeville, Ohio. I lived there for five years in the early ’70s and she lived maybe ten miles away. I, of course, commented and she always brought interesting news from the area to my attention.

And in a universe works in strange ways moment, I’m typing this while my recently adopted feral cat Junior (because he is the second orange cat I’ve teamed up with) is sitting right next to the iPad while I’m typing, and is a big reminder of

Deb’s oft-mentioned inherited cat Mischa.

I last saw Deb at Dublin 2019, an Irish Worldcon. We were meant to be co-hosts of the Future Worldcons Q&A session (we’d done sessions together before), but she had to pass due to health. Happily, I got to sit with her on a bench in one of the upper floors, and catch up a bit. My condolences to Michael and all her family and friends. She will be greatly missed.

Here’s email that Deb sent me just a day before the start of LoneStarCon 3 (the 2013 Worldcon). It was powerful and a big morale boost during critical and tiring days...it literally brought tears to my eyes. It was such a timely and unexpected boost...which are the best kind.

From: **Deborah Geisler**

Date: Wed, Aug 28, 2013 at 9:25 AM

Subject: Wishing you the very best

To: Randall Shepherd

Dear Randy,

As you bury yourself in all that has to happen to build the city we call Worldcon, please accept my very best wishes for a successful convention. You are going into our fannish family reunion having faced one of the harshest managerial challenges ever faced by a chairman. Do know that many of us who have sat in that hot seat understand and appreciate what you have done.

Bon chance, buena suerte, and good luck. I hope it is wonderful!

See you in San Antonio.

Best,
Deb

Vicki Karns on Facebook

Deb was an amazing colleague! She took me in as a roommate when I first moved to Boston, and she was always so willing to help and be a friend. I love the jewelry she made for me and will cherish it!

.....

By Patty Wells

I have many reasons to be grateful to Deb, but the one that would be of most fannish interest is that Deb is the reason I ended up chairing a Worldcon. For the Denver Worldcon in 2008, I was the division head for facilities and Deb had wanted to find out if this was something she might be interested in, so I immediately put her to work. (In the end she decided there were too many crazy questions to be answered and didn't care for it, but she entertained us with the occasional email she'd have liked to send.)

While at division meetings in the time leading up to Denver, there came a day when Deb and I were waiting for an airport shuttle. I had been concerned about the Seattle Worldcon bid for 2011 being the only one because between my hospitality contacts and some rumblings in my husband's field (high tech), it seemed like it was being hard for even groups with a lot of money to hold onto facilities. I had mentioned this to a few people who might be looking for a year to bid, but all had thought I was unusually paranoid (when I consider myself just paranoid enough).

I grumbled about this to Deb, who looked me in the eye and told

me I should bid against Seattle if I was that worried. I explained that Portland, Oregon, had a fine, then new, convention center, but not nearly enough bedrooms, and also I had my doubts about being a Worldcon chair. Deb said she'd seen plenty of ability in me, and I could find a place if I really wanted it. Deb was a very confidence-building person, as is only right for a born educator.

I thought about it all the way home and then started looking up every convention center in the country and landed on Reno, and the rest is fannish history. But I truly believe I wouldn't have had the nerve or the confidence without Deb.

On a personal note, my daughter Zoe was the teenager who wanted to get as far away from her mother as possible for college. One college I steered her to was Deb's university in Boston. As it happened, Zoe received a nice scholarship there, and indeed spent her freshman year on Suffolk's campus in Madrid, thus showing true efficiency in getting far away from Mom. But the rest of the time she was at Suffolk, Deb and Mike kept a bit of an eye on her and took her in when the heat in her apartment went out in a Boston

continued >

By Patty Wells (continued)

winter. For having eyes on the daughter when I could not, I will always be grateful.

When I was out with Zoe for her Madrid orientation, I stayed with Deb and Mike. One evening, I was on campus waiting for Deb as she taught a communications class. While my teaching isn't nearly as

fancy, at community and business colleges as opposed to a private college, I've taught for a long time. I snuck outside the open door of her classroom to listen to her lecture and found her to be as great a teacher as a Worldcon chair.

Zoe and I will miss her.



Deb, we miss you
by Edie Stern

I can't remember when I met Deb Geisler. Our friendship started somewhere around 30 years ago, or maybe more. I'm sure it had something to do with conventions. It might have had something to do with one of us being snarky in public (or at least at SMOFcon, possibly together). Especially after Joe and I moved to New York, it led to decades of friendship, convention work, New Year's parties, Alaska, potlucks, summer pool parties and, in recent years, the ubiquitous Zoom.

Deb was a devoted teacher and mentor to the young and not so young, a reluctant but enthusiastic cat owner, heir to family tragedy, purveyor of sweet rolls and port wine reductions, and a Worldcon chair. She was extravagantly, verbally, in love with her husband. Deb lived life fully, and with grace. She was capable, hospitable, comfortable, companionable, admirable, formidable. What these

last have in common is "able." That's our Deb.

My favorite memory with Deb took place right before ConJose. A handful of us (of the travelling Worldcon committee) had the wonderful chance to stay at a B&B in Napa Valley for a few days before the con. Even better, it was a B&B that was owned by a vineyard, and bordered on the fields. It was brilliant, with tables and chairs behind the buildings, steps away from the vines themselves.

One gorgeous evening, after a day touring, we brought back dinner and bottles of wine, and picnicked by the grapes. The talk was both about what we had done and what we were going to do (pre-Worldcon after all), and everyone was very jolly. Food was eaten, wine was consumed, spirits were, shall we say, high. We were all a little drunk. In the waning late August sun, the grapes were more

than inviting. It would be rude not to accept that invitation, so Deb and I made our way amongst the vines.

No one else wanted to join us, even though we'd extracted permission on checking in that we might go out into the field as long as we were careful. The grapes were warm, and heavy in our hands, the clusters lending themselves to rude comparisons. We laughed so hard that tears ran down our face, eating grapes as we went – fabulous. When we got back to the tables, someone had found another bottle of wine.

The next day, Deb had to leave early for her ConJose job. What I didn't realize until later was that her job was supervising the loading

dock. Our Deb had to be out in the summer sun, bossing amateur and pro truck drivers, hucksters and the like, all whilst harboring a wicked hangover. Her retelling of the day was much funnier than the living of it must have been.

Deb was a woman of many parts. There was quirk as well as snark. Just read the reports of Noreascon 4. It is so, so, so, very apt that her husband Mike gave her a fitting last party, laying her sword forged of meteoric iron atop her doctoral gown draped across the casket at the March 27 memorial. Deb's academic colleagues were nonplussed and a little uneasy. It was perfect.



By Mark Plummer

It was the day after Corflu when Sandra Bond drove a few of us out to the Hoover Dam. I hadn't previously appreciated that this awesome structure straddles the state line and so by driving across it we passed from Nevada into Arizona, meaning I was able to add one more name to the not-very-long list of US states that I have visited.

A few days later, at her house in rural Massachusetts, Geri Sullivan asked me how seriously I was 'collecting' US states. Geri's the kind of person who'd happily have loaded me into her car and then driven me 2,000 miles so that I could tick off South Dakota. But no, I wasn't really seriously collecting states, I said. It was just a sort of

background mental record. What I was collecting on my current US trip, I had decided, was past Worldcon chairs. I'd already amassed Ted White (1967), Mark Olson (1989), and Joe Siclari (1992) at Corflu itself, and, once we got to Massachusetts, a dinner at the Olsons' had further netted Leslie Turek (1980) plus a duplicate Mark Olson that I could later use for trading in the manner of the football cards of my youth. And then on our last day in the US, Geri drove us over to Middleton for lunch with Mike Benveniste and Deb Geisler (2004).

I've known of Deb for about twenty years. We were at Noreascon 4, the Worldcon she

continued >

By Mark Plummer (continued)

chaired, although I doubt our paths crossed, if nothing else because her concerns were doubtless on higher things. I only really came to know her in the run-up to Loncon 3 when she and we were parts of the chairs' staff. I remember thinking it striking that when assigning roles Deb chose to position herself not as an 'advisor' but as an 'assistant,' not telling the chairs what they should be doing but helping them to do it. During the four years or so leading up to August 2014 she was certainly a plain-speaking voice of sanity in the Worldcon maelstrom. She was, I think, somebody who didn't suffer fools gladly, although I imagine Deb herself would observe, channelling Eddie Izzard, that surely nobody does. I also remember her speaking up for the place of whimsy amidst the deeply serious business of Worldcon running. At the time I was unconvinced, and truthfully, I'm still not fond of that term *whimsy*, but I think over time I've come to see the real value of the idea as a defence against con-running earnestness. Indeed, a shield of umor, one might say. And writing this I'm reminded of Chicon 7 in 2012, just before the UK bid was confirmed as the 2014 Worldcon, where Claire and Deb

were standing in a corridor of the Hyatt and gleefully flapping the ends of the far-too-long sleeves of their Loncon 3 shirts at one another.

I was aware that Deb was seriously unwell when we saw her and Mike on our US trip. An oxygen pump in the hall rhythmically maintained an air supply through a long plastic tube which we all did our best to avoid treading on. I couldn't recall when I'd last seen Deb. Surely at some point since 2014. Spokane the year after, maybe? A hurried hugged greeting in a corridor or outside a party in Dublin in 2019? Seeing her in her home this year I'm not sure I would have recognised her as she certainly seemed physically diminished, but at the same time she was still very much with us, still mentally sharp, still keeping up with the world and possessed of plenty of occasionally snark-infested opinions about the Worldcon issues of the day. We had lunch and chatted for a few hours before Geri drove us to Logan airport and our flight home.

Two weeks later Geri told us that she'd died, and so now I value that afternoon all the more. And I still have a spare Mark Olson if any fellow collectors want to swap for a John Guidry.



Vicki M. Croce on Facebook

Deb will always remain an important person in my life and the kind of combination of strength and compassion I aspire to become.

By Claire Brialey

But we only saw her two weeks ago.

Just before we headed home from the US in March, Geri was able to take us to see Deb and Mike, and I'm so glad that happened. I didn't know Deb well enough – not to the extent that we were swapping recipes or that I'd have known easily what book to recommend to her – and that's my loss as well as the much greater loss that we're never going to get to talk to her again. I mean, not so that she'll reply; Deb was a great communicator, as you'd expect from someone with her professional experience, but even she had limits.

How I did come to know Deb, and to value her immensely, was semi-professionally: through con-running. [In a separate note, my husband] Mark has explained how she chose to be a member of the chairs' staff for Loncon 3 rather than acting as an adviser, where her experience would have been just as useful; and in that capacity she helped me a lot by demonstrating a different model (specifically, a competent middle-aged woman with personality) of senior leadership

within the Worldcon community. She also helped me to keep a sense of perspective through a judicious balance of snark, kindness, and fun.

Because of her Worldcon and professional standing, Deb might have been deeply intimidating but I found her immediately friendly and approachable; she might have been described as 'no-nonsense' but that definitely didn't mean no humour. She used her knowledge, insight, and judgement wisely, and I'll remember her with enormous affection; I'll possibly be able to do it without tears in my eyes by the time we get to Glasgow, where there's going to be a Deb-shaped gap. She was one of the good people, someone who made my life better, and I'm quite certain many other people could say the same thing.

And at least when you have known someone like that, you get to remember them as well. And so when I have a moment in fandom which requires a sense of perspective, I hope to let Deb say 'Bite me' in my head and so manage to smile and then get on with it.

.....

Marianne Plumridge on Facebook

Deb's intellect and impishness combined with her love of teaching and talking to people made her one of the loveliest people I've ever met. May she journey in peace and grace and light and, of course, love.

By Ben Yalow

I first met Deb when Jim Hudson recruited her for Noreascon 3 (N₃). She was teaching at Suffolk University, and her students looked like they'd be ideal interns for the con. As a bonus, we got the professor.

And it was an incredible bonus. She knew all the things that we (along with the rest of fandom) were terrible at – marketing, organization structure, and group dynamics/team building. We all had so much to learn, and she was so able to teach.

She enjoyed what we, and she, were doing – so she stuck around after N₃. She did things herself – but, even more importantly, she was able to help guide all of us into becoming better versions of ourselves.

When I chaired Boskone a few years after N₃, she was able to help

me be a better chair. The same was true for other Boskone chairs and Worldcon chairs. And a few years after that, she took on being a Boskone chair herself and showed, by example, what an excellent chair could do.

When MCFI was ready to bid again, it was clear who would need to be chair. She guided us through a messy bidding process, and in the end was a brilliant chair for Noreascon 4. Having been working on Worldcons for five decades, there are only a tiny number of chairs I would rank as outstanding – she clearly was one.

Even more importantly, she was an outstanding person who made everyone around her better. Fandom will miss that. And I certainly will.

.....

David Weingart on Facebook

I've really tried to come up with some story or memory about Deb Geisler. Others knew her far better than I did. If you were active in SF fandom, you probably knew her. She was smart, funny, and had a wicked sense of humor.

That's why I have a memory of her trying to get my support at Chicon 7 for a motion put forth by her, Michael Benveniste, and Geri Sullivan that "Yngvi is not a louse." (IYKYK) She even had fancy ribbons for people who were going to show up at the Business Meeting to vote.

Alas that I couldn't. I was going to be out late filking and partying, and there was no way I was getting up for the Business Meeting.

It's been well over a decade, but I still can picture that whole conversation in my head.

Deb was a great person and the world is poorer without her in it.

Michael Benveniste

The sequel – before the 2019 Worldcon, Deb and I took a Danube River cruise. The name of the ship we were on? Ingvi, and it was far from lousy.

Remembering Deb Geisler by Sharon Sbarsky

I'm privileged to have known Deb Geisler for 45 (or so) years. She will be missed by everyone who knew her.

I believe that I first met her in May 1989 at the NESFA Clubhouse. I parked in our small parking lot and was surprised to see a car with Ohio plates. She was inside meeting people on the Noreascon 3 committee. She contacted us to find an intern position and ended up on our committee for the Worldcon and eventually a member of MCFI as well as NESFA.

Deb chaired Boskone 36 in 1999 and later that year was voted to be a "Fellow of NESFA."

She chaired the Boston in 2001 bid (which later moved to Orlando but didn't win) and again the Boston in 2004 bid. This time we won the site selection. I was webmaster for the bid site and had created the initial convention site. The morning that the site selection winner was announced in the Business Meeting, I was updating the internet. She was announcing that the web pages would be ready as soon as I "pressed the button" and I walked into the meeting and gave her a thumbs up.

Besides the web pages, I was also in charge of our "social media," which at the time was mostly posting to Usenet. We had a press release ready to go a week later... but that was September 11, 2001. Deb called me to say "it's not going out today, we'll send it another

time." It was more important to her to take that step back.

At Boskone 39 in February 2002, British fan Peter Weston came up from Corflu in Annapolis, but he didn't tell anyone he was coming. Because he was a Guest at Boskone 37 he had a Life Membership so when he arrived at Registration where I was working I gave him his badge. Because he was a Noreascon 4 Guest of Honor, I knew that Deb would want to see him. I checked the program schedule and found she was on an item to tell local fans what was planned and what to expect for the Worldcon. When I entered the program room with him, Deb was surprised to see him and was speechless (for a few seconds!) She quickly recovered and introduced Peter to the room.

I was chair for Boskone 40 in 2003. In January at Arisia, there were fan tables for both Boskone and Noreascon 4. But as a twist, I was sitting at the N4 table and she was sitting at the B40 table. We both had a lot of fun pointing to each other saying "and she's the chair!"

There are many other convention-related stories to tell. But an important fact about Deb is that she took the time to take care of her friends when they needed it. Two things in particular were: she made sure that I was with friends when I found out my mom died, and she had me stay at her house to recover after I had my gallbladder removed.

There were many aspects to Deb Geisler by Joe Siclari

I knew Deb for over 30 years. She was good at telling stories. As with all good narrators, the stories sometimes changed a bit. But she was proud of getting things accomplished.

Deb enjoyed cooking and was great at hosting parties with her husband Mike. *[Slumber parties, New Year's, with sweet rolls in the morning along with lots more.]*

Deb was a well-respected college professor, who even brought some of her students into fannish activities including working on conventions. *[Don't you wish you could have worked on conventions for college credit?]*

Deb liked swords and whips.

Deb was a great travelling companion, knowledgeable and friendly, and she knew how to have a good time whether it was on a small boat in Alaska's inner channels, kayaking, testing the grapes at a vineyard in Napa, or explaining a strange local custom she found in Spain.

But everybody who knew Deb knows this.

Deb was part of the Boston area fan groups, NESFA, possibly the most structured and organized organization in fandom, and later MCFI, the longest-running Worldcon organization. In the mid-1990s, she quickly rose to be the head of MCFI, and ran two bids to host the Worldcon. Before she bid, she worked.

For my Worldcon, MagiCon, in 1992, Deb had to deal with some last-minute media arrangements with Francis Ford Coppola. Whenever a potentially sticky publicity problem gets handled without a mess, it's always appreciated by the rest of the committee and the chairman in particular. *[This one was very sticky!]*

For Deb's Worldcon, Noreascon 4 (N4) in 2004, I had offered to run the Publications area. To get me on the Board, Deb made this a division-level position, which had both good and bad points for her. I have pretty good convention-running experience so I was able to provide some decent advice. I am also sometimes a bit of an insolent smart-ass. Deb handled my comments with humor, often turning them in useful ways. Serious advice to a committee chair should always be given in private. Smart-ass comments should be given in public so they can be slapped down. She listened to thoughtful advice and took it from everyone to improve the convention in innovative ways. First Night at N4 was an example. Edie and I wanted to personally do the progress reports as a window on the quality of the activities that could be expected at the convention. Deb liked the idea even though it would require a substantial investment of time and money. Deb was willing to take the chance and let us put in not only the staff effort but

money, including raising advertising rates for all publications. [It didn't hurt that *Idea's* editor was critical to our efforts.]

Deb did have a fannish failure. But there was one story she always like to tell about how we negotiated a hotel contract where the hotels ended up paying us: before the success of N4, Deb ran a bid for Boston in 2001 and when hotels were uncooperative, decided to carpet bag the bid to Orlando. I had previous experience with the Orlando Worldcon and hotels, so Deb asked me to work with the hotels. While negotiating with various profit centers, we managed to get Disney hotels to agree to pay us **more** than we had to pay them for facilities. Alas, we lost that bid.

Lastly, Deb was a member of the secret Society of Past Worldcon

Chairmen. She never joined officially because no one ever does. No one can disclose their membership for fear of revealing its secret rituals. What incorporates you into the SPWC is that you seriously and intelligently figure out how to get an unorganized, opinionated, and sometimes intelligent gaggle of fans to work together for years to put together an extremely detailed planned activity that most of them have never done before. It takes organization, planning, people skills, and especially patience. Deb put on a particularly successful version of this with Noreascon 4 twenty years ago. Ever since then, nearly a dozen fan groups asked her to be an advisor, either on the record or off.

Writing all this is a sad reminder that there is a Deb-shaped hole in the SMOF as well as my world.



Raising a glass to Deb



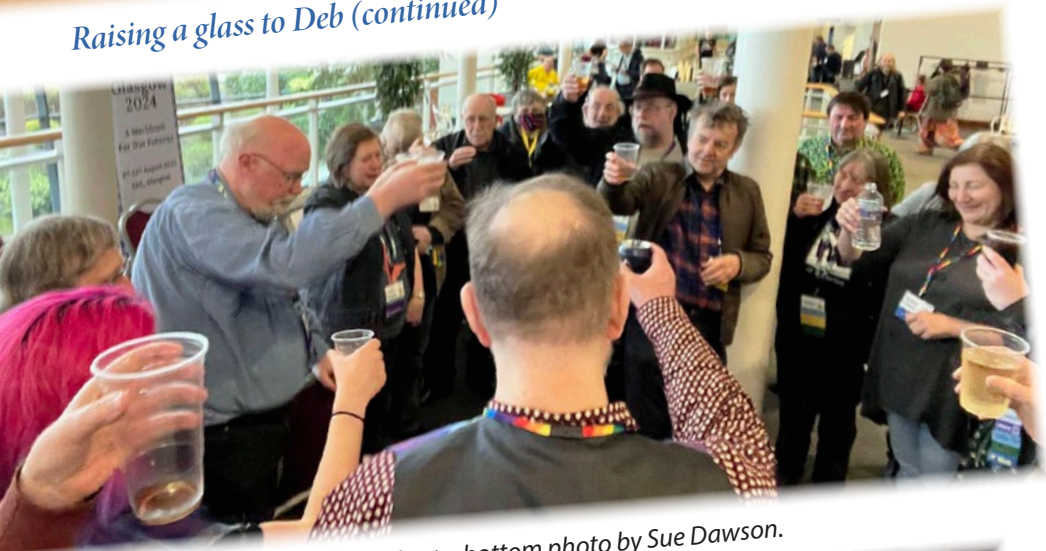
Fans at Levitation (the 2024 Eastercon in Telford, England) gathered at the Glasgow table to raise a glass in memory of Deb, led by Mark Plummer. Photos by Vincent Docherty.



continued >



Raising a glass to Deb (continued)



Top two photos by Vincent Docherty; bottom photo by Sue Dawson.



By James Bacon

“Of course you did” said Deb.

Nearly twenty years ago, I was elected as the TAFF delegate, and I met Deb Geisler in person for the first time in the bowels of the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. But my experience with Deb, which would be one always full of smiles and snark, began by email. I wrote to Deb to inform her that “I have just been foisted upon you and your committee as the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund Winner.” I noted her response in my TAFF diary: “14th June 2004 An AWESOME reply from Deb Geisler; she kicks ass and rocks. The reply is super efficient cc’d to anyone who is relevant; it is not only courteous, it deals with every aspect or concern I could have and, at the same time, gently instructs any relevant staff as to what needs to be done. I am terribly impressed.”

Here was Deb’s email to me:

Dear James,

Congratulations on your TAFF win, and we’re very much looking forward to having you at Noreascon Four. I’m copying everybody and their brother on this message so that they all have your direct contact information.

Ben Yalow, our Facilities division head, will work with his staff to make your hotel arrangements. Noreascon Four will be pleased to provide you with complimentary lodging in the Marriott Copley Place hotel, one of our two convention hotel properties.

We will also provide you with an attending membership to Noreascon Four. I am copying our Pre-Registration director, Bonnie Atwood, on this message so that she knows to add you to our roster.

Sharon Sbarsky is our Member Services division head, and her division encompasses registration, information, and so on. If you’d like to volunteer your “embedded” labor in any of her areas, I know she’d be delighted to have you. Else, just let us know where you *would* like to work, and we’ll see what we can do to make you feel u/s/e/d/ wanted.

Priscilla Olson, our Program division head, will be your most important continuing point of contact. She will be scheduling where you may be used for various program items during the convention.

We look forward to seeing you in September!

Regards,
Deb Geisler
Chairman
Noreascon Four
The 62nd World Science Fiction
Convention

On the Wednesday of the con, I was helping unload and it was hectic down in the loading dock. I saw Deb and stepped out to introduce myself. I could see she really had no idea who I was in that moment, her mind no doubt on all the small and serious things Chairs work on and consider, but she was there and briefly said hello.

continued >

By James Bacon (continued)

Deb was 46, maybe 47, Chair of a Worldcon. She was an inspiring person. From my perspective, the convention was hugely successful. Mornings I worked in Kids programme, went to Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey who were operating a Dealers Table for Cold Tonnage books, got some sleep and then did TAFF things in the afternoon, and then events and parties into the night. It was wondrous. I got to accept a Hugo Award for James White, and I got to present one, and thank Deb and her team at the Hugo Awards. The teams she had in place were so good, they followed her lead.

I was proud and honored to be given a Lensman Noreascon 4 Hero

Medal at the end of the convention by Deb herself. I had seen her often, but mostly afar, and this personal engagement was an unexpected and delightful occurrence. Deb had encountered Norman Cates (the DUFF winner) and myself through her team, and we were now more known to her. I was inspired to say to her that I would co-chair the next Boston Worldcon if she would have me, cheeky as ever, can you imagine. A terrifically good person, her hospitality and Michael's was incredible, and she had an amazing coffee machine. She welcomed and showed me great hospitality years later, at her home. She was an advisor to the Loncon 3 chairs and was a fabulous champion for

those who wanted to lead and she offered me many encouraging words on my own path, to chairing over many years.

When we met, there would always be much laughter, I would recount some instance or incident, a flood in a party suite or some such adventure, and she would respond in this lovely dry way, with "of course you did" and I would laugh so hard. She was sharp, but so good-humoured, and a delight to be around.

< James Bacon's TAFF Report is available for download from the Free Ebooks available on Dave Langford's splendid TAFF website at <https://taff.org.uk/>



It's Ragù! by gloria lucia albasì

A smile. A word. A new friend is made.

Deb Geisler struck me as a woman who lived a broad range of experiences, from which she was able to parse wisdom that she freely and generously shared with others.

I first met Deb at a barbecue and pool party hosted by friends, Edie and Joe. An interesting woman to converse with, Deb would give you her full attention, her presence. Not a small thing in the 21st century.

Deb was a gifted foodie and we chatted a few times on gastronomy. “Gloria, maybe you know: what is that meat sauce, the meat pasta sauce particular to the north of Italy?” Personally I was clueless. We aren’t big on meat sauce in my large, extended family. So, alas, I had no answer.

One year I was working on a bit of a, uh, dumpster fire regarding a fannish code of conduct “matter,” ahem. I asked Deb for some advice. As we talked, Deb said the funniest thing: “I didn’t run a Worldcon, I chaired a Worldcon. Others did the work.”

As for the advice, Deb stated: “What I’d do is follow the letter of



*Found art, New York City, 8 May 2024.
Photo by Gloria Lucia Albasì.*

the rules and procedures, ignore the person’s status or popularity within the community. Put it out of your mind.” Exceptionally effective counsel.

Deb contained multitudes. Having been a Noreascon Chair (among other things) and all-around groovy gal, she was a font of wise words. And knowledge. Remember: all knowledge is contained in fandom. Though perhaps somewhat less now.

While it may seem otherwise, it was only a dozen or so times that I interacted with Deb in real life. That’s how awesome she was.

Awesome.

Oh, is it Ragù alla Bolognese? Yes!

It’s ragù.

.....

Elaine Brennan on Facebook

Deb was a brilliant light in the world who will be sorely missed.

Graphic design, Deb, and me by Geri Sullivan

Deb never met a new output device or material she didn't faunch after. I first heard of food quality inkjet printers from her, ChefDoodler (the pen that lets you draw in sugar), 3-D printers, and other new printing technologies. MCFI bought a large format inkjet printer during the run-up to the 2004 Worldcon, Noreascon 4 (N4). A couple of years later, Deb bought a long roll of silk that fit the printer. I found copyright-free photos taken by the Hubble Space Telescope online, and we spent a delightful, quiet afternoon at the NESFA Clubhouse printing a few utterly beautiful silk scarves.

I think I first heard Deb geeking about output options when she learned she could order custom 10x10-foot rugs printed with the Lensman Family art Bill Neville drew for N4. One was placed at each entrance to the Concourse Exhibit Hall at the convention. She sent one with me to Toronto when I was the Fan Guest of Honour at the first SFContario in 2010 to be used as a thematic decoration and to help protect the floor at the All Worldcons, All the Time Bheer Tasting that Randy Byers, Pat Virzi, and I hosted there.

In November 2006, color laser printers were far from new technology, but I'd been dithering over the options and possibilities. It was a big buying decision, and I feared getting it wrong.

Randy Byers and I stayed at Deb and Mike's house while we were finishing the last few pages of layout and printing Science-Fiction Five-Yearly (SFFY) #12 at the NESFA Clubhouse. When we climbed their front steps after the first full day of SFFY production, we found a large box marked "Dell Color Laser Printer 3110cn" sitting next to the front door.

I opened the door and called out, "Where do you want the color laser printer?"

"It's up here," came the response from their upstairs loft office. "We're installing it now."

Randy and I checked: the box at the door was unopened and heavy.

"There's one here, too."

The Dell website had been, umm, troublesome. Deb accidentally ordered a second printer after it appeared her first order didn't go through.

This offered the perfect solution to my color laser printer indecisiveness. I knew Deb and Mike would have thoroughly researched the options and made a good buying decision. We confirmed that my Apple equipment worked with it on the printer they were installing, and Dell made it easy to transfer the ownership of and warranty on the second printer to me. I paid for the extra printer and they were saved the trouble of returning it. The timing was great; we enjoyed printing several SFFY pages in color the next day.

“What happens when you move it a pixel to the left?”

Deb and I collaborated on many design projects over the 25 years of our friendship, nearly all of them for print. But where did we start?

In the summer of 2001, before N4 became a seated Worldcon, Deb sent email asking me to design the convention’s logo. I intended to pass on the job because my design skills are far more type-oriented than graphics-oriented for something like logos. But as I composed my reply, I found myself writing, “If I were to design the convention’s logo, it would be very type-oriented, either reversed out of a star field, or with a star field fill in the letterforms....” The process of writing about why I probably wasn’t a good fit for the job gave me the idea for how I’d do it. So I did. Others have written about how Deb helped us be our best selves. It’s so true! Over and over and over again with me, and I’ll be forever grateful for that.

We worked together on a flyer for Boskone 43 in 2006, when Donato Giancola was the convention’s Official Artist. If I remember

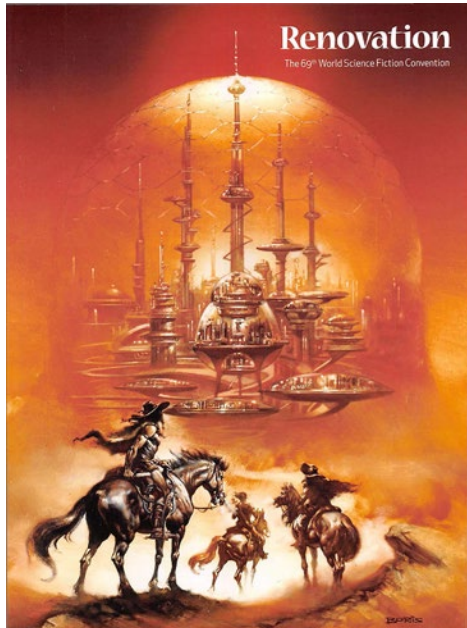


We used this version of the logo the most.

correctly, Deb was looking at my computer screen as we were working on a design and for the first time suggested that I move one of the elements “just a pixel to the left.” Darned if it didn’t make it better! She adopted the phrase to describe her role in our collaborations. It was a completely Deb move; she did so much more than put the perfect artistic finishing touch on whatever we were creating together.

We collaborated again on the Renovation Worldcon Souvenir Book in 2011. Deb ran lead on

the editing – obtaining material, polishing it for publication, and deciding what went where in the 158–page book. I completed a lot of the layout at Deb and Mike’s kitchen table, going over to Middleton so we could work together in person. So many satisfying,
text continues on page 41 >





BOSKONE 43
A regional science fiction convention filled with wonder!
FEBRUARY 17-19, 2006
BOSTON, MA

Guest of Honor
Ken MacLeod
Jamming the culture of space

Official Artist
Donato Giancola
Lustrous images & stunning realism

Special Guest
Cory Doctorow
World's most wired human being

Featured Filker
Steve Macdonald

Membership: \$43
until January 16, 2006
(Rates higher at the door)

Details on back.

Art © 1993 Donato Giancola

www.boskone.org

.....

Bruce Coville on Messenger

I loved working with Deb on **The One Right Thing**. I loved what she chose and how she arranged it. She knew exactly what she was doing and did it beautifully! Mainly I have this memory of laughing with her and feeling like the project was in great hands.

happy memories. And, oh, the outstanding food values at every meal! The dolmas, bbq shrimp, caprese salads, niçoise salads... and sweet rolls, of course.

Convention flyers, postcards, progress reports, souvenir books, and other items commonly have outstanding graphic design these days, but it was still a rarity 20+ years ago. Deb and I helped raise the bar while we added joy to our days working together on those

graphic design projects and more. It was such a win, such a blessing in my life, and in hers, I believe. When I think about everything we did, it staggers me. As the tributes here demonstrate, I was but one of many, so many. What a legacy she leaves!

That said, right now I'd rather have her here, alive, and healthy. I'm far from alone in that, so very far from alone. If only we could make it so....



By Esther MacCallum-Stewart, Chair, Glasgow 2024

Deb was the benchmark for good chairing for Worldcons. She was funny, sanguine, and smart. She did not take any shit (in fact, I think her last words to me in person were as the moderator of a Worldcon Question time and were something like 'For goodness sake, shut up and stop waffling, Esther!'), and she was incredibly competent. Deb was well known for her snark, but looking back over my messages to her, I also see someone who was passionate, thoughtful, and furiously organised. There are messages grumbling, sharing information, and just offering support. She had a knack of messaging when things were really awful and just sending a quick 'it'll get better' message, or just a finger up in the air at whoever was being frustrating. Underneath this was a deep understanding of how to be a compassionate, thoughtful

leader, and how to encourage people to be their best.

Chairing a Worldcon is not easy. You have to be patient, committed, and compassionate. There is a lot (a LOT) of wrangling cats, a huge amount behind the scenes and out front, a whole army of people telling you what to do. I think it was Deb who coined the saying 'If you chair a good Worldcon, dozens of people will hate you. If you chair a bad one, hundreds will.' (And if it wasn't, she made it hers anyway.) She called being a chair 'one of the most interesting, rewarding, irritating, life-changing, joyous, and overwhelming jobs for which you won't get paid.' She also said in the same message that I used the lower case too much.

I REALLY MISS YOU, DEB.
THANK YOU SO MUCH.





*Deb made
Jewelry...*



All photos in this section were taken by Michael Benveniste unless otherwise indicated. Many thanks to Michael, Vicki Karns, Leslie Turek, and Ann Broomhead for sharing Deb's jewelry in Idea.

Images without captions were items Deb made and kept for herself or had in her art show sales inventory.

Collection of Geri Sullivan.





Collection of Leslie Turek.



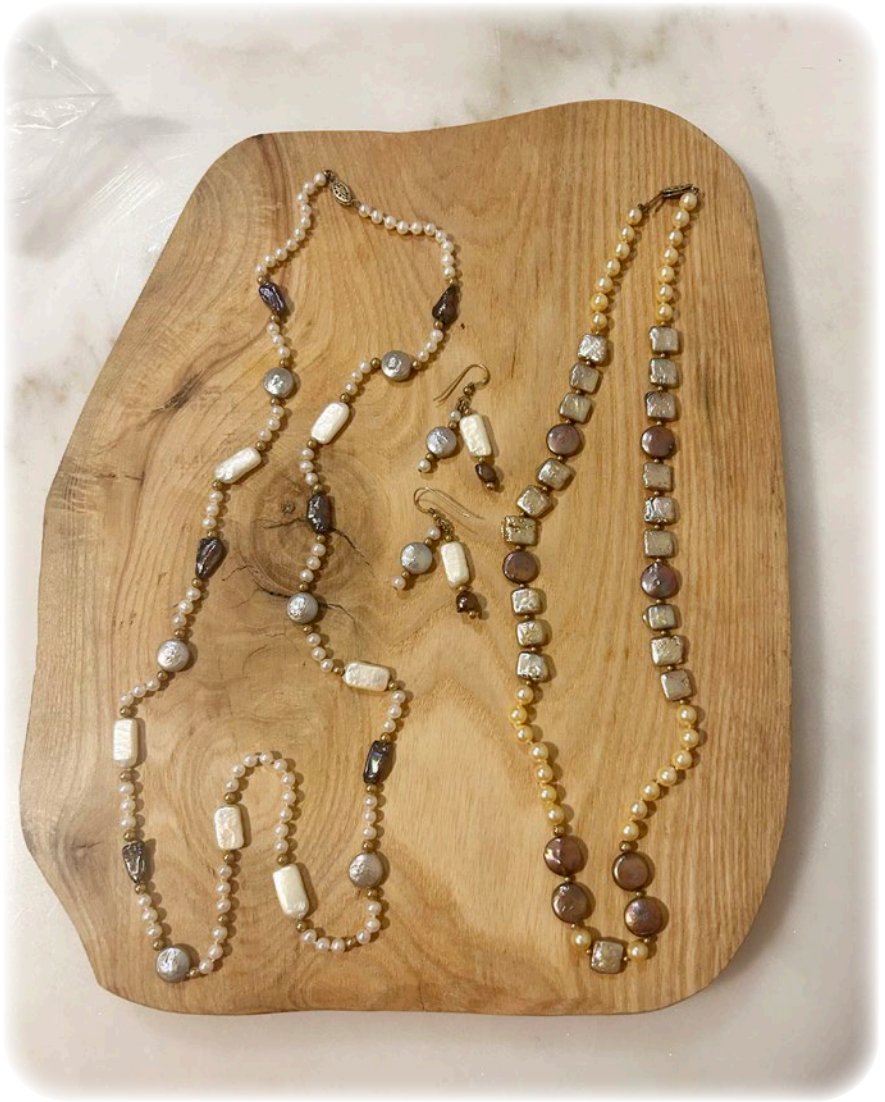


Photo by Vicki Karns, from her collection.



Photo by Vicki Karns, from her collection.



Photo by Vicki Karns, from her collection.







Collection of Geri Sullivan.







*Photo by Ann Broomhead,
from her collection.*







Photo by Vicki Karns, from her collection.



Collection of Geri Sullivan.



*Photo by Ann Broomhead, from her collection.
Ann's husband, Tim Szczesuil, commissioned the set
(necklace, earrings, and hair sticks) as a gift for her.*



Photo by Vicki Karns, from her collection.



Photo by Vicki Karns, from her collection.









Photo by Geri Sullivan.



(Silence)



Deb's urn, created by Vincent Villafranca, shown with a favorite necklace from Mike.



Seattle, WA: Helen Montgomery and Chris Rose were among the holiday recipients.



Austin, TX: An Idea for a tiara? Hanging out in Sara Felix's work space.

Welcome back, *Idea*

by Geri Sullivan

And, oh, what a welcome it's been. Publishing *Idea* in the age of social media and Kindle Direct Publishing is a remarkably different experience than the collation parties that marked publication back in the last millennium. The days when a living room full of friends hand-coloring feathers on each cover after collating 250-300 copies of the latest issue were replaced by emails from Amazon confirming every

order I placed, more emails telling me when each order shipped, and, in the US at least, even more emails with photos showing packages on doorsteps all over the country. It used to be I dropped the stamped envelopes off that the post office, then waited. And waited. The steady flow of individual order confirmations and delivery confirmations was a new and very pleasant experience.

Duncanville, TX



Portland, OR



Madison, WI





Wales, MA: Gavi Levy Haskell and Katherine Koczvara at Toad Woods Christmas.



Stafford, England: Arriving with *The Doctor* at Esther MacCallum-Stewart's.

The actual deliveries brought amusements all their own. *Idea* arrived on dozens of doorsteps a day or two before Christmas. Couples looked at the unexpected package in confusion, each knowing that the gifts they'd ordered for each other had all arrived, so what was this? And why was it addressed to both of them? The timing wasn't deliberate, but I admit to enjoying adding a bit of mystery to the holidays.

Thanks to a UK Amazon Prime membership as well as my US Prime account, copies were printed and

delivered to UK addresses as fast as and sometimes even faster than in the US. Instead of costing several dollars more per copy, deliveries to UK addresses were often less expensive than shipping to US addresses because of the different way taxes are handled across the Pond.

Guests at Toad Woods Christmas and Boxing Day celebrations received their copies in person. Scott Lynch entertained us by reading a portion of Sandra Bond's Pemmi-Con report aloud.

Then there was social media, Facebook in particular. Friends

Novato, CA



Minneapolis, MN



Flippin, AR





London, England: Jo gets introduced to fanzines as Caroline Mullan explains the genre at the London Christmas pub meet.



Szczecin, Poland: Mikołaj Kowalewski in front of his convention name badge board at his parents' home.

posted selfies holding *Idea* 13. Others texted and emailed similar selfies. That never happened in the 1990s. Heck, I wasn't even on anything recognizable as social media until I joined LiveJournal in 2003, right as I was putting Toad Hall on the market in Minneapolis and looking forward to moving east. Yes, rec.arts.sf.fandom was a thriving community that I enjoyed participating in during the 1990s, but online life is different now. Oh, so very different.

As 2023 drew to a close, the eagerness with which fans had welcomed the news that I was reviving *Idea* turned into excite-

ment, appreciation, and joy as their copies appeared on their doorsteps. That was a rush.

Steve Jeffery sent the first letter of comment (LoC) on 28 December. Jerry Kaufman's arrived the same day, just seven hours after Steve's. To my relief, LoCs continued to trickle in over the next month. I'd been worried that full letters had given way to brief, breezy comments posted online. Then Peter Young came along and knocked my socks off with the publication of *every place I read your goddamn fanzine* #1. Wow, talk about raising the bar. Pete didn't just write a LoC, he produced a **fanzine** of comment.

Seattle, WA



Chicago, IL



Brighton, MA



Lansing, MI



Hempstead, NY





Naugatuck, CT: Elaine Brennan at The Loaded Goat coffee shop.



Belfast, Norn Iron: Tommy Ferguson at home.

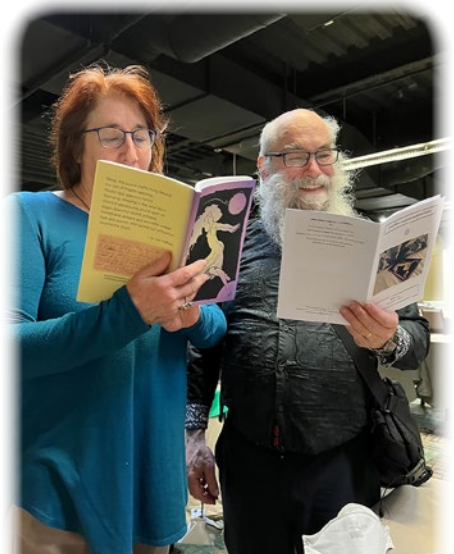
Glossy color photo tipped into the cover, exquisite design throughout. Pete sends a print edition to authors and editors; PDF editions are hosted on efanzines.com. As I write in early June, he's gone on to publish seven more issues. Well, eight more, if you include the first issue of *every place i read your goddamn book*. I take more than a certain pride of place that *Idea* was first. I was so taken with *every place i read your goddamn fanzine* #1 that I am reprinting it here as a kick-off to the letter column. I highly recommend all of issues Pete's published to date and look forward to additional issues as time continues to do its thing:

- #1 Geri Sullivan's *Idea* #13
- #2 Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer's *Banana Wings* #79
- #3 Rob Jackson's *Inca* #22 and *Inca* #23

Boston, MA: Felicia Herman peruses Idea 13 while Seth Breidbart admires every place I read your goddamn fanzine #1 during Boskone 61 set-up.

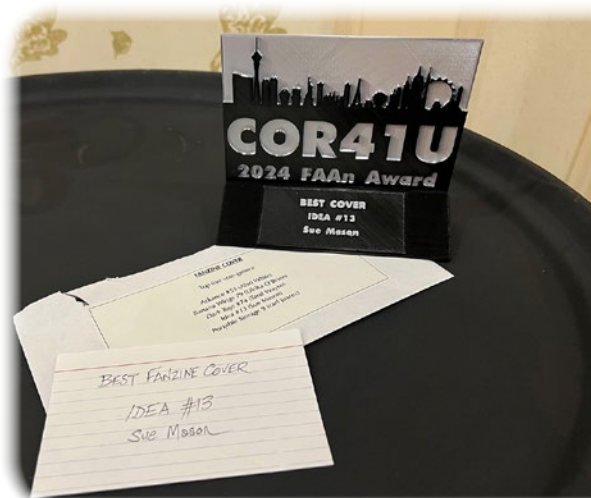
- #4 Dan Harper's *A Backwater of Fandom* #10-#12
- #5 James Bacon, Chris Garcia & Allison Hartman Adams's *Journey Planet* #79
- #6 Jerry Kaufman & Suzle Tompkins's *Littlebrook* #13
- #7 Sue Mason's *Into the Wide Purple Yonder*
- #8 Christina Lake's *Lakes Folly and Nowhere Fan* #7

You'll find these and future issues online at efanzines.com/bigsky



Further joy awaited in Las Vegas on 3 March at the Corflu 41 banquet. Sue Mason's cover won the 2024 Best Cover FAAn Award, and *Idea* itself came in third in the Best Fanzine category, one vote behind Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer's *Banana Wings* and two votes behind Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary*. What fine company to be in.

Eight days later, email from Nicholas Whyte on behalf of Glasgow 2024 brought the astonishing news that *Idea* is a Best Fanzine Hugo finalist. Yowser. I so wasn't expecting that. Many thanks to all who put *Idea* in the terrific company of *Black Nerd Problems*; *The Full Lid*; *Journey Planet*; *Nerds of a Feather*, *Flock Together*; and *Unofficial Hugo Book Club Blog*. Congratulations to my fellow Best Fanzine finalists, and to all of the other Hugo finalists as well. Let's have a fine time celebrating in Glasgow, eh?

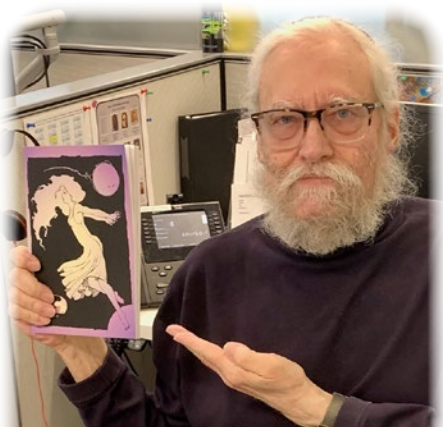


Sue Mason's FAAn Award for her cover art drawn for Idea 13.

Next up: the lettercol, starting with Pete Young's brilliant fanzine of comment. And after that? It's over to you. I hope to see your selfies with *Idea* 14 in hand and, even more, I welcome your LoCs, inquiries, offers of articles, art, and other contributions for *Idea* 15 and beyond. The plan is to put the next issue out this coming winter, ideally in December. Because, yes, decades have passed, but your welcome made it clear *Idea* still has something to offer fandom today. Plus, pubbing my ish remains hugely satisfying as well as being a whole lot of fun. Thanks, all!



Minneapolis, MN: Fred A Levy Haskell, downtown at work.



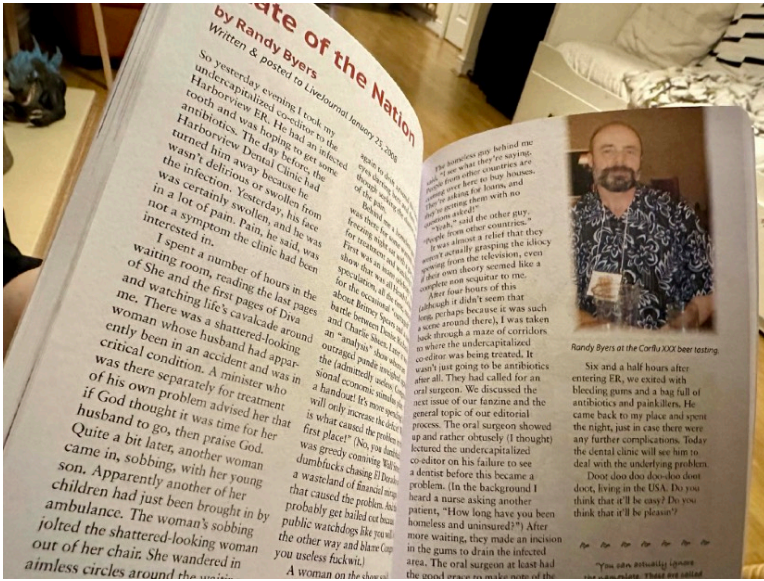
every place i read your goddamn fanzine

1



Idea #13

December 2023



Kirkby, Liverpool, England
27 December 2023

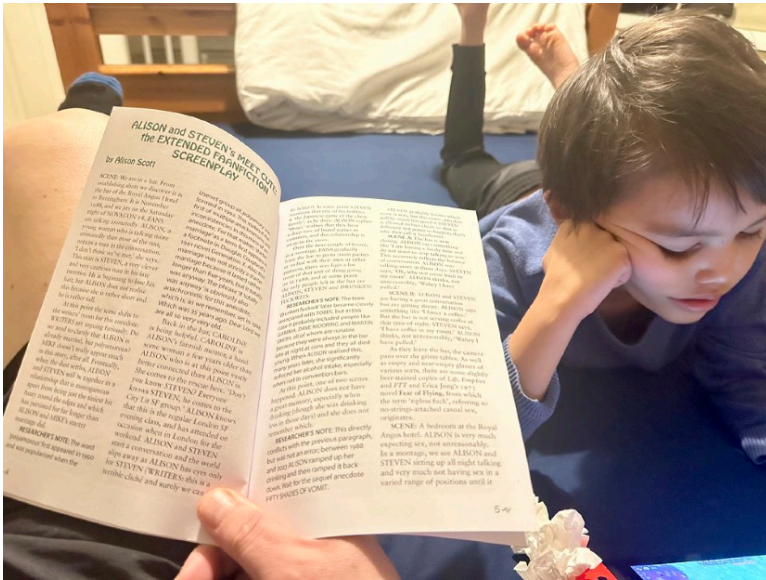
GERI, THANK YOU SO MUCH for sending me *Idea #13*. My entire span of years in fandom can be measured by the gap between this and your previous issue, *Idea #12* in 2001.

And after seeing your ToC for *Idea #13*, my first port of call was of course my late friend Randy Byers.

I still miss Randy, as, I strongly suspect, do we all. His 'State of the Nation' put me in mind of Martin Amis's fiction that he also categorised under that title, where he helps us create an idiosyncratic picture of England from the observation of small but telling details (I think it was Dave Hicks who pointed out to me that Martin Amis's writing is so tight you can tell it's his right from the first paragraph). Randy's essay also helped me

rescue an almost-forgotten memory of a hot Sunday morning in Sydney, NSW, when a colleague had to accompany me to an A&E department with suspected appendicitis. I had only landed in Australia a few hours earlier, and as I waited a few hours more to be seen by a nurse a parade of bloodied and beaten Saturday-night revellers, rough men and even rougher young women, including one guy with a beer glass embedded in his skull and a woman with a knife wound in her thigh, traipsed in and somehow jumped the queue. We (my colleague's name long forgotten) found some morbid entertainment in this cavalcade while over time the pain in my right abdomen subsided. This told me it was unlikely to be appendicitis: if it was, the pain would simply get continually worse, not better. This was confirmed by the nurse who finally saw me and told me I'd probably developed kidney stones. It was almost worth having gone through all this trouble just to have witnessed for myself the kind of 'State of the Nation' scenes that must visit city A&Es all over the world in the early hours every weekend.

I always consider it a good day when I run into Alison and Steven: the last-but-one time was when you were visiting London, and the latest time was when they and their kids visited Farah and Edward during the time I was living with them in Stoke-on-Trent in 2020. Alison's 'faanfiction screenplay' fills in many gaps on how they met and became an item, and I don't really care how much artistic licence Alison has taken in relating this story because it's the version I will inevitably recall... until Alison or Steven care to issue a revised and even more entertaining version of events?



Kirkby, Liverpool, England
27 December 2023

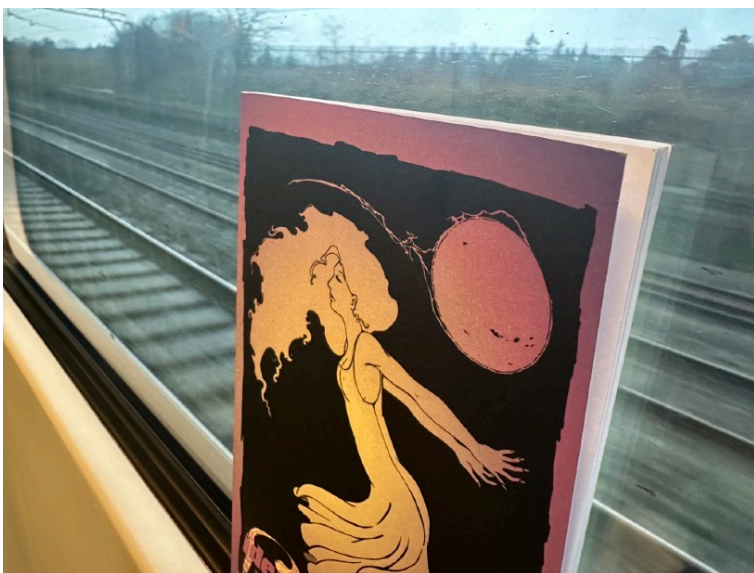


Miami Beach, FL, USA
1 January 2024

I wish I could write con reports like Sandra Bond: she makes the details interesting in a way that, if I tried it, would probably end up boring the reader. My efforts at the craft have been less expansive and have an emphasis on the *specifically* fannish, so I expect the little con reporting I have done suffers from a lack of everyday context as a result.

And so to 'Park & LoC It'. Well, to quote Erik V. Olson, "The LoCs were a strange example of time travel" – it's that 'twenty-one year gap' thing again, let alone a mere three between *Idea #11* and *#12*. Many names were recognised yet never encountered in real life. Skel (met once, Corflu, Toronto) on dealing with stuff becoming STUFF: I too am loathe to chuck anything out until space constraints dictate. I think just about every fanzine I've ever received is stored somewhere in either England or Thailand, but the same can't be said of my books, a few thousand of which have already ended up with Reading's Oxfam in the mid-2010s to compete for attention with similar cast-offs from both Dave Langford's and Brian Stableford's collections. And several of Brian's books ended up being bought by me, all at a time when Oxfam in Reading was simply *the* most interesting place in town to find science fiction.

While it was also good to read Earl Kemp again (met once, Corflu, San Francisco), it was also good to know his experiences as a typographer largely echoed my own. I've often described typography as my first love in the arts, starting with my first proper job as a paste-up artist, working my way up the office ladder to graphic designer, art director and studio manager in various studios while, mostly at home in the evenings, also



London Northwestern Railway, London Euston - Crewe
2 January 2024



London Northwestern Railway, Crewe - Liverpool Lime Street
2 January 2024

teaching myself the different disciplines of being an airbrush artist with my idols being Chris Moore, Jim Burns, Chris Achilleos and Peter Jones. I was good enough at it but became disillusioned with the uses to which I could put this talent other than to scrape by with doing the shit illustration jobs no one else wanted. I actually wrote extensively about this time in my life in my fanzine *Zoo Nation* #2. I can almost empathise with Jeff Schalles's comment "When desktop publishing came along" that everything went to hell... the various typographical crafts were simply replaced with a computer screen, and it wasn't long before the airbrush artist felt the same squeeze too, especially when Frisk stopped producing their coveted CS10 artboard, a move that pretty much signalled the end for this refined craft in the UK. It was about that time – the early 1990s – that commercial airbrush art succumbed to the computer screen too, so I get what Jeff and Earl are saying from both a typographic and an illustrative angle. It's like it's only the loss of those particular crafts that have gone, and different means of production today produce essentially the same results. Again, it's about Stuff: it asks the question "What do we wish to keep, and what is more important: the means of production or the end product?"

Alexis A. Gilliland (a familiar name for me when editing at the ISFDB) is also talking about more Stuff: the memory-laden things that simply can't become STUFF.

Then Harry Warner, Jr. on the impossibility of letting go of Stuff that keeps him alive. And this sentence – "And if I need to dispose of everything while I'm still alive, it will be even harder



Harmondsworth, England
5 January 2024



Long Beach, Los Angeles, CA, USA
7 January 2024

on me than it would have been several decades ago.” – I expect I will remember it many times in the forthcoming decades, assuming I would live so long.

Speaking of things lost, as I presently write I’m in a café on Long Beach Boulevard opposite what used to be the famous Acres of Books, a huge warehouse of secondhand books where I discovered and bought many science fiction first editions, some rather rare. Before it closed down in October 2008 it was popularised by Ray Bradbury in his essay ‘I Sing the Bookstore Eclectic’, only ever in print in a local travel magazine (although Acres did later reproduce it on their website) and, as far as I know, it remains uncollected in any Bradbury publication. The



What used to be Acres of Books, Long Beach, Los Angeles, CA, USA
7 January 2024

building is protected from demolition, the neighbourhood is now gentrified, and developers are hoping to turn the venue into an Arts Center. Long Beach has changed a lot in the thirty years I've been coming here, and it's a moveable feast on the question of too much or too little that has been repurposed for the future.

In the same way that William Breiding's *Portable Storage*, the Fishlifters' *Banana Wings* and Bruce Gillespie's *Treasure* do, *Idea* has reminded me once again that fandom contains multitudes. Encountering names unfamiliar to me and reading of their experiences that connect with fandom – however tenuously – is something I hope I will never tire of. And having read in several of your Letters of Comment about the successes and failures of various duplicator technologies used by fan-eds over the decades, I turned the final page of *Idea* #13, a fanzine edited and produced in the US, and see the words “Printed in Great Britain by Amazon”. Thinking about then and now, the before and after, I marvel at how far we've come when it comes to pubbing our ish. Maybe after all, Jeff and Earl, maybe it didn't all just go to hell.

every place

Home, 27 December 2023

Miami Beach, FL, USA, 1 January 2024

London Euston - Liverpool Lime Street, 2 January 2024

Paddington - Heathrow T5 & Harmondsworth, 5 January 2024

BA269 London - Los Angeles, 6 January 2024

Long Beach, Los Angeles, CA, USA, 7-8 January 2024

London Euston - Liverpool Lime Street, 18 January 2024

every place i read your goddamn fanzine

#1

A two-staple 'Fanzine of Comment' for
Geri Sullivan's *Idea #13*, December 2023.

Edited by Peter Young, 27 December 2023 - 22 January 2024.

Print editions only for authors and editors,
pdf editions at efanzines.com.

10 Springvale Close, Kirkby,
Liverpool, Merseyside L32 5ST, United Kingdom
peteyoung.uk@gmail.com

member and past president of the fwa

Park LoC It

William Breiding

wmbreiding@gmail.com

11 March 2024

I have to say that I've been at a loss as to how to loc *Idea* 13 and *Banana Wings* 79, both of which arrived within a few weeks of each other and read back to back. *Inca* 23 also arrived within the same time frame after the delay of being forwarded from Tucson (yes, I've been terribly remiss in sending out my COA, and not just to faneds) but I've delayed in reading Rob's fanzine until some sort of response releases me from yourself and the Fishlifters.

To kickstart I printed Peter Young's locs-as-fanzines, *every place i read your goddam fanzine*, hoping for guidance and insight. In true lochack fashion Pete responded to just a few items and then referenced the loccers themselves and closed out. Now I don't feel so bad.

Foremost on my mind remains the partially answered question I posed to you at Corflu 41 in Vegas: are you satisfied with the look and feel of *Idea* 13 as a print on demand fanzine repro'd by one of Amazon's far flung printers? (My copy was printed in Coppell, Texas.) *Idea* was always textural, as delicious to hold and behold as it was to read. And I wondered if Amazon's print on demand arm left you feeling, perhaps, slightly bereft and that something might be missing?

At Corflu while I was involved in another conversation in the Con Suite I heard this wisp of talk float over to me: "Michael Dodson started it but Bill Breiding took it to another level." That was kinda cool to hear. Your choice of interior color and full-bleed ups the level from *Portable Storage* and gives further texture. I look forward to future innovative use of both in upcoming issues. And, btw, I'm not expecting you to be disappointed: what causes me to ask is only that *Idea* was always a full-senses experience for me.

I loved the color overlay on the cover; almost, to reference Pete Young's loc, an airbrush effect in the subtlety of its use. I believe Sue's FAAn win for best cover was due as much to your presentation, as the art itself.

Before I get too Bill Bowers on your ass, a few words about the written content.

Although your adventures as a homeowner were lengthy and absorbing and Sandra's conreport from her TAFF trip was exhaustive, your shorter pieces are what shone for me – Allison's meet-cute, Craig Hughes truly displaying that Terry was a best friend, David, Randy, Ted,



even Mikołaj's Ig Nobel report all had a spit shine. Jeff's WimpyZone update had that casual brilliance I admire and has made him one of my favorite writers of the personal essay, along with Gary Hubbard. This installment was marred by some faulty editing but otherwise a pleasure. I had hoped to publish something new by Jeff in Portable Storage but was assuaged by two early WimpyZone columns that he dusted and polished and that skipped like river rocks across a placid pond.

Sandra's report on Pemmi-Con was disastrous. She captured everything I hate about conventions vividly; not only how badly the convention was run, but the general irritation and disappointment of the whole experience. How she had the courage to write it all out I'll never fathom. What an utterly horrid experience. But, in an odd way, thank you, Sandra!

In a moment of insanity I bought a ramshackle house in Oil City, Pennsylvania for forty thousand dollars. Jeff Schalles will know exactly where that is. I was seduced by the amazing surrounding landscape, the history of the area – first discovery of Oil in the USA – and the fact that a good friend had purchased a house there as well, for twenty-nine thousand dollars. I won't go into the horror show that ensued over the next eight months, not only with the house, but the inhabitants of the region. Lovecraft got it all wrong. It is NW Pennsylvania where the Old Gods terrorize and the denizens creep towards the river leaving trails of slime. I sold the house at a great loss about a year after I bought it, but never was I so relieved. So yeah, I can enjoy all your travails – knowing that, thankfully, they are not mine!

The locs were amazing. It shows that fandom is truly a time-binding place. Every single loc shone, after 23 years. And how timely was Skel's loc to Corflu 41? Did Sandra program that intentionally after reading Skel's loc about STUFF? Me I am merciless. Gail and I moved into a two room casita rental (in-law) in Albuquerque. It had to fit both of our STUFF. We took carload after carload to thrift shops in Tucson. After we arrived with a twenty foot truck of STUFF we still hadn't off-loaded enough so we spent a month seeing what actually fit into our new digs, making the hard decisions on what had to go. We finally stuffed everything in after many trips to the thrift shops, and we can still actually walk around the place!

It was a delight to see what has to be Harry Warner's final(ly) published loc.

Thanks, Geri. Do this again, real soon, and not Real Soon Now!

– *Wm.*

Much as I miss Fibertone, and the hand-colored feather on the cover, I'm quite fond of the texture and feel of KDP's matte cover stock. The hand feel of the 6x9" format also makes for pleasant reading, though I'm likely to poke a bit more at the margin settings.

Full color, bleeds, and being able to print photos are all great fun.

I rather expect that STUFF will remain an ongoing topic in these pages; it's certainly an ongoing topic in my life. Congratulations to you and Gail for accomplishing the downsizing that accompanied your move. I found I thoroughly enjoyed the process when I did it 20 years ago, but I then resumed accumulating So. Much. Stuff. – gfs

Mark Plummer

mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

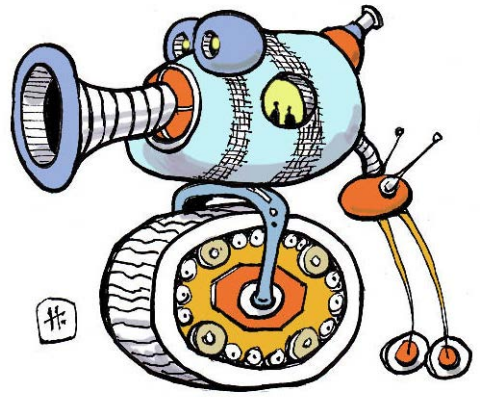
3 January 2024

I had been going to start with a piece of advice. I approached this with some hesitation because really who am I, a relative neophyte, to be offering advice to a veteran such as yourself. And then I hesitated some more about the use of the term 'veteran', ever mindful of the time I referred to Peter Weston as 'eminent' and he challenged whether I really meant old. (Although it occurs to me that that was about twenty years ago and I am now roughly the same age that Peter was then, albeit considerably less eminent.)

But I have also re-thought my advice. I had originally been going to suggest that next time you decide to resurrect a 23-years-silent fanzine title I think you should try to keep it quiet until it appears. Obviously contributors need to know and so on, but try not to let on to the wider community. Allow the revived fanzine to appear in people's mailbox unheralded with an unspoken flourish of a <Ta-da!> to gasps of fannish astonishment.

I have though concluded that actually a little heralding doesn't go amiss. Allow the news to get out early, to permeate through the subculture, 'New *Idea*'s a-comin'" and so on, building a bit of momentum. You doubtless know this and had taken it into account, demonstrating that you are a veteran (and eminent, but not old) and I am a relative neophyte.

The first inklings of this new rebirth of wonder came from Alison Scott who told us some months back that you'd decided to revive *Idea* and



that you'd be publishing her 'meet cute.' The article was very good, Alison told us.

Other rumours began to circulate, to the point whether I wondered whether you were building a fannish **Last Dangerous Visions**, attracting more and more content for a bigger and bigger fanzine, busting through the page-counts of such slender publications as *Warhoon* #28 and *Outworlds* #71, as *Idea* #13 grew and grew in conception and outstripped any plausible reality.

I should have known that you, as an eminent veteran, would not fall prey to that.

The rumours gradually became more concrete, *Idea* itself more imminent. And then on Thursday 21 December, an already auspicious day, Claire emailed me at work to say our copy had arrived at home. How thoughtful of Geri, I thought, to arrange for *Idea* to arrive on what was effectively my last working day as a civil servant.

Thursday 21 December was also Christmas Tun Day, the extra London 'First Thursday' meeting we always cram in on the third or fourth Thursday of December. The modern day meetings at The Bishop's Finger are of course Not What They Once Were

but there was still a good crowd building. Alison brandished her own copy of *Idea* #13, drawing our attention to her ‘meet cute’ article and reminding us, in case we had forgotten, that it’s very good. Caroline Mullan similarly brandished a copy and wondered out loud about Alison’s categorisation of her 1988 self as ‘handsome.’ In retrospect, it does seem a slightly odd word choice, reminding me of Maureen’s TAFF trip where Don Fitch (I think it was) referred to the 39-year-old Maureen as ‘sprightly’, a term to my mind rarely used of anybody below pension age. Had I remembered the precise content of the ‘meet cute’ (‘Very good’, A Scott of Walthamstow) I might have asked Caroline whether, pace Steven’s friend Andy, she might prefer ‘foxy chick.’

Claire was not at the Third Thursday First Thursday and was, I think, concerned that given my newly acquired former-civil-servant status I might become exuberant and off-sober. She did text me a few times to make sure I was OK and that I hadn’t forgotten to eat as I sat with Rob Hansen, Alison, Caroline, and their newly acquired token young person Jo who was reading either Alison’s or Caroline’s copy of *Idea* #13 with some apparent enthusiasm, seemingly confirming Alison’s ‘very good’ assessment of her own article.

I can assure you, Geri, that I did not become exuberant and after a while I set off with Jim and Meike for the Better Place. It’s not really called that. It is rather Craft Clerkenwell and sells a wide selection of craft beer unlike The Bishop’s Finger which is firmly in brown-beer-with-twigs-in territory. Hence going on to Craft Clerkenwell has become known as ‘going to a better place.’ We walked

up past Farringdon Station, past the One Tun, our home from 1974 to 1987, and later the formerly-known-as The King of Diamonds that hosted the London BSFA meetings in the 1980s until the landlord over-interpreted the presence of a number of CND badges and decided the BSFA was really a stealth political group. In Craft Clerkenwell, Meike and I took it in turns to stand on one leg to prove that we could. We then texted Claire to confirm our ongoing unexuberant state. Later we caught a train home from Farringdon.

Little did we know how the evening was progressing at The Bishop’s Finger. I note that in her (very good) article, Alison says of herself, ‘she significantly reduced her alcohol intake, especially when not in convention bars,’ a quasi-admission that she was once not as sensible as she is now. Geri, I can reveal that at closing time on Thursday 21 December Alison proved herself to be exactly as sensible as she once was. As The Bishop’s Finger was closing, the landlady announced that she and some of her staff were heading for the nearby Old Red Cow which would be open until 1AM and Alison and Steven duly tagged along with Dave Hodson, I think token young person Jo, and maybe one or two others. Alison arrived home at about 3AM and without her coat. (The coat was later located in the Old Red Cow, necessitating a return visit the following day and risking a timeloop in which Alison returns daily to the Old Red Cow to retrieve some lost possession and in the process loses some different possession necessitating a return visit to the Old Red Cow. Perhaps Alison could write this up for *Idea* #14. I’m sure it would be very good.)

I see a future in which the phrase 'going to the Old Red Cow' becomes freighted with meaning to indicate those moments at fannish gatherings when sensibility fails to break out.

I however returned home at a reasonable hour – I am now more sensible than I once was, oh yes – to find *Idea* #13.

Alison's article is very good. I had seen an earlier pre-publication draft and was in fact the person who spotted Steven's absence from the Novacon 18 membership list as printed in the programme book. Some might say that it undermines the truth of Alison's article but I think of 'The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling' by Ted Chiang in which a speaker of a particular African language says that it '... has two words for what in your language is called "true." There is what's right, mimi, and what's precise, vough. In a dispute the principals say what they consider right; they speak mimi. The witnesses, however, are sworn to say precisely what happened; they speak vough.' Alison's article is, I'm sure, right. An aside here: I understand there are particular circumstances behind this but I mourn the way some conventions now eschew any kind of membership list on websites or programme books. I do accept the reasons for doing it. It just makes life tricky for future fanhistorians, if there be any such.

Sandra's article is also very good and bodes well for the full report, not that I needed to see this chapter to have the expectation. I'd heard some of her individual anecdotes before – the final night staff dinner, the auction – and knew of some of the problems that beset the convention and its attendees more generally. I do wonder what went wrong with Pemmi-Con. It seemed to have the potential to be a

hugely successful NASFiC in a year in which few people from North America were attending the Worldcon. I'm glad, though, that it didn't seem to blight Sandra's trip too much and as always am slightly cheered whenever I see people at the convention, sometimes people outside what we might think of as the core TAFF community, embracing the idea of TAFF and fan funds.

And... well, all of *Idea* #13 is very good. I like the way it's a fusion of *Ideas* past and present, relatively contemporary pieces like Sandra's sitting alongside a reprint from 40 years ago and letters from 20 years ago and various points in between. Obviously, it would have been nice if *Idea* hadn't been dormant for 23 years but I think I'm going to choose to see it as waiting for the time to be right, a steam-engine time of sorts now that this Amazon self-publishing facility makes it possible for you to take fan publishing to a higher level. One thing that's only now occurring to me. There was, I thought, a vogue in some US fanzines about 25 years ago – no names – to saturate the pages with Rotsler fillos. *Idea* is well-supplied with Rotslers, about two dozen of them, but it's just right to create the ambience. *Idea* may wear the outer garments of a respectable literary quarterly but, to paraphrase something I half remember from Ansible several years back, it wears its fannish underpants with pride.

Best...



I can hardly claim to have taken anything into account in terms of how and when I introduced/announced/proclaimed that I was working on *Idea* 13 and was aiming to publish it. In retrospect, it all worked out very well indeed. The eagerness with

which fans responded to the news and offered contributions helped fuel my own determination even as my original timeline of “September/October; November for sure” slipped and slipped again into mid-December. Mostly, I just burbled, like I do, and then procrastinated about actually starting the layout (beyond the cover), again, like I do. I was gratified, more than a bit humbled, and even more crogged that fanzine that had a mere 12 issues published over 13 years was so eagerly anticipated after a score and 3 years absence. Yes, *Idea* was well-regarded back in its day, but 23 years are 23 years, and so many other faneds, including your own fine self, have published ever so many more outstanding fanzines in that time, it seemed more to me that I would have to earn my way back, not be heralded with trumpets, cheers, and offers of contributions from talented fanwriters eager to be featured in *Idea*’s pages. It was a joyous return, indeed.

What we consider “veteran” vs “neophyte” is fascinating. You found fandom a mere four years after I attended my first convention (Minicon 17, 1981) and a mere three years after I started self-identifying as a fan after attending Chicon IV, the 1982 Worldcon.

Yet, when I joined fandom, “Big Mac,” the 1976 Worldcon in Kansas City, was just three years before my first fannish moving party (July 1979) and my first Minn-StF New Year’s Party (31 December 1979). It was a mere six years before I became active in fandom, but I regarded it as though it had happened eons before my time. It was from the legendary times of yore, when fannish giants were thick on the ground.

I still see myself as something of a neophyte compared to many of my friends, even though it’s really hard to take that seriously after 40+ years in

fandom. It’s all a matter of perspective. You’ve published so many more fanzines than I have, and have by far the more consistent track record. And I doubt any of us sees ourselves as “eminent” much as others might be prone to such terms, just as you were with Peter Weston.

There are things I have no doubt about: I am old. I am utterly delighted to be joining the rest of fandom in celebrating you and Claire as FanGoHs in Glasgow this summer. And I treasure fandom and the many ways in which it has enriched and informed my life and continues to do so. Here’s to that!

Like you, “I understand there are particular circumstances behind this but I mourn the way some conventions now eschew any kind of membership list on websites or programme books. I do accept the reasons for doing it. It just makes life tricky for future fanhistorians, if there be any such.” It doesn’t just make life tricky for future fanhistorians, it hinders the very community-building that is vital to fandom’s health and continued existence. Yet the world has changed, as have fanzine distribution and preservation methods. I’ve made the hard decision not to include mailing addresses in *Idea* – including my own, for Ghu’s sake – for many of the same reasons some conventions eschew publishing membership lists. I’m not yet willing to forgo the charm of including signatures at the bottom of letters, but have decided to include first names only on those going forward. But it’s all a struggle. I dislike conventions that don’t even put the names of their chair, committee, and staff on their websites. Fandom – my fandom, anyway – is even more about the people and our relationships with each other that it is about our love of the genre. I want to promote and advocate for that in the pages of *Idea* while also being cognizant and

respectful of current day realities and sensibilities. Conflicting needs are never easy to balance, and I'm sure I'm not always going to get it "right," – if there even is a "right" answer. That's not going to stop me from trying... or stop me from continuing to think it through and possibly change my mind in the process. Onward! That's the important part.... – gfs

Michael Dobson

editor@timespinnerpress.com

11 March 2024

When I first started my own experiments with print on demand technology, people were suggesting that I was somehow polluting the precious fluids of fandom (mimeograph ink, correction fluid, and bile). I've got nothing against old tech, mind you – I spent a good part of my twenties in warehouses full of dusty airplane bits – but there's something deeply ironic about luddite attitudes among fans. Maybe it's old age. Give us our jetpacks, but keep the hell off our lawn. But you, William Breiding, Pat Virzi, and no doubt others I haven't heard of are using the new technology to great ends, while remaining fannish throughout.

I loved, of course, Craig's piece about Terry, and I always enjoy anything by Jeff Schalles. I wonder about S&ra's claim that Andy Hooper has "auctioned more fannish material for worthy causes than Ted White has enjoyed hot tokes." Either way, that's got to be a pretty big number, maybe enough to place it among the very large named numbers, like Graham's number or TREE(3).

Cheers,
Michael

Cy Chauvin

peterpumpkincat@juno.com

22 February 2024

I had been expecting and looking for *Idea* for a week. We had a big snowfall one day, and I was out cleaning the front porch. I saw some blue and white plastic hidden under the bushes by the front window. It hardly seemed worth picking up amid all the snow, but I'm a conscientious sort of guy, so I pulled it out. It got bigger as I pulled it out and I realized it was an Amazon package, and must be from you! I'm glad I didn't leave it sit there until spring.

Sue Mason did a beautiful cover. It has an art nouveau feel, and the purple shaded background is perfect (was that colored shading your idea?). All that solid black would have been difficult to get on a mimeograph. The issue is worth getting for it alone.

I'm glad most of the issue is new. I was afraid it was going to be a time capsule. Those are fine too, but a whole new series of *Ideas* is even more wonderful.

I went to Pemmi-Con too, so it's interesting to compare Sandra Bond's experiences with my own. I was very disappointed in the attendance, expecting many more people to attend, since the Worldcon was in China. The legendary aspects of the previous Worldcon held in Winnipeg (at least among some of the Minneapolis fans I know) made it seem a sure thing, but it obviously wasn't. Perhaps Winnipeg is only slightly less remote than China for most fans; it did take me three days to fly home! (That wasn't planned.)

Sandra mentions a panel of interest: "Modern SF is often considered to be inclusive. But when did the genre begin to include representatives

I must admit that I put off reading Alison Scott's "Meet Cute" until last, because the format seemed off-putting (but how could I not read the article that provoked a new *Idea?*). Once started, it was quite amusing, especially the various 'researchers notes.' I was quite disappointed that Alison and Steven's accidental meeting on the street in Chester was engineered by a friend and Alison (I believe in Fate, you see), but then buoyed up by the researcher's note at the end stating that Steven was not on the membership list for Novacon 18 where they were supposed to have met. So does Steven exist at all? Or, for that matter, Alison? I do hope you reveal in some future issue who the actors are in the photo published on page 8, or at least the whereabouts for the persistent and scurrilous researcher, since there are any number of other worthy fannish project in need of research, such as who sawed Courtney's boat. By the way, I did appreciate the explanations for the abbreviations, which were new to me.

I realize that the title of Randy Byer's article ("The State of the Nation") is an ironic comment based on his experiences at a hospital emergency room. But in my own view, the state of the nation might be better observed at a park, ball game, or even a science fiction convention! And it certainly has little to do with what those people do in those white buildings in Washington DC.

"The Further Adventure of Geri Sullivan, Girl Homeowner," was read with much interest and amusement – amusement and sympathy. Giant hoses snaking down chimneys, rows of bulbous tanks hidden in the garage, wooden rotting from floors and roof, a crazed Pat Virzi with over-sized pruning shears



attacking a green Triffid in the backyard – this is the stuff of Horror! I lay awake that night after reading it, wondering if my house would be next. So far, there has only been some minor gurgling from the toilet. But this morning I noticed some mysterious white secretions on the walls of the basement, and a further larger encrustation above the kitchen window. I'm not going to give in quite yet and take the drastic action you suggest (and call some competent person!). Oh no, let it fester, and see if we can't turn a molehill into mountain.

I hadn't expected Ted White's "The Last Fan on Earth" to be a nearly literal last person on earth story as well, but more a present day withering away of fandom. His working of the idea was funny, and I laughed especially at the last line, "It was indeed a proud and lonely thing to be a fan." And then just yesterday I got Fred Lerner's FAPzine in the mail, and Lee Gold mentions a story by Robert Bloch published in *Fantastic Universe*, "A Way of Life." "A post-Apocalyptic tale in which all of humanity evolved from fandom, closing with: 'It's a proud and lonely thing to be a fan.'" The reference now makes Ted's story even more clever!

The loc on a stick from RJ Johnson is quite cute, Geri, and I'm glad you kept and ran it. Since I'm still in

Stipple-Apa after all these years, I'm always reading tales of the Minnesota State Fair, and what everyone is eating on a stick. Speaking of which, here is a joke I ran at the end of an apazine:

Just space here for a short joke – sorry, for a height impaired joke: How many height impaired people does it take to change a light bulb on the ceiling at the Minnesota State Fair?

One (they put the light bulb on a stick)!

The other letter I have to mention is the one from Don Fitch – how wonderful that he is still alive!

The poem by Lee Hoffman about sleep is gorgeous.

Best,



P.S. Do you have any contact information for Don? Do you think he would like an e-mail or a short card/letter? I used to know Don through Apa-50, and met at different cons over the years. I especially remember a Midwestcon / Fanhistoricon which he and David Bratman attended, along with many others, of course. Don told me he was going to drive and see some Native American sites while in the area of Cincinnati, but I don't know what they were. It might be a question I could ask him.

P.S.S. Girl home owner, after finishing this letter, the hot water tank went, leaking water (that's what they do of course). Got it fixed, then two days later a valve to the furnace humidifier broke, shooting more water over the new water heater and elsewhere! I know this must be

a Curse of the Homeowner for not sending in the LoC sooner, but please take it off if you can!

To the best of my knowledge, Don Fitch isn't reading email, but he does appreciate cards and letters. Enlarged type is easiest for him to read. Drop me an email for his address. (This is an open invitation to everyone, not just Cy.)

"Barbie's Inferno" left me very grateful I grew up playing with Lincoln Logs, American Bricks, and other toys without any sense that they were only for boys. I really like your point about the joy of putting things together. – gfs

Jeanne Gomoll

jeanne@unionstreetdesign.com

3 May 2024

Thank you for reprinting "Barbie's Inferno" in *Idea* 13, but even more: thank you for sending me a copy of your gorgeous zine. What a brilliant pub! Sue Mason's artwork for the cover was lovely, as was your layout – so welcoming, easily read, and colorful!

I offer an ancillary response to Sandra Bond's question, "Why was Pemmi-Con such a disaster of a convention...? Well, here's a possible explanation. From my point of view – which is of course suspect because I did not attend – it seems obvious that the concom must have formulated a plot to sabotage their own convention. Why would they do that, you ask? I posit that they secretly planned to provide copious amounts of comic material for fan writers, of which Sandra took full advantage. I cannot be convinced that so much at Pemmi-Con could have gone accidentally wrong. It must have been premeditated. If all happened as I suspect it did, I expect, any day, that Pemmi-Con will announce the winner in their

heretofore covert contest, with points awarded according to how many errors were found and mocked within submitted submissions/conreports. Surely Sandra will win this contest hands down with one of the most hilarious conreports I've ever read.

When I was a young fan I frequently wrote about conventions, or more often, stories of what happened on the road to the conventions. But I am older now and haven't packed a car or shared my hotel room with a gang of friends for many decades. I attend fewer conventions than I used to, and when I do attend a con, I usually get in a reasonable amount of sleep. This may explain a lot about the deficit in disasters and mishaps, which used to provide me with inspiration. (Thanks, again, Sandra, for a brilliant example in this genre!)

But nowadays... a large proportion of the anecdotes I tell or write relate to Scott's and my house, and our many renovation adventures. I've written (mostly in apazines these days) about the stressful experience of buying a Persian rug at auction, the sledgehammer that was employed to remove an old, cast-iron bathtub from our upstairs bathroom, sleeping in an ice-cold attic while electrical service was updated and walls were torn out below us, discovering ugly secrets beneath the walls of our 100-year-old house, cooking in a make-shift basement kitchen while our actual kitchen was torn down to the studs and cleansed of asbestos, the invention of our kitchen smart-waiter, the dungeon beneath the porch in which we discovered Historical Artifacts, another bathroom renovation that took forever and resulted in a special name for that room (Xeno's Bathroom), and most recently, moving-the-garage day.

So, of course, I loved "Geri Sullivan, Girl Homeowner," because I identified so much with the topic of house



NICE FANZINE.
DO YOU HAVE
IT IN YELLOW?

renovations. I think it must be a fairly common genre for fan writers of my generation. Unlike you, I never did learn the valuable (well, at least, money-saving) lesson to do it myself – your Daddy's way. Instead, I am a rabid disciple of Fred Levy Haskell's Yellow Pages doctrine. In the mid-'90s, I bid out a job, interviewed four contractors and settled on Rick Larson, a highly skilled woodworker, contractor, and incredibly nice guy, to do a major renovation for us – electrical upgrade, complete house insulation, plaster repair, and painting. That was the last job we bid out. After that, when we needed work done, we just called Rick. Every time he did a job for us, I wrote up a glowing review of his work, and recommended him enthusiastically to all our friends. Rick is now the Madison SF Group's primary contractor. Which lends itself to an entirely different, but related genre of homeowner stories, happily not the disaster-based variety. Nevertheless, I do envy the sense of obvious satisfaction and competency that you've experienced by doing so much of the work on your house yourself and with friends' help. Not enough to change my ways though.

And then Paul Skelton's letter reminded me of another familiar story-telling topic for folks in my age group: getting rid of our STUFF. A few years ago, I donated my entire collection of Tiptree/Otherwise Award-winning and honor-listed

books to a Special Collection at the Michigan State University Library, and I am almost finished sending (recent) pdfs and (not so recent) hard copies of all my apazines to Joe Siclari and Edie Stern. I've already shipped them 40+ years of WisCon pubs, copies of Janus and Aurora, and all my perzines. Very soon, pretty much my entire published life will be available on fanac.org. This is all stuff that I do not want to leave for my brother/executor to decide what to do with after I'm gone. Of course, that still leaves a huge amount of STUFF filling most of the nooks and corners of our house. My Dad did it the right way. You learned to be home-competent from your Dad; I hope that I have learned a different lesson from my Dad....

In 2005, my parents sold their suburban ranch house on Norwood Drive in New Berlin, Wisconsin, and bought an accessible condo a couple miles away in Waukesha. It was considerably smaller than their house and would not hold the stuff they'd accumulated during the previous four decades. I came to help the weekend of their garage sale and witnessed an impressive sales performance by Dad. We were sitting in lawn chairs in the shade of the garage when a truck pulled into the driveway. A man slid out of the passenger side, leaving a woman behind the wheel. He walked briskly into the garage, directly to Dad's workbench. Dad grinned and joined him there. Hand tools hung in neat rows on the wall behind the bench. Larger tools, including rakes, shovels and hoes, hung alongside the bench.

Dad introduced himself and the guy identified himself as Carl. Pointing to the car, he said, "that's my wife,

Tina." Carl picked up a hammer from the bench.

"Yeah, that's a good hammer," Dad said. "It's a Heikeo."

"What do you want for it?" asked the man.

"Well, Carl, it's free, under one condition," said Dad.

Startled, the guy stared at Dad. "Free? No, I couldn't!" and he reached into a pocket for his wallet.

"It's free," repeated Dad. "But you have to take all the tools."

Carl attempted to negotiate, but Dad held firm to his terms, and a few moments later, Carl and Dad had filled two large boxes with tools. Dad helped him carry them back to the open bed of the truck.

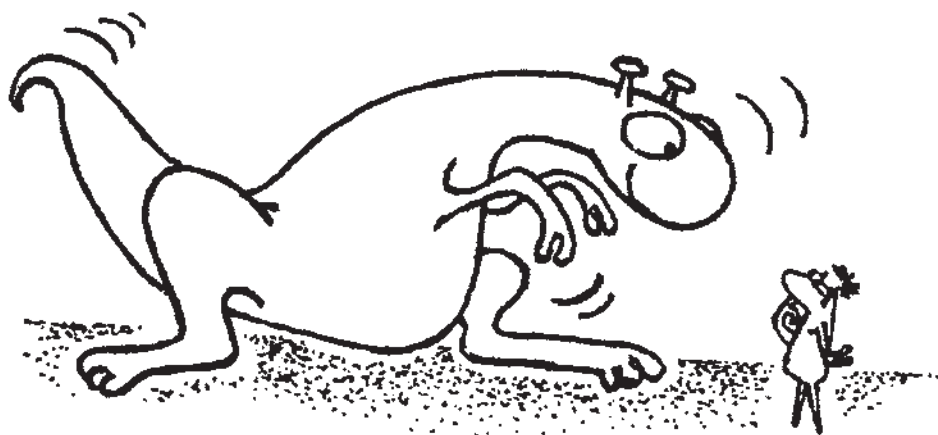
The funniest part of this story, to me, was the alarmed expression on Tina's face. She'd been reading something when Carl and Dad walked past her, but her head swiveled around when she realized that Carl had acquired two rather enormous boxes of tools. When Carl joined her in the car, I imagined her saying, "I thought you just wanted a hammer?"

Jeanne Gomoll

'Twas my delight. I've always loved "Barbie's Inferno," and with the popularity of last summer's Barbie movie both within fandom and in the rest of the world, too, it seemed an ideal time for the reprint.

Interesting theory re: Pemmi-Con. I just wish I were optimistic enough to believe it. Agreed about the many delights of Sandra's report!

Your description of finding Rick Larson and the tale of him becoming the Madison SF Group's primary contractor reminds me of Minneapolis fandom and Realtor Bob. Will Shetterly and Emma Bull were the first fans to sign him on



as their Realtor. A few decades later, he hosted a thank you party in the Minneapolis in '73 suite at Minicon after dozens of Minneapolis fans used him when buying and/or selling their homes. I didn't even bother looking at other Realtors when I sold Toad Hall at the end of 2003. I knew I wanted to work with Realtor Bob. He was a total gem, and especially good at helping people whose income streams could easily turn into a financing barrier. He had a magic touch when it came to overcoming or bypassing those barriers and finding financing that worked no matter how odd the circumstances.

Love your Dad's sales technique!
What a hoot.

I'm not all the confident that I picked up DIY home competencies from my Dad; it's more like I picked up the not-always-useful belief that I should know how to do everything. Fortunately, 40+ years of working on fannish projects brought a certain skill and comfort in asking people for help. It means I don't always have to "pick up the yellow pages" while it's also true that I've become much more comfortable doing that, too. I'm glad I was paying at least a little attention when life taught me there's often more than one valid way of getting things done. – gfs

Jerry Kaufman

jakaufman@aol.com

28 December 2023

Thanks muchly for the copy of *Idea* you sent to us. It's a lovely production with its Sue Mason cover and plentiful interior photos and art. Awakening from its long sleep, *Idea* might be a significant sign of what I think is the Last Flowering of Trufandom. (Unless you can get Gavi to start her own fanzine.)

I liked Alison's script for her "meet-cute" romcom, especially the Researcher's Notes, They were very helpful in understanding the circumstances of Steve and Alison's meeting and its aftermath. Now can we get a script dramatizing the origins of *PLOKTA*?

I was a bit disappointed by Jeff's "Adventures in the Wimpy Zone" because it repeated material from page to page. He describes the cross-Canada bicycle trip first on page 9, then again on page 10 with only a few changes in detail. The same is true of his explanations of the Collective, both on page 10. It feels like he wrote two different articles, then merged them without noticing the repetition.

Craig's memorial for Terry pulls me back to the time that Terry was still among us. I don't believe I met Terry more than once or twice, but he was a presence in my life through *Mota*. Gone much too soon.

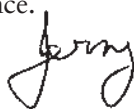
I remember Jeanne's Barbie article from its first appearance, but don't remember it well enough to spot the changes she's made for its new version.

Thanks for publishing Sandra's TAFF Report excerpt; she amused me to the point of laughter about the many Permmi-Con problems, especially the use of the "Organization" field on the program participant questionnaire. Did that carry over to the Membership badge as well?

I've got to say that your use of the convention's Daily Newsletter as illustrations was not perfect for me. At the page size you used for *Idea*, the print size of the originally 8-1/2 by 11 newsletter pages came out particularly small and hard to read. Perhaps you weren't expecting us to try to read them, only appreciate them?

I'll repeat what I said on Facebook about Lenny's "Barrett's Planeteers." I thought it superb, and because I know the original Stan Rogers' song, I was able to sing it immediately. (My first attempt to type that Canadian's name resulted in "Slan Rogers.")

My loc-writing energy is waning, so I'll thank Sandra Bond for mentioning me in her letter of comment. Even though I apparently didn't write you about issue #12, I still have a presence.



I hope very much we're not in the Last Flowering of Trufandom! Yes, I'm an optimist at heart, but I also see and welcome younger generations of fans



who are interested in and engaging with fan history as well as celebrating and strengthening the fannish community worldwide.

Ooooh, good idea! A script dramatizing **anything** PLOKTA-centric would likely be entertaining, indeed.

To the degree that Jeff's column is repetitive, that reflects an editorial weakness on my part, not his, and I apologize for that. My own reading was that he was expanding on the information he'd introduced, especially in describing the Cold River Collective.

My use of the daily *Mooseletter* illustrations was meant to help mark the passing of the days in Sandra's Pemmi-Con report. There's a link to the full set on the table of contents page for anyone who wants to read them, because, yes, in the printed version, most readers can make out the article headlines but not the text itself, and they also show only page 1 of each 2-page newsletter. I think Tom Becker did a bang-up job with the material he had, especially considering he was home in California and not in Winnipeg after life prevented him from attending as planned. <https://main.pemmi-con.ca/about/publications/>

Thanks for your letter! I appreciate hearing about what doesn't work for readers as well as what does. – gfs

Marcin Kłak

marcink@toad-hall.com

4 January 2024

Starting with the cover I adore the colour palette and especially how they permeate. A great effect!

When reading your editorial I kept thinking of a fanzine I did in 2023. It was an issue of fanzine I was writing for when I joined fandom. It was Manga and anime zine called *DOJI*. Previous issue (a special one) was published by my friend in 2011. I thought that 12 years break was long – yet it seems I was wrong! Usually I don't like being wrong but in this case it makes me happy as reading *Idea* was a pleasure.

The faanfiction by Alison was amazing. I don't know to which degree it is based on the real events. Yet it doesn't matter so much as it is a fabulous piece of writing. It made me smile throughout the reading and at least on one moment I burst in a laughter. Good thing I was reading that part at home not in a bus... Very glad to read it!

“A Brother Remembered” was a moving piece. As you probably know I didn't have a chance to meet Terry Hughes, but through reading the text I learned that I should regret it. A feeling of loss over someone who I never knew is a strange thing. Yet it happens sometimes and this is such case. This year I was reading through a set of *Vanamonde* from John Hertz. His piece about Marty Cantor evoked similar response (*Vanamonde* No. 1543) in me.

“Barbie's Inferno” is an important text. I am saddened that 40 years after writing this piece still covers an important societal issue. I would way more prefer to read it only as a funny anecdote. Recently I am more and more terrified by the level to which

we (as a society) are gender coding everything that may reach children. I have seen countless jokes and memes that were ridiculing the concept. Unfortunately it is not enough to transform the world. I hope that this will change but my impression is that the trend rather grows stronger. Yet putting aside the serious and pessimistic thoughts the article was nicely written. At points it was also quite funny.

I was happy to see the text about Polish fandom. Well at least connected to Polish fandom. Unfortunately I didn't attend Bazyliszek last year so I was not able to see the Ig[®] Nobel Dramatic Readings in Poland. That is a pity but that weekend was quite busy. We had three conventions in Poland and I decided to attend another one. Still what Mikołaj managed to achieve with his piece was me regretting of not being there. So I think it is quite good writing!

Sandra's report from Pemmi-Con was sad to read. Don't understand me wrong. Sandra's writing was very good. I was jealous of how well she writes. We have a phrase in Polish “*mieć lekkie pióro*” which would translate as “to have a light pen.” Yet the Polish word for “(fountain) pen” (“*pióro*”) is the same as for the “feather” and the “quill.” These additional connections are not as important but I think they add a bit of taste to the phrase. Still the reason why I am explaining is because I want to say that Sandra definitely “has a light pen.” I could simply write that her penmanship was great or that she has a writing flow. I decided for the Polish equivalent because of two reasons. One is that I simply like it, while the other being the fact that I had it in mind while reading Sandra's piece.

Going back to the article itself. It seems to me that there were some issues with Pemmi-Con. I heard a bit before but the Sandra's account is way more in depth analysis of the situation. I do hope that the next NASFiC in Buffalo will work better. A side note – Claire's description of Sandra visible on the picture in the report is fabulous (which is not surprising as it is Claire's writing!).

I am now waiting for Sandra's full trip report. Judging by chapter 5 it will be a fine read!

I liked your piece about being a homeowner and I admire your will to do everything by yourself. My father is a DIY person. He was always doing everything at home. (In fact you had a chance to witness his work yourself as some rooms in my apartment were done by him). Maybe because of that I completely don't know how to do anything. I was never pushed to learn as my father was doing all the repairs at home. So now when I am on my own I need to either learn from scratch or call someone "who knows." The latter is usually a better option. I remember when I had some minor plumbing thing to correct. I said to myself "Oh I can do it myself." I was partially right. I managed to achieve my goal. Yet putting everything back together took me like two hours. In the end I was not sure whether I connected it properly. The decision was to call a professional and I paid both in money (to the specialist) and in my back pain (to the deity of DIY). Yet getting back to your article, you also "have a light pen"!

The LoC section was pretty impressive and a bit surprising too. Why surprising you may ask? Well, as you probably are able to see by this point I am not very well versed in LoC writing. I had some idea on

putting a comments related to the works in the fanzine and that is it. In the LoC column in *Idea* 13, some of the fans did way more. I am impressed and surprised to see that some LoCs were just taking a hint from the fanzine and writing a whole solid article around it! It is a skill that I miss.

I won't be going letter by letter and commenting on each (or even a few of them). I only want to mention two letters. LoC-on-a-stick by RJ Johnson was absolutely genius! The other one I want to comment on was by Jukka Halme. Upon reading it I had the same association as you. Namely when I read "I'd love to be able to add our corner of the world with the rest of fandom," I had Worldcon 75 in front of my eyes. Some things are aging very well and this is such a case! As for other letters, I liked them too. Some of them were pretty interesting. Others made me jealous (so many people talking about BOXES of fanzines!). There was also a portion that made me smile which, I believe, was intended.

All the best
Marcin

Thank you for "*mieć lekkie pióro*" and the rest of your letter, too. You're quickly gaining experience locating fanzines, and are doing a fine job of it. As for further improvement, I recommend "practice, practice, practice."

I wish I had an easy way to get a few hundred pounds of fanzines to Kraków, or at least an affordable one. Because while I'm not ready to pass along my entire collection, I would love to have a hand in giving you the problem of storing boxes and boxes of fanzines while also clearing a bit space in my over-crowded basement Fan Room. – gfs

Steve Jeffery
srjeffery@aol.com
28 December 2023

“You’re not expecting another Amazon parcel are you?,” calls Vikki from downstairs after checking a mysterious thump from the porch.

I don’t think I’m expecting anything. I’ve already wrapped her presents, and I don’t remember anything missing. Also, it’s quite a thin parcel. Vikki, being the fantasy reader in this house, tends not to do thin books. (The latest Ken Liu, already wrapped and hidden away, came in at over 1,000 pages.)

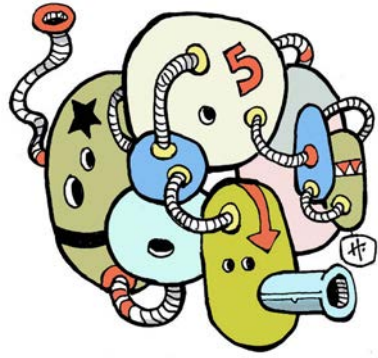
Intrigued, I pull the tear strip and open the package. Wow, that’s a gorgeous cover. Very Art Nouveau. It reminds me a little of Mucha. Sue Mason, says the contents. I’m immediately impressed, and not a little jealous that she has caught drapery better than I managed in many hours of copying Mucha posters from art books.

Idea Number 13. Have I ever seen a copy of *Idea* before? I don’t think so.

Ah, a 23-year gap since *Idea* 12 might explain that. In 2000 I had just started a new job (which I’m overdue to retire from, but keep putting that decision off), and fandom went on a back footing for a while.

I’ve just checked efanzines.com for back issues. I’ve been missing something, haven’t I?

It’s possibly egregious to cherry pick favourites from something as splendidly put together as this, but Alison’s lead article is a joy. I’m a sucker for footnotes. Especially footnotes (or researcher’s notes in this case) that have follow on footnotes and when they start arguing with the main text. (Douglas Adams started it and Jeff Vandermeer’s



‘The Hoegbotton Guide to the Early History of Ambergris’ raised it to an art form, before handing it to Susannah Clarke and D. S. Ketelby’s article in the last *Banana Wings*.)

My family, as I discovered recently, were not so bad at taking photographs as taking care of them, although the end result run close to Craig Hughes’s discovery in putting together a memorial album for his brother. My brother and I discovered a large plastic crate of photos in the dad’s shed when going though after his death. Unfortunately water and mould had got there before us, and the whole soggy mass, maybe a thousand photos, had to be thrown out. We have no idea what might have been in there, and all we are left with is a small biscuit tin, half of which are holiday photos featuring people mum no longer recognises. But I recognise that tendency to avoid being in photos, or hiding at the back or behind people wherever possible.

Not sure I’ve ever set fire to my toys in such a spectacular fashion as Jeanne (Gomoll), and certainly not indoors, although I remember experiments with tanks and toy soldiers in the garden with gunpowder made from the contents of a chemistry set supplemented from the local pharmacy. I very much doubt if you’d be able to sell sulphur and charcoal to an 11-year-old kid nowadays, not that

(unlike Dave Langford) we ever managed anything particularly explosive, more a matter of an impressive looking shower of sparks and the heady tang of brimstone and melted plastic.

That was a hugely entertaining hatchet job by Sandra on what seems a woefully ill-managed (if managed at all) Pemmi-Con, starting with the welcome news “Your hotel bill has already been taken care of” before going steadily downhill like Calvin and Hobbes racing downhill in a soapbox buggy towards a cliff edge, although I suspect Sandra was rather less entertained by the thrilling descent at the time. (Did you ever get a copy of that program book, Sandra?). You just had to keep reading to find out what else could possibly go wrong next. It could probably inspire a set of convention bingo cards.

I'd probably have got a bit more out of Adventures of a Girl Homeowner if I had any idea of what a water treatment and backwash system does and the myriad ways it can go wrong (or indeed, ‘Spung!’). Mostly I turn on a tap and water comes out. Except when it doesn't (as happened inconveniently one Christmas Eve a couple of years ago, which turned out to be due to a broken valve in the upstairs tank, easily, if expensively, replaced). That, and the times we've had to ferry water in buckets from one place to another because one of the taps had stopped working (luckily never when stuck in the open position). We've also had that thing with the fluorescent light in the kitchen, which kept cutting out but failed to work again despite replacing everything I could find in it. Eventually I gave up and rewired it into a new LED light fitting from Amazon. In fact the

whole house is starting (?) to look like a ‘make do and mend’ bodge job, including the long cable trailing up the side of the stairs from the downstairs phone socket to the router in the office.

It seems odd and maybe a little pointless to comment on a latter column whose locs date back over 23 years, so I may need to revisit those after downloading and reading the previous issue of *Idea* from efanzines.com. But that's one impressive letter column (the problem of ‘Stuff’: creeping accumulation and disposal thereof), but as you and Sandra both note, too many names no longer with us.

Steve

Many thanks for the fillos as well as your LoC; more are indeed welcome.

I won't pretend to be able to explain backwashing beyond a brief consultation with Wikipedia: “in terms of water treatment, including water purification and sewage treatment, backwashing refers to pumping water backwards through the filters media, sometimes including intermittent use of compressed air during the process. Backwashing is a form of preventive maintenance so that the filter media can be reused.” The water from my drilled well here at Toad Woods has staggeringly high levels of iron. So much so that untreated water contains large flakes of iron. Before the first water treatment system was installed, I couldn't wash clothes here at home without turning them orange.

I, too, had a troublesome fluorescent light in my kitchen. Mine was over the sink and stopped working a few years ago. I picked up a replacement fixture and Jon Singer is going to install it when he's here later this month. – gfs

Chris Garcia

johnnyeponymous@gmail.com

1 May 2024

That there is Sue Mason cover perfection! I love Sue's stuff and I don't get to see enough it! I do have a traunch of it from the '90s that Henry Welch gave me when he moved, along with a few thousand fanzines. This thing I do...

One of the earliest fanzines that was given to me on my return to fandom was *Idea* 12, followed by 11. I have multiples of each now, I think.

Since I've really only been back in Fandom since 2000-ish, I've noticed we're living in a time where significantly fewer of us are living as the years go by. Same as it ever was. Randy's passing still hits me just about every day.

I have a few issues of *Fuck the Tories* and *Mota*. *Mota*'s always had great covers, and that *Canfield* from issue 10 is probably my favorite. Now I gotta go and dig those out from the downstairs!

I am loving Sandra's TAFF reportage! The portion on Octothorpe was lovely, and this is very nice! It also might be the only mention of Bill Laubenheimer's death during the con that I've seen. He was a local and a friend.

Making home cider is a task for only the strongest of mortals. I've friends who do so and that paint thinner taste when things go 'fuck-all' is considered a badge of pride. I had a friend who drink an entire cup, and manged to keep it down, He had something of the Appalachian moonshiner in him, I think. Or at least he had a beard as long as mine.

Maybe I'm reaching, but i see a lot of Ozzy from Ted's "The Last Fan on Earth" in myself. Then again, I'm

living in slightly-pre-post-apocalyptic times, with two kids I toss my zines to all the time. JP devours them, especially the ones from the '70s. They rarely color in them like i

did my Dad's copies of *Locus*, *Granfalloon*, and *File 770*. Certainly, Ozzy and I share the same reasoning for keeping on going... though he may have slightly more readers.



Chris

Many thanks, Chris! Glad you enjoyed it. Agreed about Sue's cover; I was thrilled when it won the 2024 FAAn award for best cover, as announced at Corflu 41 in Las Vegas. I envy you that stockpile and look forward to seeing more of her work in print. – gfs

Joseph Nicholas

excellenceingardening@gmail.com

26 January 2024

This is an interim response to *Idea* 13 because (a) I haven't yet read all of it, and (b) I'll be in Australia for all of February for Judith's mother's 99th birthday, and if I don't send you something now then in all likelihood the opportunity to do so will vanish beneath the enormous quantities of catching up that I know will be awaiting me on my return in March. So herewith:

I'm responding in particular to a short passage in Sandra Bond's Pemmicon report, where she states that she was "interrupted by someone who'd been in the human rights panel the previous morning, and wanted me to educate him about how Europe

approaches the topic.” She says she found herself at a loss because “trying to explain the views of an entire continent on which the UK had not too long ago turned its back [was a] tougher matter still”. I’m perhaps speculating here – and I’m copying this to Sandra so she can correct me if I have indeed misread her – but it may be that she’s confused two entirely separate institutions which have the name “European” in their title but have nothing to do with each other. (An if Sandra is au fait with this stuff then you can take this as me clarifying a few things for you.)

The European Convention on Human Rights, and the European Court of Human Rights, were established under the Council of Europe in 1949 as a direct response to genocides of the Second World War, laying down basic standards on (well) human rights. The ECHR is often confused with the European Court of Justice, an EU institution established under the Treaty of Rome to ensure harmonised implementation of EU legislation and to rule on disputes over the interpretation of same. The important point is that it has nothing to say on human rights, because the EU does not have what’s called competence on human rights issues -- they are absent from the Treaty of Rome and all subsequent EU Treaties.

The confusion between the ECHR and the European Court of Justice is a common one (particularly in the minds of those who, unlike me, are not nerdy about European institutions – as someone who spent the last fifteen years of his professional life dealing with EU legislation, I had to be... although I was nerdy about them for many years beforehand), and was particularly on display in the arguments surrounding the 2016

Brexit referendum, when a great many leading figures who should have known better claimed that leaving the EU meant that we would no longer be bound by the ECHR and could thus deport foreign criminals and other undesirables without worrying what judges in Strasburg might think or say. Not only is the UK still bound by the ECHR, because it is a signatory to the Convention (an international agreement), but it is incorporated into UK law via the Human Rights Act 1998.

(Further – more nerdy! – the Convention is directly referenced in the 1998 Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement, which makes it next-to-impossible for the UK to resign from the agreement, as Conservative politicians devoutly wish, because as an international agreement it can only apply to or be resigned from by sovereign nation-states, which Northern Ireland is not. Conservative politicians, fulminating about international interference and the like, tend to forget, or perhaps deliberately ignore, that one of the chief architects of the ECHR was WW2 prime minister Winston Churchill. And ranting about “international interference” is schoolboy drivel – without the framework of international law and international agreements, there would nothing to govern relations between nation-states. But then the UK’s contemporary crop of Conservative politicians is generally regarded as the most stupid and ignorant of any recent Parliament.)

But now it’s time to start thinking about dinner.

Regards,



Jeanne Mealy

jeanne.mealy@toad-hall.com

9 May 2024

Idea 13 is full of so many fannish voices. My voice has long been focused on Stipple-Apa, the former waitlist that's long outlived Minneapa. It's been good to get to know a small group of members, yet I still miss interacting with other folks in fanzines and will try to do that more. I owe LoCs to so many talented people... And then there was RUNE 93, the Mn-Stf clubzine, which needed to be done and kept me busy last year.

I'm glad Alison Scott encouraged you to pub your ish. Your energetic spirit and expert party skills are missed in the Twin Cities. Thanks for filling in your history after leaving Toad Hall in Minneapolis. I can't believe you were the graphic designer for the *Annals of Improbable Research* for 14 years. They were lucky to have you! Do you have an AIRhead cap or t-shirt?

I'm with you about the least favorite thing about aging: obituaries. I'm pleased that *Idea* won't be on that list anytime soon.

Alison Scott's Meet Cute screenplay screams to be performed at a con. // Jeff Schalles tells us about a book we can't get anymore unless we want to pay \$300. Awww. Maybe I'll find it at a rummage sale or in a thrift store. But then he told us about his life back in the '70s. Yowza. So many stories for another time, too. // What a touching, well-illustrated memorial for Terry Hughes by his brother Craig. A good memorial like this one makes me wish I'd known the person being remembered. It also reminded me of my siblings. I laughed at the image of Craig locking himself in the family car because he'd brought on

Terry's wrath. More seriously I think many of us mourned the thought of suddenly being unable to read due to illness.

Jeanne Gomoll's writing about ANY topic is worth reading! "Barbie's Inferno" takes us on a trip back to childhood creativity. I thought about my Christmas wish for a skeleton kit (never got it), and playing with a mixture of toys with my brothers and sisters in non-standard ways. I chuckled and laughed at the playdate that Barbie didn't survive. The flames at the bottom of the pages here and the punchline were perfect. Somehow I missed hearing Jeanne reading this story at Minicon 23 in 1988. Thankfully we can hear a recording on the FANAC YouTube channel.

Thanks for sharing Mikołaj Kowalewski's account of bringing the Ig[®] Nobel dramatic readings to Poland. This is how fandom can WORK!

Sandra Bond's TAFF report had me howling with laughter when I wasn't cringing about the problems at the 2023 Winnipeg NASFiC. This con has gone into the Infamous annals. It appears that being long-time fans and putting a good con aren't necessarily the same.

I reached out to Curt and Alice about Sandra needing a ride. Sadly, our car was full, so I'm glad they

The Giant Prairie Chicken en route to Winnipeg. Photo by Jeanne Mealy.





Richard Cameron, Garth Spencer, and Murray Moore at the Pemmi-Con Turkey Readings. Photo by Jeanne Mealy.

could help. The adventures continued off the rails when Sandra got to Winnipeg. I wish I'd known that no one was looking after her. I would have been happy to meet for meals and do our best to figure out what was going on. Doesn't sound like she went into the green room where I found snacks and real food. This is the first I heard about how the registration field was misused by the software and attached all sorts of odd things to programming items (Organization: Myself). Very good of Sandra to connect Las Vegas fans with other Las Vegas fans. Hee, hee about the menu typo (lamented instead of laminated). Menu typos are everywhere. Yes, the Friday and Saturday night parties in the con suite were a delight. It also helped to go out to the patio outside. Everyone involved with those parties deserves a hearty vote of thanks.

Sandra is an impressive writer and I'm now an enthusiastic fan. Her summary of the Winnipeg NASFiC is all too accurate. I know that many volunteers did their darnedest, but

they couldn't save this ill-fated con. I did have good interactions with several members of the hotel staff. I'm headed for the Buffalo NASFiC in July, eager to see other fans and Niagara Falls. And I hope my con report is nothing like the Winnipeg experience.

Thanks for sharing Lenny Bailes' poem. "The Last of Barrett's Planeteers" is lyrical and stirs the imagination. Any chance it will be continued?

"The Further Adventures of Geri Sullivan, Girl Homeowner" had me smiling and nodding. Loved the photos, starting off with the giant Christmas Peep. And yes, it's OK to call on professionals to fix or install things. And handy friends are a blessing, as I read in Edwina Harvey's **The Back of the Back of Beyond**. Congrats on keeping up with much of what Needed to be Done. This is the first time I've met Burt the Alien, now two-legged thanks to Howard Whyte.

Randy Byers' article about time in an ER was entertaining and made me relieved not to be there.

Ted White's "The Last Fan on Earth" – I've heard the joke, but never heard the option of a woman knocking at the door. That loud bang at the



< Garth Spencer, Jeanne Mealy, & Cy Chauvin at Pemmi-Con. Photo provided by Jeanne Mealy.

end opened my eyes and made me wonder what was next. I was a little disappointed by the ending.

“Park and LoC It” nearly derailed this LoC when I thought about trying to find the previous issue that so many people were commenting on. No, I stood firm – the deadline is here. I can look for #12 another time. Or maybe Geri could send me a PDF when she gets this. Not sure she wants a LoC on a zine from the distant past. But that’s time-binding, right, and thoroughly acceptable? Reminds me of being handed a stack of RUNEs when I first moved here after college. What a change of pace from English papers.

[Editor’s note: PDF sent; “it’s never too late to send a letter of comment”; yes, thoroughly acceptable!]

The section starts off with an under-the-weather Paul Skelton sharing so many thoughts on so many topics. I’ve been there, doing my best and unable to focus enough. Oh, the topic of STUFF. We’re all battling it after years of not having much. I try to rein in my impulse to get too much Neat Stuff at rummage sales and thrift stores that I want to keep. Then there’s zines at some cons, furtively slipped into my luggage. Back to the article, where he covers Interesting Travels, trying to make room for guests, giving tours to guests, and the ultimate wrap-up of why he was too busy to send you a LoC on #12. Bravo.

Jason Burnett, a former Stipple-Apa member, happily joined fanzine fandom. // I identified with Earl Kemp’s tale of how desktop publishing wiped out many jobs. I worked at the *Twin Cities Reader* in Minneapolis, starting as a receptionist and moving into the production department where they taught me how to use a CompSet machine. There were



Murray Moore in the Pemmi-Con Fanzine Lounge, presumably before it was set up. Photo by Jeanne Mealy.

challenges. Where was the “On” switch? Hidden inside the body of the machine. I learned to be careful about setting the leading between paragraphs after accidentally setting it to one inch for a list of bands. I was horrified as yards of the photographic film unreel from the developing box. When I saw “Minnesota Barking Ducks,” I finally was able to laugh at the situation. Back to Earl’s LoC, where I learned that he met cartoonist Al Capp at a worldcon room party in 1956. And Capp had an artificial leg? I do believe that All Knowledge is Contained in Fandom. // Poor Brad Foster, dealing with a house flood. We’re lucky he found the time to LoC. Here’s hoping he can make it back to Minicon, which is slowly gaining in size. Will we reach attendance of 600 soon? We’re going back to the Radisson South in 2025, home of so many previous conventions with a multitude of stories.

Dale Speirs pops up with anecdotes about stamp shows and how they too can have unexpected events. I’m grateful that most SF cons aren’t that huge. // David Bratman’s encounters with a rugby team on flights demonstrates that karma is real. I also saw crescent shapes on a neighbor’s garage door from an eclipse shining through our tree leaves. I hope to see more eclipse stories in this issue, especially

yours, Geri. I didn't see the total eclipse this year and am debating about making more of an effort for another one. // It's always good to hear from Sheryl Birkhead and see her art. I agree with her about disliking the thought of deep-fried pickles. They're one of many delicacies at the Minnesota State Fair that I don't understand. // Kudos to RJ Johnson for his LoC-on-a-Stick, familiar to thousands of us who attend the state fair and search for our favorite item-on-a-stick. // I was sorry to hear that William Breiding's computer died in the year 2000.

Nice LoC from Don Fitch back in 2000. I'm glad he's doing well on hospice care. Cute picture of you two. // *Idea #12* was the first fanzine that David Goldfarb got? What an honor, Geri. // I hope that Jukka Halme is able to drive around the U.S. with a friend and attend con someday soon. I heard good things about the Helsinki Worldcon in 2017 that he chaired. // Belated sympathy to Jim Vance. He had a lot to deal with after Kate's death: Grief, kids, sorting through her stuff. I'm curious if he followed through on his resolve to organize his own stuff. // Sandra Bond's LoC leaves me almost speechless. Much fun. // I understand your caution in sharing loccers' contact information These Days. I'm sad we have to think about nefarious doodads. I do suggest adding at least a country, preferably also a state or province to get the feel of who's where. That said, you can list me as being from Frostbite Falls, Minnesota. // Great to see Peter Hentges here. What fun hearing about his family's road trips. I too had a dad who smoked heavily, which made car trips hard to handle. And I want to see you at Minicon next year, Peter.

The Radisson South is braced for our return. (Its current title is RadIsh-Tree, named for its parent companies: Radisson Sheraton Doubletree) Hey, we're still looking for members for Stipple-Apa! As you know, regular deadlines mean you will write more. (Peter was a former OOK and member of the apa.)

Geri, that's quite a story about your family's epic road trip from Michigan to Washington state before the interstate was available. I hope you write more about that trip. // Joseph Nicholas reports a case of synchronicity when he got *Idea 12* just after clearing out files and magazines. And you, Geri, report an impressive recycling effort of your own. Except for those PEZ dispensers. // Alexis Gilliland shared stories about his own stuff, from chess scores to a photo album from his first marriage. And his father's stuff, like the 55-gallon drum of fuming nitric acid. Eeeeeek! // We learn from fanzines. I had to look up limpa and found out that it's "...a sweet Scandinavian rye bread." Now your readers know, too. // Your last Harry Warner, Jr. LoC is a choice one. He was so generous with his time. Another fan I wish I'd met. // I do hope that Janine Stinson Pubs Her Own Ish soon. // I enjoyed John Hertz's story about how he and his siblings played tricks on their dad's frog collection. Then his stepmother had enough of the silliness and got rid of the best two or three hundred frogs!

Thanks for the many illos, even the box with "Ed Cox doodle here" on page 93. And a WAHF column that goes from A to Z.



It turns out I had Bart's name wrong when I posted his picture in *Idea* 12. Howard Whyte sets the record straight in his article in this issue.

I have an anniversary T-shirt from the 20th First Annual Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony, an Improbable Research scrub top, an accent pillow, and a couple of Miss Sweetie Poo coffee mugs. ("Please stop. I'm bored.") Oh, and an exercise ball that was part of the acceptance speech from the group that demonstrated that dung beetles can navigate by the light of the Milky Way. Better than all of the objects are the experiences, memories, and friendships that go hand-in-hand with being an AIRhead. I continue to serve on the Board of Governors for the Ig Nobel Prizes and look forward to helping Mason Porter host Improbable Research/ Ig Nobel Prizes Dramatic Readings at Glasgow 2024. Ursula Vernon is going to be one of our readers! – gfs

Lloyd Penney

penneys@bell.net

8 January 2024

Hey, it's been a long time since the last one. So many friends and known names have passed away in those intervening 23 years. Used to see so much of this in *Locus*, but now, it's *Ansible* that tells us who has left us, and the long list threatens to overcome the issue at hand.

Jeanne Gomoll's article made me smile, mostly because I used to work on catalogues, and I was a Penney who worked on the Sears catalogues. Sears Canada, to be precise. We wondered who else was working at Sears with a last name like a competing company? We found Montgomery, Ward, Simpson, Sears, and a Madame La Baie. (The Bay, as in Hudson's Bay Company, with a handful of department stores scattered across Canada.)

We wanted to go to Pemmi-Con, we really wanted to... we just did not have the money. This new year will be a little different, mostly because two major conventions, the NASFiC and World Fantasy Convention, are both in the Buffalo-Niagara area, and we are going to both. We're also planning to go to Loscon 50. We figures this will be our farewell to major cons of any kind; we do not think we will be able to get to any more of them. We also plan to promote *Amazing Stories* as much as we can.

Randy Byers. I had some good conversations with him, and fanzines would be a little more insightful if he was still with us. Will the last fan to leave the fandom turn off the lights before you go? So many loccers here have left us, and look! A loc from Harry Warner!

The local, and there's a lot of it. I know Earl Kemp is gone, but it's good to see his name again. I can sympathize with Dale Spiers re con-running, but Yvonne and I have been in con-running almost as long as I've been in the local. We've spent the last two years+ working on the cavernous Vendors' Hall at Anime North, our local anime con. A dealers' room roughly the size of a Worldcon's room, and Yvonne will happily tell you she left the position a short time ago, and it was like babysitting 170 squalling babies.



I'll see you at the NASFiC, and will likely give you your copy of *Idea* 14 there. Economical Canadian distribution remains something of a challenge.– gfs

Bruce Gillespie

gandcool1@bigpond.com

20 May 2024

Thanks very much for arranging for Mark Plummer to send me *Idea 13* from England, although I am not a contributor.

I had thought *Idea 13* would be a shoo-in to win the FAAN Award for Best Genzine at the most recent Corflu, in Las Vegas. My gob-smacking surprise of the year is that *SF Commentary* won. The injustice of it!

I am pleased that Alison Scott pushed you into returning to fanzine publishing. I've never met you, but I see you occasionally on Facebook and I get the impression from there that you radiate sweetness and light to fans who meet you. In particular, I remember that you took Bill Wright to the Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony in 2013, during his DUFF trip. That was the highlight of his trip.

In your editorial, you speak for me and many others:

Since 2000, Terry Hughes died. Jeff's and my dog Willow died. Mom died. Lee Hoffman died. Daddy died. Susan Palermo, Jim Young, Kate Yule, and Randy Byers all died of glioblastoma, My sister Sue died. Denny Lien died. So many more friends and loved ones died. You'll find articles and letters about some of them, from some of them, in these pages. They're gone; their words remain. We are fortunate in the latter, though certainly not in the former.

There are some people we can't lose, but do. In 1985, Elaine and I and a few others were invited to dinner at the home of John Bangsund and Sally Yeoland after the last day of



Aussiecon II, held in Melbourne. At that dinner I got to know Art Widner much better, and really got to know Terry Hughes for the first time. He was quite the nicest man I've ever met in fandom. We had swapped fanzines, of course. His *Mota* was a masterpiece of understated humour, but its pages revealed little of the personal charm of the editor. In 2001 I was one of many fans completely shocked when I heard that Terry had died of a glioblastoma brain cancer. Those outside his closest circle had received no warning. I'm so pleased that his brother Craig Hughes, in his speech at the Memorial Service held for Terry on 28 November 2001, showed how strongly his family felt about him his whole life.

Who but Alison Scott could write about how she and her husband Steven Cain met and got together as a screenplay; a screenplay, moreover, that is very funny and not sentimental or embarrassing? The main characters come to life on the page.

Some convention reports are more enjoyable than others. Sandra Bond writes quite an epic about the kind of convention that goes horribly wrong at the beginning and does not

improve – Pemmi-Con, last year’s NASFiC in Winnipeg, Canada. This is no mere whinge. You can imagine Sandra trudging through the convention rooms in Winnipeg, soaking up details, getting angrier and angrier, arranging the crimes of the convention organisers in her head as a great yarn to be unleashed on fandom.

Sorry if it sounds as if I’m over-praising everything in *Idea 13*, but it’s not often I sit down and relax with a 120-page fanzine, reading it straight through. The two other articles I consider brilliant are your own account of ‘The Further Adventures of Geri Sullivan, Girl Homeowner’ and Ted White’s surprising ‘The Last Man on Earth’.

The only reason Elaine and I have been able to survive in our own home in the suburbs is because Elaine is the kind of brilliant practical person who can solve endless problems that would have forced me out of the house to wander forever the footpaths of Greensborough. You tell what it’s like if you’re the only person in a new house out in the woods and you really do need some practical advice during emergencies.

Ted White has always been an advocate for genuine ‘fan fiction’, i.e. fiction written by fans for fans *about fans*. But over the years I’ve seen few pieces of fan fiction that he’s written. I don’t know whether he means ‘The Last Fan on Earth’ to be his own last hurrah, but it’s certainly a penetrating and amusing extrapolation of the fate of the last fan sitting in a small room when nobody else remains. I hope some editor picks this up for an SF anthology.

I thoroughly enjoyed the letters column, with not one but two letters by Skel (Paul Skelton) in fine ferocious

form. Twenty-three years later, a letter of comment from Skel is just as welcome. The same column includes what must have been Harry Warner, Jr’s last letter of comment, just to show us all how it’s done. I must say it’s a bit off-putting to find myself at the age of 77 reading about another fan who at 77 and a half sounded as if he had already half slipped into the grave, and did so two years later. I’ve just got used to the idea of turning 70, let alone 77.

Bruce

I’m turning 70 myself next month. I can’t say that I’m used to the idea, but most of my age-related attention is focused a few years down the road. My 73rd year starts 21 July 2026 and I’ll celebrate actually turning 73 a year later. Don’t yet know what the celebration will consist of, but after all these years as the post-supporting chair of the Minneapolis in ‘73 Worldcon bid, it will have to be something fitting.

I wasn’t at Pemmi-Con, but I was texting with Sandra Bond during the convention. While she noted the various problems, she wasn’t angry, nor was anger growing with each misstep by the convention. I was in awe of how she took it all in stride, looking for ways to make things like the fan funds auction work, connecting with fans, and promoting TAFF. Yes, she was soaking up the details, but the analysis and the writing came later.

“There are some people we can’t lose, but do.” Word. Word, damnit. And it’s accelerating as we age. This year is already especially hard. Howard Waldrop. Deb Geisler. And way too many others.

Thanks so much for your letter, Bruce. Glad you enjoyed *Idea 13*. I hope this and future issues continue to please. – gfs

Taral

Taral@bell.net

11 June 2024

Honestly... something snapped recently. I no longer check in daily to see what fanzines have newly been posted. I don't favour any worldcon bid over another. I purposely refused to learn who the winners of the recent FAAn awards were. Most scandalous of all, I've grown too jaded to sneer at science fiction and fantasy genre on Facebook. I feel mortality creeping up on me, and suddenly everything is vanity. What profit has a fan from all the fun that he had taken under the sun?

It gives me a great deal of free time to fret and worry over real life, however... a dubious advantage.

On seeing an issue of *Idea* after twenty-three years, my first thought was, "why is there a sudden vogue for lavishly produced genzines?" Hard copies even. My next thought was that regardless of my deep suspicion of too many production values – the legacy of nearly professional zines like *Outwords* and *Warhoon* – the new *Idea* is nevertheless certainly handsome.

As you've pointed out in the editorial, there is one commodity in which we have not been in short. Obituaries. I must have written a dozen of late. They were not important personalities, burdened by veneration, but mainly humble fans that were likely to fly below the radar, and all the more in need of passing notice. I should mention, by the way, I hope not to need *your* services on my behalf any time soon.

I knew Terry Hughes well enough to trade greetings at the opening of a con, but not quite well enough to crash all the very coolest parties with

him. He was unfailingly kind to me, and once mentioned my in the pages of *Mota*... but not by name. Just by "one reader who sent a peculiar illo that I couldn't use." At the time, that still seemed like praise.

I can't seem to avoid the subject of death. A furry fan I know in Santa Ana runs a sort of slan-shack for down and out fans. I knew one of those lost souls pretty well, and wrote a good obituary for him. A few years later, another room mate died late last year. He was able to afford rent, so he spend the last year of his life confined to a bed in the living room before passing on from cancer. A month ago, a third roommate also passed on, dying in his sleep. Cause uncertain, but heavy drinking is implicated. I talked with the owner of the place and reminded him that it was known in some circles as "The House of Inertia." That was putting it mildly. "Really, it's the House of Death," I said, shuddering.

It was kind of him to offer me a place when I grew too old-and-feeble to look after myself, and could look forward to a dirty mattress in the corner of his living room. As a special favour they would not even run the TV after midnight.

"Barbie's Inferno" was a delight and the sort of thing I'll read in a fanzine any time, all the more so if it doesn't mention fandom in it. I never owned a Barbie doll – I don't think you expected I would – but I *did* have a couple of G.I. Joe dolls. Oh... excuse me, "action figures." I also had a possible spy as well, with rubber disguises, secret gimmicks and a trench coat. But the secret agent guy was a cheap knock-off by comparison with the Joe. Twenty joint action, uniforms for every service and several other nations, weapons from infantry

rifle to flame thrower. I even had a complete deep sea diving outfit, with bronze helmet and rubber suit. The problem was... like your Barbie dolls there really wasn't much you could do with a G.I. Joe. Once you dressed him in his Marine Corps togs and stuck a M-1 carbine in his hands, there wasn't much you could do with in except watch him eventually fall over.

Curiously enough, there was a big resurgence of interest in Joes in the '90s. Hasbro still made them – though now under the Mattel name – but there competing brands made superior products. These were for grown-up boys like myself, not for kids. I ended up with two of the Hasbro dolls but a couple of shoe boxes full of military gear. Kalashnikovs, panzerfausts, Thompson 50-round drums, Teller mines, sniper rifles, Sten guns, .50 cal. machine gun mounts, and more stuff than you are likely to ever want to hear about. Some pistols were so

cleverly made that you could open the frame and spin the revolving cylinders. I still don't really know what to do with all that stuff, but I still love looking at it.

I'm glad that Sandra had a good time in Winnipeg. I was in the city in the 1970s for a small convention as the winner of a Canadian fan fund called CUFF that as far as I know still exists ... although perhaps intermittently. That year, the fix was in. No one had announced themselves in the race, so the organizers left heavy hints that if I ran, it would be unopposed.

It was one of my earliest flights anywhere, and I was excited to be in a new city. It was smaller than expected, and a bit run-down, I thought ... rather a lot like the much of Toronto, but larger. I didn't get a chance to see much of the place, and almost all I remember of it was that the locals thought that a downtown restaurant that served hotdogs was a



big deal. So far as I could tell, the dogs were no better than those served at any weenie-wagon back home. That set the tone of much of the convention, in fact. The con knew nothing about the fun fund that has send me to the con, and I was not scheduled in any programs. No, there was *one*. It was about the fan fund and I was supposed to talk it up for next year.

I did my best, but the only attendees were a couple of friends of mine. The con committee didn't even run any text about CUFF or the lucky, lucky winner. In other words, I actually didn't have a very good time.

Since then, Winnipeg fandom grew and changed hands several times, going through an intense fanzine phase that briefly lent it the title of the fanzine capital of Canada, and then inevitably morphed into the usual multifandom with something for everyone. Maybe even for fanzine fans, but I wouldn't lay odds on it.

Winnipeg itself has also changed since the late 1970s, becoming a lot like Toronto I dare say... but smaller. It is certainly unlikely to be much like the con I attended those many years ago. I am confident that Sandra very much had a good time in Winnipeg on her TAFF trip.

Poetry... shudder. I've been forced to write doggerel in my writing for the few years, and it has been nightmare. There is nothing natural about writing to write what you have to say in a way that rhymes, or has rhythm, when it forces you to use different words than the ones you mean to use! I don't know how people do it. But how can you write a novel-length work about Fraggie Rock unless it is



liberally peppered with silly song lyrics... who else would write them if not *me*?

Is it true that apples have to be shined by some apple polisher before eating, or was that only said by someone looking to give it more appeal? The apple may well be the world's most popular fruit. Here in Ontario we even have one world

flavour variety that was cultivated here first, the Macintosh. But I'm not really all that fond of them. Too sweet as a rule, although some varieties have a bit more tang to them than others. A good russet is a delight. It wasn't until I discovered the Granny Smith that I really began to enjoy the apple, and added it to my imaginary fruit basket. The problem with Granny Smiths, however, is that one crop is often very different from the next, so that some are rather bland. I remember recommended a bright green apple to a friend, and being rebuffed, called the G.S. a "junk apple." I said, "not so!" and bought one for each of us. It was as tart as nun's smile and firm as her buttocks. Delicious. Then I imparted the secret for selecting a palatable Granny Smith.

To begin with, smell it. It should palpably *smell* sour. Secondly, it ought to be deep green – not greenish, or yellow-green, or even pea green, but deep emerald green. It pains me to admit that the colour will not always steer you true, but it will more often than not. But a yellow-green Granny that smells sweet will invariably let you down and deserve to be called trash.

Nineteen-and-a-half-years is not too many, I suppose. I've been in my

own apartment – the first that was my very own – for about 34 years now, longer than any other home I’ve had for a very long shot. When I was very young, it was longer than I imagined I would ever live anywhere. The next longest times I ever resided in one place were 8 years and about 14. Together they don’t add up to as long as 34. It reminded of something that I told my mother when we moved into our Willowdale neighborhood with my infant sisters, that it was likely where she would live the rest of her life. It was true. She died in 1991. Now I’m in Parkdale, at the other end of the city and in walking distance of the Lakeshore. I will probably live the rest of my life where I am now. Hopefully I can add 20 or 25 more years to my residence in *this* place.

Dentistry is a dirty word in my book. I’m supposed to blame myself for not looking after my teeth, but I notice that my mother looked after hers to a fault, but her teeth began to fall out, abscess and turn black when she was young, just like mine. Looking after the little buggers seemed to have no effect, despite the difference in care lavished on them. And about the same time when my mother’s teeth were finished rotting, so did mine. I picked up the habit of brushing them at some point in my life, but it never did any good. All I noticed about dentistry is that when I wanted my root canal to be finished, the idiot dentist insisted I do some other work on another part of my mouth. Then I ran out of money, then neither the root canal nor the other work were finished, and so god damn all dentists to hell as greedy, lazy, sanctimonious bastards who can’t be socialized just like medicine in Canada soon enough!

Taral

A few words from
Alison Scott about

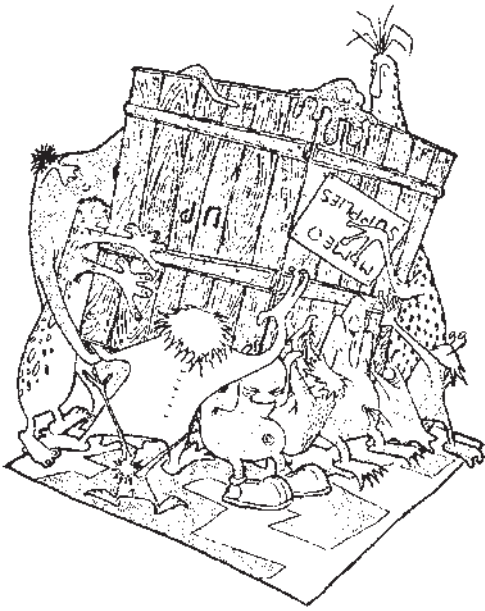
WOOF 49

We will collate WOOF 49 at Worldcon in Glasgow. Interested parties should convey fanzines to this year’s **Official Collator, Christina Lake**. Email **Glasgow24woof@gmail.com**

Copy count: 25. At the time of writing, little details like date and time have not yet been worked out, though I am happy to print contributors’ WOOF fanzines for them (laid out in A4 please, pdf, remember to embed your fonts, **no later than 25 July** please) in return for suitably generous donations to GUFF.

I expect this to be necessary because I think it unlikely we will have the facilities for mass fanzine reproduction at Worldcon, though I live in hope. For readers unsure what WOOF is – the acronym stands for the Worldcon Order Of Faneds – there are several examples available on **eFanzines**.

alison.scott@gmail.com



Alison Scott

alison.scott@gmail.com

10 JUNE 2024

I suspect I will be the only person to write and tell you about the thrill of seeing you – and several other people – at the pre-announcement Zoom meeting of finalists organised by the Worldcon. We were supposed to be being briefed on Important Things Hugo Finalists should know, but I and my *Octothorpe* (octothorpe.podbean.com) cohosts were, instead, backchatting furiously to work out which attendees had been nominated in which categories.

I was – as were, I am sure, many of your correspondents – delighted to see that *Idea*, a very traditional genzine, had made it onto the ballot. Not merely a genzine, but a relentlessly fannish genzine at that. It's not that I don't like the other finalists; I do, and it continuously irks me that so many of my friends don't read any of them. But I will never really be sercon enough for these serious discussions

of the genre, and I miss the sense of community I find in proper fanzines and their letter columns; our shared understanding of this little corner of the subculture. "Available for the usual," but it hasn't been all that usual for quite some time, you know.

I can't of course take credit really for pushing you into pubbing your ish; you had definitely told me that you were planning to get round to it in the near future. You can of course take credit for not finishing *Idea* 14 quite as quickly as you said you would, so I can get this letter in under the wire.

My joy at your – finalistness* – was only slightly tempered by the realisation that it meant that my extraordinarily personal article, which it took me some time to release to the world, and then only because I believed it was going out only to "our little corner of the subculture," would find its way into the Hugo Voter Packet and thousands of readers. Luckily the packet is now monumental, and nobody will have time to read it all. Still, I might yet Die of Embarrassment.

Sue's cover is delightful, and in general it was lovely to get *Idea* 13 as a printed book. It's shocking and strange the way postal prices have meant that this is the only realistic way to physically distribute fanzines. I have only just realised that beautiful issue 12 was produced by running Twiltone through your laser printer; I have a tendency in any case to anthropomorphise my technical equipment and in this case I am

* *I understand why we moved from having Hugo nominees to having finalists; but I do not think there is a proper word for this state of being a finalist and I find I want to use it all the time. Ahem.*

wondering whether there is a Society for the Prevention of Printer Abuse.

Jeff Schalles has great powers of persuasion; by the time I was but one page into his article I had ordered time release vitamin C and was searching fruitlessly for the non-existent eBook of **Burnt Toast**.

Terry Hughes passed away just as I was building my fannish networks, so I never got to know him. We reported his death in our short-lived fannish newszine, the *Plokta News Newt*, so short lived I'd pretty much forgotten we did it. It was good, therefore, to read Craig's tribute.

I remember the sting of getting 'girls' toys at Christmas and birthday, rather than the Meccano I craved, but fortunately the lessons I was taught about never playing with matches stuck. Which is not to say I don't have the odd hair-raising fire story; my brother once accidentally set our house on fire whilst illicitly smoking cigarettes on the roof, someone set fire to rubbish in the now-demolished garages next to our house, a visiting child once left a teddy bear sitting on a table lamp – luckily we smelt smoke – and a passing neighbour once heard our fire alarm going off after I had put dinner onto cook and then fallen asleep on the sofa with my then-tiny children. My brothers' Meccano, all well-used, mostly by me, meanwhile, is now waiting patiently for me to either eBay it or play with it. One of those.

Sandra's con report is much more fun to read than I suspect Pemmi-Con would have been to attend. One of the things I discovered on my GUFF trip is that it's not uncommon for fans in the same city to nevertheless not know each other – forging these connections is clearly one of the hidden benefits of the fan funds.

I am in awe, as ever, of the amount of amusing detail Sandra has remembered and thought to write down. Glasgow 2024 has picked up modern convention fandom's war on paper; I believe this is giving Steve Davies the chance to implement many of his plans for running a newsletter electronically, but it does make me a little sad. It also means that WOOFF contributors should very much not rely on copious printing facilities being available at the convention. Written materials endure, even such ephemera as one-sheet newszines and convention newsletters, and electronic writing often disappears into the ether as it loses timeliness. But things as permanent as issues and episodes can be referred to long into the future. If, of course, anyone cares.

I suppose developing authors have to have readings and signings but I wonder if their time would be better spent, you know, having fun? Meeting people in bars and informal programme items and just hanging out?

The ubiquity of Stan Rogers' Barrett's Privateers (and Lenny's filk), reminded me of this meme post – reddit.com/r/seashanties/comments/kwscmb/might_not_just_be_canadians_that_respond_to_this – one of several on this theme. (Memed from an original by cartoonist Dami Lee) More generally, Stan Rogers wrote, in his too short life, more songs that people think are traditional than anyone else (except perhaps Sydney Carter).

I'm sure I will not be the only person to point out that the Four Yorkshiremen sketch, as mentioned by Skel, is not from Monty Python, though it was later performed by them. It instead comes from *At Last, the 1948 Show*, made by later-Pythons Graham Chapman and John

Cleese, along with Tim Brooke-Taylor, Marty Feldman and Aimi MacDonald. Broadcast on ITV in 1967, it was then thought to have been largely lost when the ITV franchise Rediffusion lost its contract to Thames. However the BFI tracked down copies of most of the episodes. When we rebroadcast *The Prisoner* on Galactic Journey TV last year in real time (Galactic Journey (galacticjourney.com) is travelling through science fiction exactly 55 years in arrears), we used these to provide lead-out material.

Skel's story of relinquishing his STUFF reminds me of my own, and indeed that of many fans at the moment. I am fortunate enough – we all are – to have a very good collection of fanzines to hand, in the form of fanac.org; I have never held my own collection.

It's amusing to see, due to the time-binding nature of your fanzine, reports of eclipse-watching in 1999. (Our report is contained in *Plokta* 15 – plokta.com/plokta/issue15/eclipse.htm – this is from before *Plokta* moved to putting the online form in pdf and some of the photos may have strangely disappeared.)

I wonder how many Harry Warner, Jr letters there still are, sitting patiently waiting for their recipients to get round to doing their next issue? How he would have loved fanac.org and [efanzines](http://efanzines.com), preserving the bright colours of fanzines old and new for as long as we care to archive them, and enabling people who live in very small spaces to carry on enjoying them, too.

For contact information for me: alison.scott@gmail.com is good, and “London, UK” In the unlikely event one of your recipients wants to send me a fanzine or a present, they should either get in touch for the full address, or, you know, google – my address was printed on the internet many times in its earliest days, and I have not moved this century.

Love

Alison

I'd long used the trick of running Fibertone through my laser printer for selected pages that wouldn't respond well to being mimeographed, but most of *Idea* 12 was printed in the Toad Hall Champion Mimeo Center and Frog Preserve). It took another six years for me to discover the joys of sending Fibertone through ink jet and color laser printers for full color. For the most part, I don't regret having gotten rid of STUFF, but seeing color printing on Fibertone left me regretting having donated hundreds of reams to Art Scraps in St. Paul, MN, when I moved.

I will continue to credit you with the impetus that prompted me to stop

merely saying I intended to resume pubbing my ish and actually doing it. I have multiple fan writing and publishing desires and intentions, and have for decades. But too many of them continue to languish (*cough* "He preferred to stroll" *cough* *cough*). The fact that *Idea* is no longer on that list is a major happy-making fact of life these days. – gfs

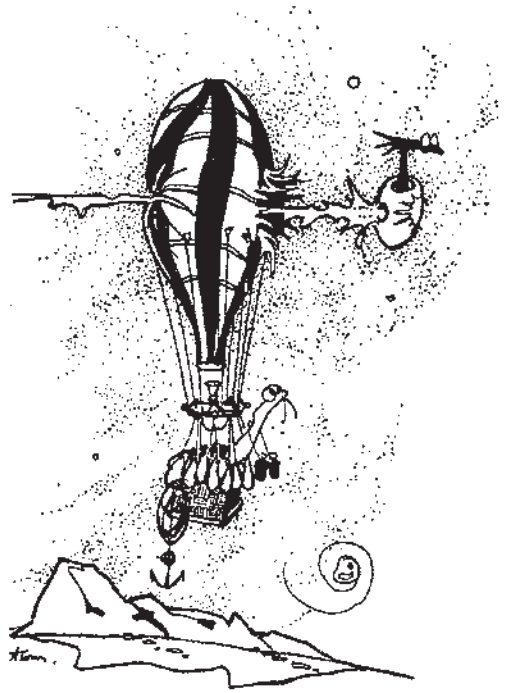


We Also Heard From:

Linda Bushyager, Facebook post 3 January 2024: “*Idea* #13 just arrived, and it has crogged my mind. It is more like a book than a fanzine, and apparently professionally printed by Amazon? At least delivered by Amazon. With colored illos and photographs – truly a thing to behold, and some delightful articles, although I have only had a chance to skim through a few so far. Anyway, thank you, Geri, and all the contributors for making my new year come alive with fannishness. I found I don’t miss the smell of the mimeo paper at all.”

John Hertz, who observed “Naturally, Mikolaj Kowalewski has a friend who can speak Akkadian” and found it “somehow reassuring to see ditto mistaken for mimeo.”

John Purcell: “There are many standout articles throughout the issue, my favorites being Alison Scott’s faanfiction screenplay, Craig Hughes’ remembrance of his brother Terry, and Sandra Bond’s TAFF report on Pemmi-Con. The mess-up with the Fan Fund Auction was reminiscent of the same event at the Helsinki WorldCon in 2017. We had our location switched on us literally just before it was due to start, and it heartens me to read that Sandra and Garth Spencer handled it well. Overall, Sandra’s report is eminently readable and voiced perfectly. I need to snag a copy of her latest collection of verse. I enjoyed her reportage of her convention experiences, and very glad to read that as last year’s TAFF delegate, she met a slew of folks to spread the word about not only TAFF but the other fan funds. Well done!”



David Russell wrote what’s possibly the best excuse for not including a LoC with his letter: “I’ve loaned the zine to another fan who I won’t be seeing for another week.”

Many excited requests and receipt acknowledgments received, including from **Grant Canfield**, **Kat Templeton**, **Heath Row**, **Bob Devney**, **Ruth Sachter**, **Perry Middlemiss**, **Paula Rice Biever**, and **Karen Babich**, who wrote: “I remember helping collate an ish at Toad Hall, possibly during a Fallcon? I brought an Eli’s cheesecake of comment, which was consumed on the premises.” (Checking sources: I’ll bet it was Not-A-ReinCONation, in 1997.)

Many thanks to all who sent articles, art, and letters of comment in response to *Idea* 13 as well as those who posted in social media about it and commented in person. I hope everyone reading this will consider doing likewise in response to *Idea* 14!

Contacting contributors

In general, please send letters of comment to idea@toad-hall.com. I will share your comments with contributors before *Idea 15* is published this winter (ideally in December – please let me know if you'd like to contribute!). If you wish to write to a contributor directly, you can use the address below. You're of course always welcome to copy idea@toad-hall.com when sending remarks about their contributions to this issue.

Idea 14 contributors:

Harry Bell <harrybell@gmail.com>
Sandra Bond <klepsydra@gmail.com>
David Dyer-Bennet <dd-b@dd-b.net>
Steve Jeffery <srjeffery@aol.com>
Josh More <josh.more@toad-hall.com>
Liz Phillips <liz.phillips.literacy@gmail.com>
Radosław “Rynvord” Polański <rynvord@gmail.com>
Taral <taral@bell.net>
Peter Young <peteyoung.uk@gmail.com>
Howard Whyte <howard.whyte@toad-hall.com>

To contact contributors to the Remembering Deb section, please send email to RememberingDeb@toad-hall.com.



Aurora over Toad Woods, 11 May 2024. Photo by Geri Sullivan.

Inside back cover
This is a blank page on the printed edition

