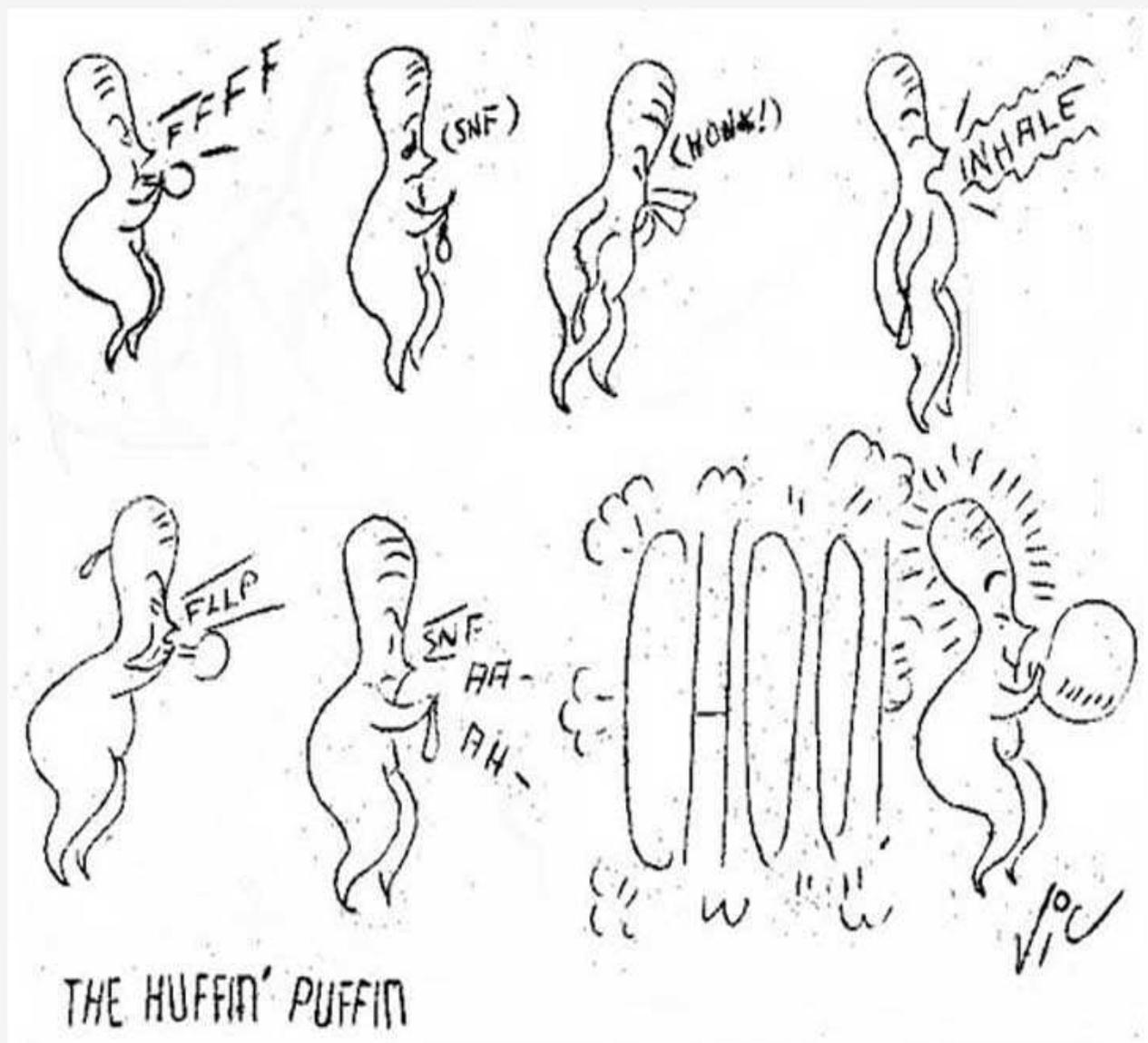


confuSon

"The son of confusion"



confuSon

"The Son of *confusion*"

Done May, 2006 (for you completists
out there.)

=====

C o n t e n t s

The BALLANCE Sheet...by ye ed, Shelby Vick.....First
Sensawunda.....fictionmags.....Second
In the Midst of ConfuSon.....ye ed.....Third
The Thin Veneer.....Arnie Katz.....Next
Sound OFF!.....Letters.....After
Back
Talk.....ShelVy.....Last

confuSon (Shelby Vick, shelvy20012000@yahoo.com or P O Box 9824.
Panama City Beach, Fl 32417) is, frankly, an attempt (however
fruitless) to regain youth! At least, to hark back to Days of
Yore, by bringing out a fanzine that is a shameless rip-off of
one I did over 50 years ago. Including lifting bits'n'pieces!



First, a word about Arnie Katz' *The Thin Veneer*. Or, that is, about the way I presented it. Oh, I didn't change anything – but it just shows you don't hafta spend a lot of money on computer accessories. A while back, I bought one of those Art Pads, where you get a pad and a stylus and hook it up to your computer, then draw. Never was satisfied with it – probably becós I didn't have enuf patience to stick to it! ANYway, I wanted some cartoons on Arnie's column, and decided to do them on Adobe Photoshop. Simple stuff. I pulled up a blank page and drew. After some retouching, I was fairly satisfied and proceeded to insert them. I thought.

When I translated the column to RTF, I had THREE copies of the head cartoon – and the last cartoon wasn't there, and the head cartoon (after deleting the duplicates) wasn't where I wanted it. Not only that, it had rearranged the title. No matter what I did, it didn't work, so you'll just hafta accept it the way it is.

The ending cartoon I eventually got into place – but it insisted on having a page to itself, even tho there was plenty of space at the bottom. Redoing it, changing spacing, nothing worked. So Arnie's column has a blank at the end of the fifth page, and the cartoon is the next page. Sorry.

Such is RTF.

+ + +

Well, this must be some kind of record. I put out confuSon as a revival of my old *confusion* of about fifty years ago, put out a second and third issue. . .and now I'm signing off – temporarily, at least.

As I explain in Back Talk, many things have come up – one that's more important than all the others. What I didn't explain is the novel I'm working on with the very able assistance of rich brown. It's a continuation of another author's very popular private detective team, and – if we can't get permission from the estate – we're busily plotting a way we can create a *new* detective team with the basic plot. If we go the new route, you'll see a detective team like you've never seen before! I like the new team so much that, whilst rich is busily editing and repairing the first draft, I'm busily working on the alternate! But I don't want to give it away right now. . . .

And, Real Soon Now (like that ancient Chinese philosopher, Rils Oo Nao) there is a book rich and I wrote over ten years ago that I'm gonna make available on the internet. Action scientifantasy with a bit of humor. When it's ready to go, I'll get the word out.

There's not a lot in thish, unfortunately. I thot I had a big backlog I was gonna use, but . . . when I looked for it, it wasn't there!

Thish's cover is one I did for LeeH's *Quandry*, those many years ago. Hated to see it fade away, so – there it is!

Sensawunda

ShelVy (from fictionmags)

There was a discussion on fictionmags I thot readers might enjoy, concerning Sense Of Wonder - shortened to 'sensawunda'. I asked permission to use it in Planetary Stories, and will, but I also thot confuSon readers might enjoy it. I'm by no means including it all, just the following highlights.

Taken from a letter by Ken Brown:

The point of such posthuman stories is that what the characters know or learn is not just in excess of what we readers grasp, it's by definition somewhat in advance of what *anyone* today knows (certainly including the story's writer), and then soars to some yet greater conceptual dislocation, astonishment piled on astonishment.

In this light, one might see 'Conceptual Breakthrough' as a subset of 'Sense of Wonder': Conceptual Breakthrough the sensawunda you do -- at least partly -- understand, and a 'Conceptual Dislocation' the sensawunda you cannot -- by definition -- understand.

The latter could be seen as transcendence -- a term Greg Egan hates, IIRC -- although I believe (pun intended) that there is a distinct difference in religious transcendence (knowledge brought to you by a Supreme Being), and transcendence by expanding one's knowledge mostly through one's own efforts.

Damien's 'Conceptual Dislocation' would then be a frustrated form of transcendence because the required knowledge is too advanced, and therefore out of reach. Sense of astonished frustration, anyone?

I agree there are lots of *other* forms of sense of wonder, but still, one way or another, it's the *possibility* of conceptual breakthrough, of seeing things in a different light, that powers sensawunda. I remain that they are closely related.

From: Rich Horton

> David P. wrote:

>>>Yes, I'm sure "sense of wonder" and "conceptual breakthrough"
>>are one and the same thing (and I was surprised at Phil S-P
>>seeming to make a distinction between them).

>
> I don't think I'd agree. My understanding of the term
> "conceptual breakthrough" is that it applies to cases
> where the =character= suddenly understands the nature
> of his or her world -- and thereby also the reader.

AKA Cosmic Irony? Like dramatic irony - the audience know what the characters don't.

> I think "sense of wonder" also applies to cases in which the
> characters are completely aware of -- immersed in --
> their world, but the reader comes to understand its nature.
> I don't see such stories as "conceptual breakthrough" stories.

But "sensawunda" is more than that (& also less than that in a structural sense). Its also the reader realising something about their own world, the one the reader lives in. Or if not realising, roleplaying, allowing themselves to think that it might be. That something may be possible. Walking around on this earth as if It might be true, They might be out there.

The canonical "sensawunda" is Nightfall. That star moment, which turns up in all sorts of sf. Its in Surface Tension. Asimov and Blish were both surprised that those stories were amongst their most popular. It works not because we now know that there are stars in the fictional subcreated world - we always did - or because we now care that the characters see that there are stars in their world - those are characters so hollow we have already forgotten their names - but because we are reminded that there are stars in *our* world. And we recall a moment when we saw them and wondered.

It doesn't have to be good thoughts of course - Lovecraft does it regularly. As do worse writers. We Are Property. Mark S. Geston does a good line in paranoid Sensawunda. Anyone read The Day Star?

And in non-sf of course. Its in the Bible. A big chunk of the book of Job is Gosh! Wow! Some of it is about stars. Right at the beginning, in Genesis, God speaks to Abraham and tells him to count the stars - if you can. Bronze age sensawunda.

Ian Covell wrote:

> The actual Sense of Wonder is not at all about
> "conceptual breakthrough", it's about being made to
> feel there is Wonder in this universe, beyond the
> here and now; worlds and lands and times and peoples
> and thoughts other than what we know..

Yes, that's it!
Though ...

> Look at the muddle Clarke (in the 2001 set) and Niven
> (in his desperate attempts re Ringworld) have got into.
> in their attempts to display their knowledge of "current
> science", both began to produce almost unreadable
> works which barely existed as fiction.

... my 16-year-old daughter, not much of a hard sf reader, read and very much enjoyed Ringworld a couple of days ago. (And is now laughing at or with RA Lafferty ;-)

> I find it extraordinarily revealing that so thorny,
> dialectically complex and hyper-theorised a reader of sf and
> fantasy as Fred Jameson should be driven to confess: "I am
> probably not alone in finding the latest hard sf based on
> informational processes (even by so estimable a writer as Greg
> Egan) relatively unreadable" (ARCHAEOLOGIES OF > THE FUTURE, p.
> 68).

I caught that sentence too, and was fascinated by it, especially as I'd just read something about Jameson which started by saying >how difficult *he* was. I think I like Egan not because of the "informational processes" but because of the maths. In part he's a much more complex Edwin "Flatland" Abbott. Being much less than semi-competent in maths and geometry I find being asked to imagine what it's *like* to experience multi-dimensional space a mind-wrenching experience. Almost (and this is what surprised me about Jameson's comment) like being asked to imagine what it really *would* be like to live in a society radically different in *values* (as opposed to seeing modern social trends extrapolated slightly for satirical purposes). And that (a world which is physically *and* morally different) is what Egan is asking us to think about.

- Andy Sawyer

From: "Ian Covell"
"Sensawunda"/Ringworld & Nightfall

I quote from:
"Shelby Vick"

>Recently re-read Nightfall and it still Grabbed me. (The writing wasn't
>that great, but The Concept!) Maybe it's becoss I have a childish mind. . .

> Shelby

This is interesting, because it happens to me too.. and you'd have thought the "sense of wonder" would thin when you have nothing to "wonder"

about [i mean, you _know_ the situation, it should be "familiar"] but somehow like you -- and maybe like "all" SF fans -- the talent I have is for repeatedly enjoying the same thing again and again, and somehow the pleasure is either constant, or different, but in either case it exists.

-- "...and then you dig a hole and put this in it.. and then what do you do with the rest of your life.."

-- "...overhead, slowly, and without any fuss, the stars were going out.."

-- "...the shadow of the awning fell across his face like a cool drink of water."

-- "...When the great markets by the sea shut fast / All that calm Sunday that goes on and on: / When even lovers find their peace at last, / And Earth is but a star, that once had shone"

-- the super spaceship breaking up "slowly, majestically" into its designed sections in THE STORM

-- "The doorknob opened an eye and blinked at him."

-- "and then it was night, under a sky of stratified sapphire.."

-- "night fell, even here"

-- "tensor, said the tensor,/ tension, apprehension and dissension have begun [RIFF]..."

-- "I AM THE LAND.."

-- the elements we are made of can only be created in the heart of suns, which live a billion years, then explode to scatter their remnants through space

-- "i am only a poor starveling indigent, sir, and i want to go home.."

-- "he made the choice we all would make.."

beloved stories, poems, wrenching you out of yourself, twisting you sideways and about, filling your ears with alien sounds, your eyes with alien sights, your mind with sudden, complete clarity, with a wild surmise, "silent, upon a peak in Darien""Just Go With It" was essentially Asimov's reponse to the questionable science in "Nightfall". I met him a few times, and when he graciously signed my copy of Astounding in which "Nightfall" originally appeared, I asked him if he had actually framed a sun/planet series that would allow the events of "Nightfall" to happen. He replied that, no, he hadn't, and still did not know how such a system could be. Perhaps this is sensawunda fantasy -mystery/magic unsupported by science? When I first read it at 11 or 12, I just took it as bad science in a not-very-good story. I am not sure that I have looked at it since, so I don't know what I would think now.

Mark Owings

Any comments??? – ShelVy

CONFUSION

IN THE FIRST PLACE –

My friend Joe Green has an interesting article in this month's Challenger <http://www.challzine.comhttp://www.challzine.net/23/23fivedays.html> It's about the time John W Campbell spent five days with him, how it came about and what happened. You'll find it interesting.

While I'm at it, let me mention another ezine, Vegas Fandom Weekly, by Arnie Katz. You can find that at <http://www.ezines.com> or you can contact Arnie at crossfire4@cox.net and request to be on his mailing list. While it serves Vegas, it also has many interesting items by Arnie and other fans.

ONE MORE, 2 –

Is this the revival of a fifty-plus year-old fanzine, or a new zine? I didn't bring that up in the first issue, but it's come up since. True, the name is different – but I'm using not only titles from my old zine, *confusion*, (Sound Off! for the lettercol, In the Midst of ConfuSon for this middle section [yeah, yeah; it was originally In the Midst of Confusion, but still. . . .] I end up with Back Talk – and I've even carried some of the contents forward; not only headings, but cartoons and all that) and the title is obviously a continuation. Of course, this is an ezine whilst the original was mimeoed, and this doesn't get mailed, and. . .oh, well; maybe I can't take this as a record-setter. . . .

What do you think?

IN THIRD PLACE –

In VFW I had a column about 'selective memory'. Like, I forget lotsa things (who doesn't?) and even the bad things I remember have good things

cushioning them. Now, I wanta talk about ANOTHER memory – computers!

Y'know, businesses often blame mistakes on 'computer error', to which I say: "Nope! More often it's 'programer error', 'cos computers do what you tell 'em to – when you tell 'em right. I know, I know; you've had fits with your damned computer time after time, and it HAS to be the *computer's* fault. Truth is, it's mostly just that you didn't do something right.

But that's just a lead-in. My point is that a properly-functioning computer *remembers*. It remembers things I don't even recall doing. Also, it automatically refreshes itself with updates from Microsoft, and my anti-virus program automatically refreshes itself, as well as my Ad-Aware program. Every time I turn it on, it is bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, ready to go.

To bad I can't say the same about myself.

–Don't misunderstand me; I've had my share! In setting up Planetary Stories, there have been pages I have had to do and redo and STILL don't know how I finally got it right. But, again, that's the programmer's fault! My friend, Lloyd McDaniel, who masterminds me thru a lot of trouble, will take one I finally give up and toss to him – and he gets it back to me, corrected, in only minutes. So I *know* it's me.

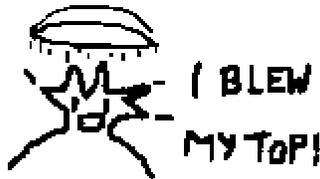
But, back to memory. My computer has 120 gigs on the hardrive, only less than a fourth of it used up. But – try to find what I want on it! There'll be a program that I know will do thus-and-so, but, if I haven't used it recently, I won't remember its name. Or there'll be a function that I *know* a program has done, becos I've done it before. . .but how did I do it?

The *real* problem, however, is stories and articles, things I've worked on. I'll try to find one, look, fuss, sizzle, and – *sometimes* – finally find it. A few months back I simplified it by creating a folder labeled 'Stories', so at least I don't have as many to peruse. And I have a folder for each issue confuSon, as well as Planetary Stories. In them, I file pictures and stuff as well as the typed content. *But* –

I have lotsa stuff saved to floppy or CD. One of the first things I did was go thru all floppies and, when I found something not on my computer, I'd transfer it over – or at least label it clearly so's I'd know what was in it.

So regardless of how good my computer memory is, it's still affected by my personal memory!

AND SO, FORTH (Fourth, 4th) –



I'm stubborn.

In The Ballance Sheet I mentioned the problems I was having with Arnie's The Thin Veneer and cartoons.

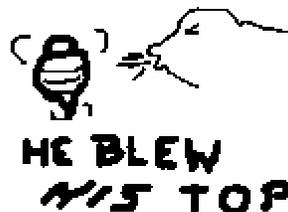
I couldn't leave it alone!

So –

I scanned each page. When I do the PDF, I'll do it as Separate Files and put those pages in the proper order. (Of course, I haven't done it yet, but I'm HOPING it will turn out in the way originally intended! It may be I am speaking out of turn and it won't develop the way I'm wanting.

If not, I'll try something else. In fact, I'm gonna give Midst the same treatment, since there are cartoons in it that RTF doesn't like.

Y'see, Arnie, that's just ANOTHER reason I could never turn out a weekly fanzine, e-type or otherwise!



HEY-A VEGAS
FAN!!!



The Thin Veneer

End of an Era

Arnie Katz

When I was a young fan, back in the 1960's — and does anyone else remember the song lyric I just Brandonized? — I was a total mark for amateur press associations.

My first fan contact (a letter with a batch of fanzines from then-young NYC fan hottie Judi Sephton) steered me to the N3F, which send me a packet of stuff that included a “fandbook” about apas by Robert Lichtman.

Everything he wrote was music to my neofannish ears. Moreover, I was perfectly primed to receive his wisdom. My childhood devotion to send-away offers — you know, send away two box tops of a cereal you con mom into buying to receive a priceless premium — keyed right into what Lichtman wrote about them. I loved the idea of sending in one little fanzine and getting a big fat envelope with 20 or 30 of them in return sounded better than anything *Space Patrol* or *Capt. Video* had and, best of all, I wouldn't have to choke down all that nauseating dry cereal.

The idea of getting to know a group of fans better through written discussions also appealed. I imagined hefty apazines filled with long, well-reasoned praise for me. It sounded like a “can't lose” proposition.

I immediately joined the N3F apa, where I encountered Bruce Pelz, Fred Patten, Roy Tackett and other fairly accomplished faneds. My boyhood buddy Lenny Bailes joined at the same time and Judi Sephton was already a member, so I didn't feel like a complete stranger. A few other neos I knew followed my lead, which made the group even more comfortable from my point of view.

And I liked it. The quality varied, but the group spirit was irresistible. I didn't try to resist it. I soon became a frequent, if not excellent, contributor.

One was definitely *not* enough, so I got on the waitlists for FAPA (Fantasy Amateur Press Association), SAPS (Spectator Amateur Press Society), the Cult, and SFPA (Southern Fandom Press Association). The last may have been a stretch, since I resided in New Hyde Park, Long Island, NY, but I stayed in as an active member for five years.

Getting into FAPA, the oldest, largest and most prestigious apa, became a prime fannish goal. Unfortunately for me, most of fanzine fandom seemed to have the same idea. The 65-member group had a waitlist of about 65 fans who wanted the same opportunity.

The climb to the top of the FAPA waitlist was long, in fact, that the more impatient fans started Shadow FAPA. It was just as well this satellite group, which flourished in the early 1960's, had disappeared by the time I put my name

to the waitlist, because it saved me from inflicting some painfully neofannish contributions on them.

SAPS had a waitlist of about 15 when my name first appeared at the bottom of it. The roster proved to be more volatile and I ascended rapidly. I got in after less than a two-year wait, whereas I didn't see the light of FAPA for five or six years after I got in line. (Ironically, I got the invitation to join FAPA just as my life got extremely complicated and I think I lasted only the minimum three mailings before getting the heave-ho for lack of sufficient activity. I got right back on the waitlist.)

By the late 1960's, I (with Lenny Bailes) had started an apa (TAPS), I helped start the first weekly local apa (Apa F) and was a co-founder of the most successful weekly local apa of all-time (Apa L). I even joined the British OMPA (Off-Trail Magazine Publishers Association) for a couple of years.

For a while there, if three fans were swapping apazines, it's a good bet that I was one of them. Not that I set a record for number of apas. Bruce Pelz, Robert Lichtman and a few other fans had made "omniapan-ism" fashionable among impressionable neofen like me. Bruce was not only in a lot of groups, but it seemed like he was Official Editor of half of them.

I dimly recall waking up one morning to the realization that I was in something like 11 apas. No one had to tell me that was unhealthy. I couldn't possibly do justice to that many apas and the desire to excel outweighed the appeal of being "in all the rooms."

I immediately began a cutback. I remained an enthusiastic apan, but by the time I gafiated around 1976, I was in only one, FAPA.

When I returned to Fandom, it was to TAPS, the apa Lenny and I started 25 years earlier. When I decided to actually re-enter *real* Core Fandom, I rejoined FAPA and SAPS and got on the waitlist for SFPA. I might even have rejoined OMPA, to become reacquainted with UK Fandom, but it had bitten the dust many years earlier. (I became aware of a contemporary British apa, Acnestis, but it seemed a little too serious for me.)

I recoiled from SAPS when I discovered that it had a resident anti-Semite — I can find plenty of prejudice in the everyday world, thanks — and I just didn't feel comfortable in SFPA. (They were a nice bunch and seemed to like my writing, but I never made the kind of connection that would've led to long tenure.)

I stayed in FAPA. Immodestly, I became one of its most active and honored members and even served as President and Vice President on a number of occasions. I got some of my new Las Vegas fan friends to join, too. Ken Forman became Official Editor and Ross Chamberlain and Joyce also held offices at various times.

That 15-year run ended a month or so ago when Joyce and I made the decision to resign. It wasn't anger or a fan feud or lack of egoboo. My time in FAPA was uniformly pleasant and richly rewarding in egoboo.

Cost *was* a factor, admittedly, but it wasn't the decisive one. I'm sure we could've continued, perhaps at a lower level of activity, for a long time.

The main reason is my sincere conviction that the hard copy apas are spiraling rapidly to extinction. I hate to see it, because apas has given me a lot of pleasure,

but even FAPA is lurching toward its end. It has shrunk alarmingly in the last two years. Not only is that huge waitlist a distant memory, but the actual roster has contracted by about one-third and it continues to plummet rather than plateau.

I've made a pretty strong effort to stem the tide, both by recruiting new members and generating a lot of material. Yet I could not escape the fact that it appears to be a Lost Cause.

As a vocal advocate of electronic fanzine publishing, it seems more sensible to go with the trend rather than continuing to try to turn back the clock.

Don't get me wrong. I love printed fanzines. Nothing adds to a trip to the bathroom like a good hard copy fanzine. (What an irony that hard copy fanzines are fading out just as fandom has aged to the point where most make more such trips than when they were teenage neos.)

Yet I have come to believe that the move to digital publishing is absolutely necessary if Fanzine Fandom is to continue, much less thrive, in the 21st Century. The choice is not "paper or pixels"; it's ultimately pixels or nothing. I'll take the pixels, thanks.

It's regrettable, really, but it's also part of Fanzine Fandom's transition from paper to digital publishing. I'd already shifted to all-electronic format for genzines (*Jackpot*, *BBB Bulletin* and now *Vegas Fandom Weekly*), so it looked like the right time to entirely stop denuding forests in the name of fanac. (I plan to sell my Jiant Copier this winter to put a period at the end of that chapter.)

Apas once played an important role in Fandom: They provided a more intimate setting than the genzines and promoted the rapid interchange of written conversation and discussion.

I almost put "rapid" in quotes, because the hard copy apa paradigm looks like the slow train to nowhere by the standards of digital communication.

In the typical quarterly apa, if I write a comment in, say, the January mailing, others will react in the April mailing and any replies I might want to make would be in the July mailing. So, if everything goes right and no one misses a mailing or runs out of time/space for mailing comments, it'll be *seven months* before the first conversation loop is completed.

That was fine when everything still moved at non-electronic speed. When the fastest thing in the world was a 40-MPH train, the speed of a horse didn't seem slow, either, but even that train is pokey by comparison to a jet airliner (minus the pre-boarding cavity search...)

The Internet changed everything. Quarterly frequency seemed like a reasonably brisk pace before the Internet, because you had to allow a couple of weeks at each end (to surface mail contributions to the OE and get the mailings delivered to members by the same method). Looking back, it's remarkable how fans in Australia and the UK stuck with US-based groups that gave them less than a month to read the new mailing and get a zine in for the next one.

Listservs have usurped the apas' monopoly on discussion and desultory communication. It's no wonder. A listserv like Trufen or InTheBar often generates five-to-10 conversational loops in a 24-hour period. The discussions often lack the depth of the best mailing comments, but not many apas write "the best mailing comments," anyway. Most online participants are content with such

brief communications. And, let's face it, waiting three months to read a one-sentence mailing comment on your apazine *does* take a lot of the joy out of apa conversation.

Listsers have turned old-style protracted fan feuds into lightning wars. There've been some barn-burners online in the last couple of years, but they burn out in days rather than years. If listsers had existed in the early 1980's, Topic A might have lasted a month instead of a soul-blasting half-decade.

Though the listsers have largely supplanted the paper apas, they do not truly *replace* them. Listsers are a great way to send brief messages, disseminate news and staying in touch. They are the digital equivalent of round robin letters, except that listsers work faster and allow a much greater number of participants.

What *don't* listsers do?

They are not a good vehicle for long essays. A number of fans tried such posts when listsers got rolling, but meaty essays are now fairly rare. That's just not the type of content that gets much response on listsers, so there's not much incentive to do them.

Listsers are delightfully spontaneous, but the flip side of that coin is that they promote hasty responses. The first listserv that incorporates a 30-minute posting delay and a "take back" feature will save a lot of petty spats and personal embarrassment.

Listsers are today's ultimate expression of the fan philosophy of Communicationism. That's great as far as it goes, but there's more to fanzine fandom than the transmission of opinions.

Listsers don't allow for artistic expression. There are many types of material, like faan fiction, humor and con reports, that you simply don't see much on the listsers. They promote quick, rather than polished, writing, too. And, of course, listserv posts offer no scope for graphic design, illustrations and other fanzine niceties.

That's a lot of uncovered territory. Listsers are great for what they are, but I'd hate to think of Fanzine Fandom being reduced to that brand of activity.

There's room for something else: electronic apas.

Electronic apas cost participants nothing beyond the costs of operating a computer and connecting to the Internet, give the perpetrators time to think before they hit the "send" button and are suitable for a much wider range of material. You'd still want the listsers for rapid communication, but an electronic apa is a way to preserve the joys of amateur press associations in the digital age.

David Burton deserves credit for starting eAPA, the first such group, and the N3F also gets an approving nod for edging toward an electronic format with the revived N'APA.

Joyce, JoHn Hardin and I started SNAPS (Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society) in April, 2005, as a hard-copy apa that also had an electronic edition posted on the SNAFFU web site (www.snaffu.org).

After a few months of assembling distributions at the "second Friday" meetings of SNAFFU, much in the manner of Apa L, an informal vote of participants changed it to an all-electronic group.

The main reasons were to trim costs and keep assembling the apa from

swamping the club meeting, but it has also given us the chance to evaluate the operation of an electronic group. The group has succeeded admirably, though a larger number of participants would certainly be nice. Still SNAPS has brought fans like Linda Bushyager and Marcy Waldie back to fan publishing and introduced a number of locals who'd never tried it to the activity.

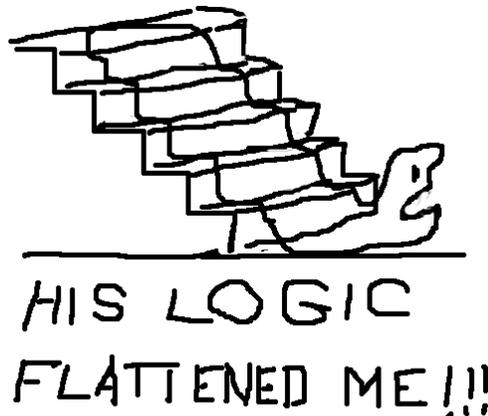
What we've learned will form the basis of an electronic apa with a wider geographic reach than SNAPS. We've learned some important things:

- SNAPS' monthly frequency is just about ideal for the group. I'd prefer biweekly, but we all know how crazy I am. Monthly will promote frequent contact while giving participants time to do something more elaborate than they would for a listserv.
- A digital apa can do without a lot of the machinery of the print apas. We don't need dues or a top-heavy officialdom.
- Some members need help with their apazines due to unfamiliarity with computer technology, fanzine methodology or both. For SNAPS, the OE works with members to help them over the rough spots.
- Limited distribution of the apa outside its roster is a double-edge sword. It may entice some, but it encourages a lot of lurking, too. Dave Burton has struck a nice balance with occasional public posting of eAPA on efanazines.com, but doing so with even less frequency may work out better for this new group.

There'll be an announcement with specifics in January, but meanwhile, I hope a lot of you will give the idea some thought and join up when the membership call is made. It could be the start of something big. (It could be a ridiculous failure, too, but that's no way to end an article in a fine upbeat fanzine.)

See you in the digital mailings!

— Arnie Katz





OFF!

Gonna start off with a letter from Peter Sullivan concerning the PDF I did of Odd #9--

Hi Shelby.

Thanks for making this available on efanazines.com. Apart from the contents, what fascinated me was the justification. I'd read about typed, justified, fanzeens, but had always assumed that this was done by doing a complete draft first, and for each row working out, for instance, that a double-space between the 3rd, 6th and 9th words would balance the line off. What ODD seems to demonstrate is a "lazier" form of this, where as many spaces as needed are added just before the last word to, in effect, "right-align" just this last word to the margin. Did anyone ever do it the "proper" way I had imagined, or did most fanzeens that bothered with justification at all use a similar method to ODD?

All of this is of course completely new to me, as postal games fanzeens (my fannish background) were driven by the need to have a reasonably fast turn-around - players wanted to know if their Army Moscow *had* made it to St. Petersburg or not. So no postal games fanzeen I ever saw (before the incoming of word processors) ever did anything other than a quick-and-dirty ragged right margin.

PS) Is this the longest gap ever between original publication of a fanzeen and a letter of comment on it? As well as most possibly the most pointless?

Peter Sullivan

Not trusting my own memory, Peter, I'll leave a more definitive answer to other

fans! I know I did some justified stuff at one time. I'd do it twice, first time ending the line with //// and then filling in the retyping accordingly – but that took a lot more time, so I would imagine more did it Duggie's way. Of course, there were a few hardtype fanzines and there you'd just fill in the necessary spaces with blank slots of sufficient width. And, yeah, I think this letter of yours could set a record for delay between publication and response!

Now, some comments about the Big-Hearted Howard memorial:

Richard Bleiler from fictionmags wrote:

Howard was a PulpCon regular, one of the genuinely nice guys. He always had the same core of stuff for sale and never seemed to care that most of it didn't move; in fact, he seemed quite puzzled when one year I bought a large handful of his old Hyperion SF titles. My guess was that now he had empty spaces he had to fill -- but with what would he fill them?

I always had a terrific time talking with Howard, whose mind remained intact even as his gout turned his leg purple and what I took to be emphysema caused him to gasp for every word, and he once went out of his way to do Dad a favor, a deed for which I will ever be grateful. (Not to be mysterious: Dad and Howard were both Hugo finalists in the same year, and were both beaten by Thomas Disch. Howard felt strongly that Dad should have won -- as did I! -- but Howard did something about it. From somewhere he had procured metal casting moulds, and the next year I met Howard he gave me a handcast Hugo, specially made for Dad.)

(Seeing the memorial was) Not a good way to return from a vacation or to start a year.

Then this from Robert Lichtman concerning confusion:

Hi, Shelby--

I don't have all that many issues -- five altogether -- but according to the Pavlat/Evans/Swisher FANZINE INDEX, CONFUSION began with a November 1951 issue of 18 pages followed by a January 1952 issue of only 2 pages. The INDEX says those first two issues were edited by one Tommy Lee Tracy (who he?), **(was me. Forget why, but I used the Thomas from my first name and the Lee was Joe Green's middle name. He helped me. The Tracy was for 'three' [tres] because Juanita Henderson, who later became Mrs Joe Green, also helped)** and then you took over.

Most of your issues of which the FANZINE INDEX had any specific

knowledge were 38 pages (but there were lots of issues about which they had no page count information). Of the issues I have, No. 10 is 39 pages, No. 11 is 37, No. 12 is 20, No. 13 is a whopping 66, No. 15 is 32, and No. 16 is 29. No. 16 is dated February 1954. I have no way of knowing if it's the final issue, but I suspect it might be.

Interesting, was just looking at who was originally sent No. 15 (Robert Bloch) and No. 16 (Bea Mahaffey). How cool!

Best wishes,

Robert

And now we hear from Howard's family:

Thank you, everyone.

Photos of Howard's 80th birthday party can be found at <http://www.livejournal.com/users/cannibal/176630.html>

-- Chad

Of course, many of you are wondering What To Do about LoCs, due to our hibernation. The answer?

Send 'em anyway!

Sooner or Later, (as MacArthur said) We Shall Return – and, when we do, we'll need contributions for Sound Off!

See ya!

–ShelVy

BACK TALK



Those Zs are coming from little confuSon, sleeping in the cave. (Yes, that's supposed to be a cave!)

ANYway, this is an announcement of Deep Impact – that is, if you're looking forward to another issue of confuSon any time soon. We are hibernating. I've had several things come up over the year. As many of you know, I was in an automobile accident August of 2004. Amazingly, I recovered from a crash that should have killed me with a car having hit me on the driver's side.

As I say, I recovered. However, my stay in the hospital took longer than covered by sick leave at the county Property Appraiser's office, where I had worked. I was given early retirement which, unfortunately, was only a fraction of my previous earned income. Not only that, but (due to sloppy work by the investigating police person) I did not get a settlement from the guilty driver. My own auto insurance paid only a fraction of the hospital bill, altho it did pay for my demolished car.

Well, I had been renting instead of owning my house. After a stay in a recovery facility, I moved in with my oldest daughter, Diane, who owns her own business. But that was just the start of things.

For one thing, Medicare announced that, as I was injured in an auto accident, they wanted a large chunk of what they had paid returned to them. Seems there is a little-known fact about Medicare: They don't want to pay if a senior driver is in an auto accident! Having no savings worth speaking of, I won't be making that repayment. Also, I have a benign tumor on my inner ear, resulting in a slight loss of equilibrium. I'm to take therapy for that, as my specialist said it was very slow-growing and surgery could be dangerous. So my time is eaten into by doctor's visits and, now, therapy visits.

Well, I could get by with that, having no employment to take up my time, BUT – now a family emergency has occurred (that's all I'm revealing) that is going to take up more time, either for months or, possibly, years. So I'm bowing out of fandom for a while. I will continue Planetary Stories – <http://www.planetarystories.com> – IF there is enuf response to the upcoming issue. If response is piddling, I'll even cut that off.

So, goodbye dear friends; auf weidersein, till we meet again, and all that good stuff.



confuSon sez -- 'bye for now. . .