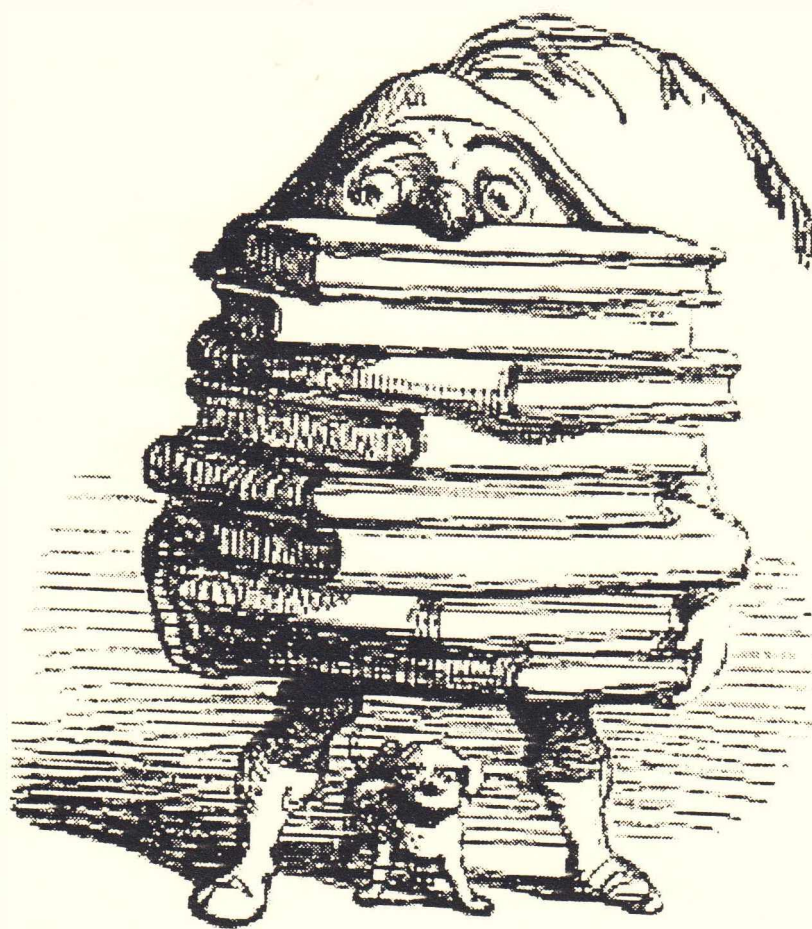


Fanthology



Janthology

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When I decided to stand for DUFF, the Down Under Fan Fund, I knew that I'd have to campaign. Despite years of campaigning for conventions, I've found that campaigning on behalf of oneself is a different and much more embarrassing proposition! This zine is intended to introduce me to you.

A brief fannish bio:

- First exposure to the virulent, infectious disease named fandom: Suncon, the 1977 worldcon conveniently located in Miami Beach (my hometown) over Labor Day weekend, the same weekend as the wedding of a high school friend. I had discovered My People.
- Rapid growth of the virus: I'd moved to Atlanta a little before Suncon, and when the few Atlanta fans in attendance at worldcon spotted my name tag, they gave me contact information for my new location. Shortly thereafter, I was a regular attendee at the local sf club meetings and the Southern convention circuit, and a member of MYRIAD, a Southern apa.
- "A way of life": My first volunteer job at a convention was the result of a slinky dress brought to Phoenix because of the heat: Art Show head Khen Moore saw it and immediately requested that I wear it the next day to run art for the art show auction. Jobs based more on intellectual qualifications soon followed.
- Con-running resume: Worldcons are the only ones I remember with any clarity (there are also some program operations and Green Room-running at Westercons somewhere in there) – worked Program Ops at Chicon IV (1982), ConFederation (1986), Noreascon 3 (1989), Intersection (1995); Rescue effort, Programming, Nolacon II (1988); ran Program Operations at MagiCon (1992); Assistant Division Head, Events at ConFrancisco (1993); Hugo Awards ceremony producer for LAcon III (1996).

Apazines – Although many people don't count apazines as "real" fanzines, they are my main fan publishing effort. Shortly after I discovered fandom in 1977, I joined the apa MYRIAD, and have been continuously in one apa or another ever since:

Myriad (1978 - 1981): I was a MYRIAD member for many years, including through my first stint of living in Israel (during which member Cliff Biggers converted my originals through electric stencil!)

Apa-69 (1982): Joined because good friend Arthur Hlavaty was OE, but I wasn't comfortable with the level of sexual discussion.

LASFAPA (1981 – 1983; 1984 – 1987): A saucy little monthly apa that I joined when I moved to Los Angeles. This apa is famous for its long-tenured OEs, its 3D Langdon chart (tracing the sexual interconnectedness of its members through pipe cleaners and styrofoam balls), and its friendly apa number (guess what for?).

SEPA (1984 – current): The premier Southern apa and my fannish spiritual home for many years now. It took me four years to get off the waitlist (but we have none now, so if anyone is looking for a traditional apa with Southern friendliness, now's your chance!)

EAPA (1992): My briefest apa membership: one mailing! I agreed to get on the waitlist and figured I'd get a spec issue or two to get an idea of what to expect. Lo and behold, I was invited into membership by the next issue! I did one issue but because my main enjoyment of apas is mailing comments, this wasn't the apa for me.

The rest of this zine consists of excerpts from this over 20-year history.

Con Reports

From *Neo #1*, my first zine ever (for MYRIAD), October 1978, describing Suncon:

My first thought on walking into the hotel lobby was: "This is the largest single collection of oddballs I've ever seen." All over the lobby, strange-looking people were sitting in little groups, involved in what looked like fascinating and absorbing conversations. Blue jeans, an incredible array of T-shirts and hats, and a few costumes here and there were present in the lobby of a hotel which, in my childhood, would not permit anyone to appear in anything less than the jacket-and-tie look after 6 p.m.

One of the above-mentioned strangers ran up, looked at me carefully, said "Oh, I thought you were someone else," and returned to the people he had been with. After this heartwarming reception to the con and fandom, I went to the information desk and became official.

From *Calculated Tedium #8*, Denvention Two report (September 1981):

After the meeting, I bumped into George RR Martin, Gardner Dozois, and their respective lady friends, and sat in the lobby busily engaged in a new sport: deciding on theme songs from old TV shows for various pros (sample: John Norman's theme song - "Rawhide") ... [At the Hugos] George RR Martin gave an amusing presenter speech for the Novelette category, explaining that he had been chosen as the presenter due to the sadism of Ed Bryant, who wanted to expose the encroaching twilight of Martin's career. Last year he had won two Hugos but this year he wasn't even nominated in the category, and now all of these rising young punk authors were sneaking up on him. Then he announced the winner: young punk Gordy Dickson!

From "The Many-Colored Badge," Chicon IV con report (September 1982):

When I got to the hotel, I reported as instructed by Ross to Programming Ops. Yale Edeiken, the grand high guru, greeted me, said that Ross had told him I was coming, and yelled over to the head of the track managers to check me in. That's when we discovered that I wasn't on the "official list" of track managers. I had to head over to the other tower of the hotel to "Staff ID" where I exchanged my black "I'm just here for the ride" ID for a green semi-peon ID. . . [two days later] Yale decided I deserved a field promotion (which to me only meant that the other track managers must have really been screwing up, if the little I had done merited special consideration!) and I was duly "knighted" and presented with a yellow badge by Ross [...] The Atlanta in '86 party was next, but all they had was screwdrivers and moon pies. Atlanta fan and good buddy Cliff Biggers asked why I didn't just go to the committee den which, as the owner of a yellow badge, I was now entitled to enter. A white badge himself, he took me down to the third-floor room, which featured: spaghetti with two kinds of sauce (meat and veggie), soup, cheese, fruit, coffee, tea, and a lot of the people whom I had been hoping to bump into but hadn't seen. Now I had found out where they were all hanging out! Yes, the prime motto of the Chicon committee was definitely Rank Hath Its Privileges (and Egoboo).

From *Trivial Pursuits* #7, Westercon report (August 1986):

Having been out of the country and out of touch for a while, I had never heard of cyberpunk until the "Fads in SF" panel I went to on Friday. From what I gathered, it's a label given to some of the newer writers with a similar outlook on what technology will do to the future (computer-generated personalities and computer sentience, for starters), and a similar writing style, which concentrates more on literary style than characterization and plot, I gathered.

It definitely sounded controversial, so I was looking forward to the Saturday panel "Cyberpunk: Another New Wave." The panelists were Bob Silverberg, Greg Benford, Charles Platt, Ed Bryant and ~~in this corner~~, representing Cyberpunkdom, John Shirley and Richard Kadrey. The stances of the opposing sides seemed to be scorn on the part of the cyberpunks for the New Wave and its participants, and the other panelists claiming that cyberpunk was a dangerous trend since it encouraged conformity and imitation by its adherents.

Our anticipation of fireworks was not misplaced, since the panel soon degenerated into vehement accusations by the cyberpunk panelists of scurrilous attack by the other panelists, and by increasingly caustic responses by Silverberg and Platt. The highlight of the panel for me was John Shirley telling Silverberg that he was jealous of Bill Gibson (the most successful of the cyberpunks) but just couldn't admit it to himself (!), but a close second was guest of honor David Brin's standing in the middle of the aisle and trying to whip up the panelists into even more of a frenzy than they were in already. I'm still not sure exactly how cyberpunk differs from the science fiction of the past, but I wouldn't have missed the panel for the world!

From "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," my ConSpiracy report (August 1987)

The Business Meeting: One of the proposals at the business meeting was for each worldcon to pass on its membership list to the next worldcon to be mined for Hugo nomination and membership possibilities. [...] Bob Hillis claimed that the amendment was unworkable because each committee used their own type of computers and recordkeeping. I couldn't resist: I stood up wearing my Ashton-Tate jacket and said, "Speaking as an Ashton-Tate employee, this problem could be easily overcome if everyone would just use dBASE" and sat down to laughter and applause. [...] Later, a woman in a stairwell stopped me and asked if I could repeat what I had said in the meeting. I did, and she said, "I didn't hear you and when I asked the guy in front of me to repeat it, he replied 'Oh, it's just a petty religious dispute.'"

The Hugos: Silverberg got his first award in a long time, as did Brian Aldiss, who started his acceptance speech by saying, "It's been a long time since you gave me one of these, you bastards!" In a lengthy anticlimax, the Hugos were followed by presentations of the First Fandom awards, the Big Heart awards, and the Seiuns (the Japanese Hugos). The awards ceremony was followed by a spectacular fireworks display on the beach. At one point, we were sure the finale had come, but the display kept going. I thought maybe the climax would be a fire portrait of Hugo Gernsback, but that was topped by George RR Martin, who claimed that the fireworks display was going to be the same as the Hugo ceremony: after what appeared to be the finale, it would peter out to nothing, which Mike Glicksohn decided would be "a guy running along the beach with a sparkler."

The Daily Newszine: The parody zine printed the site selection results before the real newszine and included the only decent party list around (even after the parody, the real newszine still didn't print a party list!) and such features as fake Hugos ("BEST LOCUS: September") and the following squib: "AS A REMINDER, the hotel staff has asked that since the hotel is booked solid, they are quite busy. So please, if you could, simply drop money off at the main desk and not bother them."

From "Bring Me the Head of Dennis Dolbear," my Nolacon report (1988) , and the only piece of fan writing for which I was ever asked for copies from people who had heard about it. I was involved in the rescue of the Nolacon programming department, which as of the Fourth of July weekend had no vestige of a program:

One of the best things about having to do the program in a hurry without anyone second-guessing us (and without the time to consult with others) was the opportunity to do kamikaze scheduling. The only thing we had from the previous regime was a stack of answered programming questionnaires. We put people who asked for autographing or reading sessions into a pile and went through it thusly: "You heard of this guy?" "Nope" "Me neither" Whoosh into the reject pile!

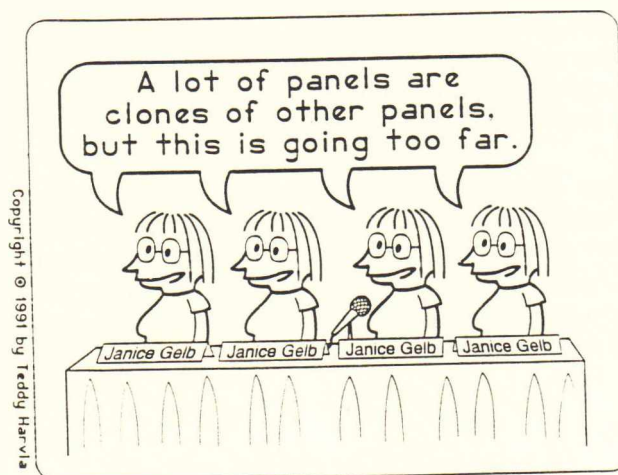
[...] They also had one of the ugliest and most ungainly Hugos ever. The description of "the Hugo rocket in flight" had seemed to more than one person to imply a somewhat horizontal rocket, but instead the rocket was perched upright on a two-foot-or-so column of a black resin material meant to resemble the smoke under a recently launched rocket, but more closely resembling the peanut-butter costume Mike Resnick talked about during the ceremony, called "The Turd." (After winning his and trying to figure out where to put it, Glyer finally put it between his legs after joking about the danger of standing up to applaud too quickly.)

From *Trivial Pursuits* #21, SMOFcon report (November 1988):

Almost every panel ended up talking about Nolacon, which we finally started calling "the N-word." Someone by Saturday afternoon protested that he didn't understand why we were still talking about it, to which I replied "They're still talking about the Titanic, too."

From "The Jewel-Hinged Jew and Other Typos," my ConDiego report (October 1990):

Or maybe I should say ConDigeo, one of the more blatant typos in a program book and pocket program chock full of them. My favorite (and the source of the name of this con report) was in a listing of guest of honor Samuel R. Delaney's book, titled in the program book *The Jewel-Hinged Jew* (rather than *Jaw*). Betty Ann Guarino's name was spelled four different ways in the pocket program, and when I saw her in the dealer's room on Sunday, I saw they'd misspelled her name yet another way on her badge. Explanatory rumors for the typos ran from a dyslexic volunteer to the wrong diskette sent to a typesetting house in Tijuana. The myriad typos resulted in many buttons created on the spot: "Three years ago we didn't even know how to spell NAFSiC and now we are one," "NAF(SIC) '90," "Real con comms don't use splel checkers," "San Diego, Typhocon I, NASFiC '90," and my favorite, "Hello. My name is ConDigeo Montoya. You killed my weekend. Prepare to die."



From "Magic Moments," my MagiCon report (September 1992):

Rumors of draconian insistence on photo IDs were confirmed by chairman Joe Siclari's 12-year-old son Danny being unable to register without a photo ID, despite two committee members at Registration vouching for him. I happened to be at Registration when Arthur Hlavaty tried to register without a photo ID and managed to vouch for him by standing behind him and proving I knew him by spelling his last name from memory! Erstwhile old-time fan photographer Jay Kay Klein later told us he'd managed to overcome the requirement by pulling a photo from his portfolio showing him sitting on a con panel with Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov.

[...] Thanks to great work by program developer Priscilla Olson, we had hardly any holes to fill in the schedule. So, when people from time to time showed up at the door and announced that they had sold a few books, would like to be on panels, and could talk about anything, we felt safe in telling them to check the pocket program and if they found a panel with three or fewer speakers on a subject for which they felt especially qualified, to let us know.

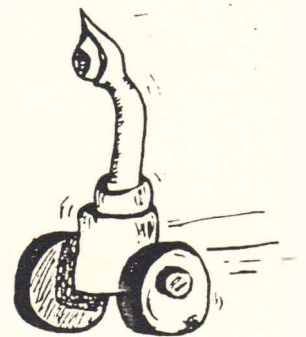
Well, safe except for one guy, who came back the next day having circled several solo speeches and all the children's programming in the Clarion, for which we hadn't bothered listing the person running the program. I told him that panels listed for the Clarion were children's programming. One such program was called "Making Rockets," and he replied that he could talk about that subject to kids, too. To which I responded that no, they'd be cutting them out. To which he said, "Oh, you mean the panel's cancelled?"

From *Trivial Pursuits* #54, Westercon report (July 1994):

As I was entering an elevator, I was grabbed by fellow northern Californian Crickett Fox for the worldcon tradition: "6 pm. The Bar." Let me tell you, if a bomb had gone off in the Hilton bar, fandom would now be without most of its SMOFs (which to many of you may not sound like a bad idea). The conversation got really silly when we started postulating a mock NASFiC in 99 bid for the Hawaiian Islands. We decided that VolConO would be at a different hotel on a different island every day of the con, thus giving new meaning to the phrase "I'm in the other hotel." The slogan of the con? "The Permanent Floating Worldcon Committee Brings You the Permanent Floating NASFiC." We also decided that Opening Ceremonies would feature a traditional "throw a virgin into the volcano" ceremony. Many names were proposed but Robert Sacks was the eventual final nominee. We also decided on Jack Lord at the Media GoH.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #60, NASFiC/Dragon*Con report (July 1995):

The Art Show entrance turned out to be a maze of individual artist tables all jammed together. The Art Show itself consisted of one-way serpentine aisles of an average width of about 30 inches. (Chicago fan Ross Pavlac measured one aisle at a 26-inch clearance!) Not only was it impossible to step back to get any kind of perspective on the art, but if you did want to take a closer look at anything, you were holding up all the people behind you. At one point, we were looking at a red blurry piece of art at the bottom of the display and trying to figure out what it was: the name of the piece, Giza, didn't provide much of a clue. Finally, we realized that the piece had been hung sideways: the pyramid in question was in the middle of the rectangular piece, which was hanging near the floor!



From "Pipers & Plaid," my Intersection con report (September 1995):

At 4 in the afternoon, Martin called me and Tina into the SFWA suite [next door to Program Ops] to tell us that John Brunner had passed away. Besides the initial shock, we had to deal with how to disseminate the news, how to officially acknowledge the death at the con, and myriad other details, complicated by the fact that Brunner's wife spoke very little English. We decided to use the suite as a decompression room for con staff, which turned out to be a good thing, since several of the British fans were really shellshocked at the news of Brunner's passing; more, they said, than they would have expected to be... Not long after I opened Program Ops at 10 a.m., Philadelphia fan Sara Paul came in with a visibly upset Robert Silverberg, who volunteered to help eulogize John Brunner if we decided to do some sort of memorial event. I thanked him profusely, since it's not the sort of thing you want to have to ask someone to do... A few of us managed to convince the majority that a proposed memorial service for Brunner Sunday morning was not a good idea, as a small turnout wouldn't look well, besides the fact that we really didn't have time to organize it properly... The Hugo ceremony started with a nice tribute to Brunner by Robert Silverberg, who asked for a standing ovation rather than a moment of silence, which helped the somewhat rough transition to the lighter part of the evening.

... We were dragged from the Old Pharts party by Colin Harris, who insisted that we absolutely had to go to the ballroom to see the Astral Pole, a quaint British custom involving a broomstick and twisting oneself into a pretzel. British fan (and former worldcon chair himself) Peter Weston couldn't understand why Eve and I found this and the other athletic event going on (walking one's hands on beer cans as far out as they could go and then attempting to return to the starting point while leaning on only one beer can) rather odd.

From "I Go Hugo," my LACon II report (October 1996):

Then came the major gaffe of the evening. Frederik Pohl – despite having received two letters (to which he responded) pre-convention naming the two awards we wanted him to present, and despite my saying in the pre-ceremony reception that the presenters should keep in mind how many awards they were presenting, and despite all people at the reception having been handed the ceremony program – still managed to get off stage after presenting his first award. By the time I heard about this on my headset, Pohl was already back in the audience. I quickly ran up the backstage stairs, grabbed a stud muffin, and hissed at him to go on stage and say "Fred will be right back" and sent an usher to get him back. Unfortunately, instead of Fred passing this off as a joke, he chose instead to say that "all he asks is to be informed what he's supposed to be doing" or words to that effect. This was later reported in *Locus*, which really upset me, since I thought I'd done everything possible to let the presenters and nominees know what was happening at all times. But short of taking out an ad in *Locus*, there was no way to let everyone who was at the ceremony or reads *Locus* know that it wasn't my fault.

From "Texas Tales," my LoneStarCon report (September 1997):

On the Religion in SF panel, the fourth panelist was Dan Gallagher, who during his introduction outlined the entire plot of his book. After some pointed hints, we managed to get the microphone back. The moderator began with a question about how our faith influenced our work... Gallagher began talking about when he had felt the call to turn his life over to a higher power, and whether other people in the audience had felt the same, and wouldn't they like to come up and talk about it? Appalled, I had a whispered discussion with the moderator and after some very pointed hints, she managed to get the mike back. The moderator firmly announced that the panel was solely to talk about religion as it pertained to science fiction, and turned the panel away from the quickly developing revival meeting it almost became. After another incident with Gallagher, we basically stopped giving him the mike...

My noon panel was Fandom Online. Guess who plopped down in a chair at the end and started taking out copies of his book and photocopied handouts? You guessed it, the dread Dan Gallagher. I knew I was really tired but even through my fog I was pretty sure he didn't belong on this panel. I got Randy Smith, who was sitting in the front row, to double-check in the program book while I turned and told Gallagher politely (in case by some miracle he was on the panel) that the subject was Fandom Online, which had nothing to do with literary SF, so I was going to have to ask him not to talk about his book. He sputtered a bit and said something about "it's only for my intro" and I repeated that it was inappropriate for the panel topic and asked him to put his books away. He stood up, said in a very loud voice "You have been very rude and I am extremely insulted," gathered up his stuff and walked out.

[Needless to say, he wasn't scheduled for the panel. When I mentioned this incident to Lori Wolf, with whom I was on a panel next and whose husband had worked on programming, she said she'd heard he'd added himself to about 6 panels. With growing suspicion, I checked the pocket program and sure enough, he wasn't supposed to be on the Religion in SF panel either.]

Trip Reports

From *Verities & Balderdash* #13, the first full zine after I moved to Jerusalem (January 1980):

My everyday existence has changed radically. Firstly, I'm taking buses everywhere (along with 90% of the rest of the population) which becomes rather awkward when carrying grocery bags, typewriters to be fixed, etc. Plus, there's no such thing as a transfer, which is rather annoying since I live at the last stop of one of the outer lines, and have to take at least two buses to get anywhere at all. Not to mention the pushing and shoving that goes on.

Socially, the entire city's sidewalks roll up at 11:45 p.m. (Tel Aviv is different but it's an anomaly.) The buses stop running at midnight so everything closes up. I never thought I'd miss Denny's, but there's no place to go late at night to sit and drink coffee for an hour or two, let alone get refills. There are cafes but, as I said, they close early and are horribly expensive, charging close to a dollar for a single cup of coffee. I told an Israeli that I met at folkdancing that there were free refills on coffee in most restaurants in America and he flat-out did not believe me.

From *Calculated Tedium* #17 (June 1982, right before Chicon IV whose co-chairs were Larry Propp and Ross Pavlac, who had the nickname "the aardvark" based on a masquerade costume):

I made a trip this month to the San Diego Zoo with Mike Glycer on Memorial Day weekend Sunday. The zoo was fun but tiring. The highlight was probably the aardvark (unfortunately, the koala, my favorite animal, was asleep). Every time we saw some exotic animal I'd kid Glycer "But where's the aardvark?" Lo and behold, near the end of the day we saw a bunch of people walking through a darkened passageway in a cave-like structure and there was the aardvark – stretched out on his back with his head thrown back, totally zonked. I was dying for a camera so we could do something putrid about the situation in re: worldcon but unfortunately we had to let the golden opportunity pass. (Glycer's comment was: "That's just Pavlac saying saying 'Let Propp do it!'"")

From "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," my first trip to the UK (August 1987):

Stratford: Shakespeare's birthplace is the entire industry of the town, and I dutifully went through the house. The most amazing thing to me about the exhibits was the fact that there has been a tourist stand there since 1821! Ironically, the only letter written to Shakespeare still extant is one from a friend asking to borrow 30 pounds.

The signs in England provided a constant source of amusement due to their incredible gentility. One in Warwick Castle said "Gentlemen must wear top attire before entering castle." Other goodies included one Neil saw in a men's room that said "Gentlemen: you will please go now and

wash your hands" and one I saw in Brighton that said "Dog fouling of the footway is an offence. Please do not take your dog into this pedestrian area if it is likely to offend."



The British Museum: We saw a fascinating exhibit of the history of clocks and watches and an exhibit of oriental porcelain, but the highlight of the Museum for me was the adjoining British Library. There are breathtaking exhibits of gilded calligraphy, historical music manuscripts, and originals of the Magna Carta, Wellington's letter announcing the victory at Waterloo, and other priceless manuscripts. (There was also a case of Beatles memorabilia, including the scraps of paper on which were drafted "Yesterday" and "She Loves You," photos from early Liverpool appearances, and a letter from John to a friend containing an obscenity that I only hope is not considered the flowering of twentieth-century musical genius at its best.)

Local atmosphere: On our way out of the con hotel in search of tea, Melinda and I bumped into Charles Platt, who went into raptures describing the amusement pier at the end of the boardwalk, which he called "a true representation of the best of Britain's past, all the charm of a lost era." Both Melinda and I had noticed the pier and took a stroll down there, whereupon we decided that if this was the best of Britain's past, no wonder they lost the Empire. It was a typical tacky seaside pier with ghastly smelling fast food stands, rusting rides, dinky shooting galleries, and a little pathetic play area at the end. The only thing that gave it even a little charm was the decorative wrought iron and an incongruous lace shop among the souvenir stands.

From "The Grand Tour," a report on a trip to Europe that included Paris, Venice, Florence, Zurich and Geneva (November 1989):

Paris: The Louvre turned out to be very confusing, with three different "districts" not all of which are connected logically by stairwell. Sculptures was first and by the time we'd seen most of the antiquities, the Venus de Milo didn't look all that different from the many other incomplete statues around. The route to the painting sections we wanted to see led us right past the Mona Lisa. Due to having seen an untold number of reproductions, I'm ashamed to admit that seeing the real thing didn't thrill me all that much. We did find out one interesting thing when a jerk tourist, despite signs everywhere warning against it, took a flash photograph. A sensor in the glass case that protects the painting immediately dimmed the glass and a nearby guard gave the rude tourist a loud lecture.

Florence: Ever since reading Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *The Palace*, I've had a thing about Florence and the de Medicis. The Chapel of Princes at the Medici Chapel proved to be a highlight for me: a magnificent marble room, predominantly green marble with mosaics on the walls and floor, with huge statues of the six dukes buried there and a large altar.

From there, we went to the Academy to see Michelangelo's David. This statue lived up to everything I'd heard about it – probably the greatest sculpture ever, you would swear that any minute it could come alive despite its large scale. It proved to be the only “famous” sight on the trip that still moved me despite the many reproductions I'd seen, and that I truly felt deserved its worldwide acclaim.

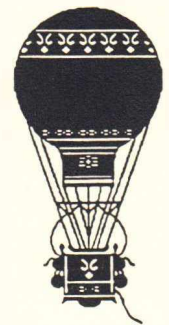
After dinner, we stumbled in the cold wind through an old neighborhood in search of what Frommer claimed was the best gelato in Italy. Eventually we found it, and posted on the wall was a review claiming Vivoli was “the best ice cream in the world” – from the *San Francisco Chronicle*!

Venice: Finding our way back to the hotel from San Marco Plaza proved to be an experience. There aren't really any intersections per se in Venice, since there is no traffic and therefore no traffic lights. We'd bought a map, but the standard Venetian walk takes you down a small street where you end up in a plaza (campo) and then other streets shoot off the campo and your street may continue and may not. (Needless to say, we hadn't marked our route on our way to San Marco Plaza.) Thanks to this charming geography, there are small yellow signs posted every once in a while near the street signs with arrows pointing to various main tourist destinations: San Marco, the Rialto Bridge, and the Accademia Museum. Luckily, our hotel was next door to the last-mentioned museum so we finally managed to get back to our room.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #28, a report on a hot air balloon trip in the Napa wine country that I'd won in a raffle at my company's holiday party (March 1990):

To inflate the hot air balloon, first cold air from a fan and then a large flame are used. The basket in which you stand has barely enough room for the six passengers and the pilot. The balloons land in and take off from available fields or roads close to local vineyards. We were told the pilot can maneuver vertically to within an inch of a desired location.

Except for the first lift off the ground, we felt no motion in the balloon itself. My mental picture had been of cold wind whipping my hair, but of course the balloon travels with the wind so there's no sensation of windiness. The ground gets closer or further away, but you barely feel that the balloon is moving. Another surprise was the ability to talk to people on the ground. At one point, we had been hovering at about 50 feet, watching a rabbit run through one of the vineyards. A dog took out after it, and the balloon pilot casually leaned over the side of the basket and told its owner what had happened!



The quiet and peacefulness of the balloon ride explain why people are anxious to do it again once they've had the experience. Our morning was especially beautiful, with snow from a recent storm still on the mountains and morning mist rising from the hills.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #36, a trip to New Orleans for NOSF3 (August 1991):

A group of us went to Cafe du Monde for breakfast and the beignets were as good as I remembered. After a brief rain shower we split up, and Vic, Melinda, and I toured the French Quarter, seeing such sights as a toy soldier shop, an antique weapons store and, the high point, a voodoo museum. I refused to pay for a tour of the latter and waited downstairs in the shop for Vic and Melinda to go through. They came downstairs convulsed, gasping out “We really wish you'd taken the tour.” Seems the proprietor, an elderly black man with a very long braided grey beard and matching hair had, about halfway through the tour, claimed to be a rabbi!

From *Calculated Tedium II* #10 (November 1985):

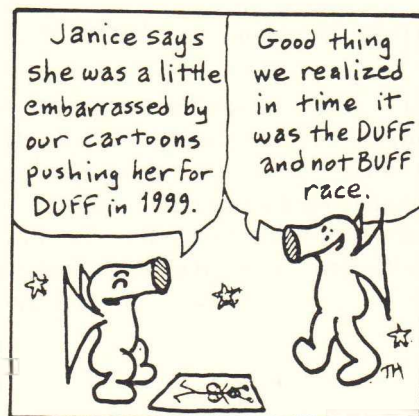
Readjusting to America hasn't been as hard as I thought it would be, possibly because I'm in such familiar surroundings in Miami that the shock is reduced. The size and variety of cars on the road really surprised me, as did the selection of stuff in the supermarket – whole aisles for stuff like cleaning supplies and pet food, where in Israel even items with a lot of different brands at most take up a shelf. Of the three things I think I missed most in Israel – football and decent newspapers and television – the first two are as good as I remembered (I got back just in time to see part of a Dolphins victory over the Jets), but network television seems incredibly asinine. I watched my first-ever episode of "Dynasty" and was appalled at the ridiculous plot and even dumber dialogue, then I watched the Christmas episode of "Highway to Heaven" and was even more appalled. The TV shows in Israel may have had laughable production values and amateur announcers but at least they granted the viewer some intelligence.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #57, describing my stint as a bridesmaid in Mike Glycer's wedding in Branson, MO (January 1995):

Since this was mostly Diana's home turf, I wanted to tell some stories about Mike from our shared past. One of the stories I told I introduced by saying that this was not the first wedding that Mike and I had both attended that was being held at the same time as an important game for my Miami Dolphins [the Miami/Kansas City playoff game was at the same time as the reception]. In 1985, we'd been at a wedding at the same time as the Super Bowl featuring Miami vs. San Francisco – I had promised to be one of the hostesses without realizing it was the date of the Super Bowl. Mike had thoughtfully run back and forth from the television to the house's kitchen, letting me know what was happening. About ten minutes after I finished telling this anecdote, the pastor came by and told me the halftime score of the Miami/Kansas City game!

From "Pipers & Plaid," my Scotland trip report (September 1995):

The Edinburgh Military Tattoo: The setting was spectacular; all through the evening I had to keep reminding myself that the impressive castle was not just a special effect but the Real Thing, built in the 1100s, that contributed to the stereotype on which modern castle imitations are based... The first band to perform was an Egyptian military band that was laughably awful. They had a fake chariot with a guy holding an ankh and were dressed in bad Pharaoh headdresses. They never did manage to start or stop any tunes on time and their marching was worse than any randomly chosen American college marching band. However, the next "foreign" band, a French unit, made up for that with some nifty routines, including one where the snare drum players circled each other in twos, banging each other's sticks in rhythm while still playing their drums... A lone piper up on the castle ramparts playing a lament for those dead in battle was very moving (despite the &*#@'s who insisted on using flash photography), and the finale of Auld Lang Syne brought the whole audience together.



Musings

From *Verities & Balderdash* #4 for MYRIAD (June 1978):

A paean to fandom: At the risk of hearing violin music playing hearts and flowers, I wanted to say a little bit about what fandom has meant to me since my move to Atlanta. Fandom is a mutual support system, I think. In a world full of plodding, ordinary people doing plodding, ordinary jobs, in which you are forced to do plodding, ordinary jobs to pay the rent, and to act plodding and ordinary most of the time to get along, it is an enormous relief to be among people to whom you can really talk, rather than just chatter. I can almost feel my brain waking up from slumber when I go to an ASFiC meeting or a convention. It welcomes being fed and resents being starved when I have to go back to the mundane world.

I will, you lucky people, spare you the filksongs I wrote in *Verities & Balderdash* #6, although they're definitely rare :->

Production notes from *Verities & Balderdash* #8 (February 1979), in the Golden Era when I was working as a graphic artist at an insurance marketing company and had full and sole access to a CompuGraphic 9600 typesetting machine and a darkroom:

Step 1 – Write zine out longhand.

Step 2 – Typeset zine.

Step 3 – Since available typesetter only has a 15-character display and will not correct after the spacebar is hit, typeset corrections.

Step 4 – Paste up copy on flats, being careful to get lines straight and put corrections on in the right place and straight.

Step 5 – Shoot PMTs (photographic copies of flats) to eliminate paste-up lines.

Step 6 – Reproduce PMTs, either by asking a favor from the busy Quick Copy department or on lousy Savin copiers at work, trying to keep dual-sided copies from misfeeding and ruining count.

Review of *The Number of the Beast* from *Verities & Balderdash* #17 (September 1980):

If Heinlein's doctor claimed his latest operation would get rid of the senile ramblings he's been producing of late in place of novels, Robert A. should definitely demand a refund. I had to force myself to continue reading past the first four chapters, which contained such examples of later-Heinlein sex-obsessed portrayals as a heroine whose degree of nipple protrusion (or lack thereof) indicates her emotional state, characters calling each other randy nanny goats and similar endearments, heroes with "infantile bias" towards teats, etc. *ad nauseam*.

Because it was Heinlein (who, in spite of recent sex-on-the-brain still writes some of the best stories around), I forced myself onward. Unfortunately, even that aspect of Heinlein was disappointing. There was some plot and action thrown in, but barely enough to sustain the book. The Russian/English penal colonies the characters first encounter are outright boring, and we never do get more than a small glimpse of any of the more interesting worlds they visit (with the notable exception of Oz) until they encounter the *Time Enough for Love* enclave (surprise!)

Here we're treated to the same sex-obsessed world we left a few years ago, complete with characters crying for joy at the opportunity to sleep with one another, the ultimate Oedipus complex gratified, plus a free-for-all at the end, the meaning of which is anybody's guess. I usually don't mind self-indulgent authors but this is a little out of hand.

From a mailing comment in *Trivial Pursuits* #2 for SFPA (July 1984):

My favorite "critic second-guessing the author" story happened when I was in journalism school and working at the local New York Times-affiliated newspaper. We had an alcoholic news editor who loved animal pictures and whenever one would come across the AP or UPI wire, he would run it. Well, one of our long-time paste-up artists decided to go back to school part-time and had an afternoon class in newspaper layout and makeup. The teacher decided to use that morning's paper as an object lesson, and pointed out how necessary the picture of the giraffe on the front page was in terms of layout considerations. Dulcy raised her hand and said, "Isn't it possible that the editor just likes animal pictures?" to which the teacher gave an emphatic negative and persisted in her completely erroneous interpretation.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #6, a report on my first game show appearance (June 1986):

With my mother to cheer me on, I arrived at the studio, where we were read the rules of the game ("Sale of the Century") and given a speech by the networks Practices and Standards representative (a legal requirement after the game show scandals of the late 1950s). The champion had won 6 games already, and the other guy had been on "Scrabble" and won two games, so I wasn't too optimistic about my chances of winning – my main two goals were (1) not to make a fool out of myself, and (2) to win enough cash (or prizes to sell) to make a substantial down payment on a new car – living without one in LA is No Fun.

The game was a lot closer than I expected, and when one of the "Instant Bargains" came up I was actually tied for the lead, meaning that whichever of us buzzed first would get a chance at picking the jackpot box one out of three identical boxes: two containing \$100, the third containing \$5000 (the amount increases \$1000 every day until someone picks it). The minute the host mentioned the price of trying for the cash, I hit the buzzer, chose box #2, the hostess brought it over, and there in the box was... \$5000 (in fake money, of course)!!! I ended up losing the game in a tight Speed Round at the end but at that point, who cared?

From a mailing comment in *Trivial Pursuits* #10 (February 1987):

Experience with regular fanzines has nothing to do with experience either with worldcons or with publishing a daily zine for a worldcon. Different skills and knowledge are necessary. If the ***s had had any worldcon experience, for example, they would have known that the Fan Lounge was the place to go if they were looking for fan art for the newszine. *** actually said in MYRIAD that he didn't want a phone in the newszine office or a location close to the action of the con because he didn't want fans dropping in or calling him with items they wanted published in the daily newszine. To me, the point of putting out the zine is to reflect news and activities (and even gossip) of the con, not to serve as the mouthpiece of the Programming Department. I got the feeling that *** felt that input from attending fans would interfere with the "business" of putting out the zine and posting programming changes.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #17 (March 1988):

The Last Emperor was beautiful but boring. I appreciated the cinematography and set decoration, but I found the movie distancing itself from the main character and the time period. Contrary to what I expected, I didn't come out of the movie feeling that I had a deeper understanding of Chinese history, the last emperor, or what life in the Forbidden City was like (thought I certainly know now what the Forbidden City looked like). I didn't develop any sympathy for the lead character because I didn't think the movie really delved into what he was feeling about what was happening to him. So, no Oscar pick for this one. (I may be prejudiced against this movie because my least favorite color is red, and that was the movie's predominant color.)

From *Trivial Pursuits* #21, describing my appearance on Jeopardy (November 1988):

I didn't do too well, as I had trouble getting the timing on the buzzer. I did get an audio Daily Double and our Final Jeopardy was the easiest of the day (they tape five shows a day and mine was the fourth). Even though I came in third, I wasn't that disappointed since I knew it was the timing of the buzzer and not ignorance of the questions, plus I didn't look like a complete idiot, which was my biggest fear. One thing I did accomplish was a plug for George Alec Effinger and George RR Martin. I knew that of the "interesting" things I put down on my card, Alex would pick the SF conventions one, so I planned ahead of time to mention friends, and I actually got the chance!

We were told that just getting on was an accomplishment. They said they test 15,000 people a year and only 425 get on, so even if we did badly on the show, we should be proud. Once you're on, it's just luck which categories you get, whom you play against, and how quickly you acclimate to the buzzer (my nemesis).

Things I found out that I didn't know before:

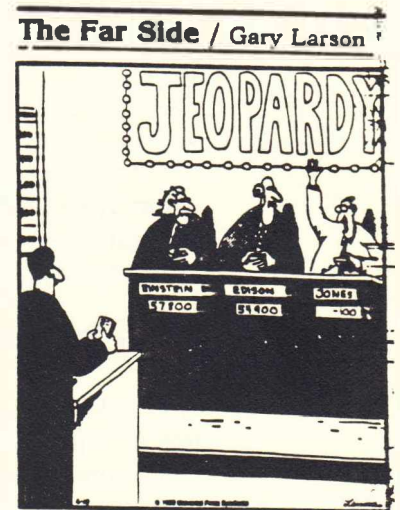
- Alex Trebek is a smarmy, self-satisfied toad
- You get as long as you want to figure out your bet for Final Jeopardy – they even give you a pencil and paper
- If you win more than \$75,000 (!), the excess goes to the charity of your choice
- During commercial breaks, the contestants stand with their backs to the board in case of a flicker on the TV monitors that show the questions
- The questions are programmed into the computer but the category titles at the tops of the columns are cards placed by a guy on a ladder!

From *Trivial Pursuits* #26, a report on the SF earthquake (November 1989):

I was at Candlestick Park (my first and probably only World Series game ever), headed for a concession stand, when the quake hit. Inside the stadium we could hardly feel it at all; in fact, a lot of people, including me, thought it was some fans in the upper deck stamping their feet.

Even after we realized it was an earthquake, it only felt like a small 4.0 roller. People were making jokes about it being a good omen for the Giants, since this was the first game they were to play at home and they were down two games to none. I was so blasé that I continued to wait in the concession line, hoping that the electricity would come back on soon. It was only after I returned to my seat that I discovered how strong the earthquake was: one of our friends had taken out his small Walkman television and when he turned it around to show the section of the Bay Bridge that had collapsed, we knew it was serious.

[...] As luck would have it, half of my building had power and the other half (mine) didn't. Using Rich's flashlight to find mine, I discovered that my 6' brass-and-glass decorative etagere itself was fine: two of the shelves had tilted, spilling and smashing everything on them (including a glass dagger I'd bought at Noreascon 2) but the shelves themselves were fine. When we shone the light in my bedroom, we spotted the TV upside-down on the floor but didn't see any tube residue on the floor. Looking closer, we discovered that my stuffed Pooh bear had fallen first and broken the television's fall!



'Excuse me . . . I know the game's almost over, but just for the record, I don't think my buzzer was working properly.'

From a mailing comment in *Trivial Pursuits* #31 (October 1990):

The reason I get so upset when con programming is a shambles isn't for myself: I generally have a good time just seeing my friends and hanging out at parties. People who come for the parties, the city, and/or to see friends will, as you say, have a good time no matter what the committee does or doesn't do. However, there are many people who do come to cons for the programming and events (probably no one you know or have met but believe me, they exist) and spend a lot of money on airfare and hotel rooms for that purpose. These are the people to whom the committee is responsible; when the programming is bad, disorganized or non-existent, I think it's a disgrace for them not to have lived up to that responsibility and see that these people get what they do and should expect: well-organized and interesting programming and events.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #39 (December 1991)—and nothing's changed...:

On the Middle East Peace Talks in Madrid: Certainly there were some hopeful signs in the talks. I think the issue of the occupied territories could eventually be solved through a compromise, but the one thing that I truly think is not likely to be resolved is the status of Jerusalem. The Israelis will never give up Jerusalem as their capital, and the Palestinians claim this is non-negotiable also. As of this writing, none of the Arab states (save Egypt) or the Palestinians have recognized Israel's right to exist. They are claiming they need a sign of Israel's good will first, but it seems to me that giving up territory just to get people to say you have a right to exist is not a very smart deal—and shouldn't be necessary. It's one thing to say that territory needs to be traded for concessions such as access to foreign trade, the elimination of internal violence thanks to the granting of independent territory to the protesters, water rights, and so on. But just for people to say your country has a right to be there and they won't push you into the sea?

From *Trivial Pursuits* #43 (October 1992):

On the Republican National Convention: This scared the hell out of me. The national convention of one of two American political institutions, and their prime-time speakers were ranting against homosexuality, one-parent families, and a working political spouse. As a Jew, hearing anyone talk about the need for a religious war in this country gives me the shivers; hearing Pat Buchanan's speech gave me the shakes. The anti-gay rhetoric was so strong that the vote in the Bay Area will be seriously affected by it. The most surreal moment to me was the seconding-Quayle's-nomination speech by a Houston Baptist secondary-school teacher, a divorcee for ten years who had successfully raised three sons by herself. This woman said flat out that she believed that God meant for families to have both a father and a mother, and that she understood Quayle's emphasis on family values. All I could think of was this woman had been brainwashed into not believing the evidence of her own life. Pretty scary stuff.

From a mailing comment in *Trivial Pursuits* #46 (April 1993):

I can't remember if I've dealt with this issue or not, but I think African-American sounds rather dumb, although it's certainly not my place to decide what people formerly called "black" should be called. The African connection is so far in the past for most blacks in this country that I would think African culture would have little relation to them, their lives, or their current culture. I think indicating more differences between people is the opposite of "humanistic"; I don't see why we all can't just be Americans celebrating our background cultures without it being noted in every description of us. I know I would find it annoying to be constantly referred to as a Jewish-American, even though I make no secret of my ethnic background.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #47 (June 1993):

The adaptation of **Much Ado About Nothing** is good, and most of the acting is great (with the notable exceptions of Keanu Reeves, who recites most of his lines as if he's reading them out loud for his eighth-grade English class and has no idea what they mean, and Michael Keaton, who mumbles most of Dogberry's very funny lines and needed to be reined in by the director). The color-blind casting of Denzel Washington works very well, and Branagh and Thompson are wonderful. I've always had some problems with the plot, though: Why doesn't anyone, especially Margaret, provide Hero with an alibi at the wedding ceremony? Why would Hero be so quick to accept back a lover who didn't trust her and disgraced her in front of her friends and family? Despite those small quibbles, the movie is a fun romp.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #63 (March 1996):

I don't know about you, but I can't figure out why anyone finds something suspicious in the fact that the top people at the top law firm in a relatively small state capitol like Little Rock had friends at the top financial place in town, who had friends who were judges in town. I'd be more inclined to be suspicious if these people said they didn't know or socialize with each other.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #74 (December 1997):

I just heard about the death of Ross Pavlac, dead only two months or so after the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. I'd known Ross for nearly 20 years: one of the first "real" jobs I did at a worldcon was working for him at the Noreascon 2 masquerade. I crashed in the Chicago in 82 suite the year they won their bid. Another time, Ross gave me, plus a few other women, a "SMOF Babes of Fandom" button he had made up at a con where a bunch of female SMOFs had been sitting on a bed at a room party and he was struck by the picture. Ross was not an easy person – he was charming and bright but also abrasive and arrogant. I had a falling out with him three years ago after he posted what I thought were inappropriately private details about Mike and Diana Glycer (Diana being his ex-wife) on CompuServe. I had basically stopped speaking to him at cons. However, when I heard the news of his illness I wrote right away to let him know I would, as he had requested of Christian and Jewish fans at large, offer healing prayers for him. I am, of course, very glad that I made up with him before he passed away.

From *Trivial Pursuits* #75 (February 1998):

In other sports news, I take personal credit for jinxing Tara Lipinski before the Ladies Short program at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships by saying out loud to the television "I hope you fall on your skinny underaged butt" right before she did! (To be even-handed about this, I disliked Michelle Kwan's skating when she was a scrawny pre-pubescent stick figure too.) I prefer figure skaters to be equally talented in athletic ability and artistic skills, and not just fling their arms around to the order of their choreographers. Other moves shouldn't be just a resting place between jumps.

Speaking of a resting place, I've come to one here. I hope you enjoyed these excerpts from my past. Cheers!

