



ASKANCE #54

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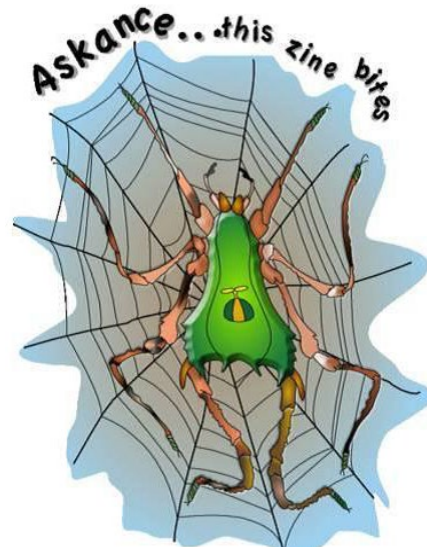
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What you have here in your hands (or on screen) is another Mythical Publication. Copies of this fine, thrice a year appearing fanzine can be had for The Usual, which means expressed interest, submission and eventual inclusion of articles and artwork, letters of comment, and cold hard cash in the amount of \$3.00 USD if you want a printed copy mailed to you. Bribes are also accepted. Of course, if you send in letters of comment, reviews, articles, and artwork, you just earned a life-time free subscription. Consider yourself a friend of the cosmos. This fanzine is available on <https://efanzines.com/>.

contents

<i>Bemused Natterings</i>	3
<i>The Wisdom of Burma Shave™ Road Signs</i>	6
<i>Parodies Lost/Parodies Regain'd:</i>	
filk songs from Sam Long.....	11, 19, 35, 36
<i>Mini-Review:"Wednesday"</i>	12
<i>Amusing Musings</i> , by Bill Fischer.....	13
<i>From the Stfnal Personal History Files</i>	17
<i>The Legend of Blitz Knutson</i>	18
<i>Figby</i> , by Bill Fischer.....	20
<i>Fanzine Reviews</i>	21
<i>From the Hinterlands</i>	23
<i>Regional Convention Calendar</i>	30
<i>What's Next</i>	37



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Clip art & internet – 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 16, 18, 23, 26

Soldier Dick Pub photo by John Purcell

Member: FWA (since 2007!)



Work, work, work, work! Hello, girls!

As work on this fanzine began a month ago, the semester was rapidly approaching its end, and man, was I glad for that. For the first time in my teaching career, I was slogging through a double-overload course schedule. That means instead of a typical full load of a mere five classes, throughout this Fall semester I had seven classes. If that sounds like a lot, that is because it really is A. Lot.

There are a couple positive sides to this, though. First off, obviously it means larger paychecks for the Fall semester. That was definitely helpful. The other positive aspect is that all of these classes required only one course prep since they were all ENGL 1301 classes, a.k.a., English Composition and Rhetoric I. When Spring 2023 rolls around in the third week of January next year I will have only two ENGL 1301's and three ENGL 1302 (Literature and Composition) classes as my regularly scheduled full load. It is too early to know if enrollment for paired classes will be up, resulting in my being asked to cover an additional ENGL 1301 class. (Paired classes means an ENGL 1301 class is tag-teaming with a DIRW 0327 class: Directed Integrated Reading and Writing, intermediate level. Letters and numbers have specific meanings in academia.) Meanwhile, fall term ended three days ago (December 16, 2022).

The last month of each semester is always a slog due to the major researched essays being turned in at the end of November, giving all of us ~~maseochists~~ English Comp teachers two weeks to grade our piles of papers. In my case that was projected to be somewhere in the neighborhood of 120 essays. The last day of classes was December 7th, and finals began on December 9th. Why the Powers That Be changed the beginning of final exams to a Friday is beyond me; those in the trenches all suspect this has something to do with getting the heck out of Dodge City before anyone has the chance to file grade complaints.

In any event, if this particular issue seems slammed together rather quickly, the preceding is why. Deal with it. I have to; therefore, no complaints from the peanut gallery.

TAFF Reducks¹

Yes, Virginia, once again the time arose for nominees to put their names forward as candidates for the 2023 East to West Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund race. While it is true that this year's race was likewise East to West due to the 2022 World Science Fiction Convention being held in Chicago, Illinois (ChiCon 8: collect the whole series!), next year's TAFF race needs to be a repeat in that direction thanks to next year's Worldcon being held in Chengdu, China. Anytime the Worldcon is not held in North America – danged

¹ This issue was begun the week before Thanksgiving, 2022, and resumed after Fall term concluded. Read on for details on this year's TAFF race – especially here in the footnotes!

provincial Yankees! Oh...wait a minnit... - then a NASFiC (North American Science Fiction Convention) is arranged, and in July of 2023 that will be north of the border in Winnipeg, Canada. Named Pemmi-con 2023, the dates for this event are July 20 – 23, 2023 (sounds appropriate), and just for you, my favorite readers, the website for pertinent information is <https://main.winnipeg2023.ca/>. Personally, I would love to attend, but with Corflu 2023 scheduled to be held in Belfast, Northern Ireland from March 31st – April 2nd the same year, this would stretch our travel funds. Decisions, decisions.

At any rate, the voting period for the TAFF 2023 East-to-West race is now open. All the necessary hoopla is available at <https://taff.org.uk/>, in addition to a wealth of historical documents about this, the longest-running travel fan fund on this planet.

Oh. I suspect that many of you are wondering why the NASFiC 2023 is called “Pemmi-con,” and here is why. The reason comes from that convention’s website:

Canada has always been a mosaic of peoples from many parts of the globe. Pemmi-con hopes to show you the mosaic that is First Nations, Metis and Canadian Science Fiction. And, maybe, just maybe, we could do a programme on making pemmican: dried meat which would be traditionally bison but could be moose, caribou, deer and even beef, pounded and then mixed with an equal amount of melted fat, and various berries; how to keep your hunger at bay when on the hunt for new things.



Ho-kay.... Here on the left is what pemmican looks like. Native Americans – scratch that; I think that phrase is not politically correct anymore - indigenous tribes of North America have been making this jerky for centuries, if not millennia. I wonder if this will be on NASFiC’s banquet menu with sides of bouncing potatoes and crottled greeps.

At any rate, the nomination period ended on December 4, 2022, and voting allegedly began on 9 December and closes on 11 April 2023.² I use the word “allegedly” because when I attempted to bash out this issue over this past Thanksgiving Holiday weekend no-one had yet announced their intentions to run for TAFF (see footnote 2). Murmurings of discussions in smoke-filled chatrooms on the internet surreptitiously drifted out that indicated the nominating period might be extended, but no decision along this line was ever announced. All I know is that a lot of American fans are excited to go to Winnipeg, Canada, and enjoy the gathering of the clan up there next summer. It all sounds good to me, so I could not understand why no-one had yet stepped forward.

Maybe it’s because nobody knows which beer goes best with pemmican.

Meanwhile, back on the local convention scene...

Apparently Aggiecon is not dead yet. Cepheid Variable, the Texas A&M University science fiction club, has announced that that Aggiecon 52 will be held over the weekend of March 3rd to 5th, 2023, on campus in the Memorial Student Center, where it has been held before. Unfortunately, this is no longer the fine and

² On December 3rd, 2022, the TAFF Administrators announced that Sandra Bond (UK) and Mikolaj Kowalewski (POL) are this year’s nominees. Best of luck to both of them! The official ballot is now available on the TAFF website (see above for the link).

wonderful student-run science fiction convention of the past. Essentially, the gamers have taken over, which is something in which I have no interest. This development is not and should not be unexpected because the nerds and geeks on campus play lots and lots of video games of all kinds. I have never really been into video games, so my disinterest in this aspect of “sci-fi” is understandable. I do understand the trend, but even so, I will not be there - unless, of course, a verifiable Science Fiction Author of Note is a Guest of Honor. Until then, do not expect to see me at Aggiecon anymore.

Genzine or Perzine: Which is it?

A good question, especially considering how much of each *Askance* issue is written by me. Not only that, but I already have a personalzine running, *Askew*, which has now reached 36 issues. That’s a pretty good run, if I may say so myself. That little zine started back in 2015, and recent issues have covered all sorts of topics, such as my musical endeavors, books and magazines read, places I have been, current politics, and so on and so forth. If I really wanted to keep *Askew* running for three more years – well, two and a half, to be relatively exact – I would have another fanzine with yet another anniversary issue reason to annoy Nic Farey. As appealing as that prospect may be, I have been thinking that since I do the vast majority of the writing in *Askance*, I might as well blend the two fanzines. If I do that, then the question becomes, should I do one last *Askew*? Rename the lettercolumn in *Askance* something like “Skewed Hinterlands”? “*Askews* me”? What to do, what to do. Oh, woe is me...

This is what keeps me awake at night.

Who is in this issue

Two familiar faces return and a hearty welcome to this issue’s cover artist. Just for shits and giggles I found an old article that I wrote over forty years ago, which first appeared in the pages of Marty Cantor’s fanzine *Holier Than Thou* #12. So yeah, it’s been a while since that article has seen the light of day. After you read it you might think it should have been left to rot in the dark.

Bill Fischer

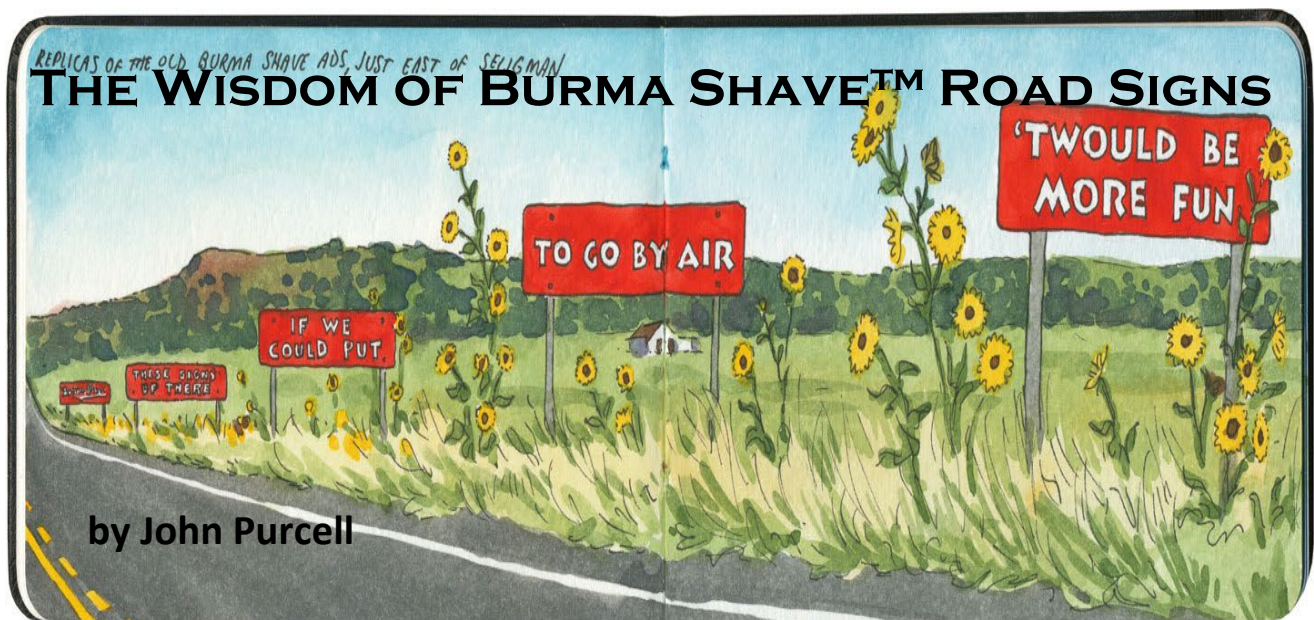
One of my best buds from my college years *mumbledy-mumble* years ago is back with a few odds and ends culled from his Facebook postings and by my hounding him for yet another Figby installment. So here he is once again – Figby, that is, via Bill – this time with an added touch of seasonal humor. Enjoy!

Sam Long

And all y’all thought there weren’t any of Sam’s filk songs left to publish. Guess what? You all thought wrong! Here in these pages is the last batch from his filk song collection *Parodies Lost, Parodies Regain’d*. You know what to expect from these. I decided to spread the wealth around this issue to keep everyone’s head in the game – or something like that. No matter what, this is fun stuph. Thanks again, Sam!

Ulrika O’Brien

It is my great pleasure to include a lovely original work from the co-editor of *Beam* as this issue’s cover art. Ulrika recently chaired the 2022 Corflu – nicknamed Pangloss – over the October 21-23, 2022, weekend – in Vancouver, Canada, and even sent along a batch of filler art to use. Obviously, Ulrika is a woman of great compassion who hates to see a faneditor grovel like a starving dog whimpering at the back door in a driving rain. I suspect she has been through this experience before, right, Nic?



Back in *Askance* #52 I ran a brief original verse based on the classic Burma Shave™ jingles that once were part of the American landscape, lining the highways that crisscrossed the country for a lengthy chunk of the 20th century. Not surprisingly, two loc-writers picked up on that and shared verses that appeared in last issue's lettercolumn, Richard Dengrove and Lloyd Penney. Both of them mentioned the book *The Verse by the Side of the Road* by Frank Rowsome, Jr. (1979), which not only provides the history behind these Burma Shave™ signs but reprints every single one of them – 600 jingles *en toto* – that adorned American roadways from 1927 to 1963.

As promised in a response to Lloyd Penney's loc in *Askance* #53, what follows is a visual-verse-with-commentary reprinting of assorted Burma Shave™ verses that I found on a website devoted to these poetic gems – ah, the wonders of the internet! – accompanied by assorted clip art car cartoons (see what I did there?) likewise nicked off the internet or via clip art tab on the Word 11 toolbar. Whatever works. This was a fun diversion from grading essays the first two weeks of this month: grade six or eight essays, work on this article; repeat as needed. As you can see, I needed this diversion a lot! These are arranged in chronological order so you can see how these jingles evolved – or is that devolved – over the decades.

Anyway. I hope all y'all enjoy this as much as I enjoyed putting this together.

So, this is how it all began. Note the lack of rhyme schemes or catchy rhythmic patterns typical of most advertising slogans:

1927

Shave the modern way
No brush
No lather
No rub-in
Big tube 35 cents drug stores
Burma-Shave

Goodbye! shaving brush
Half a pound for
Half a dollar
Very fine for the skin
Druggists have it
Cheer up face the war is over
Burma-Shave

This open form (free verse? It sure wasn't haiku) poetry format did not last long. By the time the Stock Market crashed, Burma Shave signs had started rhyming on a regular basis:

1929

Every shaver
Now can snore
Six more minutes
Than before
By using
Burma-Shave



Since the Great War was still very much in people's memory, verse regarding that war continued well into the next decade:

1930

Cheer up face
The war is past
The "h" is out
Of shave
At last
Burma-Shave

1936

Riot at Drug store
Calling all cars
100 customers
Bought all 99 jars
Burma-Shave

1933

The millionth man
Has joined
Our ranks
Of happy shavers
Many thanks!
Burma-Shave

In 1939 the rhymes gave way to a special series of snappy one-liners, such as these:

Once a day the easy way
Burma-Shave

No trick to click if quick to pick
Burma-Shave

Other days -- other ways. Nowadays
Burma-Shave

Deluxe de looks with
Burma-Shave

Those one-liners never really caught the public's favor, so back to the short stanza format it was. Not surprisingly, during World War II most of the signs were in support of the troops. However, not all of them did, as these two zingers attest:

1942

Iceman's grandson
Now full grown
Has cooling system
All his own
He uses
Burma-Shave

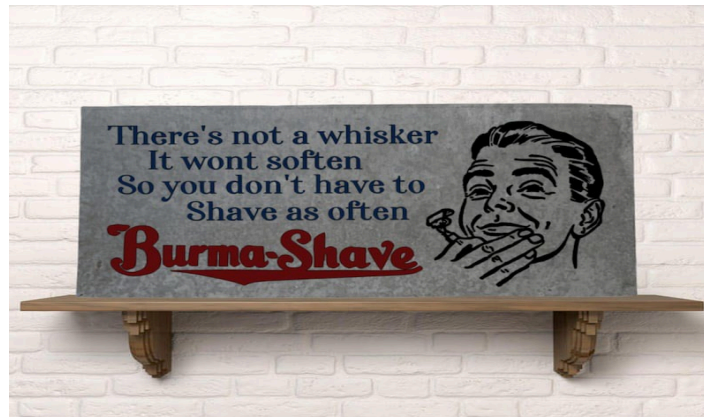
1945

She raised Cain
When he raised stubble
Guess what
Smoothed away
Their trouble?
Burma-Shave

Post-war Burma Shave™ signs didn't lose a beat to address all sorts of topics ranging from politics to bathroom hygiene to safe driving and some that simply were fun to read:

1947

Substitutes
That promise perfection
Are like
Some candidates
After election
Burma-Shave



1948

I've read
These signs
Since just a kid
Now that I shave
I'm glad I did
Burma-Shave

Little Bo-Peep
Has lost her Jeep
It struck
A truck
When she went to sleep
Burma-Shave

1950

These signs
We gladly
Dedicate
To men who've had
No date of late
Burma-Shave

He tried
To cross
As fast train neared
Death didn't draft him
He volunteered
Burma-Shave

1951

She eyed
His beard
and said, "no dice"
the wedding's off -
I'll COOK the rice!
Burma-Shave

1953

Substitutes
Are like a girdle
They find some jobs
They just
Can't hurdle
Burma-Shave

Gut rasiert? (German)
La major afeitada (Spanish)
The best shave
In any language
Burma-Shave

1959

Men
With whiskers
'Neath their noses
Oughta have to kiss
Like eskimoses
Burma-Shave

He lit a match
To check gas tank
That's why
They call him
Skinless frank
Burma-Shave

1960

Thirty days
Hath September
April
June and the
Speed offender
Burma-Shave

1959

The poorest guy
In the
Human race
Can have a
Million-dollar face
Burma-Shave



Dear lover boy,
Your photo came
But your doggone beard
Won't fit
the frame
Burma-Shave

Obviously, these signs reflected the changing interests of American society. I remember seeing them whenever dad drove our family from Minneapolis back to New York City, where he and mom were from and their families still lived, especially after Kennedy's election victory over Nixon in November of 1960. I can still remember mom's giggle as she read these signs aloud to my brother and I. Thanks to these signs, Rick and I actually practiced our reading skills during those long drives in the late fifties and early sixties. Sadly, this would not last for very long.



Because then it became 1963...

If a gift
You must choose
Give him one
He'll like
To use
Burma-Shave

Pedro
Walked
Back home, by golly
His bristly chin
Was hot to Molly
Burma-Shave

We don't
Know how
To split an atom
But as to whiskers
Let us at 'em
Burma-Shave

The chick
He wed
Let out a whoop
Felt his chin and
Flew the coop
Burma-Shave

This small sampling from the last year of these roadside verses provides a bit of insight into the times: atomic power, sexual revolution, and the rising number of Hispanic immigrants to America.

The end finally came when the Burma Shave Company was sold to Phillip Morris of the American Safety Razor Corporation on February 7, 1963. As a result, Burma-Shave's famous signs were removed from American roadways, taking decades of cherished memories with them. Today, only one full set of Burma-Shave signs exists, and it's housed in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Taken as a whole, they reflect changes in American society throughout the heart of the twentieth century.

The long-running series came to an end with this very last road sign rhyme, which perfectly summed up this unique American Legacy:

Our fortune
Is your
Shaven face
It's our best
Advertising space
Burma-Shave

Good old-fashioned American commercialism has not been the same since.

This fanzine supports Sandra Bond for TAFF 2023!

From Sam Long's filk song collection, *Parodies Lost, Parodies Regain'd*:

{Editor's note: in this issue are the remaining filk songs that Sam sent in five years ago. I wonder if he has any others lying about? Hmm...}

ON THE ROAD TO NF3

(Original about 1965)

'Er petticut was yaller, an' 'er beanie cap was green,
An' her name, 'er name was Feghild—jes' the same as Ompa's *cwen*.
An' I seen 'er furst a-pubbin on a duper black as soot
Am' a-wastin' fannish kisses on an 'eathen Idol's foot.
 Bloomin' idol o' egoboo,
 Wot they call the Ghreat Ghod Ghu—
 Plucky lot she cared for idols when I gave 'er some corflu!
 On the road to NF3...

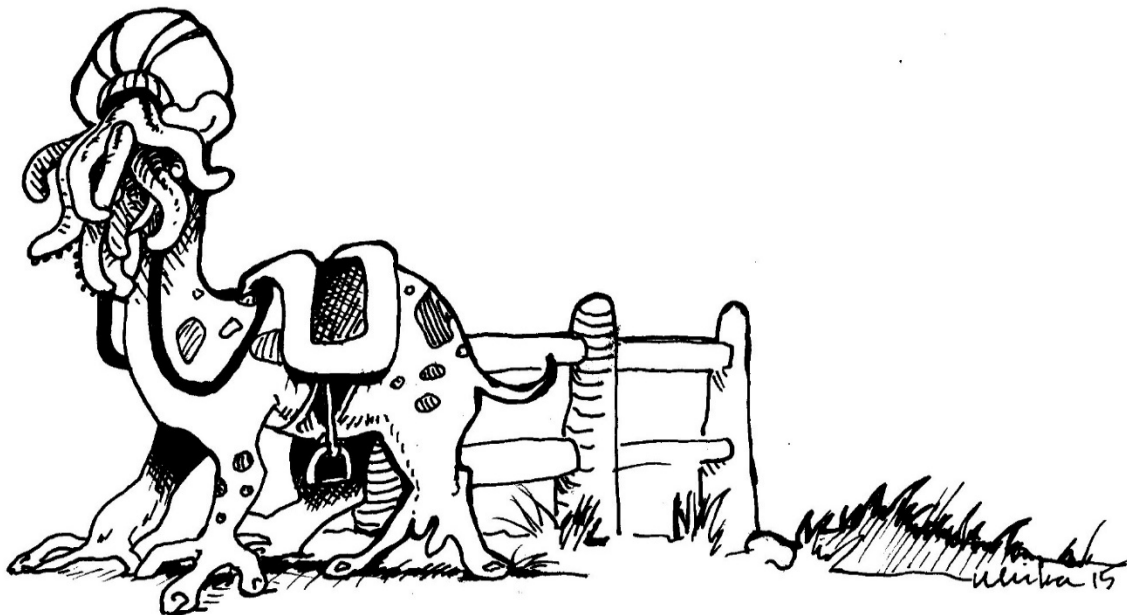
When the mist was on the slushpile an' the bheer was getting' low,
She'd git 'er little bagpipe an' she'd play "Qwertyuio".
With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er typer goin' thud,
We uster watch the neos and the fakefans pubbin' crud.
 Neofans a-pubbin' crud
 In the squidgy, squudgy mud,
 Where the repro was so awful that it chilled a trufan's blood.
 On the road to NF3...

But all that's shove be'ind me—long ago an' far from me
An' there ain't no busses runnin' from Mundane to NF3,
An' I'm learnin' up in Lunnon what a ten-year trufan tells:
"If you've 'eard fandom a-callin', then you won't 'eed nothin' else."
 No, you won't 'eed nothin' else
 But them spicy corflu smells,
 An' the 'goboo an' the fanac an' the tinkly typer bells.
 On the road to NF3....

I am sick o' wastin' readin' on those grotty SF zines,
An' the blasted Heng-Lit drivels causes me to be obscene.
Tho' I walks with fifty femfen from the One Tun to the Strand.
An' they talks a lot of SF...but wot do they understand?
 Pretty face an' fanzine, 'an
 Law! Wot do they understand?
 I've a neater, sweeter femfan in a cleaner, greener land
 On the road to NF3...

Ship me somewhere east of LA, where the best is like the worst,
Where there ain't no Fen Commandments, an' a fan can raise a thirst.
For the typer bells are callin' an' it's there that I would be
By the old Mo-ul-mein Slanshack, doin' fanac by the sea.

On the road to NF3,
Where the neos dance with glee.
Can't you 'ear those dupers clunkin' from the Globe to NF3?
On the road to NF3,
Where the 'leventh fandom be,
Where the mailin's they come reg'lar an' we got a good OE."



MINI-REVIEW:

The first season of Tim Burton's Netflix series "Wednesday" is a brilliant and hysterical treatment of the teenaged Wednesday Addams as she starts attending yet another school. This time she's at her mother's alma mater, Nevermore Academy, and Wednesday's attitude and actions are more than disruptive as she begins to learn of her mother's Nevermore legacy. It's nonstop Burtonesque fun, perfectly acted by Jenna Ortega in the title role. My favorite part of this series? Hard to pinpoint one, but I love the fact that Tim Burton cast Luiz Guzmán as Gomez Addams, who is a dead ringer for how Charles Addams drew the original Gomez. I can't wait for the second season.

Amusing Musings from Bill Fischer

Editor's note: These are postings culled from Bill's Facebook page and reprinted with his permission. ³

INSTALLMENT THE FIRST

I love the way the regular media reports on some astronomy stuff. Examples:

SCIENTISTS/RESEARCHERS: "We have found an exoplanet orbiting a red dwarf, 100 light years away that is in the habitable zone and could possibly have liquid water and be compatible with some life processes."

THE NEWS: "Scientists say a new exoplanet could be inhabited by intelligent aliens!"

THE TABLOID NEWS: "Grey aliens have kidnapped Batboy and are feeding him Elvis' brain!!!!!!!"

Then there's this one:

SCIENTISTS/RESEARCHERS: "The star is relatively close by – only about 15 light years away."

THE NEWS: "This star is so close we don't know why Richard Branson just doesn't zip over there for a look!"

THE TABLOID NEWS: "Nearby planet is hurtling toward us and is going knock Earth out to the orbit of Nibiru with Batboy on board!"

But I really love the News media's use of "only" as in "*only* four light-years from us." Yes, compared to the Andromeda Galaxy (2 million light-years away), 4 light-years sounds pretty close.

But if you're moving at exactly the speed of light it's still going to take you 4 years to get there. And since we don't have anything that can go faster than the Parker Solar Probe (430,000 mph), which is only about .000642 as fast as light, it would take that spacecraft about 6588.785 years to get "only" 4 light-years away. OK, actually it's more like 4.23 light-years but hopefully, I've made my point.

And I've always suspected that "Batboy" is made up.

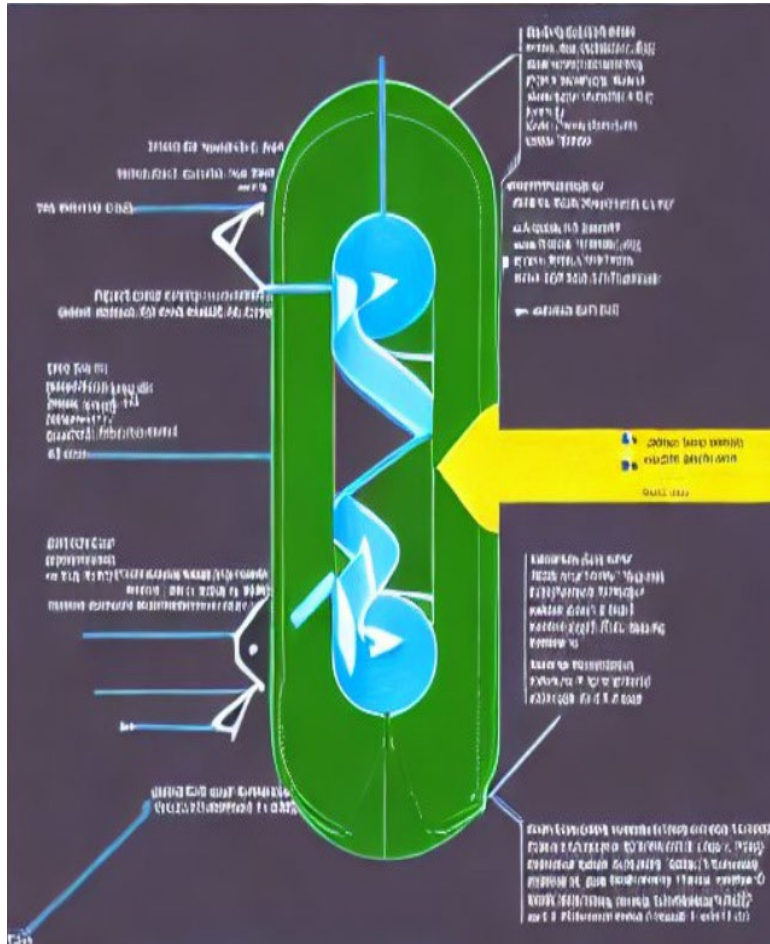


³ I seem to recall Bill used the phrase "death by disco" at some point during our conversation, but I could be mistaken.

INSTALLMENT THE SECOND

While my scratchy eyeball heals I've been going nuts with AI generated art. Today I entered things like:

1. Lada Gaga at the court of Ramses II.
2. The Ice cream cone that ate New York City
3. A gang of outlaw biker frogs having their way with Ted Cruz



And it was a lot of fun. Then I asked myself: “What becomes possible the day that artificial intelligence knows physics that we (humans) don’t know yet?”

So for the heck of it I put in: “Schematic diagram for a time tunnel to the past”. ...and the AI gave me the attachment shown here on the left.

Now, if the “words” or “text” look distorted and blurry so that they can’t be read, that is because this level of AI is such that it really isn’t sure what “words” are but it seems to vaguely grasp (if you can use “grasp” with non-sentient AI) that words are represented by little, squiggly lines.

So it would be funny or cool if it could provide legible instructions with the picture, but then it’s all imaginative and in fun anyway.

But, to think like Young Sheldon

Cooper – wouldn’t it be cool if....? 😂

INSTALLMENT THE THIRD

Wednesday night is young folks’ night at our church: They have various activities, lessons, and a light meal (usually, but not always pizza) for the preteen set, and then the youth group has it for the remainder of the evening. Since I’m in the choir and that activity starts around 7:15-7:30. I have been helping out in the kitchen earlier in the evening with tables, food passer-outing, etc.

But this is Advent/Christmas season, so the activity for the young 'uns tonight was rehearsing for the liturgically mandated Christmas play.

As we sat inside the kitchen looking through the serving window (those little food bar ones with the wooden, "accordion" shutters" out into the sanctuary/fellowship hall watching the little ones rehearse their stuff for the liturgically mandated Pastor-with-a-guitar, I realized what a piece of Americana this was. But then, as I watched the robed and toga'd shepherds and women and the glitter-haloed angels and the animals, a thought occurred to me:

What if one of the littlest kids turned out to be a method actor?

This is a serious question: I had asked, on Quora, if James Dean was considered a "method actor." I only took one theater course in my community college days, so I'm not an expert on that subject. Fortunately for me, a person who appears to be an expert (doctorate in theater arts, actor, director, playwright, critic, etc.) was very quick to answer my question. Yes, not only was James Dean a method actor (he actually studied under Lee Strasberg, I believe), but according to the fellow answering me, most actors in cinema today – whether they own up to it or not – are method actors. This distinguishes them from the previous generations of actors who had honed their skills on stage with wooden, directorially mandated, stock moves and expressions. This was all about "getting under the skin of the character and ferreting out their motivations", etc. So: Method actor.

Sorry. I was wandering. Anyway, I thought about what would happen when you get the six-year-old with the ill-fitting "lamb" costume who suddenly decides to go Stanislavski at the Christmas pageant:

ADULT/PARENT/DIRECTOR: "OK! Places everybody! Take Baby Jesus off of the piano cover and put him in the cradle. Joseph! Finish the rice Krispie bar later. Here's our scene!"

(The cast gets to their non-existent chalk marks and they're ready for a take. DIRECTOR cues the narrator.):

NARRATOR: "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

(DIRECTOR Motions for the shepherds and animals to gather round the Holy couple. One lamb stays back. The DIRECTOR notices this.)

DIRECTOR: (Whispering loudly enough to be heard from the parking lot) "Tyler! You need to gather round the cradle with the other animals!"

TYLER (His cherubic, six-year-old face framed by brown, wooly "lamb's wool"): "I'm trying to get into this. So, what is the lamb's actual motivation? What is my back story here?"

DIRECTOR: "??? Uh, I guess, because you're a – a lamb? A barnyard animal?"

TYLER: "Yes, I get that, but am I doing this as part of some obsession? Are my movements an expression of post-industrial angst?"

DIRECTOR: "Uh.. no. This is pretty much pre-industrial stuff. Jeeze! You're six!!! What is this...?"

TYLER: "OK, but I don't think a lamb can just be 'naturally good' or 'naturally bad'. There has to be more to the lamb's behavior than that. So, I approach the cradle with the other animals. Am I hungry for the baby?"

DIRECTOR: "No! You're – um – worshipful. You're gathering around the cradle in worshipful awe."

TYLER: "So, a grass-munching ungulate has spiritual feelings about a human lamb?"

DIRECTOR (Slapping hand to exasperated head): "Yes! A lamb has spiritual feelings toward the Baby Jesus! Just go with it for me!"

(TYLER ponders this then decides to go for it.)

TYLER (to himself): "OK, you can do this Tyler! You can nail this!"

DIRECTOR: "And... Action!"

ONE OF THE SHEPHERDS: "These things we have seen are miraculous, but how can this little one be the Savior of Mankind? He is just a tiny babe!"

TYLER (Ominously and slowly rolls his gaze from the cradle to the shepherd, a corner of his mouth expertly twitches, a nuance not unnoticed by the audience. He inhales and exhales a short, deep breath through flaring nostrils, but keeping a lid on his smoldering passion, ad-libbing, he says almost monotonously...) "That's what they want you to think."

The DIRECTOR and the rest of the cast and crew look on in wonder and amazement at this child.

And – Scene!



"Ah, the fetid air of teenaged angst."

From the Stfnal Personal History Files of ye Editor

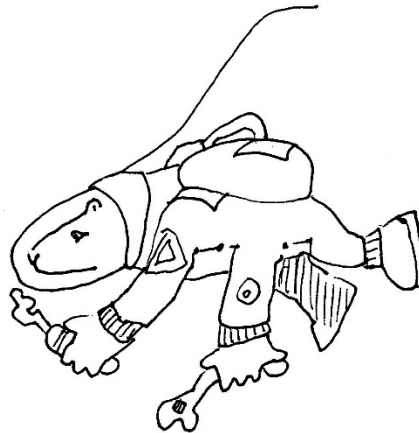
The Fanhistory group on Facebook reminded me of my first real exposure - if that is the right word to use - to the science fiction community. In fact, it actually predates my first sf convention by two years.

I don't know how many of you science fiction fan-type people out there know who Steve Glennon is – he is still living in Minneapolis and attending Minicons, I am sure - but he and I first met in Paul Anderson's 10th Grade English class at St. Louis Park Senior High School in suburban Minneapolis, MN. It was the first day of school after the Christmas holiday break ended in early January 1970, and there was this new kid in class sitting directly across the aisle from me, and he was reading Larry Niven's *WORLD OF PTAVVS* (the 1966 edition, no less). Needless to say, we struck up a conversation and became fast friends.

Well, it turned out that Lyle Girard, one of the other English teachers, also liked science fiction a lot, and wanted to teach it as a high school class. The next year in 11th grade English, Steve and I were again together in the same class (that poor teacher! Mrs. Richter had no idea what to do with us, but that's another story), and Mr. Girard came to us during the Spring of 1971 and asked Steve and I to join him at the Minnesota Education Association Conference at the downtown Minneapolis Convention Center. He wanted us to give a student's perspective of how teaching SF in high school would be beneficial. We agreed.

So we went there, dressed all nice like, and discovered we were to sit alongside Gordon R. Dickson and Clifford D. Simak on a panel discussing science fiction and its role in secondary education. I think we did okay - Steve more than I - but to say we were dumbstruck is an understatement.

Two years later we finally attended our first convention. Yes, Virginia, that was Minicon 7 over the Easter weekend of 1973. I have written about that ill-fated immolation before (see *In a Prior Lifetime* # 4 (2004) on efanzines.com for more specifics on this), so I need not go into that yet again; suffice to say my life was forever changed.



Then in 1974, I brought along a new friend I had met at Concordia College, Barry Short (a comics and sf fan from California), down for Easter break to attend Minicon 8, where we hooked up with Steve and Lee, becoming yet more immersed in this fannish subculture. At the end of that school year, I transferred to the University of Minnesota's main campus in Minneapolis, where I met many students who were also members of Minn-stf, the science fiction club of the Twin Cities area: Jim Young, Dean Gahlon, David Dyer-Bennet, Renee Valois, and more. I had met most of them at Minicon 8, so by being at the UofM I became even more involved in fandom. Getting *Rune*, the club's fanzine, in the mail in those important first two years of my real stfnal life only made this infection worse. But I didn't mind. It was fun, and I really enjoyed myself, perhaps too much at times. Still, the first half of the 1970s definitely was a major influence on the rest of my life. For that, and all of those friends, I shall always be grateful.



The Legend of Blitz Knutson

by John Purcell

First appeared in *Holier Than Thou #12* (1982), Marty Cantor, editor.

Back when I was a freshman at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, I was witness to the end of an era and the beginning of a legend. From the school that produced the only notable football player in its history — Gary Larsen, of the Minnesota Vikings feared defensive front four, the famed Purple People Eaters — came yet another great player. His full name

was William Christopher Knutson, grandnephew of Concordia's then president Dr. Joseph Knutson. But his true fame at dear old Cobberland was earned on the gridiron, and the name he will be remembered by will always echo in the confines of Jake Christianson Stadium---- "Blitz" Knutson.

Blitz was one helluva nice guy. A tall, burly young man who weighed ~220 pounds, for a human mountain he was handsome and cornered the market on cheerleaders at the college. To this day he holds the school record for most-cheerleaders-as-girlfriends in a four-year career. On top of his numerous football records, this achievement stands on its own. Blitz was truly a remarkable individual.

Blitz was a senior when I was a freshman. At the very first home football game I attended, he scored the first touchdown of the season as a result of the fumble caused by the defensive play that was his favorite — the blitz. As the defensive quarterback (he was the middle linebacker), he called the blitz every other play. Hence the nickname. Of such stuff are legends born.

Problem was, even though opposing teams knew the Cobbers (a terrible nickname, I know) were blitzing on every other play, they could not tell exactly when the linebackers, safeties and waterboy would come charging through. Twelve huge men (the waterbody was no slouch, either) running pell-mell through the offensive line left no-one in the deep secondary. If a quarterback could unload the ball quickly enough he could burn the Cobbers blind. But six or eight men cannot block twelve — let alone eleven. No time for the quarterbacks. Especially when Blitz would call the blitz whilst the offensive team was still in the huddle. How do you defense against that kind of an onslaught? Or be offensive when you're running for your life? Never before has a college defensive team scored more points than its offense. The 1972 Concordia Cobbers did just that; 19 td's for the offense on the season, 44 by the defense. Of the latter, Blitz carried 20 of them across the line. By the end of the season, the Cobbers were ranked in the Top Ten of the NCAA's Division III.

Off the field Blitz wasn't as exemplary. His financial status was always in doubt despite large scholarships and grants. He loved to spend money. Blitz was the only person I've ever known who could bounce a

Ready Reserve check. If he wrote you a check you could dribble it to Moorhead State National Bank. In fact, the school basketball team used him as a source of rubber.

Academically Blitz suffered. He pulled a 2.11 cumulative grade point average, barely qualifying for his Bachelor of Arts Degree. He majored in Underwater Macrame with a minor in a very specialized field, Contemporary Paper Clip Art. At last report he was still pursuing his doctorate in the latter subject at the University of Pyrotechnics at Resume Speed, Nebraska. In biology class as a freshman, Blitz learned much, such as the fact that an abortion was not a muffed punt. As the old saying goes, one really learns outside the classroom.

Graduation Day - May 4, 1975 - was a magical day for Blitz. On that day everything went right for him. He received his degree from a proud relative, his parents watched proudly, and earlier in the day he had received a phone call from New York City telling him that he had been drafted on the eighth round by the World Football League's Birmingham Bulls.

Yes, it was a beautiful day for Blitz. Accepting his degree with a handsome smile and a light wave of his massive hand, he fulfilled his college career in the inimitable Blitz Knutson fashion:

He sacked the Board of Regents.

From Sam Long's filksong collection, *Parodies Lost, Parodies Regain'd*:

STOUTHEARTED FEN

Originally ca. 1975

Tune: "Stouthearted Men"

Give me some fen who are stout-hearted fen,
Who will fight for SF they adore.
Start me with ten who are stout-hearted fen
And I'll soon give you ten thousand more, O!

Shoulder to shoulder and bolder and bolder
They grow as they go to the bar!
Then—there's nothing in the world can halt or mar a con,
When—stout-hearted fen can drink together until dawn.

(Note: "stout-drinking" can replace "stout-hearted" in all positions.)

FIGBY By Bill Fischer

PONDER IF YOU WILL,
FIGBY...



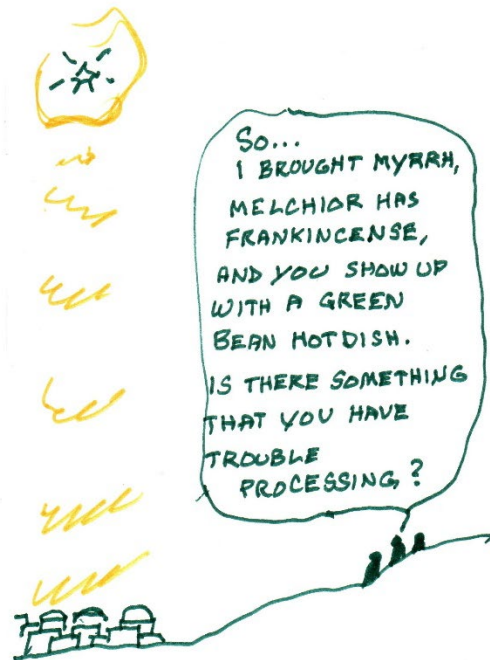
TWO THOUSAND YEARS
AGO, THREE MEN SET
OUT ON A JOURNEY...



THEY HAD A SINGULARITY
OF PURPOSE, A CLEAR
SENSE OF MISSION AND
TEAMWORK!

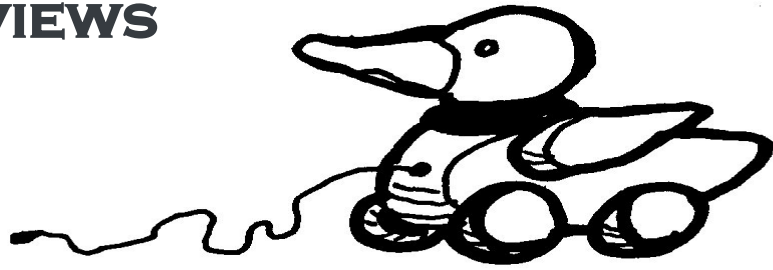


SO...
I BROUGHT MYRRH,
MELCHIOR HAS
FRANKINCENSE,
AND YOU SHOW UP
WITH A GREEN
BEAN HOTDISH.
IS THERE SOMETHING
THAT YOU HAVE
TROUBLE
PROCESSING?



"If you hear me screaming bloody murder that just means I'm enjoying myself."

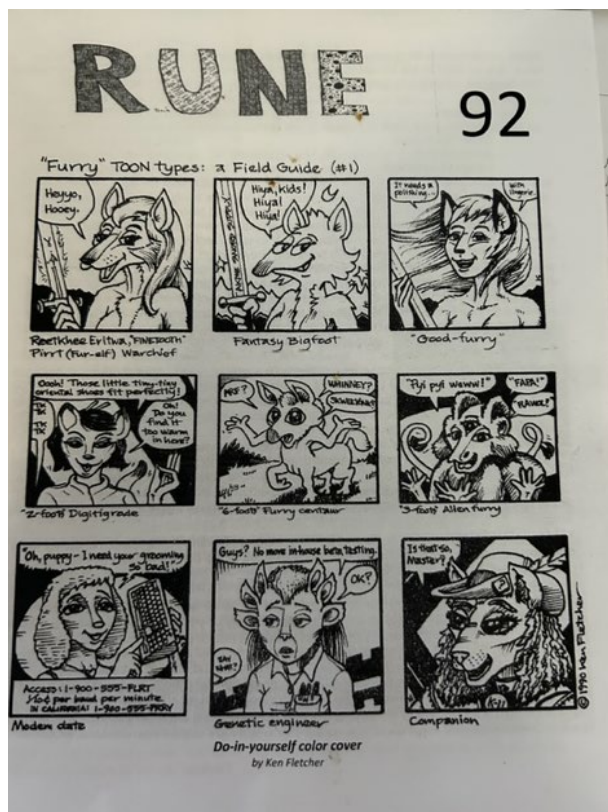
FANZINE REVIEWS



Rune #92 (October 2022)

Out of the wild blue yonder, and the frozen tundra of North America – well, almost the frozen tundra – came a wonderful, unexpected surprise in my snail mailbox: *Rune* #92, the clubzine of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, Inc. Since I had no idea that the zine was still alive, which is a wonderful revelation, this really stunned me. I had a feeling something was going on when Matt Strait messaged me on Facebook that Linda Lounsbury would like to have my mailing address. Figuring it was good to hear from Linda again, I happily obliged. A week or so later this issue plopped into the mailbox.

Reading this latest issue was a mixed bag of feelings. See, it brought back feelings of “the good old days” when *Rune* came out on a regular basis back when I lived in Mipple-Stipple; heck, at one point, during the editorial reign of Lee Pelton and Carol Kennedy, I was one of the zine’s distribution agents. The zine also pubbed book reviews and early attempts at fan articles of mine, most of which are best forgotten, and I pray shall never be collected.



Anyway.

My memories of the good old days of *Rune* were tempered by the four pages of memorials of Minn-stf members who have left us since the previous issue (mid-2019) for the great con suite in the sky; of the fourteen people listed, I knew ten of them very well. These names with photos definitely is a downer, but I have fond memories of them all. I definitely thank Linda Lounsbury, the guest editor of this Sercon Issue of *Rune*, for putting this section together. These were all wonderful people who are all missed but not forgotten.

The rest of this issue is comprised of Linda’s brief editorial “Fandom in the Time of COVID,” a common topic of many recent fanzines, a short lettercolumn sans editorial comments, three brief convention reports, “TAFF on a Stick” by Michael Lee (a nice photo-augmented recap of 2022 TAFF delegate Fia Karlsson’s visit to Minneapolis fandom that included a day trip to the Minnesota State Fair), poems by

Terry Garey and Thorin Tatge, the late Justin E. A. Busch’s article “Reading the *Runes*: Fandom’s Reaction to Minn-stf in Print” (in which my name pops up towards the end), Matthew Strait explanatory article of

what the club archivist does, and the issue ends with the club's official business pages. A major highlight of this issue is Ken Fletcher's funny front cover art ("Furry" TOON Types: a Field Guide (#1)), and the back cover art by Laramie Sasseville is more serious in content (titled "Send in the Clowns") and is set up as a do-it-yourself color cover. Great to see their work in fanzines again, plus interior filloes by Teddy Harvia, Reed Waller, Larry Tisch, Cathy Buburuz, plus photos from David Dyer-Bennet and Baron David Romm.

Overall, this is a fine issue that even prompted a letter-of-comment (loc) from me last month! Can't beat that as a recommendation, eh?

To request a copy, write to RUNE, P.O. Box 8297, Minneapolis, MN 55408 or email Matthew Strait at rune93@mnstf.org.

To Find Other Fanzines...

If readers would care to find a wealth of other fanzines, there are a few excellent sources to peruse. First off, naturally there is Bill Burns' cornucopia website of current and older fanzines, www.efanzines.com; zines of all stripes are listed in a reverse chronological order (most recent to older, etc.), and this is one of my go-to references. Another excellent source of current fanzines is Guy H. Lillian III's fanzine *The Zine Dump*, which has now reached 56 issues, and Guy not only lists the zines he receives, but also provides brief overviews of their most recent issues. *TZD* is reminiscent of Brian Earl Brown's *Sticky Quarters*, of which old issues can be found on the www.fanac.org website, another indispensable source of not only old and current fanzines, but the mission of Fanac.org is to preserve the heritage of science fiction fandom in all of its forms. Go there and become lost in fan history for hours.



This illustration was generated by someone, I am not sure who, using an art-generating AI by entering the name "Hieronymus Bosch" and the phrase "Renaissance Festival." For what it's worth.



Well, here we go again. Thankfully the last issue was a mere four months ago, so that's not too far back along the timeline, which results in a relatively coherent letter column. In the words of Jackie Gleason, "And awaaaay we go!"

Richard Dengrove
2651 Arlington Drive, #302
Alexandria, VA 22306

26 September 2022

Yes, this is a 'Dear John' Letter, isn't it? To say something similar about myself would be a quote from a '40s song entitled "Open the door, Richard!". *{Yes, first recorded by Jack McVea in 1947, and then covered by Louis Jourdan and the Tympany 5, and many others, including Fairport Convention in 1968}*

On the other hand, what you were doing, trying to grow things in the hot/dry Texas weather was sane while a friend of my wife's was crazy. She decided she could become rich raising chickens in Northern Michigan. She wanted to do it free range. The predators ate them all. At least, two of your plants survived. More than the friend. She should have talked to a county agricultural agent. She lost a lot of money on that. I doubt you did.

Now for "My Problems are all behind me." I remember just the opposite of that operation. It was to get a specimen from my hip. It did prove that I had cancer – sort of. Sort of cancer? Yes. It is slow acting cancer. I may have something else before it hits me. *{I am very glad that you are still with us, my friend. Let's keep it that way for many a year.}*

However, the cancer wasn't the big thing. A weird part of myself once came out in an operation where, somehow, I didn't feel much in the way of pain. I had sedation which allowed me to remain awake. Such sedation would not be too effective on most people. They would need to be put to sleep. The crew who did the operation were both aghast and amused at this, especially in a part of the operation that usually caused a lot of pain. For me, it just caused one second of pain. One reason they were as amazed was that I was a man in his 70s. Of course, when I knew the operation had ended, I asked when it was going to

begin. No, I usually feel bad pain when people operate on me. The only other time I didn't was having my teeth removed, also with waking sedation. The strange part was that both times I somehow knew I wouldn't feel much pain.

"And now a brief TAFF 2022 Trip Update." Fia Karlsson is breathless about t her TAFF trip to the US. If she was slower and squashed a bunch of topics into one, we might have understood her better. But she's not communicating facts but her feelings. She tells us she's having fun and can't stop to make events into discernible topics. That's good because what she communicates is she is having too much fun to stop and think about things for now. Maybe back in Sweden, she'll write something less bubbly and more organized and uncluttered.

"R.I.P. Friend" Geri Sullivan is more organized but still basically breathless. This breathlessness is sadder, though. Of course, we can't be happy that Robert Lichtman died. I exchanged zines with Robert. No question about it, *Trapdoor* was a great zine. I am sorry to say that he didn't accept any of the material I sent him for *Trapdoor*. It was pure genius. ...Or was it? In any event, one person he published, I really liked. It can't be topped for craziness. Picture this: a fellow goes to a convention of masochists. And he finds out he's a failure as a masochist. I have forgotten who wrote it, but it was someone who had an eye for true craziness. It was a classic. *{I will need to browse through my fanzine files for that issue. That article sounds very familiar.}*

"Fanzine Review:Daangerous Visions" I am sure the anthology is great from what you tell me about it. I hope there are still copies available for sale or trade.

"My letter." About your comments on my letter. I have these answers. For instance, about Covid, I got it. It was no worse than a bad cold. That's what it's come to for a lot of people. I confess, though, that the symptoms did last awhile. That's not what someone who got her Covid from the same source experienced. It sounded like old time Covid, from a year or two ago.

"Lloyd Penney's letter." Good for Lloyd. He doesn't have one job, but he seems to have many. I am glad because he had a period when he couldn't get a job no-how. I have another comment about Lloyd as well. He is to be thanked for telling us the name of the great poet who wrote Burma Shave ditties, Frank Rowsome, Jr. I have a ditty for him:

"He may not be the greatest of poets
but I like his verse just the same
even when it's no verse at all
Burma Shave."

Another comment on Lloyd's letter concerns the 488 pages for the book Lloyd is editing. I was thinking of how long that was. Of course, in the old days, that wouldn't be that long. It's just that, in the modern age, we have become wusses. *{Most of the books I have been reading over the past year have averaged approximately 367 pages, which is not bad. The good news here is all those authors kept me interested because they were excellent authors: Clifford Simak, H. Warner Munn, Greg Bear, and others.}*

Given my thorough going over of your zine here. I may as well look through your advertisements for cons. God, some are getting away from science fiction. Will the fans get away from fandom completely? I suspect yes. But I don't have a crystal ball. However, some conventions I would like to cite as getting pretty far away from fandom. A neophyte wouldn't know these were SF motivated: ReaperCon (miniatures), the Alamo City Furry Invasion, Retro Palooza (all things retro) and Dickens on the Strand (a Victorian holiday). *{I have to agree with you there, Rich. If anything, these events shows to Goya how diverse fannish interests are these days.}*

“What’s Next?” What’s next indeed. I wish you luck with your TAFF book and your housework. And with that, I say adieu.

Richard

*{It is always a pleasure to hear from you, Richard. My TAFF trip report nears completion – it’s next on the docket between semesters once this issue is completed – and the title I have settled on is **CARROTS FOR KAFKA, AND OTHER TAFF TALES**. Keep your fingers and eyes crossed; it’s the longest publication I have ever produced. It is also the most fun I have ever had putting anything together. I do look forward to having it done Real Soon Now.}*

Lloyd Penney
706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2

30 August 2022

As promised not too long ago, I am keeping up with catching up, and here are some comments I've made on *Askance 53*.

Every city seems to have a colony of feral cats somewhere. I am not sure where a colony is in Toronto, but I am pretty sure it's well looked after. There are many efforts to bring down the numbers of such cats, for there always seems to be a lot of them. Neither of us has ever had pets, not even when we were kids, and pets are a little beyond what we can afford, but we have been content to enjoy the presence of other people's pets. It's like being an aunt or uncle...you can give them back at the end of the day.

The local: We all seem to be overextended, which usually forces most of us to become good time managers. I've been juggling my various responsibilities to the point I don't really lose sleep over it. I think Rich Dengrove is thinking of Buck Coulson. Chuck Colson was one of Richard's Nixon's dirty tricks men, IIRC. Our big anime con demanded full vaccination and masking for all within the convention centre, but that directive actually came from the convention centre, not the con itself. We have yet to hear of any breakout of COVID because of this directive, called too extreme by many.

Toronto has its own magical girl convention called Pretty Heroes, just happened for this year a couple of weeks ago. It looks like it's become a genre all its own. It's not quite our cup of tea, but we did get a taste of it a couple of years ago when the convention, as part of a hopeful return to normality, staged what they called the Heroes' Market, and we had a table there. Lots of friends were there, some very good costumes, there were many Sailor Scouts (male and female), and the chairman spent the day dressed as the Miraculous Ladybug.

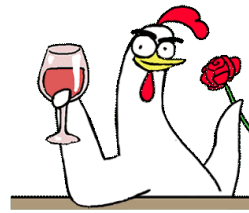
I am composing this on my tablet and not on the big computer, for it can't decide outside if the skies are going to open or not, with thunder and lightning threatening. I will relay this to the big computer when things clear up a little. Thanks for this issue and keep going with some more.

Lloyd

*{Allow me to congratulate you, Lloyd, on being named the new editor of **Amazing Stories**! I look forward to see what stories, artwork, etcetera, you acquire for this long-running and historic publication.}*

Leigh Edmonds
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Ballarat East
Victoria, 3350 AUSTRALIA

hhandc@hemsleypark.com.au



9 August 2022

Thanks for sending me *Askance* 53. I keep meaning to look at efanazines to see what's been published recently but other aspects of life keep distracting me from fanac so, at the moment at least, if a fanzine doesn't lob into my in box I won't know about it. This is a pity, really, but the Lords of Kobol only provide 24 hours in the day and there's not much I can do about it, or do all the things I'd like to in those 24 hours. Since you are still working you have yet to look forward to happy state of retirement when you will find yourself wondering how you ever had time for a job too.

If I were publishing a fanzine I'd be very jealous of your cover for this issue. It's magnificent. Congratulations to Alan for making it and to you for sending me a copy. *{Alan White is phenomenal, and very deserving of the awards he has won over the years.}*

I was not amused by your story of how your pain in the bum got fixed. It reminded me of the time I had my jaw wired for a month or so after it got broken and all I could consume was liquid, which meant that there was nothing solid to come out the other end. The constipation was remarkable. In your description of being in hospital I thought that you failed to mention the form of torture they inflict there, but perhaps they don't do it in America while they do here. It is the automatic blood pressure machine which comes on regularly and squeezes so hard that you're certain your arm will drop off it they do it again. Among other things, it is very good at bringing you back to consciousness after one of those procedures that involves being unconscious. You are right too, why do they ask you to count back from 100, knowing that you'll be out of it by the time you get to 99. Thought I wonder what the doctors would do if somebody actually did get back all the way to 0. *{There is a fanzine article lurking there...}*

Like you, I never met Robert Litchman so his death is not a personal loss. On the other hand, there does seem to be a big Litchman sized hole in the Fanverse. I knew Robert only through our memberships in SAPS and the occasional issue of Trapdoor. That fanzine was a dreadful thing because it reminded me of what a really good fanzine should be like and reminded me of my own lack of talent as a genzine editor. Robert always struck me as a fan who had lived a much more interesting life than most of us and lived the kind of 'alternate' lifestyle that many of us might have wished we'd lived. I'm sure there were many more stories he could have told.

Your Regional Convention Calendar says that there's a lot going on in your area. Do you get to much of it? I found it interesting that some of the events advertised that they were run by volunteers, which suggests that some of them aren't? Some of the events advertise that they are 'literary' which means, I suppose, that they are your good old style stf conventions with other stuff added on, rather than the other way around. *{I feel the same way, Leigh. They have mutated as interests have changed over the years. (Cue the recording of Gene Wilder screaming "It's alive!" from **Young Frankenstein** here.)}*

Like this issue, I'm also concluding with 'What's Next'. Around here it involves a bit of picking up, tidying up, washing up and all that too. Ain't life grand? As I often say, not enough hours in the day.

Leigh

*(Time? What's that? Is that some newfangled app they've put onto my new iPhone 14? Dagnabbit! How can a body keep up with these cockamamy inventions these days? *harrumph* (old fan editor gets into his Model A Gestetner Mobile and sputters off into the darkness))*

Steve Jeffery
44 White Way
Kidlington, Oxfordshire
United Kingdom OX5 2XA

srjeffery@aol.com

29 August 2022

Thanks, I think. I got as far as the medieval torture device in the picture on page 6 and then my imagination took over and I had to stop reading.

Nice tribute to Robert Lichtman from Geri. *{I agree; wish I had met him in person.}*

I'm not sure if that's the first fanzine review of the Corflu Concorde *Daangerous Visions* fanthology I've seen. Along with S&ra and Pat, I'm pleased I had a small hand in this with the story illustrations (a project that finally forced me into getting a new computer of my own, since the security lockdowns on the work laptop I've been using at home since the start of lockdown had reached a point where I could no longer save anything to external USB storage or even attach to emails outside of work.). At which point I found our old scanner would no longer work with Windows 10, so stuff had to be transferred in by photograph and then spending ages cleaning and sharpening up the images in GIMP which became a whole new learning exercise in itself. All the while fending a flood of emails asking how I was getting on.

The cover was one of those great moments when things just gelled. My own copies of Ellison's original DV and ADV were UK paperback editions, so it wasn't till I hit Google that I noted the original hb cover. I think I had noted it before, in a small illustration in my copy of the *Visual Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction*, but not in full detail and colour. Which gave me the idea for the open eye (lifting a motif from the film version *A Clockwork Orange*) and the beanie. (Which as several have pointed out since, should really be distorted into a curve, though I wonder how recognisable that might be and (b) was somewhat beyond my meagre facility with GIMP to do and not look a complete mess and a squished tomato. So I compromised recognisable fannishness for optical accuracy. Sue me. (We were a bit concerned that Ellison or his original publishers might even take it on themselves to do that, given the accuracy of Pat's stunning wraparound cover design, especially as the idea was floated to offer copies on Amazon, hence the more than slightly apologetic wording of the title and cover design as an "affectionate tribute" to the original anthology in the Corflu program book.)



You're the second fanzine I've responded to today that mentions *The Umbrella Academy*. This has completely passed me by, and I have no idea what is so I may have to visit Google (who knows all) after I hit send on this.



Steve

{The Umbrella Academy – a Netflix series since 2019, the fourth season starts sometime in 2023 – is a fabulous show. It is a fun mix of science fiction, fantasy, and supernatural elements with a great sense of humor and fabulous special effects. We enjoy that show a lot, and look forward to the next season to see where it goes. You should enjoy it, Steve.}

John Hertz
236 S. Coronado St., No. 409
Los Angeles, CA 90057

18 October 2022

I'm for fanart. I vote against "nicked off Internet," clip art, and like that. *{Oh, yes, I much prefer fanart any time, but these days there are other options available that are excellent matches for the content.}* You will see my appreciation of (Robert) Lichtman in *Vanamonde 1508*.

Beisbol season here ended sadly when the Dodgers, who had done so well, lost in the playoffs to the Padres. Early days of fandom included softball, see *Fancylopedia III*; among players at the first Worldcon were Sam Moskowitz, whom I later met at Lunacons; Langley Searles, whose *Fantasy Commentator* I later was happy to loc; Art Widner, later my roommate at cons; and Bob Madle, who has just

left us, having (I think) been Oldest of All – you'll have seen my tribute to him in the 12 October 2022 www.File770.com. You did Little League and Pony-Colt, gosh!

Fia Karlsson I was happy to meet in person at Chicon VIII – in Alison Scott's Fanzine Lounge, and a Fan Funds party, natch.

Speaking of which, you're six times closer to Natchez than I. *{Qua? I doth not get this reference, John.}*

Speaking of current SF, you'll see my note on Powers' fine *Stolen Skies* in *Vanamonde 1506*; it was reprinted at www.file770.com/tim-powers-makes-stolen-skies-sweet/. Last year came Benford & Niven's *Glorious* (*Vanamonde 1444*, which I believe you haven't seen, reprinted at www.file770.com/another-well-titled-book).

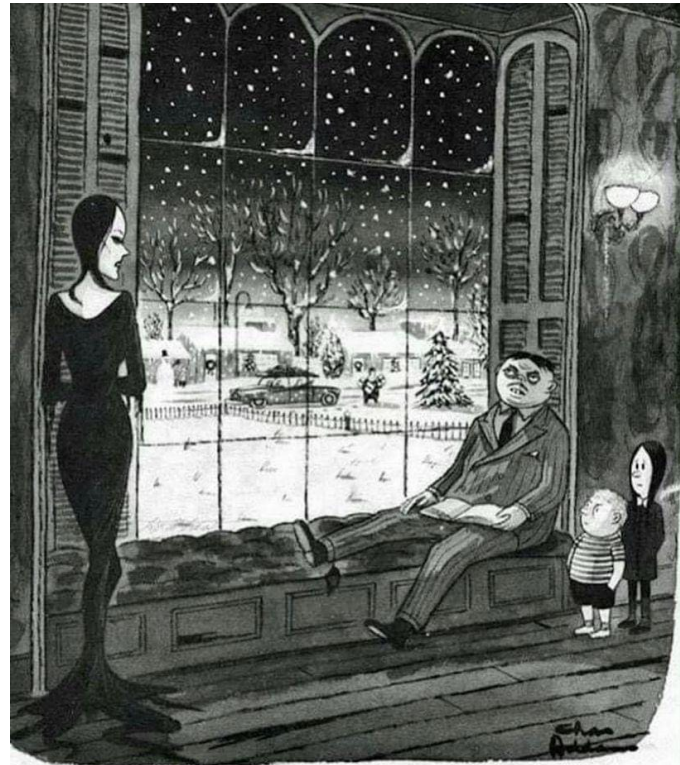
I applaud your treatment of those feral cats. But must you misuse "comprise" for "compose"? *{It fit the context of that sentence, and if that word choice trips one of your syntactic synapses, more the better.}*

The *Askance 53* photo of Feder, Lichtman, and Elaine Stiles at ConFrancisco reminds me you'll see Feder in person I shall; he's been named the Corflu 50 guest at Corflu 38 *{held in Vancouver, BC, Canada, this past October}*. I've known him longest of those three. Among my ConFrancisco adventures was meeting

Mark Twain on the streets of the Paris of the West about 2 a.m. on Hugo Night. I was in white tie; he was almost in his thirties. *{This is an intriguing juxtaposition, and I'm going to leave it at that.}* We chatted about this and that for about ten or twenty minutes. No one else was around. Punctiliously neither of us gave the slightest sign that Jon DeCles, who was present only physically but not in spirit, and I, had been acquainted for years.

John

{I must admit, Mr. Hertz, it is always a pleasure to receive a letter of comment from along with ten issues of your long-running APA-L zine, Vanamonde, in the same envelope, which makes it easier to cross-reference comments in this letter. No matter. As always, you have a unique writing style: I would describe it as staccato text. Thank you much for writing.}



“Suddenly I have a dreadful urge to be merry.”

I ALSO HEARD FROM LISTING:

Leybl Botwinik, Claire Brialey*, Rob Jackson, Jerry Kaufman, Guy H. Lillian III*, Ulrika O’Brien, Mark Plummer*, Andrew Porter

*The asterisk * indicates that these people provided Marty Cantor’s current email address, which I discovered was not in my mailing list and asked for in a general email. Thank you all for that information and said mailing address file has been dutifully amended.*

For those of you who have been paying attention to some of these bottom-of-the-page filler bits, here is yet another reminder that the 2023 East to West TAFF trip election has commenced. The ballot is available on the www.taff.org.uk website for your perusal and usage. The two candidates are Sandra Bond and Mikolaj Kowalewski. Both are wonderful candidates and will make fine delegates to the 2023 NASFiC in Winnipeg, Manitoba next July, nicknamed Pemmicon (see editorial natterings). Voting ends April 11, 2023.

As also stated in these bottom-dwelling notes, this fanzine supports Sandra Bond for TAFF 2023. Careful: she’s good at Cribbage. Do not say you weren’t warned.

“Dying well is a skill we all must learn.”

REGIONAL CONVENTION CALENDAR

Three December events have already passed by – notably Dickens on the Strand in Galveston – meaning this listing passes by the entire month of January 2023 (nothing major listed in the Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico region), then things definitely pick up in February.

Owl Con

Gaming, Fantasy, & Science Fiction Convention

February 18-19, 2023

RMC/Ley Student Center

Rice University

Houston, TX

OwlCon is an annual gaming convention at Rice University, Houston, TX, dating back to 1980.

OwlCon is BACK after being cancelled 2020, 2021, and 2022.

We feature table top and live action role playing games, miniatures games and events, historical miniatures, board games, card games, a dealers room, and more.

Gaming events will include RPGA and PFS events and specials, official tournaments for Warhammer 40k and Warhammer Fantasy, many tabletop games, several LARPS including Vampire and Call of Cthulhu, and many other games with prizes galore! OwlCon will once again be swarming with official demo folks for various game systems to give you a chance to try some of their great games. We will also have an anime room and a Dealers room.

North Texas Teen Book Festival

March 3-4, 2023

Irving Convention Center

500 West Las Colinas Blvd.

Irving, TX 75039

Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex area

The North Texas Teen Book Festival strives to connect our reading community, adding dimension to the reading experience through diverse author panels and dynamic discussions in a safe and fun environment.

...Both Middle Grade and YA authors "sign" books, meet their readers, and discuss their books in over 50 small breakout panels.... Books will be sold for each author at the event.

NOTE: The Festival itself is free but you will need to pay for parking and you will need to purchase any books you want signed [see Web site about parking fee and bringing your own books from home to be signed].

NOTE REGARDING SEATING AT EVENTS: All readings and panel discussions are on a first-come-first-served basis unless otherwise indicated. The Speed Date with a Book event and some Author Signings will be ticketed.

Sponsored by Friends of the Irving Public Library; Irving, TX; Sam Houston State University; and MedAlert Occupational.

[AggieCon 52](#)

Anime, gaming, & cosplay con.

March 3-5, 2023

Texas A&M University

Memorial Student Center

275 Joe Routt Blvd

College Station, TX 77840

Bryan/College Station, TX area

AggieCon is the annual student-run convention put on by members of Cepheid Variable. Held at Texas A&M's very own Rudder Tower, we have hosted fascinating guests ranging from Aaron Dismuke, to Jeffery Cranor to George R.R. Martin himself! (Fortunately, no con-goers were inexplicably killed off during the extent of his visit). The con is open to everyone and is a great way to spend your weekend to meet other people in your fandom, attend panels such as Cosplay Cafe and Waifu Warfare, and much more! There is also a dealers room where you can shop from a plethora of talented artists. All in all, it's a great atmosphere to go and have fun with friends and meet new people like yourself! We hope to see you there!

Brought to you by [Cepheid Variable](#)

[Bayou Battles Kings of War](#)

Tabletop miniature wargaming tournaments

March 3-5, 2023

Last held at: Sheraton North Houston at Bush Intercontinental [IAH]

15700 John F Kennedy Blvd

Houston, TX 77032

(greater Houston, TX area)

NOTE: Kings of War registration is limited to 32 participants.

What in the World Cup?!

In our proud tradition of doing things a bit differently (the Dot system of player-placed terrain, tournament themes and wacky scenarios, etc.), and the unquestioned success of last year's event, we are happy to keep our format based upon one of the greatest events in the world—the World Cup!

Here are a few of the high points, but see the additional pages for more details on the event:

Limited to 32 Players, expandable to 40 with enough interest

6 games over 2 days (4 Saturday, 2 on Sunday)

3 games of round-robin Group play in the first stage

3 games in the second "Bracket" Stage

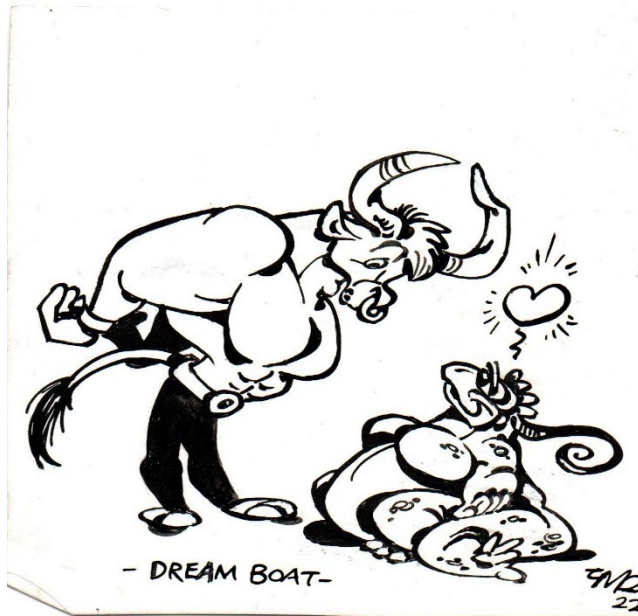
1,995 points army size

1500 point base army, plus

Your choice of two 495 point sideboards

Soft scores (sportsmanship and army appearance) are still a very important part of the event!>br> See also [Bayou Battles Facebook page](#). Bayou Battles is one of the **longest-running miniature fantasy wargaming tournaments** in Texas. This is our 17th year running this event!

Hill Country Comicon



Comic convention

Saturday, March 4, 2023 10 AM - 6 PM

Sunday, March 5, 2023 10 AM - 5 PM

New Braunfels Civic & Convention Center

375 S Castell Ave

New Braunfels, TX 78130

Greater San Antonio / Hill Country area

Here to promote FUN, ART, LITERACY, & IMAGINATION through comics and pop culture.

Embrace your nerdiness at a family-friendly, comic convention. Comic books, toys, cards, games, artwork, cosplay, apparel, guest creators, celebrity . Break out your capes, helmets, light sabers, and wands as we gather for a fun weekend in the lovely Hill Country

We strive to bring world-renowned talent to inspire our next generation to find their VOICE and become their own HERO!

All-Con

Multi-format convention featuring autographs, gaming, comics, & a burlesque show.

March 16-19, 2023

Hilton Dallas Lincoln Centre

5410 LBJ Freeway

Dallas, Texas 75240-6276

(DFW Metroplex area)

For four days All-Con provides an umbrella of content supporting fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Renaissance, Anime, Costuming, Theater / Performing Arts, Mystery, Art, Crafts, Collecting, and Film Making. To help 'give back' there are several charity events at the convention every year.

All-Con is fan organized and built on community participation. We offer a track dedicated entirely to cross promoting clubs, conventions, and events. The best part is you may cross promote as a panelist for FREE as long as we have space and your content is appropriate. Don't forget to bring flyers for the flyer table.

"It's not that kind of head-shrinking, *mon cherie*."

RevelCon 33

March 24-26, 2023

Houston, Texas area

Revelcon is a media-centric fan-run relax-a-con in Houston, TX. Our theme is "Sun, Sand, and Streaming." It will be a full weekend of panels, vids, art, merchandise, friends and fun! [Note - Revelcon is an adults-only/18-and-over con.]



CyPhaCon

Lake Charles, Louisiana's Premier Anime, Gaming, and Science Fiction Convention

March 31-April 2, 2023

Lake Charles Civic Center

900 Lakeshore Dr.

Lake Charles, LA 70601

Lake Charles, Louisiana area

Celebrating our 10th Anniversary. For Community, Fandom, and SWLA!

CYPHACON Returns to celebrate our 10th Anniversary April 1-3, 2022 at the Lake Charles Civic Center!

Taking place in the entire Lake Charles Civic Center Complex, CYPHACON 2022 is the largest fan run Pop Culture Convention in the State of Louisiana!

3-Day event will include (so far*) 7 Celebrity Guests, 3

Cosplay Guests, 2 Musical Acts, 1 Performing act, Cosplay Contest, Charity Auction, Scion eSports Arena, Tabletop Board Gaming, 110 Hours of original panels and programming, fan groups, local groups, CyPhaKids, and our new Vendor, Artists and Makers arena with 90+ vendors!

Help us celebrate the return of our amazing high profile event in April!

Brought to you by Cypha LLC.

Teen Book Con: The Greater Houston Teen Book Convention

Mission: To celebrate and promote reading by connecting teens with authors.

(Presumably April 2023)

Last held at: Davis High School

12525 Ella Blvd.

Houston, TX 77067

Greater Houston, TX area

NOTE: We will be a hybrid event (in-person but with virtual access available)

NOTE: There are **25+ authors at TeenBookCon**. You will be choosing from multiple panel sessions throughout the day.
Please see our [full list of sponsors!](#)

Yellow City Comic Con

Comic Con.

April 21-23, 2023

Friday 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am to 9:00 pm

Sunday 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

Last held at: Embassy Suites by Hilton Amarillo Downtown

550 S Buchanan Street

Amarillo, TX 79101

Amarillo, TX area

For the community by the community!

Yellow City Comic Con is the largest community annual fandom convention in the Texas Panhandle region. It is our mission to provide the best convention experience, build Amarillo tourism, and give back to the Community. Come out and enjoy Cosplay, Artists, Authors, Vendors, Celebrity Guests, panels, gaming, and so much more.

RetroPalooza Houston

A celebration of all things in Houston.

Saturday, April 22, 2023 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Sunday, April 23, 2023 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Pasadena Convention Center

7902 Fairmont Pkwy

Pasadena, TX 77507

(Greater Houston, TX area)

An annual event featuring some of the best YouTube personalities in the universe, free play console games, contests, competitions and guest panels.

Kids 12 and under are FREE! That means it's fun for the whole family.

South Texas Comic Con

Comic con.

April 28-30, 2023

McAllen Convention Center

700 Convention Center Blvd

McAllen, TX 78501

(McAllen, Texas area)

Comics, celebrities, art, collectables, cosplay contests

From Sam Long's filk song collection, *Parodies Lost, Parodies Regain'd*:

TUCKER PUB ZINES (AND I DON'T CARE)

Tune: "Jimmy Crack Corn"

[Oh] When I was young I used to wait
On Tucker, and help him collate,
And pass the Jim Beam when he got dry,
And never, ever, mention "sci-fi". Oh...

REFRAIN:

Tucker pub zines and I don't care,
Tucker pub zines and I don't care,
Tucker pub zines and I don't care,
My duper's gone awry!

And when he'd write in the afternoon,
I'd proofread in the very next room,
Ol' Tucker being apt to cry
When any loccer mentioned "sci-fi". Oh...
(REFRAIN)

One day he strode around a con.
Neos so numerous, they did swarm.
Fakefan asked him, on the sly,
"Tucker, have you written sci-fi?" Oh...
(REFRAIN)

That Tucker run and jump and scream,
Knock over bottle of Jim Beam,
Collapse (and all trufen knew why—
Fakefan must've uttered "sci-fi"). Oh..
(REFRAIN)

They laid him under a LE ZOMBIE.
Its colophon is plain to see:
"Neath this ish I'm forced to lie,
Victim of [a] fakefan's 'sci-fi'!" Oh..

Tucker pub zines and I don't care,
Tucker pub zines and I don't care,
Tucker pub zines and I don't care,
My duper's gone awry!

The substitution of "[faned] pub [ish]", e.g., "Tucker pub PONG, and I don't care" or "Lynches pub MIMOSA, I don't care" in the refrain is authorized as long as it scans. —SL

FANDOM IS A WAY OF LAUGH

Originally written ca. 1974, revised 1993; first appeared in SL's zine QWERTYUIOP.
Based on "The Height of the Ridiculous" by Oliver Wendell Holmes Can be sung to a number of tunes.

I wrote some lines, once on a time
In a wondrous faaanish mood
And thought, as usual, fen would say
They were exceeding ghoud.

They were so queer, so very queer
I laughed as I would die
Albeit in a general way
A sercon fan am I.

I called a faned, and he came.
'Twas nice of him, I thought,
For he's a BNF, you know.
I gave him what I'd wrought.

"These to the duper!" I exclaimed,
And, in a fannish way,
I added as a trifling jest,
"There'll be Roscoe to pay!"

He took the paper, and I watched;
I saw him peek within.
The first line that he read, his face
Was all upon a grin.

He read the next: his grin grew broad,
And spread from ear to ear;
He read the third: a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth, he broke into a roar;
The fifth, his beanie split.
The sixth, he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit!

The whole weekend, throughout the con,
I tended that poor fan
And since, I've never dared to write
As faaaaaaaaanish as I can.

SL-- Addition of the following refrain makes it possible to use the tune "Ghost Riders in the Sky":

Yippie-yi-o, yippie-yi-yay!
Ghostwriters in the sky

What's next, grandpa?

Methinks it is time to revisit something mentioned back in this issue's "bemused natterings" section, namely the fate of *Askew* and the possibility of its being incorporated into *Askance*. My thinking runs like this:

- At some point during this holiday break between semesters – so mid-December 2022 to mid-January 2023 is when this could happen – the plan ~~Mr. Phelps, should you choose to accept it is~~ to produce one last issue of *Askew* (the 37th) to include some final thoughts on this past whackadoodle calendar year's berserk events, a lettercolumn, a handful of book reviews, and then call it a wrap for that personalzine.
- *Askance* seems to have settled very nicely into a thrice-yearly publication schedule, with issues popping out at the end of April, August, and December. This was never a planned development; it simply happened of its own free will -- *it's alive!* -- and feels Just About Right as a fit for my academic yearly duties. Hey, if the foo shits, run with it.
- Back in the year 2003 I discovered efanazines.com and produced the first issue of an ezine titled *In a Prior Lifetime* as my re-entry into fanzine fandom. Well, heck: that means I actually **am** coming up on yet another fannish anniversary that I can write about and is bound to drive Nic Farey nuts. Will I do so? Will I succumb to the temptation? Will this be worth the aggravation, and worth the satisfaction of poking fun at Nic? Stay tuned. *<fiendishly cackles and rubs hands together>*

Of these three items the first two will likely happen. *Askew* is a fairly quick wee beastie to produce, so it doesn't bother me to clean up that zine's files. It is likewise easy to incorporate a book review or two into *Askance* and maybe other short fan-writing topics that pop up. Again, we shall see.

Naturally, I want to spend more time playing guitar, recording more original songs, and also getting out again and playing them in public. Maybe I will get lucky this year and actually get a gig somewhere in town this coming year. That would be cool. There are lots of venues in this area, so in the words of Fröderick Frankenstein, "It. Could. Work!"

Be very afraid.

Sources of linos in this issue:

Page 14: Gomez Addams, *Wednesday*, season 1, episode 5

Page 18: Wednesday Addams, *Wednesday*, season 1, episode 4

page 27: Reginald Hargreaves, *Umbrella Academy*, season 3, episode 6

page 30: Morticia Addams, *Wednesday*, season 1, episode 5



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