

You're Still on My Mind #3

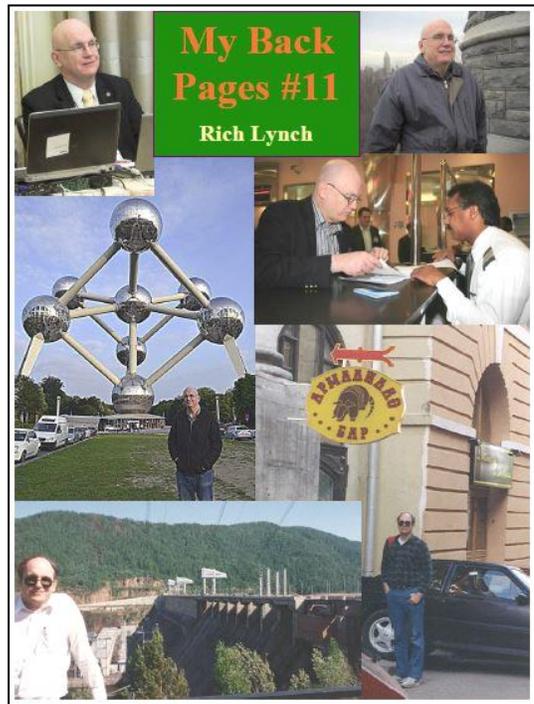
from Rich Lynch * rw_lynch (at) yahoo (dot) com * August 2023

Welcome back to all my friends!

This my third letterzine for holding belated conversations (of sorts) with people who wrote me letters of comment about *My Back Pages*, a personal time capsule which masquerades as a fanzine. The first two covered through issue no. 10 of *MBP*, so let's see what loccers told me about the next three issues...

MBP 11 was published in December 2013 and while it didn't result in very many responses from readers, the ones I did get were pretty substantial. One of them was from [Taral Wayne](#), who after seeing a photo of me standing next to a much-larger-than-life street art replica of Lord Stanley's Cup (in my essay about a business trip to Edmonton for a carbon sequestration meeting) took the opportunity to provide some interesting background information about the actual Stanley Cup:

I've seen the real Stanley Cup at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto several times. It's presently about a third the size of the one you posed next to, but still rather impressive. Originally, when Lord Stanley presented it to the nascent National Hockey League, it was just the silver bowl at the top, but over the years the list of winners grew, and new stages were added to the bottom. What you may be unaware of is that there are three cups in existence. One is the actual one created by Lord Stanley's order and is kept in a secure place at the Hockey Hall of Fame. The second is the one that is presented to the winning team every year, but normally resides on display at the Hall of Fame. It has the league's crest on the bottom where it normally can't be seen, hence the custom of hoisting the cup over the player's heads when it is won. Just checking... The third is a cheap knock-off to lend to good causes or promotional tours. It differs from the two, "official" cups in the



absence of Basil Pocklington's name on the base. It is the custom to inscribe the names of the players alone, but the owner of the Edmonton Oilers had his father's name inscribed on the base along with those of his players, which so incensed the NHL that on both "official" cups the senior millionaire's name is x'd over. Money can buy you a lot of things – health, happiness, love – but not your name on the Stanley Cup.

I hadn't been aware there are *two* clones of the 'official' cup. The one I saw in Toronto (when I was there in 2003 for the Worldcon) must have been the players' cup, since it was in the Hockey Hall of Fame. I remember I was surprised that it wasn't in a protective glass case – it was right out in the open where anybody visiting the Hall could sidle up to it for a photo op. Which I did.

Lloyd Penney, in his letter about the issue, also had a comment about my Edmonton essay:

I never knew that you'd been to Edmonton. I've been through Calgary on a train, but have never been to Edmonton myself. I can imagine the average US hockey fan probably has no idea where Edmonton is, especially when the Oilers come to town to play. Hotels like the Royal York, the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa and the Fairmont Macdonald in Edmonton are like castles, and I have explored the first two. I have taken the train between Vancouver and Toronto several times, and you're right, it is a huge adventure.

Back when the meeting was being planned the host gave a choice of Edmonton or Calgary as the site. I was happy that everyone wanted Edmonton – I'd thought there'd be a chance someday that I could someday visit Calgary on my own but I knew there probably wouldn't be any other opportunity to see Edmonton. (But twelve years later, I still haven't yet visited Calgary. They really need to hold a Worldcon there.)

MBP 11 had been constructed around a theme of journeys, and Lloyd also had a comment about the essay that described my longest journey ever – all the way to Perth, Australia for another carbon sequestration meeting.

I've wanted to go to Australia for a Worldcon, but never had the wherewithal to get there, so I expect I will never go, but I stay in touch with Australian fans via fanzines, like the Melbourne club's *Ethel the Aardvark*, and at least we know each other.

I've been to Australia five times, four of them for my work and the very first one (in 1999) for a Worldcon. Prior to that I (along with my wife Nicki) had gotten to know many Australian fans mostly from their correspondence and fanzines. We made a lot of friends from Down Under that way. And it made the

decision to attend that 1999 Worldcon all the easier. And speaking of Worldcons, Lloyd also had a comment about the essay reprinted from *Mimosa* which described the 2001 Millennium Philcon as Nicki and I had experienced it. Or more precisely, about the terrible event that had occurred just a few days afterwards.

9/11 [was] a horrible day, and simply amazing for those of us who lived outside of the US. Where Yvonne was working at the time, she had to track two corporate salesmen who had been flying out of Tokyo down to where their plane had been sidetracked. For me, I was working in a printing plant, and the work of the day stopped to watch these events on televisions that seemed to sprout out of hidden places in the building.

My workplace was down in D.C. back then, so I got to experience firsthand the chaos that happened following the attack on the Pentagon. Once it was confirmed to be a terrorist attack everyone was told to evacuate the building. On the way out I'd heard people saying that there had been other attacks around the city – an explosion at Capitol Hill, a car bomb near the White House – but it had all turned out to be runaway rumors. Someone else said that the D.C. subway system had shut down and I was thankful that was also wrong – if it had been true I don't know how I would have gotten home that day. There were thousands of people out on the street milling around the jammed-up subway entrances and it took a couple of hours before I'd eventually made it onto a train that was headed back toward the Metrorail station in Maryland where my car was parked. All that evening Nicki and I watched news reports about the world that had so abruptly changed.

The meatiest letter of all that I received on *MBP* 11 was from [Bob Jennings](#), who had quite a few things to say about the issue. Starting with its overall appearance:

I have to say I am quite impressed by the graphics and the total design of the issue. This has to be the classiest fanzine I've seen in a year or two. The use of full color photos thruout alone must have cost you a fair sized sack of Sacagaweas. I was also taken by the fact that you also used multi-color text inserts thruout the issue. It's a grand gesture indeed.

Back then my print run for each issue was just a very few copies, so it wasn't as costly as it might seem. Nowadays, *MBP* is exclusively a PDFzine that's archived at both [efanzines.com](#) and [fanac.org](#) so expense is no longer an issue. Concerning the 'journeys' theme of the issue, Bob made a glass-half-empty comment that probably many people feel about taking a long trip to an unfamiliar locale:

Reading your excursions hither and yon almost, (but not quite), convinces me that travel and sightseeing in far distant places could be fun, instead of a

wretched experience filled with stomach churning foreign food, questionable lodging, surly locals who gleefully overcharge for every triviality, foul weather, jet lag, travel accommodations that make rail-road cattle cars look luxurious and local diseases of the intentional tract that always seem to smite the unwary foreign visitor. Not to mention the squandering of massive amounts of money to engage in these odysseys that would embarrass a prodigal.

I've had my share of travel misadventures, to be sure, but I've always had the outlook that they just make it all the more interesting. That said, there are many things that I might have wanted to do when I was much younger that I'm not up for now – backpacking across Europe, for instance. Nowadays, before Nicki and I head off on a road trip we always try to find out if there's an affordable Marriott where we're going.

Bob went on to temper his comment by saying:

On the other hand, I am quite happy to experience the distant realms and the local sights thru your camera and commentary. I can do this in the comfort of my own home and say that I enjoyed your comments and most of your trip reports. I especially enjoyed your comments about exploring Edmonton, a city that apparently is a bit surprised to find itself a center of commerce in the energy and grain markets after many decades of being a backwater farming and cattle center. There are apparently a lot of other obscure and puzzling sites in the city that you were not able to get to, but I thot you did pretty well for making a whirlwind tour of the high spots during the short break from your planned meeting schedule. The photos of the oddball stuff were also very good.

The travelogue I least enjoyed was your NYCity excursion. It read well but I found I didn't have that much interest in your comments about Broadway musicals or the frozen delights of the Big Apple in the midst of winter. Having just endured one of the worst winters I ever experienced probably had a lot to do with that viewpoint.

Nicki and I don't really mind the cold weather. We both grew up in far upstate New York where snow and below zero temperatures were pretty common in winter. Januarys in the Big Apple are just more of the same. From personal experience, a cold January day in New York City is a lot more preferable than a sweltering day in July there.

Like me, Bob is a member of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance – he was the founder, in fact – but his membership had lapsed for several decades until he'd rejoined in 2010. As he noted in his letter, this had caused him to miss some of my essays in the issue which had their first publications in SFPA.

Some of the material was new to me, since I rejoined SFPA in 2010, and three of the articles were reprinted from issues before then. The one that seemed most ironic to me was the article about your attending the right-wing symposium that touted the benefits of the Prop 13 anti-property tax campaign of in California and other states. Of course this 'tax reform movement' helped to create and fuel the banking collapse and the Great Recession of 2008-present. It is hard to believe that people who ought to know better could be so short sighted and just plain dumb enuf to believe that cutting back a significant part of local and state government funding would not affect the entire prosperity of the region or seriously screw up government priorities.

Of course, ultra conservative people are narrowly focused on their specific goals and do not normally want to hear anything that contradicts their convictions. Ultra left wing folks have the same problem, but at least their dreamlike projections of the wonders that unlimited government spending and a host of new, well-intentioned programs would surely wrought can be undercut by the simple statement that government doesn't have unlimited funds, and has no realistic way to generate the massive amounts of money that most of those utopian schemes would entail. I echo your regret that the entire session was not carried over C-Span or some local community access TV station, or at least video taped for presentation to later audiences.

Back when I was working down in D.C., I always liked to go to these conservative-leaning think tank seminars even though my politics are anything but that because it (a) allowed me the opportunity for some mid-day entertainment by asking pointed and sometimes snarky questions to those on the stage, and (b) despite what Heinlein espoused, got me a free lunch. (The events were catered as an inducement for people to attend.) Now that I'm retired I keep meaning to go to more of them, but ever since the pandemic the paradigm seems to have shifted where most are now Zooms or webinars.

Bob concluded his letter by commenting on one of my appreciations of classical music composers – in this case the great Leroy Anderson, who wrote one of the most recognizable Holiday Season melodies of all time. And while he was at it, Bob shared his thoughts about Holiday Season music in general.

I also echo your comments about Leroy Anderson. Because the guy wrote music that was obliquely classical, not quite pop, certainly not pure classical, he tends to be shrugged off by serious music people in both fields. He produced a surprising amount of material, and surprisingly, almost all of it is very good. The fact that he was able to reach across genres and attract people with music as diverse as "The Typewriter Song" to "Blue Tango" ought to be

enough to insure his standing to musicologists, but apparently not. I have a couple of CDs of his stuff around here somewhere that I haven't listened to in years. I think, after reading your comments, I'll dig around tomorrow and listen to them again.

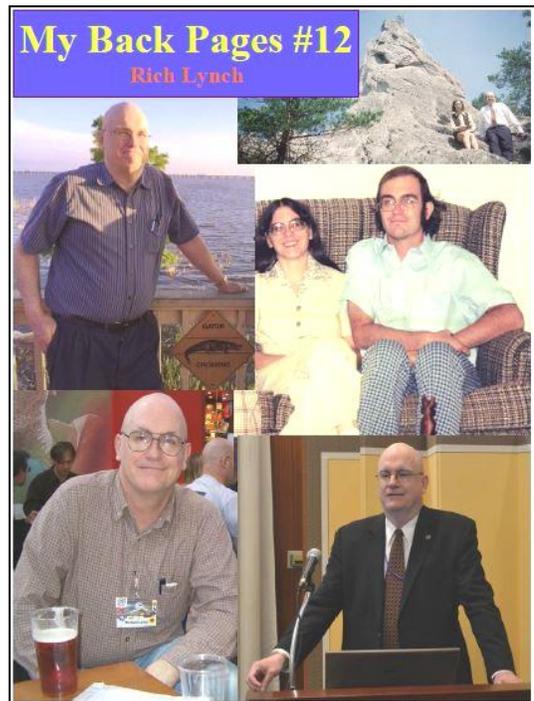
Otherwise, I am one of those people who gets overdosed on Christmas music pretty quickly. We have several (as in more than five) radio stations in this area that switch to an all Xmas music format even before Thanksgiving. One of them is a classic rock station the rest of the year, and another one plays new dance and new hip-hop stuff, and yet another is a local college radio station.

I wonder why these stations decide to go all Christmas for six to eight weeks each year. I suspect it must be some kind of cost saving measure. Christmas music is mostly public domain, and I suspect there are big companies that specialize in offering a computer download list of the top seven hundred Christmas tunes that a station can run over and over and over again throughout the season for one low bulk price. I don't know if the businesses that run commercials on these stations stay around for the noel musicade, but I know I don't.

I think I'm more tolerant of excessive amounts of commercial holiday music than Nicki is. But even so, there's a limit to the number of times I want to hear "Jingle Bell Rock" or "All I Want For Christmas Is You". On the other hand, there are some holiday songs, ones that get played far fewer times, that I really do look forward to. One of them is Darlene Love's original version of "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)". For me, it's not the Holiday Season until I hear Darlene Love sing. (That's a good title for a future essay!)

Bob also wrote me a meaty letter filled with comments about *MBP* 12 (published in July 2014). Unlike the previous issue, this one wasn't themed about travel – it really wasn't themed about anything – though it did have four essays that were travel-related, including a description of Nicki's and my trip to Texas for the 2013 Worldcon. Bob had some thoughts about those.

I enjoyed most of the travelogs but find I don't have a lot of things to say about



them. However, let me compliment you on your ability to focus on events, interesting local history, structures, artifacts and the like, and not on all the foods you ate. For reasons I don't quite understand, most fan travelogs these days, including convention reports, spend a lot of the word count describing all the meals the writer had, as tho somebody else might actually be interested in what the guy had for lunch that particular day.

I'm a big believer in one of Elmore Leonard's rules of writing: *"Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip."* I'll never be to the point where I ask myself, "What would Elmore do?" but usually, in the middle of a long, drawn-out paragraph, I do ask myself, "Is anybody gonna care about this?" And then I edit. Quite often, the essays that get reprinted here have been through three or four revisions prior to their original publications, ranging anywhere from scrubblings for eliminating typos and grammar irregularities to significant rewrites because I wasn't happy with what I wrote. Even after all these years, I think I'm still evolving as a writer. Like my essays, I'm always going to be a work-in-progress.

One of the non-travel essays in the issue was a description of a fan history project I'd worked on during the 1990s – a comprehensive outline that described 1960s fandom in enough detail where it could possibly be the basis of book about that decade. Bob had some good thoughts on the matter.

I was particularly interested in your discussion of the effort to somehow catalog SF fannish activities in the 1960s and produce a series of books about those days. Having lived thru those days myself I wish you lots of luck with the project. You seem to have made pretty good progress, but it looks to me as tho this is a project that is going to expand, and keep right on expanding for years to come.

The problem is that SF fandom really exploded in the 1960s. In addition comics fandom started in the very early sixties, and in addition to the crossover from SF fans into co-fandom, a lot of comic fans migrated over to SF fandom at the same time.

There were dozens and dozens of science fiction clubs, mostly small ones, as well as local comic clubs that moved back and forth between the two genres. A lot of these people stuck around for a longer time than the traditional 3½-4½ year 'life span' of the older science fiction fan. A lot of them went on to become movers and shakers in the world of science fiction, comics, television, book publishing, Hollywood and everything else. I don't know how in the world you are going to be able to break all this information down, much less categorize it or create any kind of realistic time-line that makes any sense. Add in the people that blipped in and out of the hobby, plus the hardcore

movie fans that interacted with SF fandom and the situation just gets even more complicated.

If you ever get around to publishing a book I suspect it will turn into a twelve volume history, sort of like those book histories that try to completely summarize the Revolutionary War or the War of 1812. Except in this case there is such an overflow of info that it might be comparable to somebody trying to write a detailed history of the entire Civil War from beginning to end, including all the theaters of operation. Maybe you should plan on a thirty volume set. I don't envy your situation trying to make sense of all this stuff.

Bob was absolutely correct – an enormous amount of research was still needed and, in the end, the project proved to be un-doable. But the outline still exists and can be found at fanac.org. Every once in a while it either gets used as a reference to some historical piece about fandom or I get an email from somebody who wants to know if there is more information about some section of interest.

MBP 12 also contained an essay about another of those luncheon seminars I frequently attended back in the early 2000s, this one featuring three university law professors who had attempted to dissect the Enron meltdown. From his comment, I'm guessing Bob has a hot button about lawyers.

I also enjoyed your article on the lawyer symposium in which the panelists claimed to be discussing ethics, but apparently were mostly interested in telling other lawyers how they could weasel out of bad situations and escape being prosecuted themselves for the dishonest crap they might have pulled. I personally think lawyers are the ultimate modern day mercenaries. They will cheerfully give you good advice, often free and up front, but if you ask them to do something, even things that are immoral, illegal, criminally unethical, and you are willing to pay for their time and knowledge, almost always they will cheerfully take your buckos and do whatever you wanted. I think the whole concept of legal ethics is an oxymoron so far as barristers are concerned. Not that I'm being cynical or anything.

You being *cynical* about something, Bob? I'm shocked! At any rate, the letter of comment on *MBP* 12 from [Lloyd Penney](#) was, no surprise, much more sedate. His letter meshed pretty well with Bob's, as he commented on two essays that Bob didn't. One of them was the aforementioned 2013 Texas Worldcon trip. Nicki and I had spent a couple of days in Austin prior to the convention, and this had inspired Lloyd to write:

Austin, Texas was a place where we wanted to go, but couldn't. We've been to a space conference in Dallas, and that's where we found a good dealer's

room, an art show and a Kelly Freas print we bought. This is what happens when you let the local fans run everything but the space programming.

I've never been to Dallas. It's the most populous U.S. city I've not yet visited and the way things seem for me post-retirement, it's probably going to be the largest U.S. city I'll never go to. Austin was much more convenient as a prelude to the San Antonio Worldcon and there were enough interesting things to see and do that we maybe should have scheduled one additional day there.

One other essay that Lloyd had a comment on was about music. Usually, things I write on that topic are appreciations of classical composers. But for this one I had described "Four Essential Protest Songs You've Probably Never Heard". One of them was by Canada's most famous balladeer, who happened to have a small connection to Lloyd:

A pleasure to see mention of Gordon Lightfoot here. I probably made mention of this when it was first published, but Lightfoot grew up in Orillia, Ontario, about 90 miles north of Toronto, as did I. His protest songs had plenty of meaning, but then, just about any of his songs had meaning, and marvellous verses, all easily understood by his clear voice as a youth. He is still performing, and his annual concerts at Massey Hall in Toronto are always sold out. He's showing his age, and is happily living in Toronto, as am I.

Alas, we lost Mr. Lightfoot earlier this year. Nicki and I had seen him four times in concert and for each he was as good as his recordings. I received one other comment about my protest songs essay – from [Jerry Kaufman](#), who described his familiarity with two of the artists singled out in the article.

You are right that I'm unfamiliar with the protest songs you described. Of the songwriters and singers you highlight, I'm most familiar with Gordon Lightfoot and Iris DeMent. In the case of Lightfoot, I know some of his music from the album that includes "Canadian Railway Trilogy" and "In the Early Morning Rain". (I'm counting on my memory to be accurate in thinking both songs are on the same album.) I loved DeMent's first album, and like her second. But she seems to be trending to writing emotionally miserable songs about failed relationship. Her most recent album, after years of silence, is very good.

I think I'm trending in a different direction – I liked her earlier albums but I *really* liked her third album, the one that her protest song "Wasteland of the Free" is from. I haven't yet listened to her most recent albums and I thank Jerry for reminding me that I should.

Jerry had one other comment, a general one, that I'm hoping I've addressed by publishing this letterzine companion to *MBP*:

Will you ever fill some of your back pages with letters from your loyal readers? A photo page of us would be entertaining, too.

I guess I'm batting .500 on that. I'm not planning to add correspondents' photos but my loyal readers are finally getting to see their letters in print (or whatever the analogy is for a PDF publication). I apologize that it took this long to happen.

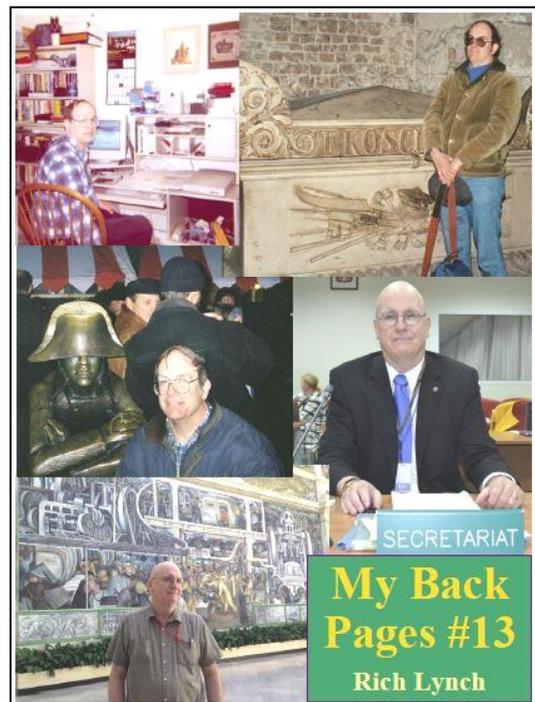
There was one other letter, a short one, that I received not long after the issue had been published. It was from [Esther Cole](#), whose fanac dates back to the early 1950s. She'd been aware that I'd been thinking ahead to retirement and had some words of encouragement:

Can't help wanting to reassure you that retirement is a great event. Les semi-retired when he was in his mid-50s. He claims this was the beginning of the happiest times of his life. He was able to work part time and spend the rest writing his novels, or traveling, or reading. Eventually, he didn't need the part time work. My wish for you two is that the next phase of your life will be equally delightful.

It turned out that I kept postponing my retirement, year after year, and it wasn't until the beginning of 2022 that I finally hung it up. But now that I *am* retired, I know that Esther and Les were right – it's been good and has given me the time to do projects that I'd been putting off for years. This letterzine is one of them.

MBP 13 was published in December 2014 and while themeless, still acknowledged the triskaidekaphobia aspect of the issue. Earlier in 2014 I'd had a business trip to Korea, where instead of 13 the number 4 was a social bane. The first essay was a description of that trip and it inspired comments from several readers. One of them was [Lloyd Penney](#), who let me know that tetraphobia exists in places besides the Far East:

I have seen in some parts of Toronto, to keep cultures happy, those who are superstitious about the number 4...the houses in that area have odd numbering to avoid that number, and sometimes, the numbers on both sides of the street are well out of sync.



Aversion to the number 4 seems to be based on the pronunciation of the Pinyin Chinese word for ‘four’, which sounds similar to its word for ‘death’. And this apparently carried over to other Far East cultures. So I’m guessing the section of Toronto that Lloyd refers to is where a fairly large Asian population resides (or once resided).

Lloyd also had comments on other essays in the issue. One was my polemic about beautiful-looking science fiction movies like *Gravity* which, because of stupid-science underpinnings, insult the intelligence of viewers. From his comment, Lloyd appeared to agree with me:

I think I am having a tougher time suspending my disbelief these days. I see few SF movies, and I think I’d rather be informed than entertained, so I watch the news and some documentaries on television, and not much more. Coming up on the CBC shortly is a mini-series called *Ascension*. What if in the 60s, someone did launch a multi-generational starship, and populated it? Will I watch it? Probably not. All of that might be too big of a leap of faith to take.

I didn’t watch it either. From the description I’ve read I don’t think I missed anything – there’s a lot of bad science in it, so much that it no doubt would have caused my “Aw, come on!” alarm to overload. I’m sure it must be available for streaming somewhere, but I’m never going to be so desperate for stuff to watch that I’d want to spend any time on it.

Instead, I’d rather spend more time on fan history projects. I’ve already edited two reprint collections of articles, by Walt Willis and Forry Ackerman. Another good candidate would be Dean Grennell, who was one of the best fan writers of the 1950s. One of my essays in the issue was a remembrance where I’d mentioned that probably few of today’s generation of fans had even heard of him – except for his membership in a small apa he had pretty much departed fandom by the early 1960s. From his comment, Lloyd wanted to rediscover him.

You’re right about Dean Grennell; while I know the name I can recall few of his fannish articles. It would be interesting to see reprints of his articles in a fanzine or book. Special project?

Well, maybe. The Willis and Ackerman collections were from articles that had been published in Nicki’s and my fanzine *Mimosa*. Dean Grennell had only one article in *Mimosa* so I’d have to look farther afield to find enough material to republish. But since a lot of it is archived at fanac.org, such a project seems do-able. We shall see.

I received one other comment about the Grennell remembrance, this one from [Greg Benford](#) who knew him quite well. In his comment, Greg provided the

reason for Grennell's departure from fandom:

I saw much of him, weekly, when he moved to Calif to edit *Gun World* just south of Laguna Beach. He'd never been so near a fan and would arrive on his Harley (another hobby) to talk at my home overlooking the beach. He was in Lilapa and contributed long pages to each month's issue.

He & Rotsler became buddies (photogs, guns, sf, Bloch etc in common) but he didn't see much of the LASFS crowd. He built an entire soundproofed shooting gallery in his basement, contrary to Mission Viejo rules, and showed me how well it worked; no sound at all outside.

He fell away from fandom as his job at *Gun World* grew and his hearing failed. He finally cut himself off, alas – funny in so many ways!

(Thinking of Lilapa, would you be interested in joining?)

I had to decline the offer to join Lilapa – with everything that was going on in my life back then, it was enough of an effort just to maintain my membership in SFPA. Greg also briefly commented about another essay in the issue, an appreciation of the famous ragtime musician Scott Joplin, mentioning that the piece resonated with him and that he wished that the musical scores for Joplin's lone symphony and only piano concerto had not been lost to time. I got a longer comment about that essay from [David Bratman](#):

Nice to see a little piece on Scott Joplin. I once visited Texarkana, his hometown. The idea of a city neatly bisected by a state line struck my fancy. Its main attraction for the tourist was a good local museum which explains how the bisected town came to be, and offers pushbutton recorded examples of works by three musicians born in the tristate area, the disparate trio of Scott Joplin (TX), Leadbelly (LA), and Conlon Nancarrow (AR). Of these, Joplin was by far my top choice.

And I got an equally long comment from [John Purcell](#):

Scott Joplin has always been one of my favorite American composers. I tend to rank him in my top five "true American composers" listing, that usually includes (in no particular order) Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Duke Ellington, and George Gershwin. Sometimes I bump Copland off the list in favor of the team Rodgers & Hammerstein or Glenn Miller depending on the mood. But Scott Joplin is there. We can thank the late Marvin Hamlisch's score for *The Sting* for reviving interest in Joplin's music.

I think that Joplin would have eventually come back into popularity even without *The Sting*, though that certainly helped. Joplin's music occupies a niche

area where jazz and classical overlap and it's not unusual for recordings of Joplin rags to be on radio station and podcast playlists for those genres.

John also commented on other essays in the issue, one of which was my remembrance of the final time I crossed paths with Bob Tucker. Unlike Grennell, Bob had remained in fandom for his entire adult life. And like me, John had his own Tucker story to share:

The last time I met Bob Tucker was at Minicon 26 in 1992. He met my wife Valerie there, gave her his "business card" with his characteristic wink, and was his usual charming self. I have always enjoyed his company ever since I first met him back in 1974. Our fannish universe would not be what it is without his influence. A gentleman in every sense of the word, and is still greatly missed.

Agree completely. Bob is another storied fan writer whose essays and articles ought to be collected. Even more than they probably already have. Before ending his letter, John provided a somewhat introspective comment on the essay about Nicki's and my annual January mini-vacation in New York City. I had ended it by writing that: *"I don't think I would have the endurance to live in Manhattan. It's a place that's fueled by some inexhaustible energy that makes it a 24/7 human kaleidoscope, and it would wear me down very quickly, I suspect. But you know what? For a few days every January, it's exactly where I want to be."* From his comment, John appeared to mostly agree:

Ah, New York City. My family comes from there: dad was born and raised on the lower east side of Manhattan, not too far from Gracie Mansion, and mom grew up seven blocks from Yankee Stadium in the Bronx. As a young 'un I toddled along with them on trips back to NYC from Minneapolis (where I was born and raised), and remember gawping at the skyscrapers, standing on the observation deck of the Empire State Building, taking the ferry out to the Statue of Liberty, riding the subway, going to ballgames at the original Yankee Stadium, visiting lower Manhattan on a Sunday morning in July 1971 and standing at the base of the World Trade Center that was still under construction, but almost completed. It is a city I prefer visiting and would never live there. Too crowded, too expensive, too dirty. Not my cup of tea at all.

Nicki and I have speculated, many times, on what it would take in terms of resources to live in a nice condo near Union Square. And we've always come away with the realization that we'd probably need to win the lottery to be able to afford one. So I think we mostly agree with John that New York is a city we'd just prefer visiting, especially since it's less than a three hour ride by rail to get there.

There was one other letter I received about the issue, but this one was of a more generalized nature. [R. Graeme Cameron](#) at the time was doing a fanzine review column for *Amazing Stories* and had let me know that *MBP 13* was one of the zines he'd selected.

I'd already scheduled issue #13 for review in my *Amazing Stories* "Clubhouse" column on January 23rd, but a good idea to bring it to my attention anyway just in case I'd missed it.

Since I'm trying to introduce as many zines as possible to *Amazing* readers unfamiliar with zinedom I won't be reviewing every issue of any given zine, but you can take for granted I will at some point review a future issue of *My Back Pages*.

What's particularly cool about *My Back Pages* is that it is indeed a personal fanthology, a concept I want to introduce to my readers as an example of how remarkably diverse the various types of zines actually are.

A belated thank you, Graeme, for that egoboo! Much appreciated, even though I don't think I ever read that column. (I haven't been a subscriber to any of the SF magazines for a long time.) Guess I'll have to check to see if it's archived online somewhere.

* * *

And now on to the 'meta' section of this issue, such that it is. [Lloyd Penney](#) saved me from being commentless for *YSO-MM* #2, and his short note provided some closure on his off-then-on plans for visiting London:

My activities with *Amazing Stories* has greatly reduced the time I have for responding to fanzines, but I will try my best to manage my time a little better. We didn't go to the London Worldcon, but were able to make our trips to London in 2016 and 2019, which allowed us to concentrate on the city, and not a convention. We had a great time with both trips, and if we are able to return, we plan to stay for a month.

London is a great city and I hope Nicki and I can also go back there someday. Thanks for the letter and for making me a priority! And thanks very much to *all* my correspondents – the egoboo is appreciated! That's it for this issue. Next one in a couple of months, probably. See you then!

--

Please note that 'Worldcon' and 'Hugo Award' are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society.

You're Still on My Mind #2
from Rich Lynch * rv_lynch (at) yahoo (dot) com * April 2023

Hello again to all my friends!

This is the second of my letterzines for holding belated conversations of sorts with people who wrote me letters of comment about *My Back Pages*. The first one covered the first five issues of *MBP*, so let's see what loccers told me about the next several issues.

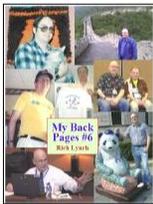
There were only two letters that I can find in response to *MBP 6* (published in December 2011). One of them was from [Kip William](#), a fan with considerable musical talent. He commented on my essay about the great composer Ludwig von Beethoven and my observation that lack of birth records prevents us from knowing for sure that Beethoven was born on December 16th.

By a coincidence, I was born the day before Beethoven's birthday. Maybe. Or maybe not. Or maybe so.

Mom was in labor for many hours before the 11:59 pm time on my birth certificate. I was born a minute before Beethoven's birthday. Except – (I only found this out a year or two ago, from Dad, as Mom had passed on) – except that I was actually born at the stroke of midnight, and the doctor or doctors offered Mom the choice of dates when I was born, and she chose the 15th, so the time was backed up to one minute before midnight. So I wasn't born on Beethoven's birthday after all, but share the date with Dave Clark (of the Five) and Nero (the non-fiddler). Unless Beethoven was really born on the 15th.

Tch. We'll never know.

The other letter was from my friend [Lloyd Penney](#). And, as usual for him, it was a lengthy one. The leadoff essay in the issue was a description of my first visit



1