

# Littlebrook 8

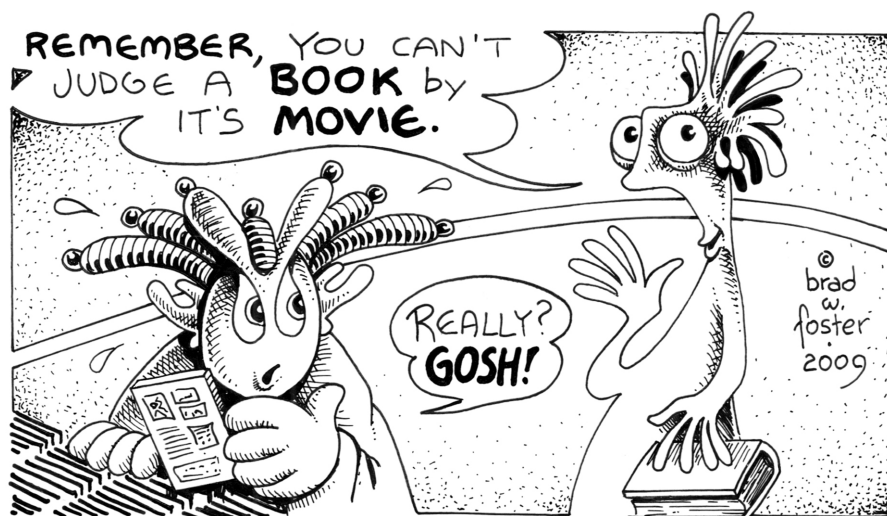
*Littlebrook*, a fanzine by and for science fiction fans without much about science fiction in it, is published by Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins (aka Suzle), on an irregular and unpredictable schedule. The publishers' address is P.O. Box 25075, Seattle, Washington, 98165; phone number is 206-367-8898. Email can be sent to [littlebrooklocs@aol.com](mailto:littlebrooklocs@aol.com). This eighth issue is dated February 2011. *Littlebrook* is available for the usual: a letter commenting on a previous issue, articles or artwork, or your own fanzine in trade. We will also accept in-person requests, the provision of a beverage, or \$2. We do not accept subscriptions. *Littlebrook* is also available on-line in a PDF format at [eFanzines.com](http://eFanzines.com). If you prefer the electronic version, let us know, and we'll send you an email announcement when another issue is ready.

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Artwork by Brad Foster (pages 1, 13) and Steve Stiles (12).

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# BEWITCHED, BOTHERED AND BEMILDRED

JERRY KAUFMAN

A year ago, in autumn 2009, Suzle and I were trying to decide if we were going to go to Corflu. Winchester, in the United Kingdom, was the venue, and a group of British fans were playing host. We couldn't just pop in for the weekend, so we had to review our finances to see if we were up to a major overseas trip. We also had to make associated decisions about where we would travel to, aside from Winchester itself, and how we would get around.

I envy those of our friends who travel frequently, without obvious concerns about cost, luggage, special sleeping concerns, or transport. (I suppose they have them, but either out of good sense, reticence or some other sense, they don't mention them.) We seem to take these things into account much more.

We finally threw caution out the window and said, "Yes, we will go." We decided to travel south and west from Winchester, visiting, we hoped, Wales, Cornwall, and the southwest English coast. We further decided that, as we do not travel light, and with memories of why luggage is associated with the verb "to lug," we would rent a car.

The winds blew caution back into our faces as we began research to discover the most interesting places to visit and the best places to stay. Suzle handles a great deal of this sort of thing, but I think I did almost my fair share. (As we looked at guesthouses, bed-and-breakfast cottages, and hotels, we tried to balance thrift, amenities, location and parking facilities. This planning generally landed us in quite acceptable establishments.)

Instead of renting the car at Heathrow, and having it sit idle throughout the convention, we decided to rent one in Winchester, where we

would return it after a week of driving. Finding our way from Heathrow to Winchester sounded quite simple in the Corflu progress reports. (As we found out, it was indeed simple, but not as described. The suggested method of taking a bus from Heathrow to an intermediate train station and a train the rest of the way was far more complicated than it sounded if we wanted to prepay. We ended up booking the bus tickets on arrival and traveling by coach in one easy leg, directly to King Alfred's statue.)

So we made it to the convention and had the properly enjoyable time visiting with old friends, having long dinners out (and thus missing Rob Jackson's trivia quiz), meeting TAFF winners Anne Murphy and Brian Gray (now Anne and Brian Gray, I hear), seeing people like Mike and Pat Meara for the first time in several decades, and so forth.

I'm not about to do a full-bore convention report. Suffice to say that I appreciate the planning and work that Rob and the rest of the committee did to get the weekend up, running, and over.

Instead, I will fully bore you with a few tales of travel post-con.

We underestimated how difficult we would find adjusting to English roads. (As we did not get into Cornwall at all, and only to Cardiff, the most English of Welsh cities) I feel justified in referring to "English roads.") We thought that, because we had managed to drive them with a minimum of terror during two trips in the 1980s (aside from some driving in London), we should be able to adjust quickly in 2010.

No. We were wrong. Suzle says it's because our car was too wide. I'd say it was because the roads were too narrow. In addition, we

had trouble understanding the road signs and roundabouts. It took nearly all week for us to become minimally comfortable. (For the record, in our family Suzle does nearly all the driving and I do most of the navigating.) The easiest parts of the trip were the long stretches of M-type roads, the British equivalent of freeways in the US. We listened to various BBC local services and I re-read our guidebooks knowing we could stay in our lane without a lot of moment-to-moment decisions to make.

As we entered each city along the way, often as sunset arrived, we invariably got lost. We had sketchy maps from the guidebooks and websites, but usually we couldn't relate the maps to the reality and had to call the hotels for further directions (we had second-hand cell phones we'd bought in Winchester – that's another story). Even then we had to stop passers-by to point us in the right direction.

Each stop had its pleasures. Cardiff gave us Cardiff Castle – an enclosure in the heart of the city with a trebuchet and a stately manor. Bath had, naturally, the Roman baths and a dinner out with fannish travelers Alan Rosenthal, Jeannie Bowman, Murray and Mary Ellen Moore, on their own expeditions. Glastonbury had more metaphysical and Neo-Pagan shops than any ten US cities combined. In Plymouth there was the Plymouth Gin Distillery and the best gin-and-tonics ever; Weymouth had the best slot machines and other games of chance; Bournemouth had historic tall ships only glimpsed through closed gates. (Lyme Regis was in there, too, with its dramatic seas and fossils.)

Back in Winchester we returned the car to Enterprise, and told the gent who would drive us to the bus stop, "Just let us off at the statue of King Alfred." To our surprise, he said, "You'll have to show me where that is." He was a fill-in employee from Salisbury and didn't know Winchester at all. Thus it was, after all our driving misadventures, we became navigators for a British driver, even saving him at one point from turning the wrong way into on-coming traffic.

I vowed that we would never drive in Britain again. But will we have the opportunity? I think yes. Britain is now bidding to host a Worldcon in 2014, and for a wonder, the intended venue is London. If we stay in London for the entire trip, we won't need to worry about trains, coaches, or automobiles. The Underground, taxicabs, and those awe-inspiring double-decker buses should be able to handle all our transport needs.

Dunno who they would have for Guests of Honor, of course. Brian Aldiss was GoH in 1965 – in retrospect, that seems premature. He deserves it all over again. It's a little too early to put Charles Stross or China Mieville in that spot. Any suggestions?

For Fan Guest of Honor, I'd like to embarrass a couple of our regular readers. They've produced killer fanzines, run various departments at both Worldcons and Eastercons, helped out a series of fan fund winners without themselves having ever stood for one, and given James Bacon the best editing he's ever had. They are also sweethearts. I suggest Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey. Pick them while they can still stand up, says I.

Our reprint of "In Calvin Trillin Country" has taken on a freighting of poignancy. One of the key characters, Bob Doyle, became quite ill this year with pancreatitis and a host of complications and infections. This led to kidney failure. Bob died on November 5.

Bob was our housemate at our house on Winslow Place in Wallingford (a Seattle neighborhood) in the very late 1970s into the middle 1980s. We hosted numerous parties and gatherings there, including several large dinner parties that Bob and friend Cliff Wind organized and cooked for. Bob was very active in Seattle convention planning, working on early Norwescons and chairing the World Fantasy Convention in 1989. He collected Richard Powers paintings and for a time acted as agent for Powers.

Bob married Barbara Norwood several years ago, moved to a rural property near Snohomish, Washington, and gradually drifted away from our circle. Barbara is a horse enthusiast; Bob happily acquired an interest, and their string grew from one to four horses, which must take quite a lot of work to care for.

(My closest encounters with horses have been through the Walter Farley books I read as a boy, and the Dick Francis books.)

So keep in mind, when you read the “Trillin” piece, that things keep changing and people keep moving from present to absent in our lives. 📖

## IN CALVIN TRILLIN COUNTRY

JERRY KAUFMAN

{{Originally published in *Space Junk* #8, undated, by Rich Coad, this report of the March 1984 NorWescon is a snapshot of Seattle fandom at an interesting moment in its history, as well as a few good gags. Or so I’d like to think. It certainly brought back memories for me. I’ve added some footnotes where I thought clarification would be useful, or where I wanted to mock myself. JAK}}

**D**on’t tell me you don’t know who Calvin Trillin is, or what he has to do with science fiction conventions. I know you don’t. Trillin is a writer, and he writes about food.<sup>(1)</sup> Real food, like oyster poorboys, hush puppies, bagels, enchiladas, and (most important) barbecue. He writes about these foods with an original wit and no detachment whatsoever. He has one hand on the typer keys and the other permanently covered in sauce.

He once visited Seattle and, in the company of a local restaurant reviewer and humorist<sup>(2)</sup> (do the two always go together?), and ate the barbecue from Seattle’s best-known joint, the Caveman in Kent. The Caveman is located a scant ten minutes from the Hyatt Hotel, site of the 1984 Norwescon. And that, obviously, is

the connection to science fiction conventions. At least this one, at least this once.<sup>(3)</sup>

“The Caveman is near the Hyatt,” I told Dawn Plaskon as we hauled boxes to Trucklet. Instead of replying, Dawn looked regally down her regal nose at the tiny truck’s already full interior. As she disappeared down to the ankles into its crawl space, she continued to scold Doug Faunt for not leaving the luggage back at the hotel. Doug, looking like a speeded-out Hell’s Angel instead of the Hewitt-Packard kingpin systems analyst he is<sup>(4)</sup>, drawled out feeble excuses. Other people grabbed other boxes and disappeared in the direction of the distant convention, twenty miles south.

The struggles for space were the result of a cheap station wagon Suzle rented: it was as sickly as it was cheap, and it had died on her at the bottom of the most treacherous hill in Seattle in the middle of rush hour traffic. Our rescuers included Doug and Dawn, our intrepid housemate Bob Doyle (who packed several boxes into his tiny tubercular Datsun), and Don Keller, who we bribed with gas money and nearly eternal gratitude (the stuff evaporates eventually).

We arrived hours later than we planned, but at least the trip was entertaining. Don, a gaunt intellectual, and his four-year-old

daughter Deirdre, a Botticelli angelette, endlessly discussed MTV videos.

We arrived to find the Fan Room already standing open, so with Don and Bryan Barrett (the Bay Area's traveling book merchant and fanzine delivery service)<sup>(5)</sup> helping, we unloaded the car. The boxes were filled with fanzines for sale and display, and material for the TAFF/DUFF auction I was running. Bryan immediately slipped a couple of books into the auction material.

Skulking around the door when we finished were a couple of hooligans who turned out to be Tom Weber<sup>(6)</sup> and Victor Gonzalez. Suzle and I decided to have dinner with them; then I would have to find Bob and get a ride home, since I had to work the next day. Both Tom and Victor are young, opinionated punks; Tom has since moved to New York, but I think this is part of their plan to take U.S. fandom by storm in a pincer movement. Like Don and Deirdre, they too were entertaining, mostly on the subject of boredom.

Mentioning barbecue, I left them. Thinking barbecue, I slept. Not remembering barbecue, I got through the day, down the highway, and into the Fan Room at about 5:30. All was confusion, babble, and crowd: things were going well, and everyone was happy. The room had a capacity, posted, of thirty-eight. It looked like more, as any crowd of milling people - some haphazard, some habitual, some purposeful (as Katin of *Nova* put it) - will.

Hanging around the wonderful Gestetner equipment (the top of the line mimeo that removes stencils for you, and the e-stenciller that does color separations) was Mike Farren of Oakland, showing Victor and Doug how things worked. "I had one of these for a week," he crowed. David Emerson, on his way from Minneapolis to San Francisco, compared Deadhead notes with Allan Baum, who almost introduced the group at the US Festival. Linda Blanchard twinkled at rich brown, her future co-editor, who obviously no longer thought she was a hoax. Jack and Pauline Palmer pointed out a cute teenager that claimed was their daughter Tilda. Nonsense, I thought, Tilda is only *this* tall....<sup>(7)</sup>

We accreted a core of dinner-seekers, including Jeanne Bowman, who, from her near-Olympian height, kept us laughing so hard that we never noticed we were eating in a Denny's. On returning to the hotel, I located Frank Catalano in the lobby.

"I hear you got stuck with 'The Worst Science Fiction Ever Written' panel," I said. He said he was a little short of material. "I can help you out," I said. "I just happen to have a few volumes of R.L. Fanthorpe here." Frank didn't exactly welcome me to the panel, but he managed to look both resigned and relieved when I further suggested that I should read them myself.<sup>(8)</sup>

Nobody in the audience or on the panel believed that Fanthorpe was real, but I passed the books around, and got corroboration from Paul King, the president of the Dan Darrington fan club, who testified to the power of Fanthorpe's *Galaxy 666*. After the other panelists explained or read from Alan Dean Foster, Lin Carter, and *The Eye of Argon* (an item I believe to be a hoax)<sup>(9)</sup>, I read from copies of *Negative Minus* and *March of the Robots*. From the former I gave the audience my favorite lines, ones I've quoted so often that you've all heard them.<sup>(10)</sup> *March of the Robots* supplied a lengthy passage at the beginning of Chapter 5, in which the robots (finally) land. By the time I reached the robots' night march on the city the audience had thoroughly sussed Fanthorpe's style, and they chanted along with me: "The city slept. Men slept. Women slept. Children slept. Dogs and cats slept."

Breathless and almost voiceless, I stumbled back to the Fan Room, where a party was progressing to a climax of noise and heat. Don Keller came in moments later and thrust a huge box into my arms. The Siclari fanzines for the sales table, I surmised, and at the last possible moment. *Fanhistorica* and *The Collected Quarry* turned out to be the most popular items we had, although *A Wealth of Fable* couldn't be sold at all. Every set of three volumes had two copies of Volume 2 and none of 3.

I spent the next several hours moving fanzines around, chatting to people (with the occasional reference to spareribs and chicken), and

shuttling down to the dance. The music (presented by the usual group of Olympia fans) was a mix of current hits and *Rocky Horror* traditionals. The floor was crowded: Steve Bieler bounced around on one foot like a maniac, Jeanne Bowman swung her hips and elbows deep and wide, Loren MacGregor moved like a rhythmic Sherman tank.<sup>(11)</sup> Sweat poured like water. About eleven I damply left to find the “Plain Weirdness” panel.

It was struggling along in the same room the “Worst SF” panel had occupied. Looking lost and confused, Marta Randall and the others faced an equally confused audience. Bill Gibson hadn’t shown up, as he’d warned everyone already, and Charles Platt had deserted the group. “Get up here; this was *your* idea,” said Marta when she saw me. I’m not sure how she got that idea, but when Marta says jump, you not only jump but develop a taste for flies.<sup>(12)</sup>

I soon found out why everyone was so confused. All the panelists and audience members were so busy denying that they were weird that not one was telling any funny stories or saying anything entertaining. Eileen Gunn explained that her old motorcycle club, the Boston Visigoths, were not weird. Tami “Two-Ties” Vining (star of Leather and Lace fashion shows) denied being weird.<sup>(13)</sup>

It was left to me (yes, I came through again) to tell the story of the Secret Handgrip of Fandom, a story *I know* is weird. The ingredients are two mundanes hot for tail; the Baroness Patia von Sternberg; Ro Lutz-Nagey and his Vivid Imagination (even the names are weird) and an entire small sf convention willing to participate in a hoax lottery. The handgrip itself is a small but explicit part of the story. (Ro wrote the thing up for *Outworlds* years ago.)

I remember Saturday as being full of Fan Room. I took an hour and a half to see the Dealers’ Room and the Phil Dick panel (with Tim Powers in the audience denying the Richard Lupoff assertion that Dick was insane and under the evil influence of Robert Anton Wilson); otherwise it was fan, fan, fan. Since Mike Farren and Doug Faunt were off enjoying themselves, or maybe sleeping, I got to be the mimeo expert, on high-

tech equipment I’d only used once, at a convention three months earlier. (I didn’t see Rod Graham, the Gestetner salesman until late Sunday.) I also did my usual trick of offering to explain fanzines and fandom to anyone who looked interested, and found half-an-hour to organize material for the TAFF-DUFF auction.

The afternoon grew more hectic still, with gofers, party-givers, and Tom Disch competing for mimeo time. Tom had been sent by the Operations staff; he needed copies of some poems run off for his poetry workshop. (I regret that I didn’t get copies for myself, since they were by Disch, freshly written.) As the mimeo minutes ticked by, Disch reduced his requests from ten poems copied, to four, to one. He seemed to think that mimeography was just cheap photocopying; my explanations and demonstrations didn’t sink in much until I demonstrated how to rip an electrostencil. Then someone told him it was 2:30. “Oh.” He looked at his program book. “I thought I came in at 4 o’clock. That’s when my poetry workshop starts.” He settled down in a corner with a copy of *Inscape* and I wearily said a silent argh.

Before the auction I managed to drop into Jane Hawkins’ chocolate party and, between mouthfuls of Vonda McIntyre’s chocolate decadence, called for volunteers to move the auction items. I convinced a few people, and we formed a caravan from the Fan Room on the third floor to Phoenix B.

I was much better prepared this year, but the excitement was at a lower pitch than last year. However, I had as much fun, and pumped as much adrenalin as before. Bob Doyle and Steve Bieler helped me auction, though Jeanne Bowman’s black lace housedress would have looked better on her than on Steve. Suzle kept track of the money, juggling all those numbers handily. Gerald Boyko enlivened things with some strange bidding techniques, like shouting, “Nobody bid! I must have that!” and then dropping out when he was overbid by a dollar. Art Widner and Victor Gonzalez bought all the fanzines. When we were asked to clear the room for the next event, we cleared in a whirlwind of payments, pickups, and last-minute purchases.

Back in the Fan Room, I began to melt into warm jelly. I was suffering from exhaustion, hunger, and adrenalin poisoning. My Caveman pilgrimage began to seem the mirage of a fanatic-damaged brain. Neither Suzle nor I had had the time to do any research into menu, prices, or precise location, or any serious recruiting. Useful housemate Bob took matters into his own hands, by jumping on the most onerous task. "Have you found out about the Caveman yet?" he asked. "I've told a lot of people about it, and they all want to join us."

I woke my organizational brain, and took it to the pay phone in the lobby. "How much is the food there, and are you prepared to make take-out orders for twenty people?... Yeah, we're with a convention at the Hyatt... it's, er, a science fiction convention... right, and fans, people who just read the stuff... ok, Roger, I'll call you back." I pinned down twenty-four people, got \$5 and preferences from each, and called Roger again. "Okay, four chickens, seven-and-a-half pounds of ribs, bread, coleslaw. We should be there in twenty minutes."

Doug offered to drive Bob and me in Trucklet, and Dawn said we could use their room to hold some of the diners. Suzle organized another expedition to get pop and beer from the convenience store next to our motel. Doug, Bob, and I crammed into Trucklet's front seat, and in the ten minutes it took to find barbecue heaven, I listed to Doug's Southern drawl debate Bob's Pacific Northwest tones on beer, cars, and computers.

The Caveman was a concrete block building of stunningly utilitarian design. The interior was nearly all kitchen, with a six-by-six cubicle up front: just enough room to place orders, stand around reading clippings (including the Calvin Trillin/John Hinterberger article that started my quest), and meet other patrons. Roger had anticipated our suddenly realized need for potato salad by adding some to the order at no charge (he forgot the bread, though), and he added a platter of Dragon Wheels (an exotic-looking barbecued potato dish) when we expressed deep and hungry interest. We carried the huge foil-wrapped plat-

ters to Trucklet and slid them into the back, hoping that the sauce wouldn't leak. If it did the interior would soon be coated, and the only way to clean it would have been to lick it thoroughly. And we didn't have D. West around for that. <sup>(14)</sup>

Fortunately, we had no sauce problems, and managed to carry the platters into our room to be greeted by a chorus of "Food, Glorious Food" as dozens of fans lined up to feast. Everything was good, although the sauce was slightly bland. The potato salad was the best I've ever tasted, and the Dragon Wheels disappeared immediately. Suzle never even saw them. There didn't seem to be as much food as I expected, but we'd added a few extra eaters after I called Roger. People grew perky and added 10 points to their IQs, and I even heard Debbie Notkin starting conversations about science fiction. The only people we disappointed were Don Maitz <sup>(15)</sup> and his friend Jo, who arrived at 9 pm, half-an-hour after our announced dinner time, only to be greeted by piles of bones and potato salad. Bob Doyle had thoughtfully invited them, but hadn't told us they'd be so late. They left, complaining about the many dinner invitations they'd turned down in favor of barbecue.

I spent the rest of the evening threading the maze between Dave Clements' <sup>(16)</sup> Junk Food Party (featuring little pink bunny rabbits, M & Ms, and imitation Twinkies) and Jane Hawkins' party (featuring a keg of Red Hook Ale, a fine local brew). Dave also featured a tape recorder, and people kept it supplied with good music (despite the tunes from *South Pacific*). At times there was enough room to dance, so we did.

It was in this atmosphere of pink bunny rabbits and "Happy Talk" that Bill Gibson finally appeared, looking like a winner in the Style Wars. "What did you do to your hair, Bill?" I asked. "Mousse," he answered. "Chocolate?" He explained that it was a new kind of holding foam. I studied his airy, upswept quaff, and asked if he could do something with my hair; he needed a dryer, so I found Suzle's. Jeanne Bowman volunteered as another experimental subject, and we followed Bill to Jane's party, where we set up near the Red Hook.

As a hairstylist, Bill was a great writer and showman. He rubbed the goop into my hair, then combed it straight back while blowing hot air through it. When he finished, I rushed to a mirror, then rushed back again. “Argh! I look like a steamroller ran me down!” I brushed it out, and it went somewhat back to the usual. Meanwhile, Jeanne was getting the same treatment, coming out looking like an eaglet with a widow’s peak. So we went back to Dave’s and danced some more.

Even Suzle danced, until she couldn’t breathe anymore. As she collapsed, so did most of the first wave of dancers. Dave picked this opportune moment to play Name That Tune, using tapes on which he’d recorded snatches of hundreds of songs from the sixties, seventies, and eighties. Don Keller was the seventies champ; Victor and Tom knew everything from the eighties. (The only one I got was “Itchikoo Park” by the Small Faces, and that was a fluke, believe me.) The second wave of dancers found another tape player and moved their booties into the hallway. They were still dancing when we went back to our motel at 2:30 am., to fall asleep in air still perfumed with sweet, tangy sauce.

Sunday was the usual Sunday at a convention, except that we didn’t hang out in a bar. Instead we were in the Fan Room most of the day, walking softly on a fine carpet of stale taco chips, a legacy of Vancouver’s “We’re not bidding for Westercon” party. We cashed out people who’d sold zines, packed boxes, wondered where the hell Linda Blanchard and rich brown were (they were in Mountlake Terrace, we found out, packing Linda’s worldlies for their marathon van trip back to Falls Church), took some time out to attend some of the banquet and accept an award for Bertie MacAvoy<sup>(17)</sup>, joined a discussion of mediazines, meeting the charming Bev Clark, publisher of *Skywalker 5* with its 250,000 word Star Wars novel, in the process. It all *seemed* like one sentence at the time.

We finished the convention that evening by watching in surprise, horror, and the coffee shop<sup>(18)</sup>, as a kindly waiter topped of Valerie Fisher’s cup of smuggled hard cider with hot coffee. Valerie<sup>(19)</sup>, a wonderfully civilized FM radio an-

nouncer, quietly pretended that it had been ice water in the criminal cup, but I caught Suzle’s eye with the sort of look developed over seventeen years of secret looks, and she looked back in agreement. This was not the sort of place we could take Calvin Trillin; this was not the sort of thing that would have happened if we had ordered, once more, from the Caveman.📖

(1) He’s still around, as staff writer for *The New Yorker*, with more food writing, memoirs, true crime and political satire to his credit.

(2) John Hinterberger, formerly a critic for the *Seattle Times*.

(3) One of many clever word constructions to come. I did a little editing but left most of my bon mots alone. At this remove, I think I agree with Samuel Johnson’s advice regarding lines that one particularly likes in one’s own writing. There’s at least one more I want to footnote, with an apology.

(4) That’s the closest I could come to what he did for HP – and, I think – Cisco, later.

(5) Now of Olympia, Washington

(6) Now going by the name of Soren “Scraps” DeSelby.

(7) We haven’t seen her for years, but we know she’s married, with at least one child.

(8) So did I beat Debbie Cross to the fannish audience with Fanthorpe?

(9) Thanks to *The New York Review of Science Fiction* and many others recently for proving it’s not.

(10) “One by one, food and alcohol overcame the reveling princelings.” “He slept the sleep of the tired, he slept the sleep of the weary, he slept the sleep of the exhausted – for he was tired, and weary, and exhausted.”

(11) Loren didn’t like this description. Honestly, I meant it with affection.

(12) Bad enough to apologize for.

(13) She goes by “Tamara” these days, and usually wears only one tie at a time.

(14) I don’t remember why I thought this would be funny. Apologies to D. and everyone else.

(15) Excellent professional artist and one of the Guests of Honor at the convention.

(16) Host of a radio show on all-volunteer college music station KCMU. All around fun guy. Much missed, as he died at the hand of a robber when he was a movie theater manager.

(17) Her book *Tea with the Black Dragon* received the Philip K Dick Award Special Citation. I think this was equivalent to “Second Place.”

(18) This is the final apology.

(19) Valerie, who now goes by a different name, officiated at our wedding in 1987.

# BACKWATERS

## LETTERS ON ISSUE #7

**Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd.  
Etobicoke, ON, Canada M9C 2B2  
penneys@allstream.net, 12/10/09**

Thank you for another issue of *Littlebrook*. Time is so subjective, it drags by or flashes past as it will. It's hard to believe that it's been two years since issue 6, but now that issue 7 is here, let's grab it and write a loc.

I smile to think that Corflu is now serving as a poke in the ribs to get going with your next issue, no matter what your title is. Incentive? Guilt trip? No matter, every Corflu now seems to start up a small wave of fanzines, and I am certainly pleased with that.

I would hope that no one would ever be able to do all the things they've ever wanted to do. There's so much I've wanted to do, but never had the time or money to do. At the age of 50 now, I think perhaps I should make up my bucket list, and at least have specific targets to aim for.

Good to see that old mimeos have a life elsewhere. We need to shake the idea that old tech is bad tech, and being old doesn't mean it's useless. It still has its uses, and we just need to find those uses. Having the Gestetner at Anticipation added some atmosphere and nostalgia to the fanzine lounge there. Good for Colin Hinz for being willing to ship that heavy thing all the way to Montreal.

The closest I've ever come to being caned was at my high school. I was usually a good kid, but I don't recall why I was summoned to the principal's office and wound up getting smacked on the hand three times with a ruler. I remember the principal as being a decent man, but physically weak, and he climbed up on a chair and jumped to add some momentum to the ruler. I left with tears in my eyes, not because my hands hurt, but because I was more embarrassed than anything else.

The local...the discussion on Sherlock Holmes is just in time for the newest version, with Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law and Holmes and Watson. I sure do have my doubts. I'm sure we all miss Jeremy Brett, rest his soul. Joseph Major, they not grits, they're greeeyits. Your cousin may not have known what you were speaking of.

Jerry, that pictures of you at le Metropolitan...

I'd swear there was a portal just like it in Montréal. I'd swear that if you'd gone, you'd have done a classic doubletake, and wondered just where, and when, you were.

**Eli Cohen  
elicohen@mindspring.com, 2/13/09**

[[Eli's letter started with a reference a party in New York and, in passing mentioned Jim Young; then he said]] Hi, Jim. Nice article on *Cat People* -- I'm glad to find out it's not a movie about people going "Whosa cute kitty? Yes, you are... yes, you are!"

I'm sorry to hear about your troubles getting back from Paris. But at least it was Newark, and not Breezewood [[Only folks who go back to our WSPFA days will get the Breezewood reference, and yes, being 'stranded' in the Newark Airport area was better than being anywhere near late 1960's Breezewood, PA svt]]. Nice that you had helpful Air France people. The last time Linda & I went to Paris (a long time ago, mind you, B.C., that is, before children) we were traveling via Air France from London. We got to Heathrow only to find — surprise! — there was a French air traffic controllers strike. The Air France personnel at Heathrow, when they bothered to stop chatting with each other, simply said there was nothing they could do. We were left entirely on our own to arrange taking assorted trains, hovercraft, and whatnot to the City of Light. I've never been that fond of Paris. Though the food, is, of course, extraordinary, even from a street corner vendor. ... [[I found that my memories of Paris from 1970 were shown to be both clear and extremely fuzzy. Of the 'classic Paris' which has not, in fact, changed much in 40 years, why did the Place de la Concorde look exactly the same, but the Eiffel Tower, of all things, look so different than the picture in my mind's eye — not to mention actual pictures.....? svt]]

Suzle's mention of traveling through France with Ginjer in 1970 reminded me of one of my favorite Heicon moments: We were at a party; Ginjer and Suzle were telling horror stories of French sleeper trains. At some point, from another conversation, someone (Mike O'Brien?) asked the room "what's the French word for morgue?" and one of you instantly responded

“couchette.” [[Actually, wasn’t either of us. Ginjer members it as being Judy Blish and I think it was the wife of Dr. Herbert Franke, the European GoH, whose name escapes me. Of course, there was a bit of chartrouse Chartrouse around at the time. We were just thinking it after our little adventure ala Couchette on our way to Heidelberg from Paris. And yes, it was Mike who asked. svt]]

Jerry, you can complain about French librairie meaning bookstore while bibliotheque means library, but remember you speak a language in which you park in a driveway and drive on a parkway.

**Brad W Foster, PO Box 165246  
Irving, TX 75016,  
bwfoster@juno.com, 12/16/09**

I must admit to being a bit confused when I read in your opening comments to *Littlebrook* #7 that I had been waiting a year for this issue. My own memory, and a quick check of the records, showed that it has been two years since issue six. (And two years before that for #5, but only one year before THAT for #4... but, I digress.) But then I realized you were working on a higher math level than me. Since there had been one-year gaps as well as two, it would be obvious that no one would really be expecting issue seven for at least a year after the sixth... therefore, we would only have been -waiting- for a year after that. Man, that sounds complicated, and I’m the one who wrote it out! [[Or maybe one of us wrote an editorial a year before we published the issue? Jerry]]

I’m not TOO jealous of your Paris trip. Okay, maybe just a little. Cindy and I are still hoping to get over to England in the next few years, though jobs, and lack thereof at the present time, are putting a bit of a crimp in those plans. Still, if there are bad times, there also have to be good times.

Regarding films from Val Lewton along the lines of *Cat People* and *I Walked With a Zombie*, I can appreciate them these days as art more than as entertainment. That is, interesting to view and think about, but not something that I go “Oh, cool, gotta tune that in!” when I see them listed as showing on tv.

Regarding my own loc about having saved *The Illusionist* and *The Prestige* to our DVR for later viewing... well, a word of warning to all with a DVR box attached to their tv. If you can’t figure a way to download those saved programs to a permanent file (and I’ve yet to figure that out myself), don’t wait too long to watch anything you record. We kept putting it off because, after all, they were always there and ready

to go. Then two months ago the DVR went haywire and would no longer transfer signals to our tv. We were given a brand new one by the dish company (yay!) then realized that the dozens of movies we had saved and not yet watched were gone with the old unit. (boo!) Let our sad story serve as a warning for others.

So, see you guys again at the end of 2011? Just don’t wait until the end of 2012, since we all now know it will be the end of civilization, at least as we know it.

**Milt Stevens, 6325 Keystone St.  
Simi Valley, CA 93063,  
12/16/09**

I don’t think I’ve ever experienced the sort of dread that Jerry talks about in *Littlebrook* #7. I’m well aware that I’m going to die at some point, but I usually don’t think about it. I usually say that I’m not at all worried about being dead, although I’m sure I wouldn’t like some forms of dying. I find I just can’t comment on death. It just is. By the time I am in a position to have a comment on death, I will no longer be in any condition to make a comment.

I’ve never thought that I had some number of things to do in life. I guess it gets back to wondering if there is an uppercase Purpose to life. There are lots of lowercase purposes in life, but they are just things you either want to do or have to do. The vast majority of them won’t kill you if you don’t do them. If life was neat, you would probably do all the things you wanted to do or needed to do done before you died. Life isn’t usually that neat. Since I don’t have any particular list of things to do, I guess I can pop off any old time without worry. That’s sort of good after a fashion.

Victor Noir certainly had a purpose in life that was different. Personally, I don’t think I ever would have thought of becoming a fertility god. Even if I wanted to be a god, I think I’d want something that required a little less work. I might have thought differently when I was younger.

Somewhere I’ve heard that story that John Berry mentions at the beginning of his article about the father who wanted to teach his son not to trust anyone. Even the first time I encountered, I noticed a major flaw in the idea. If the father’s first lesson was a success, then he would never be able to teach a second lesson, because his son would never trust him. If he really believed what he said, he shouldn’t let his son even stay in the same house. The son might well decide to smother his father in his sleep. Which would actually serve the bastard right.

Suzle recounts other parts of your trip to Paris.

I think I have come to expect no good from airlines. A couple of years ago, I missed a flight because the connecting flight was two hours late. I was almost surprised they didn't charge extra for changing my schedule. It wouldn't surprise me if soon they start charging you one amount for a flight and a second amount to actually get on the plane.

**Richard Brandt, 835 Musket Drive  
#L-303, Colorado Springs, CO 80905  
12/29/09**

Many thanks for *Littlebrook 7*. I read of your exploits in France with the envy of one who has yet to make the Atlantic crossing. (The Pacific, yeah. The Caribbean, pretty much. But ah, lands of my forebears; still waiting.)

Val Lewton hasn't suffered for lack of critical attention of late, but I'm always interested in a fresh perspective such as Jim's. I love Tourneur's work on *Cat People*; his use of realistic lighting sources (the dramatic high-key lighting from below from the drafting table, or from the swimming pool), and even a bit of discreet nudity, make much of the picture look stunningly contemporary. (By contrast, *Citizen Kane*, with its matte effects and with much of it set in a way-bygone era, must look rather old-fashioned and creaky to some youngsters encountering it for the first time today.)

The Whitehead influence on *I Walked With a Zombie* may have been overlooked because so many are preoccupied with the obvious similarities to *Jane Eyre*. I'm also a fan of Henry Daniell, whose character in *The Body Snatcher* is actually rather complex...his ends are presumably noble, after all...but Karloff more than holds his own; the scene where he's needling Daniell's doctor is fraught with psychological tension and is one of my favorites among those Wise directed. (His training under Lewton certainly served him well on my favorite of all his pictures, *The Haunting*, the ultimate in implied horrors.)

Brad Foster's tale of criss-crossing trenches reminded me of when all the pipes on our college campus were being replaced, covering the campus with its own network of trenches and forcing us to traverse makeshift bridges to reach many of our classes. One night the residents of our dorm had had enough and took to the lawn, kicking mounds of dirt back into the excavation. A futile bit of prankery which I'm sure the next morning's workmen failed to appreciate.

Especially appreciated Priest's "inside" information about *The Prestige* vs. *The Illusionist*.

**Mike Meara  
[meara810@btinternet.com](mailto:meara810@btinternet.com), 1/10/10**

*Littlebrook 7* takes me right back to my own fannish golden heyday (and what is hay if not golden, hey?) in the 1970s: the look and feel of it is very retro, which I hope is at least part of your intention, even though the production methods are more modern, and / much/ less messy. Part of the retro look, of course, is the paper size, unchanged, if I'm not mistaken, in all that long time; none of this A4/A5 nonsense for you Americans, no sirree! My own personal gilding has worn off in places, revealing the mundane metal beneath, but you two seem to be made from higher quality materials.

As it happens, I'm in France as I write this, and your tales of Paris recalled similarities with our own visits there, but also contrasts. We have equivalents of all of your pictures on the back cover, for example. Pat and I have found, as you did, that Paris is Surprisingly Spacious, despite the Metro, and that frequent stops for refreshment are /de rigueur/. Paris is also the place in France where I will try hardest with my limited French, despite it being also (in my experience) the place where I will receive the most scorn for getting it wrong.

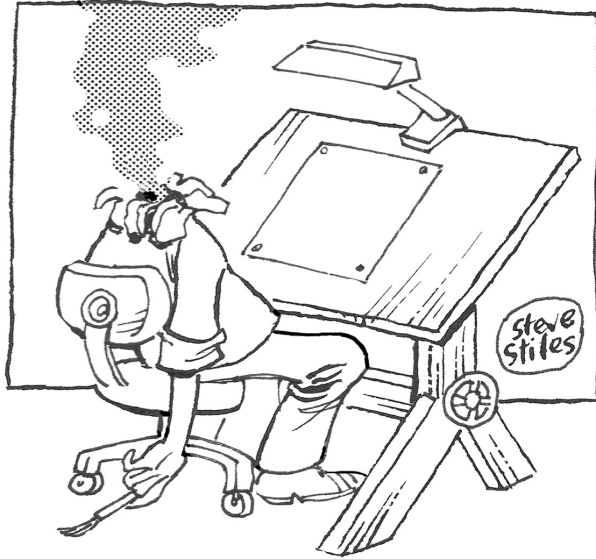
John Berry's piece might better have been called "Cane and Disable." I was only caned once at school, and though I was certainly somewhat at fault, the teacher's reaction to our misdemeanour (which was only in Latin grammar for gopod's sake – we hadn't robbed some old ladies at knifepoint) was quite disproportionate. So I and the other unfortunates got six on the botty, and no chance to stuff any padding down the trousers. The fact that the teacher in question was the headmaster made it all the worse; he lost his self-control, and I lost a lot of the respect I had had for him up to then. [[In the States, it's called paddling and has long been outlawed in most places, I believe. svt]]

An excellent piece by Jim Young on Val Lewton. I have always found *Cat People* to be a disappointment, perhaps because it suggested more than it showed, but I shall try to get one or two of the other films from my local video library. The mere look of some of these old black and white classics is sometimes enough to engage my interest.

The lettercol is always the heart of a fanzine like this, and here is a good one. This is a conversation I would have no problems walking in on; just "hi guys" and away we go.

My favourite Holmes? Jeremy Brett, and I see I'm with Lloyd Penney on that. I think Brett made the

CARTOONISTS LAUNCH WORLD  
"DRAW CTHULHU" DAY.



entire canon for tv before his untimely death, and they're out on video at attractive prices. If you haven't seen them, they're well worth a look.

**Kate Yule, 1905 SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Portland, OR 97215**

I write in response to *Littlebrook 7*. I read of your trip to Paris with great nostalgia. I've been there twice, the first a solo trip during spring break of my junior year in Munich. I had a Eurailpass and a copy of *Europe Through the Back Door*, first edition – it was barely typeset then – I was ready to conquer the world. Or at least Paris, London, and Amsterdam.

You joked about ordering French fries as somehow getting the last laugh on the French. Actually I think the joke's on us. David felt rather unimaginative for ordering steak and French fries at his first mal in France; he very soon learned that a) it was an *utterly* typical French menu item and b) in its native habitat it was bloody good!

Our odd bookstore experience was stopping in at Shakespeare & Co. and getting into conversation with the proprietor. (This would have been 1990.) David was a technical writer for Intel then and when the man heard "writer" he was galvanized. Took us on a tour through back staircases to a garret room that was available for starving writers to take up residence and work on their life's passion! We heard him out because it was easier than stopping him but it was a little em-

barrassing because of course David wasn't that kind of writer at all...then.

I think that was the same evening we decided not to attend a midnight showing of *Rocky Horror* because we couldn't be sure how late the Metro ran. The concept of getting a cab probably didn't even cross our minds.

I ended up on German television the time I visited Jim Morrison's grave, but that's another story. [[If it's the stuff of which fanzine articles are made, please send it along. Jerry]]

Anyone who gets LoCs from Chris Priest and Robert Silverberg must be doing something right.

We had rather a comedy of errors in the basement when we were getting the bathroom redone. As long as we were at it, it seemed a good idea to have them swap out the water heater as well; it was at least 16 years old and possibly quite more (it came with the house). Dumping out the old one led to the discovery that the basement drain was beyond slow. Roots? No, utter collapse more like. Excavation showed that anything from the kitchen sink that made it out to the sewers did so from sheer force of habit and certainly not because of any constraint offered by intact pipes. Digging out the bad pipes, they nicked a line to the obsolete-but-undrained oil tank for the previous furnace, so seepage from that affected the concrete and made us fear we had another kind of crisis.

Thank you for the stories and the artwork. Steve Stiles' cartoon of NASA and the one-man band makes me smile each time I re-read the text.

**Laurraine Tutihasi  
laurraine@mac.com, 2/1/10**

I'm sorry to hear of your mother's passing, but at least she had a full life. Dealing with such things is never easy though. I dread having to do that. I no longer remember whether my sister or I are named as executors in my father's will.

John Berry's article about a lesson learned the hard way was excellent. Children can be so cruel.

The letters seem to focus on movies and the horrors of home ownership. I haven't seen *The Illusionist*. I watched *The Prestige*, because it was a Hugo nominee. The descriptions of *The Illusionist* don't make it sound like anything I'd enjoy.

We are certainly learning a lot about the downside of home ownership in our new house, where we've been living since the end of June. Currently we are dealing with a serious but minor HVAC problem, a leak in one small portion of the roof, and a problem

with the wood flooring. There is a minor problem with the tile flooring, too; but I don't consider that to be serious.

Thanks for publishing the photos on the back cover.

And congratulations on being married for so long.

By the way I also read and enjoyed you and Suzle's TAFF trip report. Parts of it brought back memories of my trips to England. I'm sorry to hear of Suzle's problems on the train. I had problems on Amtrak but not in England, though I hear that rail service there has deteriorated since it was privatized. [[Thanks for mentioning my TAFF report, Laurraine. We hadn't realized that would be a bit of a letdown to spend so much time and effort on a zine and get almost no feedback! I would have added a promise at the end of the report to publish – somewhere – LoCs on the zine, if I'd thought of it. I'd love to know if it was enjoyed, and appreciate your mentioning it. svt]]

**John Purcell**  
**jpurcell45@yahoo.com, 3/18/10**

I suppose that it's only right that I compose and send this to you two while you're arriving - if not already there - at Winchester for Corflu Cobalt. Oh, well. It is Spring Break, which means yard work and other household duties get done (oil change and state vehicle inspection on car #2 are on today's agenda), but first, those all-important catch-up locs get done. Like my dad always said, prioritize your duties. He was a wise man.

I really enjoyed the book-ended editorials about your Paris trip. Jerry's sounded much more, shall we say, less frantic than Suzle's. Later this year I may be in for such a travel travail should I win this year's DUFF race, so we shall see about that in a few weeks. Even so, I am glad all problems were eventually worked out and you two made it home in one piece. Paris is one of the places on Valerie's bucket list; she studied French for a couple years recently while completing her BS degree in Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University, and she tries to use the language every so often with varying degrees of success. For me, it was Russian umpteen years ago; fortunately, I have three Russian students in the ESL class I teach, so I get a wee bit of practice on that now, which helps. My bucket list includes St. Petersburg besides Paris. Both of these would be awesome, but let's stick with one thing at a time here. First: Australia. Vote early, vote often!

John Berry's school tale reminded me of when I attended Catholic School for second and third grade. The third grade teacher was a holy terror, literally. See, I'm left-handed, so whenever I held the pencil/pen the "wrong" way and wrote in that dreaded sinister slant, she would smack the back of my left hand with this metal ruler she always carried up and down the rows of desks, forcing me to crank my left around, bend my wrist, and write cursive in the accepted right-hand slant. I certainly don't miss those days, but I still write that way, which usually amazes my students when they see me do it. So I tell them this story, and they are glad they never had to experience such treatment. Thank heavens for modern pedagogical approaches to writing.

Jim Young's article about the films of Val Lewton was most interesting, and covered some of my personal favorites. Not too long ago AMC showed *Isle of the Dead* on one of their theme nights, and I really enjoyed it. Jim's right, Karloff did a splendid turn as that aging, tormented Greek general. Of course, *Cat People* and *Curse of the Cat People* are faves, too, and I haven't seen them in a long time. Come Halloween they'll be back on the air again. This was a very good bit of writing by Jim, and I may have to bug him for something for my zine. That would be A Good Thing, for sure.

**Shelby Vick, shelvy20012000@yahoo.com, 3/27/10**

It's your fault, Jerry and Suzle!

I smoked too many cigarettes today. Y'see, I live in my daughter's house and she, rightly enuf, wants no smoking in the house (even tho she buys me cigs by the carton) so I smoke on the back porch, overlooking a canal and St Andrew's Bay.

What's that got to do with anything? Well,



over the years I have developed the habit of reading on the porch. In warm weather, that's no problem — i can read all I want. But now it is late December, and the temperature has been running six to ten degrees BELOW normal. (Global warming at work, no doubt!) So if I stay out, I figger I'll smoke whilst outside. And read. So *Littlebrook 7* caused me to stay out longer -- thus smoking more!

But it was worth it. (And now you can be credited, on the other hand, for KEEPING me from smoking whilst inside writing this LoC!)

(I should warn you this might be a lo-o-ong LoC.)

Dunno if I've gotten *Littlebrook* before, but I'm glad you got me this time. The cover brought back memories -- that old Remington you pictured wasn't but ten or twenty years older than my Very First typewriter. A young cousin of mine had taken his father's typer totally apart, back when I was mebbe 16. Disgusted, his dad said I could have it, if I wanted to try putting it back together.

I eagerly accepted the challenge! It wasn't easy, but I put it back together in about a month. As a result, my highschool grades skyrocketed, becous teachers could now READ what I turned in!

Of course, it also increased my writing (which I've been doing since around age eight or nine) and my correspondents were all pleased as well, not having to laboriously stumble thru letters of mine.

Little did I know that, one day, I would own ELEVEN different typers (including a marvelous IBM Executive with proportional spacing!) and, thru the future Vick Mimeograph, make a living from 'em.

Loved the cartoons. Brad Foster is Very Talented. Jerry, your editorial made me, once again, regret that I have spent most of my life in Florida. My '51 trip to Nolacon was the only time, up to then, that I left the state! (Wup! Not so! Had, earlier, gone to Georgia — Savannah, that is, to visit Lee Hoffman.) After that, there was a Midwescon and, of course, the '52 Chicon. . .and then I settled back to Florida again — until, mebbe 15 years ago, I went to Vegas . . .was that a Corflu or a Silvercon or what? I don't remember, but my wife Suzy was still alive and went with me. [[We met at a Corflu, so I'll guess you were at the first Vegas Corflu. Jerry]]

So only fandom succeeded in getting me out of the state. And I've STILL not been to Key West, much less overseas. But I get to read about other fans visits overseas, so fandom is, vicariously, getting me around the world. [[Gosh, I've been to Key West! My parents

and I drove down on the causeway from Miami when I was 15 or so. I remember it well because with absolutely nothing else around you, it was like driving on the ocean itself. The bigger, newer causeway was yet to be built (this was 1964); you see the old one we drove on occasionally in films where they are allowed to blow stuff up on it, etc. (e.g. *True Lies*).

Your mention of the French cemeteries reminds me of my own love of much lesser cemeteries, from local 'family' cemeteries to the more historically-interesting cemetery in Pt St Joe, where some who died in the ORIGINAL Port St Joe were buried, victims of the Great Flood. Some headstones faded with years, some missing entirely, some still legible.

As I had a mimeo business Way Back When, a business that was forced OUT of business by the advent of the duplicator, you don't need to explain the difference to me -- that is, if you meant 'copier', like Xerox, when you refer to 'duplicator.' That Rex Rotary and electronic stencil-maker STILL make my mouth drool, even tho I know the difficulty of finding stencils for each. [[Well, no, actually. I grew up in an A.B. Dick distributorship so I have a bit of a background as well. The term 'mimeograph' was patented by Albert Blake Dick and developed in association with Thomas Edison. The earliest mimeos were Edison-Dick (we have one in our garage, a souvenir from parents business, used as a prop in our stage version of *The Enchanted Duplicator* many years ago). A mimeo is in fact a 'stencil duplicator' just as a Ditto machine is actually a 'spirit duplicator'. Our Rex Rotary was called a stencil duper. Photocopiers were something else altogether. And you are right, A.B. Dick couldn't come up with anything as good as Xerox, etc., and could never complete for that business. Distributorships like my parents stayed in business for many years after photocopiers were commonplace in even small offices because older businesses, like insurance copies and churches, were still using the mimeo technology. When they too, moved on, so did most of the places where you could buy dupers, stencils, etc. svt]]

'2 Choices in Life' was another good Brad Foster cartoon.

. . .Oh, and you're encouraging me to cheat! Well, I'm using this as an opportunity to cheat, in any case. I have pledged to write one thousand words five days a week. SUPPOSED to be fiction but, as this is stretching out so long, I'm including this LoC as part of my writing....

(Yeah, yeah; I'm blaming EVERYthing on you!)

Cane and Able, by John Berry, was enjoyable - naturally! Did he do the illo? [[No, it was a piece of clip art. Jerry]]

"Shadows On A Wall," by Jim Young, was quite revealing. Always been a fan of *Cat People* but hafta admit I'd never learned the director's name. I'm just not that thorough! In fact, Val Lewton was a new name to me. Seems a shame we don't have a lot more Val Lewton material available.

As I said above, I smoke on the back porch, looking out over the canal and St Andrews Bay. But that's being interfered with! For one thing, we're in the middle of that cold snap where the temp hits below freezing every nite -- but, more importantly, it is now being interfered with by a pelican!

Yes, a pelican. Y'see, my daughter has always had a way with wild animals. When she was a kid, she was always bringing in injured birds and other wildlife that had broken something or other. She would tend to them gently, and they always took to her.

Well, recently she found a young pelican by the side of the bridge. Being Diane, she was the only one who stopped to check on it. Looked like it had been lightly clipped by a car, as it was favoring one wing and limping slightly. Since she had stopped, others pulled over, too, and gathered around the pelican.

It went straight to Diane.

People hadn't been stopping to help the pelican, but now they were all taking pictures.

Long and short of it is, she put the pelican in her truck, bought some bait fish, and brought it home. This was actually just before the cold snap and, when it shortly came along, we were concerned about the pelican -- but it just tucked its head under its wings (laid the head back BETWEEN the wings, then closed 'em over the head) and made it, even when the temp dropped down to 21 and some unlucky folks were having their pipes burst.

Now it's adopted us. Diane doesn't feed it much, becous she wants it to learn to feed for itself. (She can tell it's a young bird, still learning.) When I go out to smoke, I might not have a seat, becous the pelican is sitting on it! So the combination of cold and the pelican is cutting down on my smoking -- just a tad.

I follow several listservs and am always finding listserv members in fanzine lettercols. No difference this time, becous your first letter is from John Purcell. He brought back fond memories by talking about

waving at trains -- REAL trains, I am sure, with steam engines -- when he was a kid. My grandmother, when I was a kid, lived on a train route and I had lotsa fun there, including laying two straight pins across each other before a train same by, and then picking up the 'scissors' created when the train ran over 'em. And that ole steam whistle fading away. . . .

One of my favorite writers, Greg Benford, mentions the fantastic circulation of a Chinese sf mag. That helps explain why, incidentally, my Planetary gmail address has so much entries with totally oriental subject lines!

Milt Stevens mentioned that Readers Digest article about the super plague reminded me of all the things on the History Channel and Discovery talking about potential future disasters -- not only plagues, but meteors, super volcanoes, really HUGE tsunamis and the theory about a hyper-cane, a hurricane with 500 mph winds.

Then Suzle editorially talked about those 'potential dangers' that follow drug ads. I know it's required by law, but it often makes me think, 'Who would DARE try that thing???'

### **Lloyd Penney, 6/11/10**

Greetings! It took me a while to get to get far too much other stuff done, and then get to *Littlebrook 7*, but then, I had a look at the copyright date. No matter, it's time for some response at long last.

I wish I'd been able to go to Corflu Zed, but money never allows for this kind of event, even when planned. When Corflu was last in Toronto, I had hoped for a flood of new zines, but that didn't happen. I am extremely lucky in that few of our close friends have died over the years. But then, we are older than many of them, so I expect that they will be around for some time to come. As for us, well, we are trying our best to keep the ravages of old age away, with mixed success.

French is Yvonne's first language, and she knows the difficulties of the French language. In this technical age, communicating in French can be difficult. The two words I have in mind are *magnétophone* and *magnéscope*. *Un magnéscope* is a VCR, or some kind of video recorder. *Un magnétophone* is tape recorder, or some kind of audio recorder. Definitely not easy to understand, or remember, for that matter.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Yvonne and I marked our 27<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I've been involved with fanzines just a little longer, and apas before that. (I did things in reverse, I guess.) I keep seeing the name Chris Wrdrnd here and there...if she's

happy to facilitate zine publishing, good for her. We need whatever help we can get.

Six of the best for young John...when I was much younger, I got regular packages of British comics from my grandparents, and many of them had story-lines of being punished the headmaster with a cane or strap, and with much gusto, I might add. It made me wonder at a young age how sadistic British teachers were. Those stories also mentioned lines, but that almost seemed the easy way out, so perhaps John's reaction to his choice of punishment wasn't all that strange.

The local...John Purcell, I've always loved trains, too. A train took us from the small town I grew up in and took me out to the west coast where life really opened up for me. VIA Rail service here is the best ever, and at least Amtrak gets you to where you want to go.

Joseph Major is right, the nickname for members of the Liberal Party of Canada is the Grits. And, with the spending of over a billion dollars to stage this year's G8 and G20 summits in Huntsville, Ontario and Toronto respectively, we have some nicknames for the ruling Conservatives, none of which we can repeat in a family fanzine...[[I thought this letter would be the perfect finish for the lettercol, what with your earlier letter being the first in line. But William Breiding sent the following. Jerry]]

**Wm. Breiding, P.O. Box 961  
Dellslow, WV 26531, 9/28/10**

Almost a year for this loc. That's not too long. Luckily fanzines in the nude (not covered with ones and zeros, but naked hard copy) tend to be annuals these days.

I move around so much it's a surprise anyone can keep track of me. When I left Oil City, PA (scurried away, frightened and deranged, more likely) I fully intended to send out a COA but, in the end, did not. Probably a few faneds were peeved if their fanzines were returned, and I regret this thoughtlessness now.

I enjoyed all of *Littlebrook* #7 quite a bit, but the comment hooks came in the letter column.

I searched in vain for #6 (in some random box or another marked "zines") to refresh my memory on Jerry's comments about time travel. I may be one of the few fans that finds it impossible to take time travel seriously. As a notion (and a story device), it's a fine fantasy. But that's about the extent of it. I boggle when people talk as if the past or the future actually exist, as if they were concrete and discrete.

The past exists only through our memories. We

are a collection of memories stored in a brain that remains largely mysterious to us. Which is why aphasia, dementia, and Alzheimer's are so frightening. The past lives on only through its impact, and through human artifacts, and of course, through whatever we can read in the deep-time trail of our planet. To go back and visit the past can never physically happen, because it's only in our heads. (That's why we write stories.)

I would love it if we could go back in time, and science only needed to figure out a way to get us there. I would return to the autumn of 1986 and ask the woman I loved to marry me, and my life would be different now.

The future exists only as we project and plan for it. Certainly the outcome can be altered by what we do here and now. But we live in the present and nothing else exists, in concrete terms. The future and the past shine brightly, but only in our hearts and minds.

Speaking of our hearts and minds, Chris Priest makes an egregious error in thought while discussing the difference between the movies made from his novel and Steven Millhauser's short story. Chris says, "... 'The Illusionist' is essentially about the impossible being used to suggest the possible. Because of this the story can not make sense...." Chris needs to rethink the meaning of his words. Generally, science fiction, and much of the mainstream, is about the impossible used to suggest the possible. Particularly, Millhauser's entire body of work is encompassed in the first line of Chris' statement. He writes about the impossible to show us what is possible, and to give meaning to it. Millhauser bangs away at this premise in story after story after story. It came to a glorious pinnacle in Millhauser's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer*, where the slow building up of the possible achieves the impossible, and then the impossible shows us what is possible. Isn't that the very definition of science fiction? (Aside from, "whatever I point at.")

Time travel is impossible. So are ghosts. But both of them tell us about ourselves.

**We also heard from:** Sheryl Birkhead (who sent her notes on a "White House at Christmas" notecard – in April – and apologized profusely for the card being out-of-season – no need as we were charmed), Kirk Cockerill (who blames his interest in *Littlebrook* on Henry Welch), Frank Denton (who especially liked Jim Young on Val Lewton), and Henry Welch (who moved aeons ago to California). 📖

# SUZLECOL

## SUZANNE TOMPKINS

**T**his is going to be short and, I hope, sweet. I have zero time on this if we are to make our Corflu 28 deadline, days away.

### Corflu Cobalt, Winchester, UK, March 2010

Jerry and I had a wonderful time at the con and want to thank everyone on the committee who did such great planning and execution. I didn't take notes and cannot comment on lots of specifics, but the location was great – we enjoyed exploring Winchester, which we'd never been to; the hotel was comfortable (if pricey, but most of them are nowadays); the program nicely thought out; and seeing so many old friends was really the highlight of the con. (Here's a link to Graham Charnock's retrospect web site if you haven't seen it - <http://www.cartiledgeworld.co.uk/cobweb.html>)

I really enjoyed walking down the staircase from our 1<sup>st</sup> floor room (2<sup>nd</sup> floor to us Yanks) and right into the Con. It was like being at home in a way (home where one is charged exorbitant prices for food and drink, only available at certain hours, but home nonetheless). As with many Corflus, fans that haven't been seen in years came out of the woodwork, a surprise to the UK fans as much as to us. We sat in the lounge/bar for hours talking with British fans like Mike and Pat Meara, Paul and Cas Skelton, and US fans like Steve and Elaine Stiles, some of whom we hadn't seen in at least 30 years. I'm leaving out way too many folks, but it was a little overwhelming as is often the case at a Corflu.

Typically we discovered the best pub/food near the hotel on the last night, courtesy of Ian Sorenson, whom I guess we should have con-

sulted in the first place. We took pictures, although not as many as perhaps we should. I later found TAFF winners Anne and Brian Gray's TAFF trip photos on the TAFF website (TAFF.org), and refer you to these for some good photos of Corflu and Winchester (and their TAFF trip). They took the photos that we would have taken if we'd been paying more attention (check out <http://www.flickr.com/photos/14453377@N06/sets/72157623680465178/>). Corflu Cobalt was one of the best I've ever attended, so thanks to all who made it possible.

**W**hen we left the next day for our driving trip to Cardiff, via Stonehenge, and then back into England and southward along the coast, I should have seen trouble coming when we had to return to the Winchester Enterprise lot at the train station after driving many miles when the car sounded odd to me, only to discover that I had somehow put the car into standard mode from automatic and it wasn't changing into the higher gears on its own. Of course, we'd never seen a dual-transmission car and couldn't have guessed. An educational test drive with an Enterprise rep. took care of that problem, but we started out late, stayed late, missing Stonehenge, hated most of the driving, and if it were possible, I'd have turned the car in and taken public transportation the rest of the trip.

Jerry mentioned all this -- and the car was so too wide, exacerbating the more ancient narrow roads. We drove back and forth across SCOTLAND in 1989 and I got used to it after a while. Before we left, I'd brushed up on international signage, but could not figure out what some of the road signs were trying to tell us or who had right

of way when encountering one of what seemed like hundreds of places where the road was, literally, not wide enough for two cars of any size. That's all I'll say; we made the best of it; changed plans; had fun; saw amazing sights (Lyme Regis oceanfront comes to mind); ate good food; saw four port cities we'd never visited before; made it home in one piece...

### We'll Always Have O'Hare... <sup>(1)</sup>

Unlike my last editorial, mostly about our return from Paris to Seattle in November of 2008, I won't detail the fun and excitement that awaited us when returning from Heathrow to Seattle at the end of our two weeks in the UK. Let's just say that the three-for-three flight strike repercussions on our last three international trips have begun to wear a bit thin.

We knew going in that our return flight might be one of those scheduled for the last of three work stoppage delays by striking flight attendants on British Air. Several more-knowledgeable international traveler friends had doubted that BA would cancel their only daily flight from London to Seattle, but they were wrong. We didn't have time to get into London at all this trip and stayed, as originally planned for our return trip, overnight in the Heathrow-area hotel which was to host the Eastercon the very next weekend. As our flight was in fact cancelled, we thought we could still be there several days later to greet early con arrivals, but BA got us out the next day, whisking us straight to -- O'Hare Airport in Chicago, where we proceeded on to a fleabag hotel. There we only had to change our ground floor room once to get one whose window actually locked. What a difference a day (and American Express points that paid for the Heathrow hotel) makes.

Out the next day to Seattle on American Airlines which BA paid for, setting it up so that the transition was easy and even taking care of the baggage fees that AA charges.

On the bright side, at Heathrow we got to thoroughly inspect the Eastercon hotel and had a truly spiffing room where we watched a newly re-

leased *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* in HD on an enormous wide-screen TV; in Chicago, we had real Chicago-style food in the greasy spoon connected to our fleabag hotel, so all was not lost.

What exciting adventures await our next planned transatlantic trip in 2014?; who knows! 📖

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<sup>(1)</sup> See Suzlecol in *Littlebrook 7*, "We'll Always Have Newark"

### What I'm doing on my Summer Vacation.

Working as Hotel Facilities person for Renovation 2011, the Reno Worldcon.

If you haven't been to Worldcon in a while, and especially if you have, this is the worldcon for you! It's being put on by a host of experienced folks from all over the world. We are planning a fannish con and hope that you all will come!

Join now and get your hotel reservation in ASAP.

Here's the web site where there is a growing wealth of info on the con and Reno and environs:

### Renovation 2011

The 69th World Science Fiction Convention

Reno, Nevada

Wednesday, August 17 to Sunday, August 21, 2011

<http://www.renovationsf.org/>

