

The Kharley Knew's ~ 131



The Knarley Knews -- Issue 131
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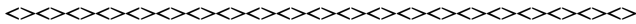
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Editorial

(In which Knarley gets to spume!)

I think I've gone from being one of the most reliable fans in the skiffy space to just another dabbler. After missing two issues during my move to California (April and June), my October issue has still yet to see the light of day. It isn't because I didn't finish it, but rather the printer died after I'd printed about 10 copies. And, through whatever form of inertia, we haven't managed yet to get around to ordering the new parts. I think some of it has to do with a cost-benefit analysis on the printer. In theory, it is a fabulous machine. It can handle black and white as well as color, pages up to 11x17, duplexing, and even stapling. It has, however, been a nightmare since its purchase as it has routinely required maintenance long before it should have. This last is no exception as the black fuser and drum have failed. The cost of the parts isn't too expensive, but I am now trying to do the maintenance without professional help and I cannot tell if this will really solve the problem. A decent new laser printer can be had for under \$1000, but we would be sacrificing a lot of potential functionality.

I suspect that this issue and October will be printed by a third-party during the first week of January, a bit late for this issue, but nothing overly significant.



As anticipated, I found out just before Thanksgiving that I passed the California Bar Exam I took back in July. I think California is the last state to report results. And all you get when you pass is notification that you passed. There is nothing to indicate how much you passed by or even your Multi-State Bar Exam score which is potentially transferable to other states – depending upon your score. I don't think I stressed too much over it and remained relatively calm through the last few hours leading up to the private posting on the California Bar web site. (I had colleagues who went home early that day and spent the last hour or so refreshing their browser waiting for the page to open up. I checked a little after 5pm only because my brother-in-law called and demanded to know whether I'd passed.) The results have long since been made public and you can now look me up on the California Bar web page to learn that my law license is in good standing.

The pass rate for the July exam was 61.7%. This was nearly a 6% increase over last July. First-time takers had a pass rate of 72.4% with repeat takers at a lowly 27%. First-time takers from ABA-accredited California law schools had a pass rate of 83% with out-of-state students from ABA-accredited schools at 75%. (I was in this group.) Only 37% of students from California-accredited, but non-ABA accredited schools passed. While I think some of these lower statistics are related to a likely inferior legal education at these non-ABA accredited schools, I think the difference is still largely an economic one. ABA-accredited schools are typically more

expensive and the bar review course is far from inexpensive. As a minor footnote, exam takers in southern California who suffered through an earthquake were graded somewhat separately and given a minor score increase that appears to have been statistically merited.

Passing the bar is, of course, not the only obstacle to getting a law license. You must pass the character and fitness evaluation which requires the state to snoop into all your closets. The process takes months and I started my application in March. As expected I didn't have any significant skeletons. The oddest exchange was the letter I received from the investigator that I might have failed to disclose a small-claims suit in which I was involved. When I called to ask for further information about what had allegedly been discovered I was told that was confidential. When I asked how I was to address this alleged suit that they wouldn't tell me any details of, they said to write them a letter denying any knowledge or involvement. Such is the way of lawyers.

Still remaining is the Patent Bar Exam. This one at least would appear to be more relevant than the general bar. The exam is offered on-line – through various providers. You are given about a 4-week window in which to take it and you are actually provided with a PDF copy of the Manual of Patent Examination Procedure (MPEP) during the exam to check your answers. This is at least a fairer and more realistic type of examination than the general bar which was closed book and where you were counseled to make up the law and apply it even if you didn't know it. The unfortunate problem is that the MPEP is about 3000 pages long and it is recommended that you take about three months of daily preparation to become familiar with its many twists and turns. The pass rate on this exam is significantly lower than the general bar, but it is open to anyone with a hard-science or engineering background and I think many take it without properly preparing.

Will the indignity never end?



We seem to have largely adjusted to life in California. We live at somewhat over 2000 feet and so are subject to somewhat severer weather than the rest of Silicon Valley. We had a two-inch snowfall about a week before Christmas. It was beautiful, but made getting out of the driveway a bit of a challenge. Once out on the roads, however, things were clear and life returned to normal. The snow only stayed around for about two days. Fortunately, it did snow very briefly on Christmas day. For about five minutes a huge updraft came in off the Pacific Ocean and sent snow flurries up into the air rather than down. Nothing stuck, but it did result in a large tree blocking the road for about 30 minutes. As is common, the first neighbor to notice it got out his chain saw and got the road open right away. After opening presents at home we

drove up to San Leandro to spend the day with my brother-in-law Dave and his significant other Nancy.

When we moved to this area of Los Gatos, we knew that there were a few Christmas tree farms in the general vicinity. We had no idea. The day after Thanksgiving the management company that coordinates them erected a number of large signs pointing toward the various farms and other smaller signs sprouted like weeds. In total there were over a dozen farms within three or four miles of the house. The practical reality of this is that every weekend between Thanksgiving and Christmas saw the local roads overrun by Silicon Valley flat-landers who have no idea how to drive on the mountain roads. They don't know how to pull over and let others pass when the road gets narrow. Others are so tentative that they drive down the middle of the road leaving no room for on-coming traffic.

Significantly more comical was the various ways in which we saw the recent kills getting sent home. A number of folks in shiny SUVs didn't want to scratch their paint so they put a blanket on top of their car to protect the paint. This method isn't particularly effective when the blanket flaps along in the breeze and the boughs end up scratching the paint anyway. What slays me is why you buy an SUV, but are then afraid to use it to haul anything. On one day we saw a BMW with a tree half-shoved into the trunk. It overhung the back by a good four feet and added at least two feet to the width of the car. Later we saw a convertible with the tree between the driver and passenger with both the driver and the passenger wearing their Santa caps.

For years we'd used an artificial tree. It had gotten a bit ragged the past few years and it is one of the many things we gave to charity rather than moving from Wisconsin. We decided to go to one of the nearest sustainable farms. A sustainable farm is one in which the tree is cut above the lowest boughs so that the tree stump will grow another tree. If done properly a tree can then be harvested as many as six times or so. For the first time we had a vaulted ceiling so we selected a 12-foot fir. Other than the weight it wasn't too much effort to get it into the house. The real problem came when we tried to use the old tree stand, which was only good for smaller trees. I ended up having to place four very large rocks (i.e. 50-100 pounds each) on the edge of the stand to keep the tree upright. It only tried to fall over once when the braces in the stand shifted. We have since remedied the situation for future years by picking up a heavy-duty stand at an after-Christmas sale.

We have been using the wood stove to supplement heating of the house. Our lease allows us to use any downed wood on the 10-acre property and we have hardly put a dent in the supply. It is still a fair amount of work as the wood has to be hauled up or down the hills and the larger logs need to be split. The redwood and coastal oak pieces generally split

quite well, but the valley oak and madrone pieces are nearly impossible to split. I need about one day a month to keep up with our consumption.

At the last minute Kyle decided not to play hockey so I'm the only one still playing. Rather than try to figure out my skill level (they have leagues from EEEEE to E to DDDD to D, etc. up into the As) I elected to join the Over-35 league. This league is fairly laid-back and while they publish the game scores there are no official standings or statistics kept. I've moved from being somewhere in the bottom third in skill level from my old league in Wisconsin to the bottom of the top third. I end up playing center about half the time and my skills are not well suited to that position. I also brought by coaching white board to the locker room and have now become a bit of a player-coach. A number of my teammates never played as children and have never had any hockey instruction. I've been able to give some basic tips on positional play which has improved our overall team play. This has been well-received and well worth the effort of showing up a few minutes early.

Our games are played at the San Jose Sharks' practice facility. It contains three full-size rinks and a half-rink. There is a lot of hockey going on there and I've even seen some curling classes. The weather is still a bit too warm for hockey, in my opinion, and the result is the ice is often wet during the first period and I sweat more than I should.

Kyle chose, instead, to play flag football. He was randomly assigned to a team and frankly the coach was less than ideal. He only allowed his son to play quarterback, even though his son wasn't very good at the position and didn't want to play there. In the end I think they were the only team in the league that didn't call plays in the huddle. As a result it was generally a free-for-all of pass routes with a poorly thrown ball that was generally incomplete. I suspect that Kyle will not be playing again any time soon. At one point he acknowledged that he missed having me as a coach because I gave everyone a fair chance to play in the positions they wanted to try. I used to take heat from the parents about this, but the kids appreciated it. I certainly never had a team of kids that hated coming to play. As far as most of the kids are concerned there is much more than winning. Oh, well ...

Somewhere in here we elected a new president. I have never been more happy than now to see an old one go. (And I remember Richard Nixon.) W has been asleep at the wheel for too long and his failed policies, especially economic ones, made it impossible for a Republican to get elected in the wake of the current disaster that is now the economy.

Until next issue . . .

A Cure for Style

By Gene Stewart

What is a writing style and how do we get or avoid it and can it be cured?

Style is how you think because style runs deeper than just choice of word, topos, or trope. If it were otherwise, then parodies of Lovecraft or Hemingway would be as good as the best of the originals. They never are because they focus only on the glittery surface of style, not the thinking that led to those choices.

Writers with distinct voices don't rely on an aggregation of the elements of style. Instead, they think in a distinctive way. Vonnegut is a good example. His voice is much more in how he thinks than what word choices he makes, or what images he deploys. He makes us see things in new ways, from angles we may not have thought of before.

Yes, style can consciously be analyzed and reproduced. This can, as you pointed out, easily lead to self-parody. Hemingway ended up that way as his thinking was gradually scrambled and he clung more to method than manner of thought.

Recipe for style: Think twice, write once. Then rewrite for clarity and concision.

Yes, style shifts with mood and changes with need. Creating atmosphere specific to each tale may require a tone different with each.

As with actors, some styles always play themselves, others are recognized only upon seeing a by-line. Is your style to be movie star or character actor?

Style is either the putting on, or the taking off, of a mask of words. It is either misdirection or revelation. It is, most often, all these things at once, most of it done unconsciously.

It is obvious that a search for the right metaphor is part of my style, for instance. It is all rooted in how I think. Modeling is part of my makeup.

In no way am I advocating that art and artist are the same, please understand that. Art and artist, although obviously on intimate terms, often do not reflect each other, at least not in ways humanoid primates can explain. Vile reprobates can produce sublime sacred art and saints can produce the scurviest pornography - go figure.

Yet, at root, it's part and parcel with how they think. Whether it reveals, conceals, or does a bit of both inevitably, ultimately style is thinking because that is what influences preference and choice.

Jagger famously said It's the singer, not the song. Diane Keaton in ANNIE HALL showed it was the person, not the clothes, that creates style.

Style is how, not what. Focusing on the what of style helps to parse it for each given writer but learning how to be true to one's self is the deeply personal thing that produces real style.

To cure style simply write to another's standards. Not only is this a simple, inexpensive cure, but a popular one, to judge by much of what's published.

But enough fumbling in the dark for now. Please excuse any errors: "Get With the New Program"

Writers are fiction programmers. If we begin viewing fiction as software, and writing fiction as programming, then we can free ourselves from publishing's hard copy centric business model and move it into at least the 20th Century, if not quite the 21st.

You can't tell yourself a story as good as a story Stephen King can tell you, so you pay to read, hear, or see his. Delivery system matters little. You can have it in hardcover, trade paperback, mass market paperback, on a CD-ROM, on a cassette tape, or filmed as a movie on a theater screen, TV screen, computer screen, iPod, or cell phone. Movies are delivered mostly on DVD but sometimes still on VCR tapes, and electronically.

What matters is the story you are after, not the format it comes in.

And even if you are Neil Gaiman or Peter Straub, and can tell good stories on your own, you still can't tell yourself a Stephen King story, so you'll still pay to get one of his, if you like his work.

A story is mental. Stories are ideas presented in a certain way to provide an experience. Each story is software.

Fiction writers program a story experience and we then buy access to it. Access can be in readable, audible, or visual form.

Publishing needs to begin viewing fiction as software to be licensed. Buying a license for a single download in one or more formats is how fiction should be acquired.

A new market model: Publishers sell access to programs, (stories), via a variety of formats or delivery platforms.

Writers license their programs, (stories), to publishers or license access directly to consumers via the internet or other systems.

Publishers will be able to offer value-added aspects such as multiple formats, backup files, and, soon, hypertext or other multimedia enhancement. At core, though, each story is a programmed experience access to which is to be licensed on a per-download basis. Download is an electronic term but a physical copy of a book, printed and bound, will count as a single instance of access. Some publishers may wish to offer multiple formats for a single price; audio and electronic downloads if one buys a hard copy, for instance.

This simple shift of outlook can and very likely will transform publishing and writing. It is a good interim solution to the many questions facing intellectual copyright as technology brings such rapid changes.

No-Budget Filmmaking Primer

by Al "Uncle Al" Bouchard

As excerpted from the blog, "Madman Al's Midnight Movie Mania"
at <http://www.alexanderbouchard.com/blog.html>

Part 1: Visual Eyes

Since this (talking about film/video/photography/other visual arts) is the purpose for which I started this blog, let's begin, shall we?

Starting from the beginning ... A spinning ball of hot material began to slowly cool, throwing off lighter elements as it slowed its spin... [Nope. Too far back.]

Let us assume, for the moment, that you've got a camera. You've read the manual, several times, and have shot enough with it to be comfortable with it.

You want to make a movie.

Okay, so now what? With a \$100 camera from Big Buy, or whatever, you're not going to be shooting *2001: A Space Odyssey*, or even *201: A Spaced Oddity*. {Well, maybe... Aaah, not.}

You can, however, shoot something you can be proud of. "How so?" you may ask.

Simple. Follow the Five P's.

Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

Yes, for those of you who were in the service, it's one of those little mnemonics they drill into you so you don't forget something critical, and screw up yourself and your buddies. That doesn't mean it has no value; on the contrary, it's an important part of your toolkit, as much so as C-47 Media Attachment Clips (wooden spring clothespins, to civilians) and Gaffer's Tape.

Preplanning has the value of preparing you for the unexpected... which, despite public relations puffery, happens all too often, and all too easily.

Now, to the stages of making a movie. There are four main stages, in order:

- **PRE-PRODUCTION**
- **PRODUCTION**
- **POST-PRODUCTION**
- **DISTRIBUTION AND EXHIBITION**

We'll discuss them in order, in the next four installments of the blog. For now, just remember this lesson from the collected wisdom of no-budget moviemakers:

"The camera doesn't lie... but watch out for the cameraman!"

Part 2: Pre-Planning Your Pre-Production

All right, you're ready to begin.

You need a story. Since this would be your first attempt, a small story will do. (Remember, War and Peace this ain't.) Let's use, as an example, a simple story.

Geeky looking man walks up to pretty girl crying on a bus bench. He asks what's wrong, and she says her dog was stolen.

Geeky looking man ducks into nearby phone booth; with a flash of light, he becomes GeekyHero. GeekyHero dashes off at super speed to find the dog.

A disreputable-looking character sits nearby holding a dog. GeekyHero sails in, coldcocks the disreputable looking man, and takes the dog.

Back at the bus bench, GeekyHero hands the dog to the girl, expecting to be made much of for his heroics. She looks at him and says, "This isn't my dog."

GeekyHero faints.

See? That wasn't so hard... which is why I shot this one myself about thirty years ago. (The footage is still around here somewhere...)

I was going to say "for the moment, we won't bother with proper script format"; but if I do that, then you might get into bad habits that would take much more time and effort to break, and replace with the right ones. So we'll give you the right habits now.

Since I'm assuming you are impecunious student types, or maybe just cheap (like me), there are places where you can get free script formatting software. I'm putting in a partial list here; places like ScriptNurse Screenwriting Site, Celtx Production Software, Cinergy Script Editor, Page2Stage Screenwriting Software, and The DV Cafe - Free Downloads for Filmmakers have downloads you can get. And if you Google® "screenwriting", you'll get an absolute overload of sites to search. (Great time wasters.)

So, once you have your script in proper format, you have to do what they call a "breakdown".

(And, no, you aren't having an impairment of mental function, nor are you having mechanical problems. This refers to listing all the cast and elements [costumes, props, locations, special effects, special make up, and the like] that you need to shoot this epic.)

This is an approximate breakdown of what you'd need:

- **Scene One** - girl on bus bench crying.
- **Scene Two** - Geek turns into GeekyHero, and runs off.
- **Scene Three** - Disreputable-looking man has a dog; GeekyHero punches him out, takes dog.
- **Scene Four** - GeekyHero hands dog to girl; she says "Not my dog"; he faints.
- **Cast Members:** Girl, Geek, Disreputable Looking Man (DLM).
- **Costuming:** GeekyHero Costume (in addition to regular clothing).
- **Props:** Dog, Handkerchief/tissues (depending on the preference of the actress).
- **Locations:** Bus Bench, Phone Booth, another location where DLM sits.

The next part of preproduction is figuring out how many pages of script are shot per scene. (This is a lot more important for a 120-page script than a 12-page one...)

If you have your script to the point where it's done, and you don't expect to make any more major changes, it becomes "locked". Any further changes are done on what are called "revision pages", which are printed on a different color paper and added to the copy of the script. Say Scene Four is on Page Four, and is revised to run onto a new page; the new page is not numbered Five, as you would expect, since the stuff that's already on Page Five stays there; the new page is Four-A. Additionally, if a scene is deleted, a notation with the scene number is put into the script to keep the scene numbers constant and consistent.

Confused yet?

Anyway, pages are measured in eighths. Half a page is not half a page, it's "four eighths". The script supervisor (if you have one) is supposed to keep tabs on how many scenes are shot, how many eighths each scene runs, how many takes were done, and which take the director thinks is a keeper.

By the way, you'll probably be doing this all on your own, since this is a simple project.

You need to find a location where you'll be shooting, cast the actors, which in this case might not be too difficult if you have enough friends, get the dog, costume, and camera, film, tripod (**DON'T FORGET THE TRIPOD!**) and batteries, and set up when you'll be doing it.

A few other things to consider, while we're talking about preproduction... Will you be paying your actors anything? Will you be feeding them? (Tip: If you're not paying them, feeding them is a **really** good idea; they might want to work with you again if you do.) Will you be supplying the transportation? (Do you really want to have three actors and the dog in your car with all your stuff? On the other hand, if you don't put them in your car, will they be able to get there?)

There are a lot of things to think about.

Well, we're now progressing to the Production phase; that's the next iteration of this blog. Until then, be happy... it could get worse.

Part 3: Results of Productions

Okay, then... Last time, you had your script, your cast, your breakdowns, your equipment setup, and your locations. With all this done, what's left but to stick your actors in front of the camera and shoot?

[Do I disillusion you now, or wait until later? Aaah, better you know now...]

There's a very old saying that goes, "There's many a slip / Twixt the cup and the lip"; the reason some of these sayings get to be very old is because they're very often true.

You could have planned everything to be shot in bright, sunny weather, and the forecast is for exactly what you want... but a rogue storm cell could dump rain all over your location during the entire time your actors are available.

You could be setting up to shoot, and a police cruiser could roll up, take a look, and ask for your permit. Which you don't have, since you didn't think you'd need one. Which you try to explain to the nice officer.

You could conceivably be making your "one phone call" from the local police station. Or, depending on the whims of the officer in question (and they can be quite whimsical, believe me), he could confiscate your equipment and issue you a citation to appear in court to show cause why you should get them back.

Your leading lady could be having her period. Your leading man could be dealing with a case of near-terminal acne. The dog could be suffering from worms, and dumping mounds of malodorous manure at the slightest provocation.

[My, didn't that roll trippingly off the tongue? Occasionally, I come up with some alliteration that astonishes even me.]

[And no, that isn't always hard.]

Now I don't bring up these nightmare scenarios to stop you from making a film; on the contrary, I just want to prepare you for situations that could happen, so you'll be prepared to deal with them as best you may.

For a short film like the one we've outlined in the previous instance of this conversation, chances are that none of the things I've described above will happen.

But they could.

But, for the moment, let us assume that everything goes superlatively well, and you've completed all your shots just as you planned them.

You feed, thank (and possibly pay) your actors, take your footage, and go home.

Onward to POST PRODUCTION... which is next time, unless I come up with some interesting sidelights about production to add first.

We'll see what develops.

Part 4: Additional Production Credits By...

Okay, then, I may have rattled some of you with last entry's recountings of problems involved in production... especially with one as fast and short as what we had in the sample script.

Understand, things like that can and do happen... but there's no saying it will happen.

Now, on to some things I didn't discuss last time...

On a larger crew, the director (you) usually tells the cameraman (you) where to put the camera, and how he wants the action "framed"(positioned in the picture). The gaffer (you) rigs the lighting (sun) to best effect for the picture, helped by the key grip (you) and his chief assistant, the best boy (also you).

The sound recordist (you) places the boom operator (sometimes you) to get the best sound in the external microphone while keeping it out of frame. The assistant director (you) gets the actors to their marks for perhaps one, and maybe more, rehearsals, at the whim of the director. (A point to note: Some directors can be very whimsical; this is not necessarily a Good Thing.)

When all the technical side is prepared, the director will call "Camera," at which point the cameraman will start rolling. The sound recordist will report if they have sound, and the director will call "Action." The actors will go through the scene, and the director will call "Cut" when the scene is over. After checking with the technical side, to see if they have any objections, the director will either accept the take ("Print", coming from the old days of making a print of the good takes to show later) or reject it, and repeat the procedure above.

Sounds really dull, doesn't it?

Well, it can be... except when your nerves are on edge because you're doing an effects shot that is not repeatable. (You have two cantalopes to stand in for an actor's head being run over by a car tire; using the actual actor is not an option.)

For something as short as our sample script, it could probably be shot "in sequence"; that is, filmed in the order you see it on screen. For larger productions, with many locations, costume changes, and other logistical issues to consider, scheduling is usually done to shoot all scenes in a particular location at one time, then all scenes at another location... Tearing down a setup and moving it to another location can be time consum-

ing, so the most efficient utilization of time and personnel is used. This is the job of the Production Department (usually you). There are shareware programs to help you; I use a few myself.

The theories behind lighting for mood and effect are something I'll go into another time, just as I'll explain (one of these days) camera angles, "Dutch tilts", and the 180 Degree Line, among other things.

For now, let's just take our footage, get back, and GET READY TO RRRRRRUMBLE!!...

(Sorry.)

Part 5: Don't Worry, We'll Save You In Post...

Well, everything's shot, and you now want to edit it.

First thing you'll need to do is get your footage onto your computer to edit.

"On the computer?" you may ask. Yes, on the computer.

Modern computers have enough power to edit, render, and add special effects to footage that would make mainstream filmmakers from even ten years ago drop their jaws in wonder. What used to take a Cray Supercomputer now can be done with something you can pick up at Best Buy or Circuit City.

And NLE software - the sanctified "Non-Linear Editing" of a few years back - can be yours for a few hundred bucks instead of the five figures you used to need to buy an Avid system.

Of course, it's what you do with it that counts, and that's what I'm going to tell you about here.

The most common way to get footage shot on digital camcorders onto a computer is by using a FireWire cable - also known as IEEE 1394 cable, or iLink. Most editing software has provisions for controlling an attached camera by the cable, rewinding it, playing and capturing the footage on the computer's hard drive, and stopping the camera when either the tape is finished or the footage ends with nothing after it.

Most analog camcorders, while lacking the FireWire output, can send the audio and video messages through the A/V outputs (the RCA plugs like on a stereo system or a VCR). If you hook up your analog camcorder to the audio and video "in" jacks on your VCR, you'll record a straight "dump" of what's on the camcorder. Great for home movies, or those vacation pictures of Junior getting dive-bombed by the seagull flock, but not too useful for editing.

There are attachments you can buy in your local computer store (again, Best Buy, Circuit City, Fry's, Micro Center, CompUSA, or whatever), that can hook up your analog camcorder's A/V jacks to your computer, digitizing the footage. I have one, an older model from Dazzle (bought by Pinnacle

Systems, which was swallowed by Avid). This hooks up to a USB (Universal Serial Bus, a newer-fangled way of getting information in and out of computers) port, and the footage is digitized and stored on the computer.

There are also other ways... many are much more complicated, and if you can get them to work reliably, me 'at's off to yer, mate.

So... the footage is now on your computer, ready to edit. (However it got there.)

First, you probably want opening titles. (It's the traditional thing, you know.) Most software applications have what they call a "Titler". You select the color you want, the background (if any), and whether it's still or moving. You type in the information, and voila! The title is a "clip" in what is usually called "the bin".

Don't worry about these terms... they're hangovers from the "old days" of shooting on film, and editing with scissors and glue. A "clip" is a piece of footage. That's all. "The bin" is a place to put clips, because they had (and still have) large, cloth-lined laundry baskets with frames sticking up, from which you can hang clips you're using. The end of the clip that's not attached spools down into the bin, which is why you have the cloth lining. (Dust and scratches on the film are Not Good Things.)

You then take the pieces of footage you shot and place them in order on what is called "the timeline". The timeline starts at 0 hours, 00 minutes, 00 seconds, and 0 frames, which is shown in the following format:

00:00:00;00

The semicolon between "seconds" and "frames" is used to highlight the difference.

Now, you may have always heard that "film runs at 24 frames per second". That's quite true... for film. Video, on the other hand, runs at 30 frames per second - 29.97, actually, but we round up to thirty because unless you work in broadcast engineering, you don't need to worry much about that three hundredths of a second.

The frames counter will therefore run between "00" and "29"; when it passes "29", it goes back to "00", while the seconds counter increases by 1.

Have I confused you yet?

Don't worry, you'll get the hang of it.

Oh, and don't forget to SAVE YOUR WORK OFTEN!!!!

Put the first clip (the girl sitting on the bench) after your titles. Then put the next clip (the geek walking up) after that. Continue putting the clips in order, until you reach the end. When you put your end titles (like the stuff you see at the

end of a movie, when people walk out of the theater), make sure you save your work. You can then look at what you've assembled.

<<pause>>

Kinda sucks, doesn't it?

Most first efforts will.

You need to go back to the start, and remember the editing maxim near and dear to all of our hearts: "Enter Late, Leave Early". Basically, what this means is you don't want "dead space" where nobody's doing anything important to the movie. If the girl hesitates a second before starting to act like she's crying, that second of hesitation comes out. Maybe even the first little bit of her starting to cry, too... you want it to look like she's been crying for a while.

Also, when the geek boy walks up, start your shot of him in the middle of a step. Don't make it look like he's waiting for his cue.

Don't cut things too tightly; you don't want to lose any information. Just leave enough to show where you are and what's going on.

Now, once you trim things down, it'll probably look better. This is natural. So you're tempted to just save it again, and burn it directly to a DVD to show everybody.

You should resist that temptation for now. Because there are more things you could do to make it even better.

I'll go into that in the next entry... I've been running on a bit here.

Part 6: After The Party's Over...

Last time, I said I'd go into more ways to make your movie better. Well, here we go... and I want to thank Peter John Ross of Sonnyboo for the inspiration. (Even though he didn't know he did it...)

I told you about basic "straight cuts" last time; one scene ends, and the new one begins. There are many effects in most editing software now that have "transitions" (a two-dollar word for a four-bit concept: cuts) like you've seen in Star Wars, or some European films, or things like that.

You don't need to play with those transitions. *[I don't need to play with those transitions.]* Those aren't the effects you're looking for. *[Those aren't the effects I'm looking for.]*

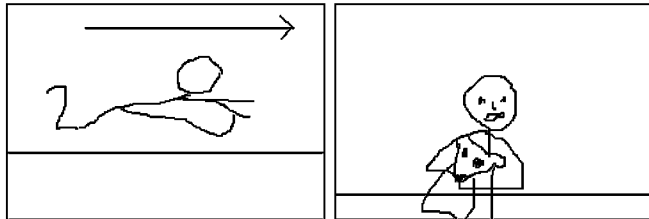
Sorry... I couldn't resist the Obi-Wan Kenobi schtick.

What you need are a few simple things... **Cut On Motion, Matching Action, and Ell-Cut Audio.**

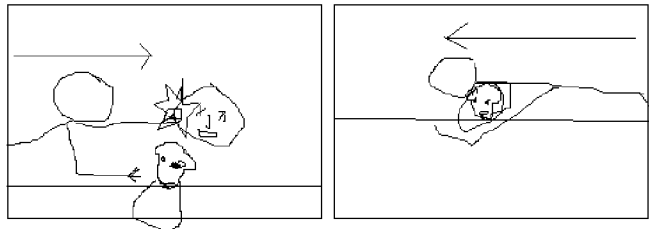
No need to look so puzzled... I shall explain.

Cutting on motion is simply cutting the scene when something is still moving... Say, in our hypothetical film, you want to cut between the geekyhero running out to search for the dog, and the less-than-savory sort sitting somewhere else with a dog. As the geekyhero runs, you CUT in the middle of a run; when you bring in the next shot, of the LTS sort with a dog, start the shot on LTS doing an action.

Here's a (very poorly drawn) sample storyboard to try and show you what I mean:



Cutting on Motion



Now, my drawing skills on the computer are something less than breathtaking, but I hope I'm getting the point across, at least.

Matching Action is showing people in one shot performing what looks like a continuation of the same action in two separate shots. Say the crying girl had received a mysterious note; she crumples it up after reading it, and throws it down onto the sidewalk. Next we see a crumpled note on the sidewalk, picked up by a hand... which is not hers, but the geek's, and he deposits the paper into a trash receptacle. This changes scene on the audience, but they don't notice as much as they might.

Ell-Cut Audio has the picture from one scene, say the one ending, overlap with the audio of the scene coming in. Say, as an example, the girl puts her head in her hands and begins to cry inconsolably. On the soundtrack you hear "*I swear, you cry like a girl!*" The picture changes to the geek and say, his father. The father's voice, which was over the previous shot, continues: "*I never saw any real man who could cry like you do!*"

There are other techniques, of course... like using something blocking the camera to switch scenes... say, a cab pulls in front of the girl on the bench, and when the cab pulls away, it's at another house, with a new character in view.

Or, perhaps, using a letter, or a newspaper, or some other thing of that sort to be the intermediate focus point in the scene shift. Say Hero writes a letter to Girl, with whom he's had a fight. He's trying desperately to make things right, and

he pulls a copy of the letter off the printer, and reads it. When we pull away from the letter now, Girl is reading it.

These techniques aren't good to use indiscriminately. Just because a pinch of salt makes your soup taste better, you don't put a cup of salt in to make it even better still. Use these techniques in moderation - a pinch, or a dash, here and there, once in a while - and it'll make your film better to watch.

Okay, next time, we'll talk about distribution - for the sake of this series, we'll limit it to DVD, and YouTube/Google Video/FaceBook/MySpace. (Festivals are a topic we'll talk about at a future date... I promise.)

Part 7: Okay, NOW What?

Well, it's done.

You planned out your script.

You wrote it.

You cast it.

You shot it.

You edited it.

You put titles on it.

A couple more things to talk about: music, for one.

If you're just going to burn this to a DVD and show it to your friends, and that's as far as it's ever going to go, then grabbing the theme from *Superman* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and putting it under your dialogue track is fine.

As long as that's as far as it's ever going to go.

If you ever decide to enter it into a contest, or upload it to YouTube or Google Video, then you have a problem. Because, under copyright law, you don't have permission to use that music.

You could get your video yanked from YouTube or Google Video. You could get a "cease and desist" letter from the law firm representing Paramount Pictures (in the case of *Raiders*), or Time Warner (in the case of *Superman*). You could get sued.

Don't gloss this over... Disney/ABC, for one, is VERY protective of its trademarks and copyrights, and has gone after a small day care for having "unlicensed" likenesses of copyrighted Disney characters as outside decorations on their building.

My solution? **Royalty-free music.**

Most music for films requires licenses: A "performance license" is an agreement between the filmmaker (you) and the performer for a flat fee, a percentage of any money made with the performance, or both. "Sync rights" means that the filmmaker (you) is agreeing to a license to use a musical composition in a "timed relation" (it's going to be the same each time it's seen) in a visual presentation. If you're talented enough to make a new recording of a piece of music, you

need “mechanical rights”, which is a license from the copy-right holder, and means paying fees and royalties.

Royalty-free music, on the other hand, is either acquired (in the case of totally royalty-free music) or purchased from the composer. That purchase price gives you a license with all these rights with no further payment involved.

If you Google® “royalty-free music”, you’ll find any number of sites that offer original compositions for reasonable prices. However, if you’re downright stingy, like me, there are places where you can get royalty-free music FOR FREE. Peter John Ross, at Sonnyboo.com offers a selection of pieces he wrote (he’s a musician, too... when you got it, you got it) for free, with the only stipulation that he gets a credit line in your film. Kevin MacLeod at Incompetech.com also provides free music, under the Creative Commons license. This basically means, as they explain it on their website, that this is their way of maintaining their copyright, but releasing some of the rights of their work to the public use. They see it as a midway point between copyright (all rights reserved) and public domain (no rights reserved).

Either way, this is something to keep in mind... you don’t want a lawsuit, because they never fit properly.

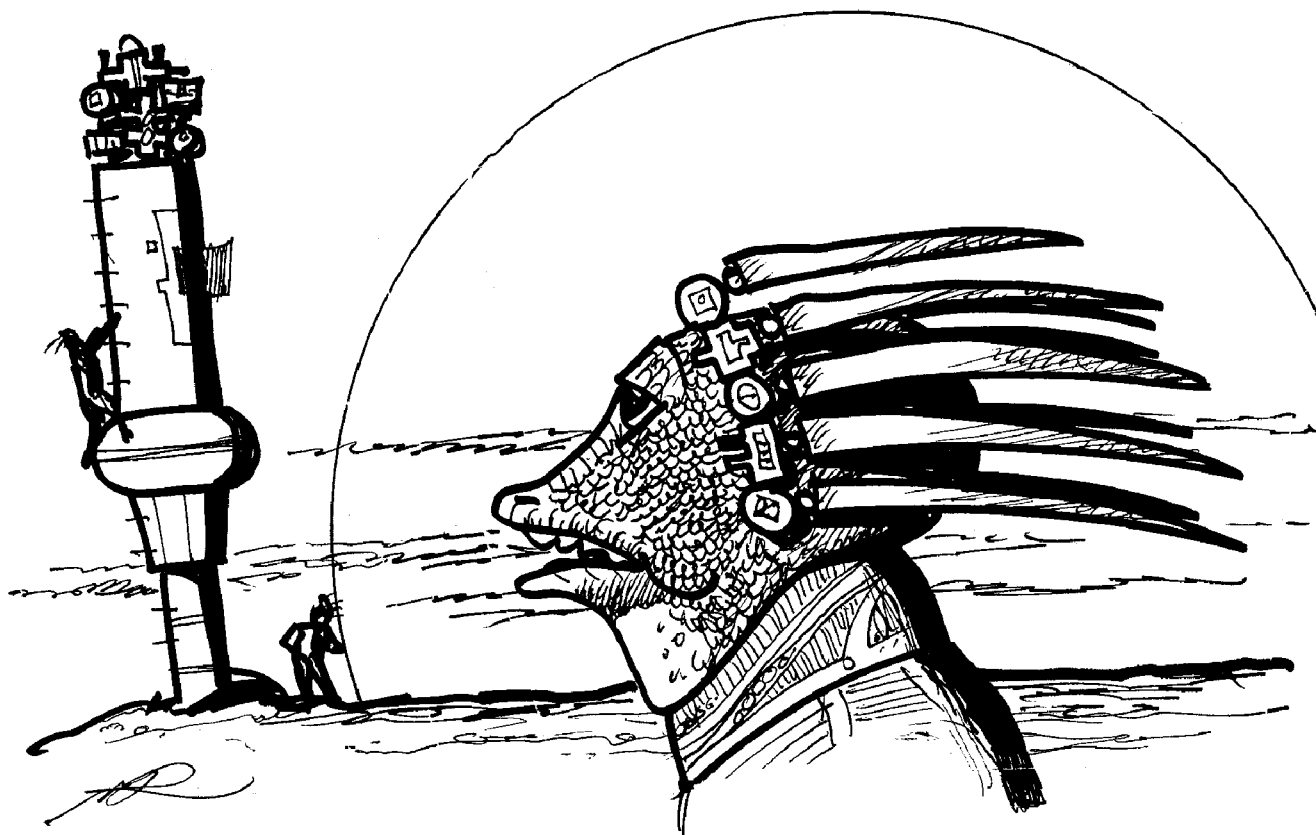
Sorry... I’ll try to keep the “puns”manship under better control...

Now, when you burn your final edit to DVD, don’t forget to make one you can do on the Web... Google Video, YouTube, and many others use Flash Video format, from Adobe, and they convert your video of 100 megabytes or less into Flash Video to play on YouTube. Here’s a neat trick... if you convert it to Flash Video before you upload, you have better control, and the video can be bigger! There are all sorts of freeware and shareware programs to convert video files to Flash Video, so I leave that exercise to the reader.

You can also, as I do, post your own videos to your own website... that’s an advanced topic we’ll go into some other time.

As for this miniseries, it’s a bit longer than five posts, but I believe I’ve covered all I said I would... More once again, and whenever that is, I’ll talk to you then!

Cheers! Al B.



CONVENTIONS

Time passed and I was moved to Woodbourn County Mixed School, a bigger school in a together area of Sheffield. My classroom turned out to be the upper hall and a more chaotic arrangement would be hard to find. Each morning, my horde of 45 assorted fifteen year olds would assemble for registration. Once that was completed it was



time for Assembly, my pupils would stack all the desks and chairs against one wall, a bell would ring, and all the pupils from the other rooms would descend on us. Then came a corporate act of worship, and the various orders of the day, snippets of information, the dishing out of swimming certificates, and the announcing of the current state of the House Points system. When that was over the children dispersed to their bases and my little mob had to unstuck the furniture and re-assemble the classroom. The whole procedure couldn't have been as a way of starting a day's teaching with the greatest amount of chaos.

Whilst doing my teacher training I had renewed my contacts with SF fandom by attending the first post-war Convention in 1947. Being a penurious trainee teacher my finances were knee high to a soggy pancake so I couldn't afford to stay overnight in London. The answer was to catch the 7-30am train which reached St. Pancras just before noon. This gave me eight hours in the city before catching the 9-00pm train home. This got in at 2-30am and left me with a two mile walk home. Happily, muggers were unknown in those days.

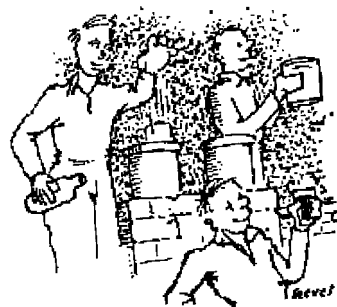
Events worked according to plan. On arrival in St. Pancras I descended into the Rotunda and began to walk slowly round whilst waving the identification colours of the day – a copy of *Astounding Science Fiction*. I wonder how often fans have used that signal. Anyway, it worked; before I could be arrested for displaying subversive literature I was absorbed into a bunch of real, honest-to-goodness SF fans. Other out of towners were collected and the whole crowd was split into small groups and taken on a flying tour of London before meeting up at the White Horse Tavern. As we approached our ears were assailed by the clamour of a burglar alarm in a nearby jeweller's. No one seemed to take any notice and it kept going for the rest of the Con, much to the distress of the various speakers.

Editor Walter Gillings showed us the cover painting for an issue of *Tales of Wonder*, this depicted a Tarzan-like figure clad in a bearskin. He was busily fending off a huge wasp on an Earth overrun by jungle and infested with giant insects. Sitting beside me, as sundry speakers spouted words of wisdom, was a young chap busily scribbling in a grubby notebook. Seeing my curious look, he explained he was "covering the Con for 'Operation Fantast.'" I later discovered that

Carry on Jeeves

By Terry Jeeves

this meant he was doing a Con Report for a fanzine run by a Captain K.F. Slater. A fanzine in which my first story and artwork appeared.



Over the years those Conventions tend to blur into one amorphous mass. One at the Royal was livened up

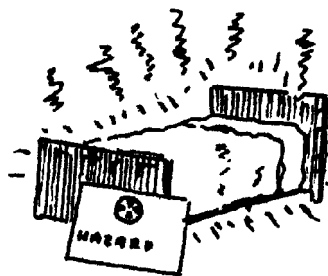
by a black cat walking to an fro over the glass roof of the Con Hall. The 1953 Con at the Bonnington saw the first "Roof-con" when a group of fen took their booze onto the roof of the hotel and disposed of their empty bottles down the chimney stacks. By this time I had qualified as a teacher and my salary of thirty quid per month allowed me to stay overnight at the Avondale, where bed and breakfast cost 16 shillings a night. 80p to you youngsters.

It was at the Bonnington that Ken Slater and I argued at 2-00am with the night porter who insisted that as I was booked at a different hotel it was time I got out of his, I trudged back to the Avondale where I was sharing a room with Eric Jones. Eric hadn't got back yet, so I turned in and was just dropping off the sleep when there came a couple of raps on the door followed by a slithery sounding ending with a gentle thud. I opened the door to find Eric Bentcliffe standing over a heap of old clothes. On closer inspection these turned out to be a well-oiled Eric Jones. The slithery sound had been Eric J. collapsing down the door. How the diminutive Eric B. had ferried the 6.1" Eric J. back to the hotel and up the stairs remained on of life's great mysteries.

Then there was the North West SF Con held in Manchester; one of its highlights was an amateur film show by John Russell Fearn. It was meant to be serious, but the fen all laughed like crazy as a model rocket took off for the Moon (from Blackpool beach) and wobbled its jerky was up on the end of a black thread. I'm afraid that Mr. Fearn was not amused by the ribald comments which greeted his epic.

Although only a small affair, it showed that a Con *could* be held outside London despite sundry comments from that area that Manchester was too far north to travel. Skilled map readers were able to prove that the distance from London to Manchester was exactly the same as the reverse journey taken by many Northern fen who had been termed "bloody provincials" by H.J. Campbell, editor of *Authentic SF*. When a much larger Manchester con was planned, a few hardy Londoners set off to attend. Some fell by the wayside as did Operation Armageddon, their plan to sabotage the Con. It wasn't needed as we had enough snags of our own. Nevertheless the Supermancon was a great success and led to a larger number of Cons outside the Metropolis where hotel rates were

cheaper and travel distances shorter. I recall that it was as the Supermancon that Brian Burgess brought along a bagful of offal for use in a mock operation. For some perfectly logical reason, these were stored under Peter Hamilton's bed. They were left there when the skit was cancelled and duly discovered at a much later date by the hotel staff.

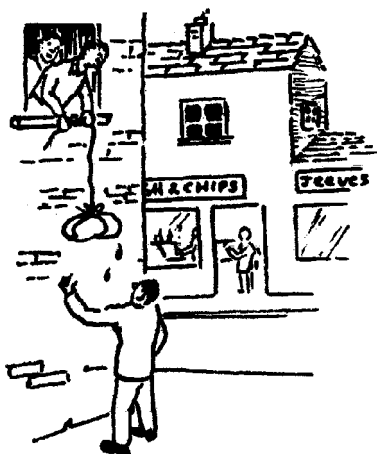


Highly memorable were the Kettering Conventions of the fifties. A sleepy little market town, it didn't boast a hotel large enough for all of us, so we took over two, the George and the Royal. The George was ideal, a large Con Hall, wandering corridors, and plenty of local eateries, most of which soon acquired additions of "Blog on Toast" or "Crottled Greeps" to their menus. Other delights in Kettering were the fan huckster tables where paintings, books, plaques, and other weird goods were all on offer. Programmes included sundry prize competitions, audience participation items, panel games, and the wonderful tape operas from the Liverpool Group. I still have them on cassette and they still give me a laugh.

A nearby "chippy" provided sustenance for the impoverished gourmand, the snag was smuggling a redolent package into the hotel. Ingenuity solved the problem in the form of a length of string lowered from a bedroom window. The fish and chips bundle was tied on the end and raised aloft. The idea worked well until the overloaded string broke and passers by were showered by fish and chips.

Another Kettering legend was the late Ken Mc'Intyre after whom the Award was named. A *bon viveur* and confirmed Guinness addict, his first act on booking into the George was buttonhole the porter and bribe him into supplying his

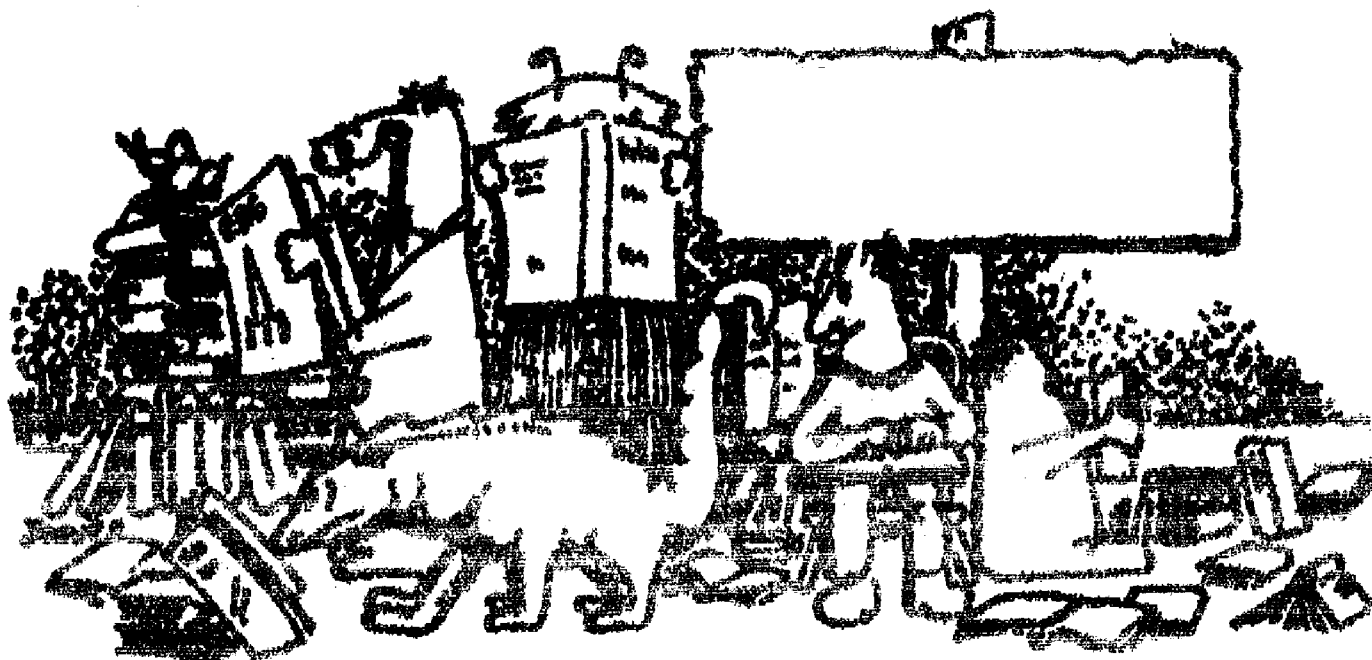
room with a crate of his favourite tippie. It disturbs me to see petty bickering over his Award which was meant to preserve the memory of a really nice guy. We tried to avoid this when setting up the Award by making the simple rule: "Vote for the person you would most like to see win the Award." Sadly, some



fen still manage to badmouth what was meant as a tribute to a true fan.

It was at Kettering that the British Science Fiction Association was formed. It was rammed through by Ted Tubb with the avowed aim, "To bring new blood into fandom." Eric Bentcliffe and I were co-opted as joint Secretaries, Archie Mercer as Treasurer, and Dave Newman as Chairman. Ted Tubb was to edit the magazine *Vector* with me duplicating it. Incidentally, I proposed the name which went into a hat along with several others. It came out on the draw and *Vector* was born. It and the BSFA almost died. Along with the first pages for me to duplicate, Ted included his resignation. Dave Newman gaffiated along with all the minutes and documents of the meeting forming the Association. I was left to edit, cut to stencil, and duplicate, the first four issues of *Vector* (as well as the regular production of *Triode*), whilst Eric B. took on all the secretarial duties. Somehow the BSFA survived and is now nearly 50 years old.

Then there was the 1957 World Con ...



INTERLOCUTIONS

□**TKK:** *Not much in the way of LOCs this issue. That's what happens when the prior issue is not distributed.*□

Eric Lindsay
PO Box 640
Airlie Beach, Qld 4802
Australia
fjagh2008@ericlindsay.com
28 Dec 2008

Dear Henry,

I can offer only belated best wishes for your move. I hope the trauma of a move to California was not excessive. The packing is the thing that gets me. Getting out of the Detroit area with its automotive infrastructure is sounding like a better and better move, regardless of other issues with the economic downturn.

Alexander Slate and **Jim Stumm** seem to be getting well into the debate on money and ethics.

Joseph Nicholas in his complaint about useless information from ISPs about installing DSL seems to have hit upon a worldwide problem. At one stage here (in Airlie Beach) the (only) local ISP would come to your home and do the install, to ensure everything worked. I thought that was what most people needed. Now you seem to only get a box, with poor (or wrong) instructions online. We were at a newly opened Bed and Breakfast in a large city a few months ago. Their advertised wireless internet connection wasn't working. Before we left, I had installed the equipment the ISP supplied, and got it working (we wanted access). However the default instructions were simply incomplete, and partially wrong. I don't know what the average user does, if they can't follow the instructions, except possibly pay someone to install such items.

I would prefer a key lime pie. However at Xmas one of the regular stall holders at the local markets give me a half dozen limes from the last few on their trees. I made them into rum punch.

Regards,
Eric Lindsay

□**TKK:** *I try not to rely on the installation manuals provided by electronics companies. They've gone over to so-called universal image-based instructions. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but not where these manuals are concerned. You almost need to fully understand what you are doing before you start the installation. When that fails I call the tech-support line. I had to do that for my DSL-modem, because no where*

did they teach me how to use the modem as an access port and then have my wireless router act as the DHCP device. Did the B&B reduce your room rate in exchange for the technical service? If you get too much into the Hawaiian shirts we might begin confusing you with Lloyd Penney.□

Eric Lindsay
26 Dec 2008

Dear Henry,

I was surprised that your fanzine efforts didn't take even more of a hit from preparing for your move. Good luck with your new bar career. I don't think I would handle any sort of exam well these days. I was never good at them at school, and the more distant they are in the past, the less likely I am to improve.

I am perhaps a month into preparing for our move, and average less packed than a box a day. Partly this is because our three room apartment has been carefully organised for ten years. There is probably no more efficient way to pack it, so everything that goes into a box reduces the available space. It has turned from a 15 puzzle (with one empty space) to a 17 puzzle, where doing anything requires moving everything else first.

Sue had a great article about the Bushmen, and how their children will not be able to continue their culture and way of life. The same thing is happening with Australian Aborigines in the remote outstations. It is very difficult to maintain a cultural museum, without also stopping the children from learning about the dominant and attractive western culture.

Australia is still attempting to kill off the introduced fire ants mentioned in **John Purcell's** article. However gardens and I do not get along. At my best, plants merely do not die before the owners return. At worst, they die within a day.

Like **Jim Sullivan**, I once loved libraries. However no longer. In the decade I have spent here, I have entered the library about thrice, and never to borrow a book. This is partly because the books on offer were restricted to the hospitality industry, and sugar cane farming. But only partly. The internet provides a much grander scale of material than any rural library.

Regards,
Eric Lindsay

□**TKK:** *I think of moving and boxes as a giant game of musical chairs. There are never enough to go around and the most open chair is three rooms away.*□



"The usual" generally refers to either a letter of comment (LOC), a contribution, or trading with your fanzine or generally any friendly means of communication.

Alexiad Vol. 7 Nos. 5 & 6 by Lisa and Joseph T. Major; 1409 Christy Ave.; Louisville, KY 40204-2040; bi-monthly; \$2 or the usual. A nice fanzine with lots of book reviews and a solid letter column.

Banana Wings #36 by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; 59 Shirley Road; Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES; UK; fishlifter@goolemail.com; irregular; the usual. A nice fanzine with lots of traditionally fannish content. Quickly becoming more dependable in publication than I am.

Chunga Issue 15 by Randy Byers, Andy Hooper, and Carl Juarez; 1013 North 36th St.; Seattle, WA 98103; fringe faan@yahoo.com, fanmailaph@aol.com, heurithermilab@gmail.com; irregular; \$3.50 or the usual. An interesting genzine with a focus this issue on Corflu, the convention not the fluid.

Fanzine Fanatique Autumn 2008 by Keith Walker; 6 Vine St.; Lancaster LA1 4UF; England; KWalker777@aol.com; irregular; exchange or editorial whim. A short zine composed primarily of capsule reviews of other zines.

It Goes on the Shelf 30 by Ned Brooks; 4817 Dean Ln; Lilburn, GA 30047-4720; nedbrooks@sprynet.com; annual?; the usual. A compendium of Ned's eclectic reading which ranges across the spectrum to SF, fantasy, and genres I can't even put a name to.

Lofgeornost 93 by Fred Lerner; 81 Worcester Ave; White River Junction, VT 05001; fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu; irregular; the usual. This is Fred's FAPA zine. This issue focuses on library classification schemes.

MarkTime 89 & 90 by Mark Strickert; PO Box 1051; Orange, CA 92856; busnrail@yahoo.com; irregular; \$2 or the usual. Travel updates and general nattering in these two issues.

MaryMark Press by Mark Sonnenfeld; 45-08 Old Millstone Dr.; East Windsor, NJ 08520; irregular; the usual. Various strange publications with experimental writing styles.

Opuntia 66B, 66.1, & 66.3 by Dale Speirs; Box 6830; Calgary, Alberta; Canada T2P 2E7; irregular; \$3 or the usual.

Fanzines Received in Trade

Dale continues to find plenty to keep him busy and to write about. He attempts to explain peak oil, but I don't know if the oil companies are listening.

Quasiquote 7 by Sandra Bond; 40 Cleveland Park Ave.; London E17 7BS; England; sandra@ho-street.demon.co.uk; irregular; \$5 or the usual. It looks like Sandra intends on keeping more regular by, in part, going mostly electronic.

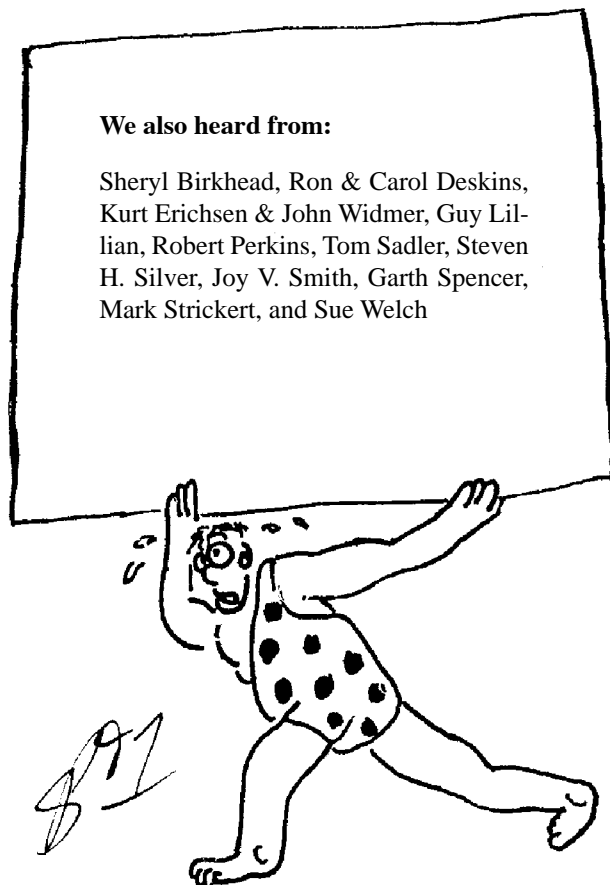
The Reluctant Famulus 67 by Tom Sadler; 305 Gill Branch Road; Owenton, KY 40359; thomasdsad@copper.net; irregular; the usual. The Famulus seems to be back on track with another issue rather soon after 66.

Vanamonde No. 763-772 by John Hertz; 236 S Coronado St No 409; Los Angeles, CA 90057; This is John's APA-L zine with interesting tidbits.

Visions of Paradise #131-133 by Bob Sabella; 24 Cedar Manor Ct; Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023; BSabella@optonline.net; quarterly; the usual. This is a fine example of a personal zine which includes considerable commentary. Three more issues which seems to be Bob's standard mailing these days.

We also heard from:

Sheryl Birkhead, Ron & Carol Deskins, Kurt Erichsen & John Widmer, Guy Lillian, Robert Perkins, Tom Sadler, Steven H. Silver, Joy V. Smith, Garth Spencer, Mark Strickert, and Sue Welch



Knarley's Planned Con Attendance

Please inspire me here.

I wonder what there is in the Bay Area?

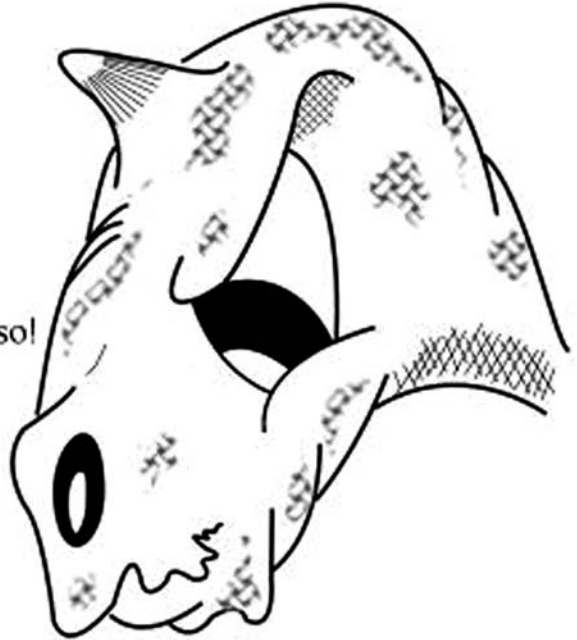
Mars in 2095 (Worldcon 153) Marsport, Mars

Labor Day, 2095



Yeah...
don't take **my** word for it...

Take **my** word for it-
I'm the big brother and I say so!



*The zine that
all fen in the know read....*

You Got this Issue Because ...

- _____ It came with the prior issue which you got for the reasons outlined on that issue. So don't separate the two.
- _____ I just spilled my iced tea. Fortunately it was only on the floor and not your pristine copy of this issue.
- _____ You are going to write me some interesting articles.
- _____ We trade
- _____ You sent me a contribution. Thanks.
- _____ You sent me a letter of **complaint** comment.

You have _____ issues left before you are designated a black hole and dropped from the mailing list.