



Dian Crayne: “The garden was pretty much a waste of time this year.” As I’ve written previously, I grew vegetables every year when I lived in Glen Ellen—including nineteen seasons in the same small backyard plot behind the apartment I lived in from January 1986 to August 2005. After a few early experiments, I settled for the same crops each year: four Early Girl tomatoes, two “burpless” cucumbers, and two hot pepper plants (one Serrano, one Thai Hot). Most of the time the results were pretty constant, but there were some years when for various reasons—and I think your friend’s notion that the smoke and pollution from the extended fires might have been a factor this year—the yield disappointed. I’d moved to Glen Ellen after living for a decade on The Farm in Tennessee, where large-scale truck farming was a constant and where I saw the same variability, so this wasn’t much of a surprise.

It’s a pleasure to read that you’re getting such enjoyment out of the books of correspondence between Lovecraft and Derleth—you’re a step ahead of me there in that while I have the books, I’ve only browsed through them and read most of the introductory material. But I’m not all that surprised at myself, in that I’ve owned all five of the Arkham House *Selected Letters* volumes for at least five years, probably more, and have in aggregate read less than the equivalent of one of them.

You wonder whatever happened to the proposed collection of letters by Avram Davidson. I asked his “ex-wife,” also known as Grania Davis (who I’ve known since 1963), who responded: “As I recall, Avram was very fond of Dian, so please pass along warm greetings. PS Publishing is doing a Vergil Omnibus, and they also asked for a volume of ‘Curiosities’—letters, essays, etc. It won’t be out for a while, the Omnibus will be first. Henry (mostly) and I will edit the curiosities. I’m sure he (and Eileen) would like to see copies of any Avram letters that Dian wishes to share. You have their contact info.” Indeed I do, and if you care to follow up please get in touch.

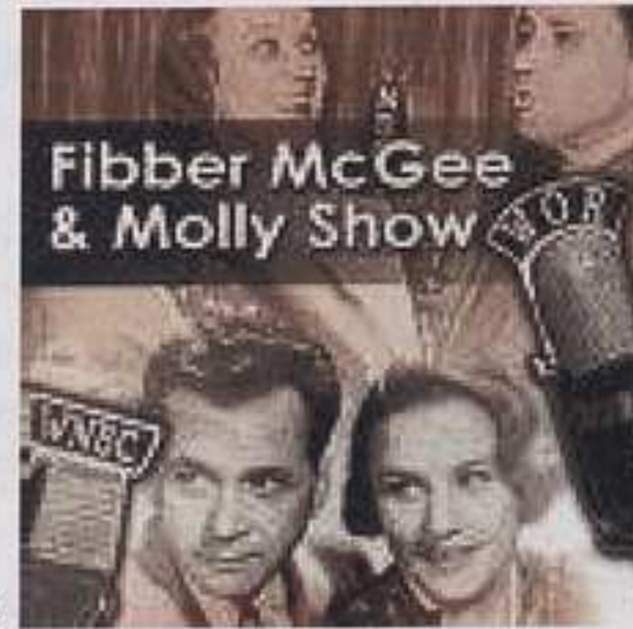
“I don’t know if mangroves would grow along the Gulf coast, but it might be a good idea to find out.” According to one source, “Because of their sensitivity to sub-freezing temperatures, mangroves in the continental United States are limited to the coastal Florida Peninsula, Louisiana, and south Texas.” That pretty much covers the Gulf except for a small part of Mississippi where they’ve apparently been replaced by large casinos.

“When I was a kid I used to listen to the radio soap operas during my summer vacation.” When I was *really* young—before I started school—I would hang out with my mother while she did her morning chores. She was addicted to a pair of radio soaps, one of which followed the other on the same station. At 10 a.m she’d listen to



"My True Story" followed at 10:30 by "Whispering Streets." One of them was sponsored by Fletcher's Castoria, which sounded hopelessly exotic to me as a four-year-old and which I didn't know for years later was a laxative (and is still apparently available, though renamed Fletcher's Laxative).

Of the soap operas you name, the only one I ever heard was "Fibber McGee and Molly," and I was an off-again-on-again fan of it (sort of the way I approach the "For Better or For Worse" comic strip these days). At one time it was a 15-minute show that preceded "The Great Gildersleeve," which I listened to more religiously. Another thing I didn't know until later was that Gildy was a spin-off from the McGees.



Regarding fans who are reactionary to new technology you write, "Remember whatshisname in FAPA, who was convinced computers were a fad and fans would eventually come to their senses and go back to typewriters?" That was Harry Warner Jr., who was cursed in his latter days as a newspaperman with a really awful computer system at work (which sounded me like IBM Displaywriter or some other early dedicated word processor). Along similar lines, my parents were similarly convinced that television was a fad and would go away and they'd be stuck with an expensive and useless set, so they didn't get a TV until 1954.

Ross Chamberlain: About a recent fire in Southern California that involved Chris and her mother being evacuated, you write, "I hadn't even heard about that fire until she told us about it, but that's more to do with my inattention to the news." Or maybe not, since fires are such a commonplace in that part of the world they may not get widely reported unless they're *really* big. Maybe the one on Topanga Canyon Blvd. didn't qualify. I don't recall reading anything about it in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and it's just one of a lot of fires in and around Topanga Canyon going back many years that come up in a quick peek at Google.

About the lower and lower prices for external hard drives you write, "I'd be inclined to wonder what anyone is ever going to do with all that storage, if I didn't remember thinking a few years ago that a 20 MB drive on my PC was going to be more than I would ever need." That was the size of the hard drive on my original computer from 1987, and before I moved on to my present computer at the end of 2000 I had run up against the limits of that drive *many* times. As a result I had numerous 5¼-inch floppies full of stuff I pulled off it. My present computer's 30GB hard drive has the same problem on a larger scale. It's presently just two-thirds full: 3GB of programs, 4GB for Windows XP, 750MB for "documents and settings" (but there are no documents there), and 12GB of data files of various sorts. But that's because I recently pulled off





about 8GB of files that now reside only on my two 160GB external drives. Both of those have 28GB of files on them with no software. At that rate it'll be years before I need larger external drives.

"Embedding fonts is done in Acrobat, mainly by unchecking a line in the printing (to PDF format) preferences saying something like 'Don't include fonts...'" I haven't encountered anything like that in my Acrobat 8.0. When I convert my WordPerfect file for *Vegas By The Bay* to a PDF, a window called "Publish to PDF" appears on my monitor. Under the "Objects" tab there's a checkbox for "Embed fonts in document." I check it. I have no problem with embedding fonts increasing the size of my file. It's actually the graphics that bulk it up more or less, depending on what they specifically are. Because of that variable,

the size reduction when going from WordPerfect to Acrobat PDF varies from 10% to 25% the size of the WordPerfect file.

John Nielsen Hall: Except that I didn't wear glasses back then, your photo of "Uncle Johnny in far off youth" looks a lot like I did in 1970. I don't have any photos from that specific era (well, somewhere in a box out back, but I'm not going on an excavating expedition today), but the one of me up above from 1980 (with which you may already be familiar) is very similar—the main difference being that in 1970 I didn't have a moustache and my beard was about half that length. To show how fast things had changed for me at that point, below is one of me and my girlfriend of the time from 1967. (Interestingly, the photographer in both cases is Andy Porter.)

"I think people need to be convinced of the benefits of public transport systems before they will be willing to pay for them and use them to any increased extent." I agree, and there's been some movement here and there towards the toll-based congestion management system you describe for London (New York and San Francisco have considered them but so far no go). The problem with public transport in many parts of the U.S. is that many of the cities and their suburbs (especially here in the west, with San Francisco a signal exception) have evolved in a way that—coupled with the tendency of many people to live at considerable distance from their employment, often forced to do so because of the high cost of housing near their jobs—doesn't lend itself to a very efficient system. If people have to transfer too much from one system/line to another in order to get to their



destination and back and/or if it takes exponentially longer to get from one point to another (which was the case when I lived in Glen Ellen and worked in Santa Rosa), many of them will choose to drive instead. At least they do now, but as you point out, "By comparison to the rest of the developed world, the cost of owning and running a car in the USA is ridiculously cheap. That needs to change in order for there to be a level playing field for the competition between public and private transport." Right now we're in a period where thanks to tough economic times reducing demand worldwide the cost of gasoline has taken a major nosedive from the heights of last summer (I can buy a gallon of gas now for just over half what it cost at the peak), which is the wrong direction. The convenience and relatively low cost of driving are tough to overcome.



John Purcell: To me you write, "If you checked out efanazines.com (and I am sure you have, Robert), you will note that I am definitely going to join FAPA. Having the first issue done is a good sign, don't you think?" I'll believe you're actually joining FAPA when I get that dues check you mentioned coming my way "before this year is out."

Also to me, "As for the Beach Boys, I never really cared for them that much, but do appreciate their place in rock and roll. I liked their later work much more than their earlier stuff." Me, too, but over the years I've come to appreciate the musical quality of that earlier work much more than I did when it all first came out and I'd hear it on my car radio and groan at some of the more inane lyrics. I credit Paul Williams (not the performer/actor, but the one who published fanzines and did *Crawdaddy!*) for turning me on to the Beach Boys fully.

Bryan Follins: Yes, life on the ol' planet is indeed packed! And random!

R-Laurraine Tutihasi: About the progress of your new house, you write, "Now the foundation is in along with under-floor plumbing and pipes for in-floor electric and phone outlets." It's hard to tell even when I blow up the photo, but it looks to me that your house is on a slab. That's a type of construction one wouldn't use in quake-prone California, where a serious temblor could break in-floor utility installations. My parents' house was on a slab in L.A., and they were lucky that there were no major quakes during the time they lived in it (45 years).



"My sister let on recently that she has her cable box set up to split the signal so that she can record one show while she watched another. I was impressed that she was that technologically competent. She has TiVo, and I thought that was supposed to allow her to do that, but I don't really know



anything about TiVo.” We have DirecTV instead of cable, and our set-up allows us to record two shows while watching another that’s *already been recorded*. This involved an extra thingie on our satellite dish; otherwise, our situation would be like your sister’s.

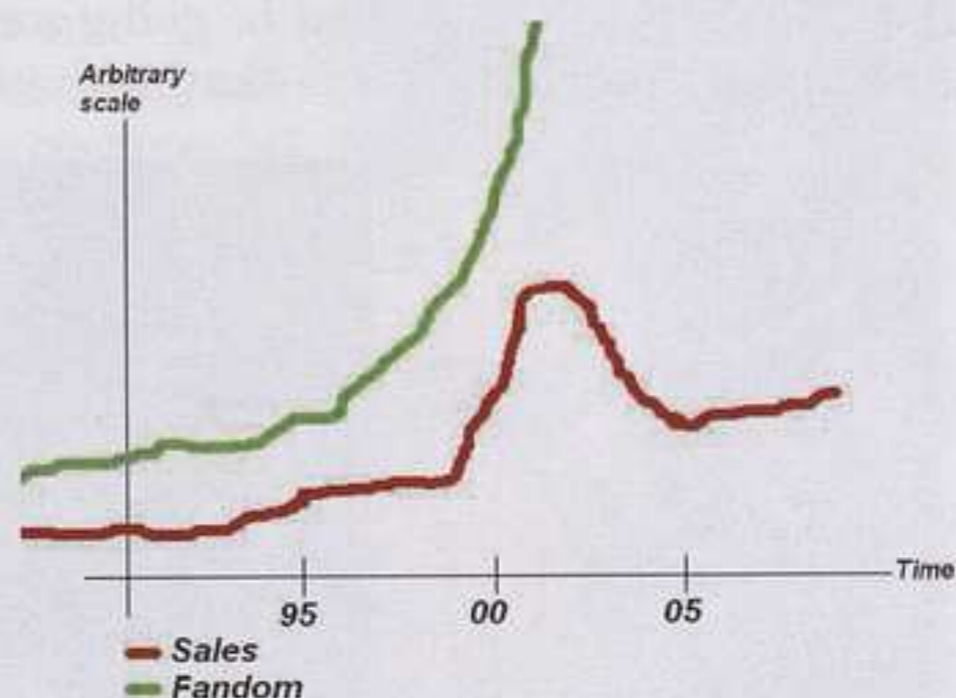
Arnie Katz: “I’m sitting here and making an Early New Year’s Resolution to start a SNAPS-zine the same day I email this bundle to you all. Who knows, I might even challenge Robert and Dian for first positioning the 40th eMailing.”

Well, I know you didn’t beat Dian because she told me she sent hers off even before I began mine. Even if you don’t get done before me, I hope you *do* step up to the plate and write mailing comments. I enjoy your articles, but they’re not interactive with us.

Regarding your Criswell-like fannish predictions, you were certainly on the mark with the first two and I suspect that over time your third—that paper apas will disappear from the fannish scene—will also come true. One already endangered group is SAPS, which is down to fifteen members and only four of them are under the age of 70. Half of the others are in their 80s and that nice Mr. Widner leads the pack at 91. FAPA’s near-term outlook isn’t nearly as dire, but it does have a high percentage of older members. On the other hand, it has Chris Garcia—and perhaps he’ll pack the roster with some of his friends the same way you got Vegas fans to flock into FAPA back in the ‘90s.

As for your fourth prediction about some sub-fandoms, including what you call Core Fandom, becoming autonomous from the larger fandom, I suspect you’re right—but since I *already* don’t have much contact with most of what Moshe calls Fandom Prime, I can easily accept this potential change. Having “nostalgia for the Good Old Days of Fandom” doesn’t mean I want to immerse myself in its current and future manifestations. I’ve already decided no more worldcons for me with the possible exception of another one happening in the Bay Area.

I also believe that fandom carried the roots of its own semi-destruction from the beginning, in that due to the way the commercial SF market developed in the direction of ever more “popular” and marketable product—and then took the leap into movies and television after a brief stop in radio—it was inevitable that eventually the audience would be watered down in the ways you describe and that Fandom Prime would eventually become what you term an Interest Group instead



of a cohesive fandom—and that it will be made up of the various sub-fandoms that will continue to congregate at the ever-larger worldcons (and also the Dragon- Cons), but that the rest of the year they'll have their own conventions and clubs, even as "Core Fandom" has Corflu. Since I'm not invested in the idea of SF as a holy cause and mostly don't read it anymore, this is okay with me.

Shelby Vick: I'm with you in agreeing that the concept "This guy deserves to die" may be true, but that following through becomes murder. I'm against capital punishment, period, even though sometimes it's hard to overlook some really bad stuff done by someone who "deserves to die." As for soldiers killing in self-defense, that's okay with me—but I don't feel that killing civilians during a war is okay and I hate the term "collateral damage" that cropped up (so far as I know) during the first Iraq war as a sanitized way of referring to it. If the civilians aren't engaged in anything threatening that would render them de facto a "soldier," then they should be left alone to live their lives in as much peace as is possible in a combat zone.

Joyce Katz: I do recall giving you egoboo on the occasion of your original mention of "an audio book of me reading *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*"—as I said at the time, you have a great voice and accent for this sort of thing. Now you report, "Last week, I was amazed to learn that my e-book made the best seller list in its category (audio non-fiction). In fact, it was actually *Number One* best seller for the week. And I spoke to Bill yesterday, and he let me know that *The Rubaiyat* is again first place this week." How terrific for you! Egoboo in a whole new marketplace is a wonderful thing. I have fantasies of you being discovered by some big-time audio book company and forging a new and lucrative career.

My mind is blown at your Halloween report that you "had 90-95 kids come to our door." In keeping with previous years, we had exactly no one. Because we live on a narrow winding street with no sidewalks, even though there are some kids in the neighborhood they must be going somewhere else to do their trick-or-treating. And to tell the truth, this is okay with us.

