

# Bento 7

## WARRANTY

At the time of packing, the contents are checked to be fit for human consumption. If, however, at the time of consumption the content are found to be infested, please return the packet to your retailer and obtain a replacement.

## ضمانتہ

عند تعبئة وشريد الغذاء، تفحص المحتويات لضمان صلاحية استخدامها بالإنساني. وفي حالة تبين ان المراد غير صالحه للاستخدام عندفتح العبوة نرجواعادتها الى المحل والحصول على بديل لها.

## GARANTIE

Der Inhalt der Packung wurde vor dem Abpacken überprüft. Falls Sie, trotz unserer Vorsicht, Schäden feststellen, bringen Sie die angebrochene Packung zu Ihrem Geschäft zurück und lassen Sie sich eine frische einwandfreie Packung geben.

## 許可証

包装の時点では中味は消費に適したものとシ、検査に合格して時。もし消費時に虫がついてはる場合は恐縮ながら買った店に返し、新しいものと交換してもらって下さい。

CONVENIENCE FOOD INDUSTRIES  
KARACHI PAKISTAN



A zine by Kate Yule and David Levine  
For LAcon III – August 1996

## Welcome to Bento 7!

Welcome to *Bento*, the Big Little Fanzine, the fanzine where science fiction fandom and gay square dancing meet. *Bento 7* is a Bento Press production from

**David Levine and Kate Yule**

1905 SE 43rd Ave.  
Portland, OR 97215

Or, electrically:

(503) 232-1727  
davidl@co.intel.com(ssd also works, for now)  
kyule@agora.rdrop.com

It is available for The Usual (Letters of Comment, tradezines, editorial whim, or \$2). All art this issue created/assembled by David.

## Self-Serving Announcement

David's extremely short story "The Worldcon that Wasn't" from *Bento 6* has been sold to Mike Resnick for his new collection *Illegitimate Stepdaughter of Alternate Worldcons*. The Resnick collection, like this issue of *Bento*, is scheduled to hit the streets at this year's Worldcon in LA. So if you're reading this at the con, don't just sit there—head down to the dealers' room and buy it!

—DDL

## Just Like Mom Used to Make

You never know what somebody is going to remember. I'm sure my old roommate Patty has no idea that there's a recipe in my collection titled *Patty's Company Beans*. It dates from a wretched, slushy winter afternoon when I came home from hours of slogging around on the bus, only to discover that my housemate had—surprise!—invited a houseful of her friends for a party. The redeeming factor was that she was feeding them all, and I got dinner out of it too.

She sautéed garlic and onion in olive oil, then dumped in canned black beans, cumin, and sherry, to heat through. The meal was assembled in diminishing layers: a mound of white rice, then black beans, chopped ripe red tomatoes, shredded green onion, and white sour cream on top. Pretty.

There was no love lost between Patty and me. But to this day we make her beans.

? ?

I've been telling David for years, every time we make Rice Krispie treats, to put some peanut butter in: "They're great that way." (No, not grrr-eat; that's a different cereal.) (Can you believe—Frosted *Cheerios*???)

—Sorry, sorry, easily distracted. Where was I? Oh, messing with the recipe, as usual—I’m easily bored, too, probably a related problem. Hate change, love variety.

Peanut butter. Rice Krispies. Right.

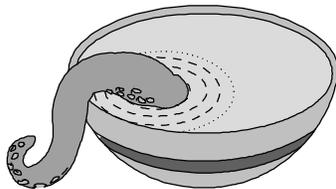
Sometimes we tried it with, sometimes David prevailed and got to do the recipe without embellishments, but it never came out the way I was aiming for. Whatever that was.

? ?

“Mom, I want your peach kuchen recipe. That one with the sour cream stuff. I think it has coconut in the crust.”

Mom has responded to a number of these requests over the years. This time she couldn’t track it down. Coconut rang a vague bell...but no, she couldn’t find it. On her next visit, she brought the dessert notebook along bodily—a stained cloth-covered binder, once blue, with page after page of recipes in no particular order.

They are two and three to a page, cut from newspapers, magazines, molasses labels, in Mom’s handwriting or a stranger’s. (In



I once got a jones for Mom’s Ox Tail Soup. The call went out...recipe came by return mail...I cooked up a batch and—yup, that was it! The authentic article. Gristle and all. Hadn’t had it in years.

Or since! *Lordy*, that was greasy! You can go home again, but sometimes it’ll give you indigestion.

? ?

It was hiding as a variation under Easy Cherry Kuchen. Eggs, sour cream, coconut, peaches. One package Betty Crocker Sour Cream White Cake Mix.

Jeeze. I haven’t bought cake mix in a decade. But for this, I make an exception.

The result is too dry, too crumbly, too *salty* of all things! Authenticity has failed me; the grail is cracked.

I guess I’m now in the market for an attractive and functional modern reproduction.

? ?

A columnist in the *Oregonian*, Andrew Mershon, wrote last year of “Wharf Rat.” One notorious day, that had been his ill-tempered reply upon too many iterations of “What’s for dinner?”

“Aw, man, Dad, you wouldn’t!...would you?”

“Over spaghetti.”

other words, just like mine.) But the graphic design cries “Sixties!”—the shape of the letters and the very leading and kerning pin these recipes down in time as surely as do the miniature marshmallows and canned fruit cocktail in their ingredient lists.

I flipped through the book, crying out “Oh god, this!” at intervals, flagging pages with Post-it notes as I found old friends I had forgotten existed.

? ?

Mom’s peach kuchen was made in the 9"x13" aluminum pan that some call a lasagna pan but in our house was always “the brownie pan”. It had a custardy topping of eggs and sour cream, drizzled around canned peaches. That part I could replicate from *Joy of Cooking*. The base was different than *Joy*’s, though, and definitely unlike the *Tassajara Bread Book*’s excessively organic version. I needed the original specs.

? ?

On a piece of plastic wrapper, a recipe calls for Nestle® Butterscotch Flavored Morsels and puffed rice cereal. Another, on thin cardboard, calls for Rice Krispies® Toasted Rice Cereal and butterscotch chips. They are otherwise identical.

? ?

This explains why it never worked with peanut butter.

? ?

He stuck to his story, and kept the kids out of the kitchen while he boned and skinned chicken thighs and set them to simmering in tomato sauce.

“Wharf Rat was the centerpiece of many of our meals through their teen-age years, and then, for some reason I stopped making it. In fact, I had hardly thought of that hastily-conceived entree for more than 15 years when I called Jason in San Jose one weekend.

“He was cooking for some friends that evening. Wharf Rat was on the menu.” —KY

---

*The first beer sampled prompted one taster to suggest that the company might do well to drop the definite article from its slogan, “It’s the water.”*

---

## Pop Pills

We’re not getting any younger, you know. I was reminded none-too-gently of this fact last month, when in a matter of weeks we both went from happy-go-lucky consumers of the occasional generic drug (aspirin for headaches, ibuprofen for cramps, and, when we remembered to take them, vitamins) to the kind of people who need those pillboxes with a compartment for each day of the week. My *grandfather* uses one of those.

I went first. This year's wet winter and warm spring created a pollen explosion that turned my usual spring sniffles into hacking, wheezing, and itching so severe I had to see the doctor. She thumped my chest, listened astutely to my wheezes, and prescribed Claritin (antihistamine) and Ami-Tex (decongestant). Suddenly I had a prescription monkey on my back. I had to remember to take pills three times a day, at times carefully dictated by my waking, sleeping, and mealtimes, and I had to consider side effects. (My friends with AIDS and other drug-intensive conditions will have no sympathy here, but to me it seemed like a big pain.)

Worst of all, suddenly I was part of a *trend*. It seemed like everyone I knew was taking Claritin, or knew someone who was. There were Claritin ads on the bus—which, weirdly, didn't even say what the product *did*. They just had a picture of a pill, floating in a clear blue sky and glowing like the Second Coming, and a meaningless slogan like "Claritin: At last, everything is different." They reminded me of the video-wall ad in *Blade Runner*, which just showed a Japanese woman swallowing a pill and smiling, over and over. There was even a web page, <http://www.claritin.com>. (Bad enough that everyone on Earth has their own web page; Claritin has its own Internet domain!)

I *hate* being part of a trend. Horrid nasty things, trends—when something becomes a trend, the unthinking hordes trample all over it, destroying whatever merits it may have had before it became

away almost completely, and there have been no noticeable side effects. I can't say that for the over-the-counter antihistamines I've tried.

Then, just when I was getting used to being a name-brand druggie, Kate got the same in spades: her doctor prescribed Prozac. Claritin may be trendy, but it's not on the New York Times Bestseller List! So now we remind each other to take our pills, and commiserate (from the Latin "co," meaning "together," and "miserate," meaning "kvetch") on our status as middle-aged people. But at least we've got each other. —DDL

## Mental Menagerie

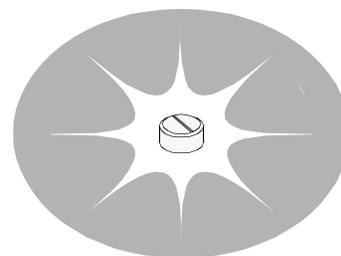
Some people call it the Spin Cycle: when the thoughts in your head churn round and round and round, keeping you awake into the wee hours. I had nocturnal pets as a child, so I know what those thoughts really are. Hamsters! Pattering about on their little paws, moving piles of seed pointlessly from this cache to that, and, most of all, going round and round and round on that squeaky little treadmill. Round and round and round and round. Squeak squeak rustle chew.

There's an antidote to hamsters, though. Pink elephants work well. Little green men. Whatever. Pick a color, and a creature.

See, what you need is something to think about that will engage your brain *just enough*, right? Too boring (like counting

trendy. I stopped identifying myself as a Star Trek fan when Star Trek went from a little cult thing to a big popular culture phenomenon, and I'm not too thrilled about what's happened to the Internet in the last couple of years (don't get me started about AOL). But, like it or not, I'm part of this trend, at least until autumn. As the Baby Boomers surge this way and that, sometimes I'm drawn willy-nilly along in their wake.

This business of prescription drugs as a popular culture phenomenon is new to me. I know that it's not a new thing; reading old *Mad* magazines from the 50s taught me about Miltown and Valium, and I remember the Minoxidil craze of a few years ago (it was in all the comic strips), but this is the first time I've seen it from inside. It looks different from in here. I'm not doing it because everyone else is, I'm doing it because my *doctor* is doing what everyone else's *doctor* is. And, more to the point, it *works*. As soon as I started taking Claritin my allergy symptoms went



sheep) and you start multi-tasking on top of it. Too interesting and it might as well be the hamsters.

So one night I started deliberately thinking of rhinoceroses—how many kinds of white rhinoceros could I imagine? A real white rhino, out standing in its veldt. A stone rhino. A rhino carved from Ivory soap. An origami rhino. (The hamsters' revolutions slowed.) A snowrhino. A white picket rhino. A plastic rhino tub toy. The label on a bottle of White Rhino Vodka. Fluffy rhino bunny-slipperzzzz.... —KY

---

*So when is it time to gather stones together?*

---

## There's a Hole

I want to say something here to mark four friends and acquaintances who have died in the last two months. I don't know what to say. Was it Pratchett who commented that it was a lot more fun in the days when we were attending each other's weddings?

And I'm only 35.

But David is gone, not my David but yet another Eisenhower-era David. (He told me once that the neighbor lady had been pregnant at the same time as his mother, and feuded with her

for years when she up and used the name first. I never forgot his name after that.)

And Jeff, who lost his voice somewhere along the way but could be amazingly forceful with just “Hsst!” if someone went astray in his square.

Lauri had a heart attack. “I just saw him last week” said David. As if that should somehow confer protection, a temporal zone of invulnerability.

And of course there’s that other classic, “But he was just a kid.” Not that that could keep Doug alive.

We say those pointless things—“He was so young,” and “But I just saw her” and “At least it was quick”... because, well, what is there to say? We stand, stunned, for a minute. And then life picks up speed again, and we climb back aboard.

But we remember. —KY

### David and Kate go Recycling

The other day I helped Kate recycle the old rotting woodpile from the back yard. We knocked off the spiders and pillbugs from each log, singing “It’s LO-OG! It’s LO-OG! It’s big, it’s heavy, it’s wood! It’s LO-OG! It’s LO-OG! It’s better than bad, it’s good!” all the while, and put the logs into large heavy-duty brown paper yard refuse bags. We ran out of bags before we ran out of logs, but that’s OK because the five bags of logs and bugs neatly

scale. So, with a cute “shh” and a wink, she waved us through for free.

On the other side of the scale we found a scene out of Mad Max Goes Gardening—huge ungainly piles of various types of yard debris (branches, dirt, rocks, pedestrians, etc.) with dozens of pickups charging about and big sweating, swearing guys shoveling stuff out of the pickups and onto the piles. We pulled in where we were directed and started unloading our pitiful five bags. I tried to heave each bag up onto the pile, but I’m not really built for heaving. One guy told me “Don’t bother, the bulldozer will just shove it in there for you,” so I just placed them neatly at the base of the heap, feeling like Felix Unger tidying up at one of Oscar’s poker parties. Then we left, with a wave to the scale operator, and drove back to civilization and the first available espresso stand.

The car smelled like fermenting bark dust for days afterwards. —DDL



filled our Toyota’s tiny trunk. Then we drove our logs out of town to McFarlane’s Bark, who would recycle miscellaneous yard debris for \$30 a ton, with a \$5 minimum.

When we got there it was a very *guy* kind of place, with mountainous piles of bark dust everywhere and humungous growling yellow machines charging here and there. Ours was by far the smallest vehicle there—most of the other customers had industrial-strength pickups, many with trailers—and I was afraid someone would drive right over our poor little Toyota without even noticing.

Inside we found tools, and big bags of fertilizer, and display bins of the various grades of bark dust, dirt, and rocks available for sale by the ton. Guys in ten-pound work boots were standing in line to order truckfuls of rocks. (Grunt.) We were *not* in our element.

The clerk was very nice, and said to drive our logs around back to the weighing scale. (Turn left at the bark pile.) See, you drive onto the scale with your “Pete’s Garden Service” pickup full of grass clippings from view-lot lawns, and dead sequoias and whatnot, and then they weigh you again empty on the way out. But when we got there the woman in charge of the scale was nonplussed—despite the stated \$5 minimum, she couldn’t figure out how to charge for a load that was too small to show up on her

### Everything I Need to Know, I Learned in Fandom

A Smoffish friend who works Worldcon security once lamented that she never got sent to deal with any of the *interesting* parties.... (although there was that bagpiper on the balcony, and the time she discovered a former boyfriend hosting the Bi-Fandom bash). Discussion ensued, with wide agreement that the Bondage & Discipline party, for example, definitely qualified as “interesting”. We postulated the applicability of the following familiar fan-nish rules:

- No weapons without prior approval of the MC.
- No masking tape.
- No peanut butter.
- Please wear your badge at *all times*.
- Flash photography in designated areas only.
- Remember to have your timesheet signed at the end of your shift. (8 hours qualifies for a t-shirt!)
- The Gamesmaster’s word is final.
- Checkout time is 12 noon.

—KY

---

...every hiss, skip, and pop I remember from my childhood...

---

## Immigrants

*A man and a woman stand on a gangplank, about to descend into the teeming throngs of the street below. Their clothing and accents mark them as foreigners. A banner overhead reads "Welcome to Windows 95."*

"Papa, I'm scared."

"I'm scared too, Mama. But we had to come here, you know that. There were no jobs left in the Old Country. But this... this is the Land of Opportunity."

"I know, I know. But there are so many people here! And everything moves so fast!"

"One hundred and sixty-six megahertz! That's *progress*! In the Old Country we had barely sixteen megahertz, and not one tenth the hard disk space. Here we have room to *breathe*! That is why there are so many people here—because there is room to grow! And everything is so *cheap* here! Look: CD-ROMs for only thirty dollars!"

"Cheap? Five thousand dollars it cost us to come to this place! And we had to leave behind all our possessions, all our treasured memories!"

"Not all. Some of our documents are compatible." *He pats his tattered suitcase.* "And we will find new applications—clean and bright, and full of features!"

fire in the quiet evenings. And the online help will never warn us about the bugs."

"Bugs." *She shudders.* "So many bugs here. How can they stand it?"

"Mama, Mama... you know we had bugs in the Old Country."

"Yes... but at least we knew where they were."

*He stares out the window into the falling snow.* "We knew before we came here that it would be difficult. So much to learn! In the Old Country, it was easy because we grew up there. Life was so simple when we were first starting out. Though it got more complex as we grew up, we could learn each new thing as it came along. But here we have twenty years of history to learn in a day!" *He squares his shoulders and turns back to Mama.* "Never mind. How was your day?"

"Not so bad. I worked with Windows before we came here, you know. Of course, Word isn't WordPerfect...."

"I'm sorry, Mama. I don't like it either, but everyone says we need to learn Word. It's the only way our children will have a chance for compatibility."

\* \* \*

"Mama, are you asleep?"

"Hmm?"

"But we barely speak the language! Where will we get money for new applications?"

"I am a trained UNIX engineer, Mama. There is always employment for a man with a good head on his shoulders." *But there is worry in his eyes.* "Anyway, the language here is not so different. It could be worse—five years ago there were no icons here, no menus, no windows. We would have had to shorten our names! But today, you could almost imagine yourself back in the Old Country." *He puts on a brave smile and hugs Mama around the shoulders. They descend into the street.*

\* \* \*

"Any luck today, Papa?"

*He stomps the snow off his boots.* "I'm afraid not. So many books I saw! But all so poorly written! And nothing for a man like me. *Windows for Dummies*, they have. *Windows for Idiots*. *Windows for Morons*. *Windows for Pinheads* they have! Happy little comic books with pictures! This much I learned in my first week off the boat. Where is *Windows for Mac Wizards*? Why is there no *Windows-Macintosh*, *Macintosh-Windows Dictionary*?"

"Here, have some more online help. It's really quite good."

"It's not bad. But I find it unsatisfying. First you must know the question to ask, and if you do not have the words to ask, there are no answers. I would rather have something I can browse by the

"I can't sleep. I was thinking about Michael. And Ken and Peter, and Allan and Margie. All our old friends. We might never see them again."

"Don't say that. We might see them tomorrow."

*He sighs.* "Even if we saw them tomorrow it wouldn't be the same. Back in the Old Country we were comrades in adversity. How we would laugh as the wind howled through the cracks in the door! But now I have abandoned them. I have become the enemy."

"Oh, Papa. You aren't the enemy; you're just a man who got out while the getting was good. Remember how hard it was to find new software back home? I had to stand in line for hours for a word processor, and we all had to share one spreadsheet. Here the stores are *full* of software. I'm sure Ken and Michael would understand. They may even join us here someday."

"I doubt it. Can you imagine Michael here? No, we will have to make new friends."



"But the people here are not as friendly. This country is so big! We were so few back home, we all had to pull together, work together. Everyone worked the same way. Here everyone is different, and if you are no use you will soon be tossed aside. Look at poor WordPerfect! No, you mustn't forget your old friends. You should write to Michael in the morning."

"Yes, I will write to Michael." *He snorts.* "I think I still remember how to use BinHex."

"Good night, Papa."

"Good night, Mama."

\* \* \*

"Mama, come look at this! I have connected to the Lands' End Catalog web site!"

*She enters, drying her hands on her apron.* "Oh! What a pretty dress! And so colorful!"

"We could never have seen this back home. We had so little bandwidth, and everything was black and white. Now, my love, you will never have to settle for text-only again!"

"We could have had color if we wanted it. And a better modem."

"Yes, but here *everyone* has color and fast modems! And this is only a small part of the World-Wide Web. Wait till you see the

rest! Sounds! Movies! Virtual realities! All for free! Truly this is the Land of Opportunity!"

"Hmm." *They browse the site for a time.* "I suppose I could get used to this." *She turns to him with a smile.* "Dearest... there's something I've been meaning to ask you."

*He raises an eyebrow.* "Oh?"

"Now that we are settled here in the New World, do you think we could perhaps think about... pubbing another zine?"

"A zine? A zine of our own? A new issue? Here in the Land of Opportunity?"

"Yes, sweetness!"

"Oh, Liebchen!"

*They embrace.*

\* \* \*

*Bento 7 was produced on a Micron Home MPC with a 166-MHz Pentium processor, 16 MB of RAM, 2.1 GB of disk, a Wacom ArtPad II tablet, and a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 5 printer. Software used included Windows 95, Microsoft Word 7.0, FrameMaker 4, and a motley assortment of image-editing programs. Our faithful Mac IIcx, on which previous Bentos were produced, has been put out to pasture in the attic.* —DDL

---

*I woke up this morning to the sound of my alarm not going off.*

---

## Finely Aged LoCs

**Vicki Rosenzweig**

New York City

23 April 1995

... "Being There" also rang true, but that may be in part because you're talking about my city as an example. It's oddly frustrating living in an American archetype, and working in one of the best-known pieces of it (my office is on Times Square), because people who've never visited think they know what it's like, and often their images don't match my present reality. For Times Square, they come up with the crowds watching the ball drop at midnight on New Year's Eve, or a general image of sex and sleaze, neither of which has much to do with the workaday reality of knowing that Wednesday isn't a good day to go out to lunch unless I go very early or late (because of the crowds that are coming to theater matinees)... From another angle, this is why the high point of my recent trip to Las Vegas (for Corflu) was an expedition to the high desert: it had a reality that I hadn't known about

except from a few bits I'd read in books. Now I know what primrose and yucca look, feel, and smell like.

The Cellphone People are very strange. I keep expecting them to walk into lampposts and the like, because the ones around here insist on consulting their deities while walking down the street. This may be safe in some places, but midtown Manhattan isn't one of them.

If they pass that bill, I want to see the "internationally recognized symbol" for "no sodomy" and (especially) "no adultery." I also wonder if such symbols, posted in rooms that children might enter, would be considered corrupting the morals of minors.



1



2



3



4



5

**Donald G. Wileman**

Lindsay, Ontario, Canada

83<sup>rd</sup> anniversary: Sinking of the *Titanic*

Dear Bentoids:

#6 arrived, as is the charming habit of your 'zine, about a month after I had wistfully concluded I'd never see one again. [*Tantalizing, that's us. But hey, we ain't got nothin' on Stan*

*Freberg, who just came out with "Stan Freberg Presents The United States of America, Vol. 2" after a 35-year hiatus.]*

John Day is a real place? Ursula K. LeGuin didn't make it up? How about French Glen? The names seemed so improbable, I was sure they were some kind of metaphor for forced, unhealthy growth! [*Yep, John Day and French Glen are real Oregon place names. So are Zigzag and Drain.*]

"WAHF" ?!! Best I can do offhand is "We 'ave heard from"—which is aspirationally inconsistent, and doesn't sound like yours anyway.

---

*Bientôt—the French edition of Bento*

---

### **George Flynn**

Cambridge, Massachusetts

March 14, 1995

Bento #6, the "Febuary" issue, was received here on March 7.

"The Worldcon That Wasn't" was amusing. (It occurs to me that I've never sung "Gimme That Old Time Religion" with the original words; the filked/pagan version would no doubt startle the Baptists.) Of course, you left out the actions subsequently taken under the "committee unable to perform its duties" rule, which would no doubt Plunge All SMOFdom Into War...

actually tight up against a wall on one side, even though it doesn't show, etc.

"Sticks and Stones" was one I read out loud to the lovely Cindy, who isn't really big on her name. Too cute, she says. If that's too cute, consider that we are now "Brad and Cindy"—doesn't that just conjure up visions of tennis whites and me with a pipe and her with a wide hair band? "Gawd, Cindy. This party is so boring! Let's go to the club?" blech.

---

*Falling is what rocks do.*

---

### **Mark Manning**

Seattle, Washington

6 March 1995

I remember long, long ago, like more than 20 years ago, when the Gay Liberation Front on my campus wasn't allowed to organize legally. The leftist group I chaired at the school reserved rooms for them, and once reserved a ballroom for the GLF's big dance. No shred of memory remains of what the event was called. They didn't refer to it as a prom, I'm pretty sure, though. Anyway, we got them the room, then acted as guards outside, just in case right-wing nuts would try to break things up.

Yes, I was asked to dance.

[*Nice use of capitalization, George. Which brings us to—*]

"Does anal retentive have a hyphen?" The best answer is still "No, a colon."

[*Yes, David's father was also disappointed that we "seemed to be unaware that the correct spelling is anal:retentive."*]

### **Brad W. Foster**

Irving, Texas

March 20, 1995

I found I was reading sections out loud to my wife as I went through it—you gotta hear this! This is great! That sort of thing.

"Worldcon That Wasn't" read so...so *real* that I had to keep reminding myself that it was made up!

[*Yeah... we figured our audience would of course know that the Orlando Worldcon went off completely as usual and hurricane-free, but some LoC's had us thinking Yipes, they took us seriously...actually, they were just getting into the alternate-universe spirit. Andy Hooper referred to it as "unexplained alternative-history fanfic," a genre he'd thought he had the corner on.*]

"Being There." *Exactly.* I've found what I like the most about having personally been somewhere, and then later seeing that same place again in a photo, or on TV or a film, is I now have a sense of the actual space *around* me, not just what the camera is pointing at; I have a better feeling for the depth, the actual size...I know there is a tall building behind the camera, and that they are

No, I didn't dance. Back then, I hadn't yet learned what fun dancing can be. What taught me that, oddly enough, was a movie, *The Blues Brothers*. But that's another story, altogether.

And whoever came up with the Information Facts panel on the back of the zine is a complete genius! [*David gets full marks for that one. This issue's back cover is found art.*]

---

*The ceaseless, pesky dialogue that is my mind.*

---

### **Candi Strecker**

San Francisco, CA

May 7, 1995

Thanks for sending me the copy of *Bento*. In my peripheral minglings with the science fiction 'zine world, I'd heard its name before, but had never seen a copy until now. It's great! I especially applaud your use of this ingenious pocket size. In a world of long-winded epics, it's a haiku of a zine. I know of almost no one else, doing either sf or "mundane" zines, who is using this size/format, and it strikes me as a pity that more don't.

---

*I keep thinking that I once lived in Duluth.*

---

**Janice Gelb**

10 July 1995

Your enlightenment about the fact that gays that gather in social groups geared around a specific activity are not necessarily in it for wild sex also hit me when I attended a gay synagogue for a while in LA. The members wanted to explore their Jewishness and worship in a place where they would not feel odd being gay. Of course, some people also went in the hopes of meeting other singles, but that happens at straight synagogues as well. (As one of the members told me, “Where else can I go to meet a nice Jewish boy?”)

Also, I enjoyed Jenny Glover's letter about the point of dancing being to dance and not caring so much whether one's partner was a potential mate (although it's more fun to flirt if they are). I used to go to singles Big Band dances when I lived in LA and more often than not they ended up being populated with senior citizens. My friends were often surprised that I'd “waste my time” going to them but I went mainly to dance and the older guys were usually the best dancers!

*[David replies: I have some thoughts about dancing (all types) being a human version of the mating dances birds do—a means of determining whether a potential mate is sound of body and mind before committing any genetic material. You can see if all the limbs are there, everything's wired right, etc. This explains*

that familiar angle. There's a tendency to fall off shortly afterwards. Ain't nature amazing?

Here's my current fave rave fig recipe:

**Decadent Breakfast Figs**

Cut figs into quarters. Mix together equal parts orange juice and amaretto and pour over figs, mixing well. Let marinate overnight. Eat the next day, preferably while lounging on a couch and feeding each other. Yum.

---

*How come “bra” is singular but “briefs” is plural?*

---

**Ian Sorenson**

18 October 1995

I read *Bento* with great enjoyment but I have to report that a couple of weeks ago I received an even smaller zine—a mere 2 inches by 1½. It is called the Lilliputian and was done as a joke by Jilly Reed because Greg Pickersgill complained about her sending a too small Self Addressed Envelope for a copy of his zine. As far as I know the circulation is 3, so I doubt if it will make the Hugo nominations list.

*why so many traditional dances are “mixers,” designed to allow/force each dancer to partner with all the other dancers of the opposite sex; since dancing is traditional at events when members of different tribes/clans meet, it encourages rapid selection of suitable mates from other populations. Because this is an instinctual behavior, it appears to apply to gays as well as straights; apparently mating behavior is independent of sexual orientation. This is my theory, and I possess the ownership of it. And it's mine.]*

---

*All I know is I had three cups of it and I couldn't feel my nose.*

---

**Karen Schaffer**

12 September 1995

*[Karen offered fresh figs in exchange for back issues of Bento. Yes, we will also trade for the Unusual.]*

The fig tree is just about ready to start dropping its fruits. Did you ever wonder why the stems on dried figs are bent? It's because, I've found from observation, the figs spend most of their lives growing at an upward angle (say between 9:00 and 11:00. No, not times—angles). The way to tell they're ripe (I typoed that 3 times as wripe!) is when they droop down and bend their stems in

*[Good God! We must not let this stand! Therefore, mailed copies of Bento 7 are accompanied by Bento 7.01, a special Mini-Micro-Bento-Supplement which is printed on the back of the postage stamp. That should hold our record for World's Smallest Fanzine! Look hard for it—it may be easy to miss.*

*Interestingly, we have discovered that there was a fanzine in the exact same format as Bento produced in Portland in the 40s. We didn't know we were part of a tradition.]*



WAAHF (We 'Ave Also Heard From): Pamela Boal, Teddy Harvia, Paul Schwabe, Steve Green (who says “Hi! to our fellow victims of the Glasgow Pakora Palace”), Roger Waddington, Leonard Levine, Vacuous\_Tart Pam Wells, and Karen Anderson, who “couldn't help but notice that you did not have anything about waffles”... How true.