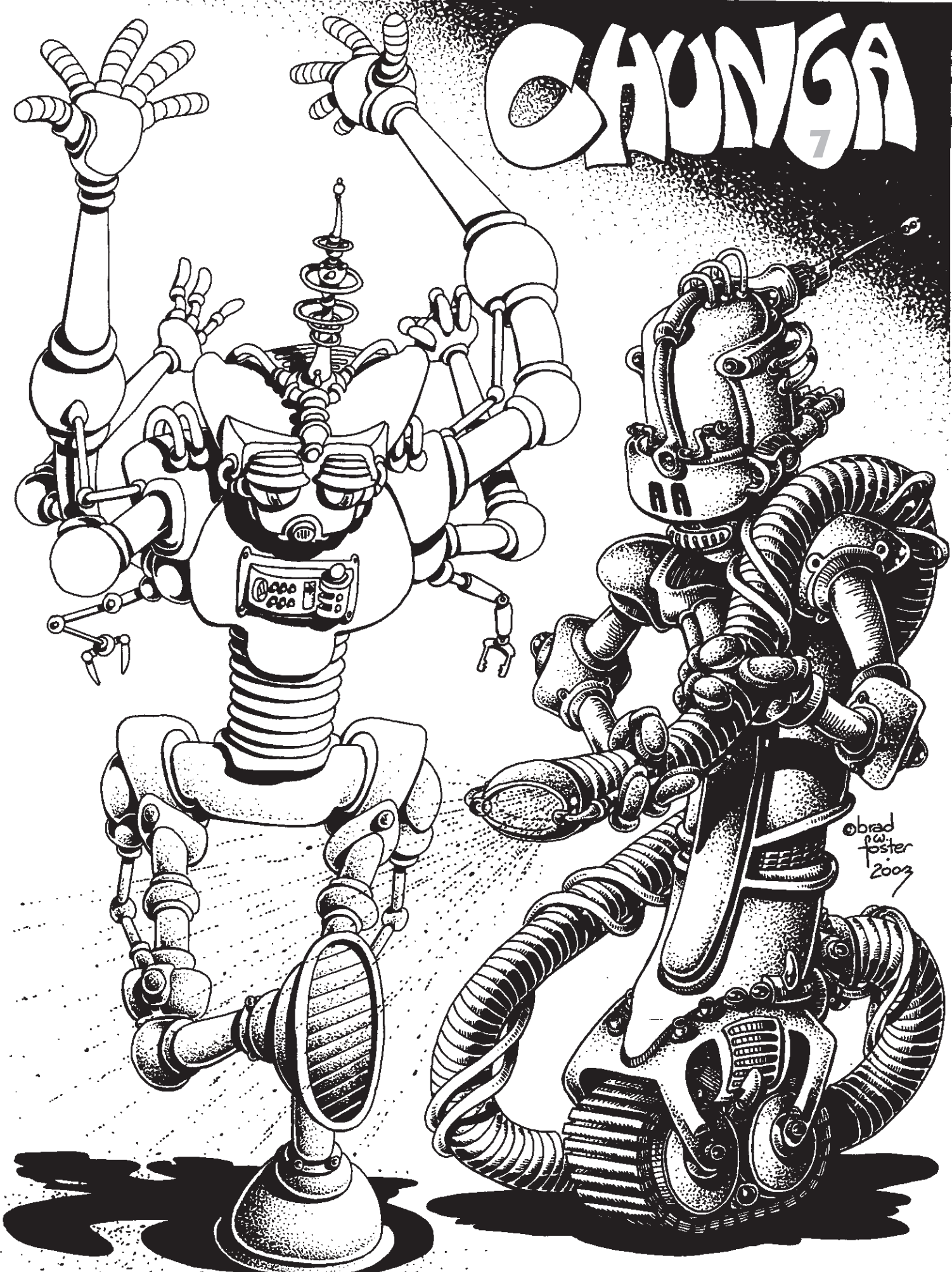


CHUNGA

7



CHUNGA

Cringe, puny human, before the titanium bulk of *Chunga 7*, recklessly instigated, with depraved indifference to human life, by a troika of ontological terrorists including (but not limited to, for purposes of indemnification or compensation as defined by USC 127.0.0.1) Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, and carl juarez, willfully aided and materially abetted by our esteemed contributors, as listed below. Click "Agree" to continue.

Available by editorial whim or wistfulness, or, grudgingly, for \$3.50 for a single issue, but why not download the online edition at eFanzines.com instead. It'll even be in color. All correspondence should be addressed to 1013 North 36th Street, Seattle WA 98103. Editors: please send three copies of any zine for trade. Email: fanmailaph@aol.com, rbyers@u.washington.edu, and cjuarez@myrealbox.com. This fanzine supports TAFF. Please vote!

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Tanglewood

In Praise of File 770

Welcome back to another big issue of *Chunga*. This is the real, actual seventh issue of the fanzine, and not an amazing facsimile thereof. We confound some of our readers here and there, because we have a weakness for publishing things that are not objectively, um, *true*. Such items as our *Fanzines from Planet X* columns, and Stu Shiffman's *Celluloid Fantasia* series, openly mix real and imaginary elements to create an alternate view of both science fiction and fandom. We've discussed using some kind of special notation to show that a given piece of writing might be a put-on, but we rapidly run into trouble when we consider elements like Lilian Edward's trip report in this issue. The mere factual content of Lilian's piece seems like scant reason to relegate it to the category of reportage, segregated from the world of art, fiction and *delicious lies*.

Pondering this issue, I am moved to the observation that the reluctance of fanzine publishers to print fiction is apparently a complete fabrication. Gordon Eklund (Best Fan Writer) and *Trap Door* (Best Fanzine) won a brace of FAAn awards at Corflu Blackjack on the strength of the former's faan novella, "Sense of Wonder" in *TD* #22. Eklund's story is faan fiction, in that it has fans as characters and fandom as its setting, but it is also more of a straight science fiction tale than you expect to see in a heartily faanish publication such as *Trap Door*. So we are far from setting a trend with our weakness for hoaxes, alternate history and plain hokum, and who knows, perhaps we'll uncover a lost short story by Dorcas Bagby for next issue.

Of course, I must acknowledge that we do our part to exacerbate your confusion by failing to make much distinction between, for example, articles about Fantastic Cinema (which is to say, imaginary movies) and articles about the Cinema of the Fantastic (which are real movies about imaginary subjects). I hope that this general warning will inspire you to stop and think twice before believing anything you read in *Chunga* in the future.

Ultimately, if the hoax is well-executed and doesn't hurt anyone, its fictional nature is a secondary attribute. I've just discovered the work of a Florida graphic artist named Everett Westphal, who sadly died of cancer in 2003. For the last three years of his life, Westphal was known to model

car kit collectors as "The Box Man," for his creation of letter-perfect, and completely imaginary, boxes for car kits that were never issued. Some unwary collectors were sent hunting for vintage TV-license vehicles, like a police cruiser from the *Andy Griffith Show*, because Westphal's boxes were so beautiful that it was easy to believe that they represented real rarities or prototypes. And indeed, it was a lot of fun to imagine that they were real as well. That, I hope, is the essence of *Chunga*'s appeal; if we can't be right, we at least want to have fun, and hope that you will too.

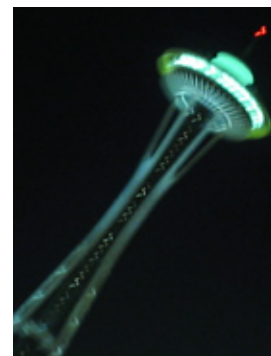
—Andy

Meanwhile, my sordid past has caught up with me. A couple of years ago, I wrote a conreport called "Corflu Gossip" for Lilian Edwards' *Floss*, and I reprinted it in my TAFF campaign promotional collection, *Wassamatta U*. One of the main sources of entertainment at Corflu is the consuite story-telling and tongue-wagging, and I tried to give a heightened, if not humorous, account of this "gossip." Amongst other things, I wrote, "It was a dark and stormy night in the consuites. Everybody joined Pete [Weston] in telling hysterical horror stories about his wife." Now, the banal reality behind this line is that Pete told us a very funny story about an Eastercon, I think it was, where Victor Gonzalez had talked him into staying into the wee hours in the bar to smoke a manly cigar and discuss fannish philosophy, when all of a sudden, at 3 or 4 in the morning, Eileen, Pete's wife, showed up and more or less hauled him off to the room by his ear so that he could get some sleep before a panel appearance the next day — or actually later that day, by that point.

A funny, sweet story, none of which made it into my conreport, and when Eileen read my characterization a few months ago, she quite rightly took offense at the implications. So I offer Eileen a public apology for my exceedingly poor attempt to wring innuendo out of thin air, and I also apologize to Pete for getting him in dutch with Eileen! All this after Eileen was gracious enough to invite me to visit their house the next time I'm in the UK. Can I excuse myself by saying that I was younger when I wrote that piece? Okay, only two years younger, but two years is ages for a dog like me.

—Randy

Peddling retrospeculation to an increasingly skeptical readership since 1896.



Tall, Dark, and Chunga ♣ 1

Under the Rainbow or, A Pot of Gold

by Randy Byers



Craig
Smith

Due to last minute difficulties not entirely unrelated to overbearing new policies on foreign visitors to the U.S. (although by no means strictly caused by them either), Sharee was unable to make the six week visit to Seattle that I anticipated so eagerly in the last issue of *Chunga*. The course of true love never did run hey-nony-nony and a hot-cha-cha, but then again nothing has ever gone quite according to plan with Sharee, love or breakfast. I suppose it's just as true to say that nothing has ever gone quite according to plan, full stop — it's just that Sharee makes a philosophy of changing plans and the need for adaptability. So it was a demonstration of philosophical expertise when, on January 18th, only three weeks after learning that she couldn't come to Seattle, I made my way onto an airplane headed to Australia. (And thanks to Tami for the ride to the airport!)

I've always wanted to go to Australia, and I suppose it's only appropriate that Sharee was what it took to get me there. The best way to see a foreign land is to visit a native, after all. Plus they say that Queensland is a land for lovers — yeah, true! Other than the transit through Sydney airport, my entire stay in Oz was in Queensland, the Sunshine State. The trip can be divided into two main phases (three, if you count the first three days in Cairns and Kuranda as initiatory, if not propitiatory), with the first phase centered on Quinta Milagro — a converted horse ranch in the bush country beyond the Atherton Tableland, well to the west of Cairns — and the second comprised of a roadtrip from Quinta Milagro to Brisbane, with many stops in between. Or you could look at the whole trip as one long phase of hanging out with Sharee, for love and breakfast — and a few pots of Gold.

On my arrival Down Under I flew three hours from Sydney to Cairns, where I found Sharee wearing a black T-shirt with the caption, "She Who Must Be Obeyed". Yes, it's all very funny until somebody gets made into a love slave! But she didn't wear the shirt for long, because it had sleeves (albeit short ones) and this was the tropics. As I staggered into the dazzling sunshine and heavy humidity, she stripped to a sleeveless top and whisked me off to a place called Dunwoodies, where we ordered a crocodile and mango chutney pizza and, after much brainstrain and translation, a stubbie, not a pot, of XXXX Gold for my beverage. After lunch, Sharee indulged the national mania for gambling and played a pokie. She won a \$120 jackpot, too, which I guess was our first pot of gold.

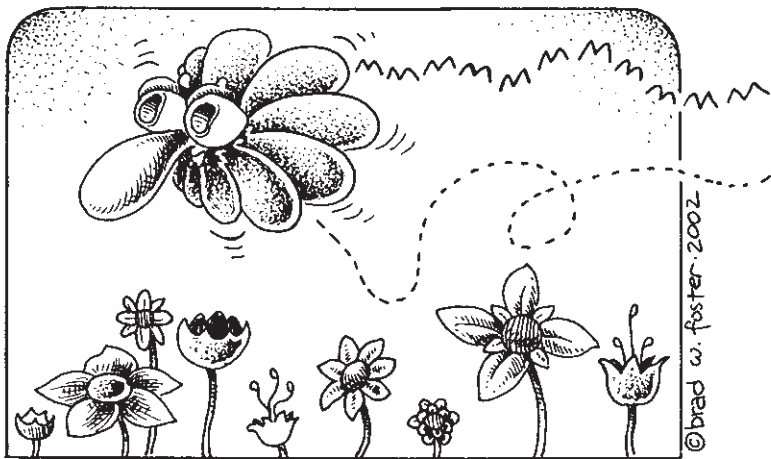
It was all too strange, of course. It had been five months since we'd last seen each other at the stirring conclusion of a whirlwind romance, and it was less than a month since our carefully built plans had collapsed and forced our imagination, consideration, and decisions into a completely different hemisphere. Now, after all the intense planning and the longing phone conversations and e-mail, it was a little awkward to finally find ourselves in the same place again and still learning how to be together — all the little details and negotiations of hanging out with someone... and with a new lover, no less. (After all these years, we are basically new to each other again.) Throw on top of that the complete change in location, landscape, climate, time zone, culture, and people that I was experiencing, and it was all just a bit disorienting. I can't recommend it highly enough as a tonic for jaded souls!

I actually enjoyed Cairns, what little I saw of it. Not that there's a whole lot there to see, I guess, but I was surprised at how cosmopolitan and global it felt for a city of that size — 90,000 in Cairns itself, with probably two or three times that many in the immediate surrounds, although I never got a confident answer on that from the several people I asked. It's a growing city, as so many in Queensland are. It's a tropical city, which is probably a good part of what I liked about it — although I also liked the Pacific-diaspora feel to the place: the mix of Pacific Rim and island people, plus the pommy backpackers and other Europeans. The Pacific Rim folks include Americans, both North and South, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, and other Asians, and Queenslanders themselves, including aboriginals, of course.

Cairns advertises itself as "where the rainforest meets the reef," and although I didn't get out to the reef (it was irukandji jellyfish season, so not real safe to get in the water, at least without a stinger suit), this convergence of ecologies reminded me of Yap Island in Micronesia, which is the tropical locale I've spent the most time in. Cairns has higher hills than Yap, so you get the classic jungle-covered hills shrouded in mist and cloud. Queensland also has huge sugar cane plantations, so there's was a definite South American or Caribbean feel to the area. I immediately felt at home in the tropical languor, although the pace and pulse of the city was certainly faster than Yap's, and there was undoubtedly more wealth in the infrastructure. It was fascinating to see how a modern, Westernized economy adjusts to the heat and humidity. For some reason one of the perfect images of it to my mind was the interstate truckers dressed in shorts,

A Brief Glossary of Strine

brekky breakfast
bush rural countryside
caravan trailer
chook chicken
chunder *Chunga*
cockie farmer
esky cooler
galah a silly, pea-brained person (from the name of a noisy bird)
hotel pub (usually with cheap accommodations upstairs)
no wucking furrries no problem
ocker typically, primarily Australian
pawpaw papaya
piss alcohol
pokie electronic gambling machine
pommy (or pom) an Englishman
pot 285ml beer glass
root shag
sanga sandwich
shout a turn in buying a round of drinks (*What'll you have? It's my shout.*)
spag bol spaghetti bolognese
squiz look (*Let's have a squiz at that.*)
stubbie 375ml beer bottle
thingo thingie
tucker food
yiz youse



BULBOSE • NOSE • FLOWER • SKIPPER

tanktops, and foam flipflops, so unlike the truckers in jeans and boots I'm used to seeing in the U.S.

We spent two days in Cairns, giving me time to recover from jetlag and the both of us time to begin to adjust to each other, and then we drove up to Kuranda in the rainforest above Cairns and spent the night at Sharee's friend Alfonso's house. Alfonso, an architect, grew up in Mexico, but he's lived in Australia for over twenty years, maybe more like thirty. Sharee met him because he's the boyfriend of Fiamma, whose property Sharee lives on when she's not at sea. He made us pizza and gave us his bed, and we fell asleep to the strange sounds of the night forest.

In the morning, we headed west through cane fields and mango orchards until we arrived in Mareeba, "where the rainforest meets the outback." Here Queensland began to feel a bit like Central Oregon to me, with a definite sense of tourists mixing with farmers and ranchers. This sense grew even stronger west of Mareeba, where the farms turned to cattle ranches, and the landscape to scrawny gum forests, rock formations, and grassland. But meanwhile, in Mareeba, we connected with Fiamma, who had just had some dental work done and was feeling a bit rubber-faced. I had heard so much about her — and had such odd conversations with her on the phone — that the meeting was almost mythic.

How to describe Fiamma? Definitely a force of nature! Definitely mysterious, probably self-made that way. She was born in New Zealand and, with an ambassador father, has lived all around the world, including West Africa, Portugal, New York, and Tokyo. She's short and strong and looks great at age fifty-something, but after various illnesses and near deaths she has a shot immune system, a pain-wracked back, and a fierce will to seize the day and get things done, despite the physical price

she pays for hard work. She owns sixty acres in the bush west of Dimbulah, where she has converted an old stable into a rambling, funky house. The past seven years have been spent turning this swath of dusty gum forest, termite mounds, and pastures into an oasis of lush gardens and bohemian splendor. She calls the place Quinta Milagro — the land of miracles — and on my last night at QM, she argued that Australia as a country could do much the same as she was trying to do, by diverting its rivers inward to turn the outback desert into productive farmland (she invoked Israel in this regard), taking immigrants from all over the world to invest their lives in this work, and asserting an independence from foreign powers like the U.S.

But that was three weeks after my first arrival — or actually near arrival, as our attempt to reach QM from Mareeba that first day was thwarted by a flash flood. We had stopped in the cowtown of Dimbulah to pick up their housemate, Chrissy, and they invited another friend of theirs, Marie, to come out to QM for a bit of adventure and vacation from her teenage sons. What an adventure she got! Sharee and I stopped for a skinnydip in Eureka creek, and I'm not sure we ever got dry again after that. The rain began to fall as our two SUVs headed toward Petford. Most likely it had been raining in the area for a while already by the time we hit the storm. The next day Fiamma read her rain gauge at over 120 ml, which is close to five inches. In any event, when we got to the first swollen creek on the dirt road that leads from the highway to QM, we decided that the SUVs couldn't make it even in four-wheel drive, but we'd try hiking the last two kilometers to the house. We grabbed a few things that might spoil or that we just couldn't do without, like milk and Marie's fresh pies, and headed into the tropical downpour.

Sharee was wearing a sarong that she didn't want to tear, so she took it off and strode naked and barefoot through the mudpuddles — "like an Amazon queen," as Fiamma remarked later, "with her butt going badda-bong badda-bong, god, there's an image you'll never forget!" We made it through two smaller creeks, while Sharee insisted that this was a brilliant introduction to the savage beauty of the bush country, and then we got to the last major creek before Quinta Milagro. It was, to quote Fiamma again, "a bloody Mississippi." Even the guide wires that are meant to help one wade through floods were submerged. We were forced to turn back.

We ended up back in Dimbulah, where we were

treated to a royal feast of leftovers and fresh oddments by Marie and another friend, Gioia, who both opened their houses to us in yet another example of the Australian hospitality that is justly praised in song and story.

The waters had receded when we returned to QM the next morning, but we discovered that the house itself had been flooded when the new fishpond overflowed. We spent the next day drying the straw mats and sweeping and mopping the red mud from the floors. That was a pretty good introduction to the rustic life of QM, which has electricity and a phone line, but where the gravity-feed shower only runs hot if a fire is lit under the raintank. They had recently unclogged the toilet drainpipe, so I didn't have to shit downstream as they'd been doing lately (after an apparently *very* confused young lady flushed her underwear at a party), but it was made clear that pissing was to be done in the yard, anywhere except on the plants. Sharee and Fiamma were both comfortable lounging around half-undressed, which was undoubtedly cooler in the heat. I wore as little as possible most of the time myself, while also trying to avoid burning my fishbelly skin. The house was full of an incredible variety of alien bugs and beetles, as well as the inevitable mosquitos, or "muzzies," which in turn fed the usual tropical array of geckos on the ceilings and the less usual squadron of bats that swooped through the house at night.

Sharee frequently quotes her friend Andrew's adage, "Scratch a punk and find a hippie." Most of you who met Sharee when she lived in the U.S. will remember her mohawk and tattoos and fashionable thriftstore outfits. Now you're more likely to find her dressed in a sarong, or in Indian or Guatemalan peasant clothing. More of a gypsy look, in general, and bighod if she doesn't even perm her hair. (Well, mohawks are high maintenance, too, so not a big difference there, I guess.) She also, like half the women I've ever fallen for, follows a loosely new age spirituality, as well as an interest in herbal medicine, organic food, and Whole Earth alternative/natural lifestyles. But she smokes cigarettes, eats beef, and drives a gas-guzzling vehicle, so it's not like she's a hardcore new age hippie puritan or anything like it. Her preference for living in the countryside may become an issue if we ever manage to inhabit the same continent, but I did my time as a proto-neo-quasi-hippie when I went to school in Eugene, so I'm at least somewhat accustomed to this aspect of her world.

Perhaps needless to say, the hippie lifestyle isn't

exactly the norm out in ranchland, and Fiamma and her girlfriends apparently have a reputation amongst the locals of being a bit crazy, possibly witches, and (as one might guess from their lack of interest in the local men) probably lesbians. This led us one night — when Alfonso was visiting from Kuranda, and he and Fiamma were speaking to each other in Spanish — to come up with an alternative name for Quinta Milagro: *la casa de las brujas lesbianas* (the house of the lesbian witches). *Lesbianas y locas*, I guess. What struck me, as I settled into the place, was that Fiamma was running something of a house for wayward girls. One powerful impression I had at first — no doubt a result of my own most ancient insecurities — was that Sharee had a lot more to learn from Fiamma than she did from me. What was I but just another fun-loving party boy? Fiamma gave regular and useful lectures to Sharee and Chrissy (who was getting away from complications in Cairns) on responsibility and diligence, self-reliance and assertiveness.

Sharee's room was an old caravan out by the shed in a wire enclosure that we shared with Ziggy — a blind wallaby who was rescued from the pouch after his mother was shot, decapitated, and left by the side of the road. (His eyes were burned by the sun before the rescue.) Cohabiting with a wallaby was interesting, not least because in the rainy weather of the wet season it was hard to keep the wallaby shit swept away from the doorway of the caravan, so we tended to be wading in a thin gruel of roo shit more often than one might prefer. Ziggy also likes to grab and hold onto you, usually licking any exposed skin within reach of his raspy tongue, which is friendlier behavior than I want from an animal, but I'm sure that he missed the constant physical attention and grooming he got from his mother, despite Fiamma's daily attempts to compensate.

The caravan was quite nice, and Sharee had spent a great deal of time painting the inside and redecorating it in anticipation of my visit. "I've never seen the girl so *nesty*," Fiamma said. The place was shaded from the sun, so it was usually quite comfortable inside. After many trials and tribulations, we were able to set up videotape and DVD players and consummate the long planned Deppfest. The idea for this was planted the first night that Tami and I visited Sharee in Victoria the previous summer, when we all went to see *Pirates of the Caribbean*, whereby Sharee and I discovered our shared love for Johnny Depp (who, in a movie with Orlando Bloom, proved that it was in fact he who was still the prettiest.) We agreed that the next time we saw each other, we'd watch as many John-

Good Piss

So, if Victoria Bitter and XXXX Gold and Bitter were nothing to write home about, was there anything worth writing about in the margins? I by no means tried every Australian beer, but of the ones I tried, these were my favorites:

James Boag Premium Lager (5%): A Tasmanian beer that was probably my favorite.

Cascade Premium Lager (5.2%): Another very tasty Tasmanian beer.

Haagen Premium Malt Lager (5%): At least I *think* it was the Malt and not the Gold. I tried one bottle on the recommendation of a guy in a bottleshop in Cairns. He said it used to be brewed in New Zealand but was now brewed in Australia as well, maybe in Adelaide. That was the only time I saw it, and I would happily have had some more.

Eumundi Lager (4.8%): Only saw this in the vicinity of Eumundi, but I drank as much of it as I could while we bopped around the hinterlands of the Sunshine Coast. Very malty, as were all of these beers—quite different than the hoppy ales I'm used to in Seattle.

Toohey's Old Black Ale (4.4%): This was the most widely available of my favorites, at least in the sense that I could often get it on tap. (The others were only available in bottles.) It was also the only dark beer I stumbled across. According to the advertising, Toohey's Old has been brewed since 1869, while Toohey's New, a more typical industrial brew that I didn't care for, has only been around since 1931.

I researched these beers on the web for this sidebar, and I can see from the reviews that I've barely dented the surface of Aussie beer. I'll have to go back and try to do better!

ny Depp movies as we could together. We ended up watching eleven of them in the caravan, eight of which I hadn't seen before. John Waters' *Cry-Baby* and Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man* were my new favorites, on top of the Tim Burton and Terry Gilliam films that had made me a Depp fan to begin with.

It wasn't all movies, of course. We did some work around the property, although not as much as Fiamma would have liked, I reckon. (Fiamma herself was laid up twice from overworking, and the second time had a relapse of Ross River fever—a form of malaria that she contracted years ago.) We also took sidetrips to Chillagoe, to see the caves and an abandoned smelter, and to the Daintree—one of the last remaining sections of more or less intact rainforest in Queensland. We didn't actually spend a lot of time in the Daintree itself, since we were put off by the backpackers hotel that had been recommended to us. We ended up spending the night at a mosquito infested Koala Club on Cape Kimberly that had only one other couple staying there that night. The nice thing was that we were left alone to play billiards after the staff went home, and at midnight we shucked our clothes and jumped quickly into the swimming pool (pursued by mosquitos) for a moonlight skinnydip.

But by far the highlight of that particular little trip was the hike at Mossman Gorge—another bit of rainforest that has been protected—where a 2.4 kilometer circuit trail took us past enormous red cedars and strangler figs with vast water pipes and buttresses for roots, past a creek where several dark fish hung in crystalline water above a white bed of sand, and, on the wildlife front, into encounters with a small slatey-silver snake that wasn't the least scared of us (even when Sharee tried to shoo it out of our path with a stick) and a Boyd's forest dragon, which ran on its hind legs much to our surprise and delight. As the cascades of rain reminded us why it's called a rainforest, we jumped into the Mossman River (well, I had to be coaxed, because it was surprisingly cold) while thunder crashed and rolled in the hills above us and teenagers smoked dope on a huge boulder nearby.

Any awkwardness and hesitancy between the two of us was worked out in the three weeks at Quinta Milagro. Far more than that, we established an intimacy the likes of which I've never experienced with anyone else. We quickly became partners in everyday tasks like cooking and cleaning, and there was none of the defensiveness and fear I've always encountered in my few and scattered relationships. After years of sleeping alone, I found myself utterly at ease with somebody else in my

bed, perfectly in tune even in the vulnerability of sleep. I observed more closely Sharee's own brand of shrugging off unpleasant or difficult choices (something I'm a master of), her obliviousness to the impact of some of her decisions on other people, and her tendency to talk tougher than she walks, but I was also able to see her powerful dedication to her friends, her openness to discussion and criticism, and her great curiosity and desire to learn. Life is an adventure for Sharee, and that's exactly the thing I seem to look for in a lover.

After our three-week idyll in Quinta Milagro, we set off on the road to Brisbane, where I planned to catch a plane to Sydney, and thence to Seattle, in ten days time.

Sharee wanted to show me as much of Queensland along the way as possible, most definitely including as many country pubs as we could find. I really haven't said a lot about beer yet, so I'll take a minute to focus on this important topic. Sharee warned me before I arrived that Queenslanders drank the Queensland brew, XXXX (pronounced "four ex"), not Victoria Bitter—and certainly not Fosters, which she says is only for foreigners. So I dutifully drank almost nothing but XXXX Gold or Bitter on my arrival. Not long after I got there, however, we ran into her mechanic and one of his mates in a pub in Mareeba, and I noticed they were drinking Victoria Bitter.

"I thought Queenslanders only drank XXXX," I said to them.

"Nah," said Jojo, "VB tastes better. XXXX is for abos."

Well, that settled that! Of course, as a great believer in political correctness, I decided to stick with the abo beer. Besides, I have to admit that I got an unseemly amount of pleasure from sitting down in a pub and asking for a pot of gold. I can say that it actually tasted better than either VB or XXXX Bitter, but that's not really saying much.

Aside from trying various pubs, however, our trip was all about seeing the country. On our way out of Quinta Milagro, we dropped Chrissy off in Dimbulah, where she was going to start work in a pawpaw packing plant. We drove south to the Curtain Fig—a massive strangler fig with a boardwalk around it. I finally learned that strangler figs are the same thing as banyans, which are trees I knew from Yap and which left such a mark on my young imagination that I once wrote a story about a boy who was lured into one and never came out again. We wandered the Atherton Tableland for the rest of the day,

looking at various waterfalls and a haunted pub. On the way to the Cathedral Fig, driving across the hilly country, the end of a rainbow appeared outside the front window of the Nissan. Neither of us had ever seen the end of a rainbow before, and I didn't even know it was possible. It hovered ahead of us, maybe ten meters away, so close it was tempting to reach out to touch it. It seemed an altogether auspicious start to the trip, even if there was no pot of gold (or Gold) in sight.

We failed to see a platypus from the viewing platform in the picturesque postcardy town of Yungaburra, and then we headed up the winding Gilles Range Highway towards Cairns. In the dark of the dusk, Sharee spotted a large python crossing the road and swerved off to the shoulder and stopped. It must have been seven or eight feet long, and it had apparently stopped to enjoy the dissipating heat of the pavement. Sharee grabbed it by the tail and flung it into the jungle, instantly regretting that she had thrown it too hard. But sure enough, another car came whizzing by a half minute later, and she probably saved the snake's life. She's always been fond of the damned things. I didn't get a good look before she tossed it, but she said it was a carpet python.

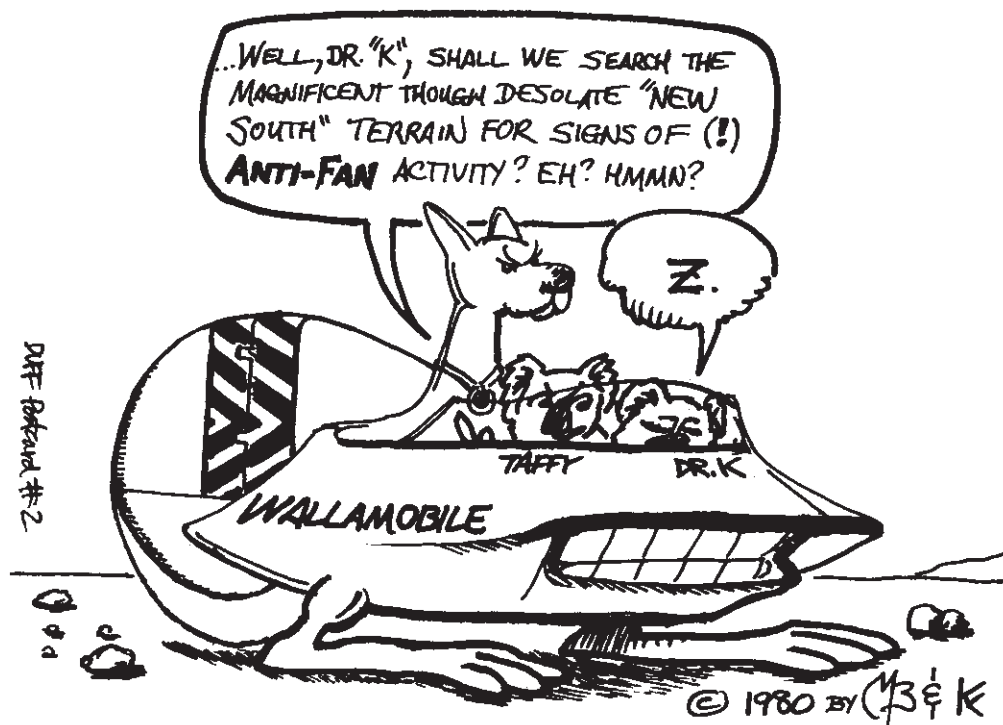
The next day, we skipped the Babinda boulders and went to Josephine Falls instead, then on (and on and on) to Townsville, where we caught the last ferry to Magnetic Island, as a flock of black cockatoos raucously urged us on. In the morning, we took the bus to Horseshoe Bay, which I insisted on calling "Horse's Hoe" after having been cor-

rected on the pronunciation of Ravenshoe the day before. We hiked in mad-dogs-and-Englishmen heat over rocky ridges to Radical Bay and Balding Bay, where Sharee, exhausted from all the driving she'd done the past two days, slept in the shade and I contemplated the beautiful pine and rock scenery, as perfect as a Japanese print.

We busted ass back to the mainland in the late afternoon and hit the road again, making it all the way to Airlie Beach that night. Brekky at the Village Deli the next morning was good, but the trendy backpacker feel of the town did not impress. *Wet T-Shirt Contest!* said one sign. Not my cuffa copy, said I. Probably if Eric Lindsay and Jean Weber had been there, they could have shown us the more interesting parts of the area — gateway to the Whitsunday Islands on the Great Barrier Reef — but they were in the States at the time.

Back on the highway, I became fascinated by the blunt signs warning about road fatigue. *REST OR R.I.P. — Tired Drivers Die*, said a common one, and another: *Rest Stop or Dead Stop*. We drove all the way to Yeppoon, which is a nice little resort town where Sharee used to go with her old boyfriend, Elwin, when they worked a fishing boat together. They used to trade prawns for cover charge to see their favorite band in a local pub.

Elwin was apparently fond of saying that Sharee isn't backward about being forward. She isn't afraid to make her wants and opinions known. One of her opinions is that Mercury Dry Cider is much better than Strongbow, and



she said as much to the woman at the bottleshop in Yeppoon. The woman was of the opposite opinion, nor was she afraid to say so. She'd gotten more bad bottles of Mercury than she cared to remember and couldn't be bothered anymore. Sharee's experience was just the opposite: she's had to send back far more bottles of Strongbow than of Mercury. The other woman just didn't like the taste of Mercury. Sharee thought Mercury clearly had the superior taste. They exchanged these views for a while, completely without rancor, but without any acknowledgment that tastes might vary.

I'd seen the same thing a couple days before at the Bush Tucker Café (no relation to Bob) just south of Cairns, where the woman who ran the place exchanged diametrically opposed views of Townsville with Sharee for a while. (Sharee thinks it's a pit, while the other woman thought it had "a nice sense of community.") I always read these exchanges as pigheaded, but as I say, it doesn't seem to lead to any bad feelings. One of the funniest instances was in a hotel in Mareeba, where Sharee asked the woman behind the counter if the fish in the fish in chips was fresh. It wasn't.

"I only eat fresh fish," Sharee explained pointedly.

"This is the bush, darl," the woman replied. "There isn't any fresh fish."

We spent the night in Yeppoon and then headed for Bundaberg, where we were to meet Sharee's mom, Sheilla, and her boyfriend, Jack. They were actually staying in a resort outside of Bundaberg in Bargara. I was finally able to swim in the ocean there, because we had gotten south of the irukan-dji zone. Sheilla and Jack had been travelling for a couple of months, having been to Fiji and New Zealand before coming to Australia. It was fun to hang out with them and treat them to a feast of seafood fresh off the local boats. This wasn't the bush, darl! For breakfast we ate mangos—dream food of my childhood on Yap—and life was very good indeed.

The four of us went to the market town of Eumundi on Valentines Day, and then Jack and Sheilla bid us adieu and continued on to Brisbane, while Sharee and I headed up to Pomona to take a look at Australia's first silent movie theater, the Majestic, est. 1921. In the hotel in Pomona, we ran into Sharee's friend Mick, who invited us to spend the night at his house. I was a little miffed that we wouldn't be having a romantic evening on our own, but it ended up being great fun, despite Mick's tendency to explain his philosophy of life at greater length than necessary. He and his wife, Jo, have built their own house (including making the lumber) at the edge of a national forest,



where we saw enormous old growth Flooded Gums the next morning. That night, however, we went to a mate's birthday party, and I was introduced to real ocker Ozzies, who weren't sure what to make of my name. "You'll need to change it if you live here," Mick advised. When he heard my middle name is Dean, he said that Deano would be perfect.

The next day we went to Dave and Bess's house in Tewantin, on the Sunshine Coast. Dave and Bess immigrated from Britain to Australia after WWII, and Bess (who grew up in the Shetlands) had some great stories about the tribulations of their first years in the country. "There weren't enough houses for people, so we lived in a glorified tent. The roads were terrible things, just a patch of gravel. I was so naïve. I ironed our sheets like a good middle-class wife. The other women must have thought I was crazy."

We stayed at their house that night and then took the scenic route through rolling hills to their son Dave's in Gympie the next day. Dave, like Mick, is a friend that Sharee met through Elwin, and I heard a lot of Elwin stories on this leg of the trip. Bess thought he was a savage and a terrible chauvinist, and everybody spoke of the great strength and fierceness of this former Commonwealth (or perhaps only Queensland) boxing champ from South Africa. Mick thought he had some Zulu in his heritage, but Sharee is sure it's Malay. Dave had a roomful of stuff that Elwin had finally agreed to let Sharee have from their life together. We spent two days driving through the hinterlands of the Sunshine Coast, where Sharee had lived with Elwin for a time and where she'd love to live again. The beautiful emerald green hills and valleys looked like the Irish countryside, and it was pretty easy to imagine a peaceful life there, far from the madding cities, but still close enough to Brisbane for the occasional taste of urban pleasures.

We spent two nights with Dave Jr., who was preparing to undergo radiation therapy for lung cancer after chemo had failed to kill the tumor. Sharee was going to go back to spend more time with him, and to go through the stuff that Elwin had left for her, after she saw me off in Brisbane. Another long drive got us to the outskirts of the big city, capitol of Queensland, where we found a motel near the airport. We sorted and divided the photos the two of us had taken over the course of my visit, and we finally faced the fact that our beautiful adventure together was over.

The tentative plan we discussed was for me to return for three months in December, although I was already thinking wildly

times have I told you not to use words like "baby carrots"!

that I would just pull up my deep roots in Seattle and move down there. Sharee makes a philosophy of changing plans, so I have no doubt that these tentative ideas will evolve in new directions. She's back on the fishing boat now, and we've already begun talking about getting together in Mexico in July. Fiamma and Alfonso will be visiting his family there for a few months, and she has been encouraging Sharee to come stay with them. If she's going to be that close to Seattle, I might as well go spend some time with her!

I've been pretty much a loner all my life, and the only relationship I've had that was remotely like a regular boyfriend-girlfriend thing was the year I lived with Molly in college, over twenty years ago. I've had other loves and lovers since then (although not many), but it has always been partial, confused, uncommitted. Sharee and I seem to form a circuit which sends the love around and around in a continuing flow — an amazing feeling that I've never experienced before, as though we are simply elements conducting a basic energy, passing the tai chi ball of love back and forth. As much as these metaphors suggest sex, and as undeniably great as the sex is, it's much more than that, of course. There's a sense that we've been given the chance to do things over again and get it right this time, to say the things we were never able to say (or hear) in the past. ("I thought you were a bit immature." "Well, maybe that's because I was only nineteen?") Beyond that, there is also the sense that the time we've spent together now has been such a great gift and great joy that it fulfills itself — that it's already enough, even though there's more yet to come.

And so it grows. ♣



The Teeth of the Argument

by Lesley Reece

Ah, lunchtime. Time to put aside the cares and woes of the morning, grab my sandwich and my book, and relax on one of the nice fluffy couches in the lounge area. That's one advantage of working at a university, lots of crash spots. They're for students, but there's a great one on my floor that's usually empty.

Now I'll just make myself comfortable and put my food on the nice coffee table. Oh, look. Someone left a copy of the student newspaper. No, don't pick it up. Don't pick it up! It's Free Speech Friday! You won't be able to eat if you read the "Opinion" section. Don't look — don't —

Too late. My eyes are already wandering over the text, another article by a self-professed "conservative" about the "liberal chokehold" that exists at the university. Things have apparently "gone too far" this time. Suddenly, my lunch doesn't look so appetizing.

You might think that four years of the same student newspaper — one and three-quarters as a student, two and a quarter as staff — would have taught me to avoid the "Opinion" section. Yet I spoil my lunch every Friday by failing to look away as the inevitable screed unfolds before me, like some horrible, scheduled traffic accident. I usually read the whole article, too, once even suffering through a sort of conservative manifesto that looked as if it were meant to be read out loud against a background of military snare drums. "I am a conservative. I believe that (insert conservative belief here). I am a conservative. I believe that..." Cue the drum corps: *DIT dit-dit DIT-dit, DIT-dit, dit-dit-dit-dit.*

I often disagree with conservatives, obviously, but that isn't why I loathe Free Speech Friday. Conservative views are hardly new; if I got upset every time I ran into them I wouldn't have eaten since 1972 (note to self: new book, *The Op-Ed Diet?*).

No, what really gets me are the "issues": abortion,

affirmative action, war protests, gay marriage, flag-burning, separation of church and state.

I don't blame the student journalists, conservative or otherwise. The "issues" are new to them, and they're learning, for perhaps the first time in their lives, to argue a point. If they stumble, the Letters to the Editor section will show them where it happened.

We older types, however, have seen it all before. We have no excuse, and yet we continue to debate "issues" that have no solution short of one side destroying the other side with an opposition-seeking death ray. Flag-burning? Come on. You've got two choices. Either you think flag-burning should be legal, or you think it should be illegal. No matter what you think, I'll ask you this: are you about to change your mind?

In the unlikely event that you just answered "Yes, I am about to change my mind," let me ask you something else. Is your "yes" contingent on a compelling argument from the opposition? If it is, you're going to need an atomic microscope to find one, because in the debate, everyone is going to say the same things other people have already said countless times since the issue first came up — and I can't even guess when that must have been.

The debate will be less like an actual discussion, and more like a masque from the English Restoration period, where every single time that a wood nymph appears and says "Hark," everyone knows it's meant to be the King's second daughter saying "The Earl of Blop is out of favor with the King!"

In a debate on the "issue" of flag-burning, one side will say "Burn the flag and you spit on America," and the other side will say "I have a right to burn it because it's just a piece of cloth." Also, at some point, someone will say, "You can't just see these things in black and white!" Every single time. Wood nymphs would be an improvement; they'd at



least cause a scandal by suddenly appearing (clad only in garlands of ivy) on the stage in the town hall.

I think I noticed this problem with “issues” because I haven’t eaten meat for a really long time. Tell someone you’re a vegetarian and you get one of three responses. There’s the one I like, which is “OK, I’ll make some extra broccoli for dinner.” Then there’s meat guilt: “Oh, I know I should give meat up, but I really like it! O, shrieve me, shrieve me, holy vegetarian!” That one’s just kind of embarrassing.

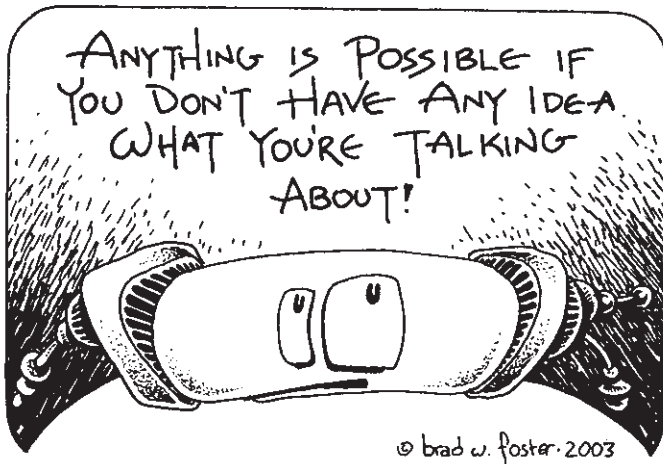
The one I dread is the third response, the “teeth” argument, which starts when someone yanks his upper lip aside and says, “Do you see these teeth? These teeth are made for cutting and tearing!” This display is apparently meant to say that I’m somehow overturning natural law by not staying at the

top of the food chain, where I belong.

I don’t like the “teeth” argument because my options are limited in terms of what I can say to this person who’s forcing me to examine his canines. I know that I stopped eating meat because I think it’s germy, and I know that my cutting-and-tearing teeth work real good on brussels sprouts. But that isn’t what he wants to hear.

He wants me to play the game. I’m supposed to tell him about factory farming, so he can point to my leather Docs and cry, “Aha! You hypocrite!” I’m supposed to tell him it’s wrong to kill living things, so he can point out that vegetables, too, are alive. I’m supposed to tell him that meat products clog the arteries, so he can thump his chest and claim that he’s healthy as a horse (never mind that horses eat only plants).

But I’m not going to read my lines. Long ago, I



learned that the only useful rejoinder to the “teeth” argument is to drop the script, roll my eyes, and say, with my best Valley Girl inflection, “So?”

That response takes care of most omnivores. Unfortunately, some vegetarians want to argue too. I still eat fish: I’m not a “vegetarian” at all; how can I call myself one? Isn’t it obvious that fish are sentient beings? How can I eat an innocent sea creature? Do I think they’re somehow less alive than their landwalking counterparts?

Gods help me; time out, time *out!*

How did we get so sidetracked? Nobody’s talking about the “issues.” They’re talking about themselves, or each other. Meanwhile, people are going to keep burning the flag, and having abortions, and protesting war, and getting romantically involved with people of the same gender. And others are going to keep pushing for an anti-flag-burning amendment to the Constitution, and blowing up abortion clinics, and starting wars, and making life difficult for gays and lesbians.

The resulting strife won’t stop until we talk about it, but we can’t talk about it until we can really talk about the strife. That’s the real issue: how are 275 million Americans going to live in the same country if the best we can do is make car-

toons out of each other? Just when we need stimulating exchanges of ideas, they are suddenly no longer stimulating, nor are they exchanges of ideas.

So I eat fish. So the guy next to me protests against war, and the guy next to him is gay, and the guy next to the gay guy thinks everyone should belong to his church and no other.

So what?

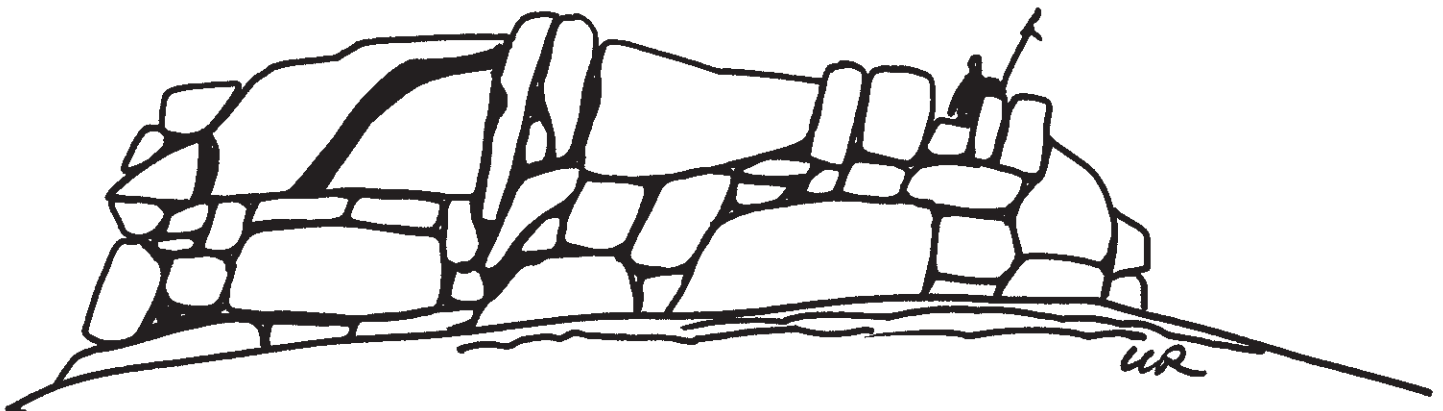
If we want to get along, the level of public discourse must rise beyond the masque. We have to start shrugging off our differences, or at least quit beating each other up with them. If we don’t, more than just the flag will be burning.

Picture this: liberals wrap themselves in American flags and start torching the houses of families who don’t recycle. Conservatives counter by camouflaging themselves as spotted owls and leading bombing raids on local NPR stations. A Mexican delegation arrives at the California border, bearing a perfect solution, but the conservatives turn them back, fearing they are part of a plot to make Spanish the official language of the US. Then some Canadians come down to tell us to cut it out and are promptly destroyed when both US sides turn on them for butting in.

Eventually, most of North America is a smoking ruin. We still argue with each other, naturally, but it’s about important stuff, like who gets the last dented can of Puppy Chow.

All right, maybe it won’t be that bad, but I don’t want to find out. So this Friday, I’m going to eat my lunch in peace. I’m not going to worry about how other people want to make all my life decisions for me. No matter how much they want to, they can’t. Nor can I make their decisions for them, and that’s something I’ll just have to live with.

As for that copy of the student newspaper on the coffee table, well, it’s going in the recycle bin. That’s where — as every good liberal knows — old news belongs. ♣



Inching

by Luke McGuff

The Saturday after Thanksgiving, I decided I wanted to see *Master and Commander* with Victor. I thought it would be a snap. I mean, who does anything Thanksgiving weekend? I sure don't. Trying to get to the Cinerama (an actual restored Cinerama theater north of downtown Seattle), I got confused between the monorail pylons and the one-way streets and got us stuck in the downtown holiday shopping traffic jam.

We inched forward. It seemed like every light caught us right at a crosswalk. The pedestrians streaming across would turn to smile, nod, wave, thumbs-up. I would smile and nod back. I drive an "art car"; in my case, a Toyota truck with trucks and cars glued all over the roof, three and four layers deep in places.

"Do you see why I was worried about parking?" Victor asked.

"I had no idea," I said.

"You're joking. This is merely the *second busiest* shopping day of the *entire year*."

"No, really, I thought it would be empty. Good thing we got here early."

We inched forward. People streamed past. More smiles and nods all around.

"This is a very weird experience for me," Victor said.

"What, that everybody points and laughs at my truck?"

"Yes. I intentionally drive the most anonymous car possible."

We inched forward. A woman came off the sidewalk, smiled, looked over the roof closely. Then she rapped on my window. I rolled it down.

"Whaddaya hold 'em on with?" she asked.

"Silicone caulk."

"Far out." She nodded to herself as if thinking of *course*. She went away.

Rolling up the window, I said "Sometimes I say mayonnaise." Victor laughed.

We inched forward. Every time traffic paused, pedestrians streamed across the street from wherever they were. At a green light, cars trying to turn

blocked the lane because they were blocked by other cars or pedestrians. Nobody looked particularly festive—it certainly wasn't a commercial for *today's upbeat downtown shopping experience*—but nobody looked particularly depressed or exhausted, either.

We inched forward. More smiles, nods, thumbs-ups. I noticed a boy, wide-eyed at the sight of my truck, tugging on his parents' sleeves.

We inched forward. Slightly ahead of us was a large cluster of people in front of a jewelry store. Most of them were squatting down.

We inched forward. A grandmotherly old woman, elegant, was the focus of the cluster. She was lying on her back, rivulets of blood on the side of her head. A couple of men tried to stanch the blood with cloths.

We inched forward. Someone placed a chair on the sidewalk, facing the street. Someone else helped a tall, hysterical, crying girl, eleven or twelve, sit in it.

We inched forward. I heard a siren start up. I could see the ambulance, blocks behind us, inching forward. ♣



He told program-makers he was "bored" and "wanted some chocolate".

Tall, Dark, and Chunga ♣ 13



A Mexican Live- Journey

by Lilian Edwards

February 10, 2004: Mexico City

Third proper day in Mexico City, after the long, long travel day from Edinburgh on Saturday. I'm playing hookey today from the Congress on Comparative Law I'm theoretically here to attend — we have the morning off most days anyway (there are papers on, but it's all on subjects I don't care about, like Health and the Law, Postmodernism and Law, Ski-ing and the Law, etc, etc) but tomorrow my coterie of colleagues are meant to be convening some kind of workshop on the future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Law in Mexico, and I feel the need to gather my strength before facing that. We are here, the story goes, to guide our struggling colleagues in the developing world on the path to building computer programs that will retrieve case law like top librarians, decide cases like top judges, and even run up fees like top lawyers — god help us all. The trouble is that almost all my party of AI and Law experts decided somewhere in the mid Eighties that none of this was really possible, and have since made one of two decisions: either to specialize in obscure corners of what I helpfully dub the “squiggly logic” syllabus, become obsessed with ontologies and amass huge docile teams of very tall Dutch PhD students — or, as in my case, to get the hell out of the field and go off into the much richer and more entertaining pastures of Internet law. So, how to tell the Mexicans, who have paid through the nose for us to come and talk about the future of AI and Law that frankly, it probably has none? It's a

tough one. In fact my cynicism about AI and law is becoming the running joke of the conference as I am hanging out almost constantly with four or five people whose entire career depends on the interface between ontologies and optimism. (Yes, how to be popular and influence people! But I suspect they mostly agree with me on the sly — or over a beer.)

Anyway this morning, people were going to the Frida Kahlo museum/studio, which I really did want to see, but we saw the area it's situated in yesterday — a very lovely village-cum-suburb called Coyoacan — so I sort of feel I've done that and meanwhile, maybe I can use my spare day to get some sunbathing in and catch up on my email and LJ for the first time this trip. It really has been all go — you get up, have enormous buffet breakfast of eggs and chorizo and tortillas and everything else imaginable (chili steak for breakfast? Perhaps not for me. But Mexicans allegedly eat breakfast and second breakfast and lunch and dinner, just like hobbits) — then either go to see the dignitaries at the conference speak impenetrably in Spanish (alright, that was only yesterday) or go out sight-seeing. This is not a wholly straightforward option either. We are not meant to go anywhere alone in Mexico City, as it's too dangerous for gringos who don't speak Spanish, we're firmly told (despite the fact that everything I've seen so far looks like LA) so Marcella has been drafted in to tour-guide us around. Marcella works at the Law Institute at the National University of Mexico which is hosting

My Lot, and is my ex-student Monica's AI and law slave, I think — rather as back in Edinburgh, I have Andres our new junior lecturer as my e-commerce slave. (Mexicans, like most Continental style scholars, are very hierarchical about these things. At one point when Monica is showing us a PowerPoint presentation on her laptop, a student has to be drafted in to hold it while she presses keys. Wouldn't do for her to hold her own.)

Marcella has a tiny *tiny* car (a Ford Ka in fact) into which are squeezed she, in the driver's seat, me (round but short), Henry (Dutch AI and law person, very *very* tall but, by compensation, skinny), Henry's girlfriend Marianne (Surinamese, also tall and not so thin as Henry with it) and Trevor (doyen of the AI and law field, from Liverpool University, short and medium thin.) As you can imagine we are all getting to know each other intimately...

Marcella is fab — after only a few cramped road trips into the wilds of Mexico Ciudad, my pal Burkhard and I admit to our mutual intention to pack her in our luggage (she's only little) and ship her back with us to Edinburgh to do her Masters. Although only 23, she speaks perfect English, has travelled in India and Europe, has strong sentiments on social justice and a savvy of Mexican *realpolitik* well beyond her years. (She also does Capoeira, which appears to be a Brazilian mixture of exercise, drumming, singing and philosophy. How Latin American!) Marcella took us on day 1 to the centre of Mexico City (by Metro — as the city has 20 million people, all with at least one car, it would take about three hours to drive one side to the other. The city cleverly decided to ban cars with certain license plates from entering the city centre one day a week. Cleverly, drivers then went out and bought extra cars). Our first port of call was the historic, scarily gigantic and curiously building-free *Zocalo*, which reminded me a bit of Tianenmen Square in Beijing, only more fun, with its hordes of street food sellers, buskers, human statues, Latin drummers and market traders. (Why *do* Third World cities have these vast, empty central squares? Their only purpose seems to be to be big enough for tanks to roll in and break up revolutions.) We goggled at the fantastic Diego Rivera murals in the *Palacio Nacional* telling the history of Mexico, from Indian gods and feathered serpents to Zapata and the Insurgentes — Mexico has had so many invasions and revolutions that I am totally confused.

On day 2, we went to Coyoacan, which was to our somewhat relief, rather nearer the hotel we're in, thus requiring only a packed-like-sardines-in-a-can drive on the freeway and not a full fledged expedition by Metro. Coyoacan is a very, *very*

expensive suburb — rents to live there are about the same as for flats in Edinburgh, though the salaries in Mexico are about a seventh. It's where Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera lived and had their studios — sort of a Covent Garden of Mexico, great shops, lovely restaurants with outdoor courtyards and a fabulous covered market bursting with mangoes and prickly pears and all sorts of nuts and spices and birds in cages and all the usual bewildering paraphernalia of foreign markets. We sampled about fifteen different types of smoked cashew nuts and tried spicy-salty tamarind sweets — mind-blowing! (Mexicans have incredibly sweet teeth it seems — they eat pure lumps of muscovado sugar as titbits, and the sweet pastries and marzipan cakes were to die for. Not to mention the fresh pineapple sorbet...)

Then we embarked on a long, hot, fascinating drive out to the southern tip of Mexico City, to Xochimilco (one of the few Mexican Indian place names I can remember as it actually sounds a lot like "chocolate milk"). This outpost of greenery



THE AZTEC HIGH PRIEST OF
FANZINE CRITICISM WOULD
DAUB ESPECIALLY BAD ISSUES
WITH BLOOD FROM THE STILL
BEATING HEART OF THE EDITOR.



and water in the vast urban desert of Mexico City is the Sunday picnic destination of choice for tired Mexican families and canoodling couples. It's a bit like a cross between the Union Canal at the bottom of my road in Edinburgh, and the Cam or the Cherwell—a broad shallow canal where you can hire large flat bottomed punts equipped with coolers and wooden picnic tables—really very nostalgically Oxbridge, although the boats with their bright tapestry coverings and emblazoned saint's names are quite definitely Mexican. And here we find, as ever in Mexico City, ambient capitalism on the move. Even when you are on the boat drinking your cool *cerveza*, peddlers paddle alongside in small punts and brightly hail you in an attempt to sell carpets, jewellery, food. I am the fall guy of our group—transported to heaven by the peace, the blessed freedom from traffic and the sun dappling on the water, I succumb all too easily and buy a bright peasant blanket-rug, and lovely silver turquoise ring, bracelet, pendant. (Afterwards I reflect that I could almost certainly have bought the same things in Edinburgh's Cockburn Street, and not dragged them back via several million airports. But to be fair, they *are* very cheap!)

Mexico's economic status is something we spend

many hours, many beers discussing. It's an interesting political time to be here—Mexico has long been in NAFTA, is jostling for status as First World not Third World, and is, officially, too well off for World Trade Organisation aid. We are here to offer academic aid of sorts to a developing country—yet a lot of the time I don't feel like we have that much to offer beyond a certain degree of intellectual ennui masquerading as sophistication. And everyone at home told me how much I would hate Mexico City—that it would be dirty, violent, poor, polluted, and grid-locked—but that's not at all how I feel as it turns out. The traffic is utterly terrifying, to be sure (again, it reminds me a lot of China, though at least there aren't any yaks on the freeways here) but otherwise so far I really like Mexico City. We *do* have good luck with the pollution—the wind is coming from the right direction and we get several days of clear blue skies and suns—but I also get told that the anti-emission rules are in fact slowly working to decrease the asthma and smog. The crime and poverty remains a shadow I never see, no doubt deliberately. Yes, street sellers and beggars are ever present—and at traffic lights, boys don't just rush to wash your windscreen but also optimistically proffer cigarettes, beer, papers and lottery tickets—but they're not aggressive; I don't feel irritated and harassed the way I did in places like Morocco and Tunisia. The Mexicans I see on the streets seem happy, polite and on the whole well groomed. I have seen far worse poverty and threatened violence in First World cities like Chicago, New Orleans and even parts of London.

I begin to appreciate what I already know intellectually, that being a “developing country” is not necessarily about universal poverty or shabbiness and shanty towns, but about the *gap* between wealth and poverty. The Mexicans I meet have gone to extremely expensive private universities which they have paid as much for as Americans who go to Harvard and Yale; they have designer clothes, the latest mobile phones and inevitably a chic European style compact car. They are indistinguishable from people living in Beverley Hills or Palo Alto. Yet at the same time Marcella, Monica, and the rest of my hopeful, middle class, socialist minded academic friends are quite fundamentally *not* living the same life as me and my pals in the UK; because they are marooned in a country with tremendous problems of corruption, democratic deficit, violence and drugs, none of which seem to have immediate solutions. Even the middle class know the problems of the rest of Mexico are their problems too. Marcella says that the police (who strut around everywhere in a bizarre selection of

I'M IMPRESSED BY YOUR DETERMINATION - BUT I REALLY DON'T WANT...



"THEY TRY TO SELL YOU THINGS EVERYWHERE..."



fancy uniforms, boots and large guns) always ask for a bribe when they give you a parking ticket and live that way, as salaries for them are so low. She refuses to pay these bribes, which I imagine is pretty brave. She is far more angry at the traders who try to rip us off as foreigners than I am — I feel it's fair enough to pay something into the local economy when we are so rich, relatively, while she is angry at what effect this may have on the image of Mexico and its people. It's all too difficult to try and solve in my jet-lagged head.

February 14 2004

Last day in Mexico City is both bacchanalian and bizarre by turns. The much-looked forward to post-conference outing to the pyramids at Teotihuacan strongly resembles an end of term school bus trip, the Europeans knackered enough, but the Mexicans positively giddy with lack of sleep and post conference survival hysteria. "You guys are exit happy," I say, slurping tequila down my front — the new English phrase I taught them, along with *road rage* and *glory hole*. The whole day's memories come back only in bursts. Drinking Negro Modelo on the bus, drinking tequila, Monica and Marcella doing a startling impersonation of the Six Year Old Twins c. 1982, more tequila, ecstatic surmounting of pyramids, "I'm the king of the world!" I tell Burkhard, who groans theatrically.

"Let's go to a club!" suggests Enrique, and although I refuse point blank to salsa, here I am later, dancing with undauntable Enrique, who is still the spitting image of the Mexicano embalmer from *Six Feet Under* but dances like fucking ace for a legal theory professor. Later I'm teasing Marcella along with Edgar, another PhD student with perfect English, who, it turns out, has such bad eyes he is almost blind but has made so little fuss I have never noticed. Marcella, the would-be Buddhist, tries to convince us that Jesus spent his wilderness years in Kashmir, and went on to invent yoga.

"If so, where's the foreskin then?" I ask, "Jesus always leaves a foreskin wherever he went. It must

have had the ability to grow back like a snake's skin."

"And did he bring Elvis back to life too?" teases Edgar.

Marcella, so politically careful to be lapsed Catholic she insists on analysing every religious story seriously, pretends not to be talking to us, but eventually gives up in giggles.

And then in a blur of recall, we're all dancing, even in staggering unlikelihood, Trevor the cynical Scouse old AI and Law git, Burkhard the German ex hippy line-dancing to Hispanic trance music, the whole cast lined up singing their hearts out to "I Will Survive". Like the end of *High Fidelity*, like a film with a very loud backing soundtrack. Home, 3am. In the morning I feel like walking death. *La día de los muertos* for real.

And oh yes, Valentine's Day stuff is ubiquitous, even in Mexico, even though my own shiny new boyfriend is far away in Edinburgh. But Mexico also has a saint of traffic, it appears, and I think he deserves a day of worship here far, far more.

February 15 2004: Cancun

Cancun is meant to be a hedonistic interlude of beach culture after the AI and sociology and earnest political discussions of Mexico City. Unfortunately, I dislike it on sight. Full of the grossest, rudest American tourists I have ever seen (I speak as a fervent Americanophile), not a "real" Mexican restaurant in sight, wildly overpriced and built, bizarrely, entirely on a scale for cars, even though Cancun is at the southern tip of the Yucatan peninsula and therefore everyone comes from the USA by air. It's a bit like how I imagine Las Vegas will be, only in Spanish with fake Mayan bits. And all the hotels are trying desperately to be pyramids. Since I spent yesterday climbing real pyramids at Teotihuacan, this cuts little ice. But mainly I'm here for the beach, I console myself, so what the hell.

Except that a tropical rainstorm cuts short my proud first swim on arrival at my hotel and then it buckets down for the next two days. My god, this



can't be happening, I wail — this is the sub-tropics where it never rains at this time of year. Nothing can be worse than a wholly artificial beach resort in the rain — I can't even get on the Internet for the queues at the cybercafe. Oh well. Apart from the beach, I have plans to go see the Mayan ruined fortress at Tulum, and the entire Mayan city in the hinterland at Chichen Itza (or chicken pizza, as the delightful Amuhricans in my collective taxi from the airport called it.) In five days time it's on to Merida, the Spanish colonial capital of the Yucatan, for yet another conference, this time talking on privacy and the Internet. (If Monica, who is also attending, remembers to pick me up in her car, which on current showing is more than unlikely.) Ah well, a problem for *mañana*.

February 17 2004

Still sunless in Cancun. Sigh. I did get to one of the beaches briefly, and had a quick swim in the perfect bleached turquoise water (as advertised) before the weather whipped itself into a storm, so I suppose I shouldn't complain. But... When I only had four days to start with... Echoes of New Zealand and the Bay of Islands, of Tunisia, of all the places I have hopefully gone in search of sun and found myself killing time in pouring rain instead. Sigh again. Is there an albatross around my neck I haven't noticed lately? (You'd have think I'd at least have had a whiff of the smell.)

Still I did get to see Tulum, the ruined Mayan fortress perched on a cliff above another perfect white sand beach, which was kind of interesting if not as wonderful in rain as in sun, I guess; and I did snorkel down the mangrove-swamp river at Xel-Ha, seeing the usual flocks of stripey and luminous blue-yellow-purple fish. What really made my day was near the end, when I was cold and tired and basically wanted out and into the arms of a nice warm

margherita (or *hombre*), seeing the most enormous flat ray undulating its way along the bottom soil, followed swiftly by something I'm fairly sure was a very small but still quite scary barracuda. Oooh. I dragged myself out of the river, limped shakily half-chilled into the right changing rooms (not so easy when you're half blind, your glasses are in a bag in a cloakroom, several thousand tourists are trying to do the same thing, and everyone seems to speak only Spanish) and ordered five or six glasses of the all-in package extremely bad *vino tinto*.

Back in the pointless void of a wet and listless Cancun, I find myself chatting briefly to two blonde surfing guy types from Toronto, escaping the cold of their winter, and a Swedish girl who's been working here six months at a hotel. As with all the previous times I've travelled and observed fellow-travellers, I wonder why I was never ever one of these people even when I was the right age — so blonde, so thin, so toned, so perfect even in bedraggling rain, confident, cocky, attractive, instantly able to strike up contacts and find out which club the cool people go to, where the best beach is for snorkelling, and which variety of martini is the current cocktail must-have. I feel about as unrelated to these people as I do to the barracuda. Does anyone reading this feel they are, or even know, one of these perfect have-a-go happy shiny people?? If not, where do they come from? Where are they made, not born? Where do they go home to when their days in Thailand and the Gold Coast and Cancun and New Zealand and Goa are done and the winter of the Northern Hemisphere can finally no longer be held at bay??

And are they happier than those in Mexico like Marcella and Monica, who are the same kind of age and at least as young and beautiful, but who instead of backpacking looking for eternal summer, want to acquire the skills of the North as a way to escape their own perfect climate? Discuss. ♣



Rain City Tangler

News & Gossip

by Ulrika O'Brien

BRING BRUCE BAYSIDE—Along with conjugal eruptions, Corflu Blackjack instigated a one-off special fund to to bring Bruce Gillespie to the 2005 Corflu in San Francisco. The goal is to raise at least \$2500 US to cover Bruce's travel costs. The fund is administered by Joyce and Arnie Katz, and checks may be flung their way, made out to "Joyce Katz," by mailing to PMB 152, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, USA. Robert Lichtman is running a mail auction to benefit the fund, and he may be contacted for details at fmz4sale@yahoo.com, or via paper at P. O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.

TAFF OFF (TO THE RACES, THAT IS)—European TAFF administrator Tobes Valois proudly announced the 2004 TAFF Ballot: James Bacon and Anders Holmström are standing, with a voting deadline of June 5, 2004. Ballots can be found online at the TAFF site: www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF-Archives/Taff/taff2004.html. Hardcopy ballots may be obtained from Tobes, or North American administrator, Randy Byers, or a fanzine near you. Randy Byers: 1013 North 36th St., Seattle, WA 98103, USA; Tobes Valois: 20 Bakers Lane, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE2 9QW UK.

GUFF IN (ON IT, TOO)—From Jean Weber & Eric Lindsay: Nominations are now open for the 2005 GUFF (Get Up-and-over Fan Fund) race from Australasia to attend Interaction, the 63rd Worldcon, in Glasgow, Scotland, 4-8 August 2005. Fans living in Australia and New Zealand are eligible to be nominated. Candidates for the 2005 race will need to post a \$25 bond (\$A or NZ), provide a 100-word platform, and have three Australasian and two European nominators. Nominations are open until 30 September 2004. Please e-mail correspondence to the Australian administrators: guff@jeanweber.com. (Jean says: "Snail mail is not recommended, as we often...collect it less than once a month.")

AND NOW . . . NOTHING WHATEVER ABOUT FAN FUNDS—From www.corflu.org, the results of the FAAn awards: Best New Fan, Pete Young. Best Fanzine, *Trap Door*. Best Fan Artist, Steve Stiles. Best Fan Humorist, Andy Hooper. Best Fan Writer, Gordon Eklund. Fan Face Number One, Andy Hooper. A Special Achievement Award was given to Bill Burns for his important and famously Hugo-free website, efanzines.com.

RUMORS OF CORFLATCH II—By acclaim the site for Corflu 22, selected at Corflu Blackjack, will be San Francisco, the bid chaired by Tom Becker. Lucy Huntzinger will act as hotel booking *nudze*, and the committee are aiming for the wonderful Ramada Plaza Hotel International as a site. A date has tentatively been set for February 2005, pending hotel availability. An avid public must still await developing details at www.corflu.org. Or, watch this space.

TRUFEN IN THE NET—Victor Gonzalez has gone live with a new fannish website: Trufen.net. The site is dedicated to fannish discussion, convention reporting, book reviews, zine reviews, and whatever chat floats your fannish boat, painted green, or not, wheels fallen off, or not. Check it out at: www.trufen.net. Pass the virtual blog. No, no, the other kind...

RETRO HUGOS OF 1953—Noreascon 4 has announced the fannish Retrospective Hugo nominees for 1953 (along with a bunch of sercon stuff): Best Fanzine of 1953: *Hyphen*, ed. Chuck Harris & Walter Willis; *Quandry*, ed. Lee Hoffman; *Science Fiction Newsletter*, ed. Bob Tucker; *Sky Hook*, ed. Redd Boggs; *Slant*, ed. Walter Willis; *art*, ed. James White; Best Fan Writer of 1953: Redd Boggs; Lee Hoffman; Bob Tucker; James White; Walter A. Willis. More details at: www.noreascon.org/hugos/nominees.html.



Shocklatch

by Andy Hooper

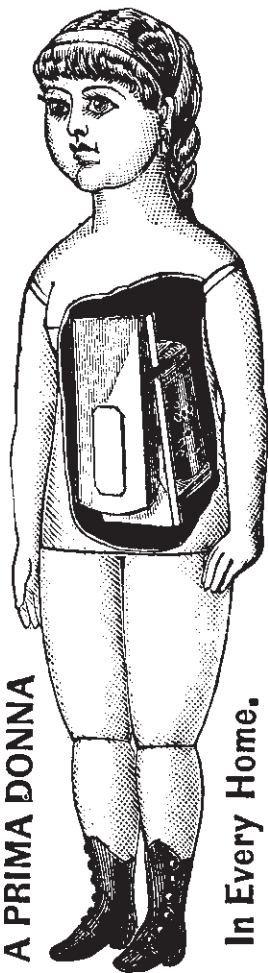
One of the most universal human myths is the story of the misanthrope or hermit, a person who travels deep into the wilderness in an effort to avoid human society. Sometimes the hermit is escaping disappointment, sometimes they are falsely accused of a transgression and must flee to avoid judgment. After many years, the hermit feels a pang of longing for his or her fellow humankind, and returns to the fringe of civilization to reinitiate contact with them. Unfortunately, after so many years living in solitude among the animals, the hermit is rendered indistinguishable from a beast, and is slain by hasty, fearful people who think themselves approached by a wolf or a bear. In the best versions of the story, the party firing the fatal arrow or bullet is the offspring, or sibling, or faithless lover of the hermit, and only understands the enormity of their life-long betrayal when the lifeless corpse is closely examined.

Sometimes a science fiction convention seems like a convocation of hermits, a jamboree of misanthropes with long hair and untrimmed nails, more used to barking imprecations at the newts and chickadees of the field than dividing the check at a fannish dinner party. Or if we happen to be better groomed, we still have a hairy beast inside, sniffing in suspicion at the approach of something half-familiar but also half-feared. Con report authors are very fond of metaphors about fandom as family, and sf conventions as being like a trip back home; but a visit to my family is always a source of tension as well as happiness. And it seems as though there are as many occasions for a fan to regard a convention as a kind of crisis as there are to see it as a source of relaxation.

Of course, the hermit is also a hopeless narcissist, so fixated on the admiration of their own honor or beauty or injury that they can't admit any concession to the needs of others, or reality as a whole. And there is nothing innately disturbing about a weekend party with people that share numerous interests with you, and no reason a fan wouldn't regard one's approach with delight. Maybe that expectation of happiness is what does so many of us in — fandom seems to be crawling with depressive and manic-depressive personalities, prone to all manner of tics and outbursts, and nothing sets us off like being in one another's company.

Potlatch, the small, literary-focused sf convention that rotates between Washington, Oregon and California, has a way of seizing me with a particularly powerful case of the heebie-jeebies. I have a long-standing interest in the future of Clarion West, the principal beneficiary of the convention, and my long participation in Wiscon made Potlatch a natural convention for me to attend when I moved to Seattle, just about exactly when Potlatch began. But 13 years later, I still feel like my participation is some kind of *issue*, both for myself and for several other fans that typically attend. I'm too big, way too loud, and certain to be a source of some trouble by the end of the weekend. Potlatch appeals to me as a source of entertainment and fellowship, but I also feel like it involves a weird kind of judgment of my behavior and demeanor, and that there are always people there who are eager to recount any fit of "Hooperish Rage" for posterity.

Naturally, I arrived at the convention on Friday in a cursing rage, so things generally looked up from there.



A PRIMA DONNA

In Every Home.

A NEW INVENTION.

I wouldn't have gone, actually, if I hadn't been asked.

I participated — rather obliquely, and admittedly at a distance — in the process of selecting the convention's "Book of Honor," but my recommendation, *Cities in Flight* by James Blish, was rejected by the Potlatch committee as too long by half, too windy, and inconveniently out of print. The convention's first choice was *Stand on Zanzibar* by John Brunner, but many felt that novel was just a little too dark to build a convention around. Several people pointed out that Brunner's *The Shockwave Rider* was better-regarded, with a much happier ending, and shortly thereafter *TSR* was the book of honor for Potlatch 13.

I resisted. I remembered reading *The Shockwave Rider* around 1982, on the glowing recommendation of fellow fans, and being just mildly impressed. I always have trouble with a protagonist whose most significant feature is that he or she is naturally wiser than all the other people around them. Taken to its logical extreme, the situation makes a Slan or an Odd John of the character, inevitably hated and feared by the "normal" humans who recognize them for what they really are. Society always seems to prove its pig-headed helplessness in a manner that justifies the protagonist's contempt for it. And although Nicki Halflinger, the hero of *TSR*, is an American fugitive in his late 20s, his voice reads a great deal like that of a liberal but disillusioned Englishman in his 40s. I think this left me interested in what Brunner had to say, but unable to identify very profoundly with his characters.

TSR also has an explicit theoretical agenda that few novelists have ever been honest enough to state so openly. Brunner was admittedly inspired by Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* and therefore set out to create a society that seemed to be the consequence of universal stress and dysfunction brought on by the pace of change and lack of continuity in contemporary life. This decision to base the setting and society of the novel on a set of emerging behaviors and psychological trends helps to create the impression of almost precognitive prediction, and that's reinforced by Brunner's description of a universal data network, transmitted across telephone lines, that seems a very close analog of the modern Internet.

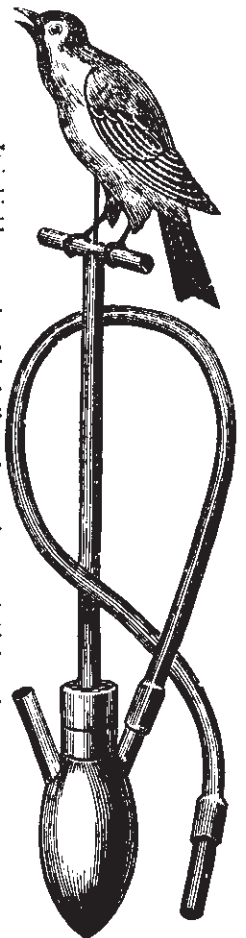
Ulrika O'Brien, program chair for the convention, listened to me waffle on about my ambivalent opinion of the novel, then coolly forced her copy on me to make me read it again, and wrote my name

in on one of the programs scheduled for Saturday afternoon at Potlatch. And that's how I found myself on a panel with three other fans, talking about the validity of Brunner's technical speculations and social evolution with the benefit of 28 years of subsequent history to guide us.

Brunner deserves particular credit for postulating the development of a national data network before the advent of the personal computer. In the novel, Brunner's computers are still centralized, gymnasium-sized affairs, perhaps several generations behind the technology in use at the time he actually wrote the book. Information storage is controlled through the possession of a few giant servers, although Brunner never uses that word. The special talent of his protagonist, Nicki Halflinger, is to alter, illuminate and actually steal that data through the manipulation of remote commands — and all achieved through the use of the key set on a common touch-tone telephone, something which was itself an emerging technology in the early 1970s.

I was far less impressed with some of the social theory behind the book. Brunner, like Toffler before him, largely ignores the palliative and compensatory behaviors with which people have tried to deal with the pace of change in the 20th and 21st Centuries. He concentrates on the alienation and fear that he believed would arise from our lack of control over access to information, both regarding ourselves and the secret realities of life in the near future. At the novel's end, Halflinger has more or less forced North Americans to become free, and to assume control of their own segment of the dataverse. But the changes seem to promise to replace one form of stress with another, and there seems little reason to assume that they will really cure the rampant psychological disorders confronting Brunner's society.

I thought I might even have a semantic hook with which to catch Brunner's premise. Shock is generally an acute reaction, typically elicited by some specific stimulus. But in Brunner's world, while shock becomes a chronic psychological phenomenon, his characters show relatively little adaptation to this ongoing state of duress. For all the psychological crises that populate the novel, everyone but Brunner's protagonist seems remarkably comfortable with the status quo, so much so that I began to wonder — is this really a utopia, one that Halflinger's own neuroses serve to miscast as a dystopia? His trump card — the creation of clone children in an effort to isolate the genetic



It is highly appreciated by ladies, who use it to teach birds to sing.

origins of “wisdom”— simply didn’t make my skin crawl in the way I assume Brunner would have hoped. Some similar premise has been advanced so often—and almost universally rejected out of hand—that it lacks the power it had 30 years ago.

It also occurred to me that living so shortly before the time in which Brunner set *The Shockwave Rider*, I might have some of the same self-interest in defining society as benign as shown by some of Brunner’s characters. This was the first step in blurring the line between reality and the novel, which ultimately proved to be the most convenient way of dealing with both.

The life of a hermit is a proud and lonely thing, and you can find yourself living it in the blink of an eye. Who hasn’t embraced some form of secret mental gaffiation a thousand or more times? And some of us fade swiftly to black with a great deal more readiness than others. But what could possibly be more sublimely abject than being a misfit among misfits? If there were an Olympic event in feeling sorry for yourself, a fan would surely win every gold medal available.

As the Friday of Potlatch 13 arrived, I felt a rising urge to skip out on the convention as I struggled to finish all the work of the day. I answered pages of urgent correspondence, and actually made a start on an early version of this article, still struggling to put Brunner in perspective. I was also concerned about selecting music for the Potlatch dance, partly because I had somehow moved the event in my mind from Saturday evening to Friday night,

out of habits formed back at Wiscon in the 1980s. I was also distressed to be reminded just how many of my CDs were stolen when our apartment was burglarized in 2002. I had never taken all the dance CDs back out of their paper-box lid following the dance at Potlatch 11, and the thief simply lifted all my best dance music without having to look at a single label.

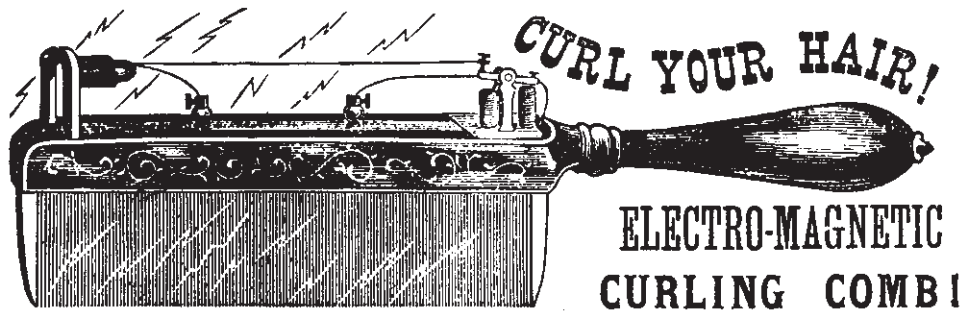
The afternoon wore into early evening, and Carrie returned home from work. I loaded all of the CDs and fanzines into the car, then almost fell over, feeling light-headed. As a diabetic, I knew very well that I had Been Bad; working straight through the afternoon, I’d eaten nothing for hours, and felt weak and mildly demented. We stopped at a local Mexican place to grab some food before heading to the convention.

My blood sugar was therefore on the rise by the time we reached the Best Western off Aurora Avenue, but the issue isn’t always blood sugar level, but the speed with which it drops or spikes upward. It was very low before we ate; and it came rocketing back up way too fast thereafter. Then the first thing I realized upon arriving at the convention was that the dance was actually scheduled for the following evening, and I had foolishly worked on the music all afternoon without any real need to. This relatively minor mistake suddenly seemed enormous, and within seconds of walking into the hotel, I found myself full of black anger that shortly morphed into something close to a full-on anxiety attack. I couldn’t catch my breath, and found myself unable to talk to or even look at any of the fans at the convention.

I was quite unforgivably rude to Ulrika and Hal O’Brien, who were kind enough to forgive me anyway; and I calmed down very shortly thereafter, as the dismal feeling finally let go of me. But of course, the damage to people’s impression of me was quite irreversible, although I did my best to behave in a sane and friendly manner for the balance of the weekend. Fortunately, there are a lot of things to talk about at Potlatch, and almost everyone was courteous enough to ignore my outburst in favor of other subjects. But there is a special shame attendant to publicly losing control of yourself in some way, and I felt apologetic toward people who were not even around at the time, and wondered how long it would be before I was formally asked to leave the convention.

These internal storms always leave me contemplating turbid water thereafter; and I had an increased measure of sympathy for Nicki Halflinger, who’d changed his hairstyle so many times, he didn’t know what he looked like.





By the time our turn came, we had already been through 90 minutes of discussion of *The Shockwave Rider*, and the love-fest was in full swing. It was hard to be critical in a room full of one-time hackers and present-day Internet addicts, all of whom seemed to agree that Brunner was an important writer, if only on the strength of his invention of the Internet worm. I felt it worthwhile to point out that Brunner had only *postulated* the existence of net viruses, while they were most likely *implemented* by certain people in the audience (to whom Jon Singer says “Hi”).

This is a parallel to the whole problem of trying to evaluate the novel as a piece of literature in such a computing-intensive subculture. If you suggest that the characters are rather wooden, that the plot largely consists of open wish-fulfillment, and that Brunner’s grasp of computing technology seems minimal at best, most fans will claim with some justification that the novel’s thematic impact quite exceeds any aesthetic issue of its construction. Victor Gonzalez wrote a passionate piece for the convention program book, arguing that Brunner’s anticipation of the rights and responsibilities of cybernetic citizenship makes it one of the most important works in science fiction history. Given this *importance*, it seems almost ungrateful to ask the novel to make sense as well.

As we praised his ideas about data transmission and anonymous telephone confession lines, I wondered how much of the work was actually focused on the future, and how much was meant to address John Brunner’s present and past, circa 1974. Most science fiction proves to be a re-telling of past events disguised as speculation about the future, and I think it is high praise to say that *The Shockwave Rider* is at least partly comprised of John Brunner’s real ideas about life in the 21st century.

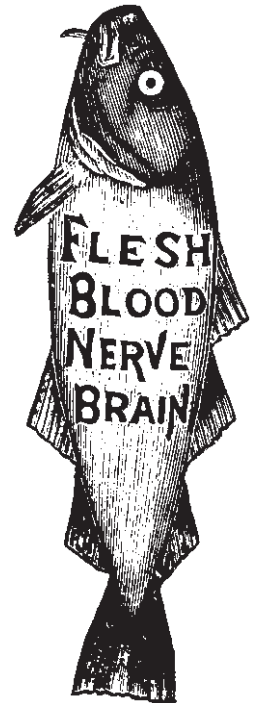
I grabbed at one element that seemed to reflect that past more than the future. The novel is about the management and manipulation of information—including education, a specifically focused form of information distribution that arouses especially passionate opinions in many people. One of the most important characters in *TSR* is not a

person, but a school—the Tarnover Institute, where Nicki Halflinger was raised in an effort to focus and enhance his gifts for data manipulation. Many writers of the latter part of the 20th century used changing styles in education as a symbol of the dysfunction at the heart of their speculative societies. It became a common device to have children raised by robots, or teaching machines, or otherwise segregated from their families for the purposes of the State or the Big Computer, or whoever had seized or been ceded the power to intervene in such decisions.

In reality, parents have become ever more zealous about exercising control over their children’s education, escalating paranoia has led to an explosion in home-schooling, and most parts of the U.S. are at least considering “school voucher” systems that will allow parents to decide where their kids attend class. Sending children to a boarding or resident school was once a moderately popular choice in this country, particularly for affluent families, but its appeal has faded. Tarnover also seems to have one of the more sinister “old boy” networks in literary history, with a number of links to the government’s intelligence service that make Halflinger’s flight especially perilous. In sum, Tarnover appears to be a high-tech version of an English public school, an environment with which Brunner was intimately familiar.

Halflinger’s journey, in which he flees the society he cannot stand, and then “accidentally” finds the one he wants to live in, seems like the hermit’s ultimate dream come true. The personality traits that make him unfit to live in the old world make him perfect for life in the new one.

Halflinger and his hermetic contemporaries have come to accept that they exist in a world over which they have little or no control, a common condition in science fiction. But the way that Nicki takes control—by sharing thousands of strategic facts and figures with millions of people he will never meet—is unique. He has no evidence that this will be of direct benefit to him, and in fact, it looks quite like it will lead directly to his death. But his moral disgust with the society created by





the selective control of information can't be resisted. And his actions were a blueprint for hackers everywhere, who felt a compulsion to tunnel into restricted databases at the likely expense of their own freedom.

But Brunner brings some creative cynicism to his work, and makes it hard for us to love Nicki without reservation. He undermines the populist sentiment in the novel by emphasizing the fact that Nicki and his companion Kate are not ordinary citizens, but people genetically predisposed to be brilliant at what they do. Kate's father was a geneticist who created enhanced animals with superior intelligence, but the twist in Brunner's view is that he was genetically gifted in the pursuit of genetics — she quotes him as saying "I guess I just have red fingers." He thus implies that Kate might have been engineered in some way to show preternatural insight and offer witty retorts at just the right moment. But the rest of the book is so relentlessly opposed to the genetic manipulation of humanity that the reader's mind is pushed away from the possibility. Instead, Brunner tells us that every nation of the Earth has been engaged in a search for those individuals who show enormous *natural* talent, in hopes of harnessing their abilities in the service of the state. Some hackers, it seems, are still more equal than others.

John Brunner finished the first draft of *The Shockwave Rider* in 1974, not long after DAW published another inventive Brunner potboiler, *Poly-math*. In the latter book, an interstellar colonization mission is damaged by sabotage and dissension, and the protagonist, genetically pre-disposed to be

good at *everything*, figures out how to save them, several times. Nicki Halflinger seems like a logical evolution of that polymath character, but instead of being good at everything, he is the very best at just one thing — manipulating data via remote connection. But both characters are the winners of a genetic lottery, over which humanity still has only the most fleeting control in Brunner's future.

So, many elements of *TSR* seem like self-indulgent gadgetry, from semi-intelligent tigers to robot luggage porters. But the power of its message — that it is better to die a free data wrangler than to live a long life as a data slave — continues to influence people 30 years after its first publication. And there's no way people that acknowledge a debt to the novel can be objectively wrong. If these ideas are important to you, than Brunner was, in some sense, *right* about the world we would come to live in.

And that's the key to understanding the real impact of Brunner's work. It isn't just that it predicted the future, but also that it had a powerful inspirational effect on the people who were going to create it. *TSR* was both a cautionary tale about the dangers of restricting information, and a paean to how cool it could be for everyone to have open access instead. The generation that would build the Internet were all enjoying their personal golden age of science fiction — i.e., they were around 14 — when *The Shockwave Rider* was published in 1975. And its popularity meant that there were ample copies for the first generation of computer-capable kids to enjoy during the 1980s and 1990s, as well.

Toward the end, I observed that the presence of so many of us spending a fine Saturday afternoon indoors discussing a 30-year-old SF novel was as eloquent a piece of evidence for its importance as we were likely to find. People seemed skeptical that the novel's inspirational effect was that significant, so I had a follow-up in my closing statement: One of the most significant events in the development of the modern Internet was the break-up of AT&T's monopoly on long distance service. And I maintained that one of the most important elements to inspire that decision was the film *The President's Analyst*, which portrayed "The Phone Company" as a human-machine conspiracy bent on the domination of mankind. Issued about a decade before the Supreme Court considered AT&T's antitrust case, the movie was a critical step in changing people's attitudes toward the company that provided one of life's most essential services.

The audience laughed, but I was completely serious. I can only assume that they had no control over their reactions. ♣

After the end of my panel on Saturday, I felt very like I'd been released from science fiction jail, and underwent a weird burst of euphoria, which was probably as disturbing in its own way as my mysterious anger on Friday night. And going back to Friday night, it was serious and constructive for only a few seconds, before dissolving into a big get-acquainted party. Out-of-town faces that we were delighted to see included **Lenny Bailes, Spike Parsons and Tom Becker, Jeanne Gomoll and Scott Custis**, and far more fans from San Francisco area than I can possibly name here. And it was great to bob around in a sea of sensitive fannish faces again; what could I have felt anxious about?

The convention was another major success for the Potlatch group, whose Seattle representatives include **Jane Hawkins and Luke McGuff**, the aforementioned **Ulrika O'Brien**, and **Anita Rowland**, who did a wonderful job stocking and supervising the hospitality suite. And whenever a convention goes well around here, I know that at least part of the reason is **Suzle Tompkins'** gift for communicating with catering directors and hotel managers. Numerous other people put in hard work to make things run so well, and I thank them even though I haven't named them here.

In between program sessions, I darted furtively into the small but perfectly formed dealers' area. Everyone seemed to have some very cool books on sale, which is one of my favorite Potlatch traditions. I bought books from several dealers, but as usual, it was my visit to the table set out by Wrigley-Cross books that nearly required me to secure a bank loan. And then there was all the stuff donated to the Clarion West benefit auction, which literally spanned ten tables.

After my panel ended, my giddy delight at surviving it

lasted through the rest of the afternoon and evening. There was a trivia game in which people shouted out the answers to sundry questions, then ducked as the quiz masters tried to hurl Hershey's chocolate kisses completely through their bodies.

We then reached some kind of perfect state of hysteria when **Ursula Le Guin** was invited to the podium to pick up her Grand Master (Mistress) Nebula award. Ursula was on vacation in Central America when the awards were handed out in 2003, but **Vonda McIntyre** and **Eileen Gunn** organized a celebration that probably couldn't have been duplicated at the Nebula banquet. When Ursula took the podium, she found that about 1/4 of the audience were holding cardboard masks that bore her face, the idea apparently being that this was the best way to provide her with an audience of her peers at Potlatch. The award, which is tinted gold in contrast to the silver of a mere garden-variety Nebula, was very nice; but Ursula seemed even more delighted when an ornate crown was placed on her head. The headline that immediately leapt to mind was "Ursula Le Guin Crowned Queen of All Space!" There was also a brace of elaborately decorated cakes, featuring covers from several of Ursula's novels, among the most tasteful tributes in the history of the genre. The cakes were whisked into Anita's well-stocked con suite, and the entire convention's population followed in their wake. The dance, once we got it started, was almost an anti-climax; but we rocked on through midnight anyway.

The 13th Potlatch was a perfectly lucky occasion, with numerous things to recommend it to most fans, not just those devoted to the book of honor. Next year, the convention will occur the week after Corflu, with both events scheduled to take place in the San Francisco bay area. Hermits and misanthropes from three continents are expected to attend. —Andy



◀ The cakes themselves, surmounted by crown and Nebula

The Iro

Alexis Gilliland

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Chunga #6 was delivered the day after Christmas, a belated stocking stuffer with superlatively excellent comment hooks, namely love and death. Specifically, Randy finding himself in love with Sharee Carton, and the death of Martin Smith, movingly reported by Lucy Huntzinger. Lucy says: "It didn't have to be that way, but he couldn't change the habits of a lifetime when faced with hard choices." A different interpretation is also possible, which is that it *did*. Martin didn't have a plan for the future? No, at forty he didn't have a future, an entirely different thing. The hardest of hard choices, to sober up and soldier on, was not possible for him. "He admitted his alcoholism was out of control but he didn't stop drinking." Well, yes. Since his drinking was out of control, he couldn't, even with the help and support of his friends. That alcohol and depression (a combination quite as lethal as cancer) were too much for him is no reflection on his moral character. At the end he did what he could to ease the pain, which was to let go by cutting his ties with the world of the living. He lost his job. He stopped taking insulin for his diabetes. "A woman he thought cared for him had dumped him," could also be seen as Martin driving away a woman who did, in fact, care for him. Alun Harries reports that Haiyan, his ladyfriend, chose to attend the funeral — you could ask her, I suppose — though such a

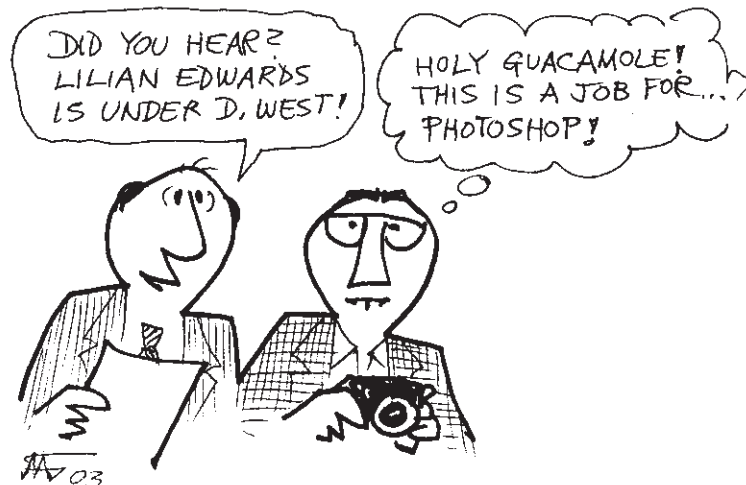
question might seem a bit morbid. From a great distance and the smallest of texts I would guess that she loved him deeply.

Love. You take it where you find it, and Randy, about the same age as Martin, is blessed to reconnect with an old friend and former lover. In some ways the forties are the prime of life, though for starting a family the twenties are better. This letter should reach Randy about the same time as Sharee returns, so his fannish duty is to give the lady his best shot and report on the outcome in the next *Chunga*.

What else? Dan Steffan's cover has a certain amount of tension between the cartoonish foreground and the realistic Seattlesque background. Despite the season, this is probably not the Madonna and Child with Holy Spirit, though the dove with its question mark is as apt a depiction of the Holy Spirit as you are going to get. Stu Shiffman's article and drawings are excellent, illuminating the way Hollywood first drew on meretricious but popular novels for inspiration, and then drew on the older movies to inspire the newer ones. No wonder Mel Brooks disrespected his material, in contrast to his remake of *The Producers* in which he was concentrating on disrespecting Hitler.

I think it's hard to avoid expressing some judgement on Martin's death, if only because we want a profoundly different fate for our-

Comments by Andy
unless otherwise noted



n Pig



selves, and feel that saying so might be the first step toward our preservation. I wish that Martin had been able to find a way to maintain his life, but I also understand that we are in many ways the sum of our habits. It isn't difficult for me to imagine a scenario in which I would be unable to leave them behind at the cost of my own life. At the same time, I feel like he intentionally drew away from people and actions that might have at least extended his survival for a few more years, and it is inevitable that some people will be angry at him for that. I hope we shortly move beyond the shock of his early death, and can remember what a really funny, unique, maddening individual he was.

Michael S. Dobson

I used to work in the Smithsonian Arts & Industries Building, originally built to house the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition after it closed, so the exposition article was particularly interesting to me. By 1973 it was exclusively the home of the National Air and Space Museum, remaining so until we cleared out in late 1975, when they reinstalled a replica of the Philadelphia Centennial (no longer there, last time I was in the building). Although roach and rat infested, it was a wonderful quaint old place to work, with secret underground tunnels, doors leading nowhere, turret offices with spiral staircases...

The turret offices were awarded as punishments. Paul Garber, "historian emeritus," who had been the driving force behind the National Air Museum (as it was originally named) for years, kept coming to work after he retired and after he had a couple of heart attacks, so they gave him a turret office—but the daily staircase climb kept him fit and healthy and he survived to see the new building as well as to see the restoration and storage area named after him.

In addition to the other features of the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts/Exploratorium, it's also the home of one of the most wonderful engineering

follies in the world, the Academy Projector in Morrison Planetarium. Because they couldn't acquire an instrument from Zeiss immediately following the Second World War (Jena being in the Soviet Zone), they set out to build their own. Now, one thing about a conventional planetarium star projector is that the star images are round (made by drilling holes in the star ball or in little metal plates under lenses that give the ball that bug's eyeball look), which is not realistic. So here's what they did. They took 3,800 grains of carborundum grit, using different sizes for different stellar magnitudes, and placed them by hand on flat lens surfaces, covered them with a layer of vaporized aluminum, then brushed them off, leaving tiny irregularly-shaped holes of proper placement and size.

The hand-placement alone took six months, and although the total number of stars projected is less than what you'd see on a perfectly clear night (away from light pollution, if you can find such a place), it's considered one of the prettiest and most realistic planetarium skies around.

No one has ever replicated this feat. As you might imagine.

Two great stories, Michael, thanks very much! It's remarkable how many readers wrote in with brushes with active and former World's Fairs. Even a hundred years after their creation, the sites really command people's attention.

Dale Speirs

The essay on world expositions was interesting. The only one I've been to was Expo 67. I can still recall the jingle of the saturation advertising that was used: "Come one, come all, to Expo 67, Montreal." I still have some philatelic souvenirs as well as the passport that one could get stamped at each pavilion. The amazing thing about Expo 67 to most Canadians was that, in a country with empty gazillion hectares of empty land, the exposition site was built on artificial islands dredged out of the St. Lawrence River.

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My mother always had the fondest memories of the 1962 Seattle exposition. It was my parents' first vacation without the kids (my brother and I being boarded out to our granny), and my mother's sister and new husband accompanied them for their honeymoon. Calgary is a popular site for el cheapo Hollywood productions which substitute the Calgary Tower for the Space Needle, even though the two towers have little resemblance.

The 1893 Chicago exhibition still lives on in Katherine Bates' song "America the Beautiful". Although this hymn was inspired by and written at Pike's Peak, Colorado ("purple mountains' majesty" refers specifically to the view from Pike's Peak), it is accepted that the line about alabaster cities was from her memory of the Chicago fair.

Expositions are a suitable topic for an SF zine, so I don't see any need to apologize for running the piece. Monorails, habitats of the future, and bizarre architecture that would bring howls of outrage if located in our modern suburbs, are all very scientific. I think part of the reason for the decline in popularity of expositions is that we can more easily see such wonders on the movie screen, television, or Internet. More importantly, the movie studio amusement parks such as Disney and Universal are far more impressive than they were back in 1967, and can be visited anytime. How can an exposition compete with Orlando or Universal Studios these days?

I think that every World's Fair has had unique attractions that aren't replicated by other forms of amusement or exhibition. And we know that they will be there in their full glory for only a year or so, conferring some urgency to our interest. But I think that people had a different attitude toward the romance of attending a World's Fair through the middle of 20th century. Descriptions always emphasize the huge throngs of people present at the fair, and people once found it thrilling to go on a long journey to be part of such a memorable gathering. Having to drive across the continent, or take a ship across the Atlantic to see the fair somehow made it more attractive, rather than more daunting.

I appreciated your observation about the 1967 Expo being built on reclaimed river bottom—it struck me as even more ironic, given that event's emphasis on sustainable, ecologically sound technology. If you like irony, the World's Fair is most definitely the cultural event for you!

Graham Charnock

Gosh I love the smug satisfying thwack *Chunga* makes as it lands on my doormat, crushing the cat as it does so. Possibly I love it best because I know when I rip open that fake manilla envelope, the fanzine itself will reveal at the very least one mention of my name, and as indeed in this issue, of my wife's name. Although I don't think she'll thank Joseph Nicholas for mentioning her grey hair. After all Joseph, we never made fun of your pony tail. Oh, but now I come to remember, of course we did...

But first more important things.

Chunga bought me sad news of Martin Smith's death. I'm not networked enough in fandom for news to have reached me any other way earlier, which is itself a sad indictment of something or other. I am deeply saddened. I met him for the first time at Hinckley and being a fellow drunk spent quite a lot of time naturally gravitating towards him and his crowd, simply because they seemed sparkier than most. Even Alun Harries, god bless his archaic cotton socks.

I had a very long conversation (and I mean very long) with Martin and his game and role-playing peers, one or other of the evenings, where he explained conventions (of behaviour) which were strange to me, but which I could still see worked somehow. He described adopting the role of a samurai in one of his own problematic job situations (it well may have been his last), and how, although he patently wasn't a samurai, he could use this mind-set to calm him down in difficult situations. I thought at the time what he was saying was a little bit abstracted from reality, that he might be taking role-playing a step too far (and I probably told him so, being the boorish drunk I am). This may or may not have been part of his problem. When I sat with him chatting, depending on what time of day it was, I did notice he would slip in and out of glazedness and I'm sorry as a fellow alcoholic (albeit one who thinks he takes care of himself) I didn't recognize this as possibly symptomatic. I mentioned this in my conrep, and I'm sorry I did now, because the processes of irony might seem I intended to diminish him, and I didn't intend anything like that at all. It's just that on our brief acquaintance I didn't have him tabbed as anybody with a serious problem.

At one stage I actually apologized to him for being drunk and boorish, but he immediately countermanded me by saying, no, as a drunk you give good value. I see now this could have been an attempt to boost my self-esteem all-too-probably at the expense of his own which was likely at a low ebb. Aftersight is a fine thing.

I wish we'd converged earlier and I'd got to know him better, although perhaps that would only have made the inevitable parting only more painful, and perhaps we could never be on the same wavelength anyway.

More deaths. Like most lifelong Warren Zevon fans (last seen at the Shepherds Bush Empire on his last British tour) Pat and I followed the original shock news of his condition and its ultimate prognosis on an almost daily basis, thanks to the web. I only think it was amazing he managed to prolong his initial prognosis by a matter of nine months. Good documentary on tv a month ago, after the event, if you discount the psychopants going up and wishing him well. I personally sent him a haiku:

*Warren Zevon's life story
Would make a good film
A stupid name always helps*

I'd like to leave you on a more cheerier note so I'll relate a joke M. John Harrison once told me: "I'm not saying my wife's fat but when I carried her over the threshold I had to make two trips."

Mike always was a sexist bastard.

And yes, Zhukov not only played the accordion but also was a virtuoso, and did in fact perform

with his daughter, in local bars, in between running the Axis Alliance on the Russian Eastern Front. Did you think I would make that up? After the fall of the Third Reich they planned to push on to Tblisi and team up with an immigrant Chinese harmonica orchestra which had got the works of Rogers & Hammerstein down pat. That would have been some gig to see, but unfortunately it remains a figment of my imagination.

So, Heil *Chunga*. How do you guys keep managing to do it? Are you Americans or something?

I note your haiku to Zevon does not scan properly; presumably it did in the original Javanese? My favorite part of Warren's exquisite leave-taking was his decision to record the Bob Dylan chestnut "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," originally recorded for the soundtrack of Sam Peckinpaw's *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*. The other night, a cable network here aired an edutainment program detailing the former's execution of the latter; their verdict was that if such an "officer-involved shooting" was as poorly documented today, Pat Garrett would at least lose his badge.

Your acquaintance with Martin, although brief, was about as intimate as mine was, which lasted 17-18 years. We talked about hundreds of subjects, but very little about his





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internal landscape, his life outside the chummy clasp of fanac. Some fans you mainline, others you just skin-pop or casually snort. I always valued the ease with which we picked up the conversation after a year or three of separation, and that we always had baseball as an icebreaker. His passionate admiration for the New York Yankees baseball club was rewarded with obscene generosity over the last decade of his life, and was always a source of great fun between us. In fact, I mostly rue the timing of Martin's death because he did not live to see the Yankees lose the 2003 World Series in six games to the shocking Florida Marlins. When the series was over, the hollow emptiness that follows the end of the baseball season was especially cavernous for me last October, because I could not send a jeering email to Martin about the collapse of his pinstriped favorites. It took some—but not all—of the fun out of it for me. That's what Martin's death has made me feel, not the dolorous aching of the loss of a family member or a best friend, but an absence of fun. Pagliacci has met his fate.

Brad W. Foster

Greetings Mr. Spacely, Hot Lips, and Durwood —
Yet another killer *Chunga* cover. I *think* I'm seeing more art from Dan Steffan recently, and I hope that's so, not just my imagination since I enjoy every piece that does show up so much!

My main fair experience is with the Hemisfair in San Antonio, back uppity-uppity years (I've no memory for dates, and no idea where to go look it up just now.) Don't even know if that one qualifies as a World's Fair, since even the name was meant to emphasize that the emphasis was more on this hemisphere, North and South America, than the whole world. Though I do note the tower from that show is in the group at the beginning of the article. However, I bring that up since Andy talks about how a number of the fairgrounds have pretty much vanished. You head to downtown San Antonio these days and the area of the fair is still very well defined, many of the buildings now being used for government or educational centers. The auditorium and exhibit hall was even expanded, that's where LoneStarCon II was held.

My sister-in-law is presently in the midst of what looks to be a life-long love affair with all things related to the Pan-Pacific Exposition, collecting all sorts of memorabilia attached to it.

Okay, you and I and the guy over there all know that Stu Shiffman is the master of these alternate-reality fake history made-up articles, and enjoying

them very much for exactly that reason. But now that *Chunga* is up on line, you ever wonder how many people are getting confused as hell when a Google search brings them straight to one of these articles, without the surrounding "warning" of the zine? Looking forward to some really wacky doctoral papers in years to come.

Erika Maria Lacey

I received *Chunga* yesterday just as I was running off on the train — and for starters it was a great shield from the light when I was coming home late at night and wanted to catch a few winks on the train.

Randy's story of falling in love was very cute. I even managed an 'aww'. Fishing! Gosh, to be living on water all of the time and doing the ocean route. I don't know that I'd want to do fishing, but chartering or something like that would be just the thing. I've a friend who owns a catamaran and hires himself out for backpackers on a regular as is — makes a tidy mint.

The illos in *Chunga* are in no way fillos! My inane giggles in the train probably got me more than a few strange looks, but they sure are worth it. The front cover was explained to me oh-so-carefully by the guy seated next to me; I guess mine own two eyes were not good enough.

It's constantly amusing to see pictures of big breasted women wearing diaphanous veils draped over them with no support otherwise; just yesterday was walking along and admiring an ex-girlfriend's rather ample area in that regard, and being filled with exuberance myself was running along, skipping, etc. Immediately I was told not to do it for I was bouncing too much, and that with a bra probably good enough to hold up five tonnes of lead. And so the pictures of *She* amuse me beyond their fantastical setting.

Funnily enough, the basic structure of fan-nish cinema in these parts seems to go: femmefan meets femmefano2. Femmefan loses femmefano2. Femmefano2 hooks up with guy. Only not quite so catchy.

Another good looking issue.

Lloyd Penney

Another marvellous Dan Steffan cover. Hey, Mom, what are you angry about? Suddenly, you're a lot closer to your Weight Watchers goal weight. I think Junior also made sure there'd be no siblings... then again, he might not see his next birthday.

Hi, Randy... good on yer, and did you like Vancouver Island? I've been from one end to the other, from Sooke to Port Hardy and most places in

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between. I've lived in Victoria, Saanich and Qualicum Beach, and when I moved back east, my folks moved further up island to Cumberland. Met my first girlfriend in Victoria. Must be something about those BC women.

Yvonne remembers the green Heinz pickle pins, made of plastic, that were given away at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto in the 60s and 70s. I think she has one left after all these years. Heinz also handed out pink and light blue baby rattles at the CNE back then, and given that they were made of thin, cheap plastic, they're tougher to find. I never did get to either Expo 67 in Montréal or Expo 86 in Vancouver, but we do have a souvenir of each. Much of the Expo 67 lands are still largely as they were, although there are often talks about redeveloping them, given how expensive real estate is.

I admit to being largely ignorant of many of the legends of Ayesha... to me, *She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed* is Mrs. Rumpole. Yvonne wants one of those shirts that says *She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed*, but darn it, I never can find one. What a shame...

Well, as you'll see in my piece this issue, I have some experience with one of those T-shirts. Maybe I can get Sharee to give it to Yvonne and take me off the leash.

We had an excellent time on Vancouver Island, although we discovered that August isn't the best time to dash up there without hotel reservations in hand. We drove out to Port Renfrew, stopping along the way to investigate one of the beaches, and found that all the rooms in town had been taken by anglers. The bartender at the pub, who called around for us, kindly offered a room in his house, but I wasn't game for the adventure, so we drove back to Victoria. Next day it was up to Ladysmith, where Sharee's mom lives, and we ate at a really good Greek restaurant there. Next day we drove to Ucluelet — a wonderful, picturesque drive — and couldn't find a room or even a spot in the campground, so we drove back to Port Alberni. Then we headed up to Courtenay, which isn't exactly a tourist haven, but even there we were lucky to grab the last room in the rundown Howard Johnson's. The bar there was quite an eye-opener, full of working class Canadians with the thickest accents I've ever heard up there, eh? Everybody was incredibly friendly, and I heard some great stories about local history and Canadian politics, not to mention mockery of Newfies. We stayed there a couple of days and took a daytrip to Mt. Washington, where we rode the chairlift up to some awesome views of the island.

I hadn't realized how huge the island is. We barely saw a sliver of it, and I'd love to do some more exploring. Next time I'll make reservations!

—Randy

Ed Meskys

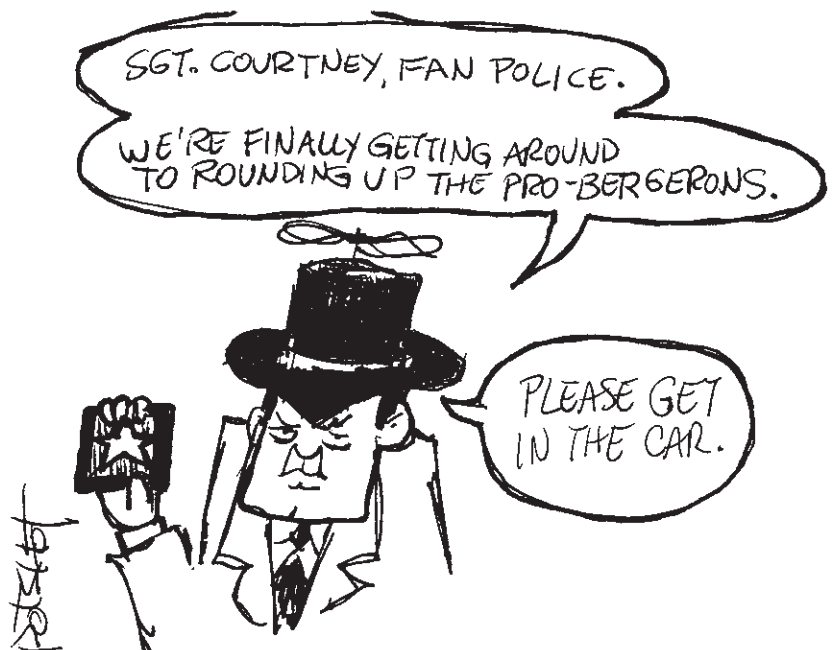
I finally got someone over to read a good part of the ish to me, and I especially enjoyed your discussion of your interest in and the history of world fairs.

My only real memory of the 1939 (New York) fair was standing at an el station with my mother and godmother at night whining to go back so I could have some more beer. (I was either 3 or 4 at the time, since the fair ran two years, and like many Europeans my parents gave me beer and wine from when I was an infant. Things must have been much more lax then since nobody prevented them from giving me some at the fair.)

In June of 1962 I moved to Livermore, California for what I had thought was going to be a summer job. When I decided to stay on they gave me time and travel money to get more of my belongings from my parents' home in Brooklyn, and I went by way of the Americal Physical Society convention in Seattle and then on to Chicon.

While in Seattle I spent about 3 days at the World's Fair and also some time visiting fen. One evening G.M. Carr had me over for dinner and talk and I saw her collection which included a perfect copy of Lovecraft's *Outsider*. Another evening the Busbys threw a party where I got to meet the Nameless Ones including Wally Weber and Burnett Toskey.

Memories of the fair itself include the Alweg



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monorail, designed to be expanded into a rapid transit system for the metropolitan area, but this was never pursued. This short stub of a line from downtown to the fair grounds seems useless to me. Is it still there, and does it get any use?

Most exciting was an actual Mercury capsule that had carried a man into space. It was crogling to look at, smaller than a Volkswagen Beetle. Union 76 Oil had a gondola ride that crossed the fair grounds. As with most fairs, many buildings were temporary and designed for demolition, but an Opera House was intended to be permanent, as well as the Space Needle with its rotating restaurant. Was the building which held the food court permanent?

Most disappointing was the very popular Ford Aerospace exhibit of a simulated ride into space. It took a wait of several hours to get in, and what a mess. You were in the passenger cabin of a passenger spacecraft, and the seats were recycled sport-car seats set up in pairs, two pairs to a row, and about 15 rows. There was a back projected view port at the front, and windows to either side. Mockups of contemporary satellites jerked past on wires as the flight attendant described the scenery. There was a news flash that a new weather or communication satellite was being launched from Cape Canaveral, and they projected a b&w clip of the launch on that screen up front. If they had passenger ships carrying bus-sized loads into orbit they would not still be launching these puny toys.

I seem to have memories of walking through a number of disappointing exhibits created by Ford over the years, at Expositions, Fairs and Museums. On the other hand, my tour of their River Rouge foundry at the age of 10 was a major and enduring thrill. Ford seems to have expanded in many different directions in the decades after World War II, perhaps in an effort to prove it was as versatile

a conglomerate as GM, but none of their new or acquired divisions seems to have been a notable success.

The former Food Court of the 1962 World's Fair (and couldn't the World's Fair be said to be the cradle of the "Food Court"?) is now called the "Center House," and is still one of the most-used buildings on the site. Hardly any week-end goes by when it is not in use by an ethnic dance troupe or story-telling circle. But to say that the monorail rapid transit system has "not been pursued" is a gross error. I have personally voted for the extension of the monorail system three times now, and I have only lived here since 1992. The Seattle Monorail Project is scheduled to finally break ground for the Green Line system, which will serve downtown, the sports stadiums, and extend north to Ballard, later in 2004. When completed, it is expected to replace more than 4 million automobile trips per year.

The "stub" line, serving the fair grounds and the Westlake mall downtown, rattles on 42 years after its installation. The new line will not make any use of the original system—but the cars will be preserved as part of our scientific heritage.

Ron Bennett

Many thanks for *Chunga* #6 and my apologies for not having acknowledged and thanked you for a welter of earlier issues. I plead Real Important issues in my life, like Overwhelming Indolence.

As a life-time collector/accumulator of just about everything that isn't bolted down and can be carried home, I was more than intrigued by Andy's article on the 1893 Chicago Exposition which I thoroughly enjoyed. One of the most detailed and interesting surveys I've read for many a year. I'd certainly relish a series of articles based on his experiences trawling the world for the Collecting Channel. I suppose you know the story, documented in Overstreet, of the comic book, *World's Fair Comics*, produced for the 1939 New York Fair and its poor sales? These led to a price reduction with the comic being reduced in price at the Fair, from twenty-five cents to fifteen. The comic had also been advertised in the different DC titles and mail-order subscriptions had been accepted at the twenty-five cent rate.

In order to be fair (sorry) to those subscribers at a time when the comic was by now selling at the Fair for the lower price DC sent out subscribers' copies along with an extra, free comic, actually *Superman* #2. Not a bad freebie at all!

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WAHF:

Andy Sawyer
I failed to get anyone interested in using the opportunity to consider the future, and instead we had some rather tacky exhibitions in a very futuristic but highly expensive dome.

Joshua Ortega
It made for a nice accompaniment to The Adventures of Kavalier & Klay.

Jerry Kaufman
Dan couldn't have done a better job on the Seattle skyline if he'd actually lived here.

Wil Tenino
I don't know what the name of this game is, but it's the only one I know that's got a midget jumping up and down on a mini-trampoline in the end zone.

Steve Jeffery
Splendid example of calligraphic titling from Jae Leslie. More please.

Dave Langford
If I weren't a deadbeat and overworked with it, I'd send a scintillating LOC. Loved Dan's cover....

Ah, yes, the Eiffel Tower. When I lived in Belgium we'd drive down the 150 miles to Paris just to have dinner at the Tower's *premier étage* restaurant (There are two restaurants on this level. One used to have a cover charge of about \$40 per person. We used to eat in the other). And then drive home. Family tradition has it that my late daughter once dropped a bottle of ketchup from the same first floor. Well, it's a story, anyway.

No mention of the Festival of Britain in 1951 nor of the Brussels World Exposition of 1958 when The Atomium was built, supposedly to last for ten years. The structure still stands and if you ever travel up its narrow, shuddering escalators you'll know that it was definitely built to collapse in 1968.

I'm sorry to learn that H H Holmes was a psychopathic serial killer. Did Tony Boucher know about this?

I won't argue with Stu Shiffman because I'm on shaky ground with merely a global awareness, or lack of awareness, on the subject, but lurking at the back of what passes as a mind is the thought that our ideas of the Dark Continent are based not on Hollywood (perhaps we're thinking of The Old West, doggon it) but on the writings of people like Richard Burton and, okay, Henry Morgan Stanley. I must confess, however, to an over-riding image of Paul Robeson singing "Climbing Up."

Ursula Andress as Ayesha "lacks a certain dimension?" Heavens, that's being kind. Far too bland...but who could really play the role? No, change that...who could really *fit* the role? Beauty combined with a mystical depth. Answers on a postcard please.

A *bissel* Yiddish? Goodness, that's the first time I've ever seen the word *bissel* written down. Ah, the varied riches of the world of fanzine. Slight typo...Howard died, I think, in 1936.

Ah, poor Basil Rathbone. I wonder how many

sword fights he was involved in, particularly against Errol Flynn. When he saw a new script he must have shuddered. "Not another one," he'd have perhaps sighed. "And this one...against Danny Kaye of all people." Did he ever make a film in which he *won* a sword fight?

Nice piece on Martin Smith. Hell, fancy throwing away one's life like that. Reminds me of young Kent Moomaw many years ago.

Excellent TAFF piece by Randy. Great impression of being rushed around, the state of confusion growing ever more rapidly. Wish I'd have known you were up in York... Next time, let me know.

Okay, a very enjoyable issue. Any surprise there? Many thanks for same.

ps: Why is this the Corrected edition?

Your last question is the easiest to answer.

Chunga actually costs so much to produce that we broke that issue into two print runs, one for North America, and the other for the rest of the world. We found a few errors after we mailed the first edition, so the European/Australian edition is, de facto, "corrected."

I was only able to scratch the surface of World's Fair lore in my article, and the 1951 and 1958 fairs are both very well regarded today. The differences in scale and permanence of the Eiffel Tower and the 1958 Atomium rather neatly summarizes the differences between the 19th and 20th century approaches to the Exposition.

In re Moomaw, surely there is a bit of difference between drinking yourself to death over a 40 year period that includes 20 Eastercons, and shooting yourself in the head before the age of 21? But the two are united in making us wonder what else they might have achieved.



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