

The logo for 'Thrilling Chunga Stories' is presented as a stylized, three-dimensional banner. The word 'THRILLING' is in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font at the top left. 'CHUNGA' is the largest word, written in a very bold, outlined, sans-serif font across the middle. 'STORIES' is in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font at the bottom right. The banner has a sense of motion, with lines trailing off to the right. The background of the entire cover is a detailed black and white illustration of a fantastical, alien landscape. In the foreground, a large, multi-eyed alien creature with a camera for a face is looking towards the viewer. In the background, a flying saucer-like alien ship is visible, and a small human figure is running away from the viewer in the distance. The scene is filled with jagged, crystalline rock formations and various alien plants and structures.

**THRILLING
CHUNGA
STORIES**

THE CALLS OF CTHULHU
by Stu Shiffman

All-New
Shadow TAFF Report!

20.05 cents

tm

CHUNGA

Chunga #9 dwells inside a manila envelope that the late, great Carnac has held to his forehead a final time, to ask: *Where can I find my semi-annual fix of trans-Atlantic fan gossip and imaginary film reviews seasoned with the spunkiest letter column in fandom?* Sleep now, prairie prince, and leave desk bits and incontinent zoo animals for petty pretenders to your timeslot, while we hope that Steve Allen and Jack Paar are waiting to share a shaker of martinis with you. Available by editorial whim or wistfulness, or, grudgingly, for \$3.50 for a single issue; PDFs available at eFanzines.com. All postal 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.

Issue 9, February 2005

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Tanglewood

Is This Myth For You?

Welcome once again to one of the few fanzines that still thinks of itself as a printed artifact, meant to be deployed on paper and somehow delivered into the hands of an audience of fans that find the effort worth opening. Many of our contemporaries have more or less thrown in the towel and gone fulltime at eFanzines, or their own dedicated site on the web, so that the great majority of printed copies are generated by their readers. It would certainly be cheaper if we could do the same thing, but all three of us are afflicted with the sense memories of receiving, opening, holding and reading the over-reaching genzines of our youth, and feel some degree of compulsion to generate similar artifacts ourselves. But shed no tears for our wasted labor, bank balances, or faith in humanity, so sublime is our satisfaction at producing the very best “Chunga type” fanzine of which we are aware.

We’re hopeful that we will be able to distribute at least half of the fanzine’s print run at Corflu Titanium in San Francisco. Conventions have a bad reputation for producing very few letters in response to fanzines distributed at them, but that has not stopped fandom from making a handful of conventions — Corflu and Novacon are the most notable cases, but regional conventions, and of course the Worldcon are included — into occasions for the distribution and production of fanzines.

Is it still necessary to warn readers that the contents of this fanzine may prove, ultimately, to be fictional in nature? Fannish fanzines have traditionally eschewed fiction except that which features fans and fandom, but they’ve also sometimes had a place for mock-analytical material concerning speculative and fantastic fiction and its characters. Fanzines have featured made-up fans, authors, editors, magazines, movies, music, cartoons, deities, obituaries, hotels, conventions, countries, pre-Cambrian fossils, spouses, wars, cocktails, sports, talking cats and alien autopsies. In fact, the tradition of fiction within fanzines is arguably as rich as in any professional publication; fandom simply finds a thousand ways to hide its storytelling zeal in the mantle of personal natter and timebinding.

Fandom may be unique in that it begins by openly mythologizing itself, then struggles to bring its command of its own factual history into congruent relief thereafter. Fandom’s most titanic figures

achieve their greatest height when we are closest to their acts and ideas; they recede into more human scale as we move away from their achievements in time. Perhaps the heart of timebinding then is to make the fans of the past pop up again with all their goofy powers intact, a bequest of delight, humor and wonder for future generations to enjoy or ridicule as they prefer.

—Andy

So I returned to Australia for another four weeks with Sharee in December. It was another amazing adventure. We started out in Cairns again, where I met Sharee’s phlegmatic skipper, Lenny, and boychik crewmate, Adrian, her fabled and fearsomely friendly former boyfriend, Elwin, and good pal, Jan, then spent too short a time at Quinta Milagro in the bush with Fiamma, Alphonso, and another friend, Marcelo. It was scary how much I felt at home there!

We flew to Melbourne for Christmas with Sharee’s sister, nephew, and father. It was my first visit to the big city, and we also stayed with her friend Andrew in a converted lingerie factory full of anarchists, musicians, and artists. I finally met some Australian fans when we had dinner with Julian Warner, Lucy Sussex, Bruce Gillespie, Alison Barton, Rose Mitchell, Steve Boucher, and honorary Aussie, Janice Gelb, who was visiting boyfriend Steve. One of the highpoints of the trip was two days of camping along the Great Ocean Road for New Years with Sharee and Andrew. Waking up on a beach in Australia is not something I’d ever dreamed I’d do.

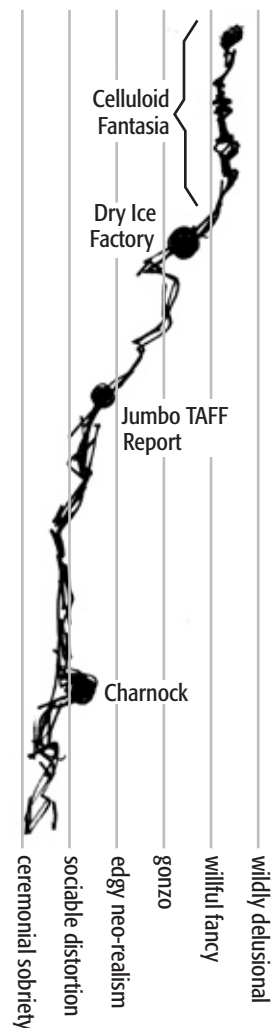
The last leg of the journey was a roadtrip from Melbourne to Sydney along the coast of Victoria and New South Wales, with a stop at Eden along the way. We had a day and a half in Sydney, which turned out to be much nicer than Melbournites had led me to believe!

Australia is a beautiful country full of beautiful people — like Sharee, for instance. They’re having an economic boom down there, it’s true, but I was struck by how much less desperate the people I met were than so many of the people I know in the US. I can’t wait to go back again!

—Randy

R.I.P. H.S.T.

Hokum Factor



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FANTASIA
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JAMBOREE!

Our frequent contributor **Stu Shiffman's** forays into creative cinematic history have proven so irresistible that other writers—including yours truly—have been moved to contribute in a similar vein. We're joined this time by noted imaginary film critic Tiger V. Chariot, whose works on imaginary films include *Laurel, Hardy, Ted and Alice*, and *The Burning of Harrisburg: Landmarks of Alternate Cinema*. He is the Ruppert Mundy Fellow at Uqbar Polymechanical Institute.

It has taken an extra issue to complete this material, originally meant to grace another "Halloween" issue of *Chunga*—but then every issue of *Chunga* is more or less a Halloween issue in some measure, so I feel comfortable publishing it now. Mr. Shiffman starts us off with a lesser known work by James Whale, and leads us to the dim fringes of the Universal Monster canon and an age of musical horror that we surely deserve.

—Andy

The Calls of Cthulhu (All-Talking! All-Singing!)

by Stu Shiffman

It is perhaps ironic and significant that the first person to bring Howard Phillips Lovecraft and his work to the attention of Hollywood was the notorious figure of William Dudley Pelley (1890–1965). Pelley had been an active and best-selling novelist, pulp fantasist (*Argosy*, *Blue Book*, etc.) and silent film scenarist (at MGM and Universal among others) in the 1920s. He contributed to films such as *The Light in the Dark* and *The Shock*, both starring Lon Chaney, Sr. He was everything that Lovecraft was not, seemingly successful and with a happy home. But he shared Lovecraft's anti-Semitism and became more and more actively anti-Semitic following his marriage's end and a transfiguring death experience (which he wrote about in an article, "Seven Minutes in Eternity," that appeared in 1928 in *American Magazine*). This account of his out-of-body experiences brought him national attention and fed his life-long fascination with metaphysics.

Call it the Hereafter, call it Heaven, call it Purgatory, call it the Astral Plane, call it the Fourth Dimension, call it What you will. Whatever it is—and where—that human entities go after being released from their physical limitations, I had gone there that night.

—William Dudley Pelley, recounting the "seven minutes of Eternity" he had in California on a May night in 1928 when he left his body and bathed in an ornate pool "among jolly, worthwhile people"

With all this and the 1929 Stock Market crash, his film and writing career crashed as well, and he further embraced esoteric theories related to the more rabid strains of British-Israelitism as espoused by Henry Ford and the *Dearborn Independent*, which bore a close resemblance to Nazi doctrine. He founded his own millennialist cult of personality based in Asheville, North Carolina, including Galahad Press and Galahad College (devoted to his "Christian Economics") and his magazines *Liberation* and *The Silver Ranger*. After the rise of Hitler, Pelley founded his own storm-troopers, the Silver Legion of America (the Silver Shirts), based primarily on the West Coast. Even as Lovecraft began to moderate his own racial views in FDR's America, Pelley had become more and more extreme. He became friends with Lindbergh and with Fritz Kuhn of the German-American Bund. He envisioned a world fascist alliance with Berlin and Tokyo based in Washington, DC under his presidency. In such publications as "*No More Hunger!*": *An Exposition of Christian Democracy* (Asheville, North Carolina, 1933), Pelley described his ideal Jew-free society where citizens belong to a vast civil service with shares in a national cooperative, and where banks, advertising, trade unionism, money and private legal practice are banished from this "utopia."

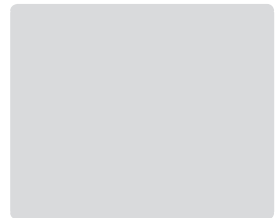
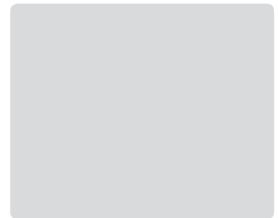
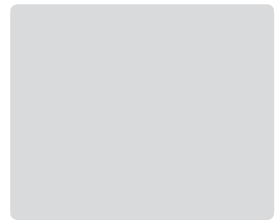
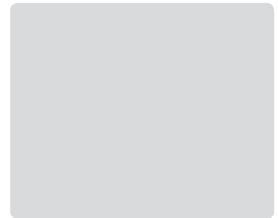
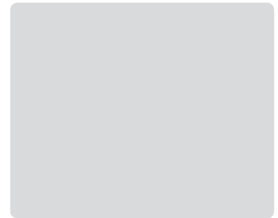
Yet, at the time that Lovecraft's "Call of Cthulhu" appeared in *Weird Tales* in 1928, Pelley was still in what passed for the mainstream in Hollywood. Lovecraft's work impressed him, and he insisted



STOP-MOTION CTHULHU

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that Carl Laemmle Jr. and Universal purchase the option on the story. He knew that he could create a spectacular film scenario from this material.

And so Universal bought the rights from *Weird Tales* and Lovecraft for what the studio regarded as a trifling sum. To Lovecraft it was life itself, and the funds helped him weather his economic storms. Often, when asked at science fiction conventions after World War II, he would attribute his very physical survival to that financial cushion. When Hammer's *The Colour Out of Space* or Ray Harryhausen's *At the Mountains of Madness* premiered, old Eich-pei was in the audience. The stars had been right.

But it all started with Pelley and that remarkable scenario, which took "The Call of Cthulhu" and its difficult mosaic structure and turned it into a more conventional linear story. Perhaps Pelley was attracted to the imaginative conception of beings like unto Nietzschean *Übermenschen*:

The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and reveling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom.

Holocaust of ecstasy. How... eldritch and disturbing. We associate the word "holocaust" with other events now.

Pelley quotes Lovecraft's opening, with a title card reading:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live in a placid island of

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ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

How Do You Pronounce Cthulhu? Gezundheit!

He structured the scenario rather like a Sherlock Holmes tale, with young George and Gamma Angell inheriting the papers of their great-uncle, George Gammell Angell, Professor Emeritus of Ancient Asian Languages at Bran (*sic*) University of Serendipity, Rhode Island, after the latter's death at 92 in mysterious circumstances. An expert in ancient inscriptions, the late professor had been much consulted by the heads of museums and archaeological researchers. The siblings experience strange phenomena after bringing the materials home and consult with George's college mentor, Professor William Channing Webb. The Sherlockian Channing Webb is a scientist and student of ancient cultures. He and his associate, the explorer Major Jonas Plank, work with the Angells to piece together the story to reveal the existence of a world-spanning cult dedicated to a being named Cthulhu. All are intrigued by a bas-relief with undecipherable hieroglyphics; with

a figure of evident pictorial intent, though its impressionistic execution forbade a very clear idea of its nature. It seemed to be a sort of monster, or symbol representing a monster, of a form which only a diseased fancy could conceive. If I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing. A pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque and scaly body with rudimentary wings; but it was the general outline of the whole which made it most shockingly frightful. Behind the figure was a vague suggestion of a Cyclopean architectural background.

Gamma's beau, sculptor Henry Wilcox, is driven mad by dreams, madness breaks out across the world, and George and Gamma join Police Inspector Lagrasse in their own city to break up a sinister cult ritual. Pursuing further clues, they embark on

the S.S. *Vigilant* to the Pacific Ocean where, later, they across an uncharted isle (this sequence anticipated *King Kong*) newly risen from beneath the sea. What they find may drive them all mad—risen R'lyeh and the temple of Cthulhu of the Great Old Ones. It contains a vast grotesque idol (based on the Manabi bas-relief perhaps), representing a hybrid figure with the body of a man and a sort of octopus for a head. It awakes, and the deaths of Sailor Donovan and others on the island triggers the final destruction.

Only the Angells, Professor Channing Webb and Major Plank survive to tell the tale. Webb and Gamma Angell are engaged, but she still wakes in the night from visions of horror.

In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming.

Is it still loyal to Lovecraft? Yes, mostly, although Pelley is emphasizing the menace of the alien Other even more than the original. The cultists, “the alien trash sweepings of Europe” in the scenario, are described as dark-eyed bearded strangers, as in some ghetto storefront synagogue. This did not endear Pelley or his scenario to the men who ran the studio.

The scenario went on the shelf and there it waited, like some baleful artifact in a Lovecraft tale. Did this too drive Pelley further to the fringes of reason?

A Whale of a Tale

It was six years later, after the coming of talking and music to the movies, that the property was discovered again. The first of Universal's horror classics, *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* (1931), had met with great success and the studio was looking for something else to scare the public. James Whale would reluctantly take on a sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, and make of it something even more wonderful than the original, but he needed another project to work on in the meantime.

That was when someone remembered Pelley's scenario. They brought it to Whale. He shuddered and was about to throw in back in the face of the studio executive when he paused. He had a notion after all.

The Call of Cthulhu
(Universal, 1934)

Directed by James Whale

Screenplay by William Hurlbut and James Whale,
based on a Scenario by William Dudley Pelley,
from the story by Howard Phillips Lovecraft
Stop-motion animation by Willis O'Brien

Professor AngellErnest Thesiger
George AngellColin Clive
Gamma AngellValerie Hobson
Professor William Channing
WebbBasil Rathbone
Major Jonas PlankReginald Denny
Henry WilcoxDavid Manners
Inspector LagrasseLionel Atwill
Cult LeaderEdward Van Sloan
Captain Johansen
of the *Vigilant*Boris Karloff

Famous players, indeed, many of whom had worked with Whale previously on *Frankenstein*. Whale's camera, constantly moving, is used creatively with dramatic close-ups and precise editing to create effects far in advance of more lauded directors of the time. The Expressionist cinematography and eccentric set designs lend atmosphere and menace. It all builds to the scene in the Temple with the colossal "idol" of Cthulhu, designed and animated by Willis O'Brien. Obie was best known at that time for his amazing work on the silent *The Lost World* (1925), from the novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the silent *Frankenstein* (1928), and was even more legendary for his revolutionary achievements on Merian C. Cooper's recent *King Kong* (1933). His mighty Cthulhu is monstrous and nightmare-provoking, even as shadow-shrouded as it is in the scene to disguise some of the model's faults.

Obie and Whale would work together years later on *King Kong vs Frankenstein* (1963).

Some, especially in the magazine *Scarlet Street* and various online forums, continue to point out the relationship between Channing Webb and Major Plank as some of Whale's gay coding. The shipboard romance scenes between Channing Webb and Gamma Angell certainly seem forced and telescoped, and he seems more interested in George according to some critics. Whatever the case, the film is a great classic of weird cinema.

The Arkham Love Call

During Universal's bizarre "Musical Monster" cycle of the late 1930s and early 1940s, it was natural for the studio to look at Whale's film for a makeover into operetta fodder. Its dark charms suit that style better than the more populist style of a Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, or Harold Arlen & Yip Harburg score. Besides, Deanna Durbin, the popular classically-trained teenage soprano who had saved Universal Studios with her *100 Men and A Girl* (1937), was tied up with the musical adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. So the pow-

ers that be (in this case producer Zalman Shvitz and lead choreographer Terence "Terpsichore" Pleay, a disciple of Hermes Pan) borrowed the Iron Butterfly and the Capon, Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy, from MGM.

"The Call of Cthulhu" is restructured into an operetta with new songs and music and with a drastically altered plot-line to conform to popular tastes and the personality of the stars. The Eddy-MacDonald version casts MacDonald as the spoiled, temperamental opera star, Georgette Angell, who learns that her sculptor brother Henry has gone mad after receiving his inheritance from old Great-Uncle and fled for the South Seas. All that remains is a fragment of a bas-relief and a cryptic note referring to finding Cthulhu. She approaches his one-time college roommate, handsome college professor Channing Webb (Nelson Eddy). She tells



her story and begs for help finding her brother. Determined to go herself, she tries and fails to pass muster incognito as an able-bodied seaman in a hilarious sequence. Yet Eddy is on the steamer after all and vouches for her, and they sail off to find the Unknown. Gradually, Eddy and MacDonald fall in love, only to fall out of love when Nelson tracks down and confronts MacDonald's mad brother on R'lyeh. Despite this rift, a happy — and logical — ending is not long in coming after the inevitable doom that comes to the ship's crew when

the idol awakes.

Highlights include the duets of "Arkham Love Call" (best known as "When I'm Calling Kuh-thool-oo-oo!"), "Mad for Love" and "Little Gray Island Under the Waves".

Jack Pierce would do the makeup for Cthulhu based on Willis O'Brien's designs, while costumes were by Gwladys (Schoen) who had done so well with the Technicolor musical of *Carnacki!* with Boris Karloff.

"When I'm calling Kuh-THOOL-hoo-ooo!" &

Keep Dancing, Darling, We Belong Dead!

by Andy Hooper

On the day Stu Shiffman sent me his article on the 1934 Universal production of *The Call of Cthulhu*, I had 200 online auctions coming to an end on eBay.com. Despite being very busy sending out end-of-auction emails, I opened up Stu's article and gave it a quick scan. Remarkable stuff, particularly the connection between H.P. Lovecraft and W. D. Pelley's anti-semitic screeds, works that had far-reaching effects. (One lesser-known example: Dr. Rene Bellocq and Major Karl Joachim Todt cited Pelley's *Crimes of Canaan* in the prospectus that lead to their excavations at Tanis on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile Delta in 1939. Questions about this expedition, which ended with the disappearance of the investigators and several noteworthy artifacts, continue to plague Egyptology today.)

It is always dangerous to begin thinking about new avenues of inquiry and genres of collectibles with eBay open on your browser. Of course, the words *Call of Cthulhu* bring up acres of collectible paperbacks, hardcovers and role-playing game materials, but very little connected to the 1934 Universal picture. It's not available on DVD at all that I am aware of, and no VHS tape has been in any catalog since 1994. No tape, not even a homemade dub, has been sold on eBay in the past sixty days. Funny. I've read references to published sheet

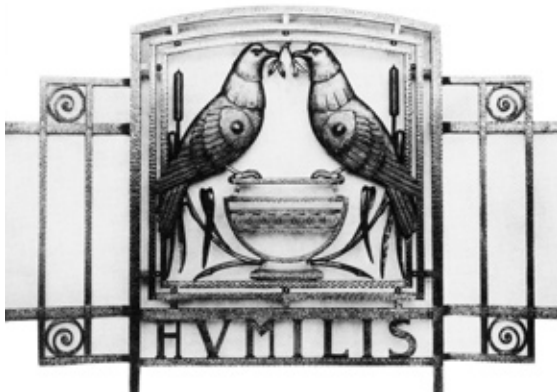
music, but never seen an example myself. Really, there are only two categories of item you'll find at all: "one-sheet" posters, and black and white still photo "lobby cards." And absolutely none of these that I could find had any image of the famous O'Brien/Harryhausen miniature of Cthulhu, which Harryhausen at least found a disappointment; he later listed it alongside the "sextopus" that grabbed at the Golden Gate Bridge in *Earth vs. The Giant Tentacles* as "projects I'd like to do over."

Although I don't spend a lot of money or display space on it, monster movie memorabilia continues to fascinate me. I've got some great die-cast cars with tiny images of Dracula, Frankenstein, the Creature from the Black Lagoon and others posted on eBay as I write this, and secretly, I'm hoping they don't all sell so I can keep some for myself. They are part of the wide sea of monster collectibles posted for auction or sale at any given time, and with keywords like "James Whale" and "Jack Pierce" to guide me, I can be neck deep in Universal pictures of the 1930s and 1940s in seconds.

As to the "Musical Monster" version of 1940, it's certainly challenging to see the commercial potential in an operetta based on the Doom of R'lyeh, but perhaps even more remarkable that Universal was willing to finance what was, by their standards, a lavish production. Musicals were expensive, and

Universal held on to every penny they could during the Depression. You could make three gangster pictures or Bowery Boys movies for the price of one musical. The rapid fire success of *Frankenstein*, *Call of Cthulhu* and *Bride of Frankenstein* enabled James Whale and Carl Laemmle to bring Helen Morgan, Irene Dunne and Paul Robeson to Universal for the first filmed version of *Showboat*. The gothic gloom of the original *Call of Cthulhu* infests *Showboat* as well; and compare the look of Paul Robeson's performance of "Old Man River" to the scene where Karloff is chained up in the police station in *Frankenstein*!

Universal "monster" musicals like *The Call of Cthulhu* (1940), *Carnacki!* (1939), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1941), *The Mummy Swings* (1941), *Now You See Him...* (1940) and Paramount's *The Road to Transylvania* (1942), presaged a trend in "creepy" popular music that would not gain a real foothold until the golden age of the Monster Culture, in the 1960s. The ultimate expression of this tradition is Bobby "Boris" Pickett's "Monster Mash," a Halloween novelty record so perfect that disk jockeys sometimes play it on Valentine's Day. But music *about* monsters from the pre-rock and roll era is challenging to find. For all that they concerned the undead and invisible men, the monster musicals were dominated by romantic serenades that wouldn't be out of place in an Andy Hardy movie.



Universal took many tricks from the poverty row studios that ground out B pictures and serials, and enthusiastically reused popular characters and settings from movie to movie. The Monster Culture more or less owes its existence to Universal's decision to re-release *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* during World War II, following the success of *The Wolfman* in late 1941. Then *Frankenstein met the Wolfman*, and vampires, mummies, invisible men and a Brooklyn Gorilla soon followed. Comedy quickly became the next genre to be "jazzed up" by adding monsters.

The second career for the Jack Pierce Franken-

stein design began in 1941, with a cameo in Universal's adaptation of Olsen and Johnson's manic stage review *Hellzapoppin!* Karloff had left the role behind for good with Rowland Lee's *Son of Frankenstein* in 1939, so cowboy tough guy Glenn Strange was packed into the asphalt spreading boots for the 1941 production. He had absolutely none of Karloff's expression or pathos, so when the *Frankenstein* franchise cranked back into action with *Ghost of Frankenstein* in 1942, Lon Chaney Jr. was given the role, which he imbued with a certain puffy, hung-over sympathy. Between them, these two films established the precedent that the Jack Pierce monster was a character in himself, independent of any specific performer, which started several producers thinking about new ways to make use of him.

Among these was Egil Swinthe, a designer, fabricator and second-unit director on a variety of productions throughout the 1930s. One of the many graduates of the "School of Kreppele," Swinthe worked as a properties master and set painter for several Zetz Tummelman serials at YMPC (the Yiddish Motion Picture Company), and received his first Hollywood credit for work on Cecil B. DeMille's *Madam Satan* in 1930, the only film I am aware of that features a costume party scene set aboard a Zeppelin.

Born in Princeton, New Jersey in 1908, Egil Swinthe was the youngest son of Rudolph and Gudrun Swinthe, immigrants from the Holstein region of Germany. Rudolph had been forced to abandon the family dairy farm after a virulent outbreak of bovine gingivitis in 1896, and became a teamster, driving deliveries for several New Jersey firms. He married Miss Gudrun Backe in 1901, and by 1908 they had four children, older brothers Peter and Lothar, older sister Lotte, and baby Egil. The youngest Swinthe was the first of his siblings to graduate from high school, and received high marks in art and music there.

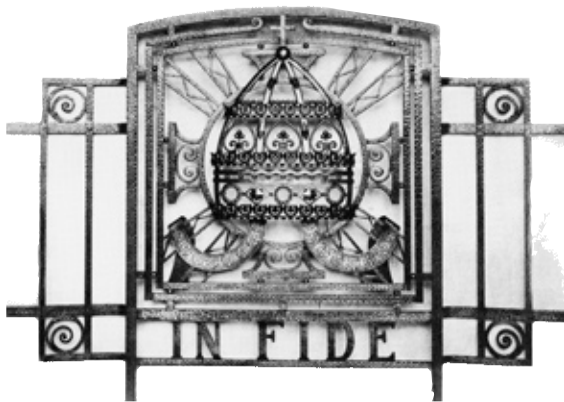
Immediately after finishing school, Swinthe applied for work at the small movie studios still shooting in the New York area. Pickings were slim; the industry had largely moved to California more than a decade before. When Werner Kreppele gave him a job painting sets for his production of *The Khazar Prince* for Astoria in 1927, it began a relationship that ran through nine pictures, and saw Swinthe perform duties that varied from set construction and matte painting to dialog coach for Anton Rokeach and first assistant director on *The Haman of Space* at YMPC. His use of forced perspective in shooting the palace of Pinkus the Pitiless for *The Adventures of Zetz Tummelman* is still

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considered a milestone in effects camera work. And his understanding of German made it easy for him to follow dialog and conversation in yiddish, while his gentile background made him ideal to send out for sandwiches when shooting or rehearsals ran past sundown on Friday.

Swinthe was unquestionably a talented painter and sculptor; several small works he gave to friends in the 1930s and 1940s are quite beautiful, if unnerving in their subject matter. Had he lived to the end of the 1960s, he surely would have been a contributing artist to Rod Serling's *Night Museum*. Werner Kreppel was particularly impressed with Swinthe's pre-production drawings of sets and properties, and used them to pitch potential investors in his films. One well-known piece of Swinthe lore that is apparently true concerns the giant golden scorpion he built in 1941 for a Republic Captain Marvel serial. The huge piece was so photogenic and impressive that it appeared in numerous other movies before being bought in 1951 by New Orleans' Krewe of Osiris, which society displayed it prominently at Mardi Gras for many years.

At some point in the 1940s, he also had a brief flirtation with Hollywood's Esperanto community, which may have led to some of his artwork joining Forry Ackerman's legendary collection. Unfortunately, these seem to be among the items mysteriously stolen by unscrupulous visitors to the Ackermansion in the 1970s; or at least they did not appear in any of the collections dispersed to various parties over the past ten years.



Swinthe's tragedy is that his talents didn't actually extend to the field that most inspired him, which was music. Friends described his habit of obsessively scribbling lyrics in the margins of scripts and on the back of drawings, often truncated to nonsensically rhyming words, as in "Manta Ray of Bodega Bay" and "Loons Swoon at the Monsoon Lagoon." While working on *Galactic Patrol* for Universal in 1939, Swinthe convinced co-star Alan Hale to let him crash a house party attended

by composer Hoagy Carmichael, who famously remarked "If you can't fit a tune to these, I think Burma Shave are always looking for new signs."

Despite this and many less explicit forms of discouragement, Swinthe continued to write treatments for a variety of musical projects into the 1940s. He had several ideas for adapting Shakespeare into musicals, like Cole Porter's brilliant *Kiss Me Kate*, but his favorite choice among the Bard's work — *Timon of Athens* — didn't lend itself well to large production numbers. He spent weeks working on a musical based on Warner's *Casablanca*, only to find out it had *begun* as a stage play, *Everybody Comes to Rick's*. His best and most original effort in the field, a musical tracing the life of President James K. Polk, and titled *Napoleon of the Stump*, briefly caught the attention of Charles Laughton. But Laughton committed to *The Haunting of Canterville* with Robert Young and Anne O'Brien instead, and lost interest by the following year.

Egil began work on the musical *We Belong Dead* in 1944, under the original title *The Lullabye of Frankenstein*. The plot was inspired by *The Bride of Frankenstein*, but also owed a lot to *Ghost Catchers*, a comedy starring Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson (playing themselves, as always), backed up by Leo Carillo, Andy Devine, Lon Chaney Jr. and Mel Torme. That movie involves two night club performers lost in an old mansion, spurious brain-switching experiments, and a number of jokes that poked fun at Abbott and Costello, whom Olsen and Johnson employed in their Broadway review. After seeing the premiere of *Ghost Catchers*, Swinthe was infected by a germ of absurdism, and in *We Belong Dead* he used it to make fun of the romantic clichés that infested most musicals.

The story, in brief, is this: Doctors Frankenstein and Praetorius are engaged in the creation of new life re-assembled from human cadavers; Praetorius is already working on a bride for the monster at the opening, because he can't bear to think of its loneliness at being the only one of its kind in the world. Dr. Frankenstein's assistant Fritz bumbles the job of stealing the brain of a legendary scientist from the local morgue, and returns instead with gray matter lifted from a recently deceased big band boy singer named Frankie Canasta. Dr. Frankenstein has dreams of collaborating with his creature in great works of benefit to mankind; but the monster wants nothing more than a new zoot suit and a hot date for Saturday night. When Dr. Praetorius "arranges" the demise of the teen-aged president of the Frankie Canasta fan club, and implants her brain into the body of the "Bride," the

two become the new darlings of the smart set, and leave the fuming Frankenstein in his laboratory as they join a group of swing-dancing celebrities for the closing production number.

Today, Swinthe would put together an off-Broadway production of the musical with ease, but his options in the 1940s were limited. Memos indicate that some producers at Universal found the project interesting, but they were concerned with the cost of no less than four Busby Berkeley-inspired song and dance sequences (particularly the camera crane shot of a camera crane breaking through the roof of the studio). They found the absurd dialog of Frankenstein and Praetorius difficult to fathom, not knowing that Swinthe had in mind to cast Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson in their parts. Dr. Praetorius was also supposed to lead a dance number with 40 amputated showgirl legs, and this was deemed unlikely to escape the censor's pencil.

There was also a problem with Swinthe's music, which consisted largely of "sweet" ballads, even the supposedly "hot" numbers featuring the voice of Frankie Canasta. His taste ran more toward Noel Coward than Rodgers and Hart, and his lyrics were more droll than heartfelt. Swinthe later claimed to have destroyed all the music for *We Belong Dead* sometime after 1950, but three of the songs were found intact after his death due to accidental carbon monoxide poisoning in 1966. Among them is the title number, in which Frankie tries to convince his newly re-animated bride to run away to Atlantic City:

We Belong Dead

I've a pair of bolts stuck in my throat;
Your nose is held on with a thread.
Nothing left to do but neck with you,
Let's face it, darling, we belong dead!

You remember death's dark doorway
And the way the world went red
To a cold stone slab in some square cat's lab
No doubt, my darling, we belong dead!

Doc shot you straight up through the roof
With a lightning bolt to make your bed
With a wrap or two and cadaver glue
No one has a clue that we belong dead!

So come with me to the Jersey shore
And rest your hijacked little head
In a hideaway near the oceanside,
incognito, because we belong dead!

The world may be forever crooked
And run by graft and greed.
But the crash can't affect us,
The taxman can't collect us
Let's Dance, my darling, we belong dead!

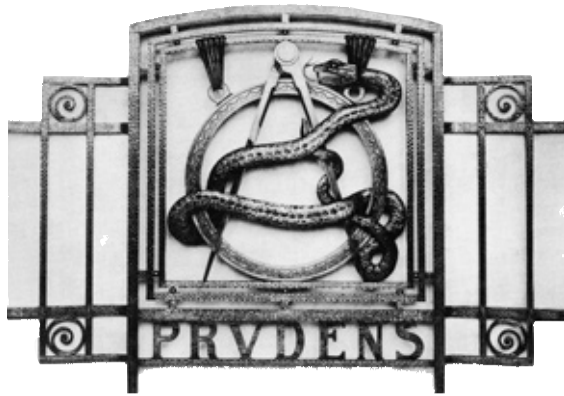
(Musical bridge and dance sequence. Some choreographic notes have been preserved: "MONSTER does a buck and wing along the edge of the elevation tank. Meanwhile, chorus of cadavers comes up from the fly, and they vamp behind the MONSTER and the BRIDE. He pulls her close, they pas de deux for a moment, then he spins her tightly in place, grabs one arm and flings her away, turning away with a flourish himself. As she nears the end of his reach, she snaps rigidly and flings out her own left arm for balance. Her left hand actually flies off from the force of the spin and lands at the feet of DR. PRAETORIOUS, who picks it up, simpers, then grabs a needle and thread from the operating table and advances smiling on the BRIDE as she goggles at the empty space at the end of her arm.)



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The living need to go on fighting
And have so much to fear
But instead we'll cheer
Mr. Tommy Dorsey's band*
At the famous steel pier!
Keep Dancing, darling, we belong dead!

(* The lyric changed from "Bob Crosby and his
Cats" between the first and second drafts.)



Lullabye of *Frankenstein*, renamed *We
Belong Dead*, was scheduled for shooting in
April of 1947. Chester Erskine was listed as
director. Casting had not been settled at the time
production was cancelled, but Richard Long, later
famous for roles on *The Big Valley* and *Nanny and
the Professor*, was confirmed as Frankie Canasta
and The Monster. Akim Tamiroff was scheduled to
inhabit Dr. Praetorious, and Fred MacMurray was
to play the hapless Dr. Frankenstein. Egil Swin-
the was listed as the screenwriter, but Nunnally

Johnson was at least partly responsible for the final
draft. Swinthe's personal assistant, Bunny DuPre,
was credited as production designer. Dr. George
Hodel, a noted physician in charge of the venereal
disease unit at L.A. County Hospital, was the film's
producer.

Hodel's participation is the single most mysteri-
ous element of the stillborn musical. A notorious
Bohemian who fathered eleven children with five
different women, Hodel was also an admirer of
photographer Man Ray, and a lover of *avant garde*
art. Richard J. Anobile interviewed Bunny DuPre
about working for Egil Swinthe in 1971:

"The big *Frankenstein* musical project was on
the table for four years, but Egil just wouldn't give
up. He had costumes made up, had boys and girls
rehearse the musical numbers just to show the
bosses at Universal Pictures. Universal was owned
by a bank then, Mr. Laemmle sold it in the 1930s,
and they would just look at you and ask: 'Is this
going to be as good as Francis the Talking Mule?'

"When Dr. Hodel agreed to put his money into
the picture, suddenly we were in business. I don't
think his part of the production was really very
large, but his name helped move mountains in Hol-
lywood. He was the doctor you went to if you had
a social disease, you see, or if you got a nice girl
from Indiana pregnant. He knew embarrassing
things about people in City Hall, and the police
department.

"The problem with Dr. Hodel was that he also
wanted us to use a young woman he was fond of in

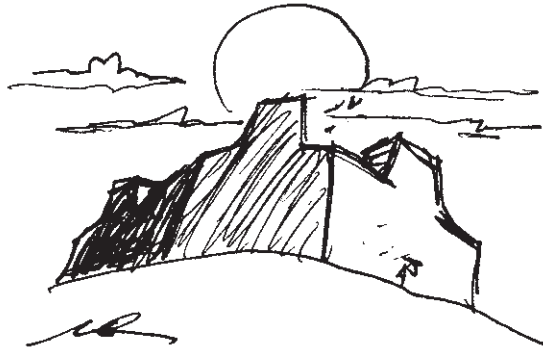


the role of Mary, the Bobby-Soxer. Her name was Elizabeth Short, she was already notorious in Los Angeles as a good-time girl, and she was very striking, with long black hair, although I always thought her eyes were too close together. Anyway, she was not much when it came to acting, but her singing was physically painful to hear. Egil said that they would film her singing, but that they would use Nancy Norman's voice when they really recorded the music. Kaye Kayser personally promised Egil that she could do it.

"All this work was done through December of 1946. Then in January, 1947, Elizabeth Short was murdered; Dr. Hodel lost all interest in the movie, and we were bumped off the schedule, with a promise we would be back in the fall. But no one ever called us back. Egil tried to get another director interested when Erskine and Fred MacMurray and Richard Long went off to make *The Egg and I*. But no one wanted the *Lullabye* project because of the problems with Dr. Hodel."

Hodel was acquitted of charges of abuse brought by his teenage daughter in 1949, then immediately moved away from L.A., first to Honolulu and then

to Manila. He stayed in the Philippines for the next 40 years, and was unavailable to the grand jury that investigated the murder of Elizabeth Short in 1950. Her fame in death — and she was called "The Black Dahlia" even before she died, in reference to her jet black hair, and as a play on the Alan Ladd picture *The Blue Dahlia* — has overwhelmed our memory of all the other participants in the story, leaving *We Belong Dead* as just another forgotten project in the land that lives on dreams. ☹



The Old Dark Sidebar: Olsen and Johnson

(This part is true)

Ole Olsen (b. Jon Sigvard Olsen, 1892–1963) and Chic Johnson (b. Harold Ogden Johnson, 1891–1962) are little-known today, because their finest work was always performed live on stage, and relatively few members of the huge crowds they entertained are still living. They began their careers as vaudevillians in the later years of the great theatrical circuits and continued to work on stage as radio and movies gradually melted their audience away. Several forays into movie-making, both silent and with sound, were anticlimactic compared to their onstage success. Finally, as a kind of capstone to the reign of vaudeville, the two took an ever-changing menu of jokes, songs, black-outs and skits to Broadway in 1938, under the title *Hellzapoppin!* and played to enthusiastic throngs for three years (a record for longest-running Broadway musical at the time).

Many other vaudevillians had tried to bring similar reviews to Broadway over the years, but none ever had the kind of success that *Hellzapoppin!* enjoyed. Certainly part of the reason for this was the way the show kept changing, and was seldom the same twice. At times, Olsen and Johnson were like circus ringmasters, and they directed squads of clowns, midgets and trained pigeons around the stage. Nightly audience participation gags also served to keep the show from being predictable.

When Universal asked them to adapt the review into a movie, they kept a sense of breaking the "fourth wall" by casting the genius/Stooge Shemp Howard as a confused projectionist trying to show the movie he is actually in. If later generations of absurdist comedians were not inspired by seeing *Hellzapoppin!*, they certainly should have been.

Another reason they are forgotten today is that Olsen & Johnson worked at a time when ethnicity was at least as funny as it was problematic. *Hellzapoppin!* began with a mock newsreel of Hitler speaking with a strong yiddish accent, and went from there. Even the casually racist studios of the 1930s found their unadulterated idiom unsuitable for general audiences, which is why their cinematic appearances generally seem a bit limp. But *Hellzapoppin!* preserves their sly timing, and presents many of their most belovedly stupid sight gags. Nearly never broadcast, I believe it has only one DVD release to date, by an Australian company, and is now most commonly seen in film school classrooms.

Their last film was *See My Lawyer*, in 1945. The two died within a few months of one another, from similar kidney ailments, and are interred in the same Las Vegas cemetery.

A Brief Survey of Musical Werewolves in Cinema

Compiled by T. Vedic Chariot

Ever since Robert Paige capered and growled through his transformation sequence in *The Road to Transylvania* in 1942, lycanthropy has had an association with music and dance. At times, striking musical cues seem to bring on the unfortunate werewolf's transformation as much as the advent of the full moon. Following are some of the most notable juxtapositions of music and werewolves in cinema since World War II:

1947: *The Werewolf of Walton*

This little-known product of the Ealing Green Studios was directed by Henry Cornelius, and starred Jack Warner, John Slater and Betty Warren. Shot in nine days, it shared a number of interior sets with Ealing's *It Always Rains on Sunday*. Warner stars as middle-class Surrey home owner John Dial, bitten by a mysterious creature on his way from a commuter railway station, and perpetually mortified by his subsequent transformations into a blood-thirsty carnivore. Betty Warren, as the victim's wife Alice Dial, vigorously pretends to accompany several operatic soloists on the piano, and in the riveting climax of the film, Slater's agonized howls gradually drown out the vocals, while Warren continues to pound the keys through her tears.

1955: *The Silver Bullet*

The legendary "Werewolf Western," with several connections to Nicholas Ray's *Johnny Guitar*, including screen writer Philip Yordan and locations in Arizona's Yavapai County. Dana Andrews stars as Picton Johnson, one of the best bronco-busters in the territory, until he is bitten by the familiar monster wolf under a full moon. Now horses can't abide contact with him, and Johnson shortly falls into a cycle of alcoholism punctuated by murderous attacks on solitary travelers. The local boss, played by Edwin O'Connor, discovers Johnson's secret and

cynically manipulates him into mauling political opponents. The final scene, in which the sweating O'Connor watches the full moon rise, and waits for Andrews to return and kill him, features an amazing performance on solo guitar, an anonymous *deguello* that makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up.

1969: *Private Wolfman USMC*

A surprisingly complex take on war and responsibility with lycanthropy standing in metaphorically for the lust for battle. A gaunt Dean Jagger is method-actor scruffy throughout, and his limited transformation scenes were created by cinematographer Conrad Hall, also noted for his work on *Please Stand By*. Not a musical per se, but the final LSD-fueled hooch massacre freak-out sequence features the music of The Bellyflops, with a very early solo by jazz fusion drummer Charley Platt.

1973: *Soul Wolf*

Blaxploitation rival to American International's *Blacula* series, starring John Amos as Lamond Talbot, an impassive double for Lon Chaney Jr. in *The Wolf Man*. A hardworking contractor bitten by an elderly Caucasian werewolf (Elisha Cook Jr.), Talbot is extravagantly tormented by his full moon activities, but keeps on keeping on, supporting his elderly parents between lupine excursions. Lavelle Roby has a memorable supporting role as the nightclub singer Yolanda Sherry, who finds Talbot's violent vivisection of abusive white shopkeepers and cops an attractive personality trait. In the film's most memorable sequence, Talbot and Sherry dance on a rooftop set while a street festival pumps out a funky soundtrack below. As Amos realizes to his horror that the full moon is rising behind him, he tries to run, then hide, from Roby, as she playfully chases him across the rooftops. Then as his transformation is complete, he pursues her in turn

until she runs off the roof and plunges to her death in the street below. Jamaican organist Jackie Mittoo provided the smoking riffs that punctuated the scene so effectively.

1981: *Ordinary Werewolves*

Look for an early cameo by Mickey Rourke in this black comedy directed by Arthur Penn from a script by Nora Ephron and Babaloo Mandel. Donald Sutherland and Blair Brown are a couple so profoundly disenchanted with the banal pace of life that they face their son's lycanthropy with a kind of dogged glee. The best moment is when Sutherland and Vincent Spano, playing his son, briefly fall to shouting at one another in an empty forest, while burying the latter's latest victim. As Spano angrily chops at the clay with his shovel, Sutherland reaches out and tousles his hair in forgiveness, and you know he is seeing a little boy that grew up to be a werewolf. Spano's first transformation is shot from medium overhead with an icy keyboard soundtrack by new age tinkler George Winston, which never breaks tempo even when the rampaging werewolf bites out an innocent throat.

1984: *Il Lupo D'Oggi (The Wolf Today)*

An Italian horror movie of the 1980s, cunningly disguised as an Italian horror movie of the 1960s. Frosted white lipstick, vinyl miniskirts, and unen-

durable Italian pop music, occasionally jarred by seemingly unwarranted lycanthropic incidents—occurring in broad daylight, and to people with no identifiable connection with the actual werewolves. Eventually, it becomes clear that the transformations are a willful expression of the modern human's desire to recapture the freedom of feral or primitive states of being. Eventually the spasms of blood and claws become even more horrifying because you know they are going to play *that music* again when the wolf appears once more.

1986: *Moon Boys*

Repressed homoerotic tale of the friendship between a new boy in town (Nicholas Cage) and the leader of a gang of redneck werewolves (Judd Nelson), complicated by the romance between their widowed parents (Robert Culp and Alice Krige). Steven Furst is very funny as the local comic shop owner, who proves to be surprisingly resourceful. Nic Cage does his very best rendition of the young Elvis here, in a serenade to putative love interest Elizabeth Peña, but of course she soon ends up eviscerated in order to fuel the climactic battle between Cage, Culp and Nelson. Cage's pants-wetting initial transformation sequence was thought to be a major reason for his Best Actor Oscar opposite Cher in *Snap Out Of It* the following year. 🐾



A DANCE FOR TEDDY HARVIA

By Schirm₀₅

Dry Ice Factory

A review by Randy Byers



Woman in the Moon (Die Frau Im Mond)
Directed by Fritz Lang
(Kino DVD, 2004)

Fritz Lang made two pure quill science fiction movies in his career. The first, *Metropolis* (1927), is one of the most famous films of both the science fiction (or skiffy) genre and of the silent era in general. The enormous reputation of *Metropolis* is one of the reasons that Lang's second SF film, *Woman in the Moon (Die Frau im Mond, 1929)*, has relatively little reputation. Kino has now released a DVD of a restored version of the movie that may change this. Not to say that *Woman in the Moon* will ever challenge the earlier movie's titanic position in the cinematic canon, but it might be better appreciated on its own merits as an early space adventure, falling somewhere between Verne and *Destination Moon* in genre evolution.

Lang made very long movies in Germany. The versions released in the US were severely cut to placate the cocaine-shortened attention spans of audiences in the late 1920s. *Woman in the Moon* was a 95 minute movie in the US until the recent restoration, which runs 169 minutes on Kino's DVD. Much of the restored footage is apparently in the first half of the movie, which sets up a love triangle and some dastardly industrial espionage, not to mention a spunky kid who reads pulp SF magazines. This section certainly has its longeurs, but by 1929 Lang was such a master of visual story-telling that aside from the overlong longing of the lovelorn (Lang was having an affair with actress Gerda Maurus, so she gets lots of glowing closeups), I mostly found the bits of business very entertaining. Kino's disk is also helped immeasurably by the beautifully atmospheric and feeling accompaniment by Jon Mirsalis on piano and synthesizer.

But what reputation the movie has is for its scientific realism, and it really gets interesting with the launch sequence and the lunar trip. Lang brought in a couple of scientific advisers, including Willy Ley, and the movie was censored later by the Nazis because of fears that it revealed too much about German rocket technology. The movie is also famous for apparently inventing the launch countdown, which Lang claimed was merely a device for cranking up the drama. The launch and the flight to the moon are great fun, full of realistic touches and great miniature models, and they establish a number of tropes used in later science fiction films, such as weightlessness humor and the inevitable stowaway.

The action on the moon is perhaps not so realistic, as the dotty scientist (already a stereotype)



uses a dowsing rod to look for water. Yet I loved his method of determining that the moon has an atmosphere: he lights three wooden matches in a row, and, *hey presto*, off comes the helmet. The lunar landscape is gorgeous, with dust hills made of bleached sand and towering mountains — shades of Bonestell — painted on backdrops. There's some exciting action involving the villain (who's only after the gold in them thar hills), and an early version of the cold equations that leads to a surprise ending.

Lang was the biggest director in Germany. His films were always major releases, and for the 1929 Berlin premiere of *Die Frau im Mond* the Ufa-Palast am Zoo theater was transformed into a model of the universe, with model rockets firing out of a model planet. But the movie flopped at the box office, as *Metropolis* had before it, and Lang turned next to an earthbound project about a serial killer, called *M*.

In 1934, Lang moved to the US, where Carl Laemmle of Universal offered him the chance to film H.P. Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu*, which ended up being made by James Whale when Lang declined. Instead Lang turned to the dark, naturalistic crime thrillers — foreshadowed in *M* — that eventually gave birth to the film noir cycle of the '40s. He was done with large-scale spectacles of science fiction, and *Woman in the Moon* was his last shot at the big picture.

“What does it matter if I doze off now and then,” Stravinsky quipped about Schubert's hour-long octet, “as long as, upon awakening, I always find myself in paradise?” So it is with *Die Frau Im Mond*. It's a boyish adventure on an edenic moon that's worth the time it takes to get there. 🍷

Jumbo's TAFF Shadow

Last issue saw James Bacon regaling us with his TAFF campaign exploits and looking forward to the trip. This issue we check in with a few of the people who were swept up in his wake at the Boston Worldcon and on two of his fannish stops afterwards (one virtual). James always seems to leave a vivid impression behind him – not to mention on the various behinds around him. Incriminating photos are available for a nice donation to TAFF.

–Randy

Mark Plummer

Ken Campbell used to talk of an acting acquaintance who had a negative presence: the stage somehow got bigger when he walked onto it. James Bacon is the antithesis of this; no matter where he went at the Worldcon his personality seemed to fill the room, even if it was the cavernous Concourse of the Hynes Centre. But it was somehow not right. Each morning James would rise at dawn, kiss Flick good-bye, and head off for a day working in children's services. In the evenings he'd do the rounds of the parties, regaling all and sundry with extravagant tales of Irish and British fandom and what it is to be James Bacon, before grabbing



a couple of hours sleep and then starting the cycle again. He had been on his best behaviour, really he had, but he seemed somehow suppressed. Martin Easterbrook had it right when he explained over breakfast on Tuesday morning that it was as if James was stuck in his Clark Kent mode. At this point, the TAFF delegate Exploded into the restaurant – wherever he went, he always Exploded into the room – with a tale of woe about the American telephone system, and hotel and transport difficulties and... and it was if the pent-up consequences of a week of best behaviour suddenly boiled over. James overflowed and burst, with invective and expletives splattering the room and possibly a few diners.

'Oh good,' said Martin, 'he's back.'

Peter Weston

For some reason I hadn't met James Bacon previously. Why, I don't know, and it's bothered me; you miss a couple of Novacons, fail to pay attention at an Eastercon, and suddenly you're a past number, a dinosaur on the way to extinction. So I wondered about being able to relate to this new wunderkind that has come amongst us.

I needn't have worried. Eileen and I bumped into James on Thursday afternoon, just after the Opening Ceremony, a Mephistopholean figure with his little goatee and hair in two tufts at each side of his head. He didn't mess around, simply lunged at

Eileen, took her in his arms and kissed her with a considerable amount of passion and a large dose of Irish blarney. She was instantly enraptured — science fiction fans simply don't DO that sort of thing. Not that I minded, not until James made a similar lunge at me. God, he's strong! It was all I could do to hold him at bay. "No tongues," I insisted, "not in front of the men." (see picture 1)

Next time we met was in the fan lounge on Friday evening, just after the Retro-Hugo presentations. We'd all scrubbed-up for the occasion, me in my tuxedo, James in his Wonderful Ice-Cream suit, and when Joe Siclari asked us to pose for a photo with one of the Awards we duly lined-up, me in the middle. Just as the flash went off I felt a hand creep round the back, grip my buttocks, and squeeze firmly. (picture 2)

Yes, I think you can say we have bonded!

Gerri Sullivan

"Hey, James, I'm headed over to the bar. What can I get you?"

"Hey, James, what's your drink?"

"No, really. It's fine. I'm going anyway. What do you want?"

True confession time: No matter how hard I tried, I was unable to buy so much as one alcoholic drink for James Bacon, TAFFman Extraordinaire at Noreascon 4. And try I did, hour after hour, day after day. Upon first meeting him, during the TAFF reception, and after the Retro-Hugos, when he was still bouncing off the walls, thrilled with James White's win with Walt Willis for *Slant*. In between program items, when seeing him in the Fanzine Lounge, and during a multitude of welcome moments that brought us further connection,



insight, and delight. Anywhere, everywhere, we were immediately the closest of friends, brought together by our respective friendships with another Irishman, one who I will point out was *happy* to let me buy him Big Sailors (Gran Marnier) back when he was the Pro GoH at L.A. Con III. But that held no sway with this James; I simply could not buy this man a drink. A Coke, once, maybe, if hazy memory serves. But alcohol, for the consumption of which I'd understood he was justly famed? No way.

I don't think it was just me, either. James bounded, full of energy, flush with delight as the World-con unfolded around him, his efforts raising him up on a wave of fannish interaction, accomplishment, and wonder that carried him high throughout the convention and into the TAFFish adventures that followed. But I never saw a drink in his hand, or a drop of alcohol pass his lips.

I'm sure some must have. After all, he and DUFF



The night James Bacon politely refused a drink

delegate Norman Cates were jumping and howling like drunken madmen at the Dead Dog Party Monday night. I have the broken table, autographed, to prove it. Okay, it was a *small* table, one of those plastic patio endtables. No sober person would think to jump on it, no other sober person would continue screeching like a monkey, jumping for the prize being dangled from above.

Fine fannish fun, ending in much laughter and no emergency room trips, though the table itself was terminal. Maybe it will show up in a future TAFF auction, raising money for yet another trip across the Pond. And maybe *that* TAFF delegate will be the sort who lets friendly fans pick up a round or two at the bar.

And if I'm not already completely taken, comparing notes and catching up with James when that day rolls around, I might just be one of the friendly fans who does so.

Claire Brialey

There are many James Bacons, and nearly all of them were at the Worldcon. I don't mean that in a dissociative identity way; it's rather that James can

fit in virtually anywhere and get on with practically anyone. If he doesn't it's either that he's still being another James—usually one of the more full-on ones—or that he's doing it on purpose.

You'll hear many stories about James as a TAFF delegate, and most of them will be true; and the ones that aren't won't be any more intense. Most people in UK fandom have encountered James the party fan, or James the unstoppable conrunner, or James the entertainer in the mad costume, or James the Robert Rankin publicity machine, or James on the pull, or James the respectable and respectful administrator of the James White Award, or some other incarnation of James the reputation. They mostly haven't encountered James the European fannish ambassador, James the Hugo awardee, James the international wit and raconteur, James the hero of Worldcon Children's Services, or James the author of the first completed European TAFF report since Martin Tudor. But they will.

The one I hadn't come across before was the James who could persuade me to lie convincingly enough to take part in a wind-up.

Interaction staff had been asked to wait a while before dropping into the Hugo losers' party, in order to give the Hugo nominees and presenters and all the other people who had official invitations to the bunfight a chance to enjoy themselves without being stampeded by European fans on a promise of free food and drink. (They put it a bit more tactfully than that, but we got the point.) But when we strolled up about midnight we discovered that James had already identified the sole cool spot in the splendidly decorated suite and planted Colin Harris in it as a marker for Europeans unaccustomed—until the ice caps melt some more—to East Coast US levels of summer humidity.

And there was cheese and drink and chat and guessing the astoundingly low cost of Flick's new dress, and so we passed the time until Norman Cates—DUFF delegate and elf ear artiste—arrived with the Hugo he'd accepted earlier on behalf of Peter Jackson and the rest of the *LOTR* team.

Norman put the Hugo down carefully by the window and came over to talk to James. They'd been getting on very well, giving one another a bit of support as fan fund delegates and hitting a lot of parties. Well enough, in fact, that James felt it an appropriately friendly gesture to wind Norman up. Before I could protest, James explained that my role in this would be to distract Norman and then casually draw his attention to where his Hugo wasn't.

I don't do this sort of thing. I can't do this sort of thing. But James was off, casually picking up the Hugo while Norman was chatting and strolling off,



looking innocent, to talk to Alice Lawson by the bar. Then he started gesticulating at me, and this particular James was impossible to refuse.

I gather it worked. There was a series of conversational steps which led to Norman turning proudly to where he'd left his Hugo in order to let me have a closer look, followed by Norman hastily excusing himself as he went to check how his Hugo could have temporarily become invisible, followed by Norman looking briefly very, very worried, followed by James cracking up uncharacteristically early, followed by Norman following James very quickly around the Hugo losers' party with something large and pointy.

James had to bring home his own Hugo from the Worldcon, of course, having accepted a retro Hugo the previous evening for *Slant*, on behalf of James White. For a short while there we wondered whether he was going to end up smuggling one through Customs internally. Even for James, that would have been a first.

Ted White

Well, it's come and gone now. But Nic Farey's Trousercon was well up to the standards set by Nic in previous years, and a good time was had by all.

This year TAFFman James Bacon was on hand.

We'd been bouncing schedules and directions and whatnot around by email for several days, Nic, James and I hashing out who was going where and when. James was flying into Washington National Airport in early Friday afternoon, and had his head set on renting a car, driving down to Nic's, and bringing Nic back up to my place for that evening's Second Friday, although Nic tried to talk him out of it. It's just under two hours' drive from Nic's to my place (Nic lives in southern Calvert County in Maryland; I live in Northern Virginia, on the opposite side of DC)—and that's when you know the way and miss no turns. I figured James had the *time* in which to do it, but it might be a hairy experience for him.

It didn't happen. I got a call from James' girlfriend—in *London!*—telling me that James had been having a miserable afternoon. He hadn't been able to rent a car, and phones were misbehaving. He'd decided to just take the Metro out to my place. "Oh, jeeze," I said. "I was just heading out to do some errands." In fact I'd almost missed her call; I was at the door. "Just leave a note for James on your door," she said, with confidence. "He can handle it."

I did, but when I got back maybe three-quarters of an hour later, the note was still on my door and James was nowhere about. So I unloaded the ice into the coolers and started the monthly chore

the nerve to portray or suggest Jesus behaved as a Liberal.



James with Bobbie Farey

of housecleaning which precedes (and is the justification for) every Second Friday. I'd only started when the phone rang again. It was James. Upon exiting the East Falls Church Metro station he'd made a beeline for the taxi ranks, gotten into one and asked to be taken to the nearest bar—from which he was

calling me. Once I knew where he was (Benegan's, a local restaurant cum watering hole located in the fringes of Seven Corners), I asked if he could wait there for about an hour while I got my cleaning done, and he assured me this would be no problem.

Indeed, I needn't have worried. When I got there, about twenty minutes later than I'd expected to, I was greeted at the door by an employee and I said that I was meeting a friend, "an Irishman."

"Oh," she said, her face lighting up with a wide smile, "yes—he's right over there."

I looked and a bearded young man in the middle of a knot of women turned towards me and shouted, convivially, "Ted!"

"Jeeze, James," I said, shaking his hand (for indeed it was he), "I hate to break up your party." Three attractive women surrounded him. He had a nearly full glass of beer in his other hand. He looked unworried about my lateness.

"Let me just finish this," he said, with a nod to the beer. There was a huge mound of black luggage near him. I separated out a piece of it—not the largest—and told him I'd take it to my car. When I hefted it I literally staggered under its weight. Incredibly heavy. (Only later, when we were bringing his stuff into my house, did he show me that this soft-luggage bag had *wheels* under one end. Had I but known!)



James and fellow fan

When I came back, the beer was finished and James was shaking men's hands and hugging and kissing the women goodbye. This is a man who can easily make friends. "They're very conservative," he told me about the women. After we'd loaded the rest of his gear, James started around the car and I had to remind him that he was heading for the driver's side. I had a sudden flash of all the times I'd made the same mistake in England.

We went out for dinner at Anita's, a New Mexico Mexican restaurant (as opposed to Tex-Mex), where we both lit into large platters of good food, and James said this was just exactly what he'd needed. After a frustrating early afternoon in which nothing was going right, he was finally unwinding and enjoying himself.

We got back to my house about an hour before things were to start, so we relaxed and continued our conversation. James told me that in the UK they call getting sercon "having a chat with Ted White." I was touched. We chatted.

It wasn't a large Second Friday — maybe a dozen people. Dan and Lynn Steffan didn't make it (Lynn had to work late, as it turned out), but Steve and Elaine Stiles, Walter Miles and rich brown did, as well as several of my non-fan friends. James seemed to be enjoying himself, but by late in the evening he was gently snoring on the small couch.

The next afternoon, a bit after 2:00, we set out for Nic's. This involves taking the Beltway (I-495) into Maryland and exiting on Pennsylvania Avenue, which is also Maryland Route 4. One drives south for around an hour on Rt 4, eventually passing through Prince Frederick and then, five miles further south, turning off onto local roads. We drove down a narrow road with

trees arching overhead, swung out and around and suddenly the Chesapeake Bay was right there, on our left. We followed the road around back inland, into Chestnut Street, and, as Nic reminded me in his directions, "The burned out house next door is still burned out."

Nic's house sits up on the side of a hill which continues above it as his back yard. It's an "upside down" house with the main floor up on top (although Nic pointed out there *is* an attic above it), and both internal stairs and outdoor steps that climb the right side of the house up to the kitchen door. It was once a "beach house" (you can see the Bay from the back of the house) in which Nic and Bobbie now live year round, and have done for the past ten years. Gradually, incrementally, Nic is remodeling the house and starting to add on decks outside which will turn his rather steep yard into much more usable space.

Nic was out in the "back yard," working a cooker-smoker, and waved to us when we pulled up. We trudged up the steps to greet him. Nic was bare-chested and looking a bit skinny, but well. He has a new "hair do," the sides of his head shaved close and the top growing freely. He seemed unhappy when I compared the look to that of Lyle Lovett and suggested he tease up a pompadour in front. He was cooking chicken pieces slathered with a sauce of his own making in the smoker-cooker. It had smelled good from down by the car, and better in close proximity.

At some point we wrestled all James' luggage out of my car and into the house. At another James went out with Chris to get more beer. Chris is a friend of Nic's, a local whom he met on the internet. Chris is a care-provider for the dying, often Alzheimer's patients. He's lived an interesting life and at another point we had a long conversation about it.

While Nic watched the cooking chicken (turning it and basting it with more sauce) we talked about the house and his plans for it. He's thought it all out, but it goes slowly for want of funds. He's mowed the weeds on the side slope of the yard, and made starting preparations for the decking, the first small piece of which is already there now.

I chatted (in the mundane sense) with Bobbie and made myself useful where I could. Eventually the chicken in the smoker was done and Nic poured what had to be a gallon or more of peanut oil into a tall pot sitting in a rig over a propane burner, and turned the burner on. A cooking thermometer told him when the oil was hot enough (around 325°F) and in went two whole chickens, onions loosely stuffed in their cavities and injected

"He's got so much . . . *personality* oozing through his pores that it's



with a marinade. *This* is the key to Nic's "cons" at his place: deep-fat-fried birds. One year a turkey, and more recently chickens. They come out with crispy delicious skin, the meat moist and tender. It's hard to stop eating them. (And "by tradition," I carve the birds. My pleasure—I cop the best pieces of skin for myself.)

It was a fine feast. In addition to the chicken there were red (kidney) beans cooked with turkey sausage, potato salad, coleslaw (made by Chris from a couple cabbages he'd grown in his garden), deviled eggs, and Much More—including deserts (which, since I don't eat sugar, I skipped). Everything was tasty and delicious. It was hard to stop eating and the conversation flowed easily. Bobbie told me how she'd met Nic—a delightful story.

I had to leave around 7:30, although I didn't want to. I needed to get to Baltimore for a concert by the Spanish band Amarok before 9 pm. Somehow I did it, getting there at about 8:45. But that's another story.

I left James in good hands. Nic had put him online and he was checking his email when I left. We shook, and I told him how delighted I'd been to meet him. Just like with so many other fans I've met over the years, it seemed we became instant friends. This is very reassuring for me: James is relatively young (for present day fandom) at 30—and he's been a fan since he was 15, something else I could relate to. He was a fine TAFF delegate, and I'm glad I had the opportunity to meet him.

And with Trousercon we've cemented into place another Fannish Tradition which began with Tobes' TAFF trip: The appearance here at the first Second Friday after Labor Day of the TAFFperson, followed by the Saturday afternoon/evening "con" at Nic's. Works for me, works for Nic.

Randy Byers

At the October Vanguard at Andy and Carrie's new house, I saw Marci Malinowycz for the first time since I'd dropped her off at the airport a month earlier for her flight to Worldcon. She had agreed to haul TAFF goods for the fan fund auction, and I'd also given her a \$100 honorarium to present to James Bacon, as a small gift from one side of the TAFF community to the other, hail, fellow, well met, and hail, Freedomia! I asked Marci if she'd given the money to James, since I hadn't heard anything back from him. (Later it turned out that Marci had misplaced a thank you note—written on an envelope box in several colors of crayon—that James sent back with her, which declared, "Christ more money!!!")

"Yes," she said, blushing and looking away.

surprising he doesn't leave a sort of trail behind him."



"What?" I said, immediately suspicious. "Did you forget?"

"No," she said, looking down and laughing. "But he asked me to give you something in return." She had a devilish twinkle in her eye, and my heart skipped. "A kiss!"

"Well, give it to him!" Tami said.

Marci walked over with much embarrassed laughter and gave me a peck on the cheek, then walked back to where she'd been standing. She kept laughing.

"Okay, what is it?" I demanded. "Does my cheek taste weird?"

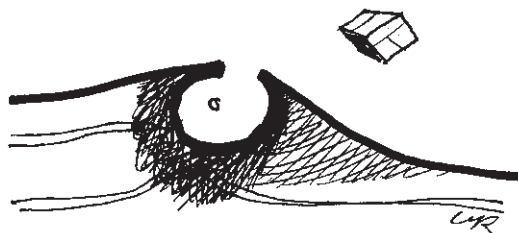
"It was actually a kiss on the mouth when he gave it to me," she confessed.

"Aha!" I cried triumphantly.

"Do it right!" Tami insisted. (I guess she likes to watch.)

Marci came back and gave me a full-on, open-mouthed, hot-tongued (well, okay, actually fairly chaste) smooch on the lips, then walked off again.

"Wow," I said, my head awhirl. "That James Bacon sure can kiss!"





Things worry me. People who used to be central to my life, part of my knowing who I was, planning to leave. Life. What am I doing. Things Changing. I handle change better than I used to. But this last Fourth of July weekend I needed to get away, and Saturday, not Friday, which would have made more sense, and not early, or even during the day, but Saturday at 9pm, I took off with one of my best female friends to run over to Caldwell, Idaho. Spur of the moment, drove 9.5 hours to stay 4, and drove back 8. For the road-trip, and the mind-clearing, healing aspects of the road. And to put flowers on my dad's grave, which I haven't done in almost 15 years, and which has been on my mind a lot lately, especially with so many friends' parents leaving the planet.

The moon came up over the Columbia River; an almost full moon, shining down for hundreds of miles, making surrealistic sculptures of a kind of bare, desert land. I've always wondered how there could be so much water there, and it be so brown. It was cool and bright and dark and good. Just what I needed. It turned out this was a good time to take off, as coming back it was 90 degrees and very hot. Though I like heat, it knocked Tucci out.

We drove Saturday until I was tired, for about four hours. Got a motel, then didn't sleep real well, but I was reminded of all the hotels and motels I've stayed in all my life, traveling and later going to conventions. I used to be able to drop off at the drop of a hat, but this trip I slept fitfully.

The next morning ate road trip breakfast at a Denny's, the only time, usually, that I eat there. Then on to Idaho, leaving Washington by climbing up about 3,000 feet to the plateau that is the central part of the US. Coming back, east to west, it's kind of dizzifying, coming out of the trees into wide open country, and dropping down, with all the big trucks on the freeway going so slowly, through two or three switchbacks, back to the flatness of wheat country in Eastern Washington. I get vertigo there.

Near Caldwell is sagebrush, brown country with cinder cones of old volcanoes sticking up here and there. Then you come to the Snake River and there's lush green right up next to the brown, sometimes perfect circles of green from the crops, and how the watering system is this wheeled contraption that goes around and waters from a central point. Then a town that looks bigger once you're off the freeway. Maybe many small towns would.

I went, on the Fourth of July, into an Albertsons, bought flowers, asked directions to the cemetery because nothing was really looking the same and there were many new things there, and it didn't smell like cows anymore. Then went up a small bluff or mesa (which looked much bigger when I was smaller) and found the Vining name in the old part of the cemetery without too much trouble. The size of the cemetery had about tripled. Lit a candle. Talked to my dad for awhile. It was nice.

Worth the trip there and back. We didn't stay long, just long enough to eat, and for me to show her the little house, that also used to look so much bigger, at 108 Woodlawn Drive, the first place I had to memorize the address for, in case I got lost walking with my two brothers and sister on the way to the public swimming pool, which is still there, or to the park where my dad used to direct orchestras on summer days, or to the Dairy Queen for a Dilly Bar. Couldn't find the tree covered boulevard near the College, but it is probably gone due to expansion. Saw the stadium where I went to rodeos.

Then, back in the car and drove back 8 hours, singing half the way, quiet some of the way. Clear skies all the way, until we came down I-90 over Snoqualmie into Issaquah, and there were the Seattle clouds. The thing I love about road trips, even short ones, is that things look a little different when you get back. A familiar road is now connected, all the way back for 500 miles in the other direction. And it's good to be home in your own bed again. ☺

Rain City Tangler

News (and Gossip) by Ulrika O'Brien

PLOKTA ART CRISIS?—Sue Mason is home from hospital, recovering from an infected cat bite requiring surgery. One has to question the fannishness of the new moggie, the former Little Bastard (now Max, rather than, er, former), as it bit Sue in the left, or drawing, hand. Sue anticipates a two-week recuperation period during which she will be stuck at home, not drawing, not driving, and typing one-handed and not having any fun while doing it.

INVISIBLE HAND OF STEVE GLOVER—Not one month after Steve Glover shut down the tun.discuss list for lack of interest, the Florence Nightingale, long time home of the London Circle, abruptly shut down for demolition. Coincidence? We think not. For want of a home, the annual street brawl over where to settle next and what publican banned whom for what bollocks reason is popping up in such disparate places as Anonymous Claire and trufen.net, leaving season ticket holders unsure of where to go to get ringside seating. The next Tun meet is scheduled for the Silver Cross, with more discussion to follow, we feel sure.

RIP F.M. "BUZ" BUSBY—Long time Seattle fan and author, F.M. "Buz" Busby died February 17, aged 83. He had been hospitalized for a month, recovering from an intestinal ailment and complications of surgery, but took a turn for the worse after a second surgery and relocation to another facility after his insurance ran out. More information, forthcoming details, as well as a place to leave messages, can be found at his Caring Bridge web page: www3.caringbridge.org/wa/buz/index.htm. Our deepest sympathies go out to Elinor Busby and Buz's family and friends.

A HAPPY VALENTINE FOR DAVE LOCKE—Vicky Locke reports that husband Dave successfully went under the knife on February 14, for the first two of what may be several angioplasty surgeries in the wake of his December 24 heart attack. For those

RIP ANNA VARGO—Anna Livia Plurabelle Vargo died in the early morning hours of January 9, of cancer. She was diagnosed in early fall, and the course of winter saw a slow parade of her friends and family making cross-country pilgrimages to Seattle for visits with her, while a core group of her Seattle friends organized together with her brother, Walter Willis, to ensure that Anna always had companions and help with home care. A memorial service was held on January 23 at Seattle's Center for Urban horticulture where family and friends from the many threads of Anna's life gathered to remember her. Anna Vargo was a bright thing, a woman of many loves, too many to adequately tell here. She was a fan of 30 years' standing, having been introduced to fandom by brother Walter, by way of a birthday gift Worldcon membership. She was a founding member of A Woman's Apa, Volunteer Coordinator for Iguanacon II, a stable anchor for those teen titans who put on Iggy from their shared garret. She was instrumental in the founding of Vanguard, Seattle fandom's long-standing, monthly focal-point party. She was also a deeply committed political activist, active in unions, the League of Women Voters, the Democratic party, and supporting local libraries. The program from her memorial and the fanzine compiled in her honor, both edited by Victor Gonzalez, can be found archived on www.trufen.net.

wanting to send belated love, donations to the Dave Locke medical fund can be sent to:

Dave & Vicky Locke
2933 Colonial Ridge Court
Cincinnati OH 45212-1903

PEREGRINATING ORYCON—The former Doubletree Columbia River, home of past Orycons and Portland Westercons, will be closing this March with no stated reopening date. Shyrl Hester, Orycon 27 chair, reports that the convention will still be held in 2005. OSFCI is currently scouting a new hotel. Interested fans can sign up for the Orycon discussion list (www.orycon.org/orycon-l.html) for details as they happen.

F-F-FAN F-F-FUNDS—Hey, there's a TAFF race on! The worthies standing for this Eastbound trip to Interaction, the 63rd Worldcon, in Edinburgh are: Chaz Boston-Baden, Curt Phillips, Suzanne Tompkins (Suzle). The voting deadline is midnight, April 3, 2005. Ballots available at a fanzine near you, or contact Randy Byers, c/o this fanzine. DUFF also reports that a Southbound race is under way for the 2005 Australian National SF Convention in Hobart, Tasmania. The candidates are Chris Barkley and Joe Siclari; voting proceeds until April 15.

The Iro

Graham Charnock
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Graham Charnock

Oh Christ, another *Chunga*. And this time with a colour cover. Those guys must be minting it, although I see they are still using cheap Bill Rotler cartoons, like every fanzine since Ed Mesky's *Niekas*. But why don't they just publish one issue every two years like Ed and other decent fans? Now I have to reply with my usual mixture of urbanity and wit, which will ensure my comments, or at least some of them, or perhaps even one, are mentioned in the next issue.

This beer I am drinking now is a Light Lithuanian Beer called 'Horn'. But let me tell you, it isn't working.

Went on holiday last week to the Isle of Wight, which is a small island off the south coast of England, wherever that is. Visited the Shanklin Zoo, which has a speciality in Tigers, specifically a rare white Bengali Tiger, which is in fact a genetic freak, and suffers from associated diseases like the inability to locate a squirrel in the dark and a particularly active digestive tract. Like most zoos they operate an 'Adopt An Animal' scheme, which had a range of rates from £1.00 for a hissing cockroach, £5.00 for a budgerigar, and £10.000 for the rare white Bengali Tiger. Each adoption enables you to visit your adoptee free for five times per year. I wasn't stupid. I adopted the hissing cockroach, but

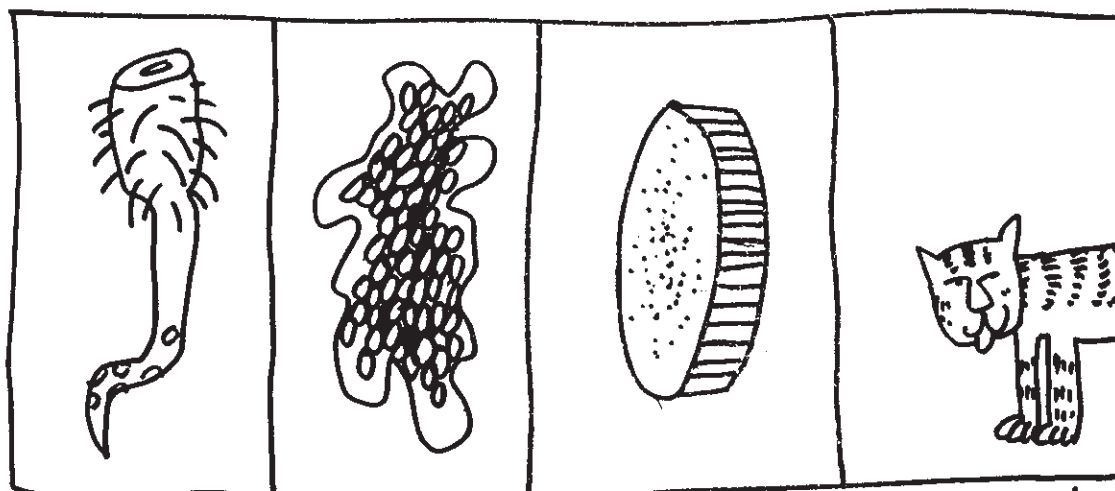
when I go, I'm going to see the White Bengali Tiger for free. Ya, boo, Shanklin Zoo. Gotcha!

Sorry, I haven't actually commented on this issue, but that's because I haven't actually read it. Doh.

Look, Bruce Gillespie's okay, but if any time you guys want to launch a fund to bring me over, I'd be, you know, like honoured. Would probably only cost \$120.00, plus car hire. How much is that to ask? I'm 58 for Christ's sake, and boy do I have some stories to tell. Including how I once shared a bed with Tom Disch, and a couch with Norman Spinrad, and his girlfriend (!), and a car with Charles Platt, and a bedroom with Chris Priest. For nine months. I even once sat on the side of Mike Moorcock's bed whilst he was naked, at least I assumed he was, since he'd considerably drawn covers over his huge throbbing member. Produced *Phile*, *Wrinkled Shrew* and *Vibrator*. Edited *New Worlds*, and played in Deep Fix, sold stories to Damon Knight and Harlan Ellison, Fan Guest of Honour along with Pat at Leeds. Founded the Astral League when Don wasn't looking. Produced the programme book for Seacon '79. And slept with Pete Weston. Come on. This could be my last chance. Oooops, there it went.

Yes, but have you shared a sand-colored suit with John Clute? I think I'd be happy to con-

Comments by Andy



ALIEN FAST FOOD

ROTSLER'S

n Pig



tribute to a fund to help defray the cost of importing you, but it has to be for a more substantial sum of money. People don't feel like they've accomplished anything when the fund only manages to raise \$120 and a rental car voucher. But then again, if we raise several thousand dollars, you'll be obliged to visit numerous locations on your tour, eat Chinese food in several time zones, and submit to either being incorporated into human pyramids, or have them erected in your honor.

Any mincing whelk off the street can sponsor a photogenic animal like a white Bengal Tiger, Graham. It takes an actual man to lay down hard-earned fundage to support a creature of arguable utility like a Malagasy Hissing Roach. The mid-level zoos and wildlife parks of the world depend on the largesse of discerning adventurers like yourself.

Steve Jeffery

Most impressed by Carl's colourful cover. Does the concrete hound have a name?

I see from Randy's half of the Tanglewood editorial that I'm not alone in receiving a flurry of conscience-pricking little notes on the envelopes of John Hertz's *Vanamonde* apazines. In my case it's a plaintive request for 'some more drawings'. Unfortunately, it must be well over a year since I've picked up a pen to scribble a line or two on a piece of paper. I don't know why, but I seem to have lost the impetus and/or inspiration, and discovered the hard way that once you stop doing something, for whatever reason, it seems incredibly hard to get back into it. I apologise, John, but I'm not singling you out, honest.

There was a point, somewhere in the mid '90s where it seemed that the Vegrants were responsible, in various editorial combinations, for 2 out of 3 fanzines that dropped on the mat, at almost alarmingly close intervals. I'm not sure if they managed their seeming goal of producing a fanzine for every possible permutation of their 23 editors, but

one felt it was a brave effort. As well as the writing and the sometime sparky lettercols, one of the constant delights was the myriad Rotsler illos scattered through the various titles, which also helped cement that group identity.

Ulrika's trip report was a complete delight. I hugely enjoyed this. I was reading her description of the great Langford ("faintly daffy benevolence...he twinkles") to Vikki.

"That's brilliant," she commented, "that's Dave to a t."

As if to underline the fact that he refuses to be seen in the past tense, Arnie Katz has begun issuing a frequent bulletin of Las Vegas fan interests, titled *Vegas Fan Weekly*. At this writing, there have been eight issues, all visible at the indispensable eFanzines.com.

Alexis Gilliland

The etymological origin of "stool pigeon" is from the 19th century prison system, in which there were no toilets in the cells. Necessarily, then, the prisoners were escorted to and from the head by a guard, who stood by them as they did their business, and who thus had a regular (you should pardon the expression) opportunity to receive information about the other prisoners. An informer — one who sang — had been called a canary or a pigeon for some time. The new usage, stool pigeon, or stoolie, was the direct result of the system with the added bonus of applying the epithet stool, meaning toilet, but also shit, to the hated informer.

Andy's haiku, "The bird sings for joy" inspired an echo with just the faintest hint of a rebuttal.

This tree is mine
God gave this tree to me!
Come make your nest in my tree.

This being far closer to the meaning of the bird's song than the suggestion that the bird is wasting time and energy singing because it is happy.

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Jay Kinney

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But because haiku are not supposed to involve human characters or actions, poets frequently use animals, plants and other elements of nature to represent human emotions and ideas within the haiku form. Besides, the poem was about Charlie Parker.

Jay Kinney

Here you've been sending me issue after issue of *Chunga*, undoubtedly the best-looking and classiest zine out there, and like a gaffed heel I've failed to respond, issue after issue. This is, of course, nothing personal. I generally fail to loc most fanzines, though I do try to keep my hand in by writing at least one loc every five years or so. Sort of the Lee Hoffman idea, but on a smaller scale.

Cool ish, but then they've all been cool. Someone somewhere inside #8 grouched about fans being lousy photographers, but Carl's cover puts the lie to that. Great cryptic shot. While I'm at it, Georgie Schnobrich's back cover is quite nice as well. As someone who only got bit with the baseball bug in the last three years or so, I can now relate to baseball references from Seattle fandom. Too bad about the Mariners, though. Heh heh.

My only misgiving with the generally high standard of design you hold to is that it almost verges on the "pro," which gives *Chunga* a slightly distant feeling in some way I can't quite pin down. But that's only about 5% distant, so don't worry about it. Now 7%, that might be a problem.

I do still miss that intimate mood created by Royal manual typewriters cutting mimeo stencils, I guess. The printed result always yelled "fanzine" to me. In fact, I'm surprised that no one has created a font that looks exactly like a Royal manual typewriter. Maybe someone has — John D. Berry would probably know. The usual Courier font that comes standard with computers just doesn't have the same feel.



All that aside, everything in the issue is a good read. Loved Arnie's piece, which started out in classic form with a witticism per paragraph. I now better grok the Vagrant *weltanschauung*, if that's the right word, and even if it isn't. Super illo of Major Katz by Stu, by the way.

And excellent Corflu con report from Andy. It almost makes me wish I had been there, but I was over in Istanbul at the time, a mere 15 minutes from the Masonic Lodge bombing that occurred while I was there. Something weird always seems to happen when I'm in Turkey. At least I didn't lose my passport this time.

Well, my energy for loc writing is already winding down, so the rest of the writers are going to be short-changed. Oh, I should mention the high point of the issue, though: Graham Charnock's loc, which was so daft that it reminded me of my own locs to *Syndrome* thirty years ago when I was at the top of my form. I'll have to go back through old *Chungas* and re-read any Charnockia I may have overlooked.

There. Hopefully this missive will earn me another five years of free fanzines from the powers that be. Note to other faneds: I do read your zines. Keep sending them. Who knows? YOU may be the lucky one to receive my next loc scheduled for... let's see... 2009.

You're going to find that it's a lot of work being a Bay Area baseball fan—you have to hate the Dodgers and the A's biggest rivals, whomever they may be.

I'm writing this comment to you in early January, so I have time to make good on this threat; I'm going to make it my business to make sure you show up at Corflu next month, so you can write your own trip report this year. I mean, what are you, two miles from the hotel?

Peter Weston

The latest *Chunga* arrived today, filling me with awe at the look of the thing and the heights of supreme fannishness achieved in the writing therein, the contents reinforcing and building on each other to reach a level of wordplay I've rarely seen elsewhere. Randy's account of the Hinckley convention makes it appear a whirl of snappy banter and dazzling personal interrelationships. (Funny, I must have missed that bit). Then, with the surreal letter from Graham Charnock (who may indeed be the world's greatest living fan-writer) we enter a bizarre new world. Overwhelmed, I wonder how can I, a mere Sercon Devil (rt'd) possibly LoC a fnz like this?

But I detect just one one slim opportunity where I might comment, in James Bacon's account of his



TAFF race against Anders Holstrom. Now I'd better declare my hand here; I've had a soft spot for Anders ever since the 1999 Novacon when he came through so splendidly for me at an impromptu programme item on 'Fannish Myths & Legends.' Panicking slightly, I'd accosted him in the doorway with an urgent appeal; "Anders," I said, "I'll give you a cue, then I want you to fall over. Can you do that?" For an instant he looked doubtful but agreed that 'Ja, this might possibly be,' and in his flaming red and black shirt took up an unobtrusive position against the wall.

Eventually I came to my Tale of the Toppling Swedes. Now, back in the early seventies the wiry little Brits were awed when a whole squad of seven-foot blond Scandinavians (all named 'Per' or 'Bjorn') turned up at an Eastercon with vast quantities of beer and spirits. We were greatly impressed and thought they must be mighty drinkers indeed, only to find at their room party that by half-past eight they were drunk out of their skulls on the second bottle of pale ale and shortly afterwards started to crash to the ground, to lie comatose like great forest trees toppled by a gale.

The cue word was 'crash' and during my build-up Anders had obviously thought hard about his cameo role. He flung himself forward in a spectacular slow-motion triple-somersault, bringing down a half-dozen chairs and two other fans and creating general uproar. A splendid fellow, I thought, one who could undoubtedly Topple for Sweden and who would make an excellent TAFF-delegate.

As indeed was James Bacon this year, with all his Irish charm and blarney running on high gain at Noreascon. He had somehow come in under my radar before our historic embrace at Boston, but we're now cheek-to-cheek, so to speak, and I'd hate to spoil a beautiful friendship. However, his article worried me and there's something I need to say which...er, forgive me, James, this might upset you, but, er...

In a recent book, the title of which Dave Langford can't for the moment recall, I expressed annoyance at the antics of a certain German fan who went around a lot of minor fan events inveigling his friends to vote for him, so he could win a popularity contest and go on a trip they didn't understand very much about. He succeeded, against several other candidates with better qualifications who had taken the traditionally more modest attitude of keeping quiet and letting other people do their canvassing for them. Does this sound familiar?

You must admit that I have a unique perspective on this situation and in all seriousness, and much as I admire James, I feel his natural exuber-

ance has led him astray on this one. He makes the whole thing seem a bit of a joke by repeatedly saying he didn't really want to win, but I think what he did was wrong. Call me Old-Fashioned if you like (last time I said that, the whole room roared, "you're old-fashioned") but I've always thought the fannish way was for the candidate him/herself to stand back and look slightly embarrassed while hoping that one's supporters were doing the business. If Anders' campaign was run in this traditional, low-key way, then he had no chance when a modern-day Mario was working the crowd. If Anders, too, was "pushing hard for votes" as James suggests (and maybe he was, I don't know) then the Unofficial Rules have been changed while I wasn't looking.

Is this the way TAFF contests are going to be run from now onwards? I think we should be told.

Peter, I think that contemporary fans labor under a series of conflicting expectations when it comes to the behavior expected of a fan fund candidate. On one level, they are expected to publish, and generally carry on in an amusing manner for the erudition of fandom, but at the same time we want them to be reticent and gentlemanly in their non-efforts to actually win the fund. James strikes me as having generally used his North American travel experience for good, and shows no intention to abscond with the fund or otherwise depart from fandom, so I'm reasonably happy with his performance so far.

Brad Foster

Nice to know I can compare myself in at least a minor way to the great Stanley Kubrick, as I also do not know what you mean by a "recharound," without it being used in any sort of context. Could it be when someone sneaks up behind you when you are playing at a slot machine, and they "recharound" to pull your pole? Or when your lover sneaks up behind you when you are playing, and they "recharound" to pull your pole? Gosh!!!!

I loved the Kunkel cartoon on page 24!

I'm getting closer to using that glue gun, though thinking less of attaching things to a car, and more of attaching things to each other.

Yeah.

Watch out there, Brad. You are about one exclamation point away from being mistaken for Luke McGuff.

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Joseph Nicholas

Tipped off by Randy's e-mail about the reference to me in his editorial, I had (probably unwisely) expected more than the near-cryptic aside that was actually there. But I stand by what I've said previously on this subject — that what is passed off as fan history is nothing of the kind, because it has no actual story to tell: no organising principle save the mere piling up of factettes in chronological order. *That*, kids, is merely the raw material from which history is actually composed, not the thing itself.

(It occurs to me, however, that my dissent from this model of fan (non-)history could be swept up under the dismissive catch-all “an obvious resentment of tradition” — ignoring for the moment the observation (was it by Terry Carr? see, even I know some fan (non-) history!) that anything done once in fanzines is a tradition) — and thus dismissed as a view which does not cleave to the hallowed tenets laid down in some crumbling fanzine of yore. And thus a view which is not fan-historical. Those who prefer anecdotes think that they might thus escape my strictures, but....but dig yourself out of all those recursive qualifiers yourselves, why don't you?)

And as I feel I must have said before as well, so what? If we make an error of nomenclature in referring to timebinding as a form of history, it may still serve as source material for those with the benefit of greater perspective and formal training in the future. At some point, someone with an “actual story to tell” may happen upon the question of fandom, at which point they will be distinctly pleased to find the wealth of lore, received wisdom, oral tradition and accumulated factettes which we have bunkered in the misguided belief we were preserving our own history. It may fall to someone who has no personal knowledge of the people in question to write a “serious” history of the phenomenon, as heretical as that must be to the traditional fanhistorical aesthetic, because only a relative outsider is likely to feel no restrictions on expressing and publishing the truth about the subculture and its members. For this and numerous other reasons, it may actually be quite impossible for fans themselves to write useful and impartial fan history of the sort you long for. But here's a bet that they will continue to try anyway.

Timothy C. Marion

I received quite a vicarious thrill from reading all the Corflu reports...so much so, in fact, that it represents a savings of money since I didn't attend.

These reports let me know what people I have known and respected for so long were doing together without depleting my time and pocketbook. Indeed, these days when I only have time to loc fanzines at work, and have so many yards of unread material at home that I never even touch, it seems downright scary to consider traveling across the country in order to peruse and be handed another arm-breaking load of reading matter. *Chunga* is therefore a much-appreciated buffer zone between me and the rest of fandom!

Ulrika O'Brien is really an extremely talented writer! Her TAFF report was so clever, with so many frequent witticisms that didn't disrupt the flow, that after a while I found myself chuckling constantly while reading it; either due to remembering the last humorous observation or else anticipating the next! It was especially amusing having her describe the behavior of or repeat the dialogue of people I know.

I'm curious as to what response, if any, you get to Jae Leslie Adams' calligraphy. To my mind, it was beautiful, but I imagine some fans, if they mention it at all, will complain about the spacing. The spacing *was* tight, but consistent. It comes across much more elegant and practiced than my own. I've almost never gotten any response to the calligraphy I've printed in my fanzines, even calligraphy which I felt (upon later objective review) was quite successful and attractive. Mostly fans just complained that it was “hard to read.”

Bieler mentions David Clements, a Seattle fan who deserves to be remembered, and who is not with us now due to his being murdered by some miscreant. No, I didn't know Clements, but I just wanted to take the opportunity to remind fandom of someone else who deserves to be remembered. It was 28 years ago that New York fan Barry Smotroff was found murdered in his apartment — a knife in his back and no signs of struggle. An unsolved murder, as far as I know. I barely knew Barry then except by reputation, we had only met once at a party in Ted White's room at a DisClave, but of course this was a horrible shock to me and the rest of fandom at the time. Barry was a fanwriter at the time for apas (including TAPS) and fanzines (including co-editing *Placebo* with Moshe Feder).

Mark Plummer

The last *Chunga* left me feeling like an HM Batman cartoon, not helped by the fact that while I had the image in my head I couldn't actually remember the name of the cartoonist I was thinking of. You know the sort of thing, a pale young fellow looks baffled while all round him are older

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men, their faces aghast and appalled because he's just mentioned something Of Which We Must Never Speak, or else displayed some tremendous naiveté ('The man who introduced rich brown to Cheryl Morgan').

Anyway, this is a Novacon thing and stems from my annual conversation with Doug Bell wherein this year I discovered that I had cast myself in the role of The Fan Who Hadn't Read *Chunga* or, more specifically, The Fan Who Hadn't Seen the Gimli and Legolas Cartoon. I mean, Doug Bell is a cool dude what with the surfing and everything, but let's face it, he's now living in some remote corner of this island — Cornwall? Devon? Tibet? somewhere like that — and by his own admission he's barely read enough British fanzines in the last year to qualify as a Nova voter. Yet here was Doug, mentioning in a throw-away fashion, 'Of course, everybody's talking about Ulrika's article in *Chunga* and the Gimli and Legolas cartoon' and I must have offered up a quizzical '?' because everybody else started giving me this look. It was pretty damn clear that the zeitgeist boat had sailed and I was not on board.

Of course, I have an excuse which I've been deploying with variations since about January 2003. Then it was 'We are about to move' and now it's 'We've just moved' but one way or another it's been the case that just about every fanzine that has entered the house in the last eighteen months has been immediately swept up and into the bottom of a box where it is quickly buried underneath six months of *Private Eye* back issues, a startlingly unattractive table lamp (broken) and two dozen empty crisp packets.

I do remember the arrival of *Chunga* #8, mind. In fact, it may even have been the first fanzine to reach us direct at the new house without first having to navigate the obscure backwaters to the post office mail forwarding system. So yes, *Chunga* Day was kind of momentous in an extremely localised way. We may even make you a little badge to commemorate your participation in this milestone. And I did have a casual flick — careful with the shift key, there — through its pages, noting its impressive roster of contributors (plus me) and clean design lines, before putting it to one side for later — yes, really — detailed perusal, you know once we'd finished painting the fanzine attic spare room and unpacking the cat.

Bad move, that. It meant that I went to Novacon unprepared, out of tune with the fannish group mind and generally apart from cutting edge twenty-first century fandom. Ironic really, because last year I found myself on the other side of the equa-

our daughters is being served up daily like snack jerky.

tion, having to deliver a crash course in Changed Domestic Arrangements in Greater Croydon Fandom since 1996 to a bemused Joseph Nicholas.

And then — *then* — it turns out that not only have I missed a zeitgeist moment, but I have also been ignoring a bloody good fanzine like wot they don't make any more, allegedly. Good fannish content, well presented, and even delivered direct to our door through the quaint old-fashioned twentieth century postal system. It's got me in it too, but hell, you can't have everything.

So, who got the job of editing James Bacon then? We need to form a Guild or something for those of us who've done it, for people who understand just what it means to wrangle the raw Baconian text into something approximating conventional English. Past TAFF and GUFF winners have often told me that a fan fund trip is something special: unless you've actually done it, you can't really comprehend what it's like. I feel pretty much the same way about editing James and if pushed to articulate the experience I'd liken it to understanding the Schleswig Holstein Question: you either die, go mad, or somehow blot the whole process from your memory.

Not much point in denying that we all made our contributions to the translation of James' submission to *Chunga* #8. It is a challenging



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process to bring James around to a narrative that can sustain the reader to the end without some kind of personality damage.

And it is certainly pleasant to think that we were such a source of buzz at Novacon. Makes one think that the truly ridiculous sums of money it took to place such a man-sized bolus of fanac in Britfandom's communal throat might have been worth the results after all.

Mark Manning

Morocco, as far as I can tell, is just barely on the tourism radar here in the States. In the whole 20 days I was there, I ran into nearly no other Americans. A couple thousand French tourists, dozens from Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy, even one group of 20 women from either Pakistan or India. But only a handful of Yanks and exactly one Canadian.

That's too bad. It's a lovely place, far more prosperous than I'd expect, certainly better endowed with green plants—forests, gardens, alfalfa fields, palm or olive groves, vineyards. The antiquities were suitably antique, the water reputedly drinkable (though I personally stuck to the excellent & inexpensive local bottled waters), the larger cities generally modern.

Casablanca, built as a French colonial outpost, looked crumbling & litter-ridden, like Havana with late-model Peugeots replacing the 1957 Buicks, but the rest of the cities looked great. Morocco really doesn't comprehend travelers' checks, but there are lots of ATMs to compensate.

I think it was Lilian Edwards in her *Chunga* #7 article who mentioned aggressive streetsellers & the like in Morocco, and I did encounter a few. But the country recently set up a corps of plainclothes tourist police whose job it is to haul such pests off to jail. As a result, telling a Moroccan street huckster that no, you're not interested in a shoeshine/a single Marlboro/a guide to the picturesque souqs/ten postcards of Casablanca for two bucks, they almost always stop following you.

Jason K. Burnett

I greatly enjoyed "The Haunted Corflu." The more I read about this con, the more I want to go. 2005 is out of the question—moving the family cross-country leaves exactly zero dollars for fannish travel in the next year. But barring unforeseen events, look for me in 2006 or 2007.

And speaking of Corflu, I have a fanhistorical/traditional question that I hope someone can answer for me: In what ways are Corflu and Ditto different? At first glance, it seemed to me that the

two should be practically interchangeable (same people in attendance, same sorts of activities, etc.), but while I've read several Corflu con reports, I've never seen anyone write about going to Ditto. Are there actually two fanzine fandoms, one centered about Corflu and the other around Ditto?

When I entered fanzine fandom, it seems like it possessed a large enough population that there could indeed be a major dichotomy within its membership, and that fact was shortly confirmed by the TAFF/Topic A war of 1984 to 1986. I can't even begin to sum up that crisis here, but suffice it to say that at one time, people on one side of the personality conflicts around it tended to go to Corflu, while people on the other side tended to choose Ditto. Both conventions probably have suffered for this attitude, while Ditto's attendance numbers would appear to have been suppressed slightly by being identified with what I've perceived as the less numerous faction. Apart from any association with "Topic A," Ditto also seems to have been closely linked to a Midwestern regional fandom that has most commonly held the convention in that general region of the country. Perhaps for this reason, fans from the East and West coasts seem more likely to attend Corflu. Corflu also seems to have a group of occasional attendees from the United Kingdom and Australia, and I don't have the impression that Ditto is as likely to attract visitors from overseas. All this being said, I quite enjoyed the only Ditto I ever attended, and would probably go if it were held in this region again.

Lloyd Penney

I keep hearing through the grapevine that Corflu will make it to Toronto some time in the near future, probably 2006 or so. I look forward to it, to find out just what a Corflu is all about. I've never been to one, so I can talk to Hope Leibowitz, who has been to them all. I'll just keep reading articles like Andy's Corflu report here, and perhaps I'll be up to speed in a year and a half.

I keep finding unfamiliar terms in the fanzines I get, which reflects more and more that I'm out of touch with things—I'd never heard of Third Row Fandom before, and now Sproutlore is finally explained. I could always do a quick Google on third row Fandom, but I think I'd rather see an article or sidebar about what they are. All Knowledge Is Found in Fandom/Fanzines; at least, that's where I'd like to find it.

I hope Steve Bieler isn't too put out about .pdfed fanzines—I'd rather have the usual paper fanzines

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that go thwack when they fall through the mailslot of the front door. I'd rather carve my fingers up on the envelope clasp when I open it. I'd rather catch my shirt sleeve on the zine's staples, whether it's two or three of them. However, I recognize the costs of doing things the way we'd like and the realities of saving that kind of money with electronic repro. Sigh—reality. I thought we were into SF to get a break from reality? It keeps rearing its ugly head.

As I write this, I don't really know where Corflu will be held in 2006, but it has been suggested that some fans in or near Toronto, including Catherine Crockett and Colin Hinz and probably Hope Leibowitz, may bring a bid to San Francisco in February. We've frequently entered Corflu without a good idea of where the next one will be held, a dash of hubris that has only very occasionally been punished.

I feel like the availability of .pdf versions of our fanzines helps us to address the fact that we lack the funds to provide paper copies of such a lavishly appointed fanzine to more than a carefully chosen fraction of the full set of people it is written for and about. I think the really important attribute they possess is increased permanence, allowing you to take a file to a printer years from now and have them bang out a copy identical to one made in 2005.

Greg Benford

Chunga... which kinda sounds like chunderin', yes?...

Good issue! I got it shortly after Worldcon, where as I recall you weren't. The fmz lounge had the feel of a 1950s living room, comfortable.

And a good Worldcon, indeed, with much lobster & 4 days in Maine after. The Japanese won the 2007 bid by a 50% margin, Yokohama, first in Asia, with David Brin and Mike Whelan as GoHs.

I'd been asked to give a Boston Hugo away. But the Retro Hugos (*Mission Of Gravity*, *Caves of Steel*, *More Than Human*, *Childhood's End*, *The Stars My Destination*, & the winner, *Fahrenheit 451*) so contrasted with the pedestrian (contemporary) ballot that I gave way to my declining interest in the award and didn't go at all. Instead, I went to dinner with Marvin Minsky and talked AI, much more fun I suspect than the Hugo ceremony... a right decision, a fascinating evening.

Old Fart Remark: When I started writing sf the likes of Delany & LeGuin contended. The 1953 Retro ballot is studded with great works still in print. Want to estimate how many on this year's ballot will be in print in half a century? That, and the predictability of so many others—the fmz, fanwrit-

I add sternly, "otherwise no one will take you seriously."



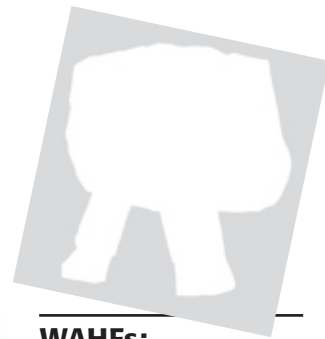
er, editor Hugos etc! I admit I'd kinda like to win one, someday—when I won all the other awards in 1981, *Timescape* didn't even make the Hugo ballot; I didn't go to the ceremony then, either—but it's sad to see it and the Nebula decline so far. How'd the genre get so petrified?

I liked the con reports. Andy on Vegas: I wonder when great fmz will be auctioned on eBay? (or have they been already?) And on seeing Rotsler's ghost: you all should read Greg Bear's *Dead Lines*, with Bill as lead character. Eerie...

Randy's piece was one of the most phildickian fan pieces ever, & witty to boot. What's he do at UWash? I must remember to look him up next I'm there. For years I've been zooming through Seattle on science business and forgetting the fmz folk... Now the SFMuseum's there, and as a board member I try to show up (great opening, I thought), there's no excuse.

"How'd the genre get so petrified?" Well, they put fossilized things in museums, don't they? I think the answer to your question is clearly money. 50 years ago, SF was still a despised subgenre of adventure fiction, most commonly consumed by intellectual misanthropes. Now it is a major literary and dramatic genre with the ability to generate millions of dollars for the right property. I think this tends to mitigate against inventive, challenging fiction, and to favor formulaic space opera and phony social critics who speak to the anxieties of a readership that reaches average intelligence at best.

At the same time, there is still wonderful science fiction being written, even if it might not reach the final ballot of any award for the same tired political reasons we've always seen. I just finished Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Years of Rice and Salt*, having savored its reading for a full year, a beautiful book that actually made me weep in places... and I have Iain M. Banks' *The Algebraist* waiting in the wings. The Hugos may be petrified, but science fiction still seems pretty flexible. ☺



WAHFs:

Don Anderson:
Chunga represents very much the best of what I remember of fanzines from my previous faanish incarnation, brought up to date in both attitude and presentation.

Austin Benson:
... the Lakolas/Gimlilian image will live with me for many years.

Murray Moore:
"I didn't want to leave Central Park and Yankee Stadium and bagels and cream cheese for a city whose main attraction was a giant replica of a hypodermic needle."

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СНУНГА

