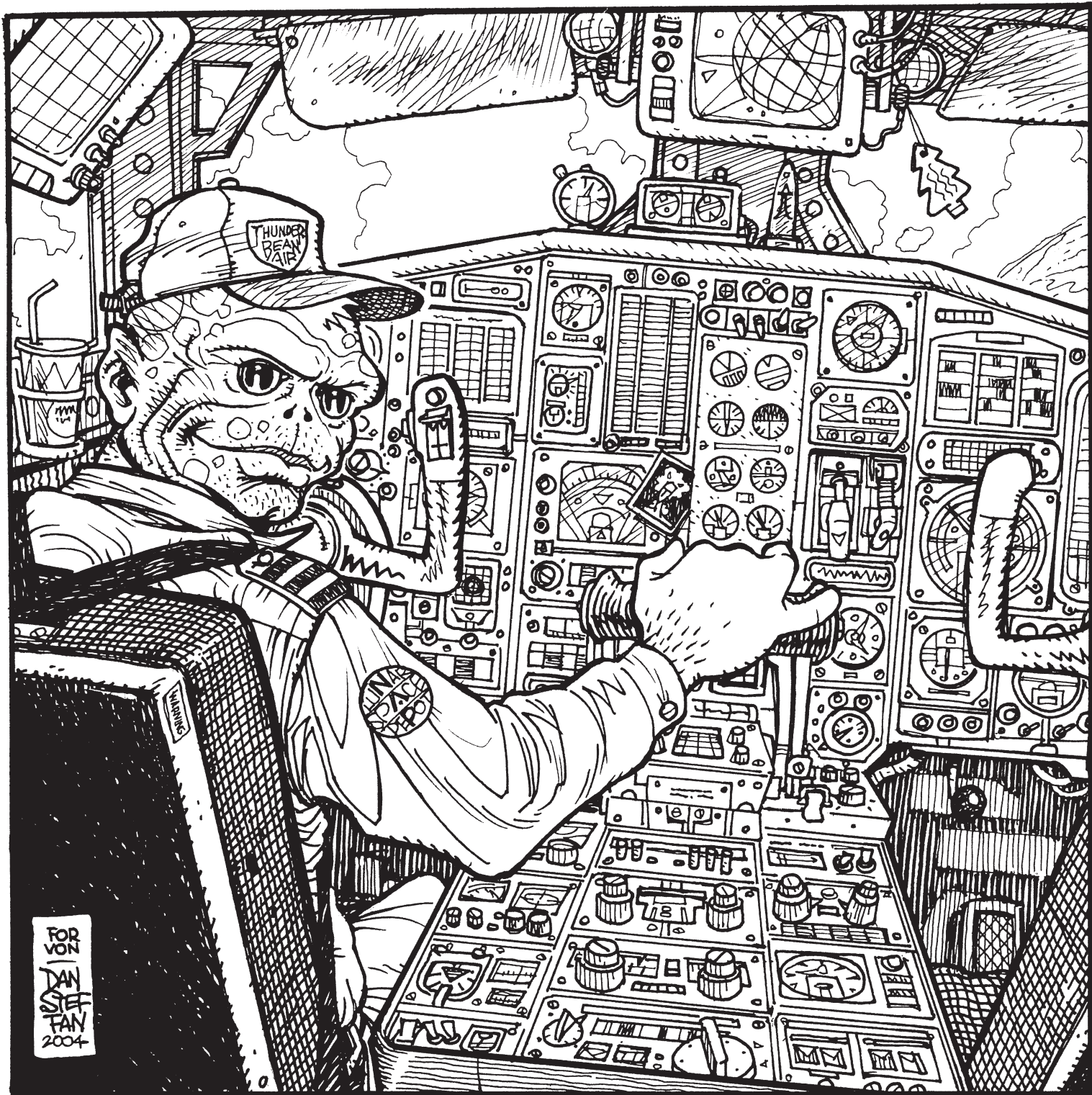


CHUNGA¹¹



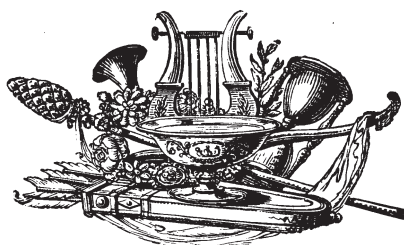
JANUARY 2006

CHUNGA

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Issue II, January 2006



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Tanglewood

Changes in Latitude

One of the difficulties of writing about your love life in a fanzine is that when the relationship you've been writing about comes to an end, you're faced with the choice of either dropping the subject and leaving everyone wondering what the hell happened or of burdening them with another damned sad story, too often told. Fortunately, the end of my romantic relationship with Sharee has not been angry or hurtful or full of any noticeable sound and fury at all. It's been damned friendly, actually.

We agreed to call it off when it became clear that our affection and attraction for each other were not enough to bridge our differences in outlook and lifestyle (not to mention country of residence). Sharee likes the carefree creative gypsy life, while I prefer a life of sturdy bourgeois conformity. (Well, that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.) We actually realized the problematic difference about a year after we hooked up, but we stuck together for another year just because we weren't ready for it to end quite yet. First I had to go back to Australia last December to maybe say goodbye, and then one thing and another led us to Glasgow, where we could have each other's back in stressful, if ecstatic, circumstances.

As I hope my writing on the subject has made clear, we've had a blast together these past two years. It was an incredible romantic adventure that put to rest some awkward history, fulfilled an ancient dream on my part, took us both to new corners of the world, showed me new faces of love, and brought Sharee blazing back into fandom and fanzines. So I'm running my Worldcon report as it was written before we agreed that we weren't a couple anymore, as another tribute to the beauty (amidst terror) of the affair.

Thanks, Sharee. That was probably the best dream I've ever had.

—Randy

It's always been a source of frustration to me that it is so much more difficult to mark the beginning of things than it is to document their end. It would be easy to offer memories of Eugene McCarthy, Richard Pryor and Robert Sheckley, all of whom passed during the last month of this fanzine's lengthy composition period, but it grows wearisome to have nothing to toast but absent friends. But where are we to turn for hope-

ful anticipation? Had fanzines been invented during the Crimean War, it still would have been difficult for their editors to know that they should trumpet the birth of Bob Tucker as a moment of great significance to fandom. While certain of Tucker's attributes were probably perceptible at birth, there was no way to predict the impact that he would have on the shape and history of fandom.

We're always happy to congratulate fans and pros on the birth of their children, but it's always uncertain whether they will grow up to embrace their parents' Way Of Life. At the recent Nasfic, held next to Seattle's airport, it was amusing to see Edd and Amy Vick's daughter Katie tearing around the place with Phil and Kaja Foglio's son. They seemed to be enjoying fandom pretty thoroughly, but there's still no way to know if they'll abandon it all as childish folderol by the time they turn 13.

More concrete encouragement about our fandom's future could be taken from the intense energy and invention of the participants in YAFA (Young Adult Fun Activities) programs and events at last August's Glasgow Worldcon. These are described as having elements of traditional programs, and longtime fannish pursuits like fanzine publishing, mixed with performance art or live-action role-playing. Anyone who wants to reach out to younger fans and make conventions and other events more attractive to them should check out Max's *YAFA Staffer* at Efanazines.com. I thought it all sounded like the best development in the culture of the Worldcon in the time that I've been involved in fandom!

Since they have had such a buoyant effect on my morale, I'm going to try to look for more of this kind of encouraging occasion in the future. After all, at least half the reason that fanzines cover all those milestones is simply to define themselves, to fix the times into which they are released. But there's no reason that we can't find some kind of good news to help enhance the timeliness of this new issue. Why just tonight, I used a coupon to get a three topping large pizza for the price of a medium! And you can do your part by slowing the headlong pace at which you have been retiring, dying and gafiating — what's your hurry? Here's another *Chunga* to help delay those terminal impulses for a few thousand words more. Hope you like it!

—Andy



Large Larger Largesse

The Civic Responsibilities of a Noble Tobes

James Bacon

I was recently at Larger in Derby, which is a medium sized town in the midlands of England. Larger was a Sproutlore affair. I run Sproutlore (The Now Official Robert Rankin Fanclub) and have done for eleven years now, but Andi Evans was running this event. In his early twenties and a drummer in a rock band, Andi's long hair and combats fit in perfectly with the variety that is Sproutlore.

So what's Larger? Author Robert Rankin misspelt Lager when he was writing his first book in 1981 and the editor thought that Large was a particular brand of beer and so it entered fictional mythology as such, as it was always described with great eloquence and quenched every thirst. Andi Evans worked in a bar, and the Bar manager Mark thought it would be possible to get a local brewery to brew some of this legendary beer, and then, to capitalise on such an idea, turn his pub into The Flying Swan, which is the main pub and regular feature in Rankin's Brentford Books.

Andi, as a Sproutlore member, took over at that stage and under the auspices of the club arranged Large last year, which was a huge success. This



year a banner was put across the front of the pub, there were quizzes, raffles, parlour magic, a live performance of some of Robert's work to music, and much drinking and chatting and laughing and courting and quaffing fine pints of Large. All good stuff.

Sproutlore is one of those fringe science fiction groups that exist in the UK and Ireland. Although the focus is on Robert Rankin, it would be fair to say that most of the people into SF at Larger would have been at the previous SF conventions or have known or been in other areas of fandom in the UK. The club has a policy of eschewing sycophantism and ensuring that the main aim is to have a good sociable time, while using literary themes to dictate content. The club has been going 12 years now, we've published 40 fanclub-zines, have held 4 conventions, 4 one-day events and two Large events and generally had a lot of fun.

Sproutlore is a route into the broader Big Tent that is SF fandom, of course. In a similar way that Max came to SF fandom through *Red Dwarf*, and Claire Brialey came through ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha (*Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* fans) and Geneva Melzack came in via comic conventions. It's a route in, a simple and easy route, a friendly and convenient route, and all are welcome.

Or is it? Well as I wrote those words, I thought to ask — you know, investigate further rather than assume, so from Large we digress for a moment . . .

So Claire, would it be fair to say that you came into fandom via ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha?

Yes, absolutely.

I'd been reading sf for three or four years before I discovered the HHG books (there were only two out at the time, I think!) but I didn't know about

fandom at all. My dad had told me about the letters columns of sf magazines when he was a young man, but he didn't really know about fandom as such either. A couple of years later a school friend told me about ZZ9, and after a few months I got round to joining, and about eighteen months after that I went to a London pub meeting.

It was through ZZ9 I found out about the First Thursday, and went to that too. For the first few years I only really hung out with ZZ9 types at pub meets and conventions; I wasn't very keen on the Real Fan (wispy beard/truffan) types who seemed to look down on us all for having a good time.

The rest, as they say, is fan history. Without ZZ9 I wouldn't be here now. I wouldn't have met either of the guys I've had serious relationships with. I wouldn't have any of the friends I have now (apart, perhaps, from that original school friend). I would have gone to a different university and probably had a different career, and I would have found something else to do with my social life and 'spare' time. I'd probably be a different person. ZZ9 was a major influence on my life and who I am today, and I will always feel a lot of affection towards the club and that experience.

Some people always refer to ZZ9 as my 'dodgy media fan background' but I find that really weird; I got into it all through books rather than the radio or TV series, and ZZ9 hung out in 'mainstream' fandom—but retained its distinct identity. But I think it was the mistaken (but common) usage of 'media fan' to mean 'people who aren't like us' rather than anything to do with what sort of sf you're into or how you respond to it.

On the other hand, once I started getting involved with running a Worldcon and then the BSFA—years after Mark did, but he seemed to get away with it as being the first person we knew to 'pass' as a Real Fan (and we knew he was still all right really)—some of my original ZZ9 friends and acquaintances clearly felt that I was going over to the dark side, whereas I thought it was obvious I was just doing what I'd always been doing but in a suddenly widening circle of people who I had only just realised were actually just like us after all.

You probably just wanted a yes or no answer there, right?

Well actually I thought it was an interesting digression, to be honest, and shows how people end up getting into SF fandom. So I seemed mostly right with that one, so on to Max...

So Max, would it be fair to say that you came from Red Dwarf fandom?



Maybe... I was certainly very involved in Red Dwarf fandom, but it didn't really lead me directly to wider fandom. There are some overlaps, though—Nic Farey set up the club initially and I know Jane Killick from when she was writing articles about RD.

I found general SF fandom through the internet, really—mostly rec.arts.sf-fandom. I wish I could remember where/how I heard about Aliens Stole My Handbag. Was there an ad in Ansible? It was around then that I decided to get to know people in person as well as online.

Hmm, that feels like maybe two for two, so maybe my perception isn't all jizzed up me arse, but of course, I too wonder how Max heard about Asthma—a Sproutlore convention.

And finally, to Geneva, fingers crossed...

Geneva, I was wondering, where did you come from to get into fandom?

Well, I read sf books for years before finding fandom. When I started at university I joined OUSFG (the Oxford University Speculative Fiction Group) because I went along to a meeting and everyone knew what I was talking about when I started talking about obscure sf authors. Made lots of friends there, and it was through OUSFG that I got to know members of what had been Oxford's CBS (Comic Book Society) who ran Caption. I didn't know a great deal about comics, certainly not small press comics, but loads of my friends from OUSFG were helping to run Caption so I went along to be sociable.

With OUSFG I went to Picocon, the one day annual convention run by ICSF (Imperial College's sf club) in London. The year after I graduated I



Geneva wonders if the propeller beanie will be "in" this season

went down for Picocon and I picked up a leaflet for Interaction and for that year's Eastercon and joined both. Then I went back home and looked up local sf groups, found the Manchester fan group FONT (Friends of Neal Tringham—who I'd actually met in Oxford through OUSFG) and started going along to that.

Then when I moved down to London I started going to the Tun and joined the BSFA and that was that.

So it's only two out of three there, sure that's a hardcore SF route there if ever there was one, not far from my own disjointed entrance to SF society back in 1989, when I was encouraged to go to the ISFA (Irish SF Assoc). I joined when I was 16, and was on my first SF concom by 18 (the national one, Octocon), but then I sort of went wrong, and started running odd stuff, nearly opposite to Claire. But then my own schizophrenic route will no doubt have me popping across these unknown boundaries for some time to come.

Just shows what a person knows till they ask.

So Tobes of course brings his friend Jonathon to Larger, as I mentioned before. He is of course welcomed. A large stocky fella, burly built, but pleas-

ant and enjoying a drink. Now Tobes previously brought a friend to a Sproutlore event, and that was Damn Fine Convention.

Robert and Hazel Newman, Stefan Lancaster and myself ran DFC. It was a *Twin Peaks* convention. You'll have to work out the Rankin connection yourself. We had all types of experts along, from orchid growers to the secretary of the British Chess Federation, not to mention some published SF experts, the dozens of air guns and the cross beauty, Kim Angel.

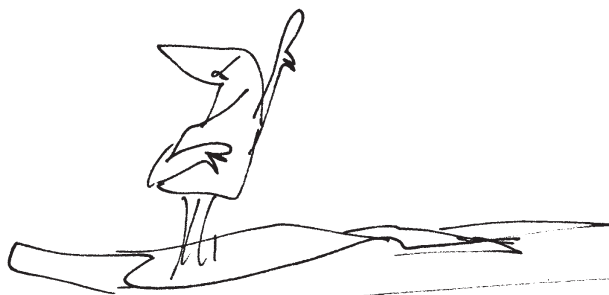
At that time Tobes brought fellow Jerseyman Ian to the convention and why not, he's one of Tobes' best friends, and well, a friend of Tobes etc.

Now DFC was odd, in that on the first night we had a cross-dressing law enforcement disco. This was the first of 3 discos over the weekend. After the Disco there was a sing along *Rocky Horror Picture Show* item planned, at 1am. We don't need sleep you see, and quite a few people were still dressed *en-femme* as one might say.

So in comes Sparks (Mike Rennie), a well-known UK con runner, and he is wearing a lovely tartan skirt. Ian, who has had a few drinks, takes immediate offence at Sparks's choice of clothing, and promptly starts to admonish Sparks for his poor fashion taste and being a bit girlie like.

Ian is drunken enough to turn it into a stand up shove and push session, which momentarily will no doubt turn into a decent fist fight. All the time Sparks is being quite restrained, which is fortunate, given his military background, and I arrive with help to break up the situation. It's ugly, messy, drunken—and Tobes' friend.

We take Ian out—of the room, that is—and calm him down, and Tobes appears on hand to help ease the situation, and we explain about expulsion, and the maiming abilities of a Sparks. It calms down, all is good, as Nic Farey would say. The next day the committee take great pleasure in making an announcement on a Flip Chart, under-



The speech that launched his career

neath a Programme change.

'The Committee request that convention attendees do not start drunken fist fights down the back of programme items, or they will be ejected'

It was funny. Everyone stopped to read it, and immediately everyone knew something had happened, despite the rumour factory that had spread like wildfire, but sure, a committee with diesel is a bad thing.

Ian behaved himself, and was spot on for the rest of the weekend and is always welcome at our cons. My good friend Tobes was overly apologetic, as is his wont. He is just too good a person, to be honest, we can't be responsible for the sins of our fathers, let alone our drunken mates. Although no better place than a con to get lashed up—but not smashed up, please.

So here I am at Larger, and Tobes has brought Jonathon. Now I trust Tobes impeccably, he is charming, erudite and very well versed in SF literature. He has been coming to Irish conventions nearly as long as I have and has always supported our endeavours. Obviously he is well known about fandom for his drunken antics, although these are lessening, which is good for his migraine, to be honest, although I wonder how many people actually look forward to the jester in Tobes coming out. Me, I have shared a room with him, and much prefer the sober conversationalist and well read SF fan.

But we are at a Larger event, which means a special beer, and even I have had a few beers, instead of my usual Cider, (I am allowed to drink as I am not officially in charge—cops only talk to sober people) and it's late, now, just after 12, which was an extension as it was to the usual pub hours, and there is a chuffuffle in the Lounge, nothing serious. I head that way anyhow, and see Max and sit down and chat with her. It's been a great day of chats and drinks and free sandwiches.

Tobes and Jonathon arrive back from the bar, Tobes is disgusted, and he has been refused service. He is relatively not drunk, but his associate is very drunk, and the bar man felt Jonathon had had enough, and therefore no more, and that meant for Tobes as well, as he was slyly considering doing the decent thing and getting one for Jonathon.

Jonathon tries to pressurize me to buy him a drink. I am too long at this lark, and brush his appeals away. Then he goes through to the bar next door, and arrives back with a brandy, to Tobes astonishment and utter contempt.

Jonathon flicks it back with haste and considers getting more, at which stage Tobes intervenes.



'No mate, you can't have anymore, you've had enough, they won't serve you, it's enough, call it a day.'

I start to laugh at the irony of the situation, but am aware that deeper there is an underlying genuine concern and nobility on behalf of Tobes. Of course, I know a good thing, and call over Jim de Liscard in order to gain a witness to this shocking development.

'NO MATE YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH DRINK' says Tobes. And if he says it, it must be true, and that puts an end to it, although those now all staring in our direction, which is most of the pub, are amused and flabbergasted.

It's grand. Jonathon takes heed of Tobes and relaxes a bit, and I head off laughing at the interesting predicament Tobes found himself in. A good night, made better by true Jersey nobility. ☺



Pirates of the Fan Lounge

Hugo-A-Gogo

Sharee Carton

I've tried, but I find it impossible to confine myself to just the convention. As it was my first trip to the UK/Europe, everything was too memorable.

Shopping in Camden markets the same day the bombs failed to detonate on the Tube; meeting up with Pascal Thomas in Rodez, France for an Occitan music festival, and driving back to Toulouse via the medieval cities of Albi and Cordes; stumbling upon the Dover bookshop while looking for the bar where I was to catch up with Malcolm Edwards for the first time in 18 years; visiting Dave O'Neill and Maryse in Bath with Randy and finding an adder in the Avebury churchyard while photographing headstones; experiencing the Frida Kahlo exhibit at the Tate Modern; Walkers Pub where I finally met Dave Langford, amongst others; the post-Walkers Tube Party where I confessed to Joseph Nicholas that in the early '80s I lived in fear that he would do a KTF review of one of my fanzines; Edinburgh Old Town and graveyards and watching *Donnie Darko* (in black-and-red?!) with Lilian Edwards; all these things

stand out as every bit as memorable as the Glasgow Worldcon.

But you are probably more interested in the people and events of the actual con, so I'll warn you now that I saw the dealers room only

once (to catch up with Eileen Gunn during her book signing), the art show not at all, and the only program items I attended outside the fan area were Ian Sorensen's play and the Hugo ceremonies. Oh, and the parties at the Hilton, but we'll get to that.

When Randy and I arrived in Glasgow from Edinburgh, I went off to meet a distant cousin while Randy checked out the con. By the time I arrived at the SECC, he had figured out all the essentials—the route from registration to the fan area and where the Real Ale was to be had.

I soon found myself on the floor with Tobes and James Bacon, which I was to learn was not unusual for Tobes, but rarely was James to be found again for more than five minutes unless it was at the Sproutlore party. Damien Warmen appeared in his Utilikilt and did a pirouette for us, proving he really did have the best legs at the con. (And ooh, those burgundy Doc Martens!) Around the same time I met Anders Holmström and have a definite memory of him kneeling at my feet and kissing my knuckles. These European fans don't waste any time! But that was only after Randy, Anders, and Jim de Liscard—the Men In Black—spent several hours evaluating the quality of the various Real Ales.

Occasionally I would join the Smoker's Panel outside, where David Pringle and several others were engaged in the popular past-time of exchanging Harlan horror stories, and there I met sweet Abi Brown. Sixteen, daughter of a fan, attending her first convention—she impressed me over the next few days with her ability to meet people and join in as though she'd been doing cons for years. Of course, I was the same age when I first discovered fandom.

I wasn't aware that Saturday was the official day for corsets, so I wore mine on Friday as part of my



A Worldcon Report in Two Parts

outfit for the pirate party, aaarh! At one point someone asked to take a photo of Catherine Crockett and myself, and Dave Langford seized the opportunity to run his fingernails up and down both our backs. Randy looked very cute in a black singlet and black leather vest with a skull bandana on his head. Anders of course stole the show as usual with his shiny black vinyl pants, grey long sleeved tunic and a marvellous black suede jacket with fringes.

Later, at the Hilton, a group of us including Anders, David Cake, Jim de Liscard, Meike, and Lennart Uhlin decided to check out the Clarion South party, where I met the people behind the Brisbane version of the Clarion writers workshops. They soon vanished, so we took over their suite and had our own party. David took a little nap and missed out on Randy and Anders exchanging shirts and vests, complete with name badges and ribbons, and we were presented with Randers and Andall! When Jim jumped in between them for a photo it became quite camp. Later, Meike told me she had warned Jim that if he didn't want to be mistaken for gay, he shouldn't wear tight leather pants and pose for photos with two other guys similarly attired!

Somewhere during one of my circuits of the parties I started talking with a couple of young guys and found out they were Latvian. Latvian! Damien and Juliette (who were on their GUFF trip) were going to Latvia and didn't know anyone there! I had to find them! I didn't have much luck finding them, and the guys I was dragging around didn't speak enough English to understand what I was trying to tell them. One of them excused himself and soon returned with a much older guy who looked like a professor in his cream jacket and glasses. I explained about D&J's trip, and he leered and said, "You are coming too? Why you are not



Our intrepid reporters

coming too? You are *pri-stess of night!* Here is my card, if you not can sleep, you call. I not sleep after meeting you. I wait for you to call." I took the card and made him promise to meet me at the fan area bar at 1pm. The things I do for fan funds! I spent the rest of the night trying to avoid him when I was in the halls, hiding behind people and going the other way.

Next day I attended a panel about fan funds, comprised of Suzle, Damien, James, Tobes and Juliette. On my way in, the Latvian dudes showed up to tell me they would be back at 2pm, but it wasn't till later that night that I managed to hook Damien up with them, and it was arranged that the older dude would meet them at the airport and they would stay with him.

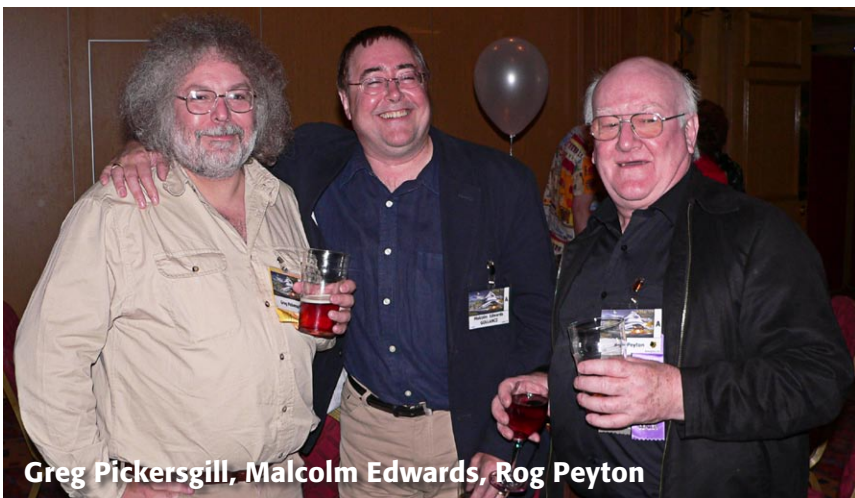
Back in the fan lounge Anders wowed everyone with his tight black velvet pants, flowing shirt and royal purple velvet vest, and the best pair of fold down black leather boots I've seen outside of Shakespearean repertory theatres. As I ran my hands up and down the purple velvet, Anders confided to me in a low voice, "Years ago I learned the benefits of strokable fabrics." I can certainly see that!

On to the Hilton for another night of parties. At one point I came across a very suggestive tableau of Jim de Liscard with his head under Flick's skirt, and later he was trying to remove a stuffed penguin from out of her cleavage — with his teeth!

Overall the room parties weren't too exciting, and a foray to the main bar led us to Christina



by Dave O'Neill, Tobes, James, and whoever else floated past. Someone told us about the 1/2er party, and we headed out to try perry and seriously hard cider—I had a couple of small tastes and decided it was too late in the evening for such hardcore alcohol content and returned to the PRFP, where Damien provided us with living proof of the dangers of hanging with Jumbo—apparently James had tipped him back and poured Irish whiskey down his throat. Finally the bar manager told us they were closing, so I jumped up to take a photo. He offered to take a couple, and somehow between the two shots I ended up with Anders and Jim in my lap and Christina had Doug and Lennart in hers.



The next day Randy and I didn't spend much time at the con itself. I went shopping for shoes, and Randy went to the rehearsal for the Hugos. I was finally going to get a chance to wear my fuchsia satin party dress that I'd had for ten years and never worn! (When you work at sea and live in the bush, you don't get to dress up much.) I was also taking advantage of the opportunity to wear the rhinestones my mother passed on to me a couple of years ago. Randy looked very debonair in his black pants and shirt, and grey jacket with burgundy tie.



The reception before the awards was a room full of people in that bizarre never-never land of trying to be polite and act nonchalant while their guts are twisted in both hope and terror of winning. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer looked triff in their matching fawn and black; Juliette and Damien looked regal in formal black; Alison Scott, Giulia de Cesare, Flick, and Sue Mason were all gorgeous in long dresses. Giulia's handmade beaded jewelry and bag could only be described as sublime. I wish I'd made it to the artshow just to see more of her work.

Lake and Doug Bell, holding court at the best party of the night, the Permanent Revolving Floor Party. I made a couple of rounds of the other parties but always ended up back on the floor. And yes, Tobes was there, with his ever present flask of Calvados. The main core of the PRFP were Christina and Doug, Lennart, Ken Shine and Clarrie O'Callaghan, Anders, Jim, Randy and myself, with regular fly-bys

I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned to find a tall, stunning brunette in a black crinoline skirt, red and black vinyl corset, and lace-up black vinyl boots, standing with a dashing shaven-headed fellow wearing an elegant black suit and several large hoops through one ear. She introduced herself as Jesse and said they had been admiring the tattoo on my shoulder, the archaeopteryx.

I glanced at the guy's name badge and thought, "Ah, so this is the China Miéville that I've heard so much about!" Jesse had a fine black dragonfly tattoo between her shoulder blades, and I asked to take a photograph. She said I should see her lizard and lifted the left side of her skirt to reveal a gecko peeking out above her black fishnet stocking; so I lifted the left side of my skirt to reveal my pair of black lizards in the same spot!

One of the most dazzling couples of the evening was definitely James and Simoné, he in a black suit with his hair spiked in front, and she in a deep red taffeta gown and wrap. My vote for most outstanding outfit, however, goes without question to David Hartwell, resplendant in tie-dye t-shirt, impressionist painting design short-sleeve shirt, red and black post-modern blazer and brown plaid slacks, topped off with a silver bowler hat and matching balloons. Only David could have pulled that one off!

As to be expected, the awards seemed endless and the tension in the row with the fanzine nominees was palpable. I'm sure you know which awards went to whom, so I won't go into that here. Some of my fave snaps of the con are of the Plokta Cabal at the after party seated with their rockets lined up in front of them, with various expressions of fascination, incredulousness, and lustful gloating. Then there is Sue Mason, cradling her rocket like it was a beauty queen's bouquet, unable to stop smiling.

After the awards there were double-decker buses to take everyone to the Hilton, with the first three reserved for those with invitations to the party. We saw Malcolm Edwards outside, and I confess that I took unseemly delight in Randy being able to use his status as a nominee to get him past the security dude checking for invites. "Gee, Malcolm, isn't it nice to know the right people?" I said to him as we climbed up to the top deck.

I didn't find the Hugo party too impressive, although I did like the silver balloons. They were only serving wine, so I ducked out to the main bar for cider and beer and found myself standing next to Susannah Clarke, who was still holding her Hugo and looking stunned. I congratulated her and said I'd seen a review of *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* a few months ago and meant to pick up a copy. She insisted on buying my drinks. I thought that was very cool of her!

Before long Randy and I wandered off to check out the evening's selection of parties. James had given me instructions on how to get into the Sproutlore party, where Tobes told me there was cider available. "Since you're not Irish, tell them you are a member of Sproutlore, you're a Robert Rankin fan, and that James Bacon sent you." However, when he heard me repeat this to Lilian Edwards a few minutes later, he said, "You won't get in!" We took this as a challenge, but after watching several people get turned away at the door, we paused to review our strategy. Dave O'Neill overheard our dilemma and said, "Follow me!" He knocked on the door and, when it opened,

her pool boy Ben Affleck for involving them in my fantasies."





Justin Ackroyd, Ian Sorensen

yelled, “M’hinge!” and ushered us in while the rest of the room was M’hinge-ing back. This was only the first of several visits to the Sproutlore party, even though Tobes was only able to find me one cider. (Tobes was runner-up to Anders for title of Procurer Supremo.)

The Permanent Rotating Floor Party: Mark II was in full swing with the Usual Suspects, and I spent most of the evening cycling between that and Sproutlore. Anders proved himself invaluable, as always, in procuring suitable beverages and snacks at the slightest hint. A mere, “Anders, I’m hungry and all the food at the parties is gone,” or, “Anders, do you know where there is any cider?” would inevitably result in provisions appearing as if by magic. Like that magic bottle of Calvados he was carrying around. (What’s it got in its pocket, my Precious?) A very nice addition in a bottle of cider.

The last day was pretty quiet as things wound down. As part of closing down the fan area there were awards given out to various folk, including Abi Brown as Best New Content Provider (Alison

told how she had given Abi the job of procuring a couple of cases of champagne from the hotel; only when Abi left did Alison realise she had just given a wad of cash to a 16-year-old to buy alcohol!) and Catherine Crockett for Best Autograph (sez Catherine, “Dave was complaining that his brother, Jon Langford, always gets women asking for his autograph because he’s in a band, so I asked Dave to sign my chest to make him feel better.”)

And finally it was time to say good-bye to these people I’d had such a great time with for the past five days. I caught Dave Langford on his way out the door and got a photo of him holding his Pillar of TAFF sculpture, and a couple of pix of Abi, who by now had accumulated quite an array of ribbons, including 2nd Generation Fan, Real SMOFs Don’t Wear Ribbons, and a Real Tits pin. I hated to say good-bye to Anders and Tobes and Lilian and Claire and Mark and, well, everyone, knowing they all live so far away it might be ages till I see them again. Years ago I’d heard that the Worldcons held outside the US were smaller and more fun, and I’d have to agree. It hadn’t felt like a Worldcon at all, more like a Corflu, and the credit for that goes to the Plokta crowd and their helpers for doing such a magnificent job with the fan area.

Our last day in Glasgow, Randy and I wandered around town and met up with David Cake and Karen McKenna by chance. We had a great day at the Glasgow Cathedral and the Necropolis, followed by a drink at Glasgow’s oldest public house, the Old College Bar, and dinner with Catherine Crockett and Colin Hinz. I hadn’t really talked to Karen at the con, and it was a delight to find out what a smart, funny person she is.

And so ended my first visit to the UK. I loved every minute of it, and I really must go back for longer and have a proper look around. Let’s see: James in Dublin, Lilian in Edinburgh, my cousin in Glasgow, Christina and Doug in Cornwall, Dave and Maryse in Bath, Alison Freebairn and everyone else in London, Dave Langford in Reading, the Pickersgills in Wales ... and of course there’s Anders and Lennart in Sweden and Pascal in France ... are there fans in Italy or Greece? I’ve always wanted to go there ... this might require a few months! ☹



Pirates of the Fan Lounge

Hugoing Going Gone

Randy Byers

Welcome back to fandom, babe! One of the great pleasures of this Worldcon was my personal transformation from the one and only Randy Byers, two-fisted TAFF bureaucrat and internationally-acclaimed winner of the FAAn Award for Best Hugo Nominee, into someone whom Ian Sorensen, with bland glee, took to calling That Guy With Sharee—a forgotten appendage of the hottest, freshest, loveliest photographer, gypsy punk, pirate queen, and dega-fiating faned in all Australia, if not all the world.

Sharee and I had originally planned to meet in Mexico City in July for the wedding of some friends, but when Fiamma and Alphonso postponed the wedding, my thoughts immediately turned to Glasgow, which I had been pining for as soon as *Chunga* was nominated for the Hugo and Claire Brialey asked if I'd be there. "As Sue Mason remarked," Claire wrote, "at least the losers party should be a bloody good piss-up." I wanted to attend the bloody Hugo losers party with a bad babe on my arm, oh yes, I did. Sharee was only too happy to accept the invitation. It seemed a brilliant enough award in itself—and obviously the only award I was going to get that night. I was under no illusions that *Chunga* had any chance at winning a rocket.

Of course, what I hadn't planned on was China Miéville arriving at the pre-Hugo reception with a bad babe on *his* arm. Next time maybe I'll try a smoldering look, since it certainly worked for him. All I could manage this time around was a moon-eyed panic-stricken look. Or at least that's how I *felt* I looked. While Sharee—who looked absolutely stunning herself in a fuchsia satin party dress—compared tattoos with Miéville's Amazonian consort, Jesse, I wandered through the hordes of friends and strangers, lamely teasing David Hartwell that his typically garish ensemble was actively evil, and feeling utterly nauseous with nerves. Hadn't really planned on that part either. Was this supposed to be fun?

"How quickly the Hugo went from seeming completely irrelevant to being, surprisingly, actually quite important," as Mark Plummer observed. What was worse was that even though I knew *Chunga* had no hope of winning, I still desperately hoped it would. The *hors d'oeuvres* were served, but my stomach was in such a knot that I couldn't begin to imagine eating anything.

"Good," said Alison Scott, with grim satisfaction. "I'm glad I'm not the only one."

However, it seemed that going to the ceremony on an empty stomach was a terrible idea, so I nibbled a couple of dainty morsels... and immediately felt

never found the body, and the boys and I had meant to carry out an autopsy...





Dave O'Neill and close friend

calmer. So of course that's when Mike Scott and Flick excitedly told me they knew how many rockets there were and that clearly at least one category was going to have multiple winners. It was impossible to tell if it meant two winners in two categories or three in one. However, three was possible, which meant that perhaps *Plokta* or *Chunga* had won. This news sent my desperate hopes spinning out of control. I tried doing the math myself while Flick tried to distract me with her shiny new engagement ring. Numbers and rings whirled meaninglessly through the unplumbable abyss of my mind.

Sitting in the darkness at the ceremony shortly thereafter, I wrestled with sheer, raw, pulsing, sweaty terror. I had written *A Little Speech Just In Case (Not That It's Likely, Of Course)*, but I couldn't

imagine delivering it now. If we won, my heart would start jackhammering against my ribs and ricocheting into my throat, where it would block the passage of words, which would only escape in a weak, stuttering, pinched falsetto. *I-I-I-I feel. I-I-I-I should apologize. To the Plok-k-k-k-ta Cabal before they take me. Out to the car. P-p-p-park and work me. Over.*

Oh, the humiliation! I writhed in agony in my seat and wondered whether I could ask Sharee to go up in my place. Would people think that was weird? Then there was Suzle up at the podium announcing that *Plokta* had won. Of course.

"Some day all this will be yours," Dave Langford said, indicating with a sweep of his hand a table full of smudged, empty pint glasses—but I wasn't ready to clean up just yet, obviously. Anyway, that was the next day, the last day of the convention, in the fan lounge. (The *Plokta Cabal* deserved a Hugo for Best Fan Lounge, too.)

David Marusek, who was sitting to my left in the dark of the ceremonies, leaned over and said, "Sorry you didn't get it."

I gave him a plastic smile. "That's okay," I lied, although I followed it with the truth: "We didn't expect to win." I wanted to sound cool and ruefully accepting, but instead I sounded like a crushed, discarded styrofoam cup. David flinched away from my naked pain.

The Hugo loser's party was pretty much a complete bust after that high point. I got in ahead of most everyone for a plate of more *hors d'oeuvres*, but the drink line was a mile long for a glass of crappy wine. Thankfully the ever cheerful Sharee, who after all still looked absolutely ravishable in her amazing fuchsia dress, winged her way to the outside bar and brought me a beer paid for by the Hugo-winning Susannah Clarke. I sat at a table that had been quickly redubbed the *Plokta Spaceport* and tried to be cheerful and congratulatory, or at least wryly amusing.

"That's it," I said mournfully. "If we're going to be snubbed for the Hugo, I quit. Fuck it. I'm done with fanzines."

Steve Davies gave me a look of mounting incredulity. "Try losing six times in a row first!" he cried. He laughed maniacally and went back to obsessively fingering the subtle flaw he'd discovered in his rocket.

The Cabal soon disappeared, and if I'd been paying attention to my surroundings rather than pretending to be chipper while I secretly wallowed in gloom, I would have told Sharee we should follow them. From what I heard



Suzanne Tompkins, Juliette Woods, Damien Warman

the next day, the celebratory party back at the Fan Lounge was one of the highlights of the convention. Instead I exchanged mobile phone texts with Alison Freebairn, who was kind enough to send a clever consolation message from London. I whirled around the Hilton ballroom a bit trying to help Lilian Edwards get past the door monitors into the party, but I was afraid to ask Janice Gelb if she'd do me a favor. I mean, what had I ever done for her? So GUFF god Damien Warman asked her instead, while I stood back feeling useless and GUFF goddess Juliette Wood stood back beaming admiration at him.

Somewhere along the way, Hugo administrator Paul Dormer announced that the vote tallies had been released.

"Don't tell Randy the fanzine results!" Jerry Kaufman warned.

"Why not?" I asked. "Did we come in last?" It didn't seem possible that my heart could sink any lower, but it exceeded expectations.

"At least you weren't beaten by No Award," Jerry observed helpfully.

Sharee returned from working the crowd in her usual gregarious and effervescent manner. "Do you still love me even though I lost the Hugo?" I asked her in another pathetically lame attempt to be wry.

"I love you even more," she said matter-of-factly, and she kissed me on the cheek with her glossy fuchsia lips. Dang it, things were looking up all of a sudden!

So we wandered out of the ballroom and into the madding crowd, and there were our friends partying on the floor. There was Anders Holmström with an ancient, dusty bottle of the Oud Beersel brewery's Oude Geuze Vielle that he had been saving for a special occasion. There was Tobes Valois with his ever ready flask of Calvados. There was Doug Bell and Christina Lake and Lennart Uhlin looking all cute and cherubic and happy as hell. There was James Bacon shouting *Mehinghe!* with Stef. There was Dave O'Neill cuddling his special bottle of Glenmorangie like a baby. There was Anders with an ancient, dusty bottle of Calvados that he'd been saving for a special occasion. Here we all were at a special occasion. Here, in fact, was the bloody good piss-up I'd been dreaming of (although perhaps not quite as good as the boody good piss-up the night before.) Here was Sharee still looking radiant in her gleaming fuchsia dress.

I was in Glasgow, Scotland at the World Science Fiction Convention with Sharee frickin' Carton. Who'd'a thunk it? Who'd'a dreamt it? *Was* it all a dream?

Two nights before, at 4am, we'd said ta ta to

our lovely friends at the convention and stumbled out into the night. Our hotel looked so close on the map, but we got lost (my fault) and wandered quite far in the wrong direction. Somewhere in the middle of Glasgow at 4am we ran into a brawl outside a nightclub. A young man came running in our direction with another in deadly pursuit. Someone was shouting, "Murder! Murder!" The first young man hit the concrete not far from us, and the other started kicking him in the ribs. Another guy rushed up to join him at the task. The guy on the ground was bleeding, he was screaming for mercy, trying to explain. We edged around them and continued up the sidewalk as more young men came running down the street, dodging past us on the way. Nobody paid us any attention. We threaded our way through the people standing outside the club, and nobody reacted in any way to our presence. We were clearly invisible, although we were both dressed as pirates. A young woman swung her purse wildly at a young man who raced past her, and screamed a hot curse after him.

We were lost and invisible in the dark streets of a strange city, and the boys cried out in pain and anger, and the streets ran with rivers of Scottish blood. But I was with my pirate queen, and I was riding high on her smile, with her arm looped through mine; she'd be there on my arm at the Hugos too, and I might be her forgotten appendage, you might no longer remember who I am, if you ever knew — just another nameless TAFF functionary and meaningless-Hugo loser — but I tell you, my friend, it was *all* good. Oh yes. It was fucking glorious.

Sic transit gloria mundi. ☹



think they would have been very happy to be allowed to defecate on themselves.

Fandom done right?

Christina Lake

Nobody needs telling that *Banana Wings* is a fine fanzine, or that Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey are two of the most energetic fans in existence. There is a consistency and depth to *Banana Wings* which for all its style *Plokta* can never match. This comes largely from Claire's thoughtful explorations of life in all its facets and Mark's ability to see the bizarre and amusing side of fandom and the world we live in.

But the knock-out article in *Banana Wings* 23 comes from James Bacon. I've read some pretty strange stuff from James in the past — written in the “raw Baconian” as Mark Plummer once put it — but this is the first time I've really “got” James. The article is about James Bacon's experience with being part of the committee for the 2005 British Eastercon and really it's all laid out in there. He's a guy with a mission — a passion — for pushing the boundaries. It might not necessarily be stuff I want to do at conventions, but it left me with great respect for what James was trying to achieve.

The strength of the writing is that James takes you into his world and calls it as he sees it, to the extent that some aspects of his confrontation with traditional fandom make for uncomfortable reading, at least for someone with my background. The strength of the editing in the fanzine is that Claire and Mark do not immediately leap to anyone's defense. In fact the article is cleverly woven into a context where Kim Huett talks about the early days of Australian fandom, Mark goes on a kind of scrapheap challenge trail to help James Bacon source raw materials for the Young Adult programme at Interaction and Claire writes a two-parter on working in the bookroom at conventions. The second part of Claire's piece follows on directly after James's article, and focuses on some of the downsides to this activity. And then Claire quietly slips in that her experience of Paragon 2 was very different from James Bacon's. She mentions feeling disaffected and cut off, and tries to analyse what it

is about Eastercons (or maybe that particular Eastercon) which does this, and what she thinks science fiction fandom and conventions are for. It's all very lucid, as you would expect from Claire, unusually downbeat and something of a reality check.

In terms of coherence, *Banana Wings* should have ended there, but then we would have missed out on David Redd's fascinating look at Christopher Priest's short story *The Negation*, and the rather mind-boggling concept of Cardinal Cox as Poet Laureate for Peterborough, not to mention a healthy letter column.

Plokta has not notably been a home for fan-nish controversy, so it was strange to find the same discussion of Eastercon spilling over into its pages. The current *Plokta* was being particularly endearing and domestic with the shock discovery of head lice in Jonathan Cain, Giulia de Cesare's attempts to come to terms with owning a garden and Alison Scott's confession of being an unreconstructed Kansas fan, when along comes a long (by *Plokta* terms), serious (ditto, though they do their best to hide this by adding amusing photos) and well-reasoned article by Max about the Eastercon debate. Max is responding to an article by Peter Weston on Trufen.net (handily referenced in *Plokta*. Isn't the Internet wonderful?), but she begins by defining what she looks for from fandom, which possibly is not quite the same as Claire. Where Claire puts the emphasis on a shared interest in science fiction, Max is into the science fiction mindset with possibly more emphasis on science than fiction. They are not poles apart, but clearly concerned about where they fit in should their type of fandom no longer be deemed relevant. As a result, Claire worries about losing touch with the zeitgeist, whilst Max piles on the proof that it is Peter Weston who is out of touch. Paradoxically Max's vigorous and well-argued defense of her generation's right to have fun

Fanzines reviewed

Banana Wings 23
Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer
59 Shirley Road, Croydon,
Surrey CR0 7ES

Plokta Volume 10, No. 2
Steve Davies
3 Sandgate Avenue, Reading,
Berks RG30 6XD
Alison Scott, 24 St Mary Road,
Walthamstow, London E17
9RG
Mike Scott, 13 Collette Court,
Eleanor Close, London SE16
6PW

Zoo Nation 6
Pete Young
62 Walmer Road, Woodley,
Berkshire RG5 4PN

in any way they choose had the effect of increasing my sympathy for Peter and Claire's positions, even though I agreed with almost every word Max said when defining what fandom was to her.

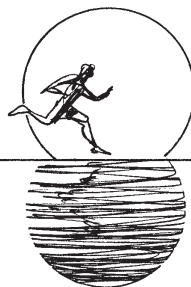
But I suspect *Plokta* didn't win its Hugo by publishing articles like Max's. It won for its sense of fun, eye for a good gag and ability to draw people into the *Plokta* community (and, obviously, draw people within the *Plokta* community. But we're not talking about Sue Mason here). The latest issue features all of these, in a new user-friendly A5 layout where you can actually distinguish the articles from the jokes. The format works really well, even if the shiny cover does remind me a bit of a publisher's brochure. But will the cabal's appetite for publishing survive winning that elusive Hugo at long last? Well, it never put Langford off. And they do seem to be having too much fun to stop.

Where I wonder does *Zoo Nation* sit in the traditional vs modern fandom debate? It's a paradigm of the new style of fanzine: colour cover, plentiful and often artistic use of photography, serious about science fiction but not afraid to have fun. It's enough to make you believe that book reviews and poetry are cool! But if you want commentary on the fannish issues of the day, then you have come to the wrong place. In fact, rather than analyse the last Eastercon or treat us to amusing anecdotes and photos, editor Pete Young prefers to transcribe a discussion he and a group of his mates had about the recent BBC docu-drama, *Space Odyssey*.

However, since the mates in question are the likes of Tony Keen, Simon Bradshaw and other familiar faces around British fandom, it would be difficult to suggest that *Zoo Nation* does not exist within the continuum of the fanzine scene. The latest issue also features articles by Steve Green and Maureen Kincaid Speller, not to mention letters by all the usual suspects (I do wonder sometimes if all that fanzines today have in common is their letter writers.) Moreover, like most good fanzines, it's built around solid writing. Maureen ponders the etiquette of what to do when former friends get famous, making some interesting points about our relationship with the past in the process. Frank Wu asks some very pertinent questions about why SF art does not engage with the real world in the way other contemporary art does. Steve Green's *Premature Burial* thankfully featured nothing more disastrous than an unstable pile of fanzines. As for the previously mentioned discussion of *Space Odyssey*, it managed to stay, mostly, on the right side of space geek talk, though failed to convince me that the programme really constituted science fiction, at least not as we know it.

But as with previous issues of *Zoo Nation*, what makes the fanzine special is the little touches of strangeness, such as *Ordering Pizza* in 2008, an amusing piece on the information society taken to the ultimate extreme, and Cromwell's *Moonshot*, a poem (i'faith!) about putting Roundheads on the moon. Pleasingly the theme of the fanzine, in this case *Lights in the sky*, is never laboured, but woven in and out of the issue, and given many different interpretations.

I still feel that *Zoo Nation* for all its merits is not the kind of fanzine I was brought up to admire when I first entered fandom. Back then, in the self-absorbed '80s, to write a fanzine about anything other than oneself and one's friends seemed ludicrously beside the point. Sercon was a dirty word, and far from being an idol of the establishment, Peter Weston was pointed out as an exemplar of this discredited school. Publishing in A5 format was deemed desperately unfannish. (Lilian Edwards and I were often told that an A5 fanzine would never win a Nova.) But times change, and now we have the Internet for the instant community building, anecdotes and gossip of the former style of fanzine. The fanzines I receive nowadays seem to be more comfortable with following their own interests, whether that be obscure films, musical influences or rural folk psychedelia (I kid you not, though it's hard to read *Owl Soup* with a packet of instant grits taped to the front if the very thought of instant grits makes you want to gag!). They come in all shapes and sizes too—from a landscape format *Tortoise* to Flick's winsome and beautifully presented *Shiny Shiny*, and *Bento*, the fanzine so small that you can lose it on the beach (well, I seem to have done so!). Good personal writing still exists—there's a fair amount of it in two other fanzines I received at Interaction, Lilian Edward's final ever *Floss* (honest, guv!) and Sharee Carton's excellent second issue of *Right Up There* (published a mere 20 years after the first). But fanzines are moving on, which is good news. Maybe we've reached the point where everyone can finally accept that there ain't no right way to do fandom, so we should forget the externalities and get on with feeling the energy? It's a pity the same still can't be said for conventions. ☺



Other fanzines mentioned

Owl Soup
Punchable Nun
Basement Flat, 4 Elliston
Road, Redland, Bristol BS6
6QE

Shiny! Shiny!
Flick
13 Collette Court, Eleanor
Close, London SE16 6PW

Bento 17
David Levine & Kate Yule
1905 SE 43rd Avenue,
Portland, Oregon 97215, USA

Tortoise 20
Sue Jones
Flat 5, 32-33 Castle Street,
Shrewsbury Sy1 2BQ

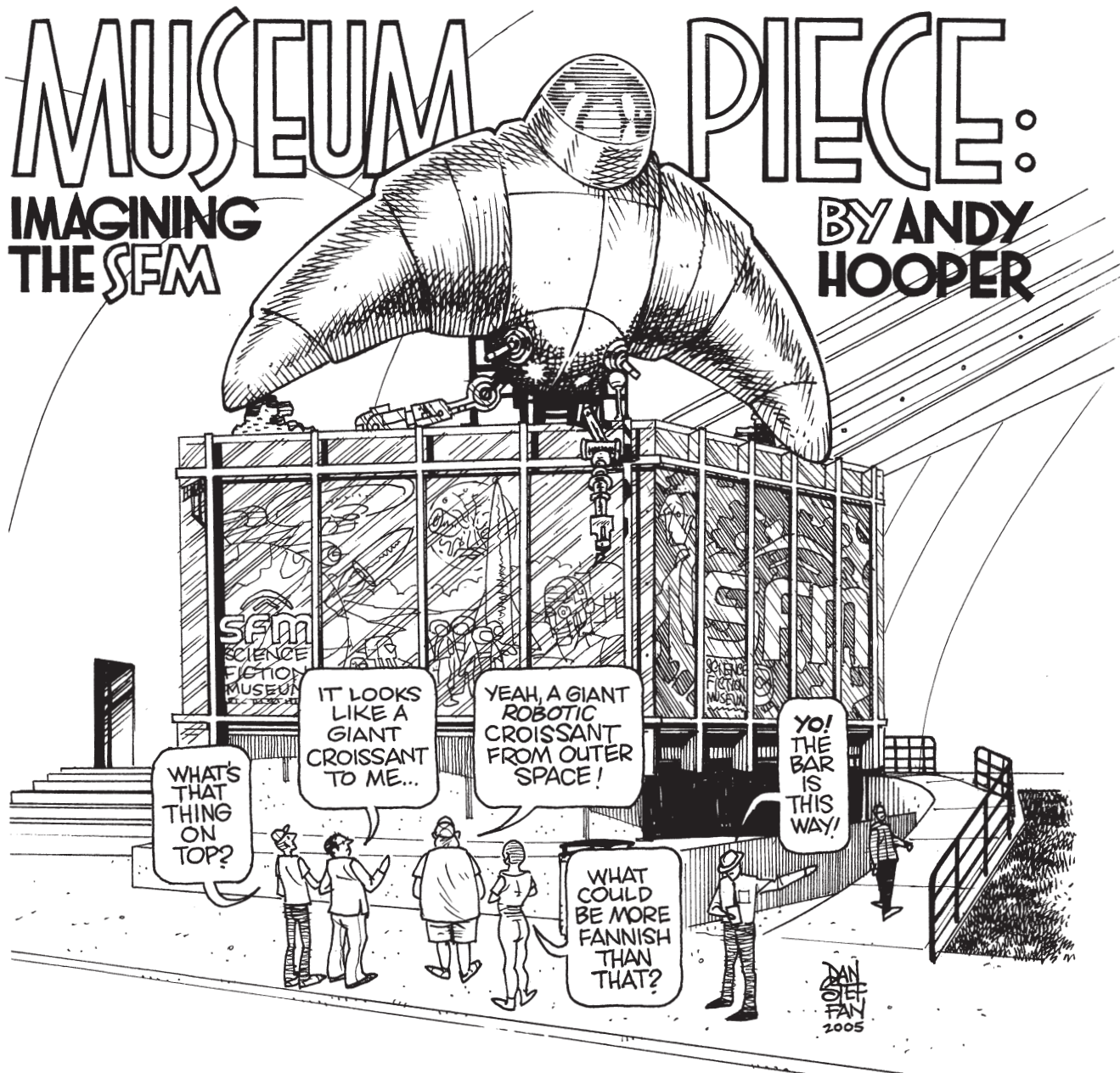
Floss 5
Lilian Edwards
39 (1F2) Viewforth,
Edinburgh EH10 4JE

Right Up There! 2
Sharee Carton
PO Box 208, Dimbulah, QLD,
AUS 4872

MUSEUM PIECE:

IMAGINING THE SFM

BY ANDY HOOPER



It was to be the first official *Chunga* fieldtrip—our first look at the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame. Tucked into a corner of the remarkable Frank Gehry structure built to house the Experience Music Project, the SF Museum had been in operation for just about a year, and our curiosity finally got the better of us.

You might have expected the Chunganate to have lined up to see the SFM on its opening weekend. But I think a lot of my acquaintances in Seattle fandom expressed the same kind of wariness that I felt: What if turned out to be terrible? The museum was carved out of the space left when the EMP closed down an unsuccessful theme-park styled thrill ride (I never rode it, so I can't tell you what it had to do with popular music), and we knew that at least part of the reason for its existence was to provide space for Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen's collection of stfnal movie and TV

memorabilia. Were we really meant to feel some aesthetic resonance with an exhibit of model space ships and tricorders?

But it was undeniably there. I started to get a little quivery as soon as we walked into the ticketing area, a space full of distant whooshy noises, dramatic lighting and airline-terminal-by-Stanley-Kubrick design. Standing at the desk while a pleasant young woman explained the relative advantages of the "Symbiote" and "Hive Mind" membership levels, I could barely hold a pen steady enough to sign my name. After a lifetime of visiting museums, I was finally about to enter one which promised to honor and illustrate my own sub-cultural neighborhood. I found myself grinning as I handed the day passes out to my fellow Chungottieri, because I was just so happy to be there.

I'm sure it's easy for most readers to see me as a major fan of museums in general. Given my obsessions with history, science and collecting, many museums would seem to have been established with visitors like myself specifically in mind. The creation, maintenance and interpretation of museums all have a swarm of academic disciplines attendant to them, but my interest arises from a more basic appreciation that a collection is always better — more impressive, more official — if preserved and exhibited in some sort of museum. Museums raise collecting from the level of venal compulsion to an act that preserves and commemorates human ideas and experience. It's almost magical — drawers full of jumbled rocks and paper ephemera are sorted and documented by earnest professionals who proclaim them Significant and Worthy of Display, and suddenly they are resting in a custom-built cabinet with a glass front.

And this is distinctly germane to any consideration of the Science Fiction Museum, because the undisputed genesis of its catalog was as Paul Allen's personal collection of science fiction movie and TV memorabilia. All of the rest of the museum's achievements — the programs by and about writers, the gallery of SF Hall of Fame members, the wonderful collections of little-known fantastic art — would not have been enough to drive its establishment without the need to display a self-indulgent billionaire's collection of old movie posters, costume pieces and prop room junk. Of course, I use the phrase "self-indulgent billionaire" in the most technical sense only — Mr. Allen does have access to a great deal of money, and the average person cannot hire Frank Gehry to build a huge curvilinear building to house selected elements of their record collection. But as tycoons with enough money to be a nemesis for James Bond go, Allen is a decent fellow, and the EMP/SFM is the most entertaining boondoggle to hit Seattle in the nearly 14 years I've lived here.

But knowing that Mr. Allen's own taste in entertainment is part of the subtext of his museum is critical to a realistic interpretation of its exhibits. And being aware of the various theories, prejudices and private agendas of the people who create them is equally important to getting the most out of any museum. Certainly, when I was 4 years old, and my parents first took me to the natural history museum on the campus of the University of Michigan, simply seeing displays of fossilized trilobites, brachiopods and nautiloids was more than enough to blow my mind, and the crowning glory of a sauropod dinosaur skeleton was sufficient to warp me for life.

Now, a short 40 years later, a visit to a museum inspires at least as many questions as it answers. Who chose those fossils, and what were they trying to say about the nature and evolution of life as a whole? Who was the rival collector that they took the most satisfaction in thwarting with the quality and quantity of their exhibits? Who lifted those sauropod bones out of the Utah desert rock, and what did they get for their efforts? Modern, or at least contemporary museums make an effort to tell some of those stories, and their curators and collectors don't hide behind a monolithic wall of anonymous policy. Even when doing your best to present something you feel is an absolutely objective truth, your own perspective is an essential element of the exhibit that results, and if that isn't acknowledged in some way, an important part of its provenance is missing. So these days, I find myself as interested in the people who create and run the museum as I am the materials on display.

In the case of the Science Fiction Museum, there was a great sense of familiarity inspired by seeing the names of people I'm acquainted with on the little donor tags in several of the exhibits. And it was far from just movie and TV ephemera on display — books, pulps, art, programs, photos and even fanzines were scattered liberally throughout, in an effort to tell the story of science fiction as both a genre of literary entertainment and a social phenomenon. Seeing it is a rich and complicated experience for any fan — your sense of "Hey, I know that guy!" is frequently at war with your insistence that "That's not how I remember it," an occupational hazard of seeing your own times on display.

The Science Fiction Museum is divided into four major exhibit areas, some more coherent than others. The first and most impressive section is the "Homeworld" wing, in which the history and ideas of science fiction are presented in creative detail. They have exhibits titled "What if?" "Not So Weird Science," and "Sci-

Binary Encounter: Bear and Benford on the SFM

For a view inside the Science Fiction Museum, we posed some questions to all-around SF mavens Greg Bear and Gregory Benford, who also happen to be members of the Museum Board.

Are you pleased with the way the SF Museum has been executed? What didn't make it in that you might like to see in future exhibits?

Greg Bear: *Astrid and I are very happy with the way the museum turned out. Topnotch talent and brains helped turn it into a real crowd-pleaser — literally, since hundreds of thousands have gone through since the opening a year and five months ago.*

Greg Benford: *It's better than we on the board thought it could be — just shows what 20 megabucks can do! Mostly we'd like more room, to cram in more of the genre in its diversity — not just books!*



⇒ **The Science Fiction Hall of Fame is one of the most striking exhibits in the museum. Does the inclusion of creators from other media mean that deserving writers may have to wait a while to be included? And do you have any favorite candidates for the honor?**

Greg Bear: *The SF Hall of Fame definitely has a lot of catching up to do, but since we can induct four new members each year, the time lag should not be any more noticeable than for, say, the Nebula Grand Masters.*

Greg Benford: *Other media have a role, too—Ridley Scott did more for cyberpunk than Bill Gibson, really, and he did it first. I don't myself want to neglect the writers now alive in favor of the dead; Phil Dick got no buzz out of his inclusion, alas; but Larry Niven will.*

The SF Museum is like something from a collector's wildest dreams. Do you have any favorite items among its voluminous collections? How cool is it to see some of your own work on display there?

Greg Benford: *I like so much of it—the spacecraft display, the aliens—that including my own work is minor. Pleasant to see a book jacket of mine, but the immense creative flow of the genre—the prime expression of the scientific culture, really, in common terms—is the true point.*

One of the most interesting exhibits in the museum covers the history of speculation about Mars. As someone with a professional interest in the question, do you feel like you'll live to see humans on Mars? Will anyone reading this fanzine live to see humans on Mars?

Greg Benford: *Mars as litmus test, as Rorschach blot: a mirror. Major science fiction writers—H. G. Wells, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Judith Merrill, Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein, Philip K. Dick, Kim Stanley Robinson, even me—responded to new theories with their own visions. Mars manifested in film, radio, the popular press—all of them usually too in love with the latest data, without vision. Changing conceptions of Mars had crucial effect, even in understanding ecology on Earth.*

Take Edgar Rice Burroughs, who wrote directly out of his own Technicolor subconscious. Burroughs appeals even now for his greatest strength: leaving behind realistic referents, liberating our desires from time and space, so they find expression free of social constraint. His Barsoom sequence is a stage for dreamlike epics mixing science-fictional and fantasy elements. Burroughs is purely fun and not remotely realistic. He knew that the science didn't have to be good, it just has to sound good.

I think with Mars we want a true mirror, because we yearn for company. Our long history of imaginary companions—demons, angels, ogres, ghosts—now yields to aliens. But Mars cannot furnish the canal diggers envisioned by Percival Lowell, which gave Burroughs his landscape. At best it can find that life emerged and perhaps even persists today. Companions for biologists, perhaps, but not for our imaginations.

So Mars still beckons. We can hope for breakthrough knowledge, though the pace of exploration is slow. Indeed, throwing a few tons to Mars with chemical rockets seems antique, given the nuclear thrusters we could be using. Surely the Chinese will not feel so limited. No novel Markley discusses (not even my own) imagines Chinese explorers at the fore. Maybe that's more mirror than we'd like to think about.

Greg Bear: *As for Mars—I'd love to live long enough to see humans on Mars, but I am reminded of what Mr. Heinlein once said, when a youngster expressed doubts about ever getting into space: "Huh! You're worried!"*

You've spent almost all of your life as a fan and creator of science fiction. Is the SF Museum something you'd have imagined as a callow fannish youth? And is it possible that it will still be around in 2106? If so, will it contain another 100 years of paperback novels and rubber foreheads, or will the museum be a completely different place in the next century?

Greg Benford: *We'll have Mars sensos that will take us there for a metaphysical weekend, maybe—but the mysteries will remain—I hope! We live for our unknowns, we chimps.*

Greg Bear: *The progress that science fiction has made in the last forty years has definitely been remarkable—but today it's under threat as never before, at least in New York publishing—and perhaps in the changing tastes of the American reading public. America is definitely sliding backward in its public support for a viable and expanding future. The Science Fiction Museum reminds us that once upon a time, our nation led the world in looking forward to, and planning, a future that would be better and more exciting for all. We need to return to that frame of mind, and soon.*

ence Fiction and Society," all handsome multi-cabinet displays of images and artifacts. The "Science Fiction Timeline" was also full of familiar titles and faces, with most of the significant events in the genre's development represented. This exhibit, for one, emphasized written science fiction far more than movies and TV. And I found myself mentally inserting various fannish events to parallel the milestones in writing, publishing and technical innovation that were the subjects of the display.

The cabinet specifically dedicated to fandom is titled "The Science Fiction Community," and has a number of delightful objects to recommend it—a 1944 issue of Bob Tucker's *Le Zombie* grabs the eye, and it was almost surreal to see references to TAFF. Everyone I spoke to about this section in advance mentioned the prevalence of Ackermania, but I didn't think Forry dominated much of the exhibit. There was at least as much stuff connected in some way to the late Poul Anderson, items contributed by Seattle's Greg and Astrid Bear. There was a long list of story ideas Anderson generated in the 1950s on display in a different case, and I thought that really evoked the life of a 20th century SF writer—no matter how great any idea might have been, you had to generate another one if you were going to keep on making sales.

Certainly the most stfnal exhibit in the SFM is the Science Fiction Hall of Fame, a wall of engraved glass slabs that illuminate to show distinguished creators in the field. The great majority of the work behind this body was done by the Kansas City Science Fiction Society in cooperation with the Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas. Four different luminaries of SF or Fantasy were inducted each year from 1996 to 2004, two living and two deceased, all honored at an awards ceremony at the annual Campbell Conference in Lawrence. I'd guess that the ability to establish this permanent exhibit in the context of a museum open virtually every day of the year was a strong argument in favor of relocating the Hall of Fame here. Still, I hope the fans in Kansas City don't resent us too much.

The exhibit is strikingly beautiful—you feel that if you touched one of the glass portraits, a hologram of Raymond Massey in a uniform with big epaulettes would appear, and describe salient events in the inductees' career. It's also easy to see some dissonance between the Hall's academic origins and its media-heavy present emphasis—early inductees include Abraham Merrit and Jules Verne, while the class of 2005 included Ray Harryhausen and Steven Spielberg. Chesley Bonestell and Philip K. Dick were also inducted in 2005, certainly wor-



thy choices, but I think they illustrate the folly of dropping the words “And Fantasy” from the Hall of Fame. You don’t get much “harder” an SF figure than Chesley Bonestell, but Spielberg, Harryhausen and Dick are all wild-eyed fantasists in my book. Was this rule made up just to keep Professor Tolkien out of the club? Could Fritz Leiber, Mike Moorcock and Edgar Rice Burroughs eventually be shown the door for being too fantastic?

All such digression aside, I love the Fortress of Solitude design of the Hall’s display, and look forward to seeing Joss Whedon added to the wall before too long.

It’s important to take in the “Homeworld” section first, because the earnest, thematically dense exhibits require a lot of concentration to get the most out of them. The wing wraps up with an overview of “The Changing Face of Mars,” a race in which just about everyone has a horse. It was in the Mars exhibit that we posed the tandem questions, to what degree does science fiction inspire innovation, and to what extent does it render actual achievement redundant? We’re not yet liv-

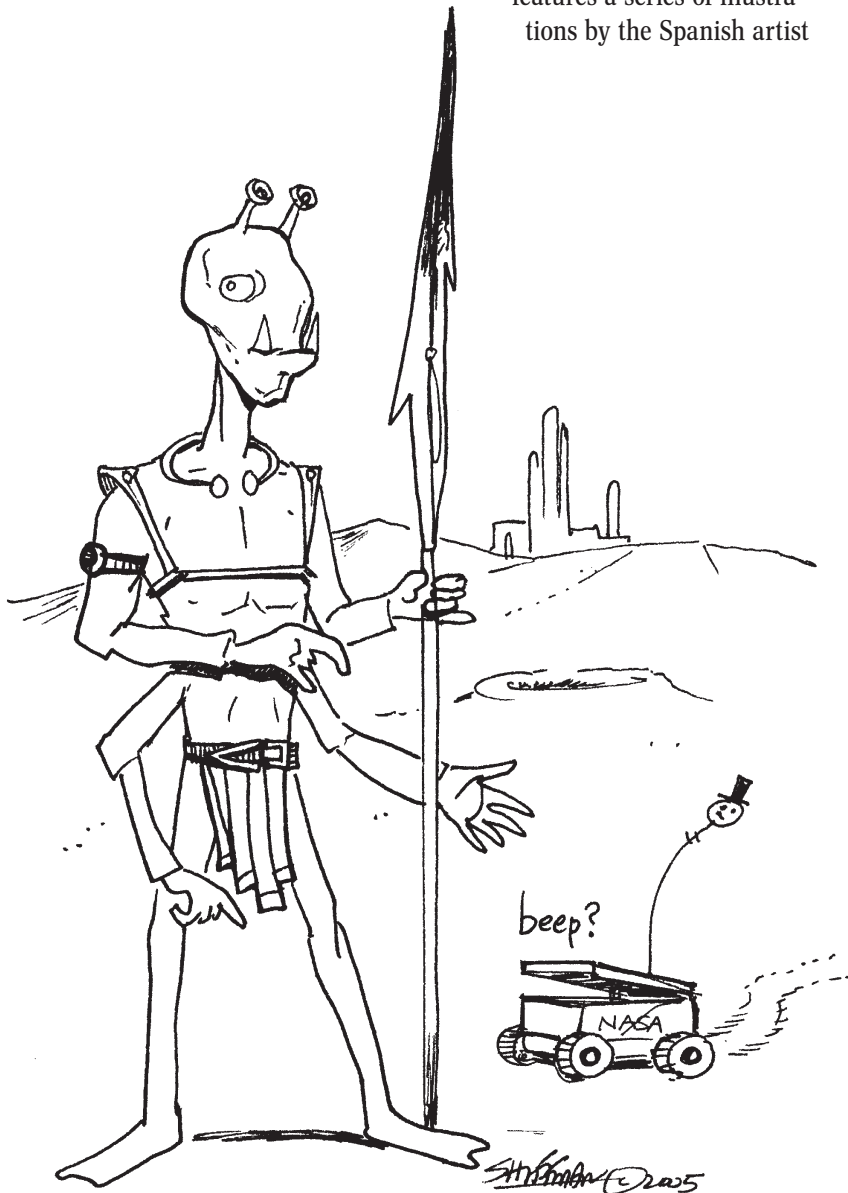
ing on Mars, but we have robots rolling around in response to the commands of highly-trained nerds at the JPL — and somehow, that seems even more science fictional than sending Paul Mantee or Val Kilmer there. But standing in front of all those book covers, Viking photos and Martian maps, I had the sensation that we have barely started to comprehend the difficulty of living on other worlds, and that I wasn’t likely to live to see that goal realized. I found that conclusion surprisingly comfortable, as we moved on to the next floor.

“Fantastic Voyages” has less of a unifying thesis than the “Homeworld” exhibit, and you can quickly see that it has the most material from the Paul Allen family collection. Two sections are dominated by movie and TV props, one for weaponry and one for advanced equipment like tricorders and communication devices. Another exhibit is full of spacesuits. All three of us were bemused by the universal cheesiness of almost all these props and costumes taken out of context. One item that particularly stood out was the “gun” carried by Harrison Ford in Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*. In the

film, the weapon appears to be about six pounds of well-greased steel—but in reality, it's made of hollow plastic, a tribute to the power of sound effects. The best part of this section was the “Spacedock” hologram, which showed all sorts of famous spacecraft from films and TV moving through an orbital docking facility. It's the kind of thing an eight-year-old would surely love to stare at for an hour or two.

Another sub-wing titled simply “Them!” was full of more latex keepsakes from movies like *Alien*, *Predator* and *Alien Vs Predator*. Forehead ridges and prosthetic ears were a common theme.

Several notorious robots and cyborgs occupied another set of cases. This admittedly impressive collection occupied the great majority of the space in the wing, but I found the more compact exhibit on H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* to be the most charming element of the museum. It features a series of illustrations by the Spanish artist



Alvim Corr ea, who died not long after completing them for a commemorative 1905 edition of Wells' novel. The pleasure at discovering these dark, delicate art works, which reminded me a little of W.W. Denslow's illustrations for L. Frank Baum, was an entirely different sensation than seeing all the immaculate, collectible and familiar book covers in the earlier exhibits. Someone had to do some digging to come up with the documentation for that exhibit, and the results were both professional and emotionally evocative.

The last region of the museum was less obviously collection-based, and organized briefer exhibits on several classic science fiction themes or motifs under the title “Brave New Worlds.” “Cities of Tomorrow” looks at imaginary urban landscapes from the Victorian era to *The Jetsons*, and leads nicely to the “Experimental Societies” exhibit. And just when you're all pumped up for a nano-intensive dome-topped corporate future, “Out of the Ashes” explores the continually popular sub-genre of post-holocaust SF, largely through the medium of achingly mint condition paperback and small press editions of classic novels and anthologies.

I think one or more of us rather disagreed with the capsule interpretations of these works that were part of their descriptive signage, but I guess that asking the exhibit's creator to have read all the books in the case and to share our interpretations of them is the kind of romantic lunacy that only occurs to a fan. Overall, the museum's picture of science fiction was surprisingly high-browed, particularly given the more lurid nature of so many of its collection's sources. One area that receives no publicity or any description on the museum web site is a gallery of work by legendary genre artists including Virgil Findlay, Frank R. Paul, Kelly Freas and Chesley Bonestell, and I'd have been happy to tour that room alone. Overall, it's clear that people within the field of science fiction have helped guide the content of the museum, and wanted it to highlight the best work that the genre has to offer. I later discovered that the primary designers of the exhibit space are a firm headed by one-time fan artist Tim Kirk; one imagines this was a particularly satisfying project!

Plus, once you're done with all the stfnal fun, you can emulate the Chungatatus and repair to the Turntable restaurant for local beer and surprisingly good pizza.

I was impressed by the way the museum was able to present so many revolutionary ideas and their history in such an apolitical manner. Unlike a

museum trying to reach a conclusion about human origins or the morality of creating and using nuclear weapons, no one is likely to picket the Science Fiction Museum over their representation of Ursula Le Guin or A.E. van Vogt. And I felt I could hope that nothing in the collections had been stolen or acquired through even more repellent acts, an aspiration that tends to elude us in many more “significant” museum experiences.

The general message of the museum seems to be that science fiction has something for everyone to enjoy, and that the speculative has as much impact on human culture as anything objectively real or concrete. That’s a seductive thesis for an aging fanboy to embrace. And the wide range of cool stuff in the exhibits, from props and scripts to immaculate first editions, fanzines and program books, is enough to make any collector faunch, for

both the collection itself and the superlative space to display it in.

It’s not clear how much the museum will have the chance to evolve; Paul Allen has told the SFM board that they need to make their way without further significant grants from him. And while the Museum exhibits are an essential experience for the dedicated science fiction fan, it is hard to say whether the casual sf reader or *Star Wars* viewer would agree that it was worth the fairly steep price of admission. It costs even more if you combine admission for the Experience Music Project, and viewing the two museums together would make for a very full, if not exhausting, day. The SFM may not be precisely the museum I’d choose to build if I had the money and collections to enshrine, but it’s still very cool, a complex and involving exhibition. I plan to see it again soon. ☺

Annex: Ten Significant and Worthy Museum Experiences

Back in the dim reaches of May and June, this article threatened to turn into a 10,000-word history of museums and the people who collect for them, but I decided a Bill Bowers-like list of favorite museums would be much more appropriate for a fanzine.

10 Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Touring the Peabody made me feel a close connection to the many dilettantes, readers, writers, collectors and academics who collaborated in the creation of modern Natural Science and many other disciplines. It’s a 19th century museum, conceived and executed in most significant part before 1900 – the original institution was founded by Louis Agassiz and Asa Gray. The museum building is right in the heart of Harvard’s campus, and it is hard to imagine a more definitively academic environment on earth. The old wooden display furniture is historic in its own right. The heart of the museum is the legendary Ware Gallery of Glass Flowers and Fruit. Created by German glass-makers Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka over more than 30 years, the 3000 glass models recreate all manner of familiar and exotic plants which Rudolf sought out around the world. The unique, irreplaceable beauty and unspeakable fragility of this collection makes for a uniquely anxiety-producing museum experience – for weeks after my visit, I dreamed of bumping into cabinets and shattering priceless blossoms like a drunken bear.

9 National Baseball Museum & Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, New York

Taking the theory that the best museums represent the best collections, the museum at Cooperstown has some completely unique displays that are the equal of any exhibits I’ve seen anywhere. But of course, if you have no interest in baseball, then all the art and engineering of this wonderful museum is likely to leave you unimpressed. Most baseball fans will find at least something that will make them cry.

8 Imperial War Museum, London

There is undeniably a sardonic pleasure in knowing that this elaborate and exhaustive museum of Britain’s wars from the late 19th through the 20th century, is housed in the former of home of St. Bethlehem’s Hospital, the notorious asylum known as “Bedlam.” What a singularly appropriate site to study trinkets like gas masks and Field Marshal Montgomery’s World War II command center. But be aware that if you want to see Captain William Siborne’s notoriously inaccurate and politically compromised models of the battle of Waterloo, you have to go to the National Army Museum in Chelsea.

7 Museum of Science & Industry, Chicago

Oh, so many fun childhood memories to choose from at the Museum of Science & Industry – the World War II warplanes hanging above the lobby, the vast model railroad layouts, the captured German U-Boat tour, the full-size simulated coal-mine. They were all so much fun and so redolent of 20th Century museological practice, from the division of huge spaces into color-coded topical zones to the little Bell Labs personal speakers that told the story of the development of the laser and similar advances. But almost no one hits the Museum of Science & Industry without also checking out the nearby Field Museum of Natural History (the only surviving display building from the 1893 World’s Fair), the Shedd Aquarium, or the Art Institute of Chicago, which is less than a mile away and packs more genuinely famous artwork into limited display space than any other art museum I’ve visited.

6 Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, Collinsville, Illinois

Americans do not have the opportunity to visit many ruined ancient cities within their own borders, so Cahokia is a very precious and unique relic of the pre-Columbian world. It was the largest city in North America before the 19th century, and the center of a remarkable culture that persisted in related forms into the age of European occupation. The relatively new interpretative center does an excellent job of recreating the people who lived on the site, but you have to go out into the many acres of open fields that were once streets and houses to get a sense of how really enormous the city was. Climbing the impossibly huge sides of Monk’s Mound until the distant skyline of St. Louis, Missouri comes into view is enough to forever dispel the idea that native Americans didn’t leave enduring structures and monuments to their presence. Note that the center is currently closed Mondays and Tuesdays due to budget cuts.

5 The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

Several things impress me about this beautiful museum, dominated by hardware composed of glass and wood. First, it has the largest collection of totem poles in the world, and if you are going to collect something, totem poles are large and bulky enough to prove to people that you are serious about it. Second, the great majority of the museum’s artifacts are housed in hundreds of drawers equipped with hard plastic lids that protect them, but still make everything accessible to the visitor’s view. The act of opening these drawers

is not unlike opening birthday presents, and I thoroughly recommend the experience.

4 Dinosaur National Monument Visitor Center, Vernal, Utah

If you want to take a trip into the wild west and find a museum at the end of the trail, you can't do much better than Dinosaur National Monument. But it might also be the finest presentation of Mesozoic fossils on Earth, because the museum puts a roof over a cliff face studded with dinosaur bones like chocolate chunks in a scoop of Rocky Road ice cream. There can be no better illustration of the task that paleontologists and excavators face in removing fossils from the matrix in which they are found – even in this incredibly rich setting, removing even one bone represents hours and hours of labor. Outside the visitor's center, miles of trails trace around the many washes, draws and buttes that have provided some of the richest fossil hunting in the world, much of it exposed by floods of the nearby Green and Vernal rivers. Certainly the best possible reason to travel to Utah.

3 George C. Page Museum, Los Angeles

Wonderfully moody museum design, combined with collections which have few parallels on Earth. The tar pits of Rancho LaBrea were remarkably deadly to all manner of California fauna, whose skeletal remains were preserved there in great numbers. People have been collecting and studying these for more than 150 years, and the Page museum documents both the bones and the people who found and interpreted them. The "fishbowl" bone-cleaning laboratory, with windows all around for the public to view the work, is a major highlight. A cool, dark island of bones and old photographs in the bright canyons of downtown Los Angeles.

2 British Museum, London

The Smithsonian has an incredible variety of exhibits and collections now spread over an area larger than the average shopping mall, but I am still inclined to believe that the British Museum is the single most important such institution on Earth. It isn't just the proliferation of utterly unique and justifiably world-famous objects in its collections that makes the British Museum so significant; its own history, its embodiment and documentation of the changing world of museology, makes it a unique cultural resource. Many of the most striking items in its displays are the object of legal efforts to recover them by the nations within whose borders they were made or discovered; but even if two-thirds of these were eventually returned, there would still be something to

make your jaw drop in every corner. And imagine if those treasures were finally returned, and new, more efficient exhibits eventually went up in the vast halls built to house bulky works like the Elgin marbles? I expect it would still be one of the more wonderful museum experiences in the world. That scenario would also provide more focus and attention for the museum's "upstairs" collection of items originating in the British Isles, like the wonderful Sutton Hoo burials.

1 Gadsden Museum, Mesilla, New Mexico

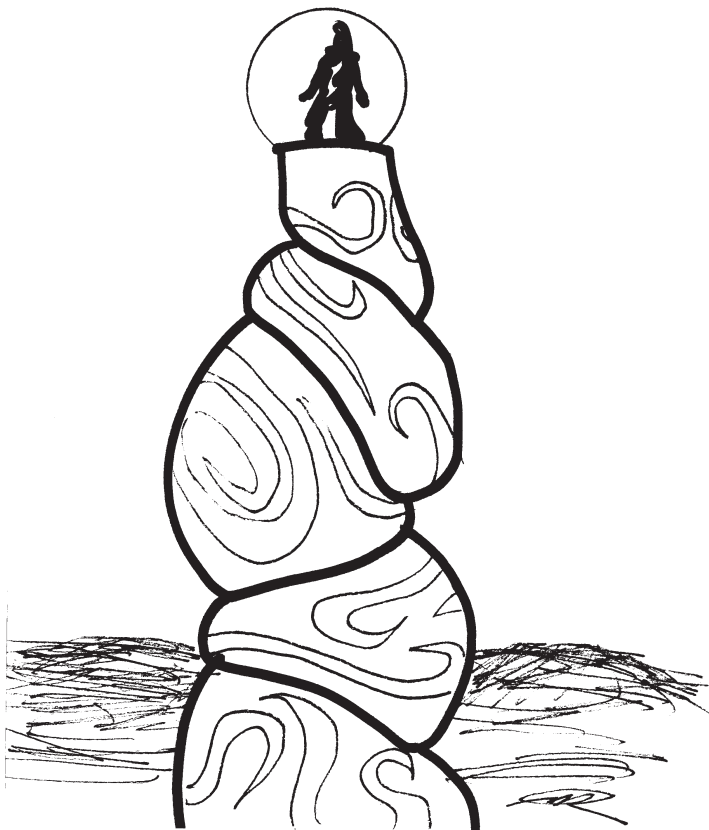
Mesilla, New Mexico is just across the Rio Grande from Las Cruces, NM, which is the town where my wife Carrie grew up. At one time, Mesilla was the more significant settlement in the area, a center of administration for both the Spanish and American Territorial governments. The town is also notorious as the site of one of the jails that Billy the Kid escaped from during the Lincoln County war, in a building that has housed a popular restaurant for more than a century. On a trip to eat lunch at that former post house, we passed a long two story house with a sign that announced it was the "Gadsden Museum." The place had relatively short hours of operation, and was closed three days a week, but we happened to be there during open hours, and decided to look inside.

The museum occupies about 80% of a private home, at the time still residence to the grand niece of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain and Mariana Perez de Ovante. Born in 1838, Col. Fountain was a native of Staten Island, New York, who moved to California in 1850. He was a reporter for the *Sacramento Union*, and covered William Walker's filibuster in Nicaragua, before reading law and being admitted to the bar in 1860. When the Civil War began, Fountain enlisted as a private in the 1st. California Volunteer infantry, but had been commissioned as a Lieutenant by the time the "California column" reached Mesilla in New Mexico Territory. While there, Albert met and fell in love with Mariana, and they were married in 1862, in the midst of his participation in campaigns against the nearby Apache people. Mariana was the granddaughter of a noted Mexican portraitist, and her family were among the 300 colonists who traveled from Ciudad Juarez to found Mesilla in 1848. Following the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mesilla was part of a strip claimed by both Mexico and the United States, and both nations encouraged colonists to settle in the area. With the Gadsden purchase in 1854, Mesilla permanently become part of the United States, although it was occupied briefly by the Confederacy in 1861.

Albert Fountain entered Texas politics following the war, and was a major power in the radical Republican-dominated Legislature in the reconstruction era. A Master Mason, he was also alleged to have served in Mexico as an officer in Benito Juarez' army. With the reassertion of the Democratic party in Texas, Fountain returned to Mesilla, and both practiced law and edited the local newspaper for more than 25 years. He was a friend to many in the Tunstall faction of the Lincoln County war, and eventually defended Billy the Kid in his trial for the murder of Sheriff John Brady. In 1896, Fountain and his eight-year-old son Henry disappeared during a journey by wagon from Tularosa to Las Cruces. Three men were tried unsuccessfully for their presumed murder, but their bodies were never recovered, and the disappearance is still the most famous unsolved murder in the history of the area.

This is only a fragment of the rich history illustrated through family documents, photos and personal effects preserved by the numerous descendents of Albert and Mariana. Gathered together with items donated by many residents of Mesilla and Las Cruces, the Gadsden Museum is like the world's best-loved walk-in curio cabinet, full of history so keenly felt that the descendents of its primary players have actually devoted the greater part of their living space to its display. Albert and Mariana's children and grandchildren remained in Mesilla and in 1905 they founded the Fountain Theater, which is today the oldest movie house in the state, and home to the Mesilla Valley Film Society. The whole family were enthusiastic semi-professional vaudevillians, and often appeared on stage together through the 1930s.

Ten years ago, I was lucky enough to have a private tour of the museum from its then director, who grew up hearing stories of a Grandfather who had been everywhere and done everything, but was also well known to every single person living in Mesilla. If she is still alive, I'm sure she's still angry about her Grandfather's death, 109 years after he disappeared. It was, I thought, the most personal "museum" I had ever seen, and the absolute antithesis of corporate, monolithic museum culture. Linking the American and Mexican stories of Mesilla, I felt profoundly privileged to have been told both in such a fascinating and concrete way.



Rain City Tangler

by Ulrika O'Brien

BANANA WINGS OVER BENTLEY The 2005 Nova Awards were presented on 13 November in lovely, historic Bentley, Walsall. **Best Fanzine:** *Banana Wings*, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, eds; **Best Fanwriter:** Claire Brialey; **Best Fan Artist:** Alison Scott.

MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSION IN WALTHAMSTOW Traces of ego- and rocket-flinders were found in the blast radius surrounding a Walthamstow residence where authorities believe occupants engaged in dangerous, award-powered experiments testing the maximum cerebral inflation index of unladen British faneds.

LONDON TUN—THE SAGA CONTINUES Demonstrating the iron-clad nature of the rule about things which appear to be too good to be true, **Walkers of Holborn**, the once and presumed future home of the **London Circle** monthly Tun meeting has been sold and is closed for renovations through February. Intrepid PNN reporter **Paul Treadaway** booked the December 1 meeting in the **Melton Mowbray**, the special December 22 holiday Tun at **The Goose**, and future interim locations through February to be decided by straw poll of the **Usual Suspects**.

SMOKE-FREE POTLATCH Changes in **Washington State** law mean that there will be no smoking areas designated inside the **Potlatch 15** hotel, bringing it to par with **California** in smoking ban sweeps. Possibly this will increase the appeal for some for **Ruth Sachter's Portland** bid for **Potlatch 16**. **Potlatch 15**, February 24–26, **Best Western Executive Inn, Seattle**. **Book of Honor:** *The Avram Davidson Treasury*, edited by **Robert Silverberg** and **Grania Davis**. **Memberships** still only \$45! www.potlatch-sf.org

BUILD YOUR OWN CON Noting the continuing love affair of **Britons** for **Silly Animals**, the **Tangler** observes that we're in the **Year of the Teledu**. "What is a teledu," I hear you cry. Normally speaking it is an **East Indian** badgeroid carnivore noted for its offensive smell, but in this case it is a **British** "open convention," a **wiki**-like event wherein there is no committee (sort of), and all of the decisions about running the thing are made by the input of anybody who wants to participate, to include the choice of hotels, the contents of the program, who will attend, what and whether publicity, and so on. The event appears to be a sort-of **Post Fanzine** affair, given to a certain level of casual fanzine-fan bashing in the wiki homepage (tregenza.dyndns.org/cgi-bin/wiki.pl?HomePage) and an attitude toward non-net-enabled fans that says, essentially: tough darts. Still, there is a **LiveJournal** community for the project (www.livejournal.com/community/yearoftheteledu/) for the curious, and the **Tangler** will be fascinated to hear how it all comes out. At least they'll have a stinking badger.

TAFF RACE FOR LA The **Westbound TAFF** race is on, the winner being bound to travel to the **64th Worldcon, L.A.Con IV**. Standing in the 2006 race are: **Bridget "Bug" Bradshaw**, **1/2r Cruttenden**, and **Mike "Sparks" Rennie**. Please vote early and often, and donate copiously to TAFF: copies of the ballots from the TAFF website (taff.org.uk), the current administrators: **James Bacon** and **Suzle Tompkins**, or a fine fanzine near you. This column endorses **Bridget Bradshaw** for TAFF. Go **Bug!**

COA: GELB GOES DOWN UNDER Another in the long tradition going whole hog in fannish exchanges, **Janice Gelb** has taken the big **post-DUFF** leap. Her new address as of **December 15**: Flat 14, 241 Williams Rd, South Yarra, Vic 3141, Australia.

CORFLU, EH?

Corflu 23—still in need of a silly name—will descend on our Canadian neighbors in spring, the weekend of May 5–7, 2006, in Toronto. Memberships are Canadian \$60; \$US 50; UK£ 25. Checks should be payable to Colin Hinz, UKP payments in cash only. The committee has yet to announce a hotel, but surely there are 24-hour Tim Hortons in Toronto? To contact chairs Colin Hinz and Catherine Crockett, send postal mail to: 148 Howland Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5R 3B5, or e-mail to asfi@eol.ca and crockett@eol.ca (do send to both, please).

The Iro

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I'd been for one of my monthly trips to Newcastle (upon Tyne, England) today to check out the book and record shops and pick up stuff from Forbidden Planet and was sitting on the Metro (underground, subway, though most of it's over ground) heading back home when I opened my copy of *Comics International* and found Dez Skinn's editorial for that issue was devoted to John Brosnan (nice one, Dez). Then I got home, found *Chunga* had been pushed through the letterbox, opened it, and...

I was aware of his death of course — I read *Ansi-ble* online (and had sent Dave a brief note) — but was very pleased to see the extended piece by him on John's wake. Most of my contact with John was during my heyday as an active fan in the 70s and somewhat into the 80s. I always liked John a great deal, enjoying his laid back cynicism and wonderful sense of humour (in person and in print, even when I was being the butt of his jokes). I remember him once getting worried about peeing blood due to an excess of Guinness and that was well over two decades ago, maybe nearly three. Also I'm fairly sure I was with him and another fan, Dave Cockfield, in the Troy Club once — smoky and seedy, loved it. I'm glad I knew him, I'm glad I read (most of) his books and his fan writing, and I'm sorry he's gone.

I was also really pleased to see the photographs of his friends. Until now, my mental image was always of their 70s and 80s selves, British fandom's young turks. Now I see them aged, with pot bellies, wrinkles, and balding heads. Myself, I confess to the first but my face remains relatively wrinkle free, and my thick hair is a cropped grey. I note this with just a tiny hint of schadenfreude. Peter Roberts sans long flowing locks, Alun Harries (it appears) sans teeth, and is it a poor photograph or has Chris Priest really turned into Brian Aldiss?

Dave makes John's wake sound like a fine and fitting tribute. But then so is his writing about it.

Randy: One of the delightful things about Dave's piece is that it brought a Rat or two out of the woodwork of our mailing list — and ended up adding a couple more to it. (Yes, at least one has been added to the woodwork of our mailing list, not the list proper.) But, believe me, Alun is anything but toothless. Dude has fangs!

Sharee Carton

First off let me state that I love the Schirmeister cover for *Chunga* 9. I enjoyed the sly peeks it received from the other people in the line at Heathrow customs.

In going back through the zine to write this loc, I'm struck by how different it is for me now that I have met folk like Pete Weston and Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey and James Bacon. It is much funnier now that I can hear the writers' voices, and I can visualize the impact James would have had on the denizens of the bar where Ted picked him up in Falls Church.

I really enjoyed Tami's piece about her road trip. I've always loved road trips, and some of the best have been spur-of-the-moment, middle-of-the-night ones. I've been doing a lot of revisiting times and places myself, lately, and the cathartic value of trips like Tami's can't be beat.

Chunga 10 made me really wish I'd been able to attend Corflu 22. I especially liked Rich Coad's "Vague Blur." The first couple of paragraphs put me



LOVE THAT
NIPPLESPUNG!



n Pig



in mind of Corflu 2, watching Terry Floyd attempt to run off *SMOCKO!* White ink on dark green paper is tricky at the best of times, but on the last night of a convention, with a myriad of influences coupled with exhaustion, it all becomes very Dickian.

Langford's bit about John Brosnan's send off had me giggling, although I wasn't sure that was the correct response given the nature of the event. Dave's writing has a tendency to elicit that type of response from me, however, and I thought it to be an appropriate farewell to a man who obviously was well loved.

Andre Norton is an author I must have read as a kid but can't recall any titles offhand, so I was curious what Randy had to say about her books. I'm always looking for good novels for my 11 year old nephew. I'm quite happy to buy him 20 or 30 books a year—he reads everything I give him. It's hard to find books these days for young adults that are not either fantasy or romance. I've given him plenty of fantasy but seldom find actual SF in bookshops in Cairns; or Melbourne, for that matter. After reading Randy's piece I think I'll have to find some Norton for him. When I started reading "Dark Star's Stone Mask" I was reminded of Randy's description of drunkenly trying to find his room at Eastercon on his TAFF trip, navigating endless hallways and fumbling uselessly with a doorkey that had been deactivated and ending up back in the bar because he couldn't get in. That feeling of desperation, "corridors began nowhere and ended in 6 or 8 sided chambers without other exit." Doesn't that sound like what we all experience several days into a con after too many hours at room parties or in the bar?

In Rain City Tangler, Ulrika mentions Walkers as the site of the London pubmeets and refers to a promise to bring in bottled cider. Unfortunately, when I was there on Aug. 1st there was no cider to be had at all, which meant making a couple of solo forays around the corner to the Printer's Devil to skull a couple of Magners. Eventually I gave in and started drinking gin and bitter lemon; a bargain at 1 pound each.

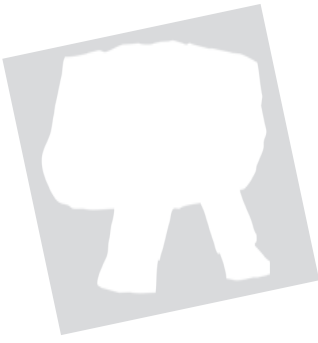
Andy: Lots of good stuff here, Sharee, and I'm ever so glad you enjoy the zine. But all other replies have been chased from my mind by the memory of *SMOCKO*, an artifact that has caused confusion and intense eyestrain to dozens of fans coming on the scene afterwards. It is remarkable how many people ended up with copies of something that was mostly handed out at a relatively small convention.

Alexis Gilliland

Dave Langford's "Torching John Brosnan" was excellent, providing not only an account of the funeral but a thumbnail sketch of the deceased. Brosnan's notion that depression is the default condition of the human mind is actually pretty close to the truth. Certainly pessimists have a better grip on reality than optimists, since the more you know the less cheerful you get. However, it is unhelpful to worry about things you can't do anything about—like dying—so evolution has selected for the ability to deceive one's self *about* those things, the better to concentrate on the things you *can* do something about. Being religious has survival value, which is not a refutation of Dawkins and his arguments in favor of atheism, only the Darwinian assurance that over time religiosity will continue to remain a chronic affliction of humanity. I also enjoyed the Kinney/Dobson real time Corflu report, which gave a strong sense of being there. Andy has it right about how fans oughtta be, really. Well educated but highly jaundiced, and after twenty years, they *should* look older.

Andy: And generally free of religiosity, although we've always had exceptions among us. It's curious that I've been prone to fits of belief in Bigfoot and UFOs at times in my life, yet have never really been able to abide most expressions of theistic belief. I'm sure it's some sort of serious flaw in my character, but to me, fandom's overall indifference to religion has always been among its most admirable qualities.

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Lloyd Penney

Another Corflu report adds a little bit more to the vicarious experience for me. I am pleased that by attending next year right here in Toronto, I'll be able to write my own report, and I shall. Just a matter of deciding who should get it, and who'd be willing to publish it.

A *Star Trek* article? This is the last place I thought I'd find it, but read it I shall, lest I be accused of being a Trekkie, and non-fan, at least by the definition of some ... I grew up with the original series, and reading up on its connected fandom through books by Gene Roddenberry, Steven Whitfield and David Gerrold got me into fandom itself. My first fannish connections were with a *Star Trek* club in Victoria, British Columbia. (There, I said it. Such a burden has been lifted from my shoulders!) I think Paramount spoiled it for a lot of us by simply giving us too much, both television series and movies. We were spoiled by a glut of *Trek*. *Enterprise*? I may have seen a total of four or five episodes, but I couldn't get into it. Too many contradictions, and I didn't want to know what had (supposedly) happened in the "past", I wanted to know what happened next. *Trek* isn't dead, it's just restin', and I hope its next incarnation will be a little more youth-oriented. I expect the *Star Fleet Academy* series will take place at some point. Some episodes mentioned a kind of time police; maybe that's the next incarnation.

The London Circle has two new members to gather at Walkers of Holborn ... some months ago, Colin Stewart left Toronto to go home to London, and has been at Walkers at least once. Now, S.O. Shana Worthen has left Toronto to join Colin, and they both plan to mingle with the usual suspects at the new pub. I'm looking forward to the 2006 Corflu, right here in Toronto. It'll be my first one.

Andy: It looks like any further installments of *The Journal of Federation Studies* will be some time in coming, with the cancellation of *Enterprise*, and the general rush to declare *Trek* dead. We might well have had a surfeit of *Trek* spinoffs and successors, but honestly, about two seasons worth of *TNG* (the seasons with Melinda Snodgrass as Story Consultant), and roughly half of *DS9* were really worth one's time; the rest was formula, with characters that seldom penetrated our long-term memories. But it has been absolutely priceless as a means to irritate many fans who quivered all over like Lionel Barrymore whenever the show is mentioned.

Jason K. Burnett

I especially enjoyed Rich Coad's Corflu report. Prior to this, I would have bet money that no one could possibly produce a more impressionist, less reality-based con report than Arnie Katz, but Rich has managed to pull it off. My hat is off to you, sir.

Dave Langford's account of John Brosnan's funeral and afterparty was probably my favorite piece in the whole issue, despite the fact that I'd never heard of Brosnan until I read it. Langford manages to capture the clubby, convivial nature of British fandom perfectly. There is something about the character of British fandom that's different from its American counterpart. I would chalk it up to the smaller size of the nation, but I think there's more to it than that. Between the British fans, British wargamers, and various other Brits that it has been my pleasure to know, I am firmly of the believe that you could take any two or more random Brits alone for five minutes and when you come back they will have discovered what interest they have in common and started a club centered around it, complete with a written constitution and duly elected slate of officers. It's really a rather charming quality that I wish was more evident in Americans.

For all the nice things it said about him, the obituary for Bill Bowers still falls far short of conveying what I nice guy he was. When I stumbled into fanzine fandom about two years ago, Bill was one of the first fans I had contact with. He was exceedingly friendly, always willing to make time to welcome and encourage a neo. I wish I could have met him in person, but I'm glad I at least got to meet him through e-mail. He was so down-to-earth, I never knew until reading his obituary that he was a Big Name Fan — he was just so down-to-earth and likable and never felt the need to trumpet his past accomplishments.

Randy: It's hard to do full justice to someone who had as much impact on fans and fandom as Bill did, so your more personal comments are very much appreciated. As for the Brits, they are simply better than we are, as they never tire of reminding us.

Irwin Hirsh

Chunga 10 was the last fanzine to arrive prior to going away for a two week holiday, so I took it along as part of my Holiday Reading Programme.

Reading the Corflu reports while in Bali is entirely appropriate since I reckon that our Kuta hotel would be a great place to hold a small convention (Geckocon). I was taken back by Jay Kinney's remark that a meal was cheap at \$10 a head,

since the most expensive meal we've had in Bali came to about US \$11 a head, a feast of fish, squid, and prawns in Jimbaran Bay.

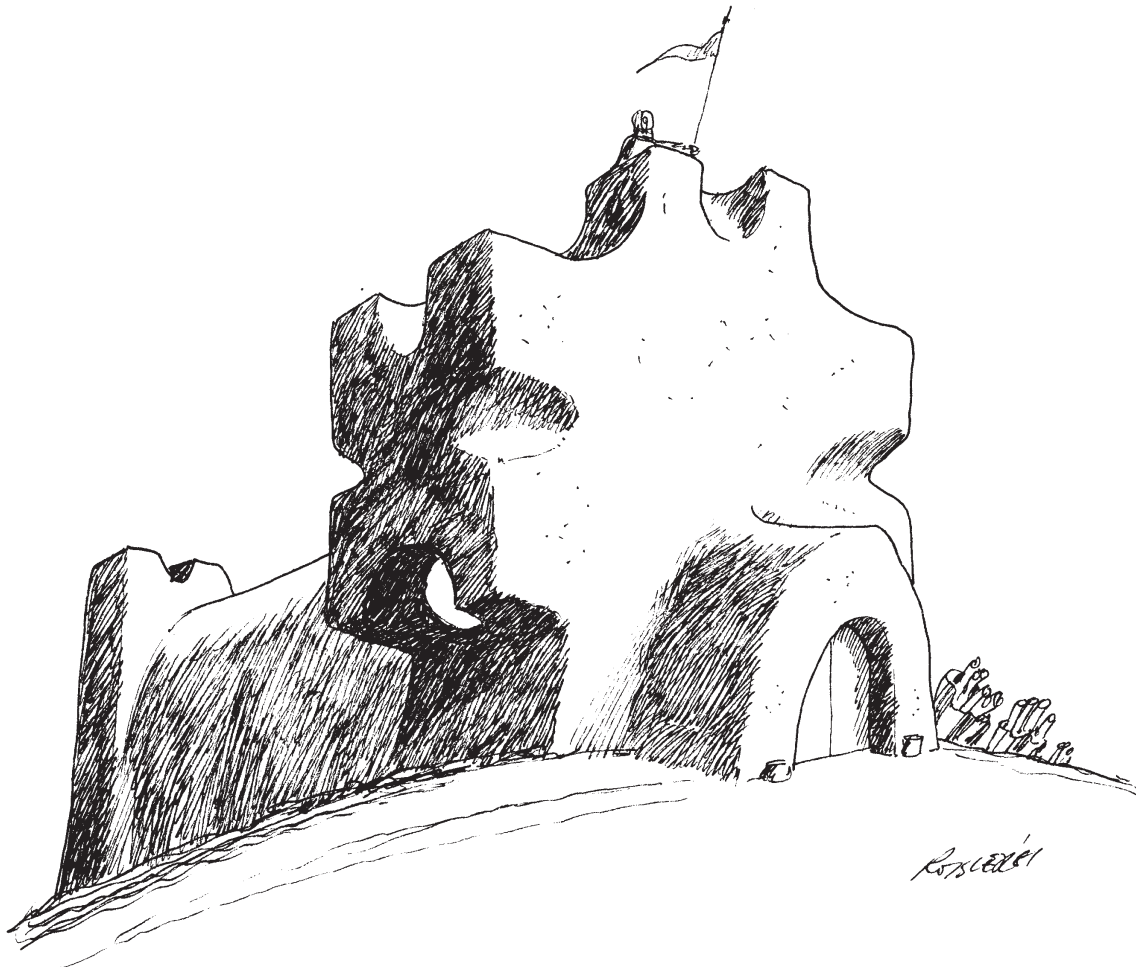
I really enjoyed Dave Landford's extensive look at John Brosnan's funeral and wake. I wonder if Holdstock's begging noises for Dave to attend was inspired by the hope that just this article would be written. And kudos to Ian Maule for his excellent photos. I particularly like the pic of Harry Harrison and Chris Priest, each making sure their glass of wine won't topple over.

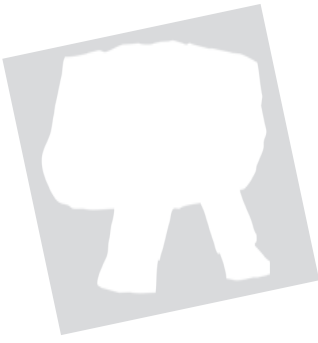
Brosnan is just about the first British fan I ever met, as he rejoined ANZAPA soon I after became a member (and joining ANZAPA was one of the first things I did in fandom.) I quickly became a fan of his fanwriting, and a year or two later discovered something of his reputation among James Bond fandom. At College I met someone who was a made keen Bond fan, and I casually mentioned that I correspond with someone who has written a book about Bond. "You know John Brosnan!" came the reply, "His book is brilliant. I wish I'd written it. Oh, what's his address? I'd like to write to him.", etc. It was good to meet and chat with John at the Wellington meets I attended after Conspiracy. Each time he mentioned that he was expecting to be deported. I see that it never happened.

Ulrika O'Brien's note about Seattle having eight resident fan fund winners had me searching the memory banks for names of the Eight. I quickly came up with five names, but it took a while to come up with the other three. This is mainly because it took a while for the memory bank to recall the names of all the TAFF and DUFF winners. Later on I realised that it would have been quicker to have wandered up to the nearest internet café, spent 1000 rupiah (about 15 cents) for the few minutes I'd need to check out Langford's TAFF and my Oz Fan Fund websites.

By my count, Melbourne also has eight resident fan fund winners, with another two (Roger Weddall and Ian Gunn) who were Melbournites when they passed away. This count only involves those who have won DUFF and GUFF, and doesn't even consider the winners of FFANZ, NAFF and The Bring Bruce Bayside Fund. However, if the Seattle fan community wished to claim Roman Orszanski, Damien Warman, and Juliette Woods (and John Foyster, who was an Adelaidian when he died) because they all are (were, for Foyster) residents of the city that hosted the 1985 Aussie Natcon, you'd get no objection from me.

Andy: But I find it completely unsurprising that Melbourne would have a large selection of the





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available Australian fan fund winners, given the activity and importance of that city in Oz fan culture. Seattle just doesn't seem comparable as either a city or a center of American fan activity (except, apparently, in the area of enthusiasm for fan funds.)

Mike Glicksohn

Four days from now, I start my 35th and last year as a high-school maths teacher. And I seem to have lost the User's Guide to my printer which I might need shortly. Oddly enough, these facts are not unrelated.

It's been on my mind all summer that next year I'm going to have a lot of time on my hands. I've got a few hundred unread books waiting for me but surely retirement can't only mean sipping single malts on the front porch and reading? So it has crossed my mind that perhaps I might pick up where I basically stopped a dozen years ago and try corresponding with fanzines again.

LASFS used to say that death will not release you. Gafiation apparently will release you from 98% of fanzine fandom but that last 2% is amazingly tenacious. In trying to find that damned printer guide, I searched through the one foot high stack of largely-unread and mostly-unresponded-to fanzines that has accumulated since last I put a full box of fanzines on top of the stack of boxes in the basement. And I saw how many copies of *Chunga* you guys had sent me, largely-unread and completely-unresponded-to. (I won't blush when I tell you I didn't feel too guilty about this: it took me thirty years to realize that receipt of a fanzine did not obligate me to reply to it but I eventually learned that lesson. But I was appreciative of your continued efforts in my direction.)

Then in this morning's mail came my copy of *Can't Get Off the Island*, the Pickersgill collection

HOW LONG HAVE I
BEEN ON STEROIDS?
HOW LONG HAS CHRIST-
MAS BEEN DRIVING
THE US ECONOMY?



of fanwriting from this year's worldcon. And while I may be getting too old for this, I can take a hint.

When I was an active part of the fanzine fandom of my day, loccing was a breeze. But after twelve years mostly out of the loop, there's a certain degree of trepidation: Will I understand the references? Will I know what everyone else is talking about? Do I have anything useful to say? wotthehell archy wotthehell why dont I find out

So many familiar names, so many photographs of friends from thirty to forty years ago (but why do they look so old?) and a bunch of young whipper-snappers too. A well-constructed, well-crafted and well-written issue. Evidently, off-line fanzine fandom is alive and well.

I only found out about *The Best of Xero* this summer when a friend asked me if I knew where to find a copy of Donald Westlake's "Don't Call Us, We'll Call You". I tracked it to the book, ordered a copy and was absolutely delighted to add it to my library. As a bonus, I made e-mail contact with Dick Lupoff and Donald Westlake which was — as we oldpharts might say — neat.

Andy's Corflu report surprised me (not because it was the best-written: I would have expected that) but because I didn't know we shared an enthusiasm for *Enterprise* (although my seven remaining brain cells would never allow me to recall any given episode as accurately as Andy can.) I still think the opening credits were brilliant and if the story line deteriorated towards the end of the series, the show remained viewable, to me.

As one of a very small number of North American fans who was active in the British fanzines of the 1970s and attended several British conventions during that time, I was deeply moved by Langford's account of the wake for John Brosnan. I knew just about everyone mentioned, including John, and was amazed at how many old-time fans made it to the funeral. I have copies of most of John's fanzines downstairs (but none of his books) so it seems appropriate, as Dave suggested, to raise a freshly-poured glass of Lagavulin in his honour and in remembrance of the times we drank together.

I'm glad to see an obituary for my old friend Bill Bowers. I've always felt Bill was under-appreciated by fannish fanzine fandom because his style wasn't close to that of most fannish fans but to me he was one of the finest fanzine editors of our generation. Coincidentally, the last loc I wrote to a non-newszine was to Bill's last issue of *Outworlds*, a ten-thousand word letter that commented on every part of that huge fanzine (because, of course, he had editorialized that "no-one can comment on everything in the issue" or words to that effect.) It

will never see publication but I'm glad he had the chance to read it and know how much I loved him.

I don't know James Bacon but Claire Brialey has a point: if he's the Rick Sneary of his generation maybe his writing should be left alone?

Very odd to read a letter (brilliantly crafted) from my old acquaintance Graham Charnock. I raise my glass (now filled with ice-cold vodka) in what I believe might be your direction, Graham. Good to know some of us are still around (us) and passing for active (that's me, not you).

Well you know, that was fun. And not completely horrible. You be the judges. Maybe I'll try this again next year around this time ...

Andy: I regard the prospect of your renewed fanactivity with considerable pleasure. Mike—your period of “gafiation” roughly corresponds to my entire fannish career. But you’ve always responded to fanzines and other communication every few years or so, making you one of the more active gafiates on the scene. Lack of activity doesn’t automatically indicate a state of Gafia—and if you continue to send letters of this quality to the small group of fans still publishing fanzines, it may be difficult to convince people that you’ve ever been “away from it all.”

Graham Charnock

The editors of the IKEA catalogue rang me up. Apparently they got my name from some other big catalogue or other, Yellow Pages, I think, although it might have been the alternative catalogue of holiday beaches, Yellow Plages.

I don't know if you have IKEA, over there, but it's like a big blue and yellow Wal-Mart that sells meatballs and Aquavit, so can do no wrong in my book.

Whenever a new store opens over here thousands are hospitalised after being trapped in the rush to buy plywood chopsticks called Ronkag.

Now Apparently Barrington J. Bayley is very big in Sweden for some bizarre reason to do with an obscure episode in one of his novels involving Herring or possibly Herrings (if anyone can shed any light on this they know where to find me, since you guys obligingly print all our addresses).

The Top Brass at IKEA, or Head Honchos as you would call them, wanted me to write a piece for the forthcoming issue of their catalogue in his style, since they couldn't afford the real thing (he'd held out for too many bottle of Aquavit).

So here is a clumsy parody outline of a Barrington J. Bayley novel about a Starship traveling between various dimensions, which the editor of

the IKEA catalogue promised to include in the next issue, but did he? Heck no. Even though I tried to put in as many mentions of Swedish furniture as possible.

The hero of this novel is a vast semi-sentient spaceship called Nordstap. Bits of him keep falling off, mostly those made of wood, where the dowels haven't been glued in properly, but he is phlegmatic about this, and has even worked up a comedy routine based on it, which he intends to showcase at the Edinburgh Festival.

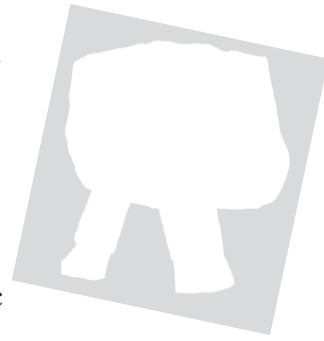
However, like all fat people, he is disgusted, if not by his vast size, so much as by his own perception of it, and has been equipped with fake-neural interchange morphal devices designed to convince himself he is in fact a small, dwarf speedster of the class known as Vorkin, so-called because they bore core DNA from the Dssmnalli, a race known for its inbred psychotic tendencies. Vorkin is Swedish for Dssmnall, as you know, but of course also for a small house made of a few pre-cut sheets of easily assembled plywood and designed to home hamsters (nails and glue (in a bubble pack) included).

Historical note: The Dssmnalli had perished when their sun exploded. Not because of the actual explosion but because they had failed to wear the proper degree of sunscreen. (I thought the fair-skinned Swedes might appreciate this Public Health note).

Carry on: The Dssmnalli sun had been reduced to the core of a small Black Dwarf that was now encircled by an even smaller planet known as Earth, or Gropvinik, as the Swedes called it, but protected from evil radiations by a free-orbiting interlaced network of fibrous self-generated structures based on Dyson spheres. Also it had three drawers and came in an easy self-assembly flat-pack.

So much for the background, although we shouldn't neglect to mention the easy access of the North Circular Road to the nearby Neasden Temple and the Welsh Harp Reservoir. Learn to sail for only £20.00 per hour. Search the web for local B&Bs. You'll find there aren't any, but it all puts money into telecommunications industry's infinite bank accounts.

The main narrative-driving character of this story was a gentleman of leisure called Sven Skantag (or storage unit for bed-linen). After gambling and losing his family fortune in the Flesh-pots of Buttvik, (literally a small stool formed from laminated plywood, but alternatively adopted colloquially as the name as the main space-yard of Gropvinik.) he managed to arrange for a pack of small raiding dwarves to patch himself into a sequence of DNA-



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based info-segments which would recycle him, and finally connect him to the big bright orange thing that was the blast-of off His ship, Svart Kralig (or vast monster made of re-cycled cardboard), which previously to this had been sitting out in the yards for three moths doing nothing but accumulating rust and popping its rivets...

He was about to blast off when a klaxon sound- ed which cleared the yard quicker than a bad epi- sode of a novel featuring Harry Potter, or the Lord of Snig Vrnornik (or general purpose cardboard stacking box), as he had come to be known in Swe- den.

The *Silk Rod* (Lord Milvik's ship, the *Kronen- borfen*, in Swedish, or the 'Swedish Meatball') was coming in from its latest trek through a Klein- Bot- tle loop. It had been forty years in stasis to the pow- er of three, and the crew didn't even have access to chamber pots.

In the ensuing emergency anyone who knew anything about disaster (or had ever read a science fiction novel) stood back to watch the skies. This included a small character from a Robert A. Hein- lein novel which won't appear any more since a pig landed on him.

There were several thousand more pages of this, but the editor of the IKEA catalogue, Wilma Twiss, wouldn't go for any of this. But there, what do you expect of any nation which has special tools to remove boogers, and that's from children, not homosexuals.

Randy: Sorry, Graham, but as much as we love the horrifically underrated Barrington Bayley, we don't publish science fiction and therefore can't use your story. All the IKEA references might make it a good fit for *Plokta*.

Cat Coast

Chunga is a fine, fine fanzine and don't you forget it Mister. I particularly like how international it feels, like the world has shrunk for my benefit. Great to see an actual article by Langford (That dog) whose *Ansible* I read when the baby goes to sleep for 50 minutes and there's only a small mountain of ironing to be done. His brevity and succinctness is commendable for someone in my position, and I thought to myself how well deserved his Hugo was this year.

Randy: It's lovely to think of you ironing the latest issue of *Chunga* alongside a teetering pile of Penelope's nappies. Sorry about all the kinks!

Rob Holdstock

Many thanks for the copy of *Chunga*, with Dave's piece on John B, the celebration, the fond memory. An excellent piece, moving, funny, accurate, and fannish. Just the job. John was much loved and much enjoyed; he was also much-frustrating, as you will have gathered. Dave didn't mention Roy Kettle's daughter Jen's homage to the man. Jen is 18 and adored JB. She read a very serious piece he'd written in the late 90's, very political, very sharp. To illustrate that there was a deep thinker below the cynical surface of the man. It was a touching moment.

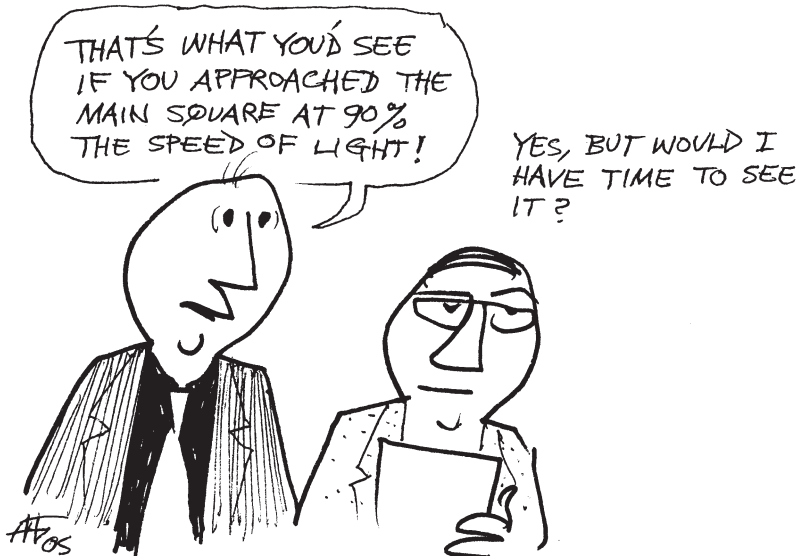
JB aside, the first sensations, as the invitees to the feast arrived, was a sense of shock at the changes that Time and its Boney Hands has wrought upon us over the 35 years since most of us met up. Chris Priest said it the loudest, with his usual Chris Priest laugh: "Christ! we've become a bunch of old farts!"

But you can't keep a young fan down. The party for John became as a mini-convention, with fawn- like souls doing their thing from inside the mere flesh-suits of a fancy dress.

Andy: It is a source of some comfort to think that our expiration may provide our friends with a chance to enjoy one another's company as JB's demise appears to have done. And your mention of Roy Kettle's daughter helps me to share in the sensation of advancing age as well, since her birth was either very recent or immi- nent at the moment I first met Roy in Brighton in 1987.

Jerry Kaufman

I liked the way the issue fell into two main themes of Corflu and Norton, with the Langford piece on John Brosnan acting as a hinge or as a central pil-



lar holding up the two sections. I also liked the way the two sections included more-or-less traditional approaches to the subjects (the Kinney-Dobson report, the Byers appreciation) as well as far-from trad pieces (the Coad hallucination and the Norton anthology of quotes).

Rich in particular did a swell job of tying Corflu and Potlatch together, although I got a little lost towards the end. Doing a con report of Corflu as though it were the Dick book of honor from Potlatch (I am remembering the plot of *A Scanner Darkly* correctly, am I not?) was a brilliant stroke, even though it would not be one that would lead to clarity. However, as a Dick fan myself, I do not expect clarity in all things.

Andy, in your description of the *Enterprise* episodes, are you doing a Television Fantasia turn, or are these real?

Andy: I think the only thing that's nominally "untrue" in that piece was the idea that Corflu Titanium was the first edition of the convention with an art show—several people have pointed out that Bill Bowers organized an art show for his Corflu, number four. The stuff about *Enterprise* was at least meant to be accurate, and the plot synopsis described an actual episode. Which may be part of the reason why the show is no longer on the air.

Shelby Vick

Chunga #9 arrived and was muchly appreciated. But what really got me was the monster—a shutter-Bug-Eyed-Monster.

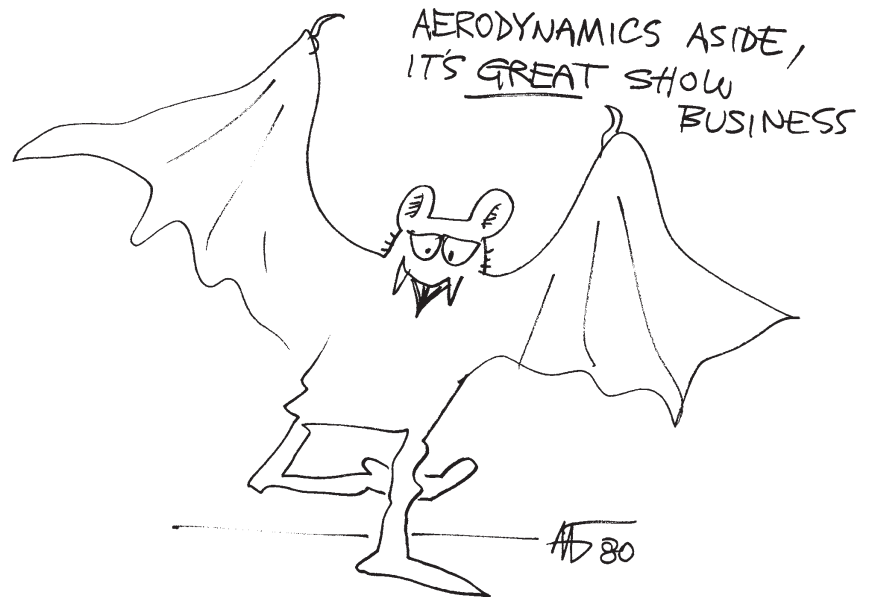
I was more computer-geek than scifi fan when I saw the title, 'Norton and Re-Norton'; my first thot was that it was about an antiviral program. But, it was an interesting retro about Andre instead. Well-done. But who did the paste-up that followed it? I woulda thot it was Randy, but then there's a follow-up by Andy mentioning Norton in regards to a proposed change in Potlatch. (Never attended one, but Andy makes his idea sound interesting—totem pole and all.)

Andy: Norton's words were fixed-up by Randy. I think he had trouble figuring out how to use his byline for something assembled from another writer's work.

Frank Wu

Suspiciously, the editorials in your last issue kept emphasizing that this was number 10. Curiously, the previous issue, No. 9, had been acknowledged to be a "Beatles reference." The Fab Four were suspected of having hidden secret messages in their

asserting that abortion of black fetuses would prevent most crime in America.



songs. Many concerned the supposed death of Paul McCartney around 1967 (to pay off the Devil for their success), and his subsequent replacement by a look-alike. The song "Revolution No. 9" was particularly important for clues related to the "Paul Is Dead" mystery. If you play that song backwards, you will hear "Turn me on, dead man."

Clearly the tricky, clever editors of *Chunga* were planting some hidden message in their text. What was it? The number 10 seemed important, as did 9. A coded message appears if you start with the section entitled "We've made it to double-digits" (an obvious call-out). Begin with the 9th letter and proceed to every tenth. This yields:

I D H E V L N L W E E D N I T N E T S

What does this mean? Expanded, this author takes it to read: "Identify his evil (in the) Netherlands. (Then we'll) weed. (The) nit nets."

Chunga is clearly planning to use its minions (the nits pictured on pages 8 and 9) to kidnap (net) Jan Peter Balkenende, prime minister of the Netherlands and President of the European Union.

I would not be surprised if *Chunga* were also found to be behind the mysterious fire that earlier destroyed the first floor of the prime minister's residence.

What could *Chunga* have against Balkenende? It could be that PM stands in the way of *Chunga's* telegraphed intent on world conquest, one fanzine at a time. My pet theory is that Balkenende is a target because of his resemblance to Harry Potter.

So, in conclusion, like most evil geniuses, the *Chunga* editors have hinted at their malicious intent. They must be stopped at all costs before untold pandemonium is unleashed upon the earth.

Andy: Cran ... berry ... sauce

WAHFs

James Bacon

It reminds me of bad times in school.

William Breiding

Mostly it's just that words have failed me over the last five years.

Jay Kinney

The variety of photos of fans helped offset the relatively cliquish limits of our fan references in the article itself.

David Langford

I may never have managed to sell to Analog, but at last I've cracked Chunga....

Robert Lichtman

(Hey, mini-LoC!)

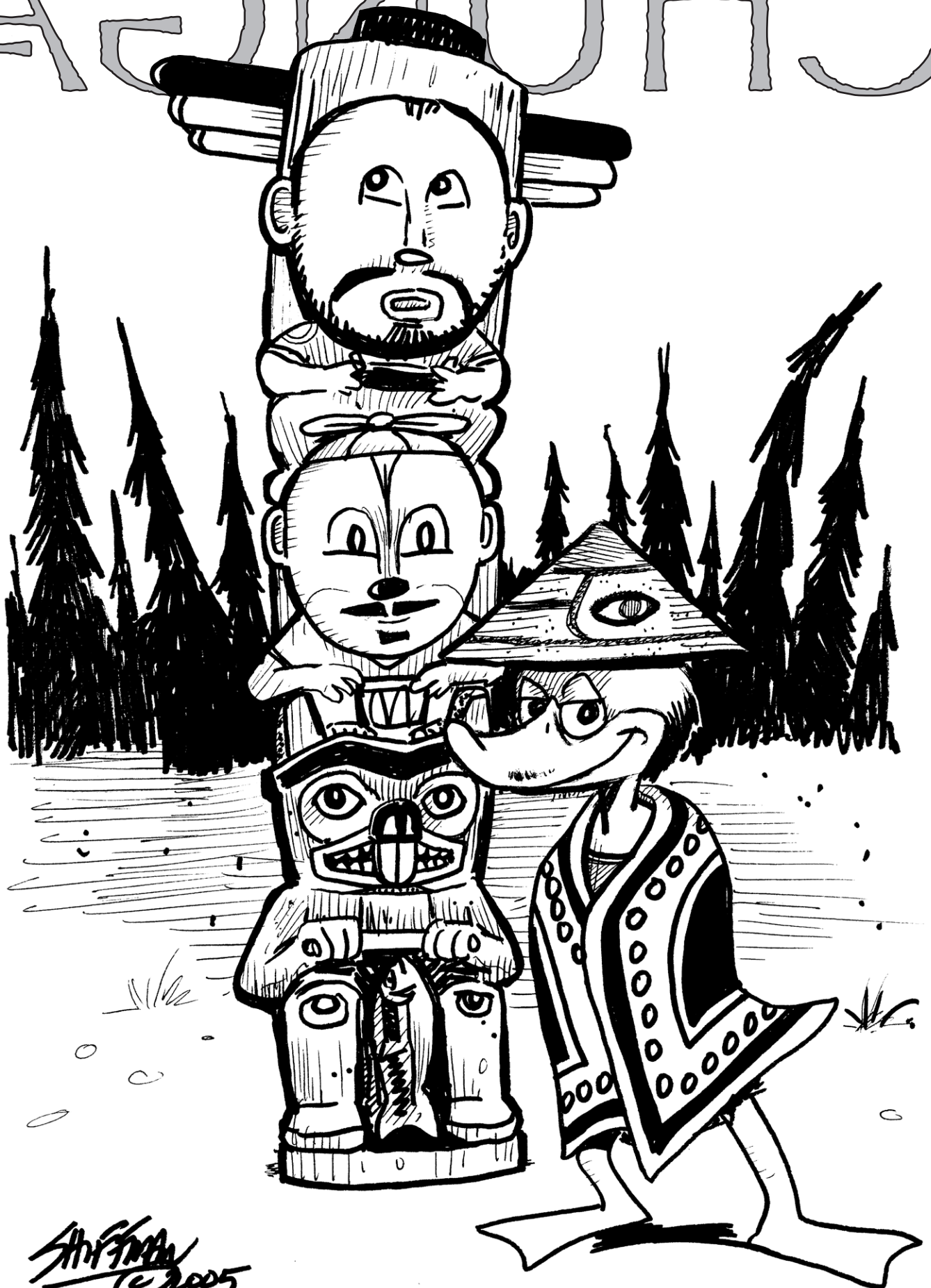
Bruce Townley

Thanks for printing it.

Henry L. Welch

Until next issue...

АЭЛАУНО



SHYFMA
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