

CHUNGA



Torchwood West



CHUNGA

CHUNGA is a hunted thing; its horse-wild eyes dart from one rain-slick cul-de-sac to another, lungs aching, ragged breath staining the November air. But it remains forever one corner ahead of its angry, unseen pursuers, as the sinister zither music swells, and shadows consume the entire world.

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PDFs of every issue may be found at eFanzines.com.

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🕯 Issue 15, November 2008 🕯

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Special Post-Election / Pre-Inauguration
Trauma Edition

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Tanglewood

Is history thermoplastic?

Welcome back to our cabinet of curiosities. *Chunga* #15 seems particularly suffused with arcana, obscure personal obsessions and their associated lore. But in contrast to many issues, I believe virtually everything in #15 is ostensibly “true.” No doubt some hokum has crept in regardless, but all our writers and contributors claim to have presented us with factual material. Fandom’s insatiable interest in everything the universe has to offer remains a consistent wonder to me, and one of the reasons why I’m still fannish after all these years.

Fandom itself persists like a creature declared extinct by science, but known to those who take the time to find it. We may appear to be an animated corpse to some, but in close-up, fandom is still teeming with life, full of passionate conviction and charging in 10 directions at once. But if perhaps your sense of wonder may feel a trifle mummified, think of *Chunga* as the brew of three Tana leaves, enough to make you walk, and talk... and LoC.

—Andy

We’re hosting Corflu Zed, the 26th Corflu, in Seattle next year. I’m chairing it, Andy’s handling the program, and various of the usual suspects of Seattle fandom are helping with all the other work that goes into running a */p/a/r/t/y/* Corflu. We are going to try to answer the call from one or two quarters (well, okay, Mark Plummer) for a more organized, if not coherent, program, but the thing that makes a Corflu is the people who come to it. We hope you’ll join us and make this Corflu something special. The more, the merrier.

Corflu Zed will be held 13–15 March 2009 at the Hotel Deca—a beautiful old art deco hotel in the University District. You may well have received a progress report by the time you’ve received this fanzine. If not, ping me at fringefaan@yahoo.com, and I’ll make sure you’re on the notification list. You can also find more information about joining and making reservations at the Corflu website at www.corflu.org, which is maintained by the awesome Tracy Benton.

We’re still brainstorming ideas for the convention, but there have already been some exciting developments. The Corflu Fifty has chosen Curt Phillips to send to Corflu Zed, and this will be a

rare chance for many of us to meet the Fan from Abingdon. I can hardly wait! We’re also putting together a fanthology of material by the Cry Gang, who put Seattle on the fannish map in the ’50s and ’60s, hosting a Worldcon here in 1961 and winning a Hugo for Best Fanzine for *Cry of the Nameless* in 1960. Just last week we heard rumors that the Eaton Collection, which maintains a large archive of fanzines, including the Bruce Pelz and Terry Carr collections, will be coming to Corflu to do some outreach. We are also looking at having various groups host parties in the penthouse consuite, and we’ll have more information about that in future progress reports.

Corflu is an old-school convention that relies on everyone getting involved to make things interesting. Please send us your ideas and make plans to come to Seattle next year with your latest fanzine in hand. We’ll show you ours if you show us yours.

—Randy

Oh there’s so much to mention, I feel like an Oompa-Loompa or two.

It is perhaps possible that by this time you will have noticed a certain small difference in texture this issue. Yes, we’ve gone to a 20-pound stock (the better to see through you). Also, we’re printing this issue on Randy’s nice new HP printer, which does color, so do not adjust your set.

A lifelong dream for some, owning the means of reproduction, but for others outsourcing of production is the thing to conserve limited global resources, and to scratch that itch we will of course be uploading a slightly more perfected version of what you have before, upon, or over you to eFanzines, for those who wish personally to become one with the Grand Chain of Repro.

Speaking of Capitalized Nouns, our lives are the inhalations and exhalations of some Great Force. We’ve lost Thomas Disch and mystery/Zen writer Janvillem van de Wetering (on the same day), Barrington Bayley (underrated van Vogt of British SF), and are threatened with the imminent loss of Forrest J Ackerman, but there are also our friends who are illing and recovering. God bless us every one, and please to keep Bible Spice from our door.

Be sure to be with us next time, when Randy sez, *Oh noes! I haz convention!*

—carl





At the Canyons of Corflu

A Desert Narrative by Andy Hooper

**Episode One: Corflu Silver Opening Ceremony,
April 25th, 2008**

I have bad dreams that take place in the program room of Corflu Silver. The same low-ceilinged space in the Turf Club of the Jackie Gaughn Plaza hotel was used for Corflu 21 and Corflu 12, at least one Silvercon, and a notorious Channelspace Inc. editorial meeting. In that room our CEO announced he had spent our remaining capitol to acquire a rival internet business, with the assumption that it would help achieve our ultimate goal—to be bought by an even bigger dot-com that would leave everyone rich.

Instead, we drifted into financial deep space, slowly cannibalizing one another as life support failed, until the last survivor froze solid with his hands still at the keyboard, writing about the collectability of Smurfs. Sitting down in that room again was like returning to the clinic where I found out I had diabetes. No question my attitude has been better at the opening of Corflu than it was that Friday.

My foul mood lifted as Vegas fan Bill Mills took the podium to open the convention. Bill has a powerful thespian instrument; his round tones remind one of the late John Carradine, the late William Conrad, or possibly the late Mel Blanc in the role of Foghorn Leghorn. It struck me that he was the living incarnation of John Barkenhorst, a character in the play I'd written for the convention. He had to play the part—and I was confident he would want to play it. I daydreamed of other casting choices as Joyce Katz took the stage. She thanked many, and described a few of the events we would enjoy at Corflu Silver.

Then came the selection of Corflu's Guest of

Honor. The names of all con members who have not yet enjoyed the honor are placed in a hat. To make the selection appear even more random, Las Vegas fan Theresa Cochrane, who happens to be completely blind, was to draw the name. Eventually, I mused, the pool of available candidates will dwindle down so that the odds of being Guest of Honor will rise to something like one in ten—and Theresa, conferring with a sighted assistant, said, "It's Andy Hooper."

I felt I might have dreamed it. I have dreams about that room, and dreams about being Corflu Guest of Honor. But people were applauding, and there was no mistake. I would have to deliver a speech on Sunday morning, and listen to questions about it for the balance of the convention. It was my turn; but that also meant that it would never be my turn again, and all future opening ceremonies will be free of peril.

Away in the convention suites, I warded off questions about my speech with fresh copies of *Chunga* #14. The carousel of friends and correspondents was full of familiar faces—some a bit balder, grayer, thinner, but all the more compelling for it. We all had amazing discoveries to share and strange new theories to expound.

The kernel of my oratory began to grow. It had to do with the disparate interests of the fans at Corflu, and would connect them like those elaborate television histories that begin with Cyrus the Great of Persia and end with the construction of

the Golden Gate Bridge. Mine would wander from the invention of writing in ancient Sumeria, to the origins of the KTF review in scatological poetry of ancient Rome, and conclude with the 19th century psychic Madame Blavatsky and her alleged service with Giuseppe Garibaldi. I planned to finish by predicting the 2063 election of Jophan Paul I, the first fannish Pope. It would be awesome!

**Episode Two: Meteor Crater, Arizona,
April 30th, 2008**

The wind never stopped. It rose and fell in intensity, but never subsided completely; and most of the time it tore at us in gusts measuring 40 to 60 miles per hour. Dust filled the air, penetrating every tightly pursed orifice and limiting visibility to a milky, stinging squint. Structures of all description shuddered and rocked under the pounding, invisible fist, and the movie screen in the visitor center rippled like a flag in the breeze.

The combination of the wind, dust and empty landscape combined to create an other-worldly impression singularly appropriate for a visit to Meteor Crater. The lip of the crater rises rather subtly from the surrounding plain, and there is no

high point nearby from which its interior can be viewed, until you are literally at its edge. It's easy to see why it was geographically unknown into the latter half of the 19th century. Officially named the Diablo Canyon Crater, it is also commonly known as the Barringer Crater, after entrepreneur Daniel Barringer who purchased it at the turn of the 20th century. He and his partners in the Standard Iron Company spent millions struggling to find and mine iron from the crater floor.

Normally, admission included a guided tour of a half-mile trail along the crater's rim, but the wind forced them to close the trail. We tottered out onto the observation decks, clutching firmly at the iron railings as we went. The scale is impressive, but the real wonder of the place is its relatively compact geometry, so perfectly round and easily encompassed by even a compromised eye.

Fifty thousand years ago, a chunk of glowing nickel-iron about the size of a college dormitory impacted the Colorado plateau at a speed of 12.5 kilometers per second. The impact instantly vaporized the great bulk of the meteor, which weighed about 330,000 tons after its transit through the atmosphere. The energy released instantly scorched



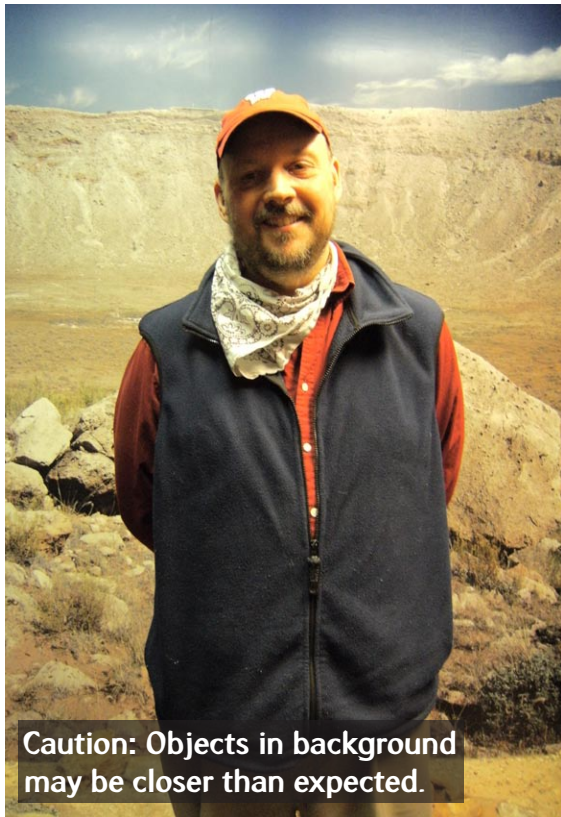


More about Daniel Moreau Barringer

The son and nephew of a Whig congressman and a Confederate general, Daniel Barringer was a classic 19th century academic over-achiever. He graduated from Princeton at the age of 19, completed a law degree at 21, then earned advanced degrees in both geology and mineralogy from Harvard and the University of Virginia.

Surrounded as it is by recently active volcanoes, it makes perfect sense that the first scientists to investigate the crater thought that it too was a volcanic feature. When Barringer first visited the crater in 1902, he was convinced otherwise, and felt that there was a large deposit of nickel and iron to be discovered beneath it. And Barringer had an impressive record of success behind him. His discoveries at the Cochise and Commonwealth Silver mines had made him a wealthy man. After decades of effort, he suffered a fatal heart attack in 1929, upon reading a summary of new calculations indicating that the bulk of the meteor had vaporized on impact.

Although Barringer believed he had condemned his wife and eight children to poverty, ownership of the crater would eventually be his most important legacy to them. Barringer had convinced most geologists that the crater was an impact feature, but its value as the best such site on Earth would not be fully appreciated until the 1960s. The family trust maintains the visitor center and charges \$15 per adult visitor – by now, they have redeemed Barringer’s \$600,000 investment many times over.



and scouring 100 square miles of rolling Pleistocene grass and woodland, and lifted 150,000,000 tons of pulverized rock and debris over the same huge slice of modern Arizona.

Because no huge mass of iron could be found at the site, the question of the crater’s origin remained open until 1961, when the late Dr. Gene Shoemaker collected dense silicate crystals there, samples that resembled rocks collected from the site of underground nuclear weapon tests. These minerals only form under the intense pressures present in a nuclear explosion or a very high energy impact. They absolutely cannot be formed by any volcanic process found on Earth. This observation, coupled with the presence of very significant amounts of meteoric nickel-iron in the area, finally lead to the acknowledgment of the crater as an extraterrestrial impact site right around the same time that I was born in 1962. The whole issue of impact by near-Earth objects and our response to the phenomenon has grown from the acceptance of what now seem to be such strikingly obvious facts.

But the sight of the crater, and other natural wonders of the region, can strike the human eye in different ways. The massive layers laid bare by the carving of the Grand Canyon seem like inescapable proof of the vast scale of geological history, yet the region is home to many people who accept Bishop Usher’s reckoning of the age of God’s creation at just over six thousand years. Later in the trip, Carrie recalled an aunt’s 1960ish reaction to the sight

of dinosaur bones and petrified trees: “Carol, you don’t really believe those things are millions of years old, do you?”

Episode Three: Pine Creek Canyon, April 25th, 2008

The first organized event of Corflu Silver was the desert walk Ken Forman planned for Friday morning. He chose a hiking trail in the Red Rocks Wilderness area, the same region we walked at Corflu 12 in 1995. We glumly noticed that where we had driven 20 minutes through empty desert to get to the trailhead in 1995, there was now a casino within sight of the park.

Ken chose the Pine Creek Canyon trail because it would have water from winter snow melt, and blooming plants and active animal life along the creek. Some of the usual suspects were along again: Bill Bodden kept a lookout for birds, and I believe he added a new hummingbird to his life list. But it seemed like there were also an unusual number of slower-moving fans who decided to brave the sun and dry conditions this year.

I’m not making fun of them, far from it; when I am the age of, for example, Elinor Busby, I’d love to be able to make it up and down Pine Creek Canyon in any kind of time. But buoyed by the sun, a casino buffet breakfast and the joy of newly-broken-in hiking boots, I streaked ahead through the cholla and creosote, to the top of the opposite rim of the canyon. I turned back to look for the rest of the group, and saw they were still scattered along the long trail down the slope of the opposite wall.

Then the trail of humanity disappeared. Ken had chosen a route that went along the creek bottom, of course, since there was much more to see there. Following distant voices, I managed to spot the top of Bill Bodden’s head as it poked up above the wash. I admired fancy water bugs skating along the gathering pools of the creek as I picked my way back to the group. Ken could probably have told me the Latinate names for them had I remained within earshot.

I was surprised that even though the balance of the party had taken a more leisurely pace and path to the falls of the creek, most were panting and fanning themselves. The desert was really heating up. Most resolved to return to the cars, while a few of us pressed on for a few hundred yards more. At the head of the canyon was a great gray promontory, sticking out above the trail like an enormous pencil point. But we couldn’t get very close; the trail began to split and meander, and some of us were foolishly wearing short pants.

Although we continued for 20 minutes more as



The 2008 FAAn Awards

The Fan Activity Achievement or FAAn awards have been associated with Corflu, ever since the Vegrants reactivated them for the first Las Vegas Corflu in 1994. They have become an essential part of the Sunday morning program at Corflu. Award categories and procedures for voting have changed from year to year, per the tastes of each Corflu committee and their designated administrator. Murray Moore collected and counted the ballots for the 2008 FAAn awards, which were awarded as follows:

Best Fanzine:
Prolapse, edited by Peter Weston

Best Fan Writer:
Arnie Katz

Best Fan Artist:
Dan Steffan

The Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award for Best Letterhack:
Robert Lichtman

Best New Fan:
Jon Coxon

Best Fan Website:
eFanzines.com

#1 Fan Face:
Arnie Katz

promised, many of the others were still working up the hill when we reached it. I was completely insufferable, and showed off by double-timing to reach the asphalt of the parking lot a few strides before Ken did.

I realized, at that moment, that I had become — well, partly — one of those hateful people that have always blown by me on difficult slopes, lapped me on my way around the track or pool, and stood still-chested and gorgeous as I heaved and wheezed to keep up with them. I'm still pretty much the same unsightly character as before, but I can surprise you if it becomes necessary to hunt me for sport.

That was a great day. Thanks to Ken Forman and the US Forest Service for helping make it possible.

Episode Four: Corflu Silver Program Track, April 26th, 2008

I know that I was a participant in Arnie Katz's panel on the Future of Core Fandom, which kicked off Corflu programming on Saturday. But I have very little memory of anything we said. I was far too preoccupied with the performance of my new play, *The Price of Pugwash*, which we were to present later that afternoon.

This was the seventh play I've written for performance at Corflu, and the last leg in an informal trilogy, formed with *Why You Got This Zine is Late* from Corflu 20 in Madison, and *Read and Enjoyed But No Content*, which was performed at Corflu 22 in San Francisco. Like those other plays, *The Price of Pugwash* traces the history of people and events in fandom through the medium of fan-ish correspondence. The first play was told entirely in fanzine editorials, the second one through the medium of comments in an apa, and the third is a mix of online and personal communication. I'm not sure how well the stories in each would stand on their own, but I like the way that they trace the evolution of fanzine fandom through the changes in its dominant means of communication.

I had a great cast to work with, with a mixture of new and familiar performers: Lenny Bailes, Randy Byers, Lise Eisenberg, Aileen Forman, Bill and Roxanne Mills and Lloyd Penney all did an excellent job.. And yes, Bill Mills was the definitive John Barkenhorst. His performance was so spot on that it left me eager to restage some earlier works to take advantage of his marvelous voice. Lenny Bailes was kind enough to print a small run of a new edition of my play *Fannotchka* for Corflu, and it would be great fun to put it on again for podcasting posterity.

And how was *The Price of Pugwash* received? Several people commented that it was the easiest of my recent works to follow, with each cast member playing just one person, and no odd accents to understand, unless you count Lenny. Later in the evening, Ted White took me aside and told me that he thought that my works for Corflu had become driven more by wordplay than action, and that he missed the days when people did things in my plays. And someone else observed that at the end of most of my plays, someone at least attempts to kiss the character played by Aileen Forman. So I promised thereafter that my next play would involve action worthy of a Republic pictures serial. *Robots! Rayguns! Bad Girls who Smoke!* And at the end of this one, someone will shoot Aileen Forman's character...after they kiss her.

Anyway, the play was not followed by an indulgent cast party with delicious food and exotic narcotics, but by my further service as an auctioneer in the Corflu benefit fanzine auction. There were only a few things in the auction that were really rare or nominally valuable. But there was also a heartening lack of utter junk — no large runs of crudzines from the recent past, no stacks of Worldcon progress reports. We ended up raising nearly \$1,000. That included \$40 I paid to donate Anna Vargo's copy of *Warhoon* 28 to Teresa Cochrane and her husband James Taylor, who spent the entire weekend working to keep the convention underway.

After this marathon (I haven't even mentioned the trivia contest), I really was beat down. There was talk of drafting me to join Ken and John Hardin in another issue of *Nine Lines Each*, and the spectacle of intercontinental arm wrestling between Graham Charnock and Ted White to come. But Carrie and I decided to go out with our roommates, and took our time resting and relaxing before we went back to the parties in the con suite.

But something else was going on at the same time. At about 4 pm I was reading my part in the play, and fanzines for sale in the auction, without magnification. During dinner, around 7 pm, the lights in the restaurant began to develop shining coronae, and it was suddenly impossible to read the menu without help. And by the time we returned to the party, my right eye had fuzzed out completely. I assumed it was another retinopathic hemorrhage, brought on by stress, activity, cigarette smoke, dehydration — there's no telling what made me bleed right at that moment. Whatever the reason, by 11 pm, I could only see through my left eye — still recovering from optical surgery on the 18th of March, and unable to read even the boldest type without significant magnification.



I was 12 hours away from delivering my Guest of Honor speech, and even if I had taken the copious notes I'd imagined the night before, I wouldn't be able to read them.

Episode Five: Bandolier National Monument, New Mexico, May 1st, 2008

The morning of the first, we began with a hearty breakfast (incorporating green chile sauce, naturally) at a diner called “Big Dawg’s,” then set out on the approaches to the Jemez valley, and the Valle caldera beyond. We would need the extra energy. Ever since we entered the vicinity of the Grand Canyon, we had been more than 5,000 feet above sea level, and as we approached the huge Valle caldera, we crested 10,000 feet well before the top. Since we live at sea level in Seattle, we really noticed the effects of being more than a mile above it for the bulk of our journey. We were perpetually out of breath, and found that an easy walk of a mile or so took as much out of us as covering three times as much ground at home.

In a desert region, it isn't hyperbole to say that all life depends on the mountains that cross and border it. Atop the mountains themselves, every thousand feet of height creates a new micro climate that corresponds to a more temperate latitude. And mountains collect, store and distribute rain water and snow melt that would otherwise sail inaccessible over the dry plains and plateaus below. The societies of the poorly-watered limestone plateaus of central America built huge pyramids in part to create artificial mountains that would catch and store water.

The Valle Caldera is an immense extinct volca-

no, once the equal of tall Cascade range volcanoes such as Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens. Even having lost an additional 1,000 to 2,000 feet to later eruptions, Valle Verde tops out above 11,000 feet. As we climbed along the road that runs right up to the lip of the caldera, we passed large patches of snow; but there were also plenty of fly fisherman out working the trout streams that issued from that snow, as it was opening day of the season.

The actual crater of the old volcano features an unbroken stretch of grass miles across. This is home to herds of elk and mule deer, but we didn't spot any that early in the year.

The Valle Caldera preserve connects directly to the Bandolier National Monument, and that proximity seems anything but coincidence. Between 1,000 and 700 years ago, people came to a canyon watered by a stream that issues from the slopes below the Valle Caldera. The walls were soft rock formed by compressed volcanic ash. They found that this rock could easily be worked into building stones, and began to raise simple houses that leaned against the sheltering walls of Frijoles Canyon. These early Anasazi settlers also pounded deep holes into the canyon wall, to hold roof beams and store all manner of goods out of the heat and sun.

The unique ancient town that resulted—and it absolutely was a town, although we have no idea what its name was, and call it after the white rancher who owned the property in the 19th century—was composed of narrow two- and three-story row houses. They were topped with wood-roofed sun porches and decorated with petroglyphs of animal totems and pictographic symbols. All were composed of the same volcanic rock—call them “pinkstone apartments,” and the neat, urban density of the site should come into focus.

Not everyone lived in the pinkstone row houses. Some people dug deep caves into the rock of the walls, more than a hundred feet up the canyon wall. And down on the canyon floor, not far from the fields where corn and beans were grown, they built a circular ring of houses, which leaned against one another instead of the canyon's side.

This structure dated from around 1100 AD; by then the population was apparently big enough that there was a need for a different category of residence—perhaps for a particular segment of the community, or temporary visitors to town. Nearby is a ceremonial kiva approximately 35 feet in diameter—room for as many as fifty people at once! This seems like clear evidence that the site supported a large population on at least a seasonal basis.

Looking at the cool canyon shadows, and think-

ing of the elk in the caldera a few miles above, it is easy to imagine that Bandolier was a Neolithic resort community. Hunters came up from the desert along the Rio Grande in the summer, stayed in pinkstones that they built, improved or commandeered, then went down to the winter settlements when the snows began. Anyone who spent the entire winter in the canyon had to be ready to deal with months of snow and freezing temperatures — certainly not impossible, but requiring a special kind of stamina known to townies in the off-season all over the world.

Like so many places we visited, Carrie remembered visiting Bandolier when she was a kid. Some things had changed, the trails more complex, but the pink stone and the dark sockets in the walls were just the same. We came down the steep canyons into the area around Los Alamos, and managed to get lost, possibly for security reasons. But we were soon sorted out by local advice, and stopped at a Mexican restaurant next to the airstrip.

The steak and enchiladas were delicious, and we were oddly comforted to be surrounded once again by men in ponytails, sandals, shorts and fleece jackets. “Everyone in this room has a PhD but us,” whispered Carrie. A well-meaning folk singer serenaded us as we ate, and at the end of the meal a slightly glassy-eyed hostess joined us for an unsolicited conversation that made us wonder if she might have been very recently and somewhat improperly medicated. Her doctorate was probably in modern dance.

Episode Six: Corflu Silver Brunchquet, April 27th, 2008

I went back to the room before 1 am Saturday night; I needed to compose my speech before I lost consciousness. I had also promised to generate some copy for *Nine Lines Each* #53, and with my eye hemorrhaging, it was hard to see the four-foot high letters on the marquee of the Golden Nugget, let alone a laptop screen or a pad of paper. I felt some pressure because I quite liked my contribution to *NLE* #52 about 24 hours before. I had compared Corflu to the Mexican Day of the Dead, riffing on a recent Cheryl Morgan article that referred to the Corflu community as “Corpse Fandom.” Nasty little creature.

With this throbbing in my brain, I crogged at the complete fannish immersion of the foregoing day. I thought of an article on deep sea salvage and the phrase came to me: “Saturation Fanac.” It took about 20 minutes to compose 100-odd words, and at least that long for Ken Forman and John Hardin to puzzle them out the following morning. I was

happy with the effort, and lay down to ponder what I might discuss with the assembled convention some eight hours hence. But I fell asleep before I could come up with anything. My sleep was disappointingly free of lucid and portentous dreams, and I came awake on Sunday morning worrying about my eye.

I have to admit that while the Plaza was even slightly more dilapidated than it was in 2004, the food had improved, and the staff tried hard to do anything we asked of them. I couldn't see the food in the brunch buffet, but it tasted fine. Mostly, I sat and thought of the many Guests of Honor I had seen over my 30 years in fandom. I remembered Jessica Amanda Salmonson's achingly funny story from a *Wiscon* in the early 1980s. I remembered GoH Bertie MacAvoy used her time to teach the audience how to throw a punch. Howard Waldrop wrote a story on a pad of legal paper and read it to the convention on Sunday morning, but he does that when he isn't a guest of honor, too.

Previous Corflus have also seen some memorable GoH presentations. John Bartelt used human models to represent subatomic particles for his talk in Arlington. Dick Smith's delivery at Corflu Ocho swung between Richard Nixon and Mussolini, but his content was unalloyed FIAWOL. Ken and Aileen Forman donned formal attire and danced to Gershwin when Ken was drawn at Corflu 2000. Stu Shiffman was gripped with stage fright when he was chosen in Minneapolis, so we made jokes at his expense and formed a three-level human pyramid in his honor — a sort of mini-roast with tumbling.

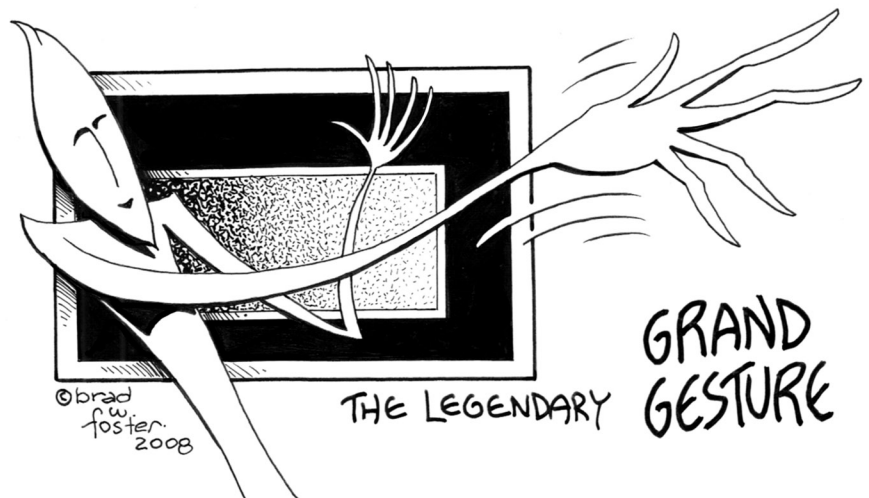
Finally, it was my turn to speak. I explained how the kaleidoscope of former GoH performances passed before my eyes after my name was announced on Friday night, and that not much had passed in front of them since the hemorrhage on Saturday evening. This required a discussion of diabetic retinopathy that surely made some blanch, but



Red or Green?

New Mexico may be unique in having a semi-official State Question, to wit: “Red or Green?” This refers to the shade of chile sauce you prefer dripping over your enchilada, your chile relleno, your hamburger, fried chicken, scrambled eggs, French toast . . . Any dish can be ordered with a side of either variety, and no one will even bat an eye.

At home in Seattle, I always prefer the more mellow flavor of the immature green chile, but during our stay in New Mexico, I was reawakened to the subtleties of red. Peppers grown in Doña Ana county, especially around the town of Hatch, produce a rich, silky sauce with a distinctive brick red shade. They're hot, certainly, but the heat seldom interferes with the flavor, which only grows in complexity as you pour it on ever more outrageous gastronomic partners. I don't think anyone has succeeded in creating Hatch chile ice cream yet, but it's surely just a matter of time.





Along Old Route 66

Several sections of our trip through the Southwest traced the path of former U.S. Highway 66, a true icon of the American 20th Century. Perhaps no roadway in history (with the likely exception of the Silk Road) has inspired as much mythology as Route 66, so I was surprised to discover that it only existed officially for 59 years, from 1926 to 1984. Stretching from Chicago to Los Angeles, U.S. Highway 66 generally followed the gentlest grades available across the Western half of the country, which made it a popular truck route. The proximity of geographical features like the Grand Canyon also made 66 an important factor in the development of auto tourism. Its fame was also enhanced by the efforts of the U.S. Highway 66 Association, formed by Tulsa businessman Cyrus Avery, who was also on the board that created the Federal highway system.

In 1938, partly due to Avery's boosterism, Route 66 became the first Federal highway to be paved for its entire length. But the growth it inspired was also its undoing. As congestion grew along the route, long distance travelers asked for a road that didn't pass through every town between St. Louis and Santa Monica. With the creation of the Interstate Highway system in 1956, Route 66 began its long decline, slowly bypassed and paralleled by the new high-speed roads. Many cities fought and delayed the process with lawsuits and legislation, but U.S. 66 was officially decommissioned in 1985.

communicated the need for me to speak extemporaneously.

I explained how I had wanted to deliver a cool narrative that connected discoveries made in Ancient Bithynia to the eventual publication of *Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine*, but I'd not made any notes with Corflu raging around me, and couldn't read them in any event. And then I described a conversation about the Battle of Mentana that I had in the con suite on Friday night.

Fought on November 3rd, 1867, Mentana was the climax of Garibaldi's last campaign to wrest the city of Rome from the control of the Pope. The tiny Papal army was bolstered by an expedition of French regulars, who helped repulse the Garibaldi. With mounting glee as I described other notable figures present at the battle, including admitted Lincoln assassination conspirator John Surratt, who served in the 1st Papal Zouave battalion, and Madame Blavatsky, who later claimed to have been wounded and left on the field.

The punch line was the reply I received from Jay Kinney in the Con Suite: "Sure, that's what she said." After all, Blavatsky was a notorious exaggerator, and Jay, as an expert in all things unseen, was quite familiar with her body of work. The point being that even though I deliberately set out to discuss the most obscure event I could—the last battle in which an army took the field under the nominal direction of the Pope—someone was ready to keep up with me. And that acceptance, I thought, is the heart of the Corflu philosophy—we are ready to share any interest as long as your descriptive powers are sufficiently commanding.

The rest of the day and evening was a pleasant blur. People offered lots of sympathy on my eye, and congratulated me for doing a fine job under difficult conditions. We gradually said our good-byes and promised to meet again in Seattle next year—because Randy has boldly stepped into the breach and offered to chair the convention in 2009.

The following morning, we got a referral to see a retina specialist in Las Vegas. Dr. Kermani was a gravely dignified professional who quickly confirmed that the blood was from another retinopathic hemorrhage, rather than a stroke or other serious event. Even though I'd spent years working to control it, the bleeding was an unavoidable symptom of my disease. He used a wonderful phrase: "Retinopathy follows its own path."

He recommended I sleep with my head propped up to help the blood pool, and to avoid violent exercise if possible. But if I didn't mind being unable to see much of the natural beauty in front of me, there was no reason why we had to cancel our

vacation. Although it meant she would have to see everything for me, Carrie still wanted very much to visit the places and people we'd planned to. I received a few bruises, and she had to read every menu and drive every mile for the following week, but together we climbed canyons in three states, and had a most excellent adventure.

Episode Seven: The Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, April 29th, 2008

We didn't make our exit from Las Vegas until the middle of Monday afternoon, so we didn't go far that day. We barely slowed as we passed the technocratic beauty of Hoover Dam, even when we saw the massive piers of the huge bridge that will soon shunt traffic away from its current route along the top of the dam. It's become clear how impossible it is to protect the old road from attack, so if you want to drive over Hoover Dam, do it before the end of 2010.

That night we stayed in a friendly, smoke-filled Holiday Inn in Williams, Arizona, and listened to cartoons on *Adult Swim* as we drifted off to sleep. And on Tuesday morning, it was finally time to take in the Grand Canyon.

Carrie's brother Gary insisted we visit the unspoiled wilderness of the north rim, as the south rim was nothing but tourist access from one end to the other. But I wanted to see the tourist sites perhaps as much as the canyon itself. Many of the structures in the National Park are considered historic landmarks in their own right. Architect Mary Colter's buildings like the Desert View Watchtower, Hopi House and Lookout Studio helped define a style known as "National Park Rustic," that includes buildings in the most spectacular settings in the USA. To miss historic places like the Bright Angel Lodge in exchange for the chance to be attacked by a bear didn't seem attractive before my eye went out, and in the event, I was grateful to be on the paved walkways of the south rim.

The colors defy description; even I could see that much, and since my sight has thankfully improved since then, I've been able to see all the spectacular photographs that Carrie took along the way. The colors changed by the hour, and in late April the day is reasonably long; sunset was not until 7:14 pm. For eight hours, we were almost always looking at some part of the canyon. We never had any sight of the Colorado River until we reached Desert View at the far eastern end of the canyon, but there were miles of tinted rock dotted here and there with green, and now and then you could make out tiny figures on their way up or down the many trails that lead down toward the river.

We began at Mather Point, gaped in awe for a half hour, then hiked between two and three miles West along the rim trail, until we reached Grand Canyon Village. With my vision focusing best at a distance of about 10 to 20 feet, I found the crush of humanity a comfort. There were dozens of Japanese speakers all around us, and pockets of French, Russian, and Hindi moved past in turn. They thinned as we got farther from the road. We ate a snack on a bench that overlooked the long phone cable that connects the North and South rims. A young boy loped by in front of his mother, talking and talking and talking about something intricate and violent and boyish, while she kept thinking, there's the Grand Canyon right there, why doesn't he look at the Grand Canyon?

At the Hopi House, like many of the park's famous buildings, you can purchase a fine selection of souvenirs. Carrie was content to buy two rolls of the most expensive 400 ASA exposure film on Earth. The village is beautiful, and we were glad to have made the hike, but the altitude was tiring us again. We decided to let the tour bus take us back up to the car park at Mather Point.

Heading East, our water bottles newly filled with the precious output of the bathroom sinks, Carrie took several pictures of what we thought were storm clouds boiling over the plateau south of the Canyon. But as we got closer, the clouds became smoke, and we could smell burning pine. When we reached the watchtower at Desert View, the smoke passed between us and the sun, giving the impression of a sudden and total eclipse.

The wind was gusting hard by the time we reached Mary Colter's famous watchtower. The beautiful, stark stones of the exterior conceal a colorful riot of native art decorating the interior. A broad spiral staircase snakes its way up three stories of astonishing graphics—like a miniature Guggenheim perched on the lip of the Grand Canyon. It was the most unexpectedly magical place we encountered on the entire trip, despite the creaking of its walls in the persistent desert wind.

The sun set during our drive south to Williams; it was tempting to go all the way out to Hopi Point to watch it, but we were hungry, and our feet fatigued. My benighted optic nerve helpfully sent hallucinatory images of vast red escarpments and white-lined rock spires, eager to join the jamboree of seeing that poor left eye had to handle alone. That night, my dreams were bright and booming, fantasies of flight over landscapes of rock and cholla and creosote bush, crossed by green-bottomed basins and thin streams of silver water. As I was walking that ribbon of highway, I saw above me



that endless skyway.

I definitely plan to go back and see it myself some day. ☂

(Thanks to everybody for all their kind wishes about my eyesight, including Carrie's Uncle Mac, who told me, "Andy, we're going to pray for your eyes, whether you like it or not." Dr. Kermani and I will premiere our two-man showcase "Love and Retinopathy" at the cabaret stage of the Main Street Station Casino on June 31st, 2009. The doctor's hit single "Retinopathy has its own Path to Your Heart" is available on Polymer Records.)

TRUST ME, LITTLE
ALIEN, YOU'LL BE IN
THE ADMINISTRATOR'S
IN-BOX FIRST THING
IN THE
MORNING.



Not a Hoax! Not an
Imaginary Story!

Return of the Man of Steel: *Breaking the Chains*

by Stu Shiffman

Narrator: Up in the sky, look! It's a bird—it's a plane—it's Superman!

In the endless reaches of the universe, there once existed a planet known as Krypton, a planet that burned like a green star in the distant heavens...

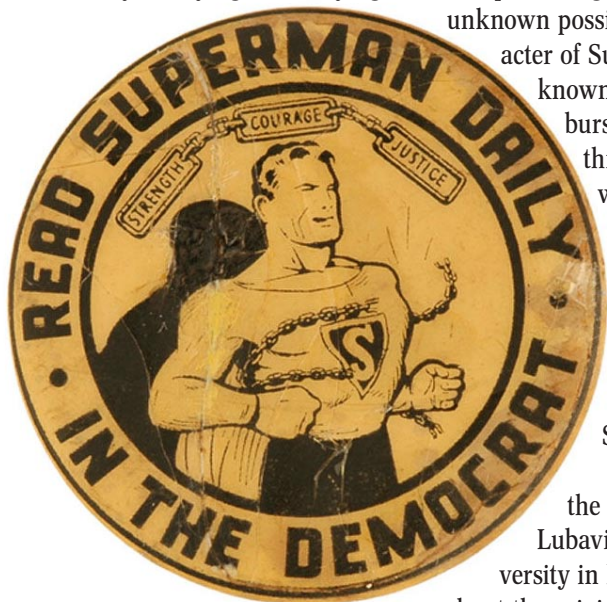
I've had the theme music from the first Chris Reeve Superman movie going through my head for the last couple of weeks. This is especially annoying while trying to write up a sidelights view on a perhaps unknown possible source of the character of Superman and his well-known iconic pendants for bursting chains and breaking through barriers. At this writing, I haven't actually seen the new film yet. Maybe it's the reports of so much Christ-imagery. (Oh, good, it's just changed to the theme music from the Fleischer Superman cartoons.)

Simcha Weinstein, the British-born Chabad-Lubavitcher rabbi at Pratt University in New York, has a theory about the origins of Superman. As quoted in "Mensch in Tights: Superman is a Super Jew: Rabbi" by Andrea Peyser (*New York Post*, June 19, 2006), Weinstein says that "Only a Jew would think of a name like Clark Kent."

"He's the bumbling, nebbish, Jewish stereotype. He's Woody Allen. Can't get the girl. Can't get the job—at the same time, he has this tremendous heritage he can't express."

Weinstein, appropriately, has written *Up, Up, and Oy Vey!* (Leviathan Press), wherein he details the Jewish roots of the Superhero. Not anything that hasn't been floated before, especially on the Internet, he says that "The boys' influences are strictly Old Testament: Superman comics begin with Planet Krypton about to explode. Desperate to save his baby son, Superman's father, Jor-El ('El' is ancient Hebrew for "God"), sends the child to Earth, alone, in a spaceship. Substitute a boat, and you've got the story of Moses." Arie Kaplan, in his series of articles on "Kings of Comics, How Jews Created the Comic Book Industry" in *Reform Judaism Magazine* and reprinted in *Comic Book Marketplace 116-118*, covered much the same ground. Let's face it, like the Man of Steel and his Krypton, in the 1930s and 1940s the European Jews and their children in North America could not go "back home" to Yiddishland. There was no longer any there. All you can do is assimilate to the dominant culture while attempting to keep true to your secret self.

British novelist Howard Jacobson writing in the *Times of London* ("Kabbalistic Crusader," March 05, 2005) has called Superman "the boy with the Kabbalistic name, the boy from the shtetl. Superman might be Jewish, but it's only so long as no one knows he's Jewish that he is capable of performing wonders. And you can't get more Jewish than that."



I Yam What I Yam

The Golem was very much the precursor of the super-hero in that in every society there's a need for mythological characters, wish fulfillment. And the wish fulfillment in the Jewish case of the hero would be someone who could protect us. This kind of storytelling seems to dominate in Jewish culture.

—Will Eisner

Superman wasn't the first cartoon strongman; he was preceded by E. C. Segar's Popeye the Sailor in "Thimble Theater" and Powerful Katrinka, the world's strongest woman, in Fontaine Fox's "Toonerville Folks." Superman's onliest progenitors, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster (the Cleveland Boys), it is often said, drew upon Philip Wylie's novel *Gladiator* (no evidence for this, really) as well as pulp heroes Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, and Doc Savage, the Man of Tomorrow and Man of Bronze (as Superman became the Man of Steel). Lester Dent (alias Kenneth Robeson) described Doc Savage as a cross between "Sherlock Holmes with his deducting ability, Tarzan of the Apes with his towering physique and muscular ability, Craig Kennedy with his scientific knowledge, and Abraham Lincoln with his Christliness." Doc even had a Fortress of Solitude!

Others, like Michael Chabon, author of *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*, have looked to the medieval legend of the Golem, an artificial guardian created by the sixteenth century Rabbi Loew of Prague to protect the Jews of the ghetto, for a forerunner of Superman.

The Muscle Jew

In his opening speech at the second Zionist Congress in Basel on August 28, 1898, Max Nordau invented one of German Zionism's most famous, most fraught, and most challenging concepts: the "muscle Jew." Although Nordau did not start exploring the political implications of his initial call for a "muscle Jewry" until a couple of years later, he clearly alluded, in this early speech, to the necessity of creating a new type of Jew—corporeally strong, sexually potent, and morally fit—as the precondition for realizing the national goals of Zionism.

— "Clear heads, solid stomachs, and hard muscles: Max Nordau and the Aesthetics of Jewish Regeneration" by Todd Samuel Presner, *Modernism/modernity* (April 2003)

Nordau called on Jews at the turn of the century to become "deep-chested, sturdy, sharp-eyed men" or *Muskeljudentum*, muscle-Jews. This obviously has not worked with me.



This notion was 180 degrees away from the traditional religious view that physical training of this sort was the way of the *apikuros*, originally the Epicurean unbeliever or apostate with a weakness for the ways of the Hellenists. (The term is to be found in a saying by Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach which is quoted in the *Pirke Avot*, "Sayings of the Fathers.") Moreover, in Greek and Roman times, sports were associated with idol worship, as in the case of the Olympics. Before he became a sage, third-century CE Palestinian rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, known as Resh Lakish in the Talmud, had been a "tough Jew" in Rich Cohen's phrase (*Tough Jews: Fathers, Sons, and Gangster Dreams*, 1998). He had sold himself to the managers of a circus, where he could make use of his great bodily strength. He had worked as a gladiator, where he was compelled to risk his life continually in combat with wild beasts. He may also have been a bandit. From this he was brought back to his studies by Rabbi Yochanan. The Talmud reports that, despite relinquishing his earlier life, he occasionally used his great physical strength to good ends. On one occasion, he rescued a rabbinic colleague, Rav Imi, who was being held captive by a group of kidnapers. Another time, he went into a town where Rabbi Yochanan had been robbed and brought back his stolen possessions.

The Hungarian-born physician and journalist Max Nordau (born Max Simon Südfeld, 1849–1923) did much to popularize the dangers and possible solutions of social degeneration and decay in such works as *The Conventional Lies of Our Civilization* (1883), a vitriolic attack on the inadequacy of 19th-century institutions to meet human needs and on irrationality, egotism and nihilism which he perceived as the evils of his time, and in *Paradoxes* (1896) and *Degeneration* (1892), where anti-social or deviant behavior is a product of mental or physical degeneration. The modern Olympic movement was started in reaction to such worries. In a certain irony, Nordau's theories also inspired a move towards

athleticism and national regeneration among his fellow modern Jews and Zionists, while inspiring inadvertently in some way the very anti-Semitic notions (execrated in “The Richard Wagner Cult” chapter in his *Degeneration*) of vigorous militarism and racial and national fitness that culminated in the Nazis’ eugenics program and extermination of Jews and other racial “undesirables.”

In the little shtetls of Eastern Europe, there were many Jewish *shtarkers* (strongmen) — the porters, blacksmiths, and farmers who protected the community during pogroms and other anti-Semitic disturbances. They appeared in the popular imagination as a necessary adjunct to the more spiritual life.

Nordau probably wasn’t thinking of the types of “muscle Jews” that would be born in the ghettos of North American cities: the gangsters like Dutch Schultz or Bugsy Siegel; labor enforcers; and the boxers. In 1933, four of the eight major divisions had Jewish world champions: the lightweight champ, the incomparable Barney Ross (Dov-Ber Rasofsky) of Chicago; the welterweight champ, Jackie Fields; the middleweight champ, Ben Jeby, and the light-heavyweight champ, Slapsie Maxie Rosenbloom. Between 1910 and 1939, there was

only one year, 1913, when there was no Jewish world champion in at least one of the weight classes. (Thanks to *Barney Ross* by Douglas Century (Schocken Books, 2006).) Then there was Joseph “The Mighty Atom” Greenstein (1893–1977) who, per *The Mighty Atom: The Life and Times of Joseph L. Greenstein* by Ed Spielman (Viking, 1979), was a diminutive Polish-born circus and Coney Island strongman and physical culturist who purportedly fought Nazis on the streets of New York during the 1930s. The Mighty Atom regularly bent iron bars and horseshoes into odd shapes and drove nails into wooden boards with his fists. His stage act also featured him breaking chains with his chest expansion.

Soon, there would be Superman.

The Golden Age of Strongmen had captured the imagination of the world between 1890 and 1910.... Into the 1920s the strongman continued as a living wonder of the world, an awesome and inspiring vision that could be had for a modest price of admission.

— Ed Spielman, *The Mighty Atom: The Life And Times Of Joseph L. Greenstein*

The body ideal, the classic form of Greek and Roman art, would be exalted at the turn of the twentieth century in the person of the Prussian-born strongman, Eugen Sandow (born Friedrich Wilhelm Muller, 1867–1925). John F. Kasson in his *Houdini, Tarzan, And The Perfect Man: The White Male Body And The Challenge Of Modernity In America* (Hill & Wang, 2001) profiles Sandow, who was already an international vaudeville star and body builder when he was brought to the United States in 1893 by the young impresario Florenz Ziegfeld. Better known for his later Follies, Ziegfeld presented Sandow as the “Strongest Man in the World” and the “Perfect Man.” Women swooned over his perfect minimally clothed body (briefs, if that, and acrobat’s tights at most), legitimized in the late Victorian period by being distanced as a living statue. His act also featured feats of great strength and, his favorite, the breaking of chains.

Kasson also focuses on how audiences were further titillated and thrilled by the physiques and physical presences of the Edgar Rice Burroughs’ fictional Tarzan of the Apes (first in literary incarnation and later in film), a symbol of natural freedom, and of the great escape artist Harry Houdini (born Ehrich Weiss). Houdini particularly produced an exotic, and sometimes erotic, dream of muscle, magic and escape.



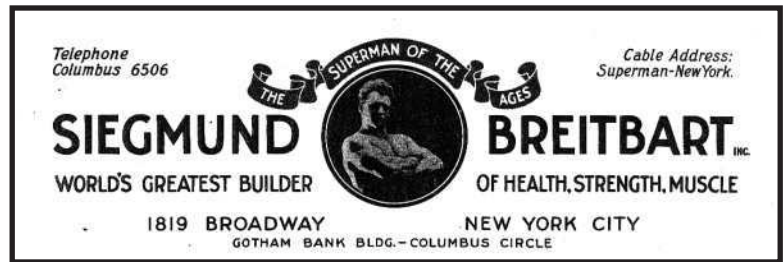
Weakness is a Crime

The man who really turned muscle culture and physical training into a mass-market product was a notorious body-building businessman and publisher. Bernarr Macfadden (born Bernard Adolphus McFadden, 1868–1955) was the “Father of Physical Culture” later nicknamed “Body Love” by *Time* magazine. He opened his first studio around 1887 under the name “Bernard Mcfadden – Kinestherapist – Teacher of Higher Physical Culture.” It was at this time that he coined the signature phrase which he would use all his life: “Weakness is a crime; don’t be a criminal!” In 1894, he came to New York to make it big, changed his name to its final form for its distinctiveness, and sold exercise equipment and began his publishing empire with his own pamphlets and booklets on health and physical training. He started up Physical Culture “clubs” nationwide. In 1899, he founded his famous *Physical Culture* magazine, the cornerstone of his future empire, which would eventually include the first true confession magazines with *True Story* and *True Romances*, *True Detective*, *Photoplay*, and the notorious *New York Evening Graphic*, the quintessential photo-heavy scandal tabloid. While it only lasted eight years, the latter was famed for its emphasis on sex, gossip and crime news, earning the sobriquet of the “Evening Pornographic.” It pioneered the use of what Macfadden called “composographs” which were photographs where the faces of famous people were superimposed on the bodies of actors posed in purported re-enactments.

The Superman of the Ages

And then from Poland came the great Jewish strongman, Siegmund “Zishe” Breitbart (1893–1925), whom Werner Herzog made the principal character in his film *Invincible* (2001). Herzog updated Breitbart to the 1930s for his tale involving him with the occultist Hanussen and the Nazis. However, Breitbart’s real heyday was the 1920s.

A former blacksmith and son of a Jewish blacksmith, Breitbart was popularly known as the “Strongest Man in the World” in the 1920s, and the Iron King or Steel Wonder. Plucked out of Starowieschtch (gezundheit!), in the city of Lodz, then part of the Russian Empire, Breitbart was eventually signed up in 1919 by the German Circus Busch of Hamburg, Berlin and Vienna. It was the beginning of a road to international stardom in Central Europe and North America. In performance, Breitbart took on a series of macho personae; that of Hercules, a Spanish matador, a poor Teuton, a Western cowboy, and a classical Greek athlete. His signature persona was as a Roman gladiator. Imag-



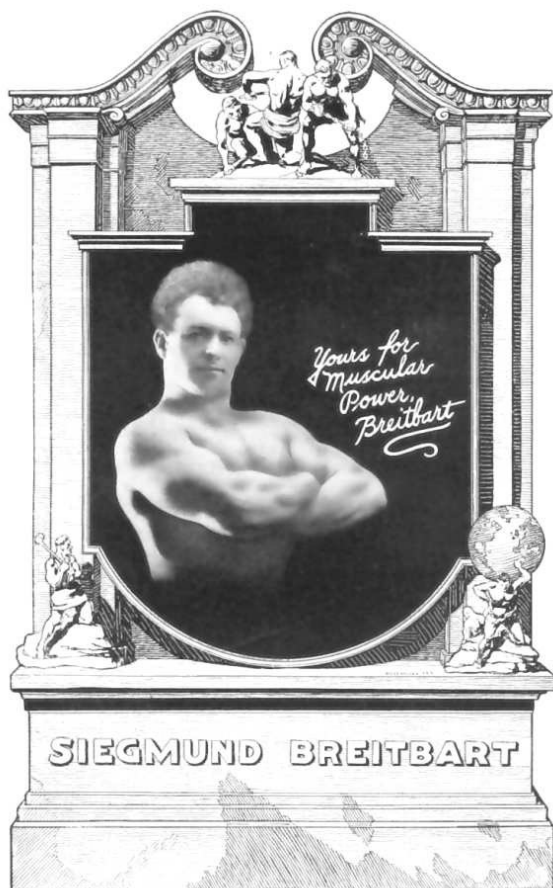
ine him costumed in the full armor and gear of an ancient Roman centurion or high Imperial officer out of *Asterix the Gaul*.

Jewish audiences called him *unzer Shimshon hagibor*, Our Hero Samson. He didn’t hesitate to identify himself with his people, and even used it in his act. For that brief post-war period, when Jewish security seemed at its lowest level in Central and Eastern Europe in the rising tides of anti-Semitism, they had a hero who was the idol of worshipping children, who defended his people and wanted them to be strong. The 6’1” Breitbart, the ultimate muscle-Jew, had a perfect musculature, curly blond hair and blue eyes. He confounded the Nazis and the proponents of so-called Race Science. He mocked their racial stereotypes and malign eugenic theories.

At least one rabbi thought this man was one of the legendary *Lamed Vav*, the righteous unknown Thirty-Six known also as the *Tzadikim Nistarim*, or the Hidden Just Men, who support the world. Note the number, thirty-six, which is twice eighteen. Since Hebrew letters are used for numbers, eighteen in Hebrew spells out the word *chai* or “life.” This is simple; the full exegesis of Jewish numerology would make your head spin. The *lamed vavniks* are usually poor and obscure, and no one guesses that they are the ones who bear all the sorrows and sins of the world. It is for their sake that God does not destroy the world even when sin overwhelms mankind. They may also contribute to *tikkun olam*, a Hebrew phrase which is usually rendered as “repairing the world.”

More secret identities, you see.

Prof. Sharon Gillerman of Hebrew Union College in LA has been working on a biography of Breitbart, tentatively entitled *A Muscular Macher: The Popular Reception of Central Europe’s Jewish Strongman*. Gillerman has already published extensively on the subject of Breitbart, with “Zishe Breitbart and the Politics of Brawn: The Real-Life Strongman of Werner Herzog’s Latest Film *Invincible* Challenged Contemporary Stereotypes of Racial Inferiority” (*Jewish Forward*, December 13, 2002), and more academically in “Samson in Vienna: The Theatrics of Jewish Masculinity,” which appeared in *Jewish Social Studies* (Vol 9, No 2, Winter 2003



New Series), “Consuming the Jewish Body: Sensation and Spectacle in the Performances of Siegmund Breitbart” as given at the German Studies Association Conference, and most recently her essay “Strongman Siegmund Breitbart and Interpretations of his Jewish Body” included in *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe* edited by Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (U of Nebraska Press, 2006). Gillerman is particularly interested in Breitbart’s awareness of his audience, and how he adjusted his show to satisfy the tastes and preferences of different groups. She details how he was Siegmund to audiences in Berlin or Vienna, while for his Eastern European Jewish fans he performed as Zishe, a more *hamish shtarker*.

In Vienna, it was reported that pictures of Breitbart adorned numerous Jewish shops and workshops and that in synagogues prayers were offered for his success. In his bulk and brawn, Eastern European Jews saw one invigorating response to the ever-growing threat of anti-Semitic ideologies and attacks. Gary Bart, the producer of Invincible and a descendent of the Jewish strongman, recounts a popular Yiddish saying that “were a thousand Breitbarts to arise among the Jews, the Jewish people would cease being persecuted.” His embodiment of qualities associated with the Ger-

man racial ideal—strength, beauty and courage—gave hope to his co-religionists that Jews too might look to a future of national empowerment, breaking their own chains of oppression through physical strength and the cultivation of heroic manly virtues.

— Gillerman, “Zishe Breitbart and the Politics of Brawn”

According to Gillerman, “The Viennese public was held in breathtaking suspense ‘by a phenomenon that has simply never been witnessed,’ reported the *Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung*: ‘A human being of supernatural powers. Breitbart. He bends steel as if it were soft rubber, bites through chains as though they were tender meat, drives nails into thick wood with his bare fist.... A bridge loaded with hundreds of kilograms of concrete block is lowered onto his gigantic body, and the blocks are pounded with hammers.... He uses his body as a support for a manned carousel which revolves at a dizzying speed.’ ”

Breitbart arrived in America on August 26, 1923 and toured widely throughout the United States that year, and settled in New York. The Iron King performed before more than 85,000 people during Christmas week of 1923, earning \$7,000 a week. He rolled half-inch metal bars into scrolls, broke spikes with his bare hands and hammered nails through three one-inch planks of wood. Under laboratory conditions, he went through convincing tests on his ability to bite through metal chain links. Breitbart supported a motorcycle track 30 feet in diameter on his chest and knees, on which two motorcyclists raced. The total weight supported by his powerful body was 3500 pounds.

It was during this amazing tour that he performed in Cleveland, Ohio. It was in all the papers. *Cleveland Times*, (October 21, 1923) reported that “Vodvil presents Sigmund Breitbart; Superman of Strength.” *Cleveland News* (October 11, 1923), in turn beat the drum that “Hercules could get tips from Breitbart.” The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* also covered him on November 1. He was billed as “The Superman of the Ages.” Breitbart was good copy, both on stage and in well-promoted publicity acts. Jerome (Jerry) Siegel was nine when Breitbart played Cleveland, and eleven at the time of his death, and might well have attended a performance.

It was in New York that he settled and published his masterwork. *Muscular Power* by Siegmund Breitbart was published in 1924 and detailed his philosophy of physical training. There was also a mail-order version, *The Full Breitbart Course*, on the order of Macfadden’s or that of the later Charles

Atlas, which was continued through the Breitbart Institute of Physical Culture after his death in 1925, when a minor stage accident involving a rusty nail gave him a fatal dose of blood poisoning. How absurd, like that punch in the gut after a performance that killed Harry Houdini. It was the end of the man whose cable address was “Superman – New York.”

Stories about Zishe Breitbart lasted long after his death in 1925. Gillerman writes that “After his death in 1925, those Polish Jews who had been most receptive to Breitbart’s message of Jewish empowerment passed on stories and sang songs about the Jewish strongman to their children.”

My unconfirmable theory is that they may have had an incalculable influence on the creation of the Man of Steel.

Superman: Kal-El, Kryptonian
Shtarker and Lamed Vavnik.
Unzer Shimshon hagibor.



John B. Speer, Democrat

As most of you have undoubtedly heard, Jack Speer died on June 28th. Jack was perhaps most famous as the creator of the *Fancy-clopedia* in 1944, but in the wake of his death I learned of some local connections that I hadn’t heard of before. I was vaguely aware that he had lived in Washington state in the past and been a friend of the *Cry Gang* in Seattle, but what I didn’t know is that he earned his law degree at the University of Washington, which is where I work. After that he moved to North Bend in the foothills of the Cascades to practice law. What really blew my mind, however, was learning that he served in the Washington State Legislature from 1959 to 1961, representing the 47th District.

Robert Lichtman was kind enough to send us a scan of the campaign matchbook that Jack used to promote himself in the 1959 race, and while he was at it, he threw in a scan of the card Jack used when he ran for judge in Bernallilo County, New Mexico in 1970. He and his wife, Ruth, had moved to Santa Fe in 1962. Not sure if his experience in the legislature was what soured him on Washington!

In any event, while others salute Jack for his many contributions to fandom, we salute him for his service to the Evergreen State. Who says that membership in the N3F never leads anywhere!

–Randy



JOHN B. SPEER
 DEMOCRAT
 for
 JUDGE, SMALL CLAIMS COURT
 BERNALILLO COUNTY

The Small Claims Court has jurisdiction over suits up to \$2,000, and violations of county ordinances. It handles about two thousand cases per year.

On the Face of It

ON THE FACE OF IT

by Taral Wayne

This is a coin with two sides like any other, and more than one reverse . . .

One side was my discovery of the coin in early June. The other side is the story of its importance in Jewish history. As for the reverses—let’s take those one at a time.

To begin with, there’s a small inconsequential coin & stamp shop called Avi’s in my neighborhood. (“Avi” is not its real name.) The store rarely has much of interest to me, but on the last visit the owner showed me some new acquisitions. There were a few Sassanid drachms worth \$30 or \$40 each maybe, some Elizabethan silver in the same price range, a large Hellenistic bronze I could make nothing of, and another bronze coin about the size of an Eisenhower dollar that caught my eye immediately. It was obviously a Roman sestertius, always of interest, but the face was a familiar and exciting one. There is no mistaking Vespasian’s bulldog portrait, nor his son’s. The two are difficult to distinguish in fact, though in general Titus is a younger looking man with a little more hair. To tell one from the other, you look for a “T” in the inscription, “IMP T CAES VESP”. His father rarely included it, though they were both identically named Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus. Another give-away are the offices held by each. As I would discover in research later, the father was never consul for an VIIIth time, but Titus was.

Still, as exciting as it was to find a Titus sestertius for sale, I was more astonished when I turned it over and discovered the figures standing to either side of a palm tree of a mourning woman on her knees, and a captive man with his hands bound behind his back. The inscription was blurred but knowing by now what to expect I could easily read

it as “JVDEA CAPTA”.

The Judea Capta series was struck by Vespasian and his son to commemorate Titus’s victory over the Jewish rebellion, and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. The temple of Solomon was the sole and absolute focus of the Jewish religion, and even today many believe Israel is not truly restored until the temple is rebuilt. Highly sought after by Jews as well as coin collectors, this was potentially a \$3,000 coin.

I casually asked the price. Unfortunately he hadn’t set one yet. The first reverse. I made a sketch of the relevant details on a piece of scrap paper and left the store.

Once I was home I began digging into my books for further information. I quickly confirmed my suspicions and wrote to a reputable coin dealer and friend in Calgary for advice. While I’d examined the sestertius closely in case it was a counterfeit, I was no expert. The dealer wrote back. He was interested, and would gladly buy it from me if it was genuine. But there was the rub. He said the type was widely counterfeited because of its high value and special significance.

A couple of weeks passed while I was busy with other things. When I remembered finally, I phoned the neighborhood coin shop. Did he still have the sestertius. He did . . . in fact he had had an interested customer, who hadn’t wanted to pay the asking price. What price was that, I wanted to know.

\$125.

I was there the next day, examining it again. My sketches had been accurate, and I saw no obvious evidence of fakery. No seams, no lumps or pits suggesting a cast, nor much-too-modern-looking



perfection in the die, nor unblemished metal, nor anything as blatant as an inaccurate inscription. (I'd seen "Hadrian" misspelled on one crudely faked bronze.) It wasn't in as nice a shape as some I'd seen in photos over the previous couple of days, but it was likely still a very valuable piece. If real. I asked without much hope if I might take the coin home, scan it, and consult a trusted dealer in Calgary. I had expected the owner to refuse, but he agreed, much to my surprise.

As soon as I was home I scanned the coin in high resolution, and sent the file to Robert Kokotailo in Calgary. He looked at the scan, then replied that he couldn't tell from that alone. It wasn't much to go on, but he thought the two letters SC (*Senatus Consultum*—by the authority of the Senate) on the reverse are a bit broader than they should be. This could be the result of a good quality casting from an original. But without seeing the coin in hand, he wasn't certain. Another reverse.

At this point neither Robert nor I could say for certain if the Judea Capta sestertius was the real McCoy or not. If it was genuine, my confidant said it would be worth about \$800 in that condition. A far cry from three grand, but not too shabby for \$125 investment. But should I pass up a possible \$675 gain in case it's a fake, or risk the \$125 to buy it in case it's real?

About the only option I had in this impasse was to hold onto the coin for a couple of more weeks. At the end of June there would be a show in Toronto, and my dealer friend could look at the sestertius in person. I doubted the owner at Avi's expected me to hold on to his coin as long as that. We hadn't put a term on the loan, mind you, but two or three weeks

to reach a decision seemed a bit unreasonable. I could only hope he didn't notice how long it had been, until the show had come and gone.

So there it was... on the face of it, a coin celebrating the crushing of Jewish nationhood for another 1,928 years. I might have discovered the find of my life.

But was it?

In my next e-mail to Robert I proposed a test. These coins tend to fall into a certain well-known range of weights. While the correct weight wouldn't necessarily prove my specimen was genuine, the wrong weight would demonstrate beyond all doubt it was a fake. My advisor suggested I use a scale at the post office, something I have to admit I would never have thought of myself.

I took a number of coins to weigh, actually. Starting with those whose weights I already knew, it was clear that the post office's scales were accurate to at least a gram. It was time to weigh the Titus sestertius. The digital readout flickered back and forth from 19 to 18 grams, back to 19 and finally settled at 18.

The real sestertius should have weight over 20. Oh-oh. Yet another setback.

Still, I didn't give up hope. From various signs I thought the sestertius had been cleaned rather crudely, and perhaps as much as 2 grams might possibly have been removed by scraping away corrosion. It was a long shot. The upcoming show and Robert's judgment would be my last appeal.

The show is called Torex and comes to Toronto three times a year. Fortunately, by then it wasn't quite so far off.

I'd been going to Torex for the last couple of

years and had gotten to know Robert Kokotailo fairly well. I met up with him at his table, where he was chatting with another dealer. He wasn't busy so I handed him the sestertius right away. It took him about ten seconds to declare it bogus. He handed it to the other dealer who happened to be at the table, and he quickly agreed. There was that troubling matter of the blurry letters, and under a jeweler's loupe the crack in the coin I thought was evidence of its authenticity turned out not to go all the way through. Under magnification it only looked like a line on the surface. The two dealers also commented on a somewhat greasy feel to the metal. I had noticed this myself, but coins worn smooth may feel this way yet still be genuine, I had hoped.

The evidence, though, was overwhelming.

It was a forgery, a counterfeit, a fake, bogus, someone was trying to pass me the queer. The last and irrevocable reverse of my good luck.

But the dubious sestertius had another unexpected secret.

Robert felt it had clearly been cast from a mold of a real coin. In fact, he was rather sure he had seen a photo of the actual coin from a public collection. That was scarcely surprising, but what Robert said next was. He said the condition of the metal, the obtrusive red stain on the emperor's chin, and the wear clearly indicated this was an old counterfeit.

How old, I asked, thinking fifty years, maybe even a hundred. 16th-century perhaps, said Robert. A fake maybe, but a four or five hundred year old fake! It might well have been made from a genuine article now in the British Museum or Vatican.

A 16th-century forgery ought to be worth something in its own right. I asked Robert, who collects such things, to put a figure on it. "If I were buying this for my own collection I might pay fifty dollars," he said. No good. The selling price for the Titus sestertius was \$125. I had hoped to make a profit on

the deal, not lose seventy-five bucks. Sigh.

Without a \$700 windfall, I made only a few, prudent purchases from Robert's table. A couple of small bronze coins from the rock city of Petra, a silver drachm from the late period of the Sassanid empire, a couple of small Roman quadrans, and some other bronzes of no great value. All interesting, but nothing to put in 24-point type.

Getting home from the airport convention strip is a lot easier than it used to be, now that there's a public bus, but it still felt like a long trip back. I might have gone straight home. But I decided to stop off at Avi's store and return the coin as soon as possible. It would save myself the trip on another day.

Happily, he said nothing about the unconscionable time I'd held onto his Judea Capta. I told him the whole story, downplaying that I'd hoped to make an indecent profit from his ignorance, and suggested he might still sell the piece for what it was — a four or five hundred year old replica. I didn't explicitly say he should probably not be asking \$125 for it though.

In the time I've known Avi he's shown me a variety of fakes and replicas, sometimes asking whether or not I thought they were real. I'd been able to spot them...so far. The details are interesting in their own right, but all that's another story. More to the point, I had an instinct that he already knew and wanted to see how much I knew. I can't recall that Avi ever revealed up front what he thought. I wondered if he might go so far as to knowingly sell me a fake if I mistook it for real. It was one reason (apart from my own personal avarice) that I was willing to take advantage of him over the Judea Capta.

What happens to the Titus forgery now? I suppose Avi will put it back in the case to sell. As a replica or as genuine? For \$125 or \$50? I don't know. At this point I'm just glad to see the back of this coin finally. ☂



Excerpts from the Fannish Protocols

In May of 2008, one-time fanzine fan Rog "Roger" Ebert made a blog post on the Chicago Sun-Times website entitled "Fanzines beget blogs." The title pretty much said it all: he made the argument that the culture of SF fanzines contributed directly to the culture, form and acronymic lingua franca of the web log. On BoingBoing, Cory Doctorow posted the key paragraph from Ebert's piece, and there ensued a very fannish discussion of the ramifications of Ebert's argument. We are reprinting, in slightly modified form, two contributions to this discussion made by Teresa Nielsen

Hayden and Lenny Bailes. You can find the BoingBoing thread at www.boingboing.net/2008/05/10/sf-fanzines-prefigur.html. Both posts originally contained many links that are worth following.

Best wishes to TNH on the health front, by the way, in the wake of news that she suffered a heart attack in September. Word is that she's doing fine in the aftermath. May it remain true!

—Randy

Teresa Nielsen Hayden:

More people than Rog Ebert have been pointing out that early online slang owes a lot to fanspeak. However, IMO, SF fandom's biggest influence has been its characteristic social technologies, such as fanzines/blogs, APAs/bulletin boards, and community-run conventions—all of which, in their earlier hardcopy versions, are robust and relatively inexpensive pre-internet systems for enabling many-to-many conversations.

These and other material-culture markers have spread to countless other contexts. We know some of the names and approximate dates for this cross-fertilization, like Paul Williams and Greg Shaw in rock journalism, Bill Blackbeard and Dick Lupoff in comics fandom, and Bjo Trimble in Star Trek fandom (insofar as Star Trek fandom is separate, which it isn't entirely). The people who started the SCA (01 May 1966, in Diana Paxson's back yard) were part of the Bay Area SF community.

There's a long list of barely-separate subfandoms that incubated in the congenial environment of general SF fandom, including gaming, RPGs, LARPs, cosplay, filking, manga and anime fandoms, et cetera. Also: I've never tried to find out who, where, and when, but there's evidently been enough overlap for the BDSM community to pick up some fannish social technologies. I've seen some of their fanzines and read descriptions of how they run conventions, and there's definitely fannish DNA in the mix.

Less a matter of specific forms than of historical connections: It's known for certain that fan-

dom, especially on the West Coast, has old ties with the gay community. In the case of LASFS, in Los Angeles, that's traceable in print clear back into the 1940s, which is uncommon for any subject touching on homosexuality. Unfortunately, the person who knew the most about this, Jerry Jacks, had it all in his head, and he died before he got around to writing about it.

I absolutely believe that I don't know a quarter of the communities and interest groups that have picked up fannish customs.

Getting back to the many-to-many thing:

I remember an article way back in *Whole Earth News*, Winter 1987, in which Dr. Ann Weiser (whom I knew to have fannish connections) explained how to organize something she characterized as being like a very slow online bulletin board, only it didn't require computers or online connections, which made it more suitable for communities and interest groups whose members weren't into those things. What she then proceeded to describe was unmistakably a standard fannish APA.

(How do I know that Dr. Weiser had fannish connections? Back in the early days of the Carter administration, I was in an APA with her. Some other members: Robert Charles Wilson, Avedon Carol, and a young fan named Patrick Hayden. And many more besides. Sometimes I feel like blogging and professional SF publishing are just a continuation of fanac by other means.)

My theory is that whenever you enable fast, cheap, reliable many-to-many communication, plus

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Nielsen Hayden



the ability to reply to it, you get a virtual community that displays behaviors and emergent properties we'd describe as fannish. However, I don't think all fandoms are created equal, or that their features are inevitable.

For instance, few other fandoms have had our passion for timebinding and community history. That's had some of the same effects you get online from message persistence and open protocols. A good performance goes on being rewarded. People who weren't around for the original conversation can catch up on it, and add to it. I've retroactively been a participant in conversations that got going around the time I was born.

The SF community's wide range of ages and incomes did away with many nonessential features. For instance, the earliest APAs—Amateur Press Associations—were for people who owned printing presses. The copies of their contributions they sent in to their APA's central collating-and-mailing person might have been beautiful artifacts in their own right; but you couldn't call what was going on there a conversation.

(Pause for credit where due: the person who was familiar with the first wave of APAs, saw the applicability of the concept, and conveyed it to early SF fandom, was H. P. Lovecraft.)

Fandom's take on fanzine and apazine production values was simpler and far more robust: *fast + easy + cheap + legible = good*. You can still find the original transfer protocol specs explained in *The Enchanted Duplicator*.

One feature that's so basic it's easy to overlook: Unlike the letterhack fandom of *Merry's Magazine*, SF fandom never let itself be tied to a single channel. Instead, it's grabbed new channels as they've become available. The most obvious consequence is that the loss of a single channel doesn't kill it off. It also makes it impossible to define or control fandom's content or personnel. Strong minority interest

in a new subject generates a side-channel rather than an argument, and everyone goes on talking.

It wasn't fate that killed off earlier fandoms, and I don't think economic considerations did it either. After all, SF fandom got its start during the latter years of the Great Depression. What enabled that to happen was (1.) the prozines' habit of printing addresses along with letters of comment; and (2.) the availability of cheap secondhand typewriters and mimeographs. But what's kept fandom cranking along after that initial efflorescence has been its historic persistence as a body of communication, and its openness as a system of practice. ☂

Lenny Bailes:

The first science fiction fanzine we know about is generally considered to be *The Comet* published in May 1930 by the Science Correspondence Club of Chicago or *The Planet* published in July 1930 by The Scienceers, a New York fan club. Some scholars of fan history argue that *The Comet* doesn't count because it was limited to articles about science, not science fiction. *The Planet* "contained 'fantastic fiction' book and film reviews, and more significant in terms of the evolution of fanzines: "miscellaneous chatter and news about the fans themselves".

When Arnie Katz and I interviewed Julius Schwartz, in 1963, Julie proudly boasted to us that *The Time Traveller* (first issue published in 1932, edited by Scienceers Allen Glasser, Julius Schwartz, and Mort Weisinger) was the first science fiction fanzine ever published. Some popular belief in the truth of Schwartz's claim may stem from the influence of Sam Moskowitz on early attempts to develop a formal history of science fiction. SaM was a charismatic and prolific figure in s-f fandom's early days, whose many pronouncements about the field have subsequently been scrutinized and found to contain some subjective inaccuracies. Forry Ackerman is another charismatic figure from those days whose memory isn't always as reliable as historians might like it to be. (Wikipedia lists him as a contributing editor to *The Time Traveller*.)

As a footnote, to this discussion, I discovered (or rediscovered) an interesting fact while reading about Jerry Siegel in Gerard Jones' excellent *Men of Tomorrow*, a history of the comic book industry. Siegel, as most trufen probably know, was the co-creator (along with Joe Shuster) of Superman. In discussing Siegel's career, Jones reminds his readership (and me) that Siegel published and distributed *Cosmic Stories*, a collection of short fiction, in 1929. Wikipedia currently states that *Cosmic Stories* was

“produced with a manual typewriter and advertised in the classified section of *Science Wonder Stories*.” A website called “Comic Art and Graftix Galleries” says that *Cosmic Stories* was a “hektographic booklet.” Several other comics websites make the claim that this, rather than one of the Scienceeer efforts, is “the first science fiction fanzine ever published.” We know that Siegel was in correspondence with Weisinger, Glasser, Ackerman, and the rest of the *Time Traveller* crew. So it seems reasonable to assume that they might all have received Siegel’s publication the year before the Scienceeer fanzines appeared. But, from what I’ve been able to find, *Cosmic Stories* was just a booklet collection of Siegel short stories. Applying the criteria of “fannishness,” one might argue that this trumps *The Planet*, with its articles on science, but not *The Comet*, which had book and film reviews.

The first postal Diplomacy fanzine that I know about, *Graustark*, was published by New York s-f fan John Boardman, in 1963. *Graustark* and the Diplomacy fanzines it spawned (*Ruritania*: Dave McDaniel, *Brobdingnag*: Dick Schultz) demonstrated their linkage to s-f fandom by publishing inventive press releases and news stories composed by the players with each series of game moves. Boardman, Dian Girard, Dave McDaniel, and Bruce Pelz were all active fanzine writers at this time. They peppered each fanzine issue with vignettes about life in their countries and statements from heads of state—in the spirit of the *Graustark* and *Prisoner of Zenda* novels. I played Italy in the *Brobdingnag* game (1964) and was inspired by their efforts to try my own hand at this. A historical note on the *Brobdingnag* game that Boardman participated in is that it was crooked. The games master was

unable to round up seven individual players and Boardman played multiple countries, stringing the other players along for several years until he decided the time was ripe to betray them and sweep the board.

In re Skatepunk fandom: the link to s-f fandom may be a bit more tenuous. You might trace its genesis back to early Internet fandom. Tom Jennings, the creator of FIDOnet was also the founder of a skateboarders’ rights group called “Shred of Dignity.” He coedited a “queer punk” fanzine called *Homocore* from 1988 to 1991. This might also tie into the linkage between the Gay Community and s-f fandom that Teresa referred to. I don’t know whether Tom Jennings was ever active in s-f fandom. I used to read his techie stuff on BBS configuration back in FIDOnet times. These days, the link between s-f and skatepunk fandom is probably Scott Westerfeld. (The teen rebel skaters in Westerfeld’s “Uglies” trilogy use futuristic “anti-gravity” skateboards as their principal means of transportation. Lots of cinematic surfing action in there.)

Also for what it’s worth, in re war gaming fandom: I was a test consultant for Avalon Hill in my high school days (1962–64) along with Arnie Katz, about the time we were publishing our first (better forgotten, now) s-f fanzine. Arnie and I submitted evidence to A-H that their board game, “Gettysburg,” was unwinnable by the Army of the Potomac—which may have been a factor in subsequent revisions made to the game. We were also test consultants for Avalon Hill’s “D-Day.”

Arnie went on to become a professional game designer and served as a consultant for Avalon Hill in the ’80s, during the years when he was gafia from s-f fandom. ☹

YOU KNOW, ALL THIS
RAPING AND
PILLAGING IS SO
OLD-FASHIONED



WE SHOULD JUST
OFFER THEM
HIGH INTEREST
DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS



"BANK OF
ERIC BLOODAXE"

I LIKE
IT

If You Meet a Trufan on the Road

by Randy Byers

A few of us involved in running Corflu Zed were recently joking about calling it the World Convention for Fringe Fandom, which is of course a play on Corflu Silver's World Convention for Core Fandom. This got me thinking about the controversy around the phrase "core fandom," and about previous attempts to name this difficult group/concept/mythology.

There's "trufandom," which can sound elitist to the uninitiated — the One True Fandom. (I used to call myself a fringe faan, because I hung out with the trufen but was a mere fan of science fiction myself.) There's "fanzine fandom," which seems to exclude anyone not involved in the art. Then there's "fannish fandom." The latter suddenly struck me as pretty meta — fans of fandom itself. Of course! Metafandom. That's what we are. Fandom that has disappeared up its own arse, or at least that's the way it always feels when I try to explain what I do to those fans of a more sercon complexion, let alone to anyone who isn't a fan to begin with. I don't mean it in a bad way either. I'm perfectly happy to disappear up my own fundament, and in fact I'm planning to do so in this article. It's a reverse ouroboros, right? A complex maneuver that, like the Astral Pole, is best reserved for Cosmic Minds.

My problem with the name Core Fandom, as I've said elsewhere — in a LOC to John Purcell's shit-raking pdfzine, *Askance*, in fact — is that I prefer the idea that fandom is an anarchy, and anarchies by their very nature don't have centers or cores. Arnie Katz, who coined the Core Fandom idea, maps fandom as a series of ever larger concentric circles, with Core Fandom a small, historically-informed group at the center and All Known

Fandom the undifferentiated mass of science fiction consumers at the further reaches. My own (admittedly vague) map of fandom is a set of overlapping circles with no center. For that matter, sometimes it seems the circles just bounce off each other without overlapping at all, but I digress. The different circles aren't necessarily just different interests either (hard SF, fantasy, comics, TV, filk, costumes, anime, fanfic) but also regions and groups and maybe even conventions. In a recent discussion of the Hugos at tor.com someone chimed in that they would never consider going to a con like Worldcon that's dominated by old, hidebound fans. WisCon was the pinnacle of fandom for this writer, much as Corflu or Worldcon or Eastercon is for others. I'm guessing that a number of our readers are WisConCentric in this way, and hell, Andy is a former WisCon chair. (Makes me wonder why we've never run a WisCon conreport!)

One fan that our readers might know through WisCon is Chris Wrdrnd, whom I knew in passing through my job at the University of Washington although it was more or less fandom that actually brought us into conversation after we had stopped working in the same building. Amongst other things, Chris is active in the zine (as opposed to fanzine) scene, and has been doing her best to bring me up to speed on this parallel universe. She recently sent me a copy of her latest zine, *Cipher #1*, which is dated May 2008. It's a beautifully designed little zine — the same size as Kate Yule and David Levine's pint-size *Bento*. Chris calls what she does a "personal critzine" — "because it looks at the per-

sonal thru' a critical lens and at the critical thru' a personal lens." She writes about her struggles with writing ("I want to lasso the wind"), gives us a post-modern herbal (a list of things and activities that lift her mood) and two cookie recipes (surely sugar is an herb?), performs wordnerdery on the subject of fabrics (specifically corduroy), and delivers a rant on the subject of women in the Harry Potter books. I love the clip art and layout experiments and rubberstamping. It feels like a work of art, and a celebration of literary and domestic concerns. It feels like a world unto itself, giving us a glimpse — however critical, conflicted, and abstracted — into Chris' person.

Eric Mayer has wondered recently what happened to perzines, which he says were abundant when he discovered fandom in the '70s. My growing impression is that perzines are alive and well in the zine world, as exemplified in Chris' zine. I'm not sure why they've become so rare in the fanzine world. Why have trufen abandoned the form? I used to think that perzines had been made extinct by online blogs and journals, but that doesn't explain why they're still so popular elsewhere, if it's true that they are. Is it simply that zines still attract teen-agers who want to write about their personal issues without putting them up on the internet for their parents to see? It is certainly my impression from following the LiveJournal community zine_scene that a lot of youngsters are doing zines. Or perhaps trufen are reserving their perzines for APAs and not sending them out to a general mailing list anymore. When I first encountered fandom in the late '70s, some of the best personal writing I saw was in apazines such as my now-housemate Denys Howard's *Bellerophon's Rage*, although, then again, Denys' great and overwhelmingly intimate MidAmeriCon report, *Wandering about from Place to Place without Apparent Reason*, published in 1976, was a one-shot for general distribution. ("I do not write this way so as to dominate or intimidate you. I do so because I believe that in a culture which alienates us from our work, our feelings, and our neighbors, self-disclosure is a revolutionary act.")

Then again, maybe trufen never were much for perzines. I'm pretty sure Denys didn't consider himself a trufan, after all. As evidence, I give you his



“DOES THIS LOOK INFECTED TO YOU?”

endorsement of Gary Farber for TAFF in the colophon for the 1980 issue of his genzine, *Women and Men*, in which Denys described Gary as “a BNF of Necrophiliac Fandom.” In the fanzine reviews for that issue, Denys says of Gary’s *Currently Recommended*, “I swear he vibrates if you ask him about stuff like Charles Burbee or numbered fandoms!” That’s what a trufan would write about, right? Not intimate, personal stuff, but humorous essays, timebinding, faan fiction, conreports, and fanzine reviews. Perzines were probably another thing foisted on us by the Trekkies — aka Women, cf Wis-Con. This would explain dodgy media fan Claire Brialey’s many essays about her sex life with Mark Plummer, no doubt!

But I digress. My own writing tends more toward the personal than the theoretic or analytical, and I suppose that reflects the influence of people like Denys, who was one of my first contacts in fandom. Yet as the feminists say, the personal is political, and so even über-fannish forms such as fanzine reviews and conreports can be very personal. What is time-binding if not an attempt to place oneself within a historical, communal context? Perhaps Chris is onto something with this personal critzine idea. As I’ve gotten older, I’ve become interested in fandom as a subculture, but it all starts with an attempt to understand my place in it. Which I guess just goes to show you, if you stare at your navel long enough, you’ll find your way up your own fundament. It’s the fundamental way of meta fandom.* (Cf. “head up your ass.”) ☂

**Meta* is ancient Greek for *after, adjacent, with, beyond*. It’s the margin, the fringe. Trufen are fringefans. We write the history, but only from the sidelines. Interestingly enough, the LiveJournal community *metafandom* is an aggregator of posts from all sectors of fandom (at least as it’s represented on LJ), from fanfic (heavily represented) to reviews to discussions of sexuality in fandom, and is thus perhaps more like Arnie’s All Known Fandom, the womb of all trufen. The names remain confused.

Cipher #1 is available for \$1 in person, \$2 by mail in the US or \$3 for the rest of the world. Send orders to Chris Wrdnrd, PO Box 45536, Seattle WA 98145-0536, USA, or contact her at chris@wrdnrd.net.



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News Flash! Not sure how this happened, but I read the entire issue of *Chunga* #14. This leads me to conclude that it must have been a stellar issue, which it was. I'm hoping and praying that Chris Garcia's journal had about the same relationship to "reality" as Graham Char-nock's single mom. A heady vapour of mild insanity seems to have penetrated the whole issue. This is good.

Perhaps Dan Steffan's exquisite front cover set the tone. I'm not sure what is going on there, but I'm suspecting that drugs were involved. There's a reason that Dan got this year's Faan award for fan artist at Corflu: this cover and his concurrent cover for *Banana Wings* #34 are total knockouts. And then there's Dan's Tucker piece which was both touching and entertaining, like a good lapdance, though perhaps a lapdance by the angel on the cover, I hasten to add, not one by, er, Dan.

I enjoyed Lisa Freitag's traipse through the three malls in Japan, though I was slightly mystified by her remark that the pizza restaurant's menu had "all the things you'd expect on a pizza available." Perhaps Lisa expects seaweed and octopus on her pizzas, but when I perused a pizza menu during my one visit to Japan, I was struck by the weirdness of the topping choices. One squid and pineapple, please.

Nice glimpse into Andy's Lagadaga days. The closest I've come to theatrical involvement has been as a cast member in some Scottish Rite degrees, which are performed in costumes on stage. Fun fun fun, except for the part where we have to sacrifice a baby. (Just kidding.)

Which brings us to Steve Stile's back cover with its disturbing number of eyeballs. We are amused, as Queen Victoria used to say.

So, solid ish, all in all. I generally find carl's layout work to be just fine, thank you. Dredging up 30 year old cartoons of mine is a dangerous practice, but luckily the one featured in this issue was

from my rough-hewn prime. I'm not sure that I can still get my brain to work that way. Probably not enough drugs. Or something.

Andy sez: Thanks for the kind comments, Jay, but come now: You Masons can hardly claim that you only sacrifice babies because it's mandatory. I know an obsessive hobby when I see one.

Curt Phillips

Thank you for continuing to send the occasional care packages containing *Chunga* even though I haven't actually LOC'ed since Chris Garcia was a toddler, busily taking apart his first Z-80 microprocessor to "see what makes it go". Thanks particularly for *Chunga* 14, which I first saw on the Corflu Silver Virtual Fan Lounge being modeled for the camera by Randy as though I were watching a fannish version of the QVC network. "Want one," I thought as I looked in vain for a 1-800 number to call. The blaze-yellow of *Chunga* 14's cover stock had a mesmerizing effect when viewed on my computer screen, and only last week my ophthalmologist paused in her examination of my dilated eyeballs to ask with a puzzled tone to her voice, "Why is there a Dan Steffan cover burned onto the lens of your eyes?" I was about to wither her with a snappy comeback like, "Because Randy put the Stiles illo on the Back cover!" when she shot a puff of air at my eyeball that distracted me long enough for her to make her escape. I hate having my eyes examined; have I ever mentioned that?

I was glad to see Andy's endorsement of Guy Lillian's *Challenger* as a zine that needs a Hugo award. There were some excellent nominees for Best Fanzine in 2008 and I don't take anything away from this year's Hugo winner, *File 770*, but *Challenger* stands with such a solid body of fan-writing under it's belt that I agree that it's high time fandom made Guy Lillian have to worry about carrying a giant metal rocket home through airport customs. Perhaps in Montreal?

e Pigge



I was very taken with Andy's article about his experiences in the theater as I hadn't known that he had that background. I've been in a few school and community productions over the years and have been *around* theater people, but have never been a part of that world in any real way like Andy has, yet I see the attraction of that world just as he describes it. His comparison of the cast of a play to an infantry platoon is probably about as apt as you could ask for. Every soldier has to be willing to make commitments and take personal risks for the group in order for the mission to succeed, and I can see where that would be equally true for the cast of a play. Possibly even more so since an actor has such great potential to make his fellow actors look brilliant or foolish by the depth of his commitment to the group. Or so it seems to my eye, anyway.

Last year I was an extra in a low-budget independent film made by my old friend Rick McVey. It was a Civil War story and he brought me in to help with arranging to get local Civil War reenactors to participate as well as to help supply props and costuming — which as a long time reenactor myself I have a houseful of. (The film is called *Freedom*, has since won several film festival awards, is available on DVD at freedomthefilm.com, and if you ever see the film, watch for the dead Yankee soldier that appears in the title shot. That's your pal Curt lying dead on the battlefield; a scene which disturbed my mother greatly when she saw it on the 30 foot tall

screen in the local movie theater.) I only appeared as an extra in about 6 or 7 other scenes in the 3 days I was on the set, but though the other reenactors ambled off back to the "reenactor camp" when not needed, I found myself hanging around in the background to watch the process of how the 10-12 person film crew actually worked at their tasks. These folks were all professional actors and crew with the Barter Theater (the state theater of Virginia) in my hometown of Abingdon and they were all very good at what they did. They worked on that film for no pay other than the joy of the work itself because they all clearly loved what they were doing. That passion showed very clearly both in the finished film and in how those folks approached their craft. The chance to closely study how those very dedicated and very professional actors went about their work was something I couldn't walk away from and I felt well repaid for the three days of my time that I gave them. I don't have the call to cross over and join that world, but I can see why it could attract someone who actually has the talent for it, like Andy.

The illo that leads Dan Steffan's article "Remembering Tucker" is one of the single best fanzine illustrations I've ever seen and reminds me that Steffan is up there in the top level of fanzine artists with folks like Arthur Thompson and Hannes Bok. His style is quite different from either of them, but like them Dan has the rare ability to infuse an arti-

WHAT KIND OF
FEEBLE NONSENSE
IS THIS?

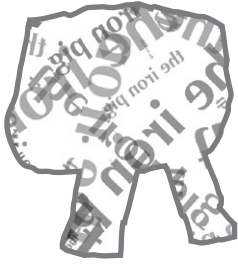


DULL, BLAND,
ANODYNE,
SEDATED
PEDESTRIAN,
UNEXCITING...



WELL, SOME
MORNINGS
I WAKE UP
GRUMPY

AND SOME
MORNINGS
I LET HIM
SLEEP



cle or story with an entire dimension of vibrancy and *life* with just a single illo. I don't know very much about art or how to write about it, but I do know when I've been affected by artwork, and Dan knows how to do that. He's another of the great fan artists we have in fandom today who deserve more recognition. And oh yes, Dan writes a pretty good article too! I always enjoy reading accounts of the various ways that fans discovered first science fiction and then fandom, and it's interesting how often Bob Tucker's name turns up in those accounts. And rightly so, since Tucker is one of the universal constants of fandom. Even his death hasn't changed that; and at least as long as I'm alive Tucker will still be the foundation of fandom for me. I've never seen the edition of *The Neo-Fan's Guide To Fandom* that carries Dan's cover art, but even if someone objected to them, I'd bet good money that Tucker loved them. That should be good enough for anyone.

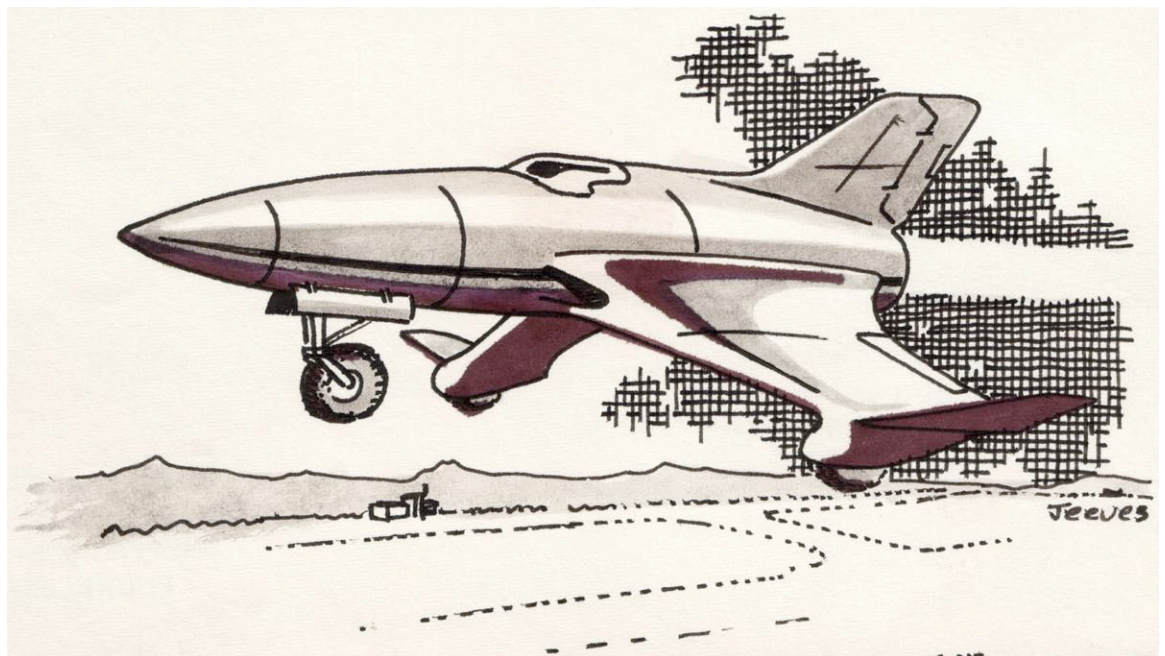
Very good fanzine reviews by John Hertz. Just the right amount of depth and the right info to make me want to read them all. I'm not sure if all of *Chunga's* readers will know without being told that the photo on page 16 that goes along with John's review of *File 770* was taken during the famous room 770 party at Nolacon in 1951. That's a young Lee Hoffman in the foreground carefully ego-scanning a fanzine while (I think) Rich Elsbery, Lynn Hickman (drink in hand) and Roger Sims (with his back to the camera) sit and ignore the pretty girl while they talk about "Science Fiction"...

Lisa Freitag's article on arriving and traveling in Japan reminds me of what a homebody I've become, since being dropped into an alien culture like

that (alien to me, anyway) would be very alarming for me. I'm terrified that were I to find myself in a place like Japan where I looked, dressed, and talked so differently, I'd immediately start trying to make myself understood to the locals by desperately talking LOUDER and more SLO-O-WLY, like "CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE THE TOILET IS? THE TOI-LET?, YES?" And then I'd start saying inappropriate things like "don't you-all have a Wal-Mart around here anywhere?" or "how much for one of them funny little hats like yer wearing?" Of course I act like that around town here in Abingdon too but folks here are used to ignoring my antics and assume that I'm crazy. Unjustifiably, I hope...

Eric Mayer wrote of becoming entranced into watching *Intolerance* all the way through in one sitting. My first year in college I took a film class where we watched a small portion — something like 20 min. — of that film during class. That was all our instructor cared for us to see even though I noticed that he'd rented the entire movie on 16mm film. I was so captivated that after class I begged him to let me borrow the print and take it home over the weekend to finish watching. (I already owned my own 16mm projector by then.) Somehow I talked him into it and so I watched the entire film through twice before bringing it back. An amazing film, and I later did the same thing with the silent *Napoleon* as made by Abel Gance. Another brilliant film with some amazing camera work.

Andy sez: One imagines that you have probably already had an experience that illustrated the folly of assuming that no one around you speaks English. Someone always does.



I've always thought of Civil War reenactment as being a particular kind of improvisational theater, where the premise is always: "You're joining a treasonous insurrection in defense of your sectional sovereignty, while you are charged with the suppression of that insurrection through extra-constitutional means. Hilarity ensues!" I have a gaming acquaintance who attended the Gettysburg events this year, and he was telling me about the truly hard-core guys who starve themselves so they will look like they have really been on campaign. As Olivier said, "Why don't you try *acting*, dear boy?"

Claire Brialey

I started writing this on Friday at Corflu, while two of you at least were wandering in the desert and Mark was up in the con suite getting in some preliminary socialising. But as I wrote that, I wondered whether I should go to join him — he'd been gone about an hour at that stage, and so had clearly found some fun, and I'd finished writing the article for James Bacon and Chris Garcia that had made me decide not to go with him initially, and I recalled Andy explaining last year that no one would like me if I just went and wrote fanzine articles in my room during odd moments at Corflu. Or maybe that was only one of the reasons.

Anyway, it seemed pretty clear that although one of the great things about Corflu is getting fanzines and one of the great things about getting fanzines is being able to read and respond and get inspired by them, and fantastic though it is to have the time to do all of that, the even better thing about Corflu — and the reason we were actually there in Las Vegas rather than just sitting at home and occasionally joining in online to complain that we couldn't hear properly and that everyone looked very old — is that it's a chance to hang out with a lot of other fanzine fans in person. And that's why we'll be doing our best to join you in Seattle next year too. So I left the letter and your fanzine in the room and went out to find the con suite and some people to talk to in it, and didn't get back to writing this until we were on the plane on Monday on our way home.

And then I didn't get round to typing it up for a week or sending it to you for even longer. Maybe I should just have sent you my paper scribbles, although then we would all have been sorry.

As Randy says in his editorial, sometimes a great article comes along and reminds you why you want to publish fanzines. I love it when that happens, but it's nearly as good when a great article appears in

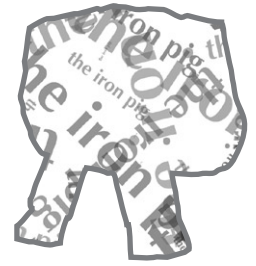
another fanzine; and I'm inclined to think it's even better when another fanzine covers a good selection of topics. Because, although I enjoy publishing fanzines as an activity in itself, it's a lot less fun without response. What really keeps me going is the sense of being part of a community that's communicating in a way that we can't quite do anywhere else (for all that most of us end up using some of the same approaches and techniques when other opportunities come up). The conversations that happen within and between fanzines are, for me, more important than the conversations that can happen in person when we see one another — even though the latter may offer more immediate fun.

As it happened, the first conversation I walked into in the con suite was about the plural of 'clitoris' (and when you might need it), and about the impending extinction of pubic lice. I can't see that this is a biodiversity campaign that environmental groups, or anyone else really, would want to lend much support; although I may be having a failure of imagination and this was why there was apparently a bus driving around Las Vegas bearing a slogan about Aggressive Crabs. Although given the location it may really have said 'Aggressive Craps' as Nic Farey insisted, which to my British sensibilities remains far stranger.

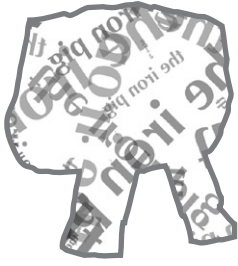
While we're on strange British sensibilities, I enjoyed Graham Charnock's 'Harringay Lit' with its bizarrely realistic cast of characters, and as a result of this piece have also learned from Pat Charnock that Harringay is in Haringey, which I never knew.

Andy's theatre piece also made a few neurons connect. It may be too facile to give in to the temptation of comparing two creative hobbies — theatre and sf fandom — especially given their evident existing intersections including, of course, plays at conventions and those people who manage to find time to take part in both. I suspect most claims I could make for the commonality of the two hobbies (or ways of life) could also be made for most other community activities, including those in which not all participants may feel they have made an active and voluntary choice to be involved, such as military or religious life. Or science fiction fandom.

I was peripherally involved in amateur dramatics as a child, initially because it was (in effect) my father's fannish hobby but consequently having the interest and sufficient confidence to continue at school. By the time I was in my early teens, though, drama at school had been subsumed into the drama of pubescent romance and I had neither the inclination nor the remotest chance of success for joining that particular dating market. I drifted sideways into the choir, avoiding the annual operetta



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Jason K. Burnett

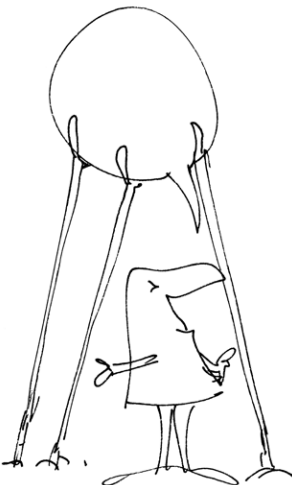
brithistorian@gmail.com

performance which had considerable hormonally charged overlap with the drama crowd, and was on the verge of having my voice properly trained when I discovered fandom. At the same time I was developing a love for certain dramatic genres — Jacobean tragedy and especially the slightly earlier work of Christopher Marlowe — that has stuck with me and led me to many really, really uncomfortable seats in theatres across the south east of England over the past twenty years.

I never got involved enough to know whether I could have been a good actor myself; that in itself makes it pretty obvious I'd never have been a great one. My last gasp in theatrical terms — before accepting that writing would satisfy most of my creative urges and provoke sufficient feedback without needing to worry about the limitations of my appearance or lack of real talent for performance — was my only foray off the stage and in front of a camera, playing a bit part in a Doctor Who skit filmed in 1991 by a friend of my then boyfriend. Fortunately I knew that only a few dozen people would ever see it. Now that we are in the age where a million extra disks need to be filled for DVD boxed sets, I find I have a listing on IMDb which is even more startling and unlikely than having a listing on the Locus awards website.

Following this year's Eastercon we know that Chris Garcia is a great performer although — beyond the persona of Chris Garcia — I don't know whether he sees himself as an actor. I liked the resonance in his article of the cyclical siren calls of elderly computer equipment, fanzines, and Chris's own need to write an article approximately every 2.36017 hours, and of course his repeated attempts to settle down to digest our own dense and unreadable fanzine. Who would not be distracted by the robotic arm in the corner? I felt there was a similar rhythm in John Hertz's assertions that most of the titles he reviewed are among the finest fanzines. This is very much what I look for in a fanzine review column, myself: sound recommendations with clear and, ideally, compelling reasons why the reviewer thinks I should seek out these titles. John's quotation also reminds me that I should seek out James Bacon to establish what precisely he meant by his usage of 'Calvinistic' in that *File 770* piece.

As I have said before, for what it's worth I like your design; I'm even accustomed by now to where to find the addresses in the letter column. I could think D West's letter demanding and unreasonable if I hadn't wished on occasion to send very similar messages to fan editors who have done to my words what he objects to for his art. Instead I have grumbled only to those close friends within earshot.



Truly I have lost the knack of performance...

But I'm delighted to know that you have not lost the knack, nor the desire, for *Chungas*. I continue to want more of it myself.

Andy sez: It seems only appropriate that Chris Garcia feels compelled to write 11 fanzine articles per day; by my calculations, Chris will be the full embodiment of fanzine fandom by the year 2016, and will have to compose, publish and react to all the fanzines still in publication.

Cuyler W. 'Ned' Brooks Jr

Thanks for *Chungas* 14. Great covers, especially the one by Steve Stiles — the closer we get to the future, the worse it looks....

The description of Andy's career as a thespian is totally alien to me, as far as something I could imagine doing myself. But I have read Arthur Machen's account of his years as an actor with a traveling company in England in the early 1900s. He never had any major parts, but he seems to have had fun.

Funny account of the Computer Museum — but what happens if his boss reads it? It's depressing to think I am now so old that computers, which were invented after I was born, have become museum pieces. I still have my first one, an Osborne, but have forgotten how to use CP/M. I don't collect them — I collect the much older laptops, portable typewriters, which go back over 100 years.

Sorry to hear about Brad Foster's bout with shingles! Is it something about artists? Alan Hunter has shingles so bad he has stopped drawing. I had a case years ago, but I'm totally devoid of artistic talent and it was very mild.

Jason K. Burnett

It's all your fault! Well, okay, maybe not ALL your fault (see below), but I'm still holding you largely responsible. You see, I had fallen into a very non-fannish state of mind. I was going along, minding my day-to-day affairs, bumping along quite happily in my mundane rut. "Fandom! Nasty thing! Makes one late for dinner!" And then *Chungas* #14 came along, banged a huge dent in my front door, and now look at me! I'm off on adventures, writing LOCs, rejoining FAPA, and all without even a pocket-handkerchief!

But I did promise to explain why it wasn't all your fault. I suppose most of the rest of the blame can be laid at the feet of Dan Steffan. You see, I never met Bob Tucker. I have, of course, read ever so much about him, but even with all that, Steffan's remembrances were enough to make me feel Tucker's loss anew and to long to follow him, pied-

piper-like, down the road of fandom. And so here I am, doing my fannish best.

Chris Garcia and Lisa Freitag's articles also pleased me very much. They both, in their rather different ways, brought out the alien-ness of everyday life, the way that what once was science fiction has now become simply "the world." I think the world would be a far better place if more people stopped and took the time to think about the wonder and strangeness of their day to day lives.

And to pick one thing to comment on from the colcol, I must disagree with D. West (and by extension with you, carl): I would not want to see *Chunga's* design simplified. The "dopy interlineations at the bottom of every page" are part of its charm. I can find simple, well-proportioned, good design at any bookstore or news-stand. (Hell, I can even do "simple" myself — whether it's "well-proportioned" or "good design" is still up in the air.) When I open a *Chunga*, I know that I'm diving into something that's not only interesting to read but also fun to look at. Please don't ever change.

Andy sez: "Don't ever change"? In its own way, this is as unreasonable a request as anything D. West might have suggested. I think the design of *Chunga* has been different every time out, in ways both gross and subtle. When my eyes were doing particularly poorly, I found myself agreeing with several of West's comments. And yet, if you take away all our tiny little lines that really mean nothing, what would we have left?

Maybe my favorite thing about this issue is that we hope to publish the entire run in color, which will make a huge difference in the impression of the photos that are included. I'd love to add sounds and smells as well, but the medium has its limits.

Alexis Gilliland

Thank you for *Chunga* #14, the April issue delivered in May courtesy of the Post Office, but at least in the same year. Dan Steffan's cover is a nice piece of graphic art, but the associated text (back story?) is slightly out of focus. It was obviously necessary for the angel to have been grounded in order for the demons to tie the anvil to her feet, and yet she has begun her ascent, despite the anvil, as the demons rejoice at their failure. Nice, also, to see D. West making an appearance, and I particularly liked his cartoon on page 27, which elegantly combines wit and snarkiness. West might consider the use of a finer point pen for shading, though. In "The Lightning Conductor" Dan remembers *Yandro* as being "terribly, terribly Beige." The text, perhaps,

bookmark about 5 pages in, but I think I get the general gist of it.

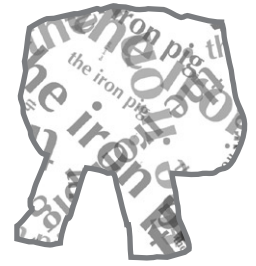
but the Coulsons printed their fanzine on cat piss yellow twiltone. He remembers Midwestcon differently too, doubtless because he enjoyed a different con. Dolly and I went one time only, and despite the people being friendly we never went back. We did persuade Bob Tucker to be GoH at the '78 Disclave, though.

My website is still a work in progress, which has turned out to be a considerably larger job than was imagined when we started off. At this point the cartoon count is above 12,000, and I have a couple of hundred that need to be redrawn since that will be faster than cleaning them up with Photoshop. Meanwhile Lee is taking one course on the design and maintenance of websites, and another on Dreamweaver. However, we expect Team Gilliland will prevail, and hopefully before your next issue, provided you don't pub your ish in unseemly haste.

Jerry Kaufman

Just a few insignificant words of thanks for the *Chunga* with the brilliant allegorical Dan Steffan front cover. I wish that the little demons had nametags so I'd know who Dan thinks is responsible for the outrage to the Spirit of Fandom.

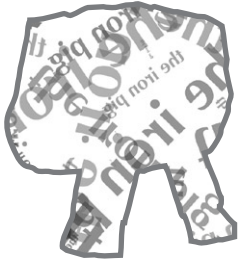
I can't skip Andy's memoir of his theater experiences, because I had them, too, so much fun and sometimes so frightening. The curtain went up, and there I was, juggling props as I made stage martinis, and with not a line of *Blithe Spirit* anywhere in my mind. This was while I was in high school, doing plays with a small acting class at the Jewish Community Center in Cleveland Heights. Did I survive? Well, barely. The girl playing my wife fed me a couple of lines, and the play slowly came back into focus. The next night, during our second and last performance, I was enough in control that I could feed other people lines when they went up.



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There's more where that came from (like the telegram from "Noel Coward" we received opening night) but perhaps I'll save it all for my own memoirs.

This would be a good moment to stop and heap praise on your artists — D. West! Dan! Steve Stiles! Georgie Schnobrich! Enough heaping.

I richly enjoyed Dan's piece on Bob Tucker. Like Andy's piece, it brought back some memories. In this case, the clearest is also the oldest. At one of the first Midwestcons I attended, 1968 or 1969, Suzle and I sat around the pool with Bob and Lee Hoffman, until the early morning train (was it the mail train or the milk run?) went by in the distance. (We also listened as Detroit fans retold tales of young Harlan Ellison. Some of those same Detroiters surprised us at the 2005 Worldcon by remembering us — I think they were George Young and Fred Prophet.)

I have a note in the margin by John Hertz' review of Steve Sneyd's *Data Dump: Panicked Oryxes Exit Mombasa*. What was I thinking?

I've got to admit to some initial confusion reading Graham Charnock's story. I blame Carl. In other articles this issue, the initial paragraph in bold is introductory. So in Graham's piece, I assumed the first paragraph was also introductory, and I couldn't figure out how it introduced the parodic material following. Once I went back and re-read from the start, I was on firmer ground. (I also implemented my Reading Graham protocol: just shut up and follow along — everything will probably become clearer.)

And that's about enough from me.

Andy sez: Ooh, Jerry -- making martinis on stage? No wonder you went up the first time. I found it challenging to smoke a cigar on stage

as Oscar Madison, and once froze just trying to dial a telephone in a performance of *The Front Page*. But the worst was having to actually fry a pair of trout filets during a one-act play for a graduate directing course. No amount of brilliant dialog can distract an audience from a pillar of smoke rising from an electric fry pan on a highly flammable stage set.

Robert Lichtman

What a fabulous pair of covers on the latest *Chungas!* Dan on front, Steve bringing up the rear — it don't hardly get better than that. I enjoyed the (probably purposeful) precognition in Andy's editorial regarding Corflu: "Maybe we'll have you over to our place next time!" As y'all might suspect from my having been the first to get to Randy and turn over my fifty bucks, I'm looking forward to it. Of the 2008 fanzine Hugo Andy writes, "I might well choose *Challenger*." Looking at the list of nominees, none of which are truly stand-out fanzines though most of them are well above merely competent, it seems as good a choice as any. It is true that "*Challenger* paid its dues publishing on paper," but then (and for a much longer period) so did *File 770*. I only hope that if *Challenger* wins Guy's ego doesn't expand so quickly as he comes up out of the audience to accept his rocket that it triggers a rare Denver earthquake or an early snow storm.

Continuing my quoting of Andy, I was glad I didn't take him up on his suggestion at the beginning of "The Land of Lagadaga": "I wouldn't blame you for skipping this — most theater stories are pretty awful." On the contrary, I thoroughly enjoyed this look at another facet of Andy's personal history (or "life"). I nodded sagely at, "When it works well, being in a play with a large cast has many of the same attractions as being on a sports team or in an infantry platoon." Having seen documentaries and/or interviews with members of theater groups that tend to confirm this view, I didn't find what Andy said to be at all a stretch — the adrenaline rush that comes with a job well done with a cohesive group of mates is worth every step both forward and backward of "the process." And I laughed out loud at his comment in the list of reasons he "was not really a very good actor" that he "could not dance without crushing small villages in his path." Sometimes there's a need for someone to do just that, even if one's name isn't Godzilla.

When I was poking my way through the issue late at night in my room at the Plaza on the day you handed it to me and ran across Dan's "Remembering Tucker," my initial reaction was a measure of relief because I'd read it months ago in

PUBLICITY-SHY CHUNGA EDITOR POSES UNWILLINGLY FOR PORTRAIT



his FAPazine and could save some time by skipping over it. And as I began to do so I came to the note at the end — “An earlier draft of this article appeared in the FAPazine *STEFFAN-dango #1*” — and the promise of additional delights awaiting me caused me to stop paging forward and read the piece. And I’m glad I did — without pulling out his FAPazine to do a line-by-line comparison, there’s something about this version that seems fuller, more detailed, and... well, just smoooooother. I’m certain that I’ll reread this wonderful memorial more than once as the years pass and I’m reminded of what a wonderful person Tucker was and how well Dan captured his essence in this article.

Chris Garcia’s article reveals a short chunk of his life in which he appears to be ruled by a combination of free association and random outside influences, all in the service of waiting for a delivery. My mind wandered with his until the penultimate entry in which he’s interrupted by a telemarketer, at which point I deeply sympathized with the steps he took in his final entry to ensure sleep. That Babage Engine that’s mentioned in the sidebar is here now, and I’ve noticed a number of references to it in the local media—not enough, however, to get me on the freeway headed south. Maybe the reason is that I don’t much care about computer history. It’s just not a source of nostalgia for me. I don’t for instance look back on the CP/M machine on which I learned WordStar back in 1984/85. When it comes down to it, I’m more focused on what computers can do for me now and in the future.

Thanks to John Hertz for his glowing review of the latest *Trap Door*, although having said that I wondered if his not mentioning the articles by Dick Lupoff (with some great artwork by Dan Steffan) and John Nielsen Hall meant that he didn’t care of them or if he was under space constraints. As for that “Typo of the Ish,” if that was the only one I didn’t catch I am much relieved. But I doubt it was.

In the letter column we are once again subjected to Alexis Gilliland’s joy over having chopped up some four to five thousand fanzines in order to extract his published illustrations so he can put them on his Website. The sheer idiocy of doing this instead of scanning them directly from the fanzines, even if they had to be temporarily unstapled in order to get a good scan, is simply awesome. What was he thinking!?

The issue of “harvesting” letters of comment from their publication on LiveJournal or some other on-line venue detached from the fanzine being commented upon is an interesting one. You copped Eric’s comments from his LiveJournal and presumably Lloyd Penney’s several paragraphs in this issue

lettercol are also on his. I have a solution for this which would allow for more space for the LoCs of others who don’t follow this route: put references to Lloyd’s and Eric’s on-line LoCs in the WAHF section, perhaps with links that could be followed by the interested reader, and with an invitation to readers to go there and then respond to any relevant/interesting points in their LoCs in their LoC to you on the issue at hand. Baroque enough to be fannish?

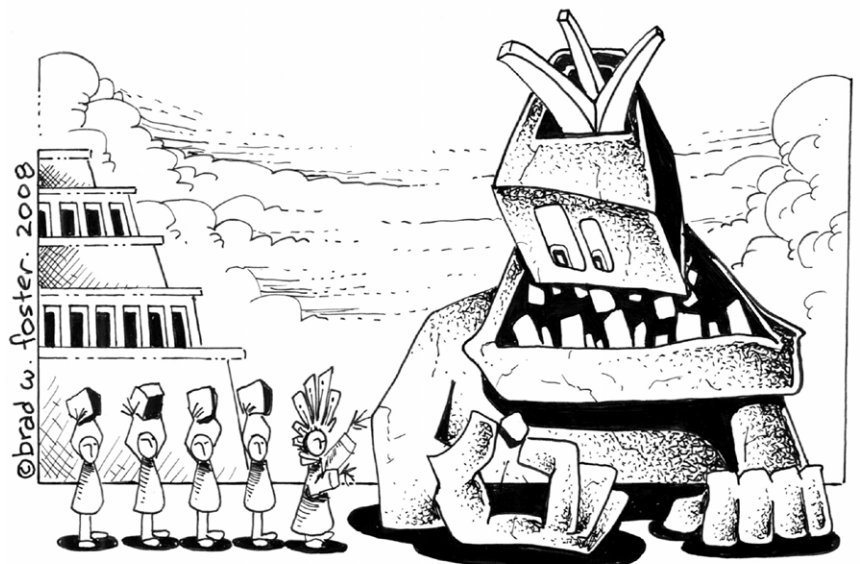
A letter from D. West! Hmmmm! Perhaps I should restore him to my mailing list, from which I cut him as I hadn’t heard from him in maybe ten years.

Randy sez: John Hertz was indeed working under space restraints, although it was the result of a miscommunication. If you count the words in his piece, you’ll see that there are exactly 1000, no more, no fewer.

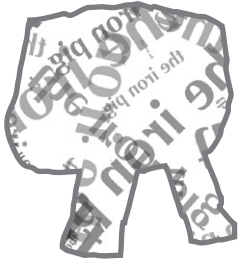
Regarding Alexis’ website project, I’m beginning to suspect that he’s pulling our leg, especially with this new detail that he’s going to redraw some of the old cartoons too. This is all the opposite of preservation, isn’t it? Fess up, Alexis!

Your idea of a website auxillary to the lettercol is interesting. Now that would be a true paper/internet hybrid zine.

Andy sez: It’s interesting that my relatively off-hand endorsement of *Challenger* has inspired such a variety of responses. If you pin me down and ask me to assert that *Challenger* was indeed the best fanzine published in 2007, I might not put it in my top five. But the fanzine Hugo is a queer beast, regarded with a curious mixture of passion and indifference by the



OFFICIAL PRESENTATION & INSPECTION of
LATEST DENTURES TO ROKRUPT the ROCK EATER



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eric-mayer.
livejournal.com

people who vote on it. Guy is a Sercon publisher in the classic definition of the term, he is well-connected to the segment of fandom that goes to Worldcon and votes on the Hugo, and it seemed reasonable that he might win the award. But the fact that I was cool with that possibility did not mean that I planned to buy a Worldcon membership in order to vote myself. I'm happy whenever I feel no urge to excoriate the Hugo results as a crime against humanity, and at this point, any fanzine that actually appears on paper is okay with me.

John Nielsen Hall

Lately I have been reading requiems for what seems like a lot of American fans I never read or knew of. Bob Tucker was of course, not one of these, but all the same he was never someone whose fanning I knew of by anything other than reputation. Dan Steffan has written something that transcends anything I have ever before read in the nature of a tribute to a deceased fan. It was unsentimental, but in no way lacking in love for its subject. It said something, indeed many things, about Tucker that I never realised or knew. And I thought Dan Steffan was an artist!

There was some reference to bongos and wigs InTheBar a long while ago, and now I know to what use they were put. Charnock has never looked so feminine as the pic on page 17. In short, there is nothing you can do to make him look feminine at all. Ive seen bricklayers with better thighs. Nor were they as hairy. But they couldn't write like him. Nor can anyone else.

I was also appreciative of the Chris Garcia article, which appeared to have been written in slow motion, since everything else I have read by Chris tends to give one the feeling that you only have so many minutes before this message destroys itself. It may be that Chris, having accepted the mission, then goes and performs death defying feats and safeguards the entire future of Western civilization before returning home to bed and dashing off another issue of *Drink Tank* before switching the light out for half an hours well earned kip, but I am well past my youthful flowering and cant hack that anymore. More articles by Chris about boring nights spent by himself in a warehouse might be to the benefit of his fannish career.

It wasn't that there was nothing I didn't like about *Chunga* 14 — your fanzine reviews are crap, quite frankly, and those cute lines in the footers are a serious irritant to me. But beyond that, I am more than contented, and please sir, I'm begging you, will you send me the next ish when it appears? I'll

do anything... almost...

carl sez: I don't think we'll be able to field a *Chunga* that meets with universal acclaim in all respects, at least until the FDA requires us to lest direct neural introjection of heterodox views prove fatal to the reader. Some linos may be an opportunity to ponder the nature of things, others an invitation to Googling fun.

Eric Mayer

I enjoyed Andy Hooper's glimpse of the theatrical world — a world that is as alien to an introvert like myself as the surface of Neptune (and would probably kill me just as fast) The last time I was on a stage, aside from having to get my high school diploma, was in the sixth grade when my friends and I, by dint of being on the class entertainment committee were given the use of the stage in the school's old combo auditorium/gymnasium. We wrote and performed a play called "The Mad Bomber." I suspect our creative instincts would have been quickly stifled today. It all ended with flashing lights and much banging on a sheet of aluminum. As the mad bomber I wrung my hands, rolled my eyes and laughed maniacally. It makes me cringe just to think about it. I have always been rather immature, and I still saw it as playing rather than as a performance in front of an audience which is why I was able to do it.

Wonderful article by Dan Steffan. Even though I missed out on Bob Tucker's publishing career (arriving too late) his influence was everywhere and, of course, the *Neofan's Guide* was one of my first important introductory texts to fandom. Well, insofar as I kind of brushed against fandom. The same personality traits that keep me off the stage have kept me away from sf conventions so while it was fascinating to read Dan's account, when I was a neofan, I never made it to that open doorway. I stayed out in the hallway and typed.

I thought Chris' article one of his best (not that I've probably seen but a small fraction considering how much he writes) What a weird, exhausting experience. Surreal. Good thing there wasn't something being stored in those packing peanuts, though. It's about midnight so it probably isn't the best time for me to be reading about staying up in a warehouse for two days. But, heck, I'd have enjoyed the solitude.

Reading D West's critique of your previous layout made me think of how uncritical I am about layout. Mind you, I can appreciate good layout, but I don't care if the layout's bad. I just figure, heck, it's a fanzine, and I guess the editor isn't into layout.

And even bad or so-so layouts can be interesting



in that they reveal something of the editor's aesthetic sense, and perhaps even more. Does a cluttered layout reflect a personality trait? How about a faned who likes to put everything into tight little boxes? What your fanzine layout reveals about you!

When I discovered electronic fanzines I experimented to see if I could make a page that resembled hectography. I downloaded some old-typewriter style fonts, and tried to find the right shade of purple. But it was still too legible. I found that if I converted the text document to a picture, shaded the background a bit and added a few blobs and smears, it looked "better" but, alas, trying to do a whole zine like that would make for a rather large file, at least for someone like me who is on dial-up.

I know I've rubbed people the wrong way with my insistence that I want to stick to electronic fanac from now on. Oddly enough, though I am sort of an electronic Luddite. I am beginning to understand that what I want are fanzines exactly like I used to read back in the seventies, except in electronic format.

The electronic *Chunga* seems to work.

Andy sez: Someday, when all the old twilltone and dittoed fanzines of yore have crumbled into illegibility, the only way we will be able to enjoy them is through electronic media. I certainly understand the impulse to free yourself from the social obligation that paper copies place on us – see Bob Lichtman's reaction to Alexis Gilliland above for an example of what I mean. But I'm glad to see that you found your way to *Chunga*, and felt like writing in reply.

Lloyd Penney

Many thanks for *Chunga* 14. *Chunga*, the zine with extra loctags and comment hooks to make sure your resulting loc is clean and crisp, and maybe even publishable. Well, that's the theory, anyway. Let's see what actually happens.

Another great Steffan cover. I'm sure these little devilspawn have seen light before, in other fan art or covers. Or do they just get around in various fanzines, the Murphy fillo? The one to blame for everything?

While you three are stomping everywhere, leaving Corflu tracks on the good carpet (just wait until your fathers get home!), the fanzines aren't going to get done by themselves, you know. I am thinking of doing a fanzine of my own...working title *Arcade*. I get a little overly analytical about these things, so I need to make a list of what I need for my zine. Articles, artwork, fillos, editorial, covers, etc. In many ways, the pertinent question is why do I want to pub my ish. Participation, feedback, egoboo... as

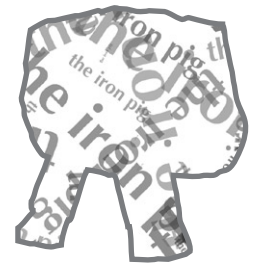
soon as I decide why I want to publish again, I can then start assembling when I want in that zine. I don't have many theatre stories, except for those voicework auditions I've enjoyed. The most recent effort was extremely snial. The student producer chose "The Drop" by John Christopher, from the March 1953 issue of *Galaxy Magazine*, and the final episode of the SF anthology TV series *Tales of Tomorrow*. I had two major roles in it, and it sounded great. I wish the final product would arrive. I should pester the producer again, and see if a contributor's copy is available yet. (Comments from the producer on my performance in *The Price of Pugwash*? Any commentary gratefully received.)

While having seen Tucker at Worldcons from a distance, my only true contact with him was at the Chicon in 1991, being on a panel with him on fanish traditions. A granddaughter brought down a bottle of fine stuff so that we could all demonstrate smoothing. Surprising few people in the audience took part, but the panel sure did, and I remember thinking my throat's just been cut. (Of course, I've never had anything stronger than Diet Coke on a panel, so two fingers of Jim Beam was a quantum leap up.) I was at only two Midwestcons; not sure if Tucker was at either of them. All I know that when *Ansible* or *File 770* arrives, the obit file depresses me.

I can't think of any other kind of job I'd rather have than Chris Garcia's. I'd love to work in a museum, I'd love to work with old computers, and I'd like nothing better than to have lots of time at work to create fanzines. And get paid for it all, too. What a gig. (News as of today...seeing that finding a full-time job seems difficult if not impossible, I decided that perhaps a second part-time job would help out a lot. Today, I start a new part-time job, as the Membership and Publications Clerk for the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Fourteen to 21 hours a week at a decent rate, and when I add that to the *Globe and Mail* position, I won't see much daylight through the week, but I should have some cash in the bank, and I can pay my share of the bills.)

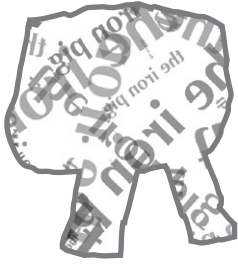
Greg Benford's letter reminds me of the miniserries *Race to Mars*, which was created by Discovery Channel Canada. That wasn't your property, was it, Greg? I quite enjoyed it, it was mostly shot in Québec, and it received much critical acclaim. If it's another Canadian programme, and other Canadian investors, I haven't seen it.

Andy sez: Lloyd, I thought you did your character every justice in *The Price of Pugwash*. I listened to the recording Bill Mills posted shortly after the convention; you sounded great, as did all the cast. Good luck with your fanzine, and



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Sharee Carton
PO Box 633
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Australia

We also heard from:

James Bacon
Thought you'd like this map.

John Hertz
Thanks particularly for the Room 770 photo. On Mondays & Wednesdays I think it should've been captioned. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I think it's just fine as is.

Nic Farey
Nary a low point to be found in #14, with Charnock, Garcia & Steffan slightly ahead of the pack and no Kentucky Derby references here, pal.

Paul Di Filippo
Chunga #14 was a living, bellowing chunk of sheer awesomeness with staples rammed through it! Art and text cohered into a brilliant, beautiful montage of all things faanish. I enjoyed the hell out of this!

Candi Strecker
(COA: 650 La Grande Ave, San Francisco CA 94112-2837)

John Purcell
Why can't women hit on me like that?

don't wait for it to be perfect, or you'll never publish.

Sharee Carton

Thanks again for another great issue of *Chunga!* A fine selection of articles and letters, all sandwiched between two triffic covers.

I did, however, find it extremely difficult to get this loc written, as every time I sat down at my beloved MacBook to write my loc, I found myself reading the entire friggin zine again, from Steffan to Stiles! (Most recently for the 6th time!)

In *The Land Of Lagadada* was anything but awful! I could relate completely to the concept of family one derives from being involved in theater. Drama was the only thing that kept me going to high school, and for 3 years I attended live-in summer drama workshops, entered every performance competition in the area, as well as taking dance classes and acting workshops at the Citadel Theater in Edmonton, Alberta. When I left high school early and did community college instead, I started attending a Performing Arts High School where I worked with some former classmates from the summer workshops and we won the state drama competition with the absurdist play, *The Bald Soprano*. I never felt, tho, that I had a fraction as much talent as my classmates, especially at improv and comedy, and this was brought home to me when 3 of the 6 of us from *The Bald Soprano* won scholarships—I was not one of them. I had every intention of entering Grant McEwan College's Musical Theater Program—until the gloss was removed from my successful, very stressful, audition when I found out they had accepted everyone who applied. Surely it would have been a great opportunity anyway, but by that time I was keen to move to Vancouver—better music and closer to all my Seattle fannish friends. I figured I needed a year off school, anyway. That was 28 years ago, and I still haven't got back to school....

Dan's tales of Bob Tucker were an absolute treat. I never met Tucker, and I don't recall having ever seen *Yandro* or *Le Zombie*, but I read *The Neofan's Guide* when I first entered fandom in '78; definitely not a copy with Dan's cover. I also devoured *All Our Yesterdays* in those early years, and anything else I could get my hands on that were considered classics of fandom. The description of that Mid-WesCon and Tucker's orchestrations was nothing short of stunning. The imagery and detail that Dan uses to evoke that long ago event suck me in every time I go back over it. What a special moment to witness, and I thank Dan for taking me there. And the pics are awsome. (That is certainly one of the

advances in fanzines that I most appreciate, the quality photos that can be published these days. Remember when one had to save a bunch of stuff and get an e-stencil once one had a full page of photos or artwork, then cut out one's wax stencil and glue the desired image from the e-stencil into the gap, and it was really hard to get everything straight—esp if one wasn't—oh, and that awful e-stencil smell! Hmmm, guess I'm showing my age again.....)

I always love reading fanzine reviews, and I really enjoy John's descriptions, esp in his review of *Trap Door*. I know that distance and lack of direct response have led to me being dropped from everyone's mailing list except *Chunga* and *Banana Wings*, but I rilly do read any zines that arrive and always fully intend to loc...

I was interested by Lisa Freitag's tale of Kawasaki. I spent 23 hours in Narita enroute to Canada in 2003, and visited the village there, where I was treated to a fantastic experience of walking the streets to the village temple behind an ornately carved wagon, all dragons in gold on red, carrying old men playing drums and flutes reclining on silk cushions, drawn by 50 or more people in matching pajamas, hauling on huge velvet covered ropes while periodically shouting "Ha!" in unision. Atop the wagon was a carved lifesized figure of a man in full samurai-style costume. (The wagon actually had a small motor hidden underneath for power, but when we reached the narrow stone bridge to the temple entrance the haulers had to drag it across for real.) I walked some of the way backwards ahead of them taking photos and was given many huge smiles from the crew. At the temple there were 6 more wagons lined up, each with an entourage wearing different colours and a different figure perched on the roof. A presentation fan dance for each wagon was performed by the women in each group, and then the men did their own presentation. Then they all joined for a group performance, some atop their wagons, and this was followed by a blessing from the numerous monks in varying colours arrayed on the stage. Giant gongs were gonged, and huge conch horns were blown. A gold casket looking very like the Ark in the first Raiders film was carried out and the head honcho monk dude presented scrolls to a selection of monks as in a graduation rite. Then the Ark was paraded along the balcony of the temple, with much incense waving, chanting, and gonging and proceeded around the temple grounds.

I wandered around the area for a while, checking out a beautiful mossy hillside partly surrounding the building that was dotted with dozens of



The Iron Pig and the Dogs of Welcome

little grottoes, each framing an exquisite, lichen-covered statue of a buddha or fantastic creature. I only saw a handful of westerners. The sun was very bright, and the day was hot, although everywhere was green with moss and lichen. In spite of the brightness, I only saw one Japanese wearing sunglasses — a young lad with one of the wagons who looked so cool he probably wore his shades even in the rain. Around one corner I found the entrance to a passage, with a sign in (poor) English explaining it was the tomb of a local saint and was only open 2 days each year. Thrilled to have lucked in on one of these days I paid 100 yen for a tiny candle at the entrance and, bent almost double, crept through the hewn stone passage. Water trickled down the walls and the coolness was most refreshing. At the end of the passage were half a dozen people with their heads bowed. I placed my candle with the others on the alter and gazed at the figure on the dias, and soaked up the tranquility that permeated the tiny tomb.

Next I decided to find the “facilities.” At Narita Station I had asked directions to a washroom from a couple of westerners who saw me looking around somewhat anxiously and asked if they could help. They turned out to be stewards from Air New Zealand, and directed me towards the temple. When I asked for a washroom, they asked if I “knew” about Japanese toilets? When I looked blank, they suggested I go to the McDonalds down the street. “We call it the M-bassy, and no matter what country you are in, they will always have at least one western style toilet.” At the temple I understood their concern — the ladies toilet looked like a horizontal

urinal, and the floor was quite wet — awkward to straddle when wearing jeans! As I wandered down the hill to return to the hotel I soon found myself joining the procession of the Ark, still with gongs a-gonging and incense a-wafting. I hope Lisa felt more comfortable after a few days — I found the Japanese pretty friendly overall, although I was amazed to not be able to find soy milk at the hotel breakfast either time I stayed overnight in Narita. (China Air was much more accomodating that way.)

Andy sez: Your description of the temple procession made my jaw drop several times. I found myself wondering what it meant to the people involved, what they felt about the gaudy and wonderful symbols they were dragging across the city. Did the kid in the sunglasses think it was all too corny for words, but he went along because it made his grandparents happy? Or did he secretly believe himself to be a reincarnated warrior monk from the age of the country at war? A pretty astonishing experience for something jammed into a layover between flights, and thank you so much for remembering it for us.

David Langford

Since it’s our wedding anniversary, Hazel dragged me out to the local DIY centre (Homebase), in whose garden section I found the Iron Pig or a distant cousin. Since I happened to have a camera in my pocket, the evidence is attached. [See above.] Why it (he? she?) should be surrounded by the Dogs of Welcome is one of those mysteries, like what song the sirens sang.... ☂



David Langford
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Geri Sullivan
Given so much solid-to-outstanding material, I feel a bit guilty coming back to your masthead to point, jump up and down enthusiastically, and exclaim Yes! Yes! This is a fanzine! This is a damned fine fanzine!

Karen Babich
Her message to Vicki R from WisCon? “I feel your pain.”

Tim Marion
Jay Kinney’s cartoon on page 28 looks like a “Dero” Schweitzer cartoon.

Jim Caughran
By the way, “fanzine” and “zine” are both valid words in Scrabble.

Brad Foster
Then I clicked on the tv in our hotel room and the weather channel was a large map of Canada — NOW I was in a foreign country.

D. West
I seem to have been over-optimistic about your capacity to tell your arse from your elbow. Again. What’s wrong with you people?

