

FIGURING IT OUT: THE PERFECT WORLDCON



The Drink Tank

Issue 124

I'm not sure why, but I've been thinking about WorldCon a lot. I mean, the obvious reason would be that pesky nomination, but even before that I was thinking about what makes a great WorldCon. There's a certain intangible quality that you really can't put your finger on. I loved the 2002 WorldCon that I heard a lot of people complaining about during the con. The reasons that one person loves a con are probably a lot different from the reasons someone else loves a con. I'm a programming junky and I love a lot of programming in a bunch of different areas. I know folks aren't all as panel crazy as I am, and I'm not nearly as party-focused as some, though I do enjoy a good mix-'em-up. I spent a lot of time figuring what I'd want to see, hear, have and go through, from bid to bedrooms. Come with me now as I explore The Perfect WorldCon!

The Bid

So, the bid is an important part of any WorldCon. You gotta win to hold the beast, don't you? To me, a good bid has a lot of stuff set up already. Hotel stuff knocked out, at least a ballpark idea of the costs (yeah, I know things happen *coughDenvercough*, but at least a general idea) and it also has a full look at what's going to be available outside of the con. They've gotta make it look like they've hammered out a lot of the important stuff, especially when



it comes to facilities. I need to know that the place where the con will be won't suck. There are facilities that are 'good enough' and ones that flat out rule, but anything other than those is just asking for failure.

Also, it has to have a party at every con you go to. That party re-

quires several things, not the least of which is lovely women and men (preferably on motorbikes, as shown above). Without eye candy of some sort, all parties are doomed. The parties also need something to distinguish them from others. Montreal had Spruce Beer, Chicago those meat sammich

things and Australia was full of Australian goodness. Without a good party, there's no way you should be bidding. Parties are utterly important.

And so are the other activities of your fandom. I want to know that the committee is experienced in running big cons. That means a Westcon that does better than average, a DeepSouthCon, a MidWestCon or something of that ilk. And it has to be good. There's something to be said for becoming ready by bidding, but it's also a great way to flat-out fail. Without big, successful cons, I just can't feel like supporting a con. Now, some groups running majorish regionals and do it well year after year, and that does count for a lot, but the step between the two, between the International/National and the recurring regional is pretty substantial and needs to be addressed.

Finally, I need to know the committee for the bid and the committee for the con are going to be the same. That goes against the grain with some folks, but I like to know that the group I interact with during the bidding process is going to be the same one running a significant portion of the con itself. To me, that's a major deal-breaker. I tend to be very inquisitive when it comes to bids and cons. I send a lot of eMails asking a lot of questions and I like to know who's gonna answer. That's just me though, but this is my



dream, so I'm sticking with it!

Another thing is the availability of materials. I want progress reports for the bid every 6 months at a minimum. Hell, the way we did Pacheco Progress, with one every few weeks, is the ideal way to go about it in my eyes. Yes, it was a hoax, but we kept interacting with our supporters, so why shouldn't serious bids.

A bid website is important too, but you've gotta make it easy to navigate at the same time as being informative. Having something fun, like info on Local Fandom, a photo gallery that includes historic shots, looks at personalities on the bid committee all make me visit more often and want to support more. That's a key thing that I think many sites ignore. If you make visiting the site the primary source for info, that's great. If you go beyond that to something more interesting, and preferably something that gives you a view of the bigger picture of the fandom that's bidding for the con, that's the best thing you can do.

The Winning Moment

OK, I know I'm nuts, but I want as much as possible as soon as possible after the win. The big thing is I want to know all the costs and locations. If they're worth my time, they've already done a lot of this ahead of time and put it in their bid materials. It would be awesome if they had a pre-printed Progress Reports. Now this is expensive if you don't end up winning, but you can save a lot of cost by not mailing it if you lost. That's easy enough.

I'd want to be able to convert quickly, either at the party (and a post-win party is essential) or at the table the next day. Having enough people to deal with a large number of folks is important too.

Getting things on the website is also important. The team basically needs to be completely prepared for the second they announce. That's effort that could go completely to waste if you lose, but still it's my dream Con.

The Build Up

You want things done quickly, and there are some things that just can't be done quickly and you have to accept that. Ideally, the hotel block is open for reservations the minute they announce, but seldom is that able to happen. The thing that has to happen early is as much info as possible out to as many people as possible. That

means website and such. Info on the GoHs is utterly important, as well as hotel and convention center info. Finding airport and other transportation information would be quite nice too. And more of that view of local fandom. I think that's something that often gets lost in WorldCon. Yeah, I understand that it's an international convention, but giving each WorldCon a flavor of the local, that going to each one is a distinct and flavored event would be wonderful, and it can be as simple as having links on the website.

There's a lot that a committee needs to do in the first year of the lead-up. I've never seen it first hand but even I know that it's hard to get together a committee that takes care of all the required elements and to start the serious budgeting process and preparations. Most cons do this pretty well, from what I understand, and the only thing I like to see from this phase is responsiveness if I've got a question.

Also, this is the period of time if anything really new and exciting should be made public. Even if it didn't happen as big as they had hoped, the Fantiques Roadshow was a great idea and they announced it early enough to get notice. I'd love to see every WorldCon try something really unusual and fun, even if it isn't my cup of tea. Basically, during the period before the big crush, I want the con to make its identity known. There are too many

cons that are all alike, I want cons that are distinct with individual flavors.

As things get closer, I like to hear about advances. Meeting notes put on the web are a little intrusive, but I like to be keep up to date. Maybe I'm nuts, and I understand that making it happen is a much harder thing, but it's always nice to feel that you've watched something grow. Feeling a connection to the con may seem like a strange thing, but it's what can really make a con seem important. I started

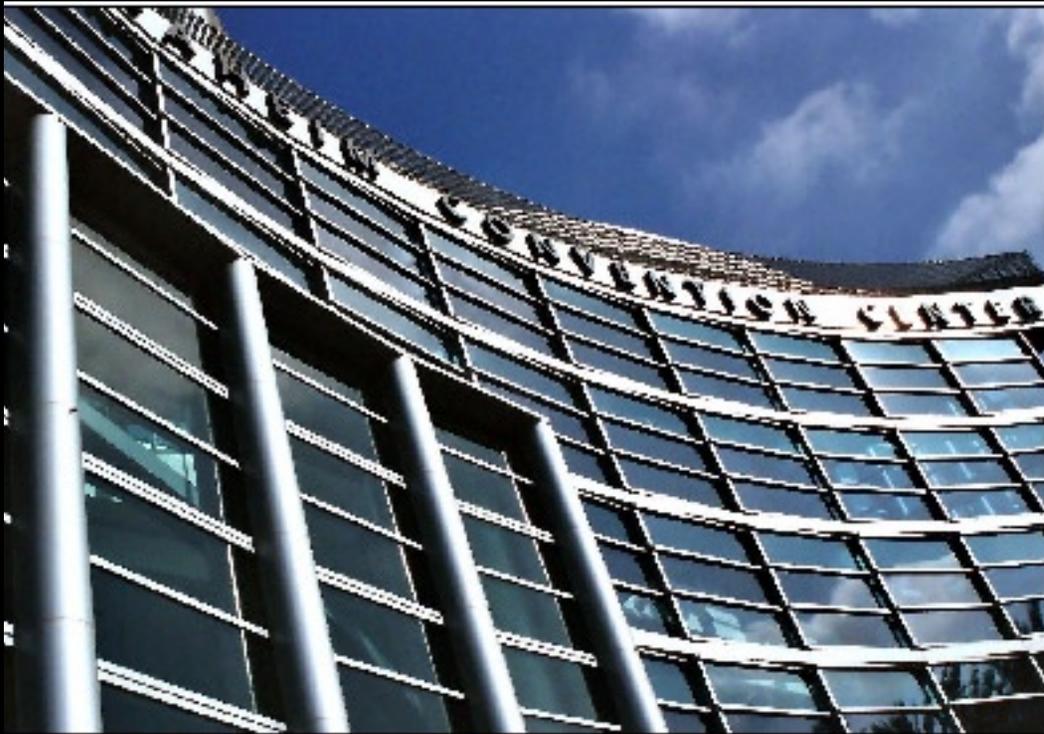


supporting the Montreal bid pretty early on (early 2005) and have been glad to watch things as they unfold. I feel a sense of connection with the bid and am glad that it's doing so well.

Those sorta things may seem unnecessary, but they are nice and this is my dream world!

The Facilities

There will always be those who complain about every possible location. Here what I want: food within walking distance (I thought LACon's area was just about right as there were several expensive places in the hotels, cheap places right across the street, and a variety of fast food not but a couple of minutes away) and preferably a general use store or two around to make it possible to buy things you might need during the day. This is especially important to me when I get allergy attacks and need eye drops to keep my eyes from puffing closed and it would have helped this year when I needed to buy sox to keep the blisters at bay. Few places have these things (Boston's Hyne's Convention Center is one, that place in Atlanta and maybe one or two other places. A lot of people talk about the Hynes as the best convention centre in the US, and perhaps the world. These sort of places are rare, but many can be made to work. Cheap places are important too. I want to be able to get the equivalent of a burger and fries for



less than 8 bucks. That's something of a tall order, but it is still possible at a lot of places (The Fairmont in San Jose had a bunch of places around it that qualified, while the McEnery Convention Center didn't) and in others it's harder. I tend to distrust CCs where the only options are either Convention Center food (though I must admit that the Moscone Center's food was pretty good and not super-expensive when I ate there during WonderCon).

But food's not the only concern. There's also access. You'll get no louder screams than from those who can't get where they want to be without having

to go through all sorts of hoops. LACon got some of that because of the placement (and numerical disadvantage) of elevators, but that's not easily avoided. Basically you have to have everything on ground level, or have multiple elevators that can get you to everything. Wide halls are an absolute must, as are a great number of restrooms. My only problem with the San Mateo Marriott (where they're having Westercon this year) is that it lacks enough bathrooms.

The connection to hotel is important too. In many ways Las Vegas is the perfect spot for a WorldCon and

in many ways it is the worst possible place. There's lots of places with space (including the Las Vegas Convention Center) but rates are high. Hotels can be cheap on the Strip, but the other expenses can be rough. It's hard.

There are things that are nice, like having a large theatre-type setting. Yes, you can usually fake one, but the Hugos and even the Masquerade could always benefit from a real stage. I have to admit that the stadium where they held the Hugos and the Masquerade at LACon was nice, but maybe not the most intimate of locations. There are theatres like the Fox in Detroit, the Majestic in Boston, the Castro in SF that would be ideal for Hugos/Masquerades, but they're not attached or even close to a convention center, so that's out the window.

There's another thing that would be incredibly difficult and incredibly awesome at the same time: a movie theatre.

You see, they used to regularly show film at WorldCon, and to a degree they still do, but having an actual movie theatre to show actual films (or professionally digitally projected video) in an actual movie theatre would be awesome! It's possible in some places, like the Moscone Center (using the Me-treon for the theatre like WonderCon does) and even the ever-loving Hynes. It's just a gorgeous touch that's not required, but this is my Dream!

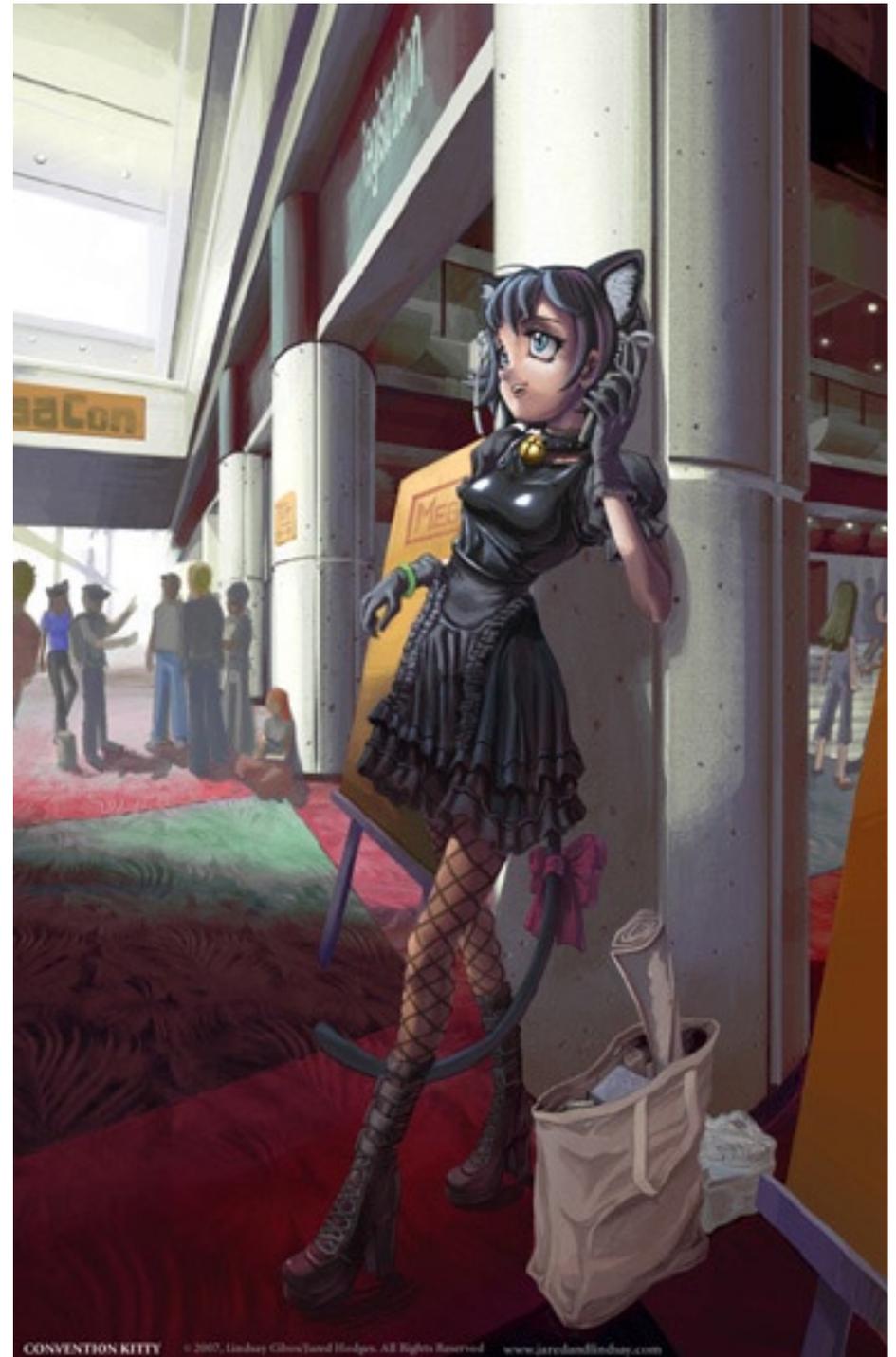
Another thing I want out of my facilities is a series of lounges. There's usually a fanzine or fan lounge, which is a good thing, and I'd add a Costumers Lounge (with stuff to help with the repair and upkeep of costumes, plus it would be an ideal place for something like Hall Costume in an Hour) an Anime lounge would be nice as would a comics lounge. Having these near programming areas would be nice (increasing traffic and so on) but I think these sort of things belong near party rooms and ConSuites. Yes, I get the concept that sort of isolates sub-fandoms, but it's nice to have a place you can go to be around the folks you know. The fanzine lounge at LACon and the one at CascadiaCon taught me that.

Programming

You see, you gotta have a programme. It's utterly important. I must admit, I'm a bit of a programme Junkie (Is that unfannish?) and I love having lots of different areas to look into. I want a film programme, preferably with a combination of films you'll never see anywhere else (a mini-film fest, as it were) and classics (with or without Horror Hosts like Mr. Lobo). That's the kind of thing that I enjoy, but I know that it can be expensive.

Panels. I love them. I really do. There needs to be a balance between serious literary, silly fannish, silly literary, seriously fannish and all the other panels that there really need to be at every WorldCon. I'm thinking that I'd love to see only five panels at any given time.

WHAT! I hear some say, How can that be? There's so much that has to be gone over that five at a time is far too few. I think not. I think that 5 times the number of slots in a day (let's say 11 total at 9, 10:30, Noon, 1:30, 3, 4:30, 6, 7:30, 9, 10:30, Midnight) and then multiply that by the number of days (let's say 4 complete and one partial) and you're well-beyond fifty panels. Plus, let's add a concept that I think is a good one of site specific programming. For example, you could have a few irregularly scheduled events in the Fanzine Lounge dealing with fanzines, and the Costuming Lounge



could host costuming panels and so one and so forth. The idea of targeted programming isn't easy, but it would also increase the potential number of attendees for some of the smaller items on the sched.

Lastly, readings. You remember that stage thing I talked about earlier. Imagine big name authors reading there, or even better, a group of small and middle name authors. The theatre setting's not particularly intimate, but it would allow for large numbers and a dignified appearance. Plus, most of those places have lobbies and those can make for good times afterwards. There's nothing like a theatre setting to make somethign seem like a big deal too.

Of course, you want a lot of folks to be on programming. You want authors and fans and artists and science types and so on. It's a good point that when you look at a WorldCon as needing 'draws', you want to have big names mingling, bringing people in. In my ideal world, the name WorldCon alone is enough to draw people, the publications and website and so on are enough to make the event draw people. I really believe that WorldCon can, on it's own merits, bring in huge numbers without having to push GoHs and so on. It's closest relative is WrestleMania, which draws more on the name WresleMania than on the stars who are in the event.

The Intangibles

There have to be a lot of great folks. This has never been a problem for me, since I've always found a bunch of people to enjoy chatting with at Cons all over the place. There has to be a group that I'm interested in talking to (and places with which to do that, including Lounges and so on). LACon IV was great, with lots of programming and sun stuff to do, but the most important part to me was getting to chat with Lloyd and Yvonne and various others. More than any event, except maybe The Match Game, WorldCon was about hanging out and having marvelous conversations. WorldCon has to attempt to make these things possible, though they can not possibly make them happen. Having large areas for people to gather and chat, preferably with food and drink, is ideal.

There are also parties. I love a good party, though I'm not the biggest party guy you'll ever meet. I tend to go, chat folks up, maybe pour a few drinks and that's that. It's always nice to have a party floor where the ConComm has worked out a real and lasting corkage deal. This was a matter that some pointed out as a problem at LACon, though it did not seem to be a large matter in the end. I understand that some hotels would rather turn a blind eye than give official permission (and in some cases they flat-out can't) but I think that a real corkage waiver is



best.

Parties need space and there needs to be a way to sit and chat. A massive lobby is a good thing. A well-trained staff for the hotel, knowing that there are going to be people up all hours chatting in the lobby, is another thing that helps.

OK, that's my WorldCon. I don't know if I'll ever get one close to it, but the fact that good folks who I want to talk with are always going to be going will make every WorldCon worth my while...except Japan because it's just too damned expensive!



**Letter Graded Mail
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my loyal readers!
(with photos from my trip to Sono-
ma)**

**Let us begin with the Exceptional
Mark Plummer!**

Chris,

I was going to start off by referring to these as 'belated comments' on DT#122 but on slight further thought that seemed a bit daft as in any non-Chris-driven universe they'd actually seem quite timely, it being only a couple of weeks since DT#122's appearance. Still Everything Is Different Now, eh?

I understand that time moves more slowly for others. It is a dreadful

business, that.

Like many people, I pretty much immediately noticed the absence of any Japanese Hugo nominees this year, but in retrospect I guess it shouldn't be all that surprising. As far as I can see, there's nothing about the shortlists in 1970 and 1990 (or indeed 1971 and 1991) to suggest that those Worldcons took place in non-English-speaking countries. It's true, I think, that Australian, British and Canadian works and individuals have done better on home turf, but in my sense is that it's only to the extent of giving a slight boost to something or somebody that was already a serious contender, a leg-up onto the shortlist from, say, seventh or eighth place. Personally, I had rather been hoping for a substantially mixed list, if nothing else to shake things up a bit, but I don't suppose it was ever a serious likelihood.

Looking over those two lists, I can see that you're right. There were people who thought that the John Hertz nomination last year was largely due to the WorldCon being in LA. I think I was largely helped by the fact that so few Japanese members nominated and LACon folks seem to know me.

I don't think I have any serious disagreements with your assessment of the odds in the fan categories. In particular, I agree that John Scalzi presents the strongest challenge to

Dave Langford's dominance for quite some time, although of the other names you cite as previous contenders I suspect only Cheryl ever really posed a serious threat, for all that I'm personally a big fan of both Claire's and Andy's writing.

Cheryl came damn close, and there was a lot of talk about Claire winning next year (which would be this year) at LACon.

I would add though that I've no problem at all with professional writers being nominated in the fan writer category, because as has been so often argued before it's not the case that the fan categories represent some junior league. And it's not as if it's a new thing we're talking about here; by my reckoning, only three of the past winners in the fan writer category weren't professional writers (Mike Glycer, Susan Wood, Harry Warner). However, I'm sure that the fact that John Scalzi has made the list does Mean Something for the award; it's just that I'm not sure what. I don't know, my general feeling remains that rather than pursuing this constant process of improvement, modernisation and extension, the whole Hugo edifice should be knocked down and replaced with a new build but -- in anticipation of a pouncing Kevin Standlee (who, I predict, will know that I've said this as soon as I click the [send] button) -- I don't actually care enough about the

matter to want to do anything about it myself.

I think there are problems with the Hugos (mostly they revolve around the damned Australian Ballot method!), but I still think it's an important thing for us to have in fandom. I'd have said that even before I got nominated too!

One more minor point on the fan categories: you say, of Plokta, that its Britishness is an advantage 'despite Brits who seem to think that Americans won't vote for UK zines'. Really? Do you think that's a common sense over here?

I remember a bunch of threads around 2006 when I released my Hugo predictions somewhere (maybe my LJ, maybe in The Drink Tank) and I said that PLOKTA was a run-away winner no doubt and I got a flood of British folks saying that PLOKTA didn't have a chance because Americans won't vote for a British zine, especially when Mike Glycer's File 770, an LA-based zine, was on the ballot. On the other hand, there are a lot of Americans who think that the only good zines come out of the UK (one of our fanzine panels at BayCon brought that up). It goes both ways.

Less to say about the pro categories, I'm afraid, mainly through rather embarrassing ignorance: I haven't read any of the shortlisted



fiction. Yes, the gender imbalance seems odd (did you see the regendered version of the 'Helens':

<http://regender.com/swap/http://www.locusmag.com/2007/03/HugoNominations.html?>)

but at the same time I can't think of anything that's screaming at me as an obvious omission which most likely reflects my narrow reading in 2006 sf.

I learned to the test, as it were, and read most of the things on the list after they were announced. I mostly only read when I'm on trains. I don't take trains much either.

Actually, I did for a moment wonder whether you were too quick to allot favourite status to Julie Phillip's Tiptree book in the related book, given the presence of that John Picacio volume. I have-- or rather had -- this general feeling that art books always do really well, but on actually looking

at the results on the Locus website it seems there have been relatively few such winners in this category. An illustration of the merits of checking rather than going on gut reaction, I suppose. And the Tiptree book is incredibly good.

It's great, and even after looking the Picacio book over, I don't think there's any chance of it winning against the Tiptree. It was a big deal book over here as they hyped it on NPR more than a half-dozen times.

Are you going to re-handicap the dramatic presentation long-form now in view of the correction?

I probably should, though I'll need to reconsider the whole beast. I'm guessing that all the buzz is going to Pan's Labrynth, but it also appears that it was Number 5 in the voting. An interesting matter.

--

Best etc.

--Mark

Thanks much, Mark!

And now, the Wild Man from Ireland...James Bacon!

Dear Chris

well you missed a damn fine Eastercon and it was a sad old thought that brought to mind that you might have been along as the TAFF delegate were it not for the forces of common

sense and conservatism.

Damn! Once again I am thwarted by Common Sense! I've heard nothign but good things about Eastercon too.

Here a recent fan fund seems to have run for such a short period of time, its a big bang thing suddenly we have a fan fund, then there is amazing energy, effort and collective will and suddenly we are hurling someone out on the world of science fictional fandom to meet others, elsewhere, in places far away.

Guff is over shortly, well in 2 hours 45 minutes I think, and it had a campaign time of eighteen days, and the winner has about nine weeks to pack their bags and head away to the land of the novelty cane toad items and kangaroo meat.

I think the race for GUFF this year went really quick (I believe Wham, Bam, Thank You Ma'am would be accurate) and the ballot was filled with great names (and all but one of them on my LJ FList) and I even voted!

Jets had a longer run opening on the 4th of December and closing four months later, and there is a winner. Chris O'Shea is off to the worldcon later this year. It was a good race, but it seemed to al happen between Picocon and Eatsercon, a mad dash for votes and fund raising.

I thought that there were a lot of



good folks up for JETS too. I was kinda pullin' for Abi Brown because she's a second generation fan like myself. I hope Chris has a good time.

Now I know, I know its an alternative turtledove now, but you might have won last years TAFF were it to have happened, and by gum if you did boyo, I don't doubt you would have had a ball at this years eastercon, apart from the fistful of fanzines and the authors just turning up on an ad hoc basis, the no guest and last minute phoenix effort among other things such as a great programme had this fantastic effect on the convention. I was at 3 gripe sessions and no one showed up to gripe. Even the major final gripe session was small in turnout and smaller in points, it lasted about 30 minutes and some of the complaints/suggestions were common sense, with a few legit points, but most

of which were very minor impacts upon the surface or a gargantuan event. ***I'm actually working on PrintZine issue 00 which will be my Turtledove review of my TAFF trip. It'll be weird. A gripe session that is brief and makes legitimate points? Such a thing has never happened before.***

Yes, it was grand eastercon indeedy, and I had a ball. I even did kareoke, and shouted a few songs at that.

I'm a master with the B52s' Love Shack.

Of course next years eastercon is winding up to be a real doobie, as we would say, and I imagine you might be thinking somewhere in the nether regions, that you might just go for it, well I hope you do, and I hope others do too, and I hope all fans encourage other fans to go.

The plan, as it stands, is to run for TAFF again and hope that I can sneak out a win, and I might still find a way to get out there if I don't win, but it'll be much harder.

Jets has shown there is no such thing as too many nominees.

Absolutely right, though it might make the 20% rule far more difficult.

Heathrow is just west of London and Orbital will be a super eastercon for any TAFF winner, apart from the superlative guest line up, which

should attract more fans, there is big crossover between the committee on Orbital and a convention called Redemption which is like eastercon but about Blakes Seven and Babylon 5, but it isn't really, its more a smaller media version of eastercon, with discussions and what not. So there should be many a fan whom a TAFF winner can educate and introduce to the world of international fan funderry. ***I've looked at the line up of GoHs and that's enough to make me want to be there. Godo folks. Then again, I've wanted to get out to the UK and meet all of these names I've seen in zines all these years. And finally get to meet Dave Langford and Dave Langford II (better known as Niall Harrison) to see if any of their talent will rub off on me by just being in the same room.***

Anyhow, get those minions minioning somewhere, start calling apa's apa's and not A-P-A's and you never know, but most importantly when the right time comes, get your readers to get others to run too. ***But A-P-A just sounds so cool! I've tried to get some other folks to run, and I'm thinking we'll have a more crowded field for this coming year.***

still loving drink tank

J

Good to hear from ya and I hope you'll keep redaing!



And what's a fanzine without an LoC from Lloyd Penney?

Dear Chris:

I think I'm finally catching up, with two Drink Tanks to peruse. Here goes with issues 121 and 122. (Nope, 123 just dropped. Here comes another multi-issue loc, just the way John Purcell likes it.)

Well, I like to keep folks on their toes with issues coming out at all hours!

I'm falling further behind because I've got a three-week assignment that gives me eight hours a day in the daytime, and this Globe and Mail job that gives me on average two hours a night. Given I need a few

meals and some sleep, that doesn't allow for much free time. I take bits of time whenever I can. Yvonne and I are going to a surprise party in Windsor, just across the river from Detroit, on the weekend, so I'll probably write some locs on the way down in the car, like this one!

In Windsor? That's across from Detroit, right? That's the home town of The Tragically Hip and Dan Akroyd. I've LoCed in some strange plaecs, most notably on airplanes and BART trains.

121...What rap I have listened to, it's pretty stone cold. Rap had the opportunity to be a positive force, but all it's all bling and jigglin' hos, and a chance for some to get rich with not much music talent at all. The messages in rap have been obliterated by violence and death, and greed and hatred. It's a shame, it had basic roots behind it, but now, it's just another music genre. Putting a little steampunk into it would give it some true charm.

Now, I miss the old days when hip-hops was all about how dope your rhymes were and how fly your sneakers looked. There are some great rappers who are positive (Kool Moe D is one of my faves) and there are a lot of guys just out there doin' their thing.

M, what a story about subbing for a ceramic nude. Amazing that you

could stay still for that long. The staff must have kept people away from you so they couldn't tell that the sculpture was alive.

I've still not coaxed out of her whether this was a great big hoax that the art gallery pulled, or a little hoax that she pulled on me and my readers. I've found a reference to the art show, so I'm not sure. Everyone's playing pretty close to the vest.

Hobbies are a waste of time, to be sure, but an enjoyable waste of time. But then, no activity is a true waste of time if you get some exercise, whether it is the exercise of the muscles or the mind. There's one worthwhile activity with your eyes closed, Chris, and that is a decent night's sleep, something I haven't had in a while. I have searched the Web looking for any mention of a Detroit Worldcon bid, and I hear nothing. Keep us all apprised, living up here, I'd like to know more.

I haven't found out any more, but I haven't been around a lot of SMOFs lately who have their fingers on the pulse of Detroit fandom. I can definitely use a good night's sleep, which is why tomorrow I'm getting tested for sleep apnea.

I understand where some might get inspiration from Asimov and Powers...I'm getting some ideas from reading Charles Stross' *Accelerando*



on eBook, stored on this same Palm. Realities made to order, pre-programmed and so much more. I have to admit that you've either done your research here, or come up with a total work of fiction, it's so much outside of my own experience.

Accelerando is a great book. I've started rereading it myself.

I like the story of putting a fictional person into that Who's Who, so those who read it won't know what's what. Do any of us really know what's real any more? We can edit our own realities to suit ourselves. (Yeah, you can tell I've been reading Charlie Stross...)

I have always assumed that reality is nothing more than a collective hunch. Apologies to Lili Tomlin for gasking her line.

I read an excellent point online recently. that George Bush is not stupid. And that's the scary part. His

ignorance comes not from stupidity, but from a lack of morality and worldliness. We can hope that the next president is smart, worldly and aware, with a strong moral base...in that vein, I can see why Barack Obama is so popular. Anyone, to be honest, would be an improvement over Bush, and let's hope that this is the end of the Bush dynasty.

He's certainly not stupid. He's a certain kind of shrewd and behaves very morally...within his faith's definition of morality. Obama's got a lot going against him (the BLack thing does still matter to a lot of stupid people, and the lack of national political experience matters to a lot of smart people) but he's the best bet for the Dems.

Is fandom necessary? In some ways, no. It was a necessity to form a coherent network of people with like interests. Perhaps the Web gives us that network today, but fandom gives us a social network that keeps us connected and busy. Fandom may not be necessary, but it's still a lot of fun, and you can get a lot out of it if you but try.

Good points, one and all. I think that had their never been a regular fandom inventing itself, publishers and so on would have come up with the con as a way to flog books. It'd be different, but it would have happened.

Mark Plummer brings up the old argument of what is a fan? I still think that even an interest in SF may qualify you to be a fan, but you should be able to pursue just about any interest or interests, as long as you're fulfilling your wants and needs I like my old smorgasbord model; sample from each dish, or chow down at one bowl, whatever you please. I think besides fanzine fandom and convention fandom, there is also club fandom, and I suspect an on-line fandom. You go where you're comfortable.

I can remember one of the things that Dad wrote (I'm going over his notebooks finding quotes about Vonnegut for my Memorial issue). A real Fan is someone who has the same sickness that you do, according to my Pops.

April 15, 2007

And now, I'm writing this on the way home. Had a great time in Windsor, and some people won't sober up for days.

I met folks with that same problem in Sonoma!

I'm pretty certain that if the Harvey's chain ever makes it to the US, it will change slightly to appeal to what they see as American tastes.

We've got something called Harvey's on the East Coast now, but it's almost the same thing as Carl's Jr. Out here.

I can't get Moxie, but I can get



Vernor's Ginger Ale, Stewart's soft drinks, and the weird stuff from Jones. I hope they never try green bean and turkey and stuffing soft drinks again! (burp)

We can get Vernor's. I love Vernor's. I'm just hoping that I can stock up on Spruce Beer when I go to Montreal.

122...This year, I have no Hugo vote, so I can't really make much comment on who should get what silver rocket. It's been a while since I've read current SF, so I can't comment on the pro categories, and when it comes to the fan categories...well, I like the idea of people who've never won finally winning. The egoboo and feelgood should be spread around a little more.

Can't argue with you on that last point. I'd love to see Challenger or Banana Wings win. Hell, SFFY should (and might just) take home the prize for long-term quality.

Isn't it John Scalzi? I don't recall anything he's written, but fanwriting does take other forms than fanzines. And, while I'm here, once again congratulations on your double nom! Two tiny little lapel rockets will be yours soon.

Thanks much. Yep, It's John Scalzi. How this mistake happened is as such: I was writing away from my computer and I was working on this section. I knew his first name started with a J, so I figured Joe made sense. The weird thing is that I've only heard him called Scalzi, without a first name. "Hey CHris, you read Scalzi's blog?" is a frequent call. The current version has it as John Scalzi. Bill Burns, that mighty man!, updated it for me.

123...Great graphic on the front! Where do you find these illos? And now, we're back home from Windsor. As you can tell, I didn't get much work done on the road...

That one I came across while looking for an image of wrestling. I'm not sure why it popped up, but I wrote to the artist and he gave me permission and I replaced the other image I had planned on using.

Hey, Purcell, any LP-locs are mine! Got it? This is definitely one of them, and will get worse if issue 124 drops soon. I've attended about 200 cons in the space of 25 years, and

I've certainly had my good time. I've costumed, run cons, assisted with clubs, etc., and I figure it's all a part of fandom as a whole. There are areas of fandom I have no real interest in participating in, but it is still useful to me to know why they are interested in that area. Always something to learn and understand.

As John and I coined the term Lloyd Penney-Style LoC, I will grant him temporary use of the term...for now! I took a little longer than usual with this one because I had an issue of Half DOME Happenings (available on the AhwahneeCon LJ community) and some APA stuff to work on. And I said it in my head as apa instead of Ay-Pee-Ay, James!

I always felt the young one in the crowd for years locally...now, I seem to be the resident oldphart in some circles. And, I will be a mere 48 in June. For the longest time, I figured that if I didn't act my age, no would guess my age, but my rapidly thinning hair is giving me away...

You're 48. Here's a stunning revelation: my Mom is three year and nine months older than you! That's sobering, no?

I'm rapidly fading, mostly because it's been a great weekend with Molly Moo and her hubby Victor in wonderful Windsor, and it's depressing because I gotta go back to work tomorrow. Take care, and see you



with issue 124, appearing soon at an eFanzines.com near you.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Thanks much, Lloyd.

Hey, Chris -

In case you're wondering, the loc I texted to you was originally composed in the men's room between classes last Thursday. I thought you might want to know. So here's a proper loc on *Drink Tank* #123.

LoCing in the boys room! That's different!

Interesting cover. This certainly looks like a book-learned man. I bet he's well-read, too. He's probably

perusing the poetry of Wordsworth here, if I'm reading his expression correctly.

Isn't it an awesome picture. I've gotta say that it's one of my faves and I'm so glad I found it.

Poker is a game that continues to escape my abilities of playing cards. The only card games I'm really adept at are cribbage, hearts, whist, and war. Well, go fish, too, but that's only when I play with my son. Never cared for Bridge; too complicated for my taste. Poker requires betting, strategy, and the ability to bluff, none of which are skills I'm very good at with cards. Maybe you will have to teach me the basics of poker some day. In the meantime, I just don't understand America's recent fascination with poker. Watching a poker game on television is - to me - like watching golf, bowling, or curling. I just don't get it. Unless you're doing any of these things, they just don't seem like spectator sports to me.

I love Curling. I love Women's Curling most. I can't wait for the Ladis of Curling calendar!

Yes, indeed, Vince McMahon got his head shaved. I like Bobby Lashley, and think McMahon is carrying his mania a bit too far. Merging WWE with ECW certainly sounds like sure-fire money maker, and typical of

McMahon's business acumen, but I don't like his ring persona. When he's interviewed outside of the ring regarding the history of wrestling and certain individuals in the profession, he's an extremely smart, sharp businessman who really knows his business. I will give him credit where it's due: he knows how to milk the audience for the big bucks. No doubt about that.

The Donald Trumpo thing was a brilliant idea to get mainstream press. There's talk that Vince is workign on another mainstream celeb, one with a trouble recent past, in an angle this summer. If it happens, it'll be big!

Besides, this bald look might catch on. It certainly gives him a more manic appearance. "Vince- - *wheeze* go to the dark side *wheeze* together we can *wheeze* rule the universe!"

wheeze-hack!-sputter-wheeze

Oh that's just wrong!

In one of your responses to Eric Mayer, you might have nailed the hammer on his head. It is probably true that most fans think of con-going as the main activity of fandom, when in historical accuracy, it is not. As fans' ability to travel about the country improved, and the numbers of fans increased, gatherings of fans became



inevitable. Clubs and cons were a natural progression. But historically speaking, it was the correspondence between fans via letters and zines that originally linked fans.

AM I right that Forry is to blame? That modern fandom arose from a letter he sent to someone whose address he found in a ProZine in the late 20s? I know I've read that somewhere, but I can't remember where.

I do love attending cons for the same reasons you do, Chris: I love to talk zines with people, and thoroughly enjoy meeting people I have corresponded with for years. Cons are great, no doubt about it. Yet there is still an indefinable joy that comes when I get a zine, a loc, or some contribution in the regular mail or via e-mail. It is so much fun being in

contact with other fans that I really get a charge out of any kind of contact with them. This is, essentially, why so many of us have remained in fandom for so long. We enjoy the contact with each other. 'Nuff said.

I must admit that there's a certain wild thrill when I check the mailbox here at work and there's a new zine from Mark Plummer, or the Chunga guys, or the PLOKTA Cabal, or the most recent FAPA mailoing, but there's little like getting to sit down and gab with the folks too...espeically if it's over BBQ ribs!

Are you serious that Wade Boggs - the Boston Red Sox Hall-of-Famer - might be a nephew of Redd Boggs, former member of the old Minneapolis Fantasy Society? That would be neat, if it's true.

This may be a fannish legend, or it may be true. I first heard it years ago, back around 1990 or so.

I think all I will say about your "Collective Nouns" article is that yes, indeed, the English language is one big, honking, confused jumble of words. As much as I love teaching it, sometimes I sit in awe of the international students in my class whose primary language is so dissimilar from English, and yet here they are working their butts off to master a language that is quite

possibly the most difficult language in the world to learn.

Oh. You were promoting a collective noun for “zombies.” Lessee... Zombie = singular; zombies = plural. Zomboni? Naw... Only if it was a hockey team of all zombies. I will get back to you on this one.

Maybe.

Our dear friend Barbara Haddad-Johnson suggested a SHable or a Lurch. I like Lurch. I think I'll stick with that.

San Jose is changing, eh? You make it sound so interesting and exciting. Since Corflu will be there in four years time, I am positive that it will be ready for us. The rest of your article here was quite interesting, and I think I remember that documentary, “The Town That Was.” So terribly sad to hear of a city/town dying, and of the reasons for it happening. My hometown of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, has gone through both growth spurts and attrition, and seems to be in a preservation kick recently. Too bad Centralia, PA can't be preserved. Then again, thanks to that mine fire, it certainly doesn't sound safe. How odd to think of an American city as a footnote in history. Someday we all will be, I guess. Still, a most sombering thought.



Looking through the Wikipedia entry, there's a lot of stuff based on Centralia. I must learn more! You'll get to know San Jose when you're out here for CorFlu...or else!

Oh, shit.... yet *another* Garcia-zine? Most of us can't keep up with just one zine put out by you, let alone your apazines, et al. You truly are insane, you know that?

I try to keep busy!

Great art on the last page. Loved it!

And that's a wrap. Take care of yourself, roomie.

All the best,

John Purcell

Thanks much, John!

Art this issue

All the photos from page 9 onwards were taken in Sonoma by Genevieve Collonge this past weekend. You can see more in SF/SF.

The cover strip is from B.S. by Gerver and Montverde. It's a great strip and when I saw it I had to use it.

The two drawings were from Asimanga and Banzchan. Good folks all.

I'm not sure who did the MagiCon logo, but Arnie Katz swears it was the best WorldCon Ever!

The girl on the Vespa is hot, isn't she?

