

The Drink Tank



Issue 144

GARCIA@COMPUTERHISTORY.ORG



OK, last issue opened a little heavy with that Racism piece from Frank Wu. This issue opens much lighter with a food piece from Frank Wu. There's a reason the man nearly made the Best Fan Writer Hugo ballot!

11 RANDOM THOUGHTS ABOUT FOOD BY FRANK WU

1. A chocolate dessert should be so dense a neutrino can't pass through it.
2. I like Chinese restaurants 'cos I can eat from more different phyla (animal groupings) there. You can

get Chordata (chicken, beef, pork) anywhere. Same for Mollusca (mussels, squid, clams) or Arthropoda (shrimp, lobster, crab). Anywhere. But in a Chinese restaurant you can also often get Echinodermata (sea cucumber). You might even find Cnidaria (jellyfish). The latter will become more common as we eat up all the fish in the ocean in their niches are filled with jellyfish. We know the ecology's gone really downhill when they start serving McJellyfish sandwiches at McDonald's.

2a. (Corollary) Eat as much fish and shrimp as you can now, before they're all gone.

3. At one point, I thought it was the epitome of cool to read Allen Ginsberg's "A Supermarket in California" in a supermarket in California. Luckily, I'm much better now.

4. Supermarkets are one of the places in America where you aren't allowed to take photographs.

5. How to talk to girls at grocery stores. A guy saw a girl with a package of mac and cheese and a Snickers bar in her basket. "Is that your dinner?" he asked. "Yes," she said. "We can do better than that," he said. And they did, because supermarkets are the new meat markets.

LET'S
ANTHROPOMORPHIZE
FOOD!



6. My parents are Chinese. Every once in a while my dad would bring home some animal part of other that most Americans avoid (kidneys, tongue, intestines) and declare it a delicacy. I suppose if you have a billion mouths to feed, every part of the animal is considered yummy.

7. One of my favorite games is the Chinese Grocery Store Game. You go into a Chinese grocery store and everybody gets 10 minutes to find the grossest thing they can. One time the winner was Frozen Snake Head Chunks. One time it was a shrink-wrapped styrofoam tray holding meat labeled, simply, "Pork." As if the butchers didn't even know what part of the animal it was. One time I found a paper package that had cool pictures of centipedes on it. All the writing on it was Chinese, which I can't read. I thought it was maybe centipede poison, and I asked my dad to confirm this. He said, no, it was actually dried centipedes, which you constitute and drink like a tea. The packet listed dozens of ailments it was meant to cure. Dried centipedes. We have a winner!

8. I guiltlessly eat at Chinese restaurants because I know every dollar I spend there is going straight into someone's college fund.

9. A salad should have at least 13 ingredients. There are few things more disappointing than a restaurant salad made of a couple brown flakes of lettuce and a few slivers of flavorless tomato. No, a salad should be overflowing with things like: mixed greens, baby spinach, broccoli, cucumber, red and yellow peppers (green peppers are too bitter and there should be nothing bitter in a salad, lest the meatatarians be discouraged), croutons (for saltiness), cheese chunkettes (all pieces of everything big enough for people to pick out their dislikes), celery, red onion (mostly for decoration since few eat them), dried cranberries and raisins (the sweetness tricking the meatatarians to keep eating salad), and unfragged walnuts (for meatiness). Now, that's a salad. The salad celebrates the bounty of the earth given unto us. The salad declares the glory of God.

10. Some physicists say that time is

JUDITH MOREL'S RULES OF COOKING; ALWAYS WEAR SHOES. NEVER MIX MINT WITH CITRUS UNLESS THERE IS YOGHURT INVOLVED. AVOID COOKING WITH ANYTHING ALIVE UNLESS IT IS LOBSTER. NEVER COOK STEAKS WELL DONE. CHOP ONIONS FIRST. YOU REALLY DO NEED FOUR DIFFERENT TYPES OF FLOUR. WASH HANDS AFTER HANDLING PORK OR CHICKEN AND BEFORE HANDLING MUSHROOMS. LISTEN TO ALTON BROWN. BUTCHERS KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING. NEVER TOUCH A CROCK-POT.

running backwards, so you should eat dessert first.

11. You must respect the effort entailed by a dessert choice, and your selection finalized only after appropriate deliberation. No, you are not being annoying if you ask for something special, like the chocolate wafers arranged vertically like the strongholds of a medieval fortress in the moat of caramel, complete with crenelations of strawberry and little flags of candied almonds. The waiter will be amused by your cleverness and the chef will appreciate your interest in his work. And when the miniature fortress of delictitude arrives, with extra flaming candles and sparklers you didn't anticipate, you will hear others utter the sweetest words of all: "I should have ordered that!"



And Now, eMailed Words of Comment from Steve Green!

Hi Chris,

I remain a mite guilty about foisting that dreadful illustration by Rob Leifeld upon your readership, but I do believe it made my point for me: Leifeld needs to be slapped with a restraining order preventing him from coming within fifty feet of a crayon.

Very good point, but when it comes to crimes against comics, Jim Lee and Todd McFarlane are far more guilty

Frank Wu's trawl through the sewers of racist invective was unpleasant, but scarcely surprising. Similar slime proliferates across the 'net, and I regret to add that most I encounter originates in the US. This may be the result of an economic bias - after all, there are more US citizens with web access than, say, African or Eastern European - but I suspect the rot goes far deeper.

All Best

-- Steve

I've noticed that the worst Americans tend to be more generally racist (You're differ'nt 'an me!) while some the really vile posters tend to be Brits (against Pakistanis), Australians (against Aborigines or Asians) or Dutch (against Muslims). It's strange that it tends to break down like that on the boards I read.



I haven't written much about TAFF in the pages of The Drink Tank for a while, and so I shall fill this little space with a little TAFF junk.

I'm still running and it's still fun!

I didn't have the WorldCon this year like I did last, but I've got Silicon to go and pass around the love. Ribbons, poster boards return, and a lot of fun stuff! It's the last con I'm going to before the end of voting (damn money!) and it's not too big, but I'll enjoy myself and get some more TAFF exposure!

Artificial Intelligence is a tough sell. The eggheads have been working on the same set of problems for the last 50 or so years. They failed to win at chess (mostly because they realized that Brute Force was really the answer) and they only really succeeded when they started working with pattern and series recognition and the Web came about and started using algorithms that were invented at AI labs across the world. Artificial Intelligence hasn't made it to the point where machine translation is any better than it was in 1995, we haven't gotten but 8 emotional states recognisable by robots like Kismet! It's a travesty.

One of the greatest challenges is getting a computer to pass the Turing Test. Here's how it works: you get a pair of terminals. On one side you put a researcher and on the other you put either a computer with a programme running or a real person. You then have a bunch of 'conversations' and the researcher has to figure out who is real and who is computer. If he can not do so, that computer has passed the Turing Test. A lot of programmes have succeeded at passing a limited Turing Test, but no machine has ever gone all the way. There was a bounty put out for the first person to create a machine that passes a complete Turing Test. I believe it's up around 15 million



pounds right about now. That's right, thirty million bucks plus. Good money for a single test.

I believe there's still an annual test and every year it gets closer but it never really gets all the way there.

There's this thing called Second Life. It's a multi-player world where

you can buy and sell stuff, build houses and on and on. It's kinda like a complex version of The Sims played with millions of other peoples around the world. It's pretty complex, but you can interact with people, chat, buy and sell stuff, the works.

This is the perfect place for a Turing Test.

Now, there've been people who have hooked up Eliza to their IM service. The program makes it seem like you're talking to a psychologist. It asks you simple questions, makes it appear like it's trying to understand you and uses key phrases to make it seem like it's really talking to you. The fact that people will often wonder whether or not they're really talking to the person who usually uses the handle. My friend Bobby used the technique after I told him he should try it and I was fooled once or twice.

Second Life is the perfect place for the Turing Test. You simply have to program all sorts of things in to the program and it won't be easy. Language recognition, pattern rec between several different kinds of things, learned behavior, multi-level cultural understanding, none of that is easy.

Still, 30 million's a lot of money and someone could do it!

OK, I have to admit it: I love Soviet Kitsch. I went around looking for a Communist Party piece (and found the one that was on the cover of the last issue) and I found so much of the stuff that I had to do a little thing in this issue.

This here is the best of Soviet Pin-up and humor art. I admit it, and they'll probably take away my membership in the Ronald Reagan Lovers Fan Club, that Soviet design has it all over what we in America were doing in the 50s and 60s. It was so clean and cool!

And so, here is the best of Soviet Glam and Pin-Up!

Pieces are from Shinigamigirl (<http://shinigamigirl.deviantart.com/>), Domnx (<http://www.domnx.com/>), Kirsty Carter (<http://avalyna.deviantart.com/>), DeathChicks (<http://taintedart.deviantart.com/>) JoEllen aka lillyxandra (<http://www.firefly-path.net/>), Dan Glas (<http://theguitarfighter.deviantart.com/>), Katy Ide (<http://jaderelic.net>), Will Radik (<http://optic-echo.deviantart.com/>), GothFox (<http://www.gothfox.com>), ED (<http://remotelylame.sectumsempra.net>), haikuninja (<http://haikuninja.deviantart.com/>) and SixGunSalute (<http://remotelylame.sectumsempra.net>)



КОЖА-БЯТО-ТИНЪ





**YOU'VE GOT TO APPRECIATE THE
LOOK OF A WOMAN WITH A HAM-
MER AND SICLE. I MEAN, TYPICALLY
I WANT TO FUCK THEM BOTH!**

-M LLOYD



От России с любовью!



**IN MOSCOW, WE ALL WANTED
TO SLEEP WITH THE OLD GUARD
GIRLS.**

-JAY CRASDAN



THE COOL RUSSIAN BABES ALL DRESSED IN THE OLD HATS AND COATS WITH SHORT SKIRTS AND NO BRAS. IT WAS LIKE MY DREAMS MADE REAL.

-SABEAN MOREL



***IN SOVIET UNION, GIRLS
PIN-UP YOU!***

-CHRIS GARCIA (AFTER YAKOV SMIRNOFF)



★ RESISTANCE ★



THE BEST THING ABOUT THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION WAS THE FETISHIZATION OF ALL THINGS OLD SOVIET. YOU COULD SLAP A RED STAR ON A NUDE CHICK, JACK UP THE PRICE AND GUYS WOULD HIT IT LIKE A MAC TRUCK.

-CHRIS GARCIA



MAYBE IT'S ALL THAT RED. I MEAN, I CAN'T THINK ABOUT RED WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT SEX. AND STARS! I MEAN, YOU SEE STARS WHEN THINGS GET GOOD. AND THERE'S GOLD. GOLD EQUALS MONEY, MONEY EQUALS POWER AND YOU WANNA FUCK THE POWERFUL, RIGHT?

-M LLOYD

Hey, how about another LoC, this time from the man in Texas...John Purcell!!!

So take a letter, Garcia (doo-doo-doo-dah-dah)
Feed a copy to the fish; (bop-bop-bop-ba-wah-dop)
Make a copy for my lawyer,
Gotta start the next ish....

Scans much better than your version to me, doesn't it? But anyway, it's time for yet another loc to yet another issue of The Drink Tank, that long-running Hugo-Losing fanzine of renown.

Good lyrics. I tried to find a cute fish image, but a squid was close enough.

Interesting cover photo. It makes me wonder what it all means, especially the cartoonish touch of the big black X denoting a closed eye. Maybe this fellow was run over by the Garcia fanzine express. That would explain a lot of things about this picture.

Never look for explanations for the things I run. You'll spend your life looking for something that isn't there, a fannish Lost Dutchman's Mine if you ask me.

Frank Wu's excerpt-article about prejudice and bias in America is sadly true. There is still, and will always be, racism in this country despite the



gains that education and the efforts of civil rights leaders have brought. I believe that a large part of the problem is that the comments on YouTube are mostly from teenagers and uneducated young adults who still have yet to learn the value of an open-mind, and have not yet been exposed to the dialog of

higher education. When I bother to read any of the comments on YouTube (which is very rare) I notice the same things that Frank does: rampant foul language, extremist views, and very, very little real dialog between people. This is possibly because the Internet is giving our culture the chance to vent without thought; anyone with an Internet hookup can put in their two-cents worth and hide behind the anonymity of a false name.

I've always maintained that you can't educate the hate out of people. It's an evil vibe that we can never truly get rid of without doing some terrible things to all Americans.

This is not good for America. If anything, it is this kind of one-way dialog that is destroying the efforts of many fine and noble people who have fought so hard to preserve the rights of people. How ironic is it that those who dedicated their lives to the preservation of the rights of the persecuted to have a voice are having their work used by many ill-educated, unknowledgable people to say whatever they feel like saying. (Did that sentence make sense? In re-reading it, I think it does, so I'm gonna let it stay as is.) One thing that I have learned first-hand in college classrooms is that the more you learn and discuss viewpoints, allowing for opposing views and developing rhetorical skills, is that a person can

begin to see, maybe even understand, where someone else is arguing from. Argument is not about brow-beating somebody else to accept your view. Far from it. Argument is all about making rational statements, logically supporting them, and listening intelligently to what others have to say.

But are rational statements on the subject any better. The claim of American Black inferiority can be 'backed' with some very strong numbers (such as test score averages and arrest statistics) and there's a lot of ways to support an argument against a number of minorities as being damaging to the over-all health of various economies. Same thing goes for White folks being controlling and evil devils. Do those slanted stats makes their arguments any less racist? I'm not saying we shouldn't talk about these issues, they are important, but there needs to be a realistic method of discussion without the stupidity of racial name-calling.

Unfortunately, as these assorted YouTube comments prove, the Internet is not a controlled environment like the college classroom. And also unfortunately, a lot of these commenters do not, as Frank said, practice "self-editing". People can spew on the Internet with reckless abandon. It is my contention that they



don't regret the idiotic, potentially destructive things they say because they're being made anonymously. It is a pretty sad situation.

Well, there is such pressure to hide this sort of thing, it would make sense to keep it beneath the surface and fake names and private-ish nature of comment boards make it possible to vent there. Not a good thing, in fact it's a terrible thing, but I can see why it happens.

I don't know if Frank's slippery slope hypothesis will come true: "If this lies beneath, will it burst to the surface in uncontrolled violence and mayhem?"

Maybe not. But, I do agree that these comments are indeed quite unsettling and worthy of investigation.

Very true.

Onward to Boobs, Wrestling, and stories about drinking. Well, at least about wrestling.

Ric Flair has always been a colorful figure in the ring, and even though I never really cared for some of his antics, I think he's always been a class act and deserves his popularity. He will be missed from the ring, but we can expect him to have a hand in the till for many more years. Heck, he's only 58 years old! Man, I sure hope I could have that kind of build and energy level when I hit 58. Godspeed, Ric Flair!

I hope I look that good when I'm 38! OK, maybe not so leathery, but he's still got some definition.

"John for DUFF", eh? So far you are the only person who has picked up on my musings about maybe standing for DUFF in a couple years. My inquiries to correspondents Down Under have resulted in one definite Aussie nominator. As I think about this more over the next couple years, my commitment to this may increase or decrease. But I will let you know. Maybe you could be one of my North American nominators? We shall see how things stand when we get into 2009.

I'm nominating you whether you want me to or not! John for DUFF!

Hey, you've got Steve Green on board as a columnist! Nice job, roomie! And it is a good beginning, too. I don't have much to say, but we'll see him again in many more issues.

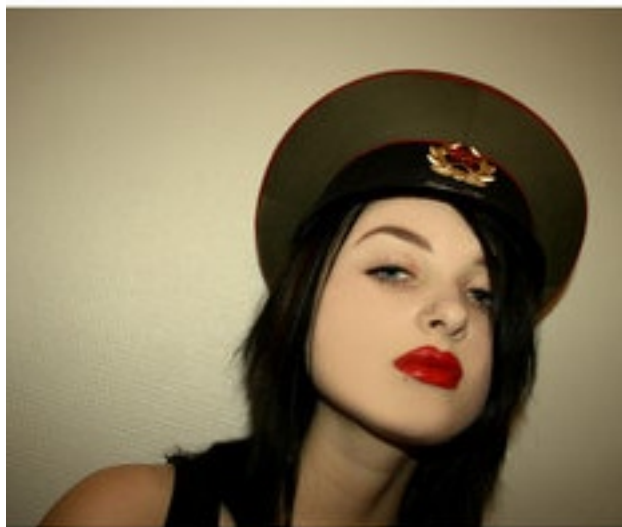
I'm so glad I can feature his writing. I'm always glad to have another voice in the pages of my little train wreck.

That's all I can natter on for now. See you again, roomie.

All the best,
John Purcell

PS: In case you're interested, this is loc #150 of 2007. Man, these suckers add up!

Number 150! I'm probably around 50 or so, though maybe a few more. I don't have all these GarciaZines to kick around!



Fannish Memory Syndrome ***Steve Green***

To Manchester, for the city's eighteenth annual Festival of Fantastic Films. Ann and I have been regulars since 1992, when the driving force behind the event was veteran sf fan Harry Nadler, previously responsible – along with Chuck Partington, his co-editor on the fanzine *Alien* – for setting up the Delta Science Fiction Film Group, a tiny gathering of movie enthusiasts which met above a chip shop in Kersal and produced a couple of shorts for the 1965 worldcon (among them the satire *Breathworld*, with a cameo from Harry Harrison).

Sadly, Harry left us in 2002, but that motley crew of cinephiles is still remembered through the Festival's annual Delta Film Award, presented to the best amateur movie shown over the weekend. I joined the panel of judges in the early 1990s and stepped forward to become its administrator in late 2004, when it became blindingly apparent some kind of selection process had to be instituted if those of us sitting in judgement were to retain our sanity. (Among the final straws was an brain-numbingly tedious post-apocalypse memoir narrated in monotone whilst the "director" drove around Derby with a camera glued to his dashboard.)

The shake-up has led to regular

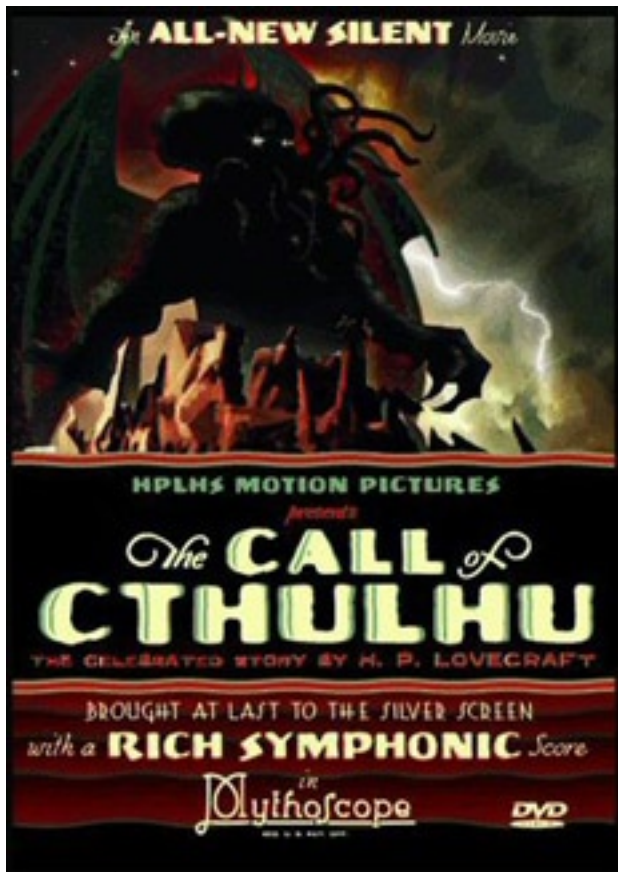
gatherings at Chez Green each summer, jokingly dubbed "the Olton Fantastic Film Festival" and usually featuring appearances from old friends Ray Holloway (another of the Delta judges) and Joel Lane. Whilst I'll have excised much of the real dross by this point (pointless *Star Trek* rip-offs, psychological "thrillers" which neither engage the mind nor boost the heartbeat, laughable zombie videos), there always remains a hardcore of material over which my thumb still hovers with uncertainty. By opening the selection process up to input from other enthusiasts, I also ensure the final line-up won't simply reflect my own prejudices (including an appalling predilection for "whimsy", according to Ray).

We have, inevitably, become a victim of our own success. The 2006 winner was *Eddie Loves You*, an hilarious horror-comedy from British director Karl Holt, but the runners-up included entries from Spain and the United States (the latter being the terrific *Call of Cthulhu*, an unmissable silent movie which imagines how Lovecraft's mythos would have translated to 1920s cinema). This year, more than fifty films landed in my hallway, from film-makers in Finland, South Africa, Eire and at least a half-dozen other countries.

The shortlist eventually comprised a "lucky thirteen", ranging from Jean Luc Baillet's surreal fantasy *Contretemps*

(our winner) through Helmi Yusof's eco-chiller *Flyer* (produced with the support of the Singapore Film Commission and a worthy recipient of the judges' "Highly Commended" certificate).

The true horror, of course, is that I no sooner returned from this year's FFF than the gears began to turn and the next competition loomed over the horizon. But to be frank, I wouldn't want it any other way.



The 19th Festival of Fantastic Films will be held in Manchester on 17-19 October 2008. Full details at the official website: <http://fantastic-films.com/festival/>.



And of course, Alex took this wonderful picture of Linda and me at the Golden Gate Renn Faire. It's good stuff!

Art this issue, other than the Russian stuff, is from Bea Hawkins, Dave Diveccio, Lisa Lee, Roe, Khaaaaaaan!, Natasha Kolova-Rana (I may be butchering that name, but she's a great gal!), Dave Steiner, Fish, Fil Moreno and Don.

Next issue will be one of two things: a shorty before Silicon where I ramble with the help of friends like Spring Schoenhuth, or I might wait a week and write a post-Silicon wrap-up about it. I dunno. Either way, it'll be sooner than you think!

Corset issue needs more stuff and I'll be talking about the big Cross-over that will be Annual #3!