

The Drink Tank Issue 159: Out of My Hidey-Hole



And here I am, in my first CostumeCon meeting, listening to Kevin Roche make things happen. I'm excited, very much so, that I get to work for Kevin who is one of my favourite people in the whole world, and that the con has come together in so many ways. I wish I could have done more up to this point as the Toastmaster, but I'm ready to take things up and run with them.

What are my duties? Well, I either have to MC each Masq or work with the person who is MCing them. I'm making a list of things that every MC needs to know. There's the classic set of things: meet every entry and make sure you know how to pronounce their name and their entry. I made the mistake of not doing that with one of the contestants for the BayCon 2005 Masq that I was MCing. The young lady came out and I introduced her as Ave (rhymes with Blave). The young lady came out in a lovely dress and knelt and started singing which is when I realized that her entry was actually title Ave (rhymes with Mojave, as in Ave Maria) and I started busting up. Gotta avoid that. The other things are make sure you've got water to sip during entries because there's nothing worse than hurting your voice in the early going and having no water to remoisten yourself. Also, having a couple of anecdotes to lean on just in case there's an unexpected pause. There are a few classics (leading the Audience in a rowsing round of Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes or even recit-



ing the Boy Scout or Hippocratic Oaths) and making sure that you are ready for an little problem.

There are a bunch of ways to dress to make the thing a little more funky. The Tux is a classic. Nothing is better than having a well-dressed person as your MC. The image of Phil Foglio in his Tux MCing the Masqs at WonderCon or WorldCon is one that sticks in my head. Even just a nice suit can make it a little more awesome. Coming up with an outfit that reflects the event can work nicely too. For the Future Fashion show, wearing a costume that's subtly futuristic is a nice touch, but wearing a costume that's all-out isn't a great idea because those tend to be a little difficult to work in and hot (and you're always in the lights which makes things even hotter). Plus, doing an elaborate costume can distract a little

from the rest of the Fashion show. Doing something like the George McFly from the 2000s from Back to the Future 2 is a simple piece that can fit the theme, or even dressing like Edward James Olmos from Bladerunner is another one that could be awesome. The other way is to be nutty. When I did the Masq for BayCon, I wore a suit and a Hawaiian Shirt under it and my Fez (the symbol of the GoHs for BayCon that year) and I announced that I was Entry 0: Evening Wear Jay Lake. That got some laughs, including from Jay himself.

Those are the simple things. The hard ones are the ones where you have no idea what's going on, and that's why I'm the Toastmaster. I'm either prepared to deal with things and I can help folks make things happen.

And after this, I'm off to the Further Confusion meeting. FurCon isn't going to be easy. I'll be working as the head of Science & Technology programming and that includes running the Live Animal show with Leopards Etc.. There was a moment of stress for me when the San Francisco Zoo Tiger attack happened, I wondered what how that would effect the fact that we're going to be showing Lynx, Ocelot and a Puma. Apparently, it has no effect, luckily. I'm building a little screen thing so that the cats can be held from view until they are on display. The other panels are going to be fun too. I'm excited about doing the one about Podcasting. A few folks from Furry Podcasts

have stepped up and I'll be running a workshop about how to do Podcasts yourself. That'll be a fun one. There's a panel about Furry Biotech that should be fun. I'm also very interested in the Science of Dragons which is featuring my buddy Bob Hole. The theme is the Fur East, so having a science panel about the Physics, Chemistry and Biology that would be required to make the Asian Dragon possible. That'll be fun.

The BayCon meeting was last week and I'll be running the Fanzine Lounge and doing Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me during the Masq's Half-Time. I've got a lot of folks I wanna use (Leigh Ann Hildebrand, Todao Tomamatsu, Howard Hendrix, Bob Hole, Jason Schachat, Derek McCaw, Patty Wells, Andy Trembley, etc) and I can only use three panelists, one announcer, someone for Not My Job and maybe one more person. It should be crazy and fun. I'll also be doing a special zine dedicated to Tim Powers, the guy who happens to be one of my favourite writers and will be the Writer GoH. We're hopefully going to get to run a few of his art pieces from old issues of Amra and people like me, hopefully Espana and a few of my friends from LA will have some good articles. I've got one piece that should be rad.

And so, that's the start of my Con working this year. I'm working with the folks for the WorldCon Fanzine Lounge in Denver, which will be a good thing, and I might be the head of the Westercon

Fanzine Lounge, though I haven't heard about that for sure. Should be a crazy year!



TAFF News and Notes

The trip is coming strongly together. I've got the first week pretty much done, and after that, it's a little unclear. I gotta make my way to the North and then head to a Fan Meeting in the midlands for that Friday before I go home.

I'm hoping that I'll get some time to hang with Peter Weston, Pete Sullivan, Bill Burns, Steve Green and others. If folks aren't going to Eastercon, where

I'll be meeting everybody I can. If you're one of those people who won't be at Eastercon and you happen to be one of those folks who'll be around the UK, Scotland or even Wales, lemme know and I'll make sure I can make it.

If you're interested in finding more about the trip in faster time, check my LJ: johnnyeponymous on livejournal.com. That and this here fanzine are the best places. LJ is also one of the areas where pieces that will make up my TAFF report will go on. Also, The Drink Tank will have a couple of pieces, as will Claims Department, my FAPA zine, and The Christopher J. Garcia Show Starring Christopher J. Garcia! which is my SNAPS zine. I'll also be running pieces in other zines, like Askance (which John already asked me about) and Vegas Fandom Weekly and hopefully one for File 770 and a few others if they ask. If you run a zine and would like a chunk, lemme know and I'll give you one.

That's one of my theories. I'll be taking pieces of time (like an hour or two) and sending them out. It might be that there are several paragraphs starting in the middle of a word and continuing until the timeframe ends. That'll make things a bit disjointed, but it should be good for one thing at a time. I'm not thinking that everything will be available in other zines, since I'm thinking 100 pages will probably be about how many I'll run, but you'll get a taste and hopefully that'll work to gain exposure.

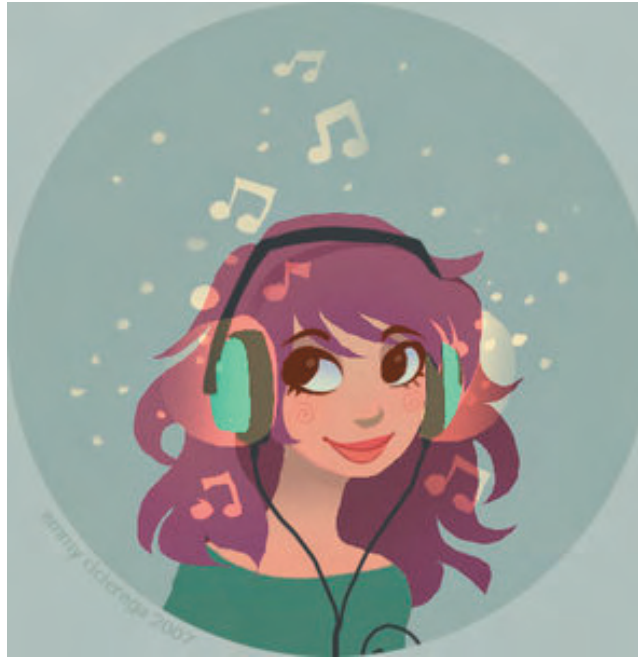
An Idea About Clothing and the Washing of Said Things...

I've been thinking lately about a number of theories that rise from my regular, semi-regular and irregular life. One such thing is washing and drying the clothes afterwards. I've found a few things out while experimenting with the washing of clothing in the common laundry zones. Here's the theory and why it makes sense.

One: wash as normal, use 10-20% less than the recommended amount because really, you need less than the amount they list. I did an experiment years ago and I discovered that there's no difference between using the full amount and even 75% percent of the listed amount. Below that, it doesn't work on real hard stains. I tend to go with 90 percent if I'm using the cheap stuff and 80% is I'm using the real Tide/Cheer/All/Gain/Etc. brand. Once you're finished with that, then you throw everything into the dryer.

And I do mean throw.

You see, I've got a theory that's seems to have worked out. It works through the idea that the spin cycle makes things happen. It packs the clothing into a hollow cylinder that is packed two or three items thick. Now, during the wash cycle, things will be mingled and most of the smaller items will be pushed and mixed with the bigger items. Entanglement of socks and underwear within pants and shirts (and especially



towels) is so frequent that I'd say it's 1/3 of all items. The spin cycle is terribly important to the drying process, though it can't bring clothing to a completely dry state. A good spin cycle (roughly 20% of the total wash time) will cut your dryer time roughly 30%, which is significant, but the fact that things are spun together and 'caked' means that the time to dry is still higher than it should be. Even with the tumbling action, items can remain caked into the chunks they were spun into well into the wash cycle. That means that only the outer shell of the chunk is being dried in that period. Now, mostly the outer items are the large pieces with the smaller items clung like ramora to-bottom, which will allow them to fall off as the tumbling and drying happens. The items that managed to embed them-

selves into the inside of pants legs or within shirts can stay in there through much more of the cycle. For those of us that pull our pants off along with our underwear and throw the mass into the clothesbin, that can lock the pieces together for the entire cycle, making the pieces much thicker, leading to longer drying times and the potential of removing pieces without them being fully dry. That's a problem, though most drying times are long enough to deal with that.

And that leads to the throwing. If the clothes are thrown three things happen that assist in the drying process. The first thing is that by throwing the objects, there is up to a second of extra high velocity drying that's going to make things go faster, even if it's just a millionth of a second. That tiny amount of free drying will give you an advantage and it might just make the difference.

In addition, there's the matter of gravity. Gravity will tend to drag all items towards the centre of the Earth. That means that the items will travel in something of an arc, which means that you'll get even more time of free drying. Throwing in an arc is probably less accurate, but it's also the most drying. Go figure.

The last one is the impact. That moment when it strikes is majorly important. It first helps to break up the clumps. While yes, if the smaller pieces are on the side that impacts into the dryer will be driven into the larger items

that are on top of them, but they will be rearranged and the items will actually come apart more easily when the tumbling starts. This will help by shocking the smaller pieces that are trapped in the inner section and then will certainly come out easier in the cycle. with the pieces more broken up, the drying will happen faster.

So, that's my theory. I think it'll win me the Nobel Prize in Physics at some point. I hear it's getting easier now that most of the great big discoveries have been awarded.



Letter Graded Mail

Sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org

By my Gentle Readers

Let's start with our friend Eric Mayer!

Chris,

Hey, this issue's all politics. Real politics then fan politics. I'd better just watch what I say. Well, naw.....

As far as the US elections go, no one I vote for ever wins and the candidates I like never have a chance. One year, when the democratic candidate for Pennsylvania Attorney General was staunchly anti-abortion rights, I voted for the Libertarian. I think we really could use Libertarian Attorney Generals. Needless to say I'm in favor of any candidate who sees UFOs. And I don't see how Hillary being "vetted" will make any difference since the right wing propaganda machine just manufactures dirt if it can't find any.

Well, I've always been in the party that Ron Paul runs in, which was the Libertarian originally and now the Republican. Maybe this time my vote for him won't make me a loony, but I fear that's still not the case.

"A Corflu Carol" struck me as protesting too much. Apparently Cheryl's piece stung more than I would've thought since it didn't seem very well focused. I'm not sure why this was run anonymously since the author's identity isn't a secret in certain circles. I'm assuming it wasn't

sent to you anonymously.

I don't read any mailing lists so I haven't heard anything on that front.

I find it hard to believe the author actually meant to say what the article seems to say. Maybe it's a case of writing that will be understandable, in the sense it is supposed to be understood, to a particular audience but not to a wider audience, which is definitely either a trap or a desirable feature of fanwriting, depending on one's point of view.

That's true of a lot of the Drink Tank, or so I've been told by many...

Look, for example, in regards to Corflu present if you wanted to convince me to absolutely avoid sf conventions and stick to electronic fanac you couldn't do much better than to describe a con featuring arm wrestling. I mean, why would a writer want to stick to communicating in words when he could be...uh...arm wrestling? What kind of an argument is that? What really puzzles me is the clear message (perhaps not intended but the message conveyed) is that the form of fanac (preferably paper) is more important than the substance, which is nonsense. ***Folks seem to know my position (that all FANAC has to be judged on its value to those who participate in it) and that form is nowhere near as important as the fact that fans are a part of it.***

Granted, collectors of the future won't be able to buy and sell blogs, say, but is that a bad thing? (It kind of an-

noys me when people sell stuff they were given. They have the right but it doesn't seem in the spirit of the thing.) Those fans of the future who are interested in the writing and artwork will still be able to see electronic zines online, or in some other electronic format. The difference will be that the work we are putting in electronic format will be available more widely, for free. No one will have to outbid everyone else at an auction. Those of us who can't afford to collect rare paper copies won't be dependent on the good graces of collectors willing to scan stuff and put it online. So the idea that poor Emcit would be crying because her writing turns out not to be worth as much to a collector as a paper fanzine strikes me as just plain wrong. I don't agree that we should value a fanzine by how much money it will bring in at auction someday.

That's a point I didn't find myself when I read it, but I can kinda see now that you mention it. Then again, I didn't see that I was being painted as a mindless acolyte as Andy Trembley described my (at least I think I'm DT Khris) appearance in the piece!

Mind you, I understand the concept of the fanzine as a physical art form. I did several issues of Groggy entirely with a hectograph and continued to hecto covers for years. But if I could have chosen I would much preferred to have communicated with more people than I was able to via paper and so today I stick to

electronics. And believe me if I came back years from now and saw collectors shelling out \$5,000 for someone's paper zine while fans were reading my stuff that was still sitting around online for free (which I'm sure they won't be...) I'd smile.

Can't argue with you on that point one bit, actually.

Anyway, I suspect that the author of this didn't really intend to say what was said. For example, I would value the writing of Willis more highly than most writing (which perhaps was more the point to be got at?) but not because it happened to be on paper, nor would I describe its "value" in a monetary sense. Yet these are the only characteristics mentioned. Would the author value an electronic version of Willis more highly than a paper copy of Emcit's work? If so then why all the carry on about paper? If not...well, then I really disagree.

Interesting take overall. I'm still very happy to have a piece where the protagonist is obviously Indian.

Maybe, the problem is, that it is hard to see, when you think about it, what real advantages paper zines have, except that some of us got attached to



the form, which is hardly an argument. Again, to me, words are what matters and words say the same whether in pixels or ink but the pixellated variety are a lot easier to send around.

And that's why rare printed copies of The Drink Tank will fetch upwards of 45 cents when they are auctioned at CorFlu 2025.

To be perfectly honest, I think you've now run two very fuzzily constructed bits of faanfiction in a row, neither of which probably makes whatever points were sought to be made very effectively.

Glad your new place pleases you. I hear what you're saying though about missing places within walking distance. There used to be several restaurants close to where I lived in Rochester, along with various stores, but here in the sticks every place requires a drive.

Best,

Eric

I've got a fridge full of frozen foods, some juice and Capri Suns to keep me

going and enough computing power to put out a zine a week!

Thanks a lot, Eric!

And now, with a Lloyd Penney-like LoC, is, like, Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

Three issues behind, such as it ever was. Time to catch up, yadda, yadda. It's not so much the quantity of writing as much as it is the quantity of art. You must scan DeviantArt and other art sources looking for something sexy and dark. Anyway, here are smartass comments for issues 156, 157 and 158 of The Drink Tank. If anything else (like 159) arrives, I'll tack it on the end.

Ditmar always puts together great artwork. Those are either very large people, or a very small planet.

I'm hoping for a little of both!

As always, the past year was a mixed bag for me. Sounds like yours was the best...you got to run into the lovely Linda, and having someone to share your life with is the best present you can get. Had to move, sure, but I think you've had an easier time of moving than we did last time, and you've got lots of friends to help out. As for me, I thought my employment situation had evened out...not to be. That was a harsh thing to have to deal with, just before Christmas. Oh, well, at least I have work at Panasonic now, at least until mid- or late March.

I think it was one of the best years

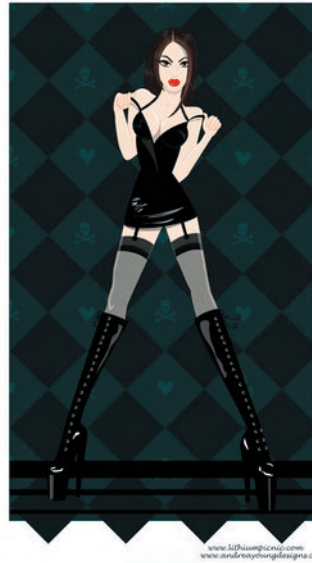
ever. 1997 was a good one too. As was 2005. Glad to hear you and your current Japanese Masters are getting along!

Robert A. Heinlein

is either adored or reviled by many fans. On one hand, there's The Heinlein Society, and he's their patron saint, and then there's folks like Earl Kemp, who couldn't stand him. I liked his early stuff, as did most people, but his later stuff was increasingly sexist and strange. At a few of the space conferences Yvonne and I have attended, there are many space advocates who claim him as their own. There are a couple of Heinlein prizes, one for SF writers and one for space advocates, and this seems to be one reason why the two groups have a lot of overlap.

I still don't like him!

Now, I can read ahead a couple of issues and see who's behind the Barmy Cats/CORPSE Fandom fanfic...oooh, it's Cheryl Morgan! Bad girl! Naughty girl! Any more chapters coming up? _ I know fanfic is a tradition wielded by some... they may now feel the shoe's on the other



foot. Let's see what the reaction is... Best thing is, I don't think she cares a whit about what the reaction is. Perhaps this whole Core Fandom thing is a pot that needs stirring from time to time.

You may be right about that. I thought it was really funny!

157...There's the Smart car. I haven't seen too many of them lately, possibly because of the cold, but businesses like them as company cars because people do look as they go zipping by.

I see one or two of them around here. They look like little toy cars zipping along with the traffic!

More Barmy Cats, and Cheryl Morgan owns up. It's been fun, but so many comedy programmes start with the disclaimer, "Not everyone has the same sense of humour." Let's find out if that also pertains to fandom.

It apparently has, as other than a couple of angry comments, most of the folks who've mentioned it thought it was really funny. I'm kinda shocked by that. Then again, who reads The Drink Tank?

China may become the manufacturing dominant country over the next few years, but I will be one of millions who will avoid any merchandise from China if the quality of the merchandise doesn't improve. There's been too many recalls and too much shoddy workmanship. I'm just afraid that giants like WalMart will be beaten at their own game by a tsunami of cheap consumer

crap coming from China.

I think most of the cheap consumer crap we get from WalMart comes from China. You're allowed to slap a Made in the USA sticker on anything that's finished in the US, so you could do 150 steps in China, but that last line of paint makes it Made in the USA.

You and us and Eric Mayer all seem in to be in the same boat, there's some level of uncertainty in our lives. Money, employment, housing...life shouldn't be this difficult, but it is, and damn that reality from distracting us from the pleasure of life, anyway...

Well, I call it Ebb and Flow, though The Stranger in The Big Lebowski said 'Sometimes you eat the bear, sometimes the bear eats you.'

158...By "vetted", perhaps Hillary Clinton means she's had all her shots? (Her nose is warm and wet?) The rest of the world looks upon American politics as slightly right of Attila the Hun, so anything less right would probably be good for them, and the Bush regime has treated allies like crap over the past 8 years. A fresh start would be good; America needs to make a lot of apologies for Dubya, and a Democrat president would be most likely to do that. My own naïveté may be showing here, but if the two could bury the hatchet, a Clinton-Obama ticket would show the USA in a most progressive light.

I like the sound of Ron Paul /Obama,

but that might be a little too weird for some folks.

More fanfic. Who are we dissing this time? I do think it's all in fun, and inflated egos need a little deflation from time to time; otherwise, they burst. Many years ago, when the Boston in '89 Worldcon bid had an entertaining bid-zine called The Mad 3 Party, there was not one, but two parody issues, and I got skewered both times. And, it was fun.

I'm one of those zanies who love being mocked. I do enough of it myself that it's nice to have someone else taking up the mantel once in a while!

Adobe inDesign seems to be the successor to QuarkXPress. I still have a serviceable version of QuarkXPress, and I can still put out a decent flyer or publication. I had a look at inDesign at one assignment I was at, and while it resembles QXP in some ways, it is extremely detailed, and is definitely a workplace programme.

I think Pagemaker turned into inDesign. I like it because it's very clear and I have the Adobe Suite to play with. I've used Quark, but I never felt comfortable with it. I really should learn it since it's on my new computer too!

Speaking of assignments...I am still at Panasonic, and will probably be there until mid-March. Work ran out at Diageo for Yvonne, and tomorrow, she starts a new assignment, a 1-year maternity leave replacement in accounts pay-

able at DuPont Canada. We think this will be a good assignment, and possibly one she can stay in permanently, so we are thinking happy thoughts. Upcoming...Yvonne's space, science and technology programming at Ad Astra 2008 in March, my doing a fanzine panel with Joe Fillinger and Ken Krieger at Eeriecon 10 in Niagara Falls, NY in April, and then it's a trip to Vegas for Corflu Silver, and some early celebrating of our 25th wedding anniversary. It's going to be a blast this spring, winter can check out now, we're already tired of it. Take care, see you nextish.

I have yet another reason to be upset that I won't be at CorFlu, though as you can see from this issue, I won't be without fun that weekend!

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Thanks, Lloyd!!!

And now, a debut: Katrina Templeton

Hey Chris,

I figure it's only right and fitting that you get my first LOC to a fanzine anywhere, given that you're sorta the reason I've started reading fanzines in the first place. In an LOC response in #146, you mentioned that you didn't think Drink Tank was a good place to start anybody out on fanzines, which I found rather hilarious because that was, indeed, where I first got my start.

Wow, that's weird. I would never have thought that anyone would start off

with the Drink Tank. Of course, my dream is that The Drink Tank will eventually become a gateway zine, in a way.

I'm a neo-fan. Although I joke about 2004's "One Night at Baycon" (in which my friend invited me for a Sunday night), I've counted my involvement in fandom from the 2007 edition of Baycon. I admit to spending all weekend walking past the fanzine lounge and wanting to poke my head in and say "what's a fanzine, anyway?" but I didn't, because I didn't want to look stupid.

No need to have worries about that. We ALL look stupid in the fanzine lounge (except for Leigh Ann. She NEVER looks stupid).

But I was briefly introduced to you when you were standing by the Montreal bid table, and Kevin Standlee referred a question about Montreal your way because you had been there. Somehow, I figured out the connection between you and these mysterious objects called 'fanzines', and applied some Google-fu when I got back to the internet.

Ah Google, is there anything it can't do!

And that is how the Drink Tank ended up as my first fanzine, and from there, well, I've bounced all around efanzines and even joined up with the gang over at eAPA. It's pretty much all your fault. Thank you.

Fantastic! eApa is a group that I really wish I had time to get back into,

but things are just so crazy right now and I'd love to get back and see who's still around and such.

I would have voted for you for TAFF, but the time in fandom requirement disqualified me from voting. However, I was glad when you won, and I can't wait to see what you have to say about the trip.

Well, I'll do my best not to disappoint, Just remember: no matter who you are or how long you've been in fandom, you can always support the fund! One thing that I really believe in is getting folks who we wouldn't normally think of to come along and join up in the fan that is the fund. Yeah...I was stretching to make that one work.

Anyway, keep up the good work. I always find something interesting in your 'zines, and I don't expect that will change any time soon. And at the coming Baycon, I won't be afraid to poke my head into the fanzine lounge.

-kat

(aka Katrina Templeton)

And we will be happy to have ya join us! You know, nothing says you appreciate a zine more than sending an article to the editor! And of course, if you go on to become that one in a million fan, I'd be able to say it's all my fault!

Thanks for writin' in. I'll try to keep things up in quality for ya.



“Paint the sky with stars”

Health Notes from Finland

M's health has been improving of late, as she recently sent me a letter of disgust over something I wrote on ZineWiki. Her Cancer is in some sort of remission, which is good.

SaBean's doing well too...especially since she's pregnant! Several of us, including SaBean, believed that she wasn't able to have kids, but now, there you go! She's do right around Westercon.

And now, with a preemptive LoC on the issue you're reading, Mr. Frank Wu!

Hey Chris!

Great issue! I assume as I've not yet read the articles herein. However, based on your brief descriptions, here is my LoC commenting on this issue. (Instant LoC: just add neepery!)

First off, Congrats to SaBean on her good news. And Chris, please tell her that "Frank" is a really good baby name. ***Sorry Frank, this one's gonna be called Boddington (Jay insists that his kids have liquor names!).***

Congrats again on winning TAFF. I propose that you collect all the fan fund-related jokes that have been circulating recently and submit them to the makers of Laffy Taffy.

I will not dignify that with a response...except to say two TAFF candidates walk into a bar, which is a good thing since you can't have a race with just one!

I've never been to a FurCon or a CostumeCon, but I do have a couple of pieces in the Fashion Folio that the Con is putting out. It's a Japanese Schoolgirl with a backpack that becomes a spider with then wraps its legs around her. I wonder if the typical cinematic Japanese schoolgirl has a shorter life-expectancy than the typical Red Shirt.

Hmmm...sounds like the kind of re-search that can only be discussed

over cans of Jolt Cola and Cheetos.

As far as drying clothes, the best thing to do is to hang them dry, especially shiny shirts, which is something I know a little about. If you hang them to dry- or upon unpacking, wet them and let them dry overnight on a hanger, you'll never have to iron again.

You make it should like some sort of Voodoo Ritual. I'll have to try it.

Anyway, great issue. I really look forward to reading it.

Thanks, Frank! And now, making her Drink Tank debut with a LoC in reference to Frank's Loc, is Miko Simons!!!

Chris- The Dread Pirate Foodbeard

I can't believe the nerve of Frank to write a LoC before the issue comes out. In fact, it has me so astounded and aghast that I have taken charge and written a counter-LoC to Frank's.

While I am sure this issue most likely will be great, there is nothing like potentially jinxing the issue! Smooth move, Frank!

In lieu of the fact that Frank has some designs in the CC26's Future Fash-



ion Folio, and even furthermore that he's taking upon himself to promote his designs, I propose we dress Frank as said Japanese Schoolgirl with the crazy Spiderleg backpack. Who's with me?

I mean, why not? If he's giving bachelor-style laundry advice, what does he truly know about dressing himself! Let me expand, though. Only hang dry woven garments. Flat-dry knits on a towel or else they will sag. Finally, if you hang anything on wire hangers or cheap plastic ones, the shoulders will get pointy creases.

So there, Frank! Schoolgirl outfit, NOW! And get your own sketchbook paper and pen next time! Jeez!

This issue had better be good or else I'll blame Frank for Jinxing it!

Miko

PS: I don't dislike Frank in any way. He just demanded a LoC and in my book, that leaves an open invitation to mild razzing. Love ya!

And so do I!

BSFA Night, with Robert Holdstock, Star Tavern, off Belgrave Sq, London. 23 Jan 08.

By James Bacon

As I got off my train that slowly drawled into London Victoria at a disappointing speed, I knew I would be late, not too late, but all the same late. England doesn't do late, except at train stations and airports, where it is stoically dealt with and I expected that the interview starting time of 7pm would be adhered to.

I walked briskly from Victoria, up to Belgrave Sq, and around behind the grandiose buildings, which are mostly embassies, and just starting down a private street that backs onto Mews I found the Star tavern. Situated strangely, not really on a thoroughfare or main street, somewhat secluded and quiet, it has an olde world look to it. Inside it was busy and I was quickly served.

I travelled up the stairs, and as gently as I could, well for a clumsy oaf, burst in to the hushed private function room, it was OK, as the author was obviously at a key point in reading a poem.

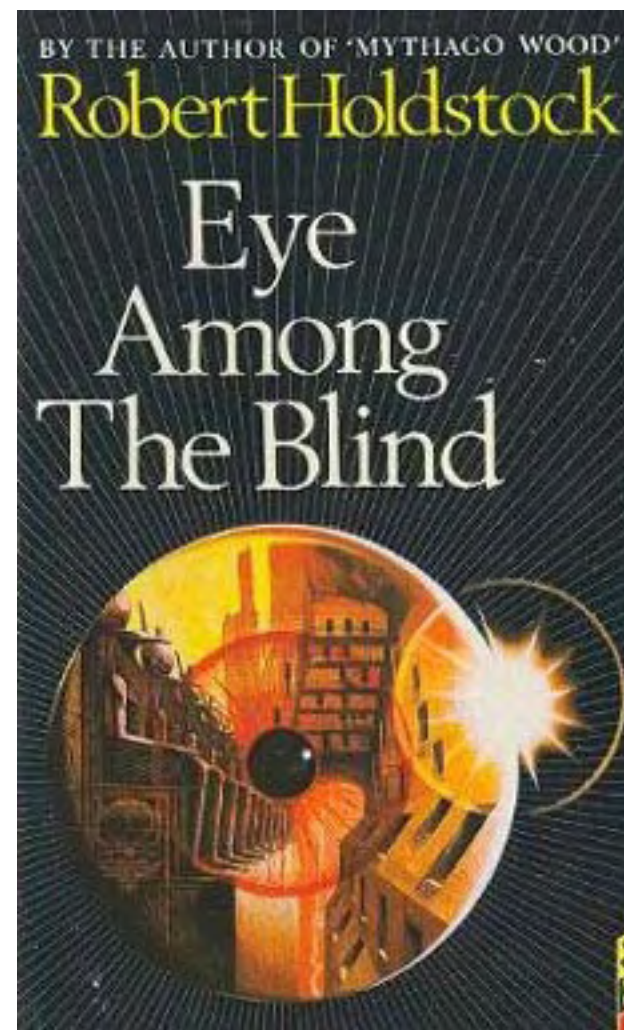
The room, rectangular and small enough, was fairly full. I placed my drink down and listened. I decided to listen openly, rather than with a concerted look or concentrated pose, with my head in my hands for instance, as to be honest, I had missed the beginning of this fantastic poem, which was more like prose really. A break occurred. Edward James (HUGO) beckoned to an empty chair and I darted across the open floor and squeezed snugly into a good spot. There were about 30 people in attendance I reckoned.

It was my second time at the pub, the first was last year, when it was due to be Robert Holdstock talking, but unfortunately he came down with an infection and couldn't make it. I did though, and heard some interesting stuff about the Arthur C Clarke award, that I am still trying to write about, but I left relatively early.

As I sat, Robert gave us another poem. It was smooth in its own way. Then he talked about the influence his grandfather, who the first poem was about, had on him, and his writing. Paul Kincaid was interviewing him, and I could see that Paul was latching cleverly onto this new aspect of Mr. Holdstock's background and I was enthralled to hear about this man's grandfather, who served in World War one and who subsequently had an amazing story to tell.

Robert Holdstock is best known for his *Mythago Wood* series, and Paul asked him about this work. Discussion centred on time, and how as a fantasy writer, Mr. H seemed to be fairly unique in his utilisation of time in his fantasy novels. Time did seem important to Mr. H. And has featured elsewhere in his writings and he admitted to being obsessive about time. He was then drawn on the river that runs through Mythago wood, and I could see that he was surprised about this, as although it probably doesn't feature as strongly for him, one can understand that it would feature to the reader and does.

Paul spoke about Mr. H's early science fiction novels, of which he thinks quite highly. Mr. H said he didn't need to go that far to escape. I expect these novels discussed were *Eye Among The blind*, *Earth Wind* and *Space Wars*, but I cannot be certain. *Necromacer* also got a mention.



I was impressed with the amount of thought and consideration Mr. H was giving to Paul's equally well founded questions. It was obvious that Paul knew what he was talking about, but he also had the angles that he wanted to explore, and was rather happy for Mr H. To wander down a dark alley and rather than turn back, he would expect a further illumination.

There was talk about the Merlin Codex, the most recent of which, *The Broken*



Kings, the third in the series has been released last year. This is an interesting series, and features Jason of Jason and Medea fame, along with Merlin, but importantly to the set up is that Jason's boys are not dead. Apparently this idea came to mind when two young actors, didn't act so well. There is also a sentence to the Argo, which was in itself

something else that Mr. H went into. It is obvious that Mr H's knowledge of myths is unquestionably adept.

The evening's organiser, Tony Keen drew Mr H out on the conceit, that he uses for the codex and others in the audience had some questions. Mr H made mention of his next book, which again is back to *Mythago wood*, and has the working title *Avilon* (I think)

It was over too soon. I could listen quite contently for another couple of hours as these two men spared behind the table at the top of the room. I could also have willingly listened to more poetry, which Mr H. agreed helps to refine his prose, but all good things come to an end.

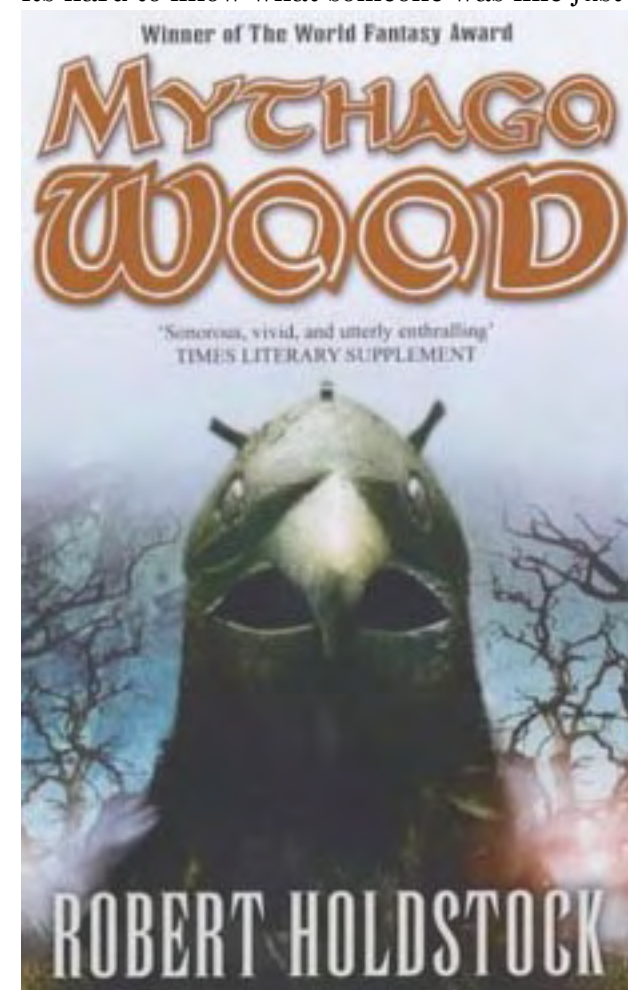
There was a raffle, and I won a book, that is now destined for the charity shop I fear. I spoke to Pete Young about a fanzine

project, Peter Wilkinson gave me some sage advice about sending emails to him, which he can't read online and I heard about the British library as a good place to write a book, by Hugo winning Edward James. Surprisingly there was no talk about the BSFA award shortlist, which had only been published, on Monday, I think, but I forgot to mention it.

I managed to chat with Mr. H for a few moments. We had met when he was guest of honour at Octocon in Dublin in 1994, which was my second convention where I was on the committee and just twenty. I had seen him since but I hadn't seen him for a few years. His wonderful partner Sarah was also in attendance, and I reacquainted myself. He had mentioned that he wants to write a family book, based on his family's history, some of which he had gone into and I was well impressed with this. Apart from the First World war Aspect, it is that he is such an intelligent and thoughtful writer that I am sure it would be a great read. I also liked my own grandfather a lot, and respect that he wants to write about him.

Among the many things we chatted about, we talked about fanzines and fandom. Mr. H. is no stranger to fandom, he along with Malcolm Edwards were involved with the seventies convention Seacon, and he was a writer of a number of pieces for various fanzines, although he moved into professionalism and put the hard work that is fandom behind him, but I know he remained friends, and has since befriended many fans. Fanzines came up and he made mention of Kim Huett's fanzine, *You Only Live Once* which features the work of the late John Brosnan, with whom he was a very good friend.

I liked Brosnan's work, I found him through the pages of *2000AD* where he was a first a film critic and later wrote the *beyond zero* story about a Taxi Driver in Zero City, a rather sordid and unpleasant place, with art by Kev Hopgood. I even had a letter published in the letter coll of the comic complimenting it among other things, quite briefly and of course I loved *SkyLords* trilogy but then airships in a post apocalyptic world just appeals. It was interesting to talk about John, I didn't know him at all, and I find that its hard to know what someone was like just





through their writings, its so nice to have a drink with someone, and I never properly fulfilled this with Mr. Brosnan, though I did meet him just the once.

Too soon it was farewells and everyone took their leave and departed for their own ways.

With the upstairs empty, it was easy to judge its size, I think Nic Farey's lounge in Maryland was probably bigger, but the decor and styling gave it a distinctive, not exactly classical but English pub feel. I bid adieu to Mr H and the delightful Sarah.

This is the last meeting at this venue, in future the pub of choice will be The Antelope which is near Sloane Sq tube station. We'll all be Sloane rangers then, all I need is my Paddington soft hat.

I wandered back to Victoria, and was joined by Tony on his way to the same station. I asked about the way it works, here. It's different you see, England, that is. So very different to the old ISFA meetings, reminiscences of which had flooded back into my brain for some reason, must have been the memories of upstairs rooms in pubs, with ropey decorations. I first attended a night out in a pub when I was fifteen in Dublin.

He explained that it's an academic type thing, where there is a meal afterwards and we talked about how it was different than the full themed evenings of old ISFA

meetings, where someone mad would have followed Mr H., like a tree surgeon or something. I explained that a meal out was a little too bourgeois for my liking, but who I am to ponder these English ways. It works well and I expect I will be along to future meetings,

I complimented him on an excellent evening and got a train to Croydon.

<http://robertholdstock.com/formoreabout> this amazing author.

www.bsfa.co.uk for more info on The British Science Fiction Association.

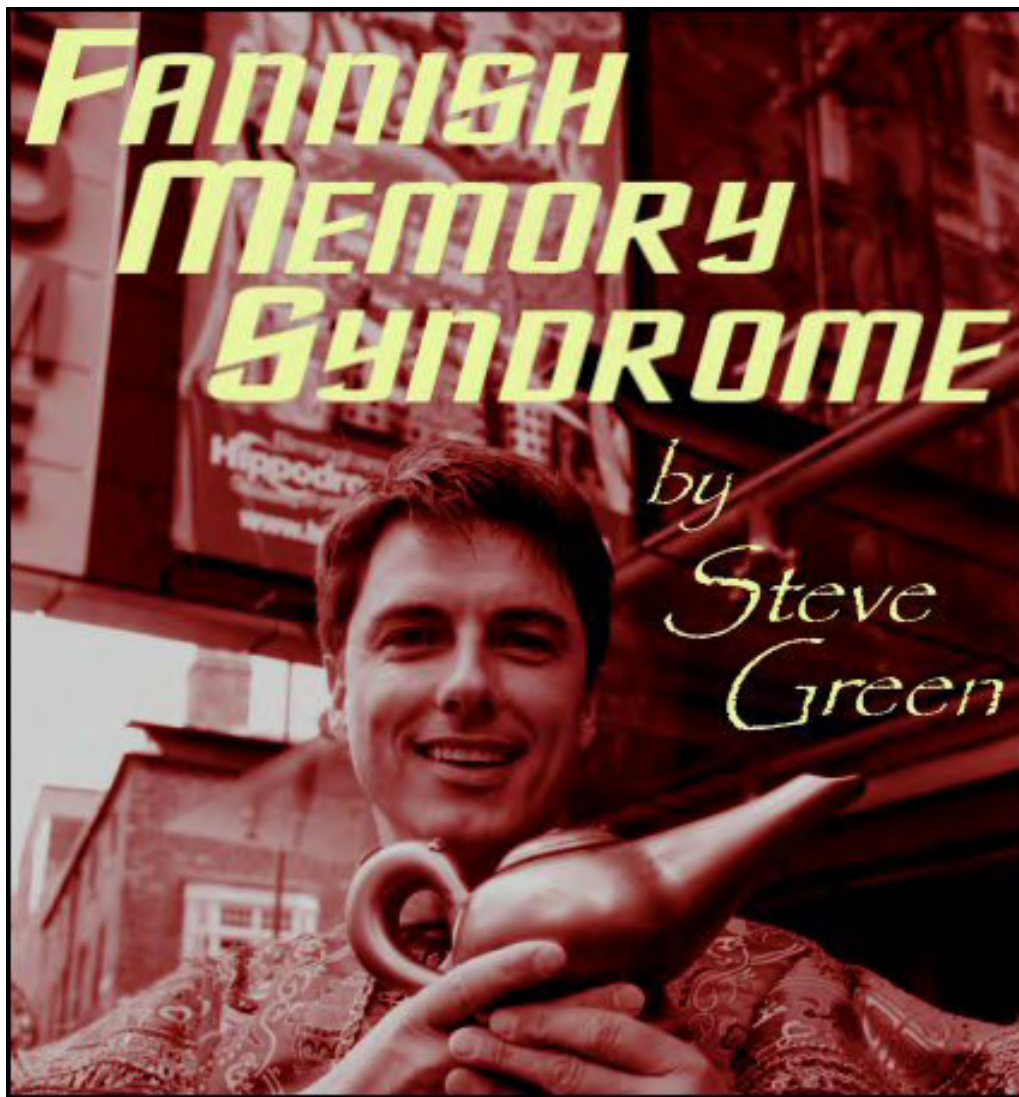


Most of you know that I'm a big fan of Teen Flicks. Not the 1980s stuff from guys like John Hughes (though much of his work is well-worth watching) but the stuff that had it's heyday in the 1999 timeframe with films like She's All That, Never Been Kissed, Ten Things I Hate About You and Cruel Intentions. Those all came out in the same year and all had a lot of charm to them.

This Tuesday, Heath Ledger died of causes unknown, but it might well have been an interaction of various prescription drugs. He'd been having trouble sleeping and was taking anti-anxiety medications. These things happen. Right now, they've ruled out suicide, which is a good thing, and they're working on the accidental overdose angle.

His role in Ten Things I Hate About You was classic and could have easily made him into the biggest Teen star of his generation. He followed that up with a turn in the brilliant film A Knight's Tale, which was kinda a teen turn on Chaucer. Instead of running with that scene, he turned scripts down and went with Indies and films like The Patriot. His breakthrough as a serious actor was in Brokeback Mountain, where much of his power came through the interaction with his co-stars, the exceptional Michelle Williams and the solid Jake Gylenhall.

He's the Joker in the next Batman film, which will be the second to last film we'll see him in. He's got a Terry Gilliam film which just wrapped his scene. Heath Ledger was 28 years old.



Fannish Memory Syndrome

Steve Green

To ancient China, to rescue a princess kidnapped by a coerced genie. Or rather, to the Birmingham Hippodrome, where Torchwood lead and occasional Doctor Who companion John

“Cap’n Jack” Barrowman is treading the boards as the eponymous headliner in the theatre’s golden anniversary pantomime, “Aladdin”.

(A few words of explanation for non-UK readers: “Panto” has been a yuletide staple of British theatre for nearly three centuries, a bizarre cocktail of slapstick, innuendo, music hall, base comedy and showtime. Rather

bizarrely, the male lead is often played by a woman (“the Principal Boy”) and the secondary female character (“the Dame”) is traditionally essayed by a male comedian in drag. No wonder Brits are less hung up on gender distinctions.)

Ann and I are accompanied by our younger god-daughter, Heloise

Tudor, whose devotion to the revamped Doctor Who verges upon the obsessive; I’ve lost count of the conversations we’ve had about the Timelord’s previous incarnations, his assorted nemeses and the likelihood of Daleks landing anywhere north of Birmingham. With her dad Martin pretty much below the fannish radar these days, other than appearances at Novacon, it’s good to see a new generation stepping into the breach.

It’s impossible to tell who’s more excited at the prospect of seeing Barrowman in the flesh, Ann or Heloise, whilst the rest of the audience seems split equally between fans of his telefantasy work and those enticed by our star’s parallel career as a guest judge on a series of promotions for West End musicals thinly disguised as talent shows.

Meanwhile, Barrowman is obviously having as much fun on stage as those in the stalls and upper circle, momentarily reduced to giggles on more than one occasion. Better still, the much-publicised 3D animation sequences complement the cast’s performances, rather than swamp them. The show runs for more than two hours, and they get few opportunities to catch their breath.

Later, Ann turns to me and says “I shall see him always in sequins”. Should put an interesting spin on the new season of Torchwood.