

Fanzine Lounge in Action!

The Drink Tank 171



Cover photo from Jean Martin of Mette, Brian, Kevein Roche, Karen Tully, dude whose name I've forgotten, Jason Schachat Karisu and probably a couple of others letting loose in the Lounge sometime after 2:30 am on Sunday of Bay-Con.

If'n you're lookin' for a full report on BayCon, the next SF/SF will have it. It'll basically say this, when boiled down to syrup: it was a great time. Yeah, there were minor problems, a few things thrown at us that might not have been optimal, but it was a great time. Far better than last year and easily my favourite one since 2005 when I was Toastmaster.

The big deal with BayCon 2008 was the new facility, the Hyatt Santa Clara. The good was really good: bigger space, attached Convention Centre which opened things up to a huge new Dealers Room, really good food with a reasonably priced but well-appointed buffet and a beautiful lobby. The downside was the size of the big event room was only 208 or so, meaning that 1/10th of the con could fit in there for the Masq, and people were turned away. That's a rough one. The sleeping rooms were nice, but smaller than many would have liked, and the party floor was congested. We were spoiled by the DoubleTree. The party patio was an amazing valve that allowed for some of the party pressure to be relieved.

The people are the best part of any con and here there was no shortage of great folks. And most of the people I wanted to come by the Fanzine Lounge came by the Fanzine Lounge. Jon deCles, one of the founders of the SCA and a long-time fixture around fandom, spent a few hours around, including a wonderful hour and a half with me, RJ and Milt Stevens where we talked the old days and just had a good time. I'd met him briefly once before but this was the first time I talked to him (and that Kevin Roche gave me the rundown on how the effect Jon had upon his life). Tim Powers stopped by, though I wasn't around. It was OK because we chatted a bunch a few other times. There was Jean Martin, David Moyce, Espana, and so many other SF regulars. We had people popping by when we were a quiet-ish Lounge during the day, and folks flooding in when we were something resembling a party in the evening.

OK, it was a party room, more or less, and it was a blast.

Kevin Roche and Leigh Ann both noted that the Fanzine Lounge was, in many ways, a convention in and of itself. There was programming, there



was partying, there was dancing, there was flirting (and a LOT of flirting this year), there was costuming, there was zining, there was singing, there were action shooting sports (Jason Schachat is very good with a blow gun) and there were so many different things going on in there. I was very happy with the way it turned out. There were quiet times, there were loud times, there were periods of boredom, but there was always something happening, whether or not it was entertaining being beside the point. The lounge was a giant success.

And one other problem was Chris Knight couldn't make it to run Trailer Park. That was a rough point as he's done it all but one year in the last ten (which is the one time I've done it in the past). They asked me to do it and I recruited Jason Schachat and Derek McCaw of FanboyPlanet.com. The folks pulled off a bunch of trailers from Apple.com and we did little intros.

There were game trailers and some short films and movie trailers. I thought the idea of combining all of those together in one program was a really good idea. The audience only half-agreed. They wanted movie trailers and nothing but, which was weird.



Poi spinning photo by RJ Johnson

There were a few folks who called out for game trailers, and a few that were really funny and the crowd liked. The Short Films were troubling to a de-

gree. A couple of them were great hits and one or two were too long or didn't seem to have a point. On the other hand, I thought that the entire thing went really well. Derek and Jason and I got some laughs and maybe even taught a thing or two to the audience. I'd be happy to do it again

There were some small problems, like at any con, but mostly the fun was what folks walked away with. I was happy to see my buddy Christian McGuire (and not only because he gave me a \$500 check for TAFF!). He's a good guy and we chatted a good deal. He's one of those fixtures of fandom and even though I beat him like a baby seal in the TAFF race, the guy's still entertaining and will even still talk to me! Ed Green, who has gracefully appeared in these pages a few times, was there and sadly I only had a few minutes to chat with him. There was also Tadao. The man is a legend and I'm glad to be able to see him as often as I have been over the last six months or so. That picture over there is one of my faves from the con. They're just so darn cute!

And of course, Linda, patience of a Saint, was there and while we didn't get to spend as much time together as I'd have liked, we snuggled up a few times and on Sunday we partied hard. It's nice to have a girlfriend you can party with and not

have to worry about either of you going too far. That's always an issue: knowing when to say when. We've both got that down, though.

And so, BayCon was a good time and I'm glad I got to see so many of my friends and make a couple of more. Next year, I wanna run the Lounge, I want to do something like The Match Game (Perhaps Hollywood Squares?) and if they need me, Trailer Park. Other than those, I don't think I'll do as much. Of course, I won't stay up as late either. I say that now, but when the time comes, it'll 4am and I'll still be buzzed wandering down to get another bucket-full of ice to keep the party rolling just a few more minutes.

This issue features a couple of article debuts: Dwain Kaiser, one of those fans who remembers when it was The Olden Days, with a little piece he wrote in the Lounge, and there's Steve Stiles with his debut Art and LoC, as well as Mr. McGuire with a drunken rambling and so very much more. And away we go, onward!



**LETTER GRADED MAIL
SENT TO GARCIA@COMPUTERHISTORY.ORG
BY MY GENTLE READERS**

Let's begin with an honor: art and words from one of the legends, Rotsler Award winner and all-around fanzinista...Steve Stiles!

Dear Chris,

First of all, I never had the honor of killing Hitler: It was the Human Torch who did it, actually. The flaming android incinerated the murderous madman in his bunker as the Russians closed in on Berlin in the final days of WW II. With his dying, lying, breath the fried Fuhrer instructed his Nutzi henchmen to tell the world that he had died by his own hand. Strange but true: Look it up.

Come off it, I know the whole Invaders thing was just a cover for your swatch of destruction!

It sure is nice to get annually nominated for the Hugo, after, what, some 30+ years of inexplicable invisibility, but I have to work not to get worked up by such concerns as likely odds, campaigning, winning strategy, and whatnot; I have to remind myself that this is my hobby to enjoy, not for some material prize, that I must keep in touch with my usual Buddha nature, and to avoid sour grapes at all costs even if I have to forgo the deeply satisfying fun of sneering at the (sneer) competition. ***In my case it's easy to avoid sour grapes by simply realising that I'm the least deserving one on the ballot.***

You, on the other, have a damn fine claim to being well-more-than-worthy of a win.

THE FEW ISOLATED POCKETS OF DIEHARD SIXTIES ACID HEADS ALL HAVE BAD TRIPS -- SIMULTANEOUSLY!!



Now, as to your Cons, that certainly puts the finger on my problem as for the most part the Hugo Voting audience are convention fans rather than fanzine fans, and, due to no time and little money, my con going and art show participation has dwindled radically in the last few years.

I know how that goes.

You imply that there's no Stiles art in your fanzine because you dropped the ball by turning down an offer from me (what was it, some of my computer abstracts?). No, the problem is my frustrating lack of time. I have a job with lots of overtime and a long commute. I have a love of taking my time with the process of making art. I also have a house that's old and falling apart – it

seems like whenever I've scheduled time at the drawing board (which is also falling apart), something always comes up to hinder that. There's art that I've promised John Purcell and Earl Kemp for over a month now, and despite my best efforts I've been blocked. The illo I'm sending you now is a good example of that: I'm reworking a panel of mine from HYPER Comics to learn Photoshop. No sooner had I started on it, shortly after Corflu Silver, than my basement and family room flooded. It smells like two dozen wet dogs in our entire house. Maybe dead dogs. I'm going to be working on cleaning up this mess for at least the next two weeks.

You had kindly offered to draw something for an issue a year or so ago, and I just never got my ass into gear to eMail you back with details. Mea Culpa. Flooded basements might be the worst. I've never experienced because 1) I live in Cali and we don't have basements and 2) Floods are the least of our problems.

So.... If quantity of art trumps quality, then I'm surely screwed. ***I hope quantity trumps quality...then I've got a shot someday!***

--Steve

<http://www.stevestiles.com/>

Thanks Much Steve! It's good to have ya in the pages of my Little Thing! You know, I just realised that Earl and Purcell's zines are both underLoCed by me...I must fix that nowish!

And Speaking of John Purcell...here's John Purcell!!!

You know, young feller, it has been quite a while since I have written a Lloyd Penney-style loc to you, so here is a wonderful chance to revisit this time-worn loccking method.

Gotta love Lloyd-style: the LoC that was made for today's fast-paced pubbing!

DT #169: Well, it certainly looks like you and the rest of the attendees at CostumeCon 26 had a wonderful time. I am glad that your emceeing gig went well. Your hope of a united BArea fandom is a good one to hang onto. Whether or not it happens really does depend on everybody in the region. The problem is simply the growth factor. Minneapolis Fandom grew so rapidly into such a large community that the split-factor was inevitable. This is going to happen when the numbers of a fan group get so large. Look at LASFS, for that matter, or any other large fan community. It is something that simply goes with the territory, sad to say.

Well, it's a dream. A boy can dream, can't he?

One of the good things about such a situation, though, is that everybody basically is on the same page when it comes down to running a major regional convention. Things go fairly smoothly when it's time for that con to happen, and that's definitely

A Good Thing. Whether or not BArea fandom unites is something I would not worry about nor campaign for. When needed, people of like mind will work together. It certainly sounds like that's what happened for CostumeCon 26, and that is what makes any con a success.

It's the seriously unlike minds that make it difficult, but I have to say, there's been a lot of come together of late that I didn't expect.

DT #170: Ah. More CostumeCon 26 reportage. Again, I'm glad everyone had a great time. Gee, I sound like a broken record, don't I? You and I both failed to attend Corflu Silver for equally good reasons, and neither one of us suffered for the lack. As for next year's edition in Seattle, we shall see what transpires. No promises made at this point except that I will join as an attending member no matter what.

And I've still got the definitive CostumeCon Report for Claims Department to Finish (I'm on page 13 and it's only Saturday night!). I'll go to Seattle, largely because I love the Seattle gang, but also because I gotta pimp for TAFF and I love Seattle!

To Johanna Mead - who may be eligible for the Best New Fan FAAn award next year - all I can say is the obvious pun: Absinthe makes the heart grow fonder.

You'll be punished for that one...perhaps in the afterlife. I'll put her on my ballot. Of course, I think I did so this year...

I have been reading Frank Wu's LiveJournal entries about his support for Senator Obama, so those "Six Alternative Endings" are quite amusing. I enjoy fun stuff like this. Keep them coming!

Frank and Brianna are in my thoughts at the moment with Bri going in for Surgery today. I always worry about those things.

And I think I'll leave off there for today. Thanks for the zines, youngster, and have a merry one.

Thanks Much John! I'll get that LoC off to you soon!

All the best,
John Purcell





We ran into these lovely young ladies a few times on Sunday Night. As you'll notice, everyone except for the Commodore (the lass with the Blue Hair who some might remember from the review of the 2007 BayCon...and the 2006) has a ship in their hair. I very much appreciate that one in the of the young lady in the lower left of the photos. It's a shipwreck.

When they walked by the Fanzine Lounge and paused to have pictures taken in the large hallway waiting area. I spent some time staring at the headdresses, only to be chided for ogling. It's a fair cop, because it took me a while to work my way up to their heads!

Photo from RJ Johnson, a solid photographer and all-around good guy

12 Slices of Bacon and a Little Thing by Christian McGuire written in the Drink Zine Lounge at BayCon Late on Friday Night.

Hark, What yonder Leigh Ann and Leo and Espana and Jason, and I lost among the muns. Ah yes, Espana orders 12 slices of bacon, crisp, and dry. Is it for Tadao. A bacchanalia of greasy pig product? Not likely. An action of drink and outré conversation only to be found in the proximity of Kevin and Andy. Yes. Indeed. The last evil genius party. Crap, is this the Errol Flynn or Hunter S. Thompson of Baycon or a lisergistic epigram of Shaqiel O'Neal.

Only the time. The Baycon time. That's the rub. Up to help, not sure of my role. A trusted lieutenant or lackey. How is Tycho a chair? A man of the hotel hour?

Heck. Again I think of fun and good company and companionship and peeps. Leigh Ann. Espana. Tadao. Elected to hang out and be with others. Tadao is and Cathy is. I love to write.

Snow angels. Leigh Ann, a snow angel on the carpet. How ironic, I can, or not be a special snowflake. Yes light and refreshing. There's no difference.

Where our host? Mighty Chris Garcia. Escaped to the arms of the Fabulous Linda. To sleep? Perchance to dream of lilacs and special issues of fanzines. Christ Garcia. The

charismatic Mesmer of our lives. A man who has brought back some life to fandom. The bits lost with age and the loss of "OTHER THINGS BETTER MENTIONED ELSEWHERE".

Four "little things" sweet nothings. Pear, mixed with ginger ale. Ah, the sweet escape I've not allowed myself for a 15 month period. I drink not to excess, but to excel. I drink for the freedom to be open and feel. Be me. To write. To be with friends. Tadao is my friend. Cathy is my friend. I want to be a friend with Espana. I want to be a friend and more with...

...

Patrick, a new brilliance? Maybe. He has all the elements. The next Jesus guy.

Cathy. I remain confused. Dear. Emotionally intimate. A confused but happy pixie.

Write. Why not write? Why be scared of freedom? How can I transfer this to sober? Where is the tool? Every day. Every day. The words must flow. The keys must be pressed. Every moment out, out. Get it all out. Ghod, the freedom. Not sustainable with alcohol or other. How can I bring this out from here? How can I be sober and open? Let it

flow and drawn out from the center.

Chaz, is a goofy bastard. A BIG DAMN HERO! Ok, he has big ass faults, but there's a hope and sincerity at the core. Must be what Lynn sees.

Sees chocolates. Rocky Mountain Chocolate Company. Godiva Chocolates. Ghiradelli chocolate. Fresh asparagus. Steamed. Vegetables that taste good. Only in Santa Clara. Only at Baycon. There's no better place in the world than a convention. A place for people to gather and socialize with like minded people who hold a weird element close to their heart.

Close. End. 30. No more. Or will it be an endless dialog with myself. Do I ever think without walking or talking or speaking out? NO. Only in writing.





The SF/SF Crew in the Bar



Miss Lovette at the Klingon Slave Auction



The Photos of Miss Jean Martin from BayCon 2008



Jason Schacht

Leigh Ann Hildebrand

Arabella, Leigh Ann and Jason on Fanboy Etiquette



Jungleboy Kevin and Johanna at the Last League of Evil Geniuses Party

THE BRISTOL COMIC EXPO 2008 BY JAMES BACON

There was the usual James and Stef May birthday party on Saturday in Uxbridge. These are always quite good and Stef has a river at the end of his garden, which we always get into at some stage. This year we had inflatable armchairs and the yellow dragon, but a lack of rain meant that these were grounding a lot. It was a good evening and I decided to head home with the wife and dogs at about 2am or thereabouts. I usually stay over as it normally continues into day 2, but the wife needed to study and I was wrecked, having been at college that morning.

Annually the Bristol Comic Expo is the largest comic event in the UK. There is also the Birmingham International Comic Festival, Thought Bubble another comic festival in Leeds, Hi-Ex in Inverness in Scotland and many comic marts and fairs, but the Bristol Expo is the largest purely comic event. It's not like San Diego at all, London Film and Comic Con is like a small san Diego, except they only have a handful of comic stuff and the big Manga events are Manga, although

there is an obvious cross over.

So I went to Bristol, feeling groggy and worse for wear, I had arranged on the drive home to Croydon to met Liam again on Sunday morning and with both of us in the rail business we got a special deal on the train fare. The train sped down to Bristol at 125mph, not bad for a thirty year old machine. It was comfortable and we had a table.

The online directions, from the train station, were just 'a short

distance away' which was rather vague as we got off at Bristol Temple Meads station. A train station with some 15 platforms and so much railway infrastructure surrounding its outskirts, much of it is no longer in use. We walked out the front door of the beautiful station and I saw a heavy set dude with long hair and a Tank Girl T-shirt, I asked him where the expo was on and he pointed to a doorway about forty feet away.

This was a large hall, I think at some stage it was a part of the railway buildings and after some investigation it turned out that indeed the building we were in was part of the original 1840 train station in Bristol. The Main 1840 station building now being the Commonwealth and Empire museum and the train platforms and shed being an exhibition hall, with the loading bay an extension of the 1840 station. Originally there were two terminus stations in Bristol. In 1871 a new station in mock Tudor style that really was an amalgamation of the two existing adjacent stations was built. This also realigned the train lines, so that through routes could exist, since the stations were at angles to one another, this is a serious curve. Thus the original station was defunct by the time this massive fifteen platform behemoth was completed in 1878. Inside the hall was filled with lines of tables, going up and down. There

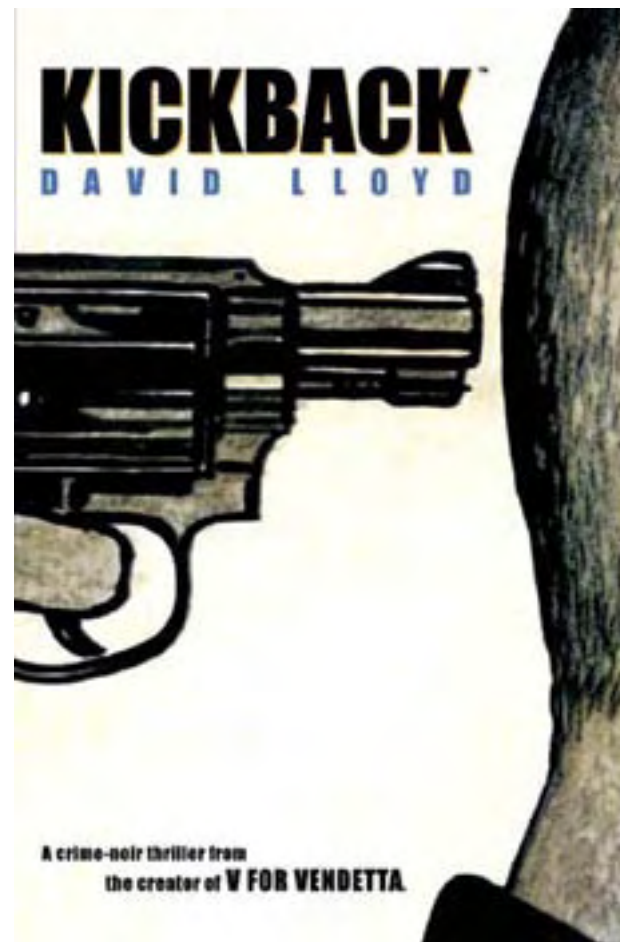


were some 94 exhibitors, and I expect that there were a good 250 tables, as there were also a good number of professionals with a single table. It was £6 in and there was no shortage of free comics and posters and postcards immediately upon entry.

I was methodical about my approach. I wanted to walk the whole hall, up and down and then back again. We had about five hours and the convention was an all weekender, so although I wanted to go to some of the panels, I knew I would meet more people, chat, find new comics, buy ones I was after, acquire some artwork and of course imbibe the full atmosphere in the main hall. Immediately some serious comic books shops were present. Incognito Comics from Essex who always have an impressive stand were next to David Lloyd who was signing and sketching. I highly recommend his two latest offerings *Kickback* which is a brilliant piece of psychological crime noir and *The Territory*, with Jamie Delano. I chatted with David who is a guest of honour at LX next year. As you can imagine *V for Vendetta* was a popular item to be signed, but I was impressed that he sold out of *Kickback*.

Onwards I went. The dealers were an eclectic mix. Regular comic shops, mixed with specialist seller, homemade productions and fanzines. I saw one table which was an amazing

selection of underground but highly professional production comics. *Persepolis* would sit well here, but the detail to these comics. It would be fair to say the selection was heavily of the literature genres known as general fiction, autobiographical and whimsy. The production values were incredible. Really nice stuff and of course very personal. This is where comics as a media rather than genre is really happening. People are finding they can adequately tell their tale by sequential

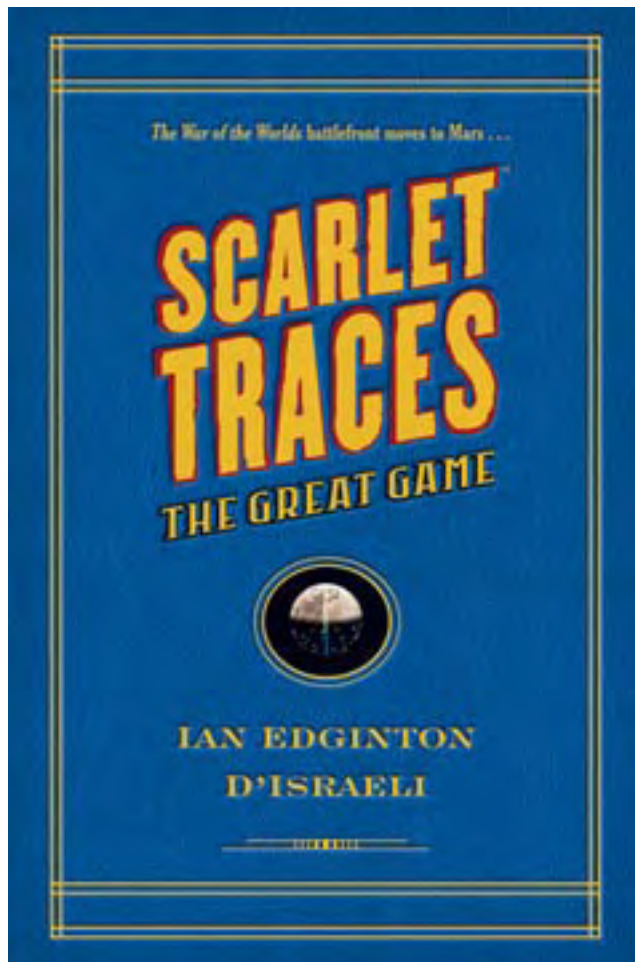


art and it's as valid as any other media.

For me now there are more comics available than ever before. This is odd given how much is available online for free, but when you see the Tozzer guys producing *Peckerwood 24*, it shows that the market has considerable stomach for such interesting and very crass gems. I continued on. I got down to what I consider a comic fanzine table. The lads from Futurequake. I am a big fan of this little publishing house. They produce A5 and A4 comics. I caught up and bought the releases the guys had for the expo. They produce two fanzines dedicated to the world of *2000AD*. *Zarjaz*, which they get permission to produce original stories using copyrighted characters for and *Dog Breadth*, the Strontium Dog fanzine, which at issue 14 went from an A4 mostly text, interviews, fan fic and articles zine to some articles interviews and excellent comics, again allowed by the big publisher. These guys are pretty cool and I enjoyed chatting with them. Mike Carroll, a friend from Dublin, has had a couple of stories in their pages and you must support the local parish.

Onwards I went and an inker was selling some quality artwork. I looked on as he did some sketches.

I saw a page from *Fury*, the Garth Ennis written World War II story



about the man from SHIELD but I was unsure if the price was dollars or pounds that was pencilled on. If it was pounds it was too much, despite trying to get the chaps attention, he was busy chatting, and I failed and intended to come back later.

D'Israeli was the first pro I got to actually buy from. He was relaxed, having won the Eagle Award the night previously for favourite Comic Book artist (inker). I at last picked up the

first part of his and Ian Edgington's *Scarlet Traces* trilogy. It's an adaption of War of the Worlds and its only beautiful, but the pair have gone on to create a sequel set ten years after the Martian invasion, with Victorian Britain having capitalised on the defeated Martian technology. Great SF. I also picked up the Paul Cornell written *Xtinct* that originally appeared in the *Judge Dredd Magazine* also with Disraeli artwork. Fan Favourite Cornell was wandering about somewhere, and I intended to get back to him and get it signed, He is a super multi talented bloke, very easy going and tremendously pleasant. He was a GOH at the Taff con I ran Plota Pi the dangercon.

This week his new comic *Captain Britain and MI: 13* which will feature a selection of British superheroes begins. There will be an initial tie in with Marvel's current big project, Secret Invasion and then it continues with its own story arcs.

Onwards I went. More homemade comics were purchased. First *Zombies ate my Chilean*, which is a must really and of course there was much talk about Zombiecon which I am running in September with Stef. Then it was *Sgt Mike Battle*, the greatest American superhero. I just thought that any comic that has the Last Admin Hero, Von Burger and a fight scene between Battle and Osama

has got to be irreverent enough for me. Also in an effort to out-Coxon John, one of the covers features a bloodied hand clutching a staple gun, and where there are wounds, there are staples.

I continued on, Tokyo Pop had a huge stand of Manga and I again found many artists pushing their own recent publications. I was pleased that Self Made Hero had a stall. These guys have been publishing the Manga Shakespeare series and I have to admit I am really enjoying it. *Richard III* is my favourite so far drawn by Patrick Warren who I think is still in college. I chatted with the Emma who was the publisher. I wondered what they would do next and she mentioned some interesting plans, such as *Henry VIII*, I did ask about *Henry V*. They have just done *Julius Caesar* so I will get that one, and no doubt it will be an interesting take as they have helicopter gunships on the cover.

I bought their new *Nevermore* collection of Edgar Allan Poe's stories, by a selection of writer and artists, and it's really very impressive and also an adaption of *The Trial* by Franz Kafka. I suggested they might do *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn or even better 1984. I picked up a load of free promo material, put my comics safely away and continued on.

More and more comics. Shops

with fantastic reputations and most with some creators working away as part of the stall. I greeted Liam Sharpe of Mamtor publishers. His wife Chris and sister Kerry were hard at work selling this small publishing house's really nice range of comics. I especially liked Matt Coyles *Worry Doll*. This comic won him the Rue Morgue best comic artist award. (you can preview the first fifteen pages here: <http://www.mamtor.com/books/worrydoll.html>) Liam is a great sort and he was busy as hell.

I met Chris Weston then, who was at the Mamtor table, but he had too long a list to do any more sketches, and he only had UK artwork with him. The DC work he has done with Garth Ennis is amazing and I was hoping he might have a page or two along, but no luck.

I saw Lee Carter was at the 2000 AD stand and I decided I should get a sketch from this very cool chap. His work is really quite shape and it turns out he is a conceptual designer during the day for bizarre creations, the guys who did Project Gotham racing and and comics are a hobby more than anything else. I was surprised as I viewed a selection of prints, two of which he just gave to me, which I thought was very cool. He has just started a new series in 2000 AD called Dead Eyes, so I picked that up and after getting a few more bob out of the



cash machine back in the train station, picked up some 2000AD graphic Novels as well.

New talent in the form of Kieron Gillen and drawn by Jamie McKelvie were on hand. These guys are super stars in the making. *Phonogram* was fantastic and McKelvie's *Sunurban Glamour* published by Image comics is just spot on. McKelvie also drew a piece for *X-Men: Divided We Stand* written by Matt Fraction. I spoke to them, and thanked McKelvie for a piece of artwork he gave my wife the week

beforehand at a comic book signing as part of the free comic book day event at They Walk Among us in Richmond, London. These guys are hot.

I came across a number of tables then that were selling artwork. I love comic artwork a lot, but am oddly picky about what I buy. It's not so much about the characters as the creators. I won't buy any old Punisher page, but you know a Steve Dillon one will grab my attention. So I browsed through and unfortunately nothing really caught my eye. One stall was selling some classic pieces, from the 60's and 70's and at a great price, but again the military stories I would have been interested in just were not represented.

Then it was the artist alley, I suppose. Well there was a long row of comic artists, working, selling, and sketching away. I first went to Gary Erskine who is currently working on *Dan Dare*. He is an inker and artist and was selling quite a lot of Barry Kitson artwork that he had inked. I loved his inks on *Johanns Tiger*. So I asked for a sketch. There is a small charge, £5, which I am more than happy to pay. A decent sketch is worth a lot more. He is using an interesting technique at the moment to cut down repetition of work, by using tracing paper and turning it over to ink in pencils. I asked for a *Dan Dare* which is a fav right now, being published by Virgin comics and written

by Irish comic genius Garth Ennis. The picture was perfect, I was very impressed. He had some artwork for sale, and I was looking for a recent story that was written by Michael Carroll and appeared in *2000 AD*. He sold me a rough and finished page, which was cool and also he was giving away posters, selling a print and had comics also to give away.

I continued on. There were more comics for sale and I was impressed to see an *Akira* cell for sale for a huge amount of money. I have a really nice Kenada Cell that I bought in San Diego, and I wouldn't sell it for the world, but there was a lesser character and I was agog for a moment. Classic, current, crucial and cutting edge artists were working away. I continued on and saw Simon Bisley.

He had been working all day and was tired, but the stall holder where Bisley was signing asked if I could be the last sketch, which was major cool. I spoke with the great man, and he was impressed that I was Irish and we talked about Ireland and comics and he was really quite a pleasant fella. He is a huge man, he looks like he should be a wrestler and when I commented that he was very decent, he dispelled it. I got a nice sketch of Slainé, the comic written by Pat Mills. It's a Celtic fantasy based on old Irish Mythologies although unique in its own right. Bisley is doing a zombie comic with Alan Grant (who did Lobo with him) and Glenn Fabry. It's called *The Dead* and follows an English Fire Station crew and some soldiers after an apocalyptical event in the UK, where well Zombies happen. It looks really good and starts in August.

I spent a lot of time browsing comics, new old, second hand and packed up. I love packs of comics, it's a very cheap read, much cheaper usually than Graphic Novels and not all stories, arcs or forgotten series have been repackaged. I bought a few titles and a number of good value packs and the odd graphic novel, especially things that stood out for me. I then met Paul Grist of *Jack Staff* fame and got a sketch from him, and bought a couple of specials that I am missing. Jack Staff is definitely a very quintessentially British comic



and a great read with it. It's not all about Jack Staff, the eponymous hero, and there are an interesting selection of characters who share Castletown. I especially like Ben Kulmer who works for Q, investigating the weird and unexplained, rather like the metal gauntlet hand with special powers that he has. It's a great comic and although I have never read his hard boiled noir police series *Kane*, I know a few fans who love it a lot and I must get around to it at some stage.



I stopped just to get some cola; it was nice to have a cool drink. I hadn't noticed how warm it was, but it was a super day outside and it was warm but not like San Diego where you would need aircon, but warm enough. I took a time to look about and I was impressed by a crowd of some 30 young people sitting in an empty corner, chilling out. Some were

Al Davison, a fantastic comic artist is one of those multi skilled and styled artists, and he was doing a roaring trade of drawing people in a manga style. He is spot on and somehow seems just what to do to get the character likeness but without the exaggeration of the cartoonist or the detail of a comic artist and captures the clean lines of manga in faithful representation. I was impressed as were the people in his queue. The gang in the corner were nicely noisy, and at one stage broke out into song – Heads, Shoulders Knees and toes, Knees and Toes – it was fun. A few had some manga costumes on and had made a real effort and some of the girls might have had costumes on or maybe not. I got wandering again and met Liam. I had bought some more comics and just bumped into him. He had met SF conrunner Chris Bell, who once had an involvement with writing comics, but when I went to see her at the Bryan Talbot table, she wasn't there and Bryan was very busy indeed. He also saw Ken Shinn at one stage another

fan and we both bumped into Stacey Whittle, who was full of praise of the actual programme in the Ramada hotel, which she reckoned was very good. Liam was contemplating going to see a talk, but he was already late for its beginning and I had checked out train times and reckoned that the 5pm would be for us, and we would meet at 4.45 at the front door.

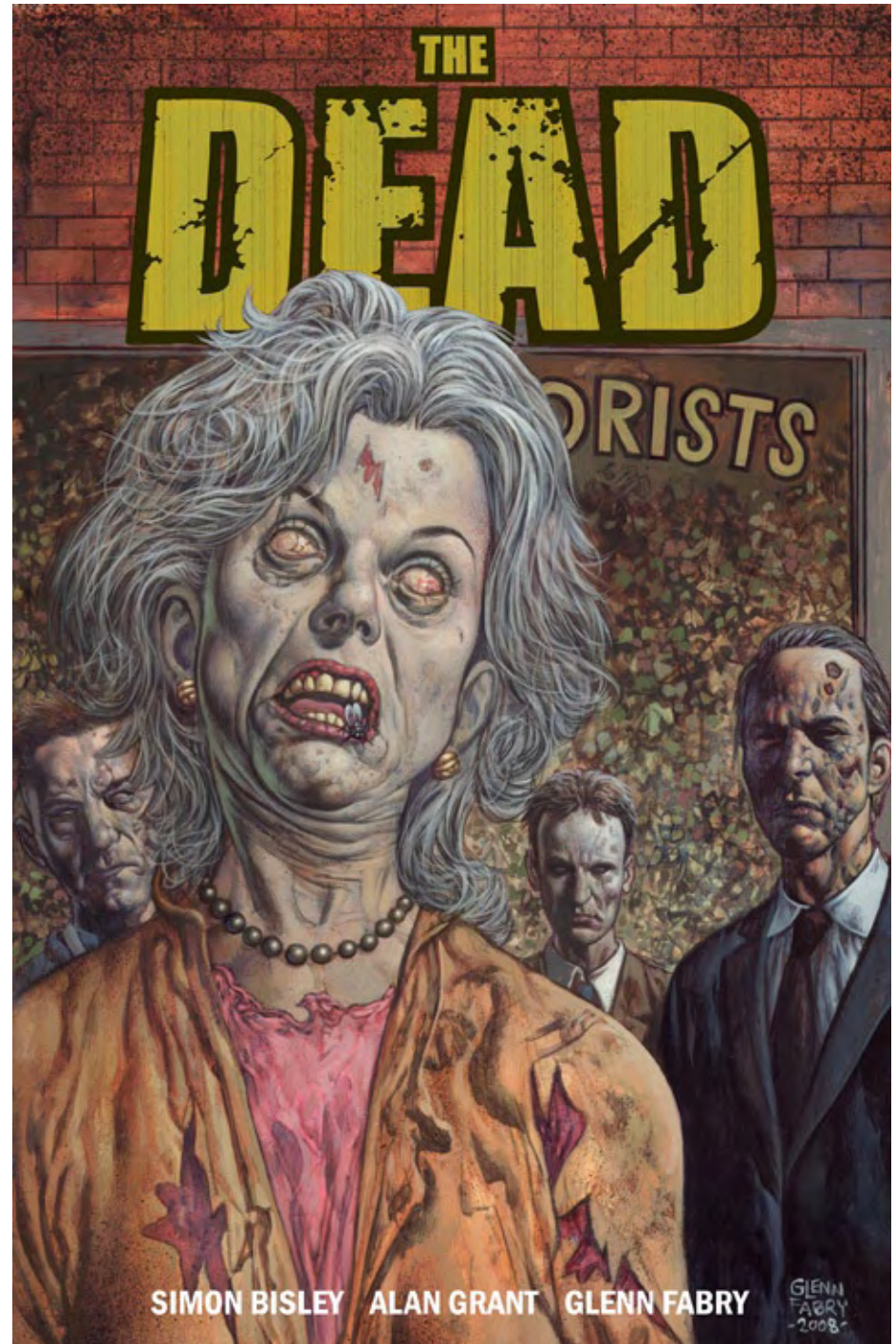
I knew there were a few tables I wanted to get back to so I decided to tack back. A few stalls near the far side were now shutting shop and as I retraced my steps I noted a few people were leaving. Then I heard my name and I met John Reppion and Leah Moore. Leah has gone blonde and John now has a very musketeer styled beard so I hadn't really recognised them, but both were suited to these new looks. I chatted about Zombiecon – both are Zombie fans – nay creators in the genre that is *Zombie*, their *Raise the Dead* comic with art by Hugo Petrus is very popular and also well written. I especially liked the Arthur Suydam covers from the series, the zombie baby parody of *Nevermind* being an image that just appeals. We chatted and discussed the Accent comic anthologies, which each year have a different theme, this year is *Robots*, but last year was *Zombies*. A great selection of comic art and writing at great value.

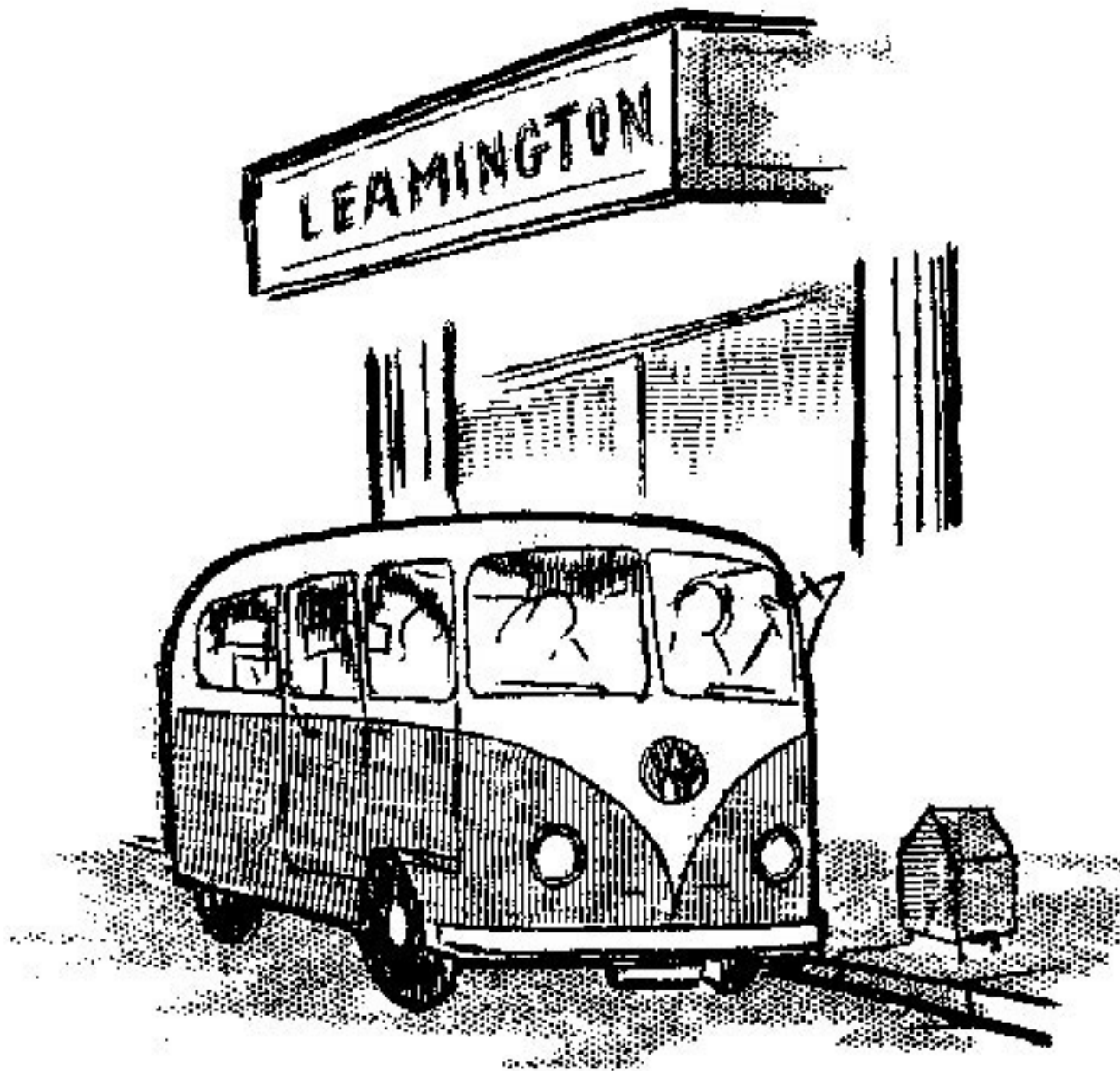
Finally as I had failed to call back at a number of table I intended

to, I met some Irish lads, Bob Byrne and Alan Nolan. Alan draws *Sancho*, a very interesting character and has recently produced the first graphic novel collection of the comics. Bob Byrne another creator was selling *Mr Amperduke*. This is a superb comic, with over 2000 panels this 150 page comic has no words or dialogue at all, just allowing the pictures to tell the story. Mr Amperduke has a large Lego model set in his basement, it's huge and best of all it's inhabited. The inhabitants, due to an illness suffered by Mr Amperduke, are left alone, but a nasty little boy who likes to see insects suffers, puts a nasty creature, a Nechraddon, into this world of plastic bricks. It's great. Byrne has also had much success with his *Bob Byrne's Twisted Tales*, which are hilariously grim and appear in the pages of *2000AD*. You can download some of his work on his website www.clamnuts.com and it mentioned that he was giving an original panel of artwork to everyone who buys the comic, which is pretty cool.

And then it was time to go home. There were a load of announcements and a number of interesting discussions, but I had limited time, like always I was pushing my luck that weekend getting as much done as I did and to be honest chatted to many more people than I would have if I was watching talking heads. I think I shall have to mark the Birmingham International Comic Show in the diary as they have Michael Golden as guest of honour. Now Golden has done a lot of work, but for me one of my favourite comics is the first dozen or so issues of *The 'Nam* written by Doug Murray a vet himself. It's a great comic that lost direction and went arseways real fast, but by then both Murray and Golden were off the title. Anyhow something to really look forward to.

I met Liam and we effed it on the train, after speaking to the Train Manager and we were speeding home and made good time. I ended up with a huge stack of comics and graphic novels and other free cool stuff.





ATom during the second day of PacifCon informed me, in his best teacher to student voice, that I had been drunk and disorderly the night before, phoor behavior for a young seventeen old fan attending his first convention. Not that I wanted to correct my elders but I had to let him know that I hadn't been drunk that I was working on a con oneshot with Greg Shaw and Nate Bucklin... Looking at me with a totally serious look on his face he spoke words of wisdom that I have never forgotten during my nearly fifty years in fandom: "Dwain, that's worse than being drunk."

Who am I to argue with that worthy artist and TAFF winner.... so with those words in my mind it's off I go, no longer writing these words of wisdom, but looking for a bheer or two (or three).

Dwain Kaiser



Where am I?

In *The Drink Tank*.

What do you want?

Information.

You won't get it.

By hook or by crook, we *will*.

Okay, okay, no need to get so *shouty*...

What's the most uncomfortable journalistic situation you've ever found yourself in?

In the spring of 1992, I took a telephone call from Carole Jones at HarperCollins: she was eager to get one of her US fantasy authors interviewed by *Critical Wave* (the semi-prozine then edited by myself and Martin Tudor) during a signing

tour stopover in central Birmingham. It might have been a bad line, but I was convinced she said "Katherine Kurtz". Fantastic, I responded; I read and enjoyed several of her "Deryni" novels during the late 1970s (just before I pretty much gave up on the whole "epic fantasy" sub-genre).

A time and place were arranged, and basic bibliographical details double-checked (note: pre-Google) whilst I researched the interview.

A couple of weeks later, I turned up at the city-centre Holiday Inn, which I'd last visited fourteen years earlier, back when it hosted Novacon 8. Carole smiled as she opened the hotel suite door and introduced me to... Katherine Kerr, author of the "Deverry" series, launched in 1986 and by then up to its sixth instalment, *A Time of Omens*.

Did Ms Kerr realise you'd been lured to her room under false pretences?

Don't believe so. I asked a few questions swiftly cribbed from HarperCollins' publicity hand-out, then dropped into generic interrogation; Katherine was very open and chatty; Carole seemed delighted with the interview; I escaped with my integrity more than usually intact.

Did this façade ever see print?

Of course: I'm ever the professional: *Critical Wave* #31, a full year later (five issues in real time: Martin and I were somewhat shackled to the whims of our readers' wallets). If we ever get our act together, it may even end up on *eFanzines* before the end of the current millennium.

Do you seriously expect to get away with submitting this as your latest column?

Chris, is that you?

That would be telling.

[to be continued]



Steve Green and Martin Tudor, strolling near the former's then-home in Birmingham in 1984, three years before they collaborated on *Critical Wave*. [Photo: Ann Green]

5 THINGS ABOUT BAYCON

BY LEIGH ANN HILDEBRAND

1. And now, the recipe for the official unofficial (or is that the unofficial official?) cocktail of Chris Garcia's Swingin' Fanzine Lounge: the Little Thing. In a hotel goblet, highball, or go-cup, add one generous scoop ice (about 1/2 the glass full.) Pour in two fingers of Absolut Pears vodka. Fill to top with Reed's Ginger Beer. Stir or mix by other means. (Look, people, I can't connect these dots for you. You'll have to do it yourself. Just agitate the drink into a state of mixedness.) Serve. For a stronger drink, use a shorter glass, or pour three fingers of vodka.

Variations:

Hot Little Thing -- substitute Reed's Extra Ginger Beer, for a spicier taste.

Little Pink Thing -- add a splash of Reed's Cherry Ginger Beer.

Hot Little Pink Thing -- A Hot Little Thing with a splash of Cherry Ginger.

Another Thing Altogether: Substitute vanilla vodka for Absolut Pears.

Could the Little Thing benefit from shaking, or a garnish, or perhaps a classier approach? Why yes, yes it

could, but it would be a lot harder to make quietly in a hotel bathroom, wouldn't it?

2. You might think that a Fanzine Lounge as social space wouldn't work as well for actually creating fanzine content. You'd be wrong. Here's the thing: the overall energy level can reach a fever pitch at times (I'm looking at you, Sunday night's crazed Eurovision dancers), but that energy is at least partially converted into matter -- in the form of writing and art. That's not just fanzine in an hour material, either. I think that probably some of that writing and art will end up in the pages of other fanzines, or even here in Garcia's little thing. Even when things aren't created in the lounge, there are a lot of promises for material made there. Some of those promises are even kept.

3. I swear, I did things at Baycon outside of the Fanzine Lounge. This year we practically had an entire programming track devoted to social/dating skills for geeks, with topics like "Fanboy Etiquette", "Geek of My Dreams", and "Single SF Fan Seeks Same..." I got to participate with the charming Mr. Schachat on



Orange Soda Pirate by Greg Vineland

the etiquette panel, which was a blast. On Monday, I had a packed room for the personal ad panel. To the credit of all the geeks of Baycon, not a single person asked if they could touch my breasts. NO, really, that's a *good* thing. I promise.

4. My review of the hotel: There. Are. No. Closets. We had to have a separate rolling wardrobe sent up to accommodate all of my gowns and um, things. (Every day at a con involves at least three changes of clothing: daytime, evening, and late night. That's not including hall costumes or Regency dance togs. And then there's all the shawls and wraps and pairs of gloves and accessories. People, I tell you, con-going is very accessory-intensive.) The bathtubs are also much smaller than those of the previous two hotels. I have to tell you, I consider the bathtub quality to be much more important to my overall con experience than the existence of a sushi bar. (My bet is on Westercon 61 to win Best Con: Hotel Tub Division, 2008.) In the absence of an actual closet, it would be nice if there were drawers instead of fake drawer fronts. Oh, and the hallways are smaller. But

all of that aside, I enjoyed the public spaces of the hotel, particularly the lobby. I'd love to see more furniture in the main lobby space next year - an extra conversational set or two, perhaps outside the bar railing. I love a bar with comfy chairs, and the chairs in the new Baycon hotel's lobby bar are much more comfortable than the ones in the Doubletree's lobby bar. Now, if we could only get more meat food in the restaurant, we'd be set.

5. With apologies to Donne, the Baycon lounge experience in poetic form:

Th'lounge is all states, and all princes,
too,

Nothing else is.

Princes do but play us; compar'd to
this, All honour's mimic, all wealth
alchemy.

Thou, sun, art half as happy 's
we,

In that the world's contracted
thus;

Thine age asks ease, and since thy
duties be

To warm the world, that's done in
warming us.

Shine here to us, and thou art
everywhere; This lounge thy centre is,
these walls, thy sphere.

Yeah, it's kind of like that.



Klingons up top, Jean Laser and Espana posing all America's Next Top Model next to them, Tadao, Tim Powers and Jean on the bottom next to Johanna with a whip! Photos from Jean Martin.

As I was getting ready to go to the hotel for BayCon, the news broke that Robert Asprin had passed away. It was a shock, and I instantly remembered that he was supposed to be a Special Guest at Marcon with Kevin Standlee as the Fan Guest of Honour. I also knew that Kevin had been looking forward to seeing him and that he had been the President of the Mythadventures Fan Club in his younger, more vulnerable years. That has to suck.

Curt Phillips, a fine fan who sadly doesn't show up in these pages as much as I'd like him to, sent this fine little piece originally for the Fanzine in an Hour at Bay-Con, but lack of eMail meant it had to wait for this edition.

<http://www.mythadventures.net/>> reports-

On May 22, 2008, Bob passed away quietly in his home in New Orleans, LA. He had been in good spirits and working on several new projects, and was set to be the Guest of Honor at a major science fiction convention that very weekend [Marcon]. He is survived by his mother, his sister, his daughter and his son, and his cat, Princess, not to mention countless friends and fans and numerous legendary fictional characters.



I met Bob Asprin at Stellercon in North Carolina back in the 1980's. It was a great time to meet him because the first Myth Adventures book had just appeared and Bob was on top of the world. He was clearly a man who loved the SF world and with his new book opening new roads for him, I imagine that the joy I saw in his face reflected the wonderous new things going on in his heart and mind. That was a great weekend for Bob Asprin. Everyone should have a weekend like that one. His books were reliable reading and fun, and never gave the reader anything less than full value for

their money. That seems to me to be a pretty good thing for a writer to have said about his work. Bob Asprin will be missed.

Curt Phillips

(Photo; Robert Asprin at Stellercon in Greensboro, NC. About 1980)

Here's a note on Mr. Asprin from Jay Crasner

I just heard about Robert Asprin dying. Shit. There was a funny man who knew how to write a story that would stand up to the comedy and he could play with everything around the words, twist them into turrets and shoot down on you with some sort of comedy rifle. I loved the Myth Adventures stuff. I remember reading them for the first time when I was in high school and going 'Wow, this is the man right here!' and then passing it on to M, to SaBean, to Mike, to everybody. Another one gone.

I've read very little Robert Asprin in my days. I don't know why, maybe it's because I'm always leary of authors who often use middle initials (You wouldn't believe how long it took me to get into Robert J. Sawyer). I've read a couple of things, and I remember he did a series of columns about writing for one of the mags that I thought were really good.