

The Drink Tank Issue 187
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Photo by Miko!

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Steam Powered: The Convention A Genre Appropriate Review by Christopher J. Garcia, Esq.

Photos from Capt. Kevin Standlee

Note: Many of the events in this article actually happened, and some didn't. You can figure out which is which. Really, it's a Fictional Review.

The day was cold and grey as any London had known. This was California, I thought, not the cold, cobbled two cow streets of Her Majesty's greatest metropolis. I had left the Antiquarian Computation Museum around Two with plans for the Conference of Modern Steam Enthusiasts, named by the wags who would be attending as Steam-Powered. It would be the kind of event that many people spoke of for long. The plan was to celebrate the geniuses of steam and those who were followers of the lifestyle. I was most excited as I would be speaking on the matter of engines of Mr. Babbage, the best known of the early Steam Pioneers. I would be presenting his early failures that led up to the grand explosion that his Analytical Engine represented. I was far from the best expert in the world, but I would be able to give a reasonable talk on the subject.

I piled my Portable Processing Engine, the notes for my lecture, and the miniature set of cards that held the programmes for the images of my talk. I powered on my boiler and waited for it to



come to temp. I slipped on the handling gloves, opened up the PPE and stared working on my lecture, polishing some of the more craggy prose. The bell rang, announcing that the steamcart was read for riding. I finished the paragraph, fairly certain that there were two Ls in Caullfat, and pulled back on the tow-strap to get it free of its parking space. Once I had it free into the road, I pushed the drive lever into position and we jerked onto the road. I made good time as few of the others

who come to Mountain View leave their employers so early.

The location was the Domain, a new lodging that had previously been another venue of no consequence. While quite modern, few of the local enthusiasts seemed aware of its existence. I pulled in and there was a gentleman in working attire standing behind a buggy. He was dining on some sort of chips and cheese combination that our Mexican friends seem to be most fond of. I piloted my cart into a space and

disengaged the drive. I had to pull hard on the two brakes, slowly releasing one, then the other, and then reapplying them to make a smooth path into the space. I walked out, taking my PPE with me, and as I passed the gentleman in the working garb, he spoke to me.

"You might not want to leave your cart there, sir, unless you are a guest of the hotel," he said, stepping forward.

"Sadly, I'm not," I answered.

"They're planning on sending hitchmen to fetch any vehicles not associated with a room stay." He informed me.

"My word!" I exclaimed. "Are you saying that I may well have to find my way to an impoundment yard?"

"Only if you leave your cart here too long," he said.

I took my chance and walked into the hotel, immediately being greeted with the sight of five delightfully dressed people sitting behind a table.

"Hello, and welcome to Steam-Powered!" said one of the lasses, dressed in a fine hat.

"Yes, I'd like to pick up my registration," I said, removing one of my name cards from my inner pocket.

"Ah, Chris Garcia!" she said. "You're one of our presenters, are you not?"

"Yes I am," I said and they prevailed upon me a packet with information, my admission ticket to the next evening's entertainment, a name placard for use on

my lecture and a lovely card of thanks for participating. It was a wonderful gesture.

I took the packet and walked off to move my steamcart off to a better location. The warm-up period was only a few seconds. I pulled it back and set it up for travel, the tiller sending us rocketing around the corner, coming to a rest in the lot in front of a general wares shop. I purchased a bottle of water to make my leaving my steamcart there a legal matter. I was entitled to two hours of resting in their lot.

I walked back to the hotel and found my way into the room of wares. So many people selling so many goods in such a small space! I was shocked at the number of sellers had brought things as varied as goggles that would be good for those who pilot steamships to the yet-to-be-invented vacuum tube that people will be raving about once they show up on the scene. It was impressive to see all the dealers. I took only a quick pass as I got a call on my portable communication unit. It was Spain, which informed me that I'd be included in the coming Fourth Estate preview of the newest airship! I was most pleased and did a little dance. It was most unprofessional of me, but what could one expect when offered a trip into the great wide sky?

I walked into the mail hall and found a friend, a lass named Chris Fisher who was magnificent at designing and constructing costumes favored by the Heterodyne Concern. It was a good thing because she was someone I knew among a sea of people who were magnificently



dressed but near-strangers to me. Some I recognised from other convocations and colloquia, but I'd never spoken with beyond a nod, a tip of a hat and a 'Good day'.

"Ah, it's always good to see you, ma'am." I said as I walked to her. I had no hat to tip, or I certainly would have done so.

"Hello, Chris." she said.

"How are all things treating you?" I asked.

"Well, I'm here as press." she said.

"Press? What organization are you with?" I asked.

"Well, it is an audio news dispatch for the EngineNetwork called Steampunk Spectacular." She said.

"Really? I wasn't aware of it? You must have interviewed someone from the museum?" I asked.

"Oh yes, Mr. Tim Robinson."

"What is the EngineNet location of the AND?" I asked.

"Steampunkspectacular.com, we've got six episodes up." She said. "I was going to walk through the dealers room. Care to join me?"

"Yes, though your duty is to prevent me from standing in one location long enough to actually purchase anything." I said.

"That is a role I perform often for many of my friends." she said.

We walked through, seeing the many interesting items they had for sale.



That's James Blaylock!

This pass was a more thorough one than my fast walk-about earlier. We stopped by each of the tables where beautiful jewellery and lovely and useful devices that I would look closely at. If I was looking too closely, Chris would make sure to move me along. I was particularly taken by a copy of The Strand Book of Crime. I am, above all, a fan of Criminal fiction and this copy was particularly tempting. I was hurried away and that was a wonderful thing as I needed

to not buy it. We made a full pass in about an hour and I was very happy that I spent nothing. I wandered off to my cart and moved it to a sidestreet. No one seemed to have tried to place their steamers there because someone had left an air-balloon next to El Camino, blocking the view. I walked back and discovered that Kevin Roche and Andt Trembley had arrived. It's always good to see the two of them. We chatted for a few minutes, discussing their

plan to attend a Famous Dead Persons Party at the manse of two friends of ours. Kevin had chosen a character from a FarSeer Programme from the UK and Andy had chosen to portray a famous professor from an English boarding school. Good choices, both.

I went to my car to get my PPE and found a location in the Atrium where I could see everything and write an article for the Journal of Steam-Processing History. A friend of mine from the Silicon Convention came and we chatted when Chris found us. She had lined up two interviews for her EngineNet programme. She was carrying her digital cylinder record.

"What's the interface like?" I asked.

She fiddled with the Wolverine, which she had named Logan, and showed us the dials and gauges. It was an impressive display and technological admiration was at an amazing level.

They headed off to the Fish Market the next block over where they'd dine. I was getting peckish myself and since I'd done the Dealer's section, I headed off to the Fried Chicken Emporium where I discovered there was a steampipe that I could tap into to charge my PPE. I read the programme book, which was printed at an odd size, but looked very good. They used a fine engraving of me holding up a piece from the Museum collection, which made me look far more respectable than I usually look. I ate my chicken, which was economical and delicious. I had fully charged my PPE and made my way back



to the hotel, where more people had begun to show up. I again toured the wares in the room of sales, finding yet more interesting items, including a set of guns that were designed for use by Upstanding Gentlemen in the killing of large bug-like creatures on the other inner planets. They were most pleasant to look at.

There was some downtime, as there was no programming on Friday. That would have been nice, but Friday programming usually starts after work for all but the largest of regional conventions so that the working class can catch their steamtrolleys to the event and the better-known

authors and wealthier fans can catch the proper Zepplins and locomotives towards the convention site. I found a comfortable couch and began to work on this very report. I know it is quite inappropriate to work on these matters in public, but it was nice to be able to record the effects of the convention and its attendees before the thoughts had left my head. In fact, it would be fair to say that I was doing a great service to the Fanciers Community to be recording the

event so close to the moment it happened. I was joined by several friends who would come and chat for a few moments before they entered into the Dealer's Room. Mo Starkey, my buddy Steve, Chris again, and Kevin and Andy all stopped by and we enjoyed good company. Diane Rooney, a reporter for ScientiFantasy/ San Francisco, was there and I hardly ever get the chance to chat with her. It was a shame as she's a fine writer and her words make that journal so much more entertaining.

It was coming up time for the main festivities to begin in the upper ballroom. I could hear that music was issuing from it, and I made my way up. I should mention

that I was not dressed as finely as many of those in attendance. I was, in fact, exceptionall ill-dressed for such an event. One might even call my clothing mundane. No matter, I was a Steam Fancier as much as any one in the hotel...only I am far too clumsy to be good with a pair of scissors and far too poor to purchase the correct mode for the event. It was a shame as there were some amazing clothing on display, mosly being worn by lovely and delightful

people. Many were delightfully dancing in the room to recorded music. I recognised the couple leading the dance, as they had been leading events at the Costume Fancier's Convocation in San Jose. I ran into Jean Martin, my diminutive co-editor for ScientiFiction/San Francisco, and we chatted briefly. She's always fun to chat with, though notably we were not frequent in each other's company during the event.

My Darling and Entertaining Linda called me

and noted that she was feeling off, and so she wanted to avoid the excitment of the convention and spend the eveing nestled snugly in bed. She said I should enjoy myself at the convention, but I said I would meet her at my flat in an hour or so. My darling is much more important than a convention.

I spent the rest of the time chatting with people, including witnessing both Kevin and Andy emerging in their

costumes, and hardly recognising either of them. Perhaps my eyes are beginning to fail me, or those costumes were magnificent. Andy with hair is an incredible sight.

After some more chatting, I made my way out to my steamcart and then off to my flat.

Saturday was another day. It began early with Linda and I arriving at Denny's, a fine eatery with much great and economical eating. I had a large breakfast which

carried me quite a way through the day. We walked over to the hotel and discovered the first people who were milling around. I walked into the room off the lobby where my lecture would be taking place. It was the smaller room, but you couldn't imagine that many folks would be up that early in the morning and also I'm not exactly a giant draw when it comes to putting wool in the seats. I looked at the projector they had provided, the



Much Like My Personal SteamCart!



tubing for which did not match up with the tubing for my PPE. I only panicked slightly, and I went to find the people who were running programming and I told Gail the problem. She understood that this might happen and asked if I could transfer the filmes. I pointed out that I had a file of camphorated punched cards containing the images. Since they had a compatible PPE, I could enter the images and the flickershow would be possible. It made the presentation

that much more entertaining.

Several people who were known to me attended, although Linda went to the attire panel in the upper ballroom. I was preparing for my talk with Captain Kevin Standlee, late of the HMS Armadillo, and Cheryl Morgan attended, with a number of other folks. By the time the talk really started, there were about 50 total people in there. That's a great number for the morning after a night full of festive revelry. I

began to give my talk about Saint Charles Babbage and all the wonderful work he did to give us computation, starting at a time when there was no other human thinking in that direction. Not all of my gags worked the way I had hoped they would, but I came up with a way to end it with "At least Mr. Babbage invented the ultimate Knick-Knack!" That went very well.

I then headed upstairs to the upper ballroom where Linda was waiting for me. She's a wonderful woman. We got up on the dais and one of the other panelists had shown up early as well, so we chatted with the audience. I picked up my pages of notes and sat up. We talked of metallurgy for a while, which is an area I'm not very well versed on. The panel started as soon as the other panelist showed, and he was a PhD participant and a very smart guy. As a pseudointellectual, it was nice to have a theoretical guy on the panel.

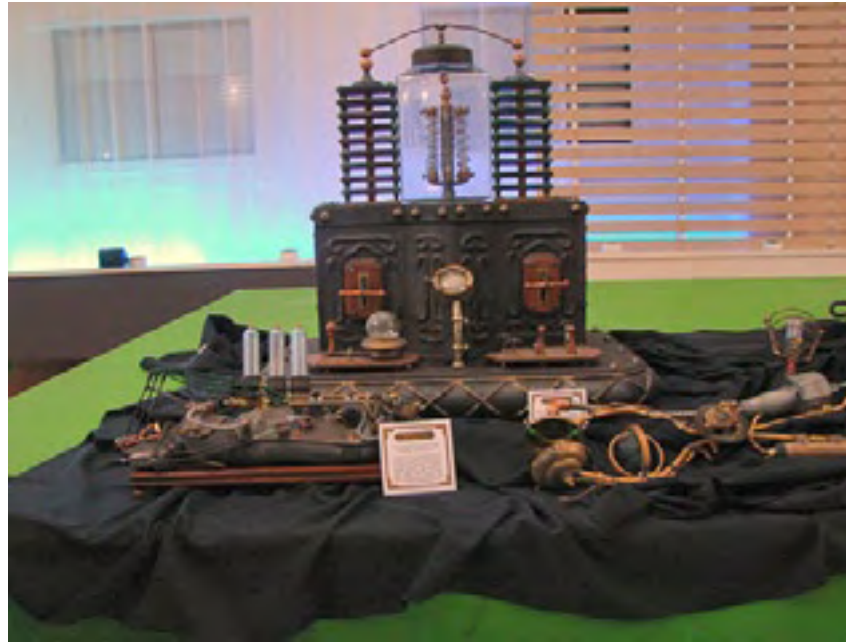
This panel was all about the power of Victorian Technology, which was called The Engines of Empire. We went into many areas, serious discussions of things like Looms, the steam engines, the canals, and even medical and chemical advances. Of course, we also talked about things powered by leeches, such as the brilliant Dr. George Merryweather and his Tempest Prognosticator, and various other fun things. We got a lot of interesting knowledge flowing, and the people seemed to enjoy it and it might be the best panel I've done in ages.

After that, all my panels were

complete for the convention, and thus I could enjoy the rest of it without much stressful work. Not that speaking was a difficult a task. Of course, it is terrifying to lead up to those moments and it's lucky that I seldom have rigor mortis when I'm talking. Freezing is a terrible thing.

The weather was as if they'd imported the London fall, which worked well. There were many problems with the various cart and lorry operators. We gathered for a trip across the street with Chris, Linda, Kevin and Andy. It was a five-some going to the Korean Palace Steam-BQ. There, a steam heated grill allowed six people to huddle around it and cook their own meat. It was delightful. I enjoyed it the first time I brought a group in on the Zeppelin from the UK. The place is good for groups, though the grills are small. We talked of many terrible things, and another group was placed at the table across the aisle from us. Espana, Ace & Lazer, Joe Price and Eric and Jade all braved the walk across the road with the careening carts. Nothing is easy when rain comes to the Bay Area.

We walked across the road and found ourselves there just in time to watch the Keynote Speech from His Honor: Jake Van Slat. He puts together fantastic objects, and his keynote was spectacular. The room was full to capacity and then some, with people standing all along the edges of the room. I thought it was a fine call to arms, speaking of the ways in which



we, as practitioners of the Steam Lifestyle, could make our way and the things that we mean. It was wonderful to hear him talk about this things. I leaned over to Espana and said "We must get the rights to reproduce the speech in the pages of ScienciFiction / San Francisco." After the talk, I walked down to the Atrium. Another publisher, Gareth from Make, was there and we talked about his days as a publisher. he told me of his days working on his own zine and how it pulled things forward. I was pleased to hear that he had worked with Spirit Duplicators and Gestetners and all forms of arcane publishing technology. I met Jake right after I finished chatting with Gareth and got his permission to reprint his work. He was a really nice guy.

After that, it was time for our concert. A massive street locomotive had been hired to transport many of the attendees,

but Linda and I wanted some extra flexibility and we had her steamcart, so we first returned to my flat to change clothes. Linda, who was dressed in fine garb indeed, as she always is, wanted to change into dungarees. I made sure to drink enough water, as I knew that I'd be sweating in the heat of the San Jose Civic Auditorium. I made sure that everything was going well. I went out and stoked Linda's cart's boiler. My home was wonderfully warm, especially the belt driven fans. As I'd been cooking lentils on the hearth with large amounts of vinegar and mace, the whole house smelt, and the belt-driven fans were helping to keep the house from smelling too much of vinegar and mace. Not that it's a terrible smell. Just a bit much. We headed out and discovered that some jack-knack had put his cart in my space. It was not a good thing. I was quite annoyed, yet decided to let it go on the way it was.

The weather had gone from bad to Biblical. We got in the cart and started down. The airships were in the air, their lights throwing down on to the road. It was a beautiful sight that we have mostly justly accepted as being something normal. When you have so many airships flying in and out of the airfield, you start to see it as just another thing.

There were all forms of locomotion going on. The carts, the lorries, the locomotives, a huge number of Penny-Farthings and Cobble-Bumpers were

making their way into the heart of San Jose. It would be odd for men and women to expose themselves to the elements on those forms of transit, but night-life requires sacrifice. We made it into the heart of San Jose, home of technology. We parked Linda's cart in the Crown Plaza next to the Civic Auditorium. It was a majestic building with gorgeous lobby built from Analytical Engine Camphorated Card companies. The place dripped of opulence...and the comfort and quality that the Crown Plaza line of hotels promised and delivered. We walked through the lobby where many folks were walking around. There was a conference for the Women of Engine Educators who must have been on a break.

We walked down San Carlos Street, right across from the light horizontal funicular. It seldom ran when the weather was Dog & Cats, but now it was trying its damndest, with a number of the conductors and engineers spending much of their time running ahead of the barely moving train and clearing branches and other obstacles. The time to move between the stations was longer than if you walked, but at least the passengers remained dry enough to make it worth the three tuppence and a half-crown it cost.

The Civic Auditorium was built in a battle between man and mule, with the mules winning at least until some Arts & Craft-inspired man came up with the idea of decorating the ceiling. We arrived and they tore our tickets, allowing us into the vast main hall. I hadn't been there since the

Poe Awards as a part of the World Scientifiction Convention. Before that, it was either a wrestling show while I was in High School or a production of Annie, the lovable, pupil-less orphan. We found that the cavernous hall was less than full. In fact, the upper section was closed off. I love watching from the balcony, so that was slightly disheartening, but the front section was chairs where those of us who had bought Full Weekend VIP passes could sit and enjoy ourselves. Walking through there, we ran into a number of folks we knew from other Fancier Events. We made our way to where Kevin and Andy, Phil & Kaja of Heterodyne Industries, Spring Shoenhuth and Julie. We were all chatting, noticing the level of attendance. We waited a few minutes and then the first act, Platform One, played. They sounded nearly exactly as if someone had piloted a Zeppelin carrying Depeche Mode

slammed into a locomotive with Echo & The Bunnymen on board. The lead singer did an impressive amount of dancing. The Drummer, playing an Electro-Mechanically Amplified Drum set, was the one who drew most of the attention. It's strange that she was much more charismatic than the dancing singer, but even just hitting the drums in simple patterns, she was great.



The songs were all very similar, but when they played their final song, it was a cover of Losing My Religion. It got the crowd moving, something that none of the songs managed very well. The crowd was very into it, and I thought that it was easily the best thing they did. I could imagine it being played on the Aethercast of some Oscillator Station.

The main event was Abney Park. They came out and they were all crowd and charisma from the beginning. It was slightly fuller, but still, the lead singer said that being blinded by the lights meant that he didn't see all the empty space. They started and the whole effect got the crowd into it. Everyone was up and dancing. Not me, of course. Not dignified. No, not at all. Linda and I watched, though we were certainly into it. It was wonderful to see the Foglios getting into it and that was the best part of the entire evening. They performed a song of Pirate-kind and that led to Mr. Foglio getting off his seat and doing a marvelous jig. It was far more fun. The show was great, very energetic and the crowd was out of their seat for most of it. I was happy to have been there.

Liinda and I were tired and we decided to pilot our way back to my apartment where we would get some sleep and deal with the changing of the gear from the Daylight time to the Standard. That's always a good thing, as having it darker earlier is always a good thing as writing by gaslight or phosphorus arc is much preferred.

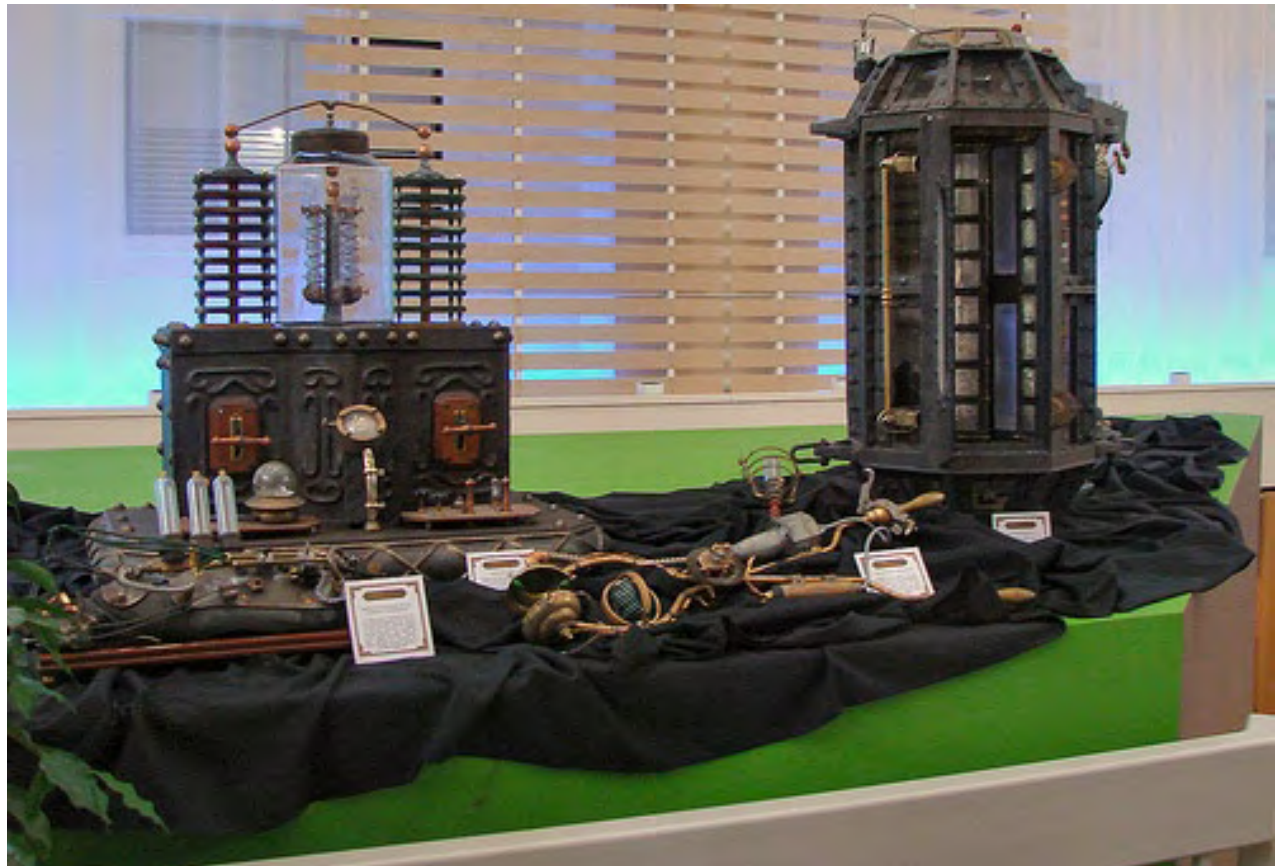
Sunday morning started early. We enjoyed the Presidential comedy and were reliving the bits as we got ourselves ready. I'd run out of breakfast meats in the kerosene fridge, so Linda and I headed across to the Great American Diner, which has a miniature Locomotive on the Track that runs around the restaurant. We ordered and watched their Farseer. The

candidates were talking and talking and the analysis was marvelous. Or maddening. I'm still not sure which.

We arrived at the Domain and there was no one roaming around. I figured that the place wasn't jumping because it was early. I figured that it was almost exactly time to make a pass through the dealer's room to find the bargains. We made a pass around and found that there was a lovely miniature raven at one of the tables and I bought it for my darling Linda. She really liked it and I was so glad. We walked around and headed upstairs to see a panel, but Linda was caught in the reaper that

was the selection of hats upstairs. She had already bought one instead of coming in to the Jake Von Slat keynote, but here was a new hat with a Girraffe theme. It was really cool and she was happy to have it. I thought she looked beautiful in it. They packaged it in a lovely box with pre-paid mailing matter on top. Very thoughtful.

The entire place seemed a little burnt out on Sunday, but not in a bad way. It was more of a 'Well, we have to keep going but we partied REALLY hard last night' sort of thing. I ran into Espana and she looked burnt. I actually said hello first before I mentioned that she wasn't shiny as usual.



We went to lunch at the KFC again, the rain hardly having let up, and then we made our way to the convention again to hear Mike Perschon talk of the documentary works of Mr. Jules (pronounced Jewel) Verne. It was a very good talk with a Capt. Nemo in the audience. That's always a good thing. The trans-national paramilitary organization Le Legion Fantastique, officially named Mike into their fold, possibly to allow them to take hold in Edmonton. It was a fun ending to the content portions.

We headed down and I settled in to the Future of Steam Powered, which was really a Hiss and Purr session. I was impressed with the folks who were in there for the panel before the funeral because they were still talking about choosing a career path, which they for some reason chose

to call a persona. The folks were talking about places to secure clothing and so forth, which must be more difficult than I'd imagined. I guess taking less pride in one's appearance takes a lot of time.

The panel began; the organizers, Tofa Borregard, Richard Bottoms and Ariane Wolfe all showed up and they pointed out the things that went wrong, the things that went right and told us of their future plans. They have planned a Congress dedicated to the denizens of Ringworld where they will bring ambassador Larry Niven to the Bay Area. He doesn't like Zeppelins, but is quite fond of the Locomotive trip between Los Angeles and San Jose.

I thanked them for asking me to deliver my lecture and panel. I also told them that I'd be more than willing to do a

game show for them next year. I had an idea of either Steam You, based on the Aethercast that National Public Oscillator puts out, or maybe the Steampunk Squares. Hard to say. I really thought it was good stuff, and though some folks were very unhappy for some of the events, I came away with a great feeling of happy exhaustion. Radar, Linda, Kevin, Andy and I all went for Mongolian BBQ, served by those barbarians who cooked it on an over-turned manhole cover. What a better way to end the weekend of the convention dedicated to the fanciers of steam, Queen, and Country.



So, I won a writing contest. I'd written a story about 5 years ago that was kinda Steampunky. It was about a modern professor whose Grandfather was a crazy old professor who created wonderful things and strange devices, doing his work in a real-life ghost town at the marshy end of the San Francisco Bay. It was called Drawbridge and it's been gone for more than 50 years. It was an interesting story concept, kinda cheap and a purposefully heart-tuggy piece that wasn't particularly genre nor particularly mainstream. It was right on that line. I think I submitted it to Polyphony since it was the kind of story that wasn't on one side or the other. I renewed my belief that it was a fine venue for a story because it had declined me. That's one good sign.

So, the Steampunk Convention had a contest for Steampunk Music and Short Stories. I figured there'd be no harm in entering it. I had a story that had a real Steampunk method to it, but I needed to send it from home, but the OLPC doesn't deal with Microsoft at all, so I had to go with one that was on my Scribd.com site, and there it was. I sent it in, figuring it wouldn't win, but whatever.

And then it won.

They announced it on their website on Monday and I was the winner. 250 bucks! That's a much better deal than if I had managed to sell it to almost any market that'd take it. I'm still not a fiction writer. I'm just a guy who has some extra fiction pieces from his younger years.

Letter Graded Mail
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my gentle Readers

Warren Buff, come on down!

Hey, Chris.

Thanks for publishing the piece about the bid. Your Fandom on Infinite Earths series has been entertaining all the way through, but it was another article that caught my eye enough to LoC.

I wanted to jump in on the discussion of favorite albums. You noted two that I agree should be in the top ten (whether we're speaking of personal favorites or the pinnacle of the art form): Rumours and Kind of Blue. They both easily make my list. I also would only slightly disagree with your picks of Sgt. Peppers and Graceland -- I'd prefer Abbey Road and Bridge Over Troubled Water.

The list is of my Faves, but it also speaks to the matter of craft...though nowhere near exclusively. I won't claim Sex Packets is a near-perfect album, or even the best rap album out there, but

it's one that effects me! Abbey Road is a great album, though I never got into Bridge. As for Beatles albums, Revolver and The White Album are also up there.

A more obscure favorite of mine is the Deutsche Grammophon release of Herbert von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmoniker on Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Just about everything DG releases is top-quality recording, and for Beethoven, I haven't found anyone better than Karajan and the Berlin Phil. Combine the best recordings with the best performers on probably the single greatest piece of music in the Western tradition, and you've got an album to love.

That's the one they usually use in movies, right?

Ska is an area in which my favorite



album isn't really the best. My favorite would have to be Catch 22's Keasbey Nights, while I think the best is probably the Specials' eponymous debut. Working in Keasbey Nights' favor is the fact that, while it instantly struck me as an awesome album, I had initially been unenthused by one of the best songs on it: 9mm and a Three Piece Suit. Now, that track gets me pumped up to the point of wanting to skank every time I hear it.

I love The Specials, and it's right up there for sure. Catch 22 is a good band. Enjoyable. I think I caught on to them

through Live 365. I know have 9mm and a Three Piece Suit on MP3. At least I think I do. If you like Catch 22, I can think of a half-dozen Cali Ska bands you might enjoy. I'm thinking old skool Skankin' Pickle, The Janitor Against Apartheid and even Voodoo Glow-Skulls. I used to hate them, but they grew on me.

My perennial entry for hip-hop still has to be Jurassic 5's Quality Control. It was the album that really sold me on the idea of hip-hop being more than just rap and synthesized beats. It made me look at DJing as an artform, and I'm forever grateful to it for that. In particular, I'm still impressed with the way pieces of the beat are dropped out and replaced with samples in Monkey Bars. It has the rare quality of



flowing as a whole album (a la Abbey Road or Dark Side of the Moon) while breaking the tracks at smooth points for radio play. ***Let me add that De La Soul and Tribe Called Qwest both have come very close to the list, and usually you can count on Public Enemy being there, particularly Fear of a Black Planet. Jurassic 5's sound is pretty dope, though. I might also through an album that's both a Mash-Up and a Hip-Hop record out there for consideration: A Night at the Hip-Hopera by the Kleptonics.***

Another enduring favorite for me is Bob Dylan's Blood on the Tracks.

When I first heard it, I was impressed that Dylan could be so melodic. I was used to his 60s material, and liked his wordplay, but didn't know the full extent

of his powers as a storyteller until I heard this. The characters drew me in, and Shelter from the Storm haunts me. The line "In a little hilltop village, they gambled for my clothes" strikes me as some of the best Christ imagery I've ever encountered. It's too bad he uses the crown of thorns earlier in the song -- it was almost perfect.

I run hot and cold on Dylan. There are times when there's nothing better, and other times when I don't want to hear his whining. I do love songs like Who Killed Davey Moore. The Newport electric set was released recently and is an

amazing document, but it wouldn't be on any list I make.

Up until recently, I would have picked Johnny Cash's Folsom Prison album for such a list, but recently, another live country album has supplanted it -- Kris Kristofferson's Live at the Philharmonic. It features a short set of Willie Nelson, as well as an incredibly sarcastic cover of Okie from Muskogee. It has a great medley of Billy Dee and The Law is for Protection of the People, which is probably the best example of the verse/verse/Jesus verse format I've heard -- the final verse brings it home heavier than most. About half the songs on the album deal with substance abuse in one form or another, and a lot of the rest with unhealthy love (with some overlap). It shows off Kristofferson as



Cash's best stuff is always live. I'd say Live from San Quentin is his best, but Folsom Prison is pretty damn incredible too. Let me say that the Soundtrack for Oh Brother, Where Art Thou? was almost up there too. It's another fantastic example of modern and antique being simultaneously featured on the same disc.

Slipping up to your constraint of a top 10, another favorite is the Kinks' Lola Vs. Powerman and the Moneygoround, Part 1. This album has recently gotten some attention from the indie rock set after being used extensively in The Darjeeling Limited, and in it, I can hear many of the tropes of indie rock -- echoing from 1970. And in typical indie fashion, I loved it before it was cool. While the singles Lola and Apeman are fun, if you get ahold of this, check out the lesser-known tracks: Strangers, This

both a writer and a performer -- keep in mind that he wrote such famous songs as Help Me Make it Through the Night (which doesn't appear on this album, unfortunately), Sunday Morning Coming Down, and Me & Bobby McGee.

The varying forms of Country and I have a long-standing relationship. I've never been a big Kristofferson fan, but I loves me some Willie. His stuff is usually good, though there are few albums where I get into the whole thing and not just individual songs. Johnny

Time Tomorrow, A Long Way From Home, and Rats. This album is haunting at times, powerful, and often brilliantly satirical. It's an emotional rollercoaster ride, ending with the defiant Got to Be Free.

You know, if you listen to The Kinks and The Stooges and the MC5, the entire basis of modern indie rock can be heard.

The classic rock enthusiast in me wants to include such notables as The Who's Who's Next, Bruce Springsteen's Greetings from Asbury Park New Jersey, Yes's Close to the Edge, Electric Light

Orchestra's Out of the Blue, and Derek and the Dominos' Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs, but there's just not room. And I'm ashamed to be leaving Weezer's Blue Album, Jeff Buckley's Grace, Lyle Lovette's Pontiac, the Beastie Boys' Paul's Boutique, and Oingo Boingo's Dead Man's Party by the wayside, too. There's just too much great stuff out there.

Those are all worth albums (save for my dismissal of Jeff Buckley, but I'm not French, so I don't have that gene). Paul's Boutique and Licenceto III should be put in for serious contention along with that one that had Sureshot are all worth thinking about.

So now I'll attempt to rank a top ten.

1. Blood on the Tracks, Bob Dylan
2. Lola versus Powerman and the Moneygoround, part 1, The Kinks
3. Quality Control, Jurassic 5
4. Live from the Philharmonic, Kris Kristofferson
5. Kind of Blue, Miles Davis
6. Rumours, Fleetwood Mac
7. Keasbey Nights, Catch 22
8. Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Herbert von Karajan
9. Bridge Over Troubled Water, Simon & Garfunkel
10. Abbey Road, The Beatles

That ranking is sort of a surprise to me, but when I consider a combination of appreciation as high-quality music, emotional range and power, and my continuing desire to listen again and again, that's the ranking I come up with. Thanks for making me think of this.



- Warren

Good list. I think I should try and get a lot of folks to give me their lists and run stats!

And now...Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

Damn, you are making sure I can't keep up! I was making a few notes on 185, and 186 shows up! Hope the birthday celebrations were muy loco, and you had

the best time ever. All I have for a present are some words on issue 185 and 186 of The Drink Tank.

I'll gladly take a LoC over just about anything...except maybe a pony. I'd regift it to Linda, but it'd be nice!

185...well, the cover serves you right, ya big ape... John, I'd think that if you dressed up to go the FAAn Awards, they wouldn't let you in! Arkadelphicon would be in 2021, if my math's good. Have you noticed there aren't any fannish psychologists? Wonder

why, hm?

Ooh, good point!

I have heard of Robson Arms, and I think it was on CTV, but no one will ever accuse me of watching it. Furies have been an easy target by just about anyone involved in the entertainment industry, once they got some publicity. But, if the general media ever finds out about the plushies...well, I expect to see that on a CSI or Law and Order at some point. Every year, the general public needs someone new to laugh at. I'll happily take one of those shirts, Taral...about the only Worldcon I didn't get any souvenir shirts from was Torcon, and I ditched my bid shirts, too.

I wanna officially say Congrats to Taral for his Rotsler win too! I'll have more on this in the next couple of issues!

CorFlu 28, hm? Let's see...aha, so we did make it, hm? The US dollar must have sank like a rock again. Right now, the Canadian dollar has sank 30 cents in value in less than a year, so it once again costs me C\$1.25 to buy every US buck. We had been thinking of going to Florida next year, but we are having serious second thoughts. Guess I expected a Garcia CorFlu would disappoint some of the Old Guard, hm? Oh, well, I'll take a kick-ass party anyday. Tea at the break? I'll take a cuppa orange pekoe, cream and two sugars, please.

I'll make sure it happens!

186... There's Stickman on the front cover, crying, and asking, "Who keeps leaving all these dead bodies all over the place?"

Exactly! One of my very rare pieces of

Fan Art. I don't think we'll be seeing another for quite some time!

Musta been a party, and I'll bet your head still hurts. We're doing some more with our steampunk costumes this week...I need to get a white dress shirt with cufflink cuffs, and I need to hit some hobby shops for train stuff.

You can see, there are some amazing costumes that I've been steeping in, and I doubt I'll ever really wear a costume to a con!

I am not sure there's ever been a NASFiC in the northern US or Canada. Warren, if there was ever a tentative bid to host a NASFiC in Toronto, I never knew of it, and certainly had nothing to do with it. After Torcon, I doubt there will be the incentive to bid for any World convention, be it Science Fiction, Horror, Fantasy, Mystery or what have you.

I think World Fantasy may see another trip to Toronto. I think World Horror was there not too long ago, too.

Alanis Morissette has always been a person of interest to me. Under just her first name, she was a teen idol here. She took an old Quebecois song, put English lyrics to it, called it "From LA to New York", rocked it up, and made her name. And of course, she disappeared, but emerged years later with a nasal voice and an attitude, and made it even bigger. She has mellowed, and to be honest, nearly disappeared again.

She's still big down here on Adult

Contemporary stations, and she's a VH1 Fave.

More Dream Corflu...if this is what's going to be happening, it looks like I should start saving now. You realize that if you have Art Widner going to this convention, he's going to be over 100 years old? If you do the play instead of Andy Hooper, we just won't get through it, we'll be laughing too hard. Good food and good times and good friends...if Scotty can get the transporter up and running by that time, I'll be there.

We'll make it happen, bro!

Last weekend, we were in Montréal at Con*cept, had a fine time, and saw the area where the fanzine lounge will be at the Palais de Congres. It will not be in its own room, but in an open area as part of the exhibit space. Not the best, but it is what I can get. We will soon need ideas for the lounge, and what we can get from Anticipation. I've got the same signs we used for the 1994 lounge in Winnipeg, so they will see the light of day for the first time since '96, I think. I'll be casting about for fresh ideas.

Anything I can do to help, you know I'm willing!

Take care, good sir, a hug to the lovely Linda, and see you next time.

Yours,
Lloyd Penney.



Guess what? I'm spittin' mad. Yes, it's great that Obama is President. That's just fine. Honestly, I hardly care. The only real thing on the ballot that I cared a lot about was Prop 8, the Same Sex Marriage ban that we in CA had to vote on. They say it's too close to call yet, but it doesn't look good with the low number of votes left to be counted and the lead the bastards have. It's not right. It's just not right.

I really believe deeply that there's nothing more certain than that all people should be able to share love with whoever they please, and marriage is a part of that. I hope we can overturn it, but that'll take 2/3

Oceans cannot part,
Blood cannot unify us.
Above such droplets
May hope help us see how we
Are sisters, brothers, neighbors.
-John Hertz

Obama - On Election Night *Taral*

The election was not exactly a landslide -- even though Obama has more than twice the electoral college votes, he had 48% of the popular vote. That means almost half the voters subscribed to Republican-Neocon baloney. They believed that the GOP ticket (the party of do-nothing and business-as-usual) offered reform. Then too, there's still Sarah Palin, the fundamentalist community's Great White Hope. She might not survive in politics long enough to matter, but it's disturbing to even consider the possibility of Sarah Palin as the party favourite for 2012. On the face of it, it would be insanity to pick such an unelectable eccentric. But they did once...

Perhaps it would be for the best if the GOP *did* repeat their mistake... from the point of view of progressive Americans, of course.

Admittedly McCain conceded well, and Obama's speech was exactly what he needed to say on the eve of his victory -- cautioning people of a hard job ahead, and that there would be inevitable set-backs. Now, if only the knuckle-dragging element can resist the impulse to shoot him...

My guess is that the mere election of Obama will actually help restore some stability to the global economy. Hard to say how much. His election is no more than

a symbol of potential change at this point. But I think people feel hopeful about the outcome of that recent November night. America is back! The one that the world admired, not pitied and feared. Good vibes may well translate into some gains in the short term. But make no mistake, there is much broken in the world's affairs that needs fixing. It will be hard going.

Its also curious that Americans flocked to the polls while this time Canadians could hardly be bothered to put their beer down, and scratch an x on a ballot before going back to the beer. Whahoppen? I didn't think the issues were *that* vague or boring.

In the meantime, our re-elected Tory government is in the act of retrenching itself. While Americans are joining a world chorus for Change, Prime Minister Harper preaches Caution. While the rest of the globe questions the institutions that led us to the brink of mutual catastrophes - financial chaos, oil shortages, energy needs, food shortages, environmental change, political tensions, religious strife, terrorism, war -- there is Canada -- counseling delay! Let us *not* act. *Wait* and see. Why fix what *used* to work?

For once it feels embarrassing to admit to being Canadian.

As for my thoughts about McCain and the President-Elect, Barack Obama



represents at least a *chance* of change. He won't be able to alter anything truly fundamental in one term, or two. I wouldn't worry about the USA becoming a peacenik, socialist, paradise, with free LSD given out by former DEA agents on the street corners. But all I think McCain could promise was more of the same that the Republicans have been serving America for the last eight years. For that matter, there has been no basic difference in the way America has run for at least thirty years, regardless of which party sat in the White House. Ever since the Regan Counter-Revolution, a fifty year long program of genuine reform had been systematic reversed, allowing once again the uncontrolled growth of corporate privilege and power, at the expense of ordinary

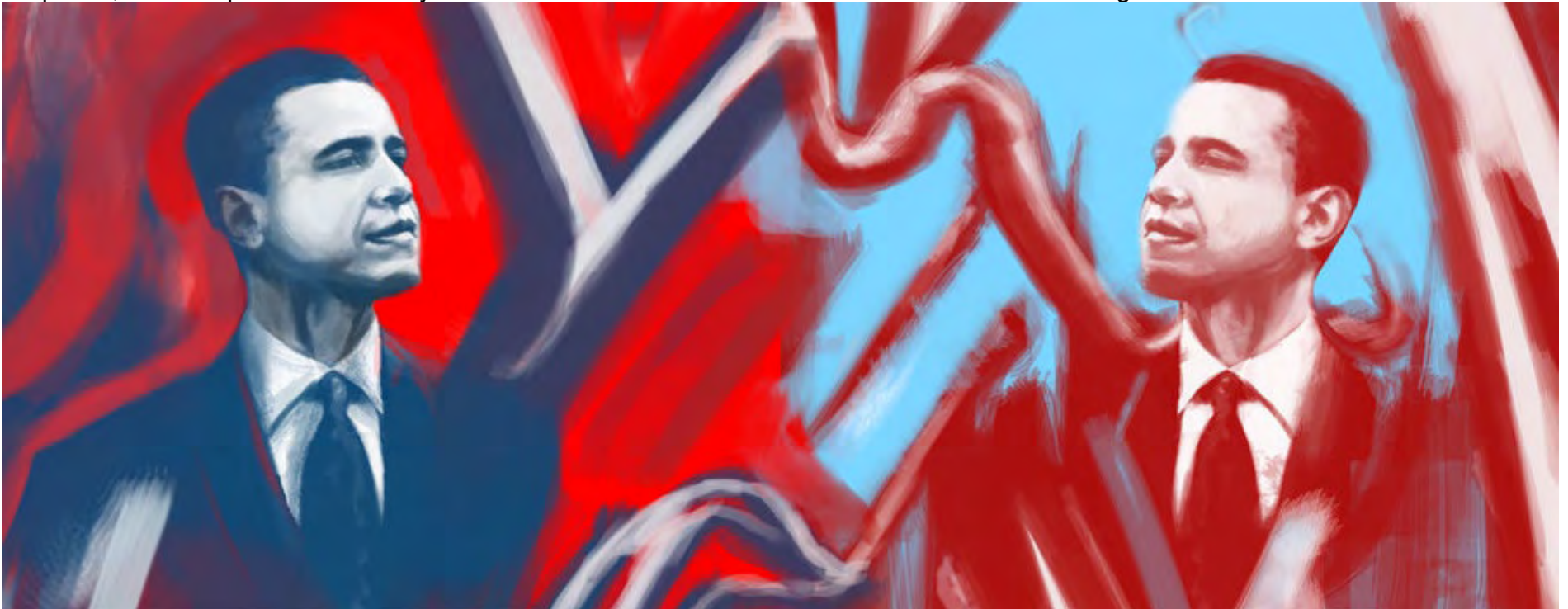
people.

With Dubya, the counter-revolution took another giant step backward. America was being de-Americanized as corporations moved jobs, production, and assets, to nations even friendlier to the enjoyment of unfettered power. Meanwhile, the armed forces began to take on more and more the aspect of the White House's private army.

At *best*, McCain was a throwback to Bush Sr., rather than the incompetence and autocracy of Bush Jr. Trickle-down economics, de-regulation, and lower taxes for the rich had done Americans little good since Ronald Reagan introduced them, and were unlikely to produce bounty for average Americans in future either. Republican unilateralism had cost the nation its

reputation world-wide, and deprived it of allies. And... Gawd help us.. what would have happened had McCain died of old age, mid-way through his inaugural speech, an over-seventy year old man finally worn out? President Palin would have probably turned the US into something resembling Dr. Seuss with nukes. Christian-Rights for Women, Creationism in schools, and a gun in every purse!

The idea that the Republican party could offer reform, and pretend it wasn't responsible for the ineptness, incompetence, short-sightedness, arrogance, and plain greed of the last eight years wasn't credible. It is possibly the best thing that can be said for America, and for the future, that at least half the voters recognized it.



This Just in...From John Purcell!!!

Jumping Jiminy Cricket, Christopher; you're almost to 200 issue! Keep this up and we will have to put you on publishing hiatus until your pubic hiatal hernia heals. I have no idea if that sequence of words makes sense, but I really do like the parallelisms and multi-alliteration.

It could well turn out that I'll have my 200th issue as the 4th Annual Giant Sized Annual!

I also really like the alternative Corflu report you wrote. Sure, it was 73 times longer than my little contribution, but it was still a lot of fun, and that's the whole point of writing dreck, I mean, stuff like this. It's good writing exercise, and you done good. Thank you for getting this out of your system, and I'm honored and humbled to have been a small part of it.

It's not the size of the FAAn Fiction, it's getting people interested enough to sit through it. I think you did that much better than I did.

Speaking of my small part, I see that Clawed Money wrote in. Ah, the wonders of modern technology, especially wireless Internet, since Clawed was able to read issue 185 without Internet access. That's impressive. Either that, or he's smoking some pretty good stuph that he's growing down there on Satawal. Sure hope Clawed doesn't use it all up. We sure could use some of it in Seattle next March.

Always a good thing!

Eric Mayer used up some primo loc space defending his spelling errors against

my keen editorial feet, but I'll forgive him. To be fair, I won't remind him either of the Yankees inglorious 2008 season because that would be cruel and an unfair criticism. Colour me moderate-orange. (That British spelling was for Eric's wife, Mary.) Besides, the Bronx Bombers have a brand new, gob-smacking beautiful replica of Yankee Stadium to move into next Spring. I forget what they're going to do with the original Yankee Stadium because it is simply so damn historic. They're not gonna tear it down, are they? Now THAT would be totally cruel and heartless with no respect whatsoever for baseball history. It is an architectural icon of our national past-time. I mean, really; leave the place alone. I saw a couple games there when a kid visiting NYC with my family back in the early 1960s. It's a way cool stadium.

I rarely have nice things to say about the Yankees (they are the lesser Dodgers and anyone who knows us San Franciscans can tell you what that means) but I will say that the design for their new stadium is pretty great.

Back-tracking a bit, I really liked Taral's little piece "Somewhere on Furrymuck." I am glad he's doing a lot - and I mean a LOT - of writing lately. The man's a demon fanwriter all of a sudden. Heck, every so often I get a new arkle from Taral for Askance. Even if it doesn't seem like a good fit for the zine, it is still a very enjoyable or interesting arkle. Plus, I am happy for Taral being awarded this year's Rotsler Award. He deserves it for such

a long career in fandom and all of those countless illoes and covers he's drawn over the years. Congratulations, Taral Wayne!

I'll be doing a special piece on Taral and his Rotsler win in the next issue. The Rotsler is by far my favourite fannish award, which might be because there's no way I can ever think of winning one so I respect it much more than those I could possibly win!

Interesting story about the 2010 NASFiC bid for Raleigh, North Carolina from Warren Buff. Good luck to him. If all goes well, and I get my nominators lined up and all of my other ducks in a row, I will be standing for DUFF in 2010. Do you know, Chris, if anybody else has said they might be interested in also standing for DUFF that year? I need to know sort of soon since Joe the Plumber's waiting for his assignment to go into my competition's headquarters and mung up their toilet. (Yeah, I took pity on poor Joe the Plumber since he's out of work now that McCain lost the election.) Joe wants to install some kind of electronic listening device inside the tank, or something like that...

I've heard a few names, actually. I'd expect a crowded field. It usually is when there's a WorldCon in Oz. And whoever wins will have to deal with filling the shoes of Janice Gelb, who was the delegate the last time WorldCon was in Australia. She did a wonder there, as I understand it.

Anywho. Thanks for the zine, young feller. Let's see how long it takes you to get

to issue 200. Judging by the time span between your latest issues, it could be a little while. You must be getting busier at work. Oh, well. I am also extremely busy, but really have the pubbing Jones biting me to get cracking on the next issue of Askance. More good material on hand.

All the best,
John Purcell

Well, I took a bit of a break, but now I'm back and things are going to be sliding along like always. I'm ever 2/3 of the way through my NaNoWriMo and should be done by Wednesday. It's always that way. Short bursts followed by long periods gasping for breath.

OK, that's it for this issue. What's next? Well, Taral's tribute for winning the Rotsler and a piece of his aforementioned fan writing. There's a cover from Briana SpaceKat-Wu and a review from her as well. Expect art from Taral, Steve Stiles, and more! Plus, there may well be the return of Fannish Memory Syndrome from Steve Green, if he's not too busy producing work for his TAFF run. I'll have the names of those standing by then and I'm hoping for a race that was every bit as fun as the one that I went through last year. There's no telling what'll happen, but I can tell you that it's going to be a good time for all.

I want to thank John Hertz for his powerful poem, Dann Lopez for The Dork Knight, The LoC Box for the great words, the Good Captain Kevin Standlee for his photos, My man Taral for the article and the coming rain of awesome, all the folks at Steam Powered who were so nice to me and my good people, and of course, Tamberlaine and Cutch for the art.

And to the rest of the world, I say I'll see ya next week with more of what I always do. You can't go wrong putting out issues when you've got such great people around sendign you amazing stuff!

Tales of the DORK KNIGHT



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