

THE DRINK TANK

Another wonderful cover from Brianna SpaceKat-Wu! Always good to have her stuff in *The Drink Tank*. It's also good to have another piece from the *Man Himself*: Steve Stiles! Always a good thing. That's it down there.

This issue is all about art. Not just any art, but the art of Mr. Taral Wayne, the 2009 WorldCon's Fan guest of Honor, and the reason we're doing an issue full of his stuff, winner of the 2008 Rotsler Award. It even explains why for the first time since issue 99, we're doing it in portrait instead of landscape!

The Rotsler is the highest honor a Fan Artist can get based on a lifetime of work. Named after Bill "The Thrill" Rotsler, famed LA-based Fan Artist who was one of the true legends of Fandom for a

few decades, the Rotsler has been given out to eleven magnificent artists, including ATom, Steve Stiles, Harry Bell, Grant Canfield, Ray Nelson, Alexis Gilliland, Marc Shirmeister, Kurt Erichsen, Terry Jeeves and Brad Foster. It's an amazing group of artists.

To me, the Hugo may have more Wow Factor, but there's nothing more incredible than giving an award to those who have a long body of work for that long body of work. While other awards may give praise for a specific period of time, The Rotsler goes beyond that, giving a lifetime's work a once-over and declaring the winner worthy of eternal praise!

And here's another reason why I love it: it's named after Rotsler. I never

met him. Dad said he did, but I never got to. He was one of those guys who you had a reaction to. While I was never a fan of his cartoons, the stuff he did that were space pieces, reptile over-lords, landscapes, mysterious castles, women trapped in globes and so on were wonderful. Those alone were enough to settle his place in history for me, but the little cartoons that popped up in so many fanzines for so many years are an incredible piece of the fannish tradition. I wish I could live the kind of life he did, but I'm already behind in getting to it!

And so, here's Taral Wayne, the 2008 Winner of the Rotsler Award, with commentary on the pieces he sent my way for this tribute. I think you'll agree that this is evidence that he well deserved the award, and his frank discussion of the pieces and the world that surrounds them are both enlightening and tough, something that great fan art and fan writing can often be accused of.

And now, on to the show!
garcia@computerhistory.org

GRIZZLY BEARS IN YELLOWSTONE PARK WERE FORCED TO IMITATE A FAMED "ROCK" GROUP. MANY WERE INJURED WHILE ATTEMPTING THE FIRE SPITTING ACT! ALL DUE TO THE SONIC DEATH RAY CONSPIRACY!



Think Tank

My Comments on Rotsler Award

Folio

Taral Wayne

Contents

Rotsler Letraset- Page 4

Aftermath- Page 5

Aquaphile- Page 5

Couch Potato- Page 6

Colour By Number- Page 7

Crew Mate- Page 8

Dating Game- Page 9

Decompression- Page 10

Equinocturne- Page 11

Fetish Sawyer- Page 12

Glass Pixie- Page 12

Hot Wheels- Page 13

Huckster's Room- 14

Lifting- Page 15

Sauna- Page 16

Rotsler Letraset – It likely makes most sense if I start with the infamous “Rotsler” Letraset. Readers might be a little surprised to learn that none of the replicated figures and symbols were drawn by Rotsler. I drew one of each type myself, freehand. I will admit to having actual Rotsler illos as models, though I altered them as I saw fit. The fake Letraset sheet was originally printed on a large sheet of paper, something like 10 by 14, folded in half, and run through one issue of my last genzine – New Toy.

People have generally assumed the Letraset was a tribute to the master. It seems odd, therefore, to be a winner of the Rotsler Award and have to admit that it was no tribute. No, I’m sorry, it was only a private joke.

I never really cared all that much for Rotsler’s art. It was clever, and often apropos. Rotsler certainly had a sense of how far to go with what he had, so he never

over-reached himself. His cartoons were never ugly or badly constructed. They just never excited me. It didn’t seem to me, that as an exercise in pure drawing, **he was** exceptional. As a cartoonist? Well, that’s something different. Many *extremely* successful cartoonists are lackluster draftsmen. In the field of cartooning, rendering isn’t the point. But I’m more of a renderer than a humorist, and that’s how I look at a drawing.

Still, fandom is full of cartoonists. In large part, I picked on Rotsler *because* of his stature in fandom. It’s understandable how he came by it. The man was supplying fanzines with cartoons and art before I was born. He also hit his stride at a time in fandom when his sort of minimalist drawing was “hip” – it was the era of Fieffer and abstract jazz covers. A further plus was that Rotsler was pretty darn easy to trace on a wax stencil, something that could not be said for, say, Hal Foster, or even Walt Kelly.

Yet fans spoke of Rotsler’s “inimitable” line. This annoyed me. I thought it looked awfully easy to imitate, so I set out to prove it. I did so on a number of occasions, and once even presented a fake (printed in a fanzine) to Rotsler to autograph. He did. Then he did a double-take and said, “Hey, wait! That’s not mine!” Some of my imitations were weaker than others, but I finally decided to settle the issue once and for all, if only in my mind.

Hence the Letraset. It not only proved I could copy the Master so perfectly that nobody could tell, but it also made a statement that I regarded the Master’s efforts to be rather repetitive and interchangeable.

So there. I guess the committee can take away my plaque, but I’ve already spent the money!

If I may be serious for a moment, my apologies if my confession has *actually* angered anyone. I assume we are all fans, have broad minds that can make room for differing opinions, and can laugh at ourselves a little.



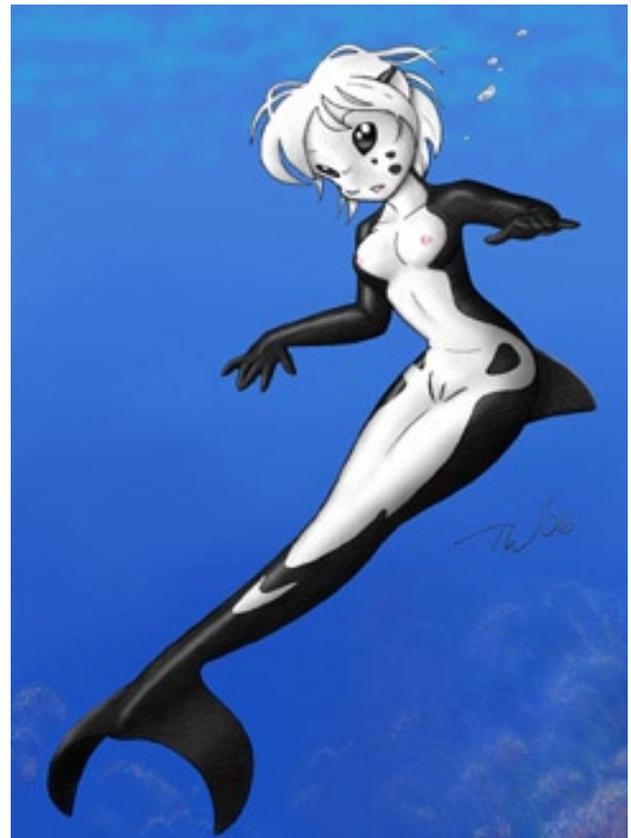
Aftermath – The need for money makes artists do strange things.

I'm not much of a fan of dark fantasy, but the book dealer, who commissioned this piece for her catalog, was. It was an interesting challenge regardless. From time to time, creative artists like to take on something they don't normally do. If you've seen much dark fantasy illustration, you know that it's mainly, well, *dark*. Dark in subject matter, dark in tone, but usually dark in fact, since more black ink gets splashed about than is common with other genres.

Keeping with tradition, I cast almost everything in deep, dark shadow, including most of the zombie (or whatever it is). The foreground roots and branches are not all black, but heavily shaded. If you look carefully, you can see a couple of books partly submerged in the swamp water. In the background, among the decaying trees is the stump of Toronto's CN Tower. Crumpled in the zombie's fist is a copy of the dealer's own catalog. How it survived Apocalypse, I leave to your imagination.

Aquaphile – One of the wonderful things about Photoshop is that you can often dispense with the inking stage. This piece began with a humble pencil drawing. I skipped right over inking by boosting the contrast digitally. If you look closely, you can just make out the original lines under the black parts of the "mermaid's" body.

Once I had a foreground, I created a new layer, filled it with a blue, created a gradient from top to bottom, and used the air-brush tool to paint indistinct formations of coral on the sea bottom. It's easy – almost – if you know how to do it. But of course, you never do... With Photoshop you're always learning new things.



I believe I may have coloured the piece specifically for the use of *Rowrbrazzle*, the cartoonists' apa. (It was begun by Marc Schirmeister back around 1984, and survives still.) Now that I think of it, I wonder why I didn't shop it around after *'Brazzle*, for some widely available zine to use. Or did I? No... I don't think I did. I've only just got it through my head that with so many digital zines, these days, colour covers cost no more than black & white. I've only done three or four so far.



Couch Potato – Couch Potato is a commission for a furry in Germany, who imagines himself a slobby cat guy. He e-mailed me photos of the corner of his living room, so I could get the details right. I haven't incorporated everything in the sketch at this point, only the main features. Some of the details that are included are those I added myself – the plethora of TV, VCR, and other remotes, for instance. The “bobble-head” of Mojo-Jojo. The pizza slice. Although I began this piece in 2006, I'm a little embarrassed to admit I'm still inking the finished 11 by 17 drawing.

Colour By

Number – This double parody has an odd history. Those of you who were around back in the 1980's remember the commotion caused by Richard Bergeron on the one hand; Avedon Carol, Ted White, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, etc. on the other. I wasn't involved, but had a ring-side seat for the proceedings. Was I making an ambivalent comment, or just taking an opportunity to imitate Bergeron's style, when I did this? I'm not sure. It seemed funny at the time, though, to draw Avedon thumbing her nose, in the style of the person she was thumbing it at.

Strangely, Bergeron was

delighted with it. But nobody else seemed to be. (I had expected it would likely be the other way around, or that *nobody* would be happy with me.) I forget how many fanzines I tried this cover on, but no-one would publish it. Finally, more than twenty years later, Marty Cantor said he was game, and it appeared on *No Award* at long last.

I did colour this piece by hand, some years ago. This version shown, however, is coloured by Photoshop. The original was done with colour pencils, and has a "texture". While not unattractive as such, in this case the perfectly smooth colours produced by Photoshop are more like the smoothly silk-screened colours of Bergeron's Warhoon covers. I also used Photoshop to correct an unfortunate "numbering" mistake.



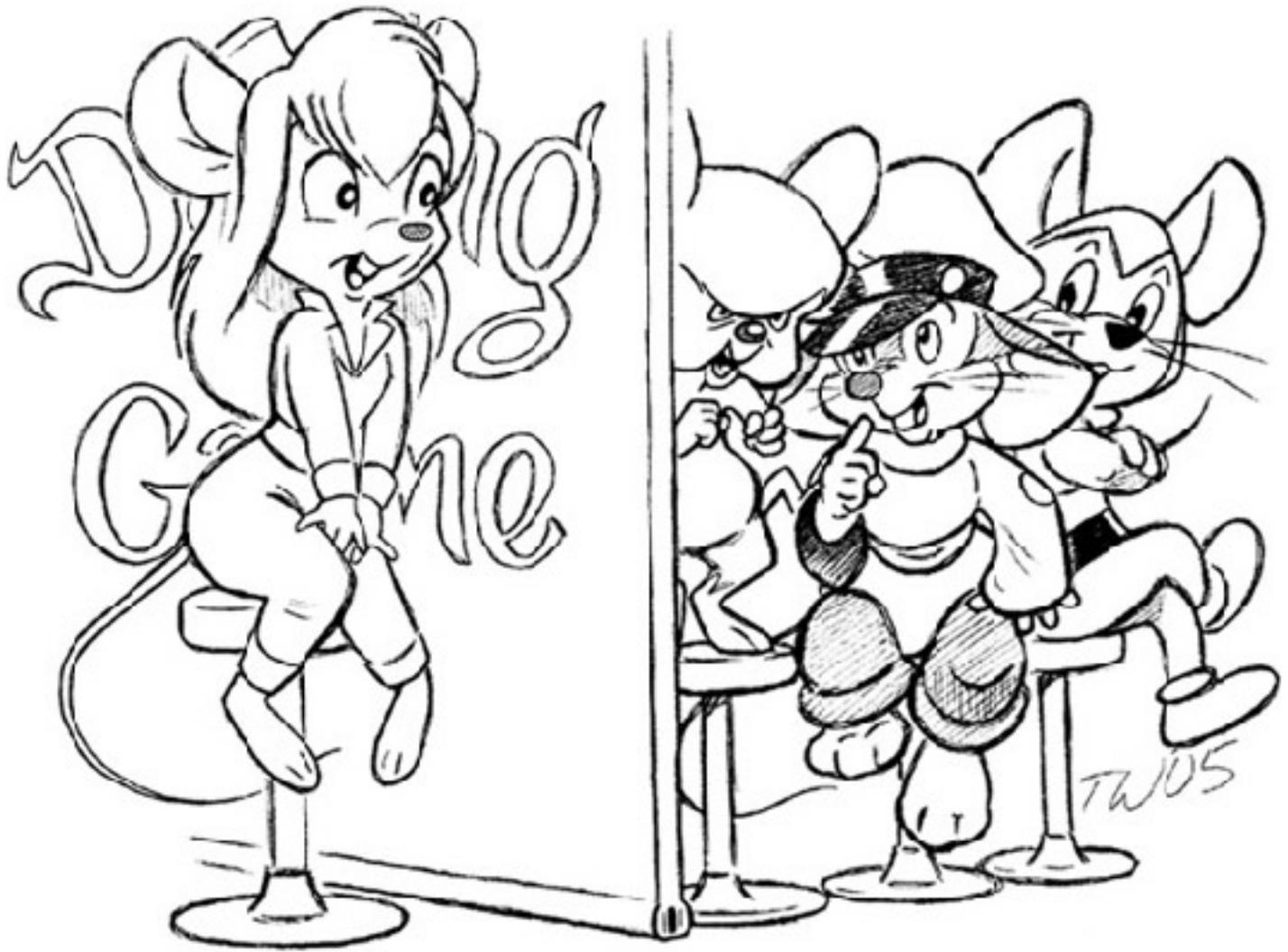
Crew Mate

– My original aim was to do a cover for Pat Mueller's *Pirate Jenny*. I thought this fit the title. For whatever reason, she never got around to using it. (I can imagine several reasons, but why exercise my paranoia?) Eventually I recycled it for Mike Glycer's *File 770*. In time I coloured it, as well, selling it as a print. You can see from the texture that the job was done with colour pencils. However, when I scanned it, the faint tints of the sky dropped out of the image. I restored them with Photoshop.

In the mid-80's I rekindled an old interest in military hardware. I began building model kits again, and had built several Japanese

made kits of handguns in 1/1 scale, complete with working parts. (*Plastic*, working parts, not suitable for live ammunition of course.) The tank turret illustrated is from a German Tiger I. In the holster is a snub nosed Smith & Wesson .38 with over-sized grips for accurate shooting. I think you'll recognize the ham sandwich without my help, but the stubby bottle may be a bit of a mystery unless you're a fellow Canuck. Back then we still had bottles with short necks. I don't know why we switched to the American long necked bottle, unless it was just another corporate decision, to simplify production. I don't drink beer, mind you, but I miss our own bottles. The brand is Molson's Export. Don't ask me about the cigarette. I don't think that type have brand names...





Dating Game – I drew this just for the fun of it. When I say I’m not a “cartoonist”, clearly I protest too much, because sometimes I do like to draw something funny. What I find funny, however, may or may not seem so to everyone. In this case I’ve played around with familiar cartoon characters, putting Gadget (from Disney’s *Rescue Rangers*) in The Dating Game. The potential dates are three other cartoon mice. Two are easily recognized – Brain from Warner Bros. *Pinky and the Brain*, and Fievel from *An American Tail*. It is a rare person, though, who recognizes the third mouse. It’s a Walter Lantz character, used in only *one* animated cartoon in 1959, who appeared in a small handful of comics. So don’t feel bad if you didn’t put the name Space Mouse to him.

Decompression – This appeared in an early issue of File 770, before Mike Glycer began using full page covers. Later, I drew a more elaborate version of this called “Book Scout”. In the first one, the damaged spaceship is leaking fanzines – copies of Mike Glycer’s own *Scientifriction*, Arnie Katz’s **** *Extra*, Stu Shiffman & Larry Carmody’s *Raffles*, Terry Hughe’s *Mota*, Peter Robert’s *Egg*, and Ian Maule’s *Nabu*. In the later drawing the fanzines became books, and were being gathered from free fall by my imaginary better-half, Saara Mar. It too was published by Mike, in File 770. But I rather like the simplicity of this one. I believe I was trying to capture something of the almost elemental quality of some of the art I was seeing in fanzines back in the 70’s. Art by Vaughn Bode, and Dan Steffan, to name a couple of the artists I liked.





Equinocturne – this is a rare avis. Those of you who read the novels of Robert Charles Wilson may not be aware that he's the same Bob Wilson who was part of the Toronto fan scene in the 70's. He had one short story published early in his career, that he would probably like to forget. It was published in a 1975 issue of Analog. Naturally, one of the other writers had the cover. Because I'm a wildly impractical sort of guy, I decided to fix that... I not only did the art entirely without lines, so that it would look like a Frank Kelly Freas painting, I forged his signature as well, and hand lettered the whole thing. I had a couple of colour photocopies made, and replaced the

real covers on a couple of real copies of the February Analog. I own one, and Bob the only other.

Apart from Bob, myself, and a handful of visitors to my apartment, "Equinocturne" has never been seen by anyone.



Fetish Sawyer – When *Cats Don't Dance* first showed on the big screen, I thought it was as near to the perfect animated film as any would ever get. I'm a little less enthusiastic now than I was, but it remains a damned good movie. It helps, too, if you like musicals. One of the characters was the particularly appealing Sawyer Cat. Her number in mid-film, "Tell Me Lies" is one of the nicest bits of torch singing I've heard – it should be, it was sung by Natalie King Cole.

In the film, Sawyer is a rather prim and repressed person, who feels she's learned her lesson in life, and has stopped reaching for the stars. Having a rather bent sense of humour, I wondered if she might have a more interesting personal life than she let on, and produced this piece with her got up in fetish gear. It was at a time when I had seen so much fetish furry art, that I was beginning to see the appeal... up to a point anyway. Since then I've made an effort to return the way I came. The other way lies madness.

But I still like the drawing. Once again, it's only a pencil piece that I've beefed up in Photoshop, coloured, and added frills. The background double is an overused trick you see a lot of in anime fan art. I think pretty nearly half. I played with it a couple of times so I know how the trick's done. It's fairly easily done, actually, which may account for how it became a cliché.

Glass Pixie – This too, is mainly a Photoshop artifact. The original is a very rough sketch. But if you know what you're doing you can take next to nothing, and turn it into a surprisingly impressive piece of eye-candy with a computer. I might not have bothered working this one up, had it not been for a correspondent who runs a website with a lot of my artwork. He asked why I never seem to do male figures. I sent him what I could, but it was a pitifully small assortment. I can't help finding female figures more pleasing to draw. When I doodled this one, I felt obliged to pass it on. Clearly, as it stood, it was in need of more



work.

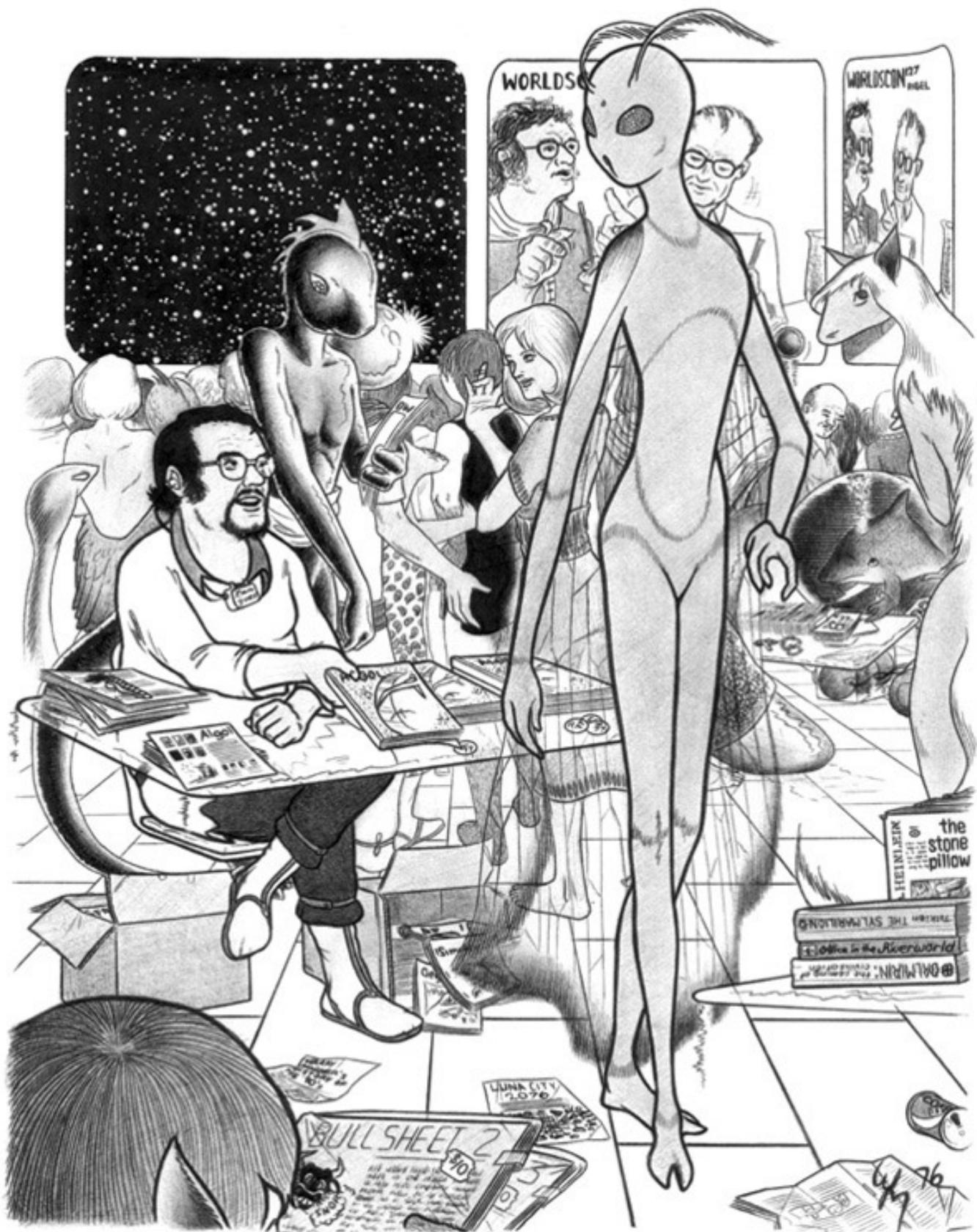
I might have done it in some straightforward way, but decided it would be more interesting to create a transparent effect. So the pixie became a mere glass bauble on a table-top.



Hot Wheels – I’ve kept the number of pics in this folio that include Saara Mar to a minimum. But a folio with no drawings of Saara would hardly be a genuine sample of my work. This one shows Saara admiring my new wheels, and also another “alien” character named Tangel. She’s the short one with the tail, next to Saara.

The hot rod is my attempt to blend classic styling with the new look in hot rodding, which goes too far toward modernization for my taste. I’ve retained more of the detail, and original lines of the Ford ’32 roadster. As well, all four wheels are fitted with baby moons. As a gesture to the new century, I blended the headlights into the fenders, added a sharply sloped windshield, and a Dodge Viper 490 c.i. mill. If you care about such things, you likely know what I’m talking about.

You may guess that I like cars. I do. Sadly, I’ve never owned one. But I do, at least, have a couple of hundred die-cast models of many models, from every decade. Being able to choose a 1919 REO Touring, or a brand new Audi R8, to sit on my work table for inspiration isn’t as good as having a car I can actually drive, but it has to do.



Huckster's Room (Worldscon 127) – I wanted to include as broad an assortment of my work as I could. “Huckster’s Room” is one of the oldies I thought would be familiar from old zines. It was done at Linda Bushyager’s request, for her edition of *The Neo-Fans Guide*. It was drawn back in the days when I used gray-tones in a lot of my work, creating trouble for anyone who tried to print it, and usually leading to disappointment on my part when I saw what bad mimeography, or cheap xerox, had done to the art. This piece is no exception. The mimeographed version isn’t too terribly bad, but this is what it was *supposed* to look like.

Although this pretends to be the Worldcon for 2069, unfortunately there is no likelihood that the wall-screens would be showing a debate between Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke. Somebody obviously forgot to invent the terrific scientific advance that makes lifespans of a hundred and fifty, or two hundred years possible, because both Clarke and Asimov have passed away since I drew this. And here I thought I was being clever showing them looking really old.

There’s also an aged Heinlein in the crowd. As you know, he’s gone too. Up front is Andy Porter at his table selling Algol still... and he hasn’t been looking so good lately. I wonder if I hadn’t put a hex on them all.

There are lots of details you should find interesting. Overlook nothing. Notice the Montreal in/en ’77 buttons on the corner of Andy’s table. And the vinyl bagged copies of *Bullsheet*, the MidAmeriCon newsletter, selling for \$50 each. Don’t miss the copy of “*The Stone Pillow*” either.



Lifting – I drew this at the request of Brad Foster, who wanted to produce a tiny booklet of cartoons and drawings all based on the acronym, “LoCs”. He created a list of many possible meanings for the four letters. I chose “Lifting Ourselves Coolly Skyward.” I figured almost all the other contributions would be humorous. Instead, I wanted to do something that was atmospheric.

In my mind I had a floating city, spread among the clouds. That proved to be too much of a chore, and frankly the detailed buildings and spires were really not essential. Instead, I had the string of floaters rising up toward what might a moon or twin planet. This much simplified the image as well as the job. It might seem a little odd for me to say it, considering how much detail I’ll put in a drawing, but *too much is too much*. A picture should not have more in it than it needs.

Fans of the Powerpuff Girls should note the Bubbles dolly. And the fourth figure on the way up is Saara, seen from

behind and below. I couldn’t resist the cameo. Brad liked the piece, I guess, because he used it for the back cover.



Sauna – I like cats. They're easy to live with, and fun to draw.

Of course, no cat I've lived with has been stacked like this, or liked taking a sauna. Until I got this drawing into Photoshop, it was only a pencil sketch. Once again, I worked the magic of 1's and 0's – darkening lines, airbrushing her luscious figure three-dimensionally, and suggesting a steamy background. I discovered that sometimes gray-tones are enough. It isn't necessary to use a full palette just because it's there.

Chris' Notes:

I have to say that Taral has always been around as far as my experience of Fanzines go. I've seen many of his works in many places, including in the long run of Gallery, an art APA, that was given to me as a part of my archive of zines. While a

lot of the stuff in those issues did not appeal to me personally (though there was stuff from DL Norton that I enjoyed) it was always Taral stuff I found the most out of. I'm still not sure why, but there's something there.

Taral has appeared in the Drink Tank a few times, with an extended interview that Frank Wu did where I got to run a bunch of his art. I've always intended to give Taral another major 'show' as it were in my pages, and the plan was to try right before WorldCon, but the Rotsler showed up and that sealed it.

Of the pieces he passed my way, the one that moves me the most is Decomposition. While everything in the group is fantastic, it's that piece, zines tumbling through space and time, that really got me. I couldn't explain it. It was one of those moments when you come across a piece that really shows you what you love. And that was a piece I loved. The mention of Vaughn Bode, probably my favorite comix artist, and Dan Steffan, one of the truly great Fan Artists, also helped earn it a place in my heart.

I hope to do more of these tributes to Rotsler winners, both prior winners and the new ones as they come out. That's all for this special issue!