

THE DRINK TANK ISSUE 208



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That's another Genevieve cover! I love the fact that I've got her art to play with. Her stuff is a ton of fun. Also, this issue features the return of The Dork Knight, which also meant that I had to go back to Portrait for an issue. I'll be running more over the coming months, and sometimes that'll mean a different design. And, of course, Brad Foster designed the logo for The Drink Tank!



Back when I was a kid, it wasn't weird to go over to some kid's house to play some Nintendo. You'd bring a game or two from your collection, you'd all huddle around the NES and the two of you would play for hours. There were some classics, like Pro Wrestling, Ice Hockey and Baseball, which were just pure blasts to play. It was the 1980s and the Nintendo ruled the roost!

In the early 90s, you got the Super Nintendo, the SNES. It was prettier than the NES, had better graphics, but there was just something about it that made it less fun to play together. You had some games which were fun to play as a unit, but there was nowhere near the same level of going over to someone's house to play Nintendo.

Then in college, there was the Genesis. We had a Genesis in our room, which was a lot of fun. We'd play Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter II all night. There was NHL 95 and John Madden's Football. It was a gathering point. People would get together and we'd play video games as a sort of a party. There'd be days where we'd put together what would more or less resemble a party of people getting together to play one game or another.

After college, when I came back to Santa Clara and my friends had their own place just a few blocks from my house and work, there were long nights playing games. We'd throw in WCW vs. the World, or Mario Cart 64 and play all night long. It was awesome fun, especially since we were all just starting to get ourselves working and such.



And then it was over. Sure, for a while we had Goldeneye and Halo at Sarah's that we would play, but mostly video games had become a one-man show, more or less. You'd buy a game for the PC or whatever console and you'd sit at home playing it. Maybe you'd get a game that was networked and you'd converse and have fun with those folks, but it would be you alone in a room playing. It was fun, but it wasn't the same.

Last Saturday, Linda and I went over to Ken and Jerry's to play the Wii with Bryan & Mette and Kevin & Andy. We've done a few games nights before. Mostly, we enjoy some dinner, watch some videos, drink a lot of wine, and enjoy a few games. Ken and Jerry got a Nintendo Wii recently, so we had set that up for a game night.

It was just like old times, only better.

The Wii concept is really smart: make games more physically active. Wii Fit is a huge deal and has sold incredibly well. They have a Form Baton, a controller that looks like a remote control, which is the heart. You also have this trigger thingee which attaches to the Form Baton to create the Nunchuk (or numchuk, depending on your side of that religious war) and that allows you play more games and requires you to be active. It's very smart.



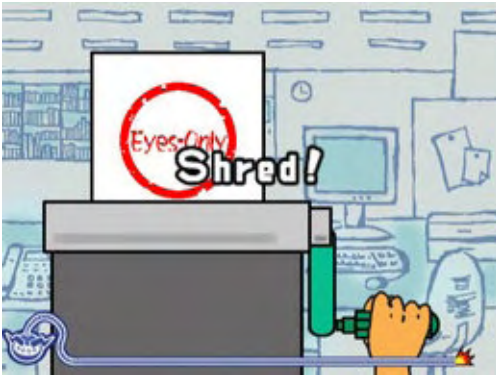
The first game we played were a series of small challenges designed to make you better at all the forms of the game. It's called WarioWare: Smooth Moves, and it was a really smart, fun and thoughtful game. You did a series of small games, each about 5 seconds long, and you had to hold the controller in a specific way. It introduced all the different concepts you'll have to face if you buy a Wii. These games are short, some are kinda simple and dumb, and the little stories they told between the levels were hilarious. Even the way they introduced the new positions (like The Waiter, The Mohawk, The Elephant and The Samurai) were really funny. You'd start the level and one person'd played the first game and then pass it along to the next person and they'd do the next game. When it got to Ken, he'd toss it back to me and I'd play the next game. As in any good game, after a few challenges, you had to fight the Boss Stage, which was a longer game than the others.

The key was the passing around. While most of us aren't gamers, especially Linda, it was a party game that was meant to be played by a large group of people hanging out. It was so much fun and it reminded me of those days playing Ice Hockey with the pals at someone's house. I loved it and it's exactly why Nintendo has come blazing back.

The Playstation, first released in 1995, really took a bite out of Nintendo. It was a good system, but it really was a system that invited the One Player concept more than any other. There were a lot of party games on the Playstation, and that was sort of the point. The Playstation became the most popular console since the Atari 2600 (there are arguments both for and against that statement, but the numbers play out) and it really set up the war for superior computing power. The Xbox from Microsoft basically did everything that the Playstation did in the same ways. It was about power to those consoles.



The Xbox 360 and the Playstation 3 were both high-powered systems that both had some slippy moments. They



were based around giving the player as much power in graphics and AI as possible. Nintendo went the other way. They made a console that was nowhere near as powerful as either the Xbox 360 or the Playstation 3 (or the Playstation 2 for that matter) but they gave it a concept and designed it with the idea that people would get together and play it. Just look at the name Wii (pronounced We). It says it right there. We. Not I, but we. It's a great idea.

So, the days of going over to a friend's place to play Nintendo is back and I, for one, am glad to be there.

"The consensus was that power isn't everything for a console. Too many powerful consoles can't coexist. It's like having only ferocious dinosaurs. They might fight and hasten their own extinction." Shigeru Miyamoto on the Wii.

Letter Graded Mail
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my loyal readers

Let us start with Mark Plummer on the CorFlu Review issue!

Chris,

Just been looking through the latest issue, and I conclude that it is surely the most awesome of the hundreds of fanzines you've produced over the last few years. I don't know this because I haven't analysed every one of those thousands of fanzines, but this one has an AQ (Awesome Quotient) of 1.83, this being the ratio of appearances of the word 'awesome' (or derivatives) to the number of pages, which rises to 2.2 if you disregard the cover. DT#205 only managed 0.14. You've got to admit that that's pretty, well, awesome.

Claire and I were wondering whether we should start a fan fund to expand your pool of available superlatives. SCAN, 'Send Chris Adjectives Now', is thus collecting money to assemble a care package of 'great's, 'superb's and 'wonderful's (comes with free bonus pack of 'tolerable's, 'run-of-the-mill's and 'crap's) which we will ship to Mountain View for incorporation in future GarCia fanzines. It'll be... very good indeed.

Ah, but hang on. Further examination of DT#206 reveals that awesomeness is not quite as all pervading as it seems. The world is in fact not made entirely of awesome, whatever John Coxon may think -- and as an aside I note that the word only appears four times in the entire six-issue-to-date run of Procrastinations.

It all leaves me feeling slightly sorry for the few fans and fanzines who don't achieve awesomeitidiousness. Randy did a 'great job', an 'amazing job', but was he awesome? No, he was not. Why, Chris, why? What did he do to you?



Inca 'might become one of the best zines in the world' you say, but has it attained awesomeness? Seemingly, no. That nice Mr Jackson will be crushed. Ah, but you continue '... with more issues, it could become one of those that you really find yourself waiting for.' Hmm, so perhaps you see awesomeness in Inca's future. That's not so bad. He's young, he's just starting out. When he's done millions of fanzines like you perhaps Rob Jackson will be awesome too.

Finally it occurs to me that should you chose to print this letter in a future issue – always assuming you are still physically able to produce fanzines in the future, which frankly I doubt – I only need to say the word awesome once more and this will have become a 12-awesome (oops, 13) letter which may mean, depending on the length of the issue, that you'll manage an even higher AQ.

How much more awesome (14) could it be? None, none more awesome (15).

Best etc.

--Mark

Mark Plummer

Croydon, UK

Mark-

Awesome.

Chris

And now, Teresa Cochrane on the same issue!

I wish James and I could have been at corflu. we were in the virtual consuite a bunch, and I even got the glow/let-down afterward.

Oh, by the way, my middle name is one you'll like: ReNae.

Tee

Now, if James and the kind who don't like the internal Caps had their way, you'd be simply Renae. And what fun would that be? I wish I had spent more time in the VCS myself. I was only there for about an hour total, though I understand that parts of my voice and view were present without my knowledge, which is always the best way.

Good to hear from ya, Teresa. I must get out there again sometime!

And now...Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

Hey, man, you did it again! Two more Hugo noms! Not sure how you do it; I've been trying a long time. But way to go, and you should get at least one silver rocket in your time. In the meantime, I'm going to keep plugging with locs, and here's one now, on issues 205 and 206 of The Drink Tank.

Well, thanks! I can't



The Wii has some wonderful games for it, and there are some strange concepts that might well be made into games for the system. One that has been rumored for more than a year is Remote Master which is game where you actually play games by sliding teh controller across the floor or a table or whatever. It sounds awesome until you get into a heated game of hockey and your remote flies into a thousand jagged little pieces.

believe I'm still on the ballot! I also can't believe that you aren't on the ballot! I blame the internet...

I like both dogs and cats. They have their personalities. The best thing is that you know where you stand with them; they will not lie to you. They either like you or dislike you, and they will tell you. Most dogs and cats like me, they all absolutely adore Yvonne, and she prefers dogs, while I prefer cats. The worst thing is, we don't have any pets, but we enjoy everyone else's.

I am allergic to Cats, but not to Dogs. I love Linda's cat, Hamachi, who I often call The Other Cat, and he's always trying to climb on me.

The series *The Tudors* is not one I watch, but it is shown regularly on the CBC here. Obviously, the producers of this show are letting the drama presented obscure any historic accuracy some might ask for.

The Tudors is good stuff. Linda has it on DVD and I think I'll have to convince her to watch them some weekend...probably when the cat is climbing all over me!

The local—we have a copy of *The Golden Compass*, and while not a great film, it does come from some good writing. Worth keeping. We never did buy the two Narnia movies, though. Enjoyable enough, and if you can keep down the Christian overtones, they provide a nice diversion. I will probably go and see the next one, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, but that seems some time off. (Hey, that Foster guy sure knows how to draw the pretty ladies, hm? Braw Foster? Yes, he is.)



I'm a fan of the first Narnia movie, but I recently watched the BBC version and if that had been my first exposure of the books, I'd have never been interested in them.

The FAAn Awards were good to me, I was nominated for an Aurora award, and we got to nominate deserving fans for TAFF, DUFF and CUFF. We've had a pretty good year.

A hearty congrats to you, my friend, and to those you nominated! How many FAAns have you won now?

Again, wish I could have been at Corflu Zed. I've now won Best Letterhack five times, and have never been at the Corflu where I won them. Taking part in an Andy Hooper play is fun for any voice actor. I hope someone picked up my plaque and my envelope of fanzines. Haven't heard a word since from anyone. Oh, well, I feel like I'm looking inside from the outside at the best of times.

Hey, you answered that question really fast! I think Murray Moore got your stuff for ya. At least I hope so...

I plan to get caught up with zines because if the haul of zines this year was like the haul I took back from Vegas, I'm going to be behind very quickly. Next weekend is Ad Astra, and the steampunk costumes are complete! We'll see if someone can take some pictures, and we will get some pictures to you. Slowing down the Drink Tank? Say it ain't so! Other convention projects usually slows me down, too. At Ad Astra, we're running a steampunk tea social, Yvonne's got a track of programming on the go, we have things to distribute through the registration package and the flyer table, plus our own luggage and food, and a few other things--good thing we have a station wagon. I should ask now--are you planning to bring any paper issues of TDT to the Montreal fanzine lounge for people



to pick up? Bring them with you if you like, or I will soon be sending out a general message to as many faneds as I can reach about stocking the lounge with tons o%f zines.

I gotta see some footage of those Steampunk costumes! Where are the photos? I'll bring a few issues printed, and some Claims Departments and TAFF newsletters.

See you in August, mon cher ami.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

And the same to you, pal!

And now, with his first written appearance in The Drink Tank...Dick Jenssen aka Ditmar!

Chris,

MANY thanks for not only using a graphic of mine

for the cover of Drink Tank 206, but - and especially so! - for saying such complimentary things about my pictures.

It's so great for my ego...

And it's well-deserved. I've had you on my ballots for the last couple of years. I'm hoping that you'll agree to let me do one of the tribute issues in the future. That'd be great.

If you go to:

<http://www.lulu.com/ramblehouse> you'll find two books with Ditmar covers - "Sideslip" and "Deep Space".

What happened here was that Earl Kemp put Richard Lupoff in touch with me re:my graphics, and Dick asked if he could use some of my pictures as cover material. I said yes, of course - flattery gets people everywhere with me. Since the publishing house, so Dick says, is run on no budget at all, my services net me two free copies of the books which use my covers. More are in the pipeline

Cheers,
Dick Jenssen

That's fantastic! That Dick Lupoff fellow is a good guy. SO is that Earl Kemp. I've been lucky enough to have wonderful interactions with all of y'all.

Thanks much! And now...John Purcell!

Well, it certainly sounds like you had a great time at Corflu, roomie. How did the Lovely Linda enjoy it? If she's got any kind of fannish background and enjoys chatting with really kewl people, I'm sure she had fun, too. All your report does is make me wish I could have been there in person.

I think she had a good time, though it can be difficult coming to CorFlu for the first time if you're not a regular fanzinista.

But I was virtually there. At one point you put your face right into the camera -- unnecessary close-up! -- which made me laugh. You are such a cut-up and a ham. Hmm. A cut-up ham. Y'know, a ham and cheese sandwich *does* sound good right now. Be back in a minute or three...

I think that the VCS is a great concept and folks have been doing really good stuff. I'm having some thoughts on that for a future CorFlu...

Okay. Back again. There really isn't much else that I can add here except that Art Widner never ceases to amaze me. The man is 90 years old and still conning away! God bless him.

He's 91 and still, I think if ninjas had invaded the Deca, Art's have them all licked in no time!

Speaking of elderly fans, a few days ago a long-time fan from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Chester Cuthbert died at the age of 97. Chester used to loc my earliest zines, and had one of the longest tenures in fandom, possibly exceeding even the fannish careers of Forrest J. Ackerman and Bob Tucker. It was sad to hear of his passing from Robert Sabella.

Chester's name is one I'd heard but I'd never met him or had any interaction with him. There aren't a lot of fans who were that long-running who I haven't at least eMailed.

Back to Corflu for a nonce. I really laughed at your description of Nic Farey as an example "what would happen if you took Tobes and James Bacon, put them in a blender with a perpetual motion machine and a splash of Jim Beam Rye Whiskey." Sounds like the kind of guy I'd enjoy chatting up. Grrr... If only....

Nic's an absolute blast!

But I'm glad you're back and working on that Handicapping the Hugos issue. It should once again be interesting to read. And while I'm on that topic, congratulations on your double nomination again. Get those concession speeches ready again, buddy.

It's done and it was a tough issue to do all the reading for. I've got a great concession speech ready: wait for Mike Glycer to turn his back, grab his rocket and run like Hell.

With that, I'm outta here. Aggiecon 40 starts later today (March 26th), but I probably won't get over there until Friday afternoon. The Thursday program is basically a writer's workshop and the birth pains of the dealer's room and assorted other displays. The real

action kicks into gear tomorrow. I'll be posting pictures and comments from the con on my LJ over the weekend on my brand new cellphone. So until then, have a good one, and enjoy the convention season.

All the best,
John Purcell

Hope that was a good con. I read some of your in-progress review and it sounds interesting. I'm hoping I can make it out to Texas for a con at some point.



And finally, I goofed on Taral's last LoC and left off this little piece!

Loc to Drink Tank 205, March 2009

Gee. You accidentally dropped a couple of lines from my loc. Oh well, shit happens.

I could probably write an article on the Higgs particle, and why it's nicknamed the God Particle, but it would only mean looking the subject up on Wikipedia, and paraphrasing. Any number of other science geeks in fandom could do it.

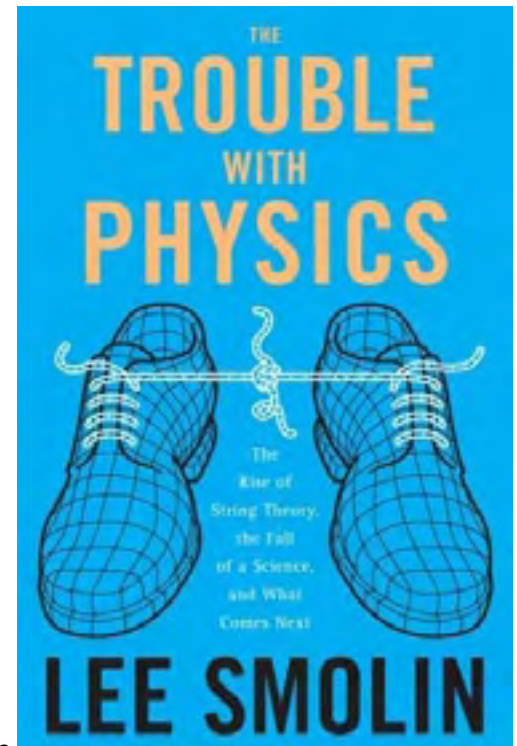
The Reader's Digest version (from memory) is that there needs to be another higher dimensional field in which the associated particle is the Higgs. Depending on the rest energy of the particle, the physical properties of other, more commonplace particles, is fixed at the values we see in nature. In principle, the Higgs particle could have any rest energy, and create different universes with different physical laws -- hence, "The God Particle". No evidence of it has been found, nor is the theoretical necessity for it particularly strong, though attempts have been made to tie the Higgs to the Inflationary model of the early cosmos. Particle physicists feel there is a slender possibility that a very low estimate of the rest mass of the Higgs (the one that made *our* universe) might fall within the upper limit of energies that can eventually be reached by the new Large Hadron Collider at CERN.

See... that wasn't hard. But it is very, very approximate, and if anyone is really curious, they should go to the Wiki article. I also recommend a book called "The Problem with Physics: The Rise of String Theory, the Fall of a Science, and What Comes Next", by Lee Smolin. One place to find it is, <http://www.amazon.ca/Trouble-Physics-String-Theory-Science/dp/0618551050> It's about twenty bucks.

According the author, string theory has produced nothing but tangled knots since it came into fashion, more than twenty years ago. Not only has it not solved any problems, and in fact caused more, string theory is *in principle unprovable!* The theory itself says almost as much, but prefers to say that there are infinite solutions to the equations. But of course, infinite solutions means no preferred solution, which is no solution at all. It predicts nothing, it solves nothing, it explains nothing. The book goes on to say that so many of our most esoteric theories -- dark matter, dark energy, inflation, and so on -- are all so tied together, that if one goes, they all go. It might well be that our theoreticians will have to go back to 1950 and start over! Beware MOND!

One very troubling factoid mentioned by the author is that there have been no significant advances in theoretical cosmology or particle physics in an entire generation. We've been living through the most unproductive twenty years of theoretical physics in modern history. Whether or not string theory and the rest are all wrong, that's a worrisome bit of data, Mr. Data!

As weird as the Higgs is, I have real trouble with String Theory. I had a long chat with Professor Suskind over at Stanford a year or so ago and I really found myself more confused. Even more after I read the Wikipedia article. I'm not a great science guy.



Tales of the DORK KNIGHT

Well, On behalf of
THE LEAGUE OF SUPERHEROES...



We hereby ACCEPT your application
for Membership! Congratulations!



Theme Music by John Phillip Sousa

Your First Assignment is to PATROL
the
CASTRO DISTRICT of
San Francisco!



Your
ESCORT
will be None
Other than...
THE
FLAME!

Oh, it's YOU! I'm SO glad. We're gonna have
SO MUCH FUN! We'll sit around in our
Jammies and do each other's Nails, Oh...
we MUST go to the PUB!

