

ТҮһө Идирүүк Тҕауу 2222



And so, here's a Steve Stiles Abstract cover! I love this stuff he's shown me so far. I'm a big fan of abstract art and the stuff he's doing makes me glad that I get to run at least one of them as my cover!

This issue has a bunch of stuff, and not very much me, which is just the way I like it. There's Taral and Frank and Taral & Frank and there's Macey aka Twisted Pixie, and more!

We start with a conversation between Taral Wayne and Frank Wu about the Fan Artist Hugo that goes into deep topics!



On the Matter of the Best Fan Artist Hugo 2009

by Taral Wayne and Frank Wu

It was Frank Wu who first brought Taral to The Drink Tank with his interview in early 2008. I'm happy to say that the Two had a conversation via eMail that They've been kind enough to let me print here. It's an interesting take on the subject of Fan Huos and what it takes to win one of them!

Taral Wayne

The con has been over for a week, my guest has gone home; I've had time to rest, to catch up on work, and reflect.

If the last Drink Tank is any indication, there may be some ugly talk ahead. I thought it would be best to spell out my own feelings first, lest you think anyone speaks for me.

Of course I regret losing the fanart Hugo this year. I wouldn't be human if I didn't. But I've lost them before, and one more is hardly going to kill me. What was different this time was that I was actually at the con where it all went down. In the past I was always at home when I got the news, and, even if I had won, it would have been old news before the Hugo ever arrived in a plain cardboard

box, without fanfare or excitement. Anticipation was the one time I might have experienced the whole thing. Its unlikely I'll attend another worldcon soon, if at all. (The expense mainly.) So if the time comes that I do win one of the coveted rockets, the fun will be limited to lifting it out of the box at home by myself. That's the part that I most deeply regret.

Still, I don't lay the blame on you. You encouraged people to vote differently than they did, and they didn't. Had you taken your name off the ballot, the winner would only have been Sue Mason instead. (The figures show this clearly.) The problem is that people are very slow to change how they vote. My guess is that they vote mainly from familiarity -- when confronted with a ballot, their thoughts are "hmm, who did I vote for last year."

The issue, it seems to me, is the one Chris Garcia raised when he said (in the latest issue) "What does it take to win a Hugo?"

It's been known for years, that fanzines exert less and less influence on the fan Hugos all the time. So much so that I believe most voters are probably under the impression that fan art is defined by what is shown in convention art shows, when the artist ticks off the box that says "fan" instead of "pro." When most zines are read by perhaps 200 people, most of whom won't pay for a worldcon membership

just for a vote, it seems inescapable that perceptions of fanart have changed. It can't hurt, also, when the artist (or writer or faned) attends a lot of conventions, meets a lot of people, and makes an impression.

In the case of someone like me, who attends almost no cons anymore, and doesn't stage photo ops, or seek to be the center of attention when he does, the disadvantage is palpable. On the face of it, the answer to Chris's question may well be that *nothing* is sufficient to win a Hugo, if only the art itself is at issue. No amount of work published will put an artist over the top if he is not *personally* popular with the fans who buy worldcon memberships and have the right to decide the Hugos. If anything, I think Anticipation has proved it beyond a doubt. Chris said I had everything going for me this year, but it wasn't enough.

I have similar doubts anything will ever be enough for Steve Stiles, either, or for any number of other fanartists with long records and undeniable abilities. So long as they aren't familiar convention attractions, they simply cannot gain enough votes. Nothing can be done, so far as I can see. The voters giveth, and the voters taketh away.

Still, none of this changes the fact that the con was a magnificent experience for me. I came away without

one slice of the cake, but I had all the rest. It would look pretty selfish, even ungrateful, if I made too much of a fuss about it.

(PS - For Chris. Unless I misunderstood the figures I jotted down at the con, I came in third rather than fourth. It represents a distinct improvement in my standing, actually. Usually I've placed dead last. But it *was* a distant third.)



Frank Wu

Hey Chris (and Taral):

Taral beat me to the punch - I was going to write about how I felt about the Hugos, and he wrote first! (I'm going, however, to address this

missive to Chris instead of Taral, because it feels easier to access the emotions slantwise.)

Chris, you and Taral are, of course, quite right. This was Taral Wayne's year. He should have won. Being fan GOH at a worldcon (a worldcon!!!!) is no small thing. Taral's published a bazillion illos this last year, and thousands (tens of thousands?) of words. All throughout the con, I told people that I thought (and hoped) that Taral would win - he deserved it. That's why I've been pushing for him all along - why we did that "In Twiltone Yet Green" interview of him way back in issues 153 and 154. Why I told everyone on my blog to vote for him. Plus, he had home-field advantage, just as Sue Mason did in 2005.

Taral should have won.

It was absolutely heartbreaking when he came up to me after the ceremony and handed me a copy of the acceptance speech that he would have given.

He should have won.

I also want to address a question related to Taral. A question that Chris asked: What does it take to win a Hugo?

I think Chris' point is that you can publish a ton of awesomely fantastic stuff, but if you don't show up (and show off) at cons, it's not enough.

I agree that one thing that hurts

Taral's visibility is that he doesn't go to a lot of cons - as he noted, this was the only Hugo ceremony he's ever attended. Perhaps being a loud voice at conventions (which Taral isn't) helps. But I don't think it's necessary. David Langford has won his dozens of Hugos without attending U.S. cons. Sue Mason doesn't go to a lot, either (and she was only on about four panels this year) - but she's won twice. Shy and quiet people like Ted Chiang win regularly. So... attending cons doesn't hurt your visibility, but I'm not sure it's necessary.

That said, I agree with Chris and Taral that fanzines have less and less influence on the fan Hugo voting. (This gives me the idea of running a poll on my blog about this - I'll get back to you when I have the results.) More and more fanzines are available all the time online at efanzines.com. But not enough people read them!

Anybody out there have any solutions?

I'm not sure what the answer is. Or how we can change the world so the Hugos are just so that Taral (and Steve Stiles) finally win the Hugos they deserve.

I'm not sure how to do that at all, other than continuing to shout out: "VOTE FOR TARAL WAYNE!"

Frank

I will note that Fanzines still have some sway over the Fan Hu-

gos. I made the Fan Writer ballot without having a widely-read blog or many appearances in the Semi-pros. Same can be said of John Hertz. Brad Foster's win last year was likely from his fanzine work (though I'm fairly certain he shows up in a fair number of art shows) and the stuff he did for various con publications in 2007 and early 08.



Twisted Pixie

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Taral Wayne

I don't have any problems with Chris running all this. It should provide some lively reading, even though I doubt we'll solve all the world's problems.

I was told by a prominent British source that Sue has the support of the Plokta cabal. The folks behind that zine seem to be an island apart from the British in some way. What was said to me, specifically, is that they pub Plokta as though it was an off-Broadway show, and wait for the audience applause. But the audience doesn't become involved in the way that's usual for British zines. The rest of British fandom are outsiders. I gather too, that the zine has its own following, who are also not necessarily the same as British fandom at large. One presumes that these are who vote for Sue, and why she can enjoy a high profile without a lot of convention hopping.

Dave Langford's advantages, on the other hand, are that Ansible has a wide following. It was widely read as a printed newsletter and has an even wider readership now that its on line. Dave was also a top-notch fan writer Once Upon a Time. His skills haven't declined in the intervening years, even if he normally only writes for Ansible these days.

I suppose you could say that these are only after-the-fact

explanations for why fans don't need to have a hugely visible personal profile. But it remains true, I think, that a *huge profile of some sort* is a must. I don't think traditional fanzine fandom is likely to provide it. In special cases where it does, the circumstances are not generally repeatable.

Another conversation I had at Anticipation (during the post-Hugo reception) was with an old time fan politician who prefers to remain anonymous, but has been meddling in the Hugos for years. He has several times fought for changes in category definitions. His conclusion after repeated efforts to make the Hugos work is that it isn't really the rules at fault. You can write better rules, but you can't get the voters (or concons) to observe them. He said that until we have a better voter, we aren't likely to have a better award.

This is a bit of a pessimistic evaluation. But I don't have any better explanation... except, perhaps, that all awards tend to follow a bell-curve. You can be too progressive, too avant-garde, too intellectual, too nuanced, too eccentric, too whatever for the general audience. So the Moody Blues outsold Captain Beefheart, Tiny Toons was more popular than Duckman, and more people read Jerry Pournelle than Theodore Sturgeon. The peak of the curve of success lies in the middle, not at either the crap end **or** genius

Dear Chris,



In a related, but seperate LoC-item, here's Brianna Spacekat Wu

First of all, deepest condolences for not winning best fanzine or best fan writer at the Hugos this year. You are one of my favorite personalities in fandom, and you're also my friend. Frank and I were deeply disappointed that you didn't win.

There has been an immense amount of discussion in the Wu household about the Hugos since Frank won best fan artist in Montreal. I felt compelled to contribute my own point of view.

First off, I feel Taral Wayne is a wonderful artistic talent. I was introduced to his work in the first

weeks when Frank and I were falling in love. Frank was showing me the artist that he'd specifically declined the 08 nomination for in the hopes of propelling to a Hugo win. I'm attracted to the clean lines of his process, and I think his work has a wonderful spark of whimsical energy. For me, it was a hard choice between rooting for the underdog whose art I admired, and rooting for my husband.

That said, I also believe that no one is entitled to a Hugo, not Frank, not me, not anyone. That honor is up to the voters to decide.

It's also important to note that even if Frank had declined the 09 nomination Sue Mason would have won and not Taral Wayne.

If we were to speak truthfully about the voting process, Frank probably won because he is a force of personality in the science-fiction world, much like yourself. I learned a lot about the psychology of voting in college, and candidate personalities influence voting choices as much as logic does - it's comes down to a likability heuristic. People probably voted for Frank for the same reason I voted for The Drink Tank for best Fanzine - because you are my friend, I admire your work and I wish you all the success in the world.

Frank hasn't decided yet if he would accept a nomination in 2010 - but I think we'd all agree that the

Hugos would be best served if more people voted, and if they educated themselves on the work of the people they are voting for.

Brianna Spacekat Wu

First off, I never expect to win a Hugo (well, maybe a post-humous win...) because I'm not widely-known outside the world of fanzine fanciers and the Fanzine Fanciers who know me are also aware that I'm just not that good! I think the big problem with Taral not winning is that it shatters my illusion. I always have that Horatio Alger thought that if you work hard, put out great stuff, you'll be recognised with a rocket, and with even more exposure like the Rotsler and WorldCon GoHship, that should have been enough. The problem is the lack of depth of knowledge, or maybe it's that folks notice, but just don't pay attention. The Hugos voter packet could come in handy, and there are folks who believe that Weird Tales' victory was certainly helped by the Hugo voter packet. There's no certainty that Aussiecon will do it again, but I hope so. That's one way to get more exposure to the lesser known, or at least under-recognised folks, a fighting chance in the voting. In 2005 and 2006, Frank had done so much great stuff that there was no

question in my mind that he earned the rocket. In 2007, Brad Foster had thrilled so many faneds with magnificent color covers that he got the win. In 2008, no one put out as much as Taral, so after three consecutive wins by easily the most productive, it hurts a bit to not have it go down that way.



I'm sure there'll be more talk over the coming months, but let us also focus on Anticipation itself with this lovely note from Taral about an experience very few of us will ever know: the GoHship!



Open Letter

A Thank You Note to Anticipation

Hopefully I've included everyone I've spoken to over the last few months or weeks, about Anticipation. If not, perhaps someone will convey my apology and share this message. I wish to thank everyone. Due to their efforts (and, if I'm not being too bold to suggest, a little of my own) I had a splendid time. Oh, there were a few seconds here and there I could have rewritten or done without. I can leave most of those to your imagination. And for the rest, I was grateful for the solution you presented me—the scooter was a great deal of fun (besides sparing my back unnecessary agony). I don't think I permanently crippled *anyone* I ran over...

Not only did I have a great time at Anticipation, but it gave me a new

perspective on cons. I was never much for attending program. My dislike of the program items had little to do with their content, and much to do with my hearing. It was tough to follow often quiet-spoken people at the front of a room, at a distance. So I'd find something else to do. But all too frequently the people I wanted to hang out with were in a room, somewhere, listening to a panel discuss the social implications of space elevators, or some such thing. So I would probably just end up bored. There were other reasons I stopped going to SF cons in the later 80's, but that was the one that struck me last weekend. Anticipation was a different experience. Because I participated in so much of the program, I felt a part of the con in a way that was entirely fresh and very much to my liking. Now all I have to do is figure out how to get other conventions to make me their guest of honour...

At times I was too busy, if

anything. And sometimes the panel or talk I was giving was under-attended. I wonder if Anticipation wasn't doing too good a job. Someone said they thought there were something over a thousand program items! No wonder I was speaking to four or six people sometimes. I think everyone I knew was also doing some program item or other at the same time! There is such a thing as too much of a good thing it seems :)

The crew who worked on recreating my rooms did a surprisingly effective job. I saw with satisfaction that there were people going in and out all the time, so it must have been a terrific hit. I took photos as it was being put up, and more photos when it was finished. Eerily, the photos of the fake room are a little hard to tell apart from photos of the real room, since neither have depth. (You have to look for perspective oddities, and size discrepancies to be sure which is which.)

Now I wonder what happens to the "room." Surely it didn't just go into the trash? If not, I have several suggestions.

- 1) Donate it to the Merrill Collection in Toronto, if they'll have it.
- 2) Send it to Aussiecon to be set up for fans Down Under to see.
- 3) Auction pieces of it for TAFF and DUFF.
- 4) (This suggested to me by another party), set it up in an alley for some homeless fan.

Before I send this, I want to thank you all one more time for spoiling me rotten, but even more for keeping me busy. I haven't had as much excuse to work my butt off on art in ages, and it was very welcome.



Hijacking Democracy

Walt Wentz

This week a few friends and I traveled down to McMinnville to attend Congressman David Wu's town hall meeting. It turned out to be a wasted effort... the venue seated only 130 people, and the "anti" crowd had arrived early and packed the hall, leaving no room for ordinary citizens who wanted to actually learn something about the proposed health reform bills. I gathered from newspaper accounts later that those inside spent the meeting yelling at Congressman Wu, who replied politely and calmly. Several hundred other "antis" remained outside on the sidewalks, waving signs denouncing "Obamacare" and equating it to abortion, euthanasia, socialism, communism, naziism, national bankruptcy and all the other popular frauds, distortions and fantasies picked up from Rush Limbaugh, Sarah Palin and all the anonymous spam-pushers on the Internet.

Other people were narrowly focused on such disparate obsessions as gun control, creationism, illegal immigration or even eugenics.

No matter what their various interests, however, many of the "anti" crowd seemed to share one common

characteristic:

They were rude.

Their newly-declared freedom to yell insults at their elected representative seemed to extend to anyone who might disagree with them.

There were almost as many pro-health-reform people on the walks as there were antis. When we arrived, a man came out of the crowd to offer us printed "Health Care for All" posters. We accepted them, replacing the crude little hand-lettered signs we had made ourselves. Instantly, some of the antis began jeering, "Yaaah! You got ready-made signs!" As if that made us a valid target for their orchestrated anger.

Eventually a polite policeman came by, informing everyone there was no chance to get into the hall, which had been full two hours before the meeting.

Most people stayed, waving their signs at passing cars; we left. Our gauntlet back past the anti crowd was uneventful-- aside from an angry man calling one of us a "pinko Communist" and threatening to follow him home and murder him, and some other young men yelling, "Yaaah! Ready-made signs!"

Better a ready-made sign, I thought, than a ready-made mind.

The main impression I

carried away was that of rudeness-- arrogant, sneering, self-righteous rudeness. Would any of these same people speak to me in that fashion if we met on the street, when they didn't have their crowd around them for inspiration? I don't think so. I hope not. But this conscious and deliberate coarsening of public debate--which is supposed to be free and open to all shades of opinion... what effect will it have on the American way of life? Common courtesy and mutual consideration are what make democracy possible, and civilized life itself. Deliberately discard our ordinary human decency, make anger the be-all and end-all of public debate, and America becomes a cold, ugly and dangerous place.

