

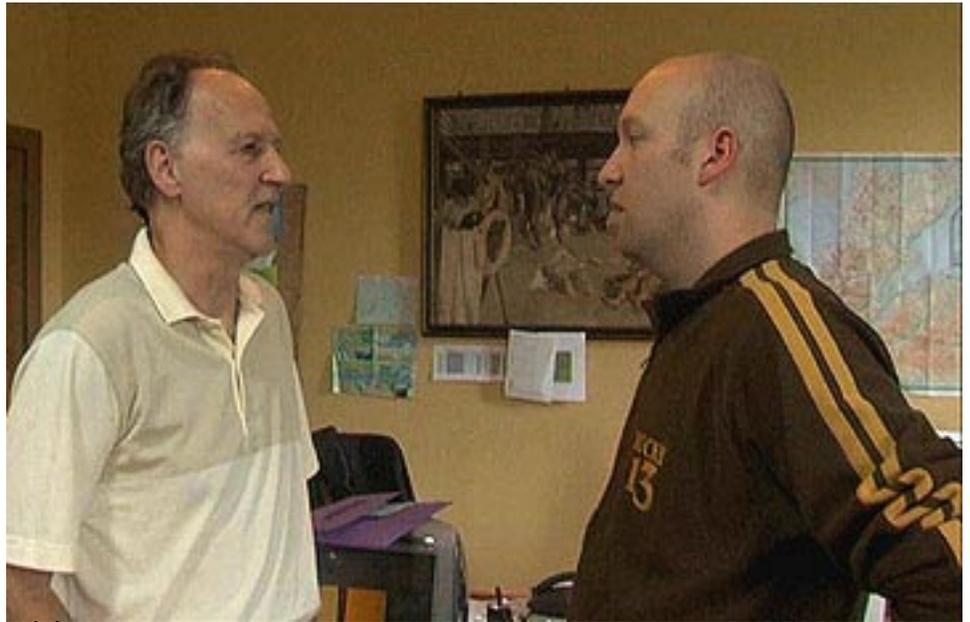
My Kind of Afternoon

I spent my Saturday watching movies. I know, how rare for me to be watching flicks instead of debating the merits of our current administration or reading Moliere. Instead, I picked up a documentary and a film that pretended to be a documentary.

The legit doc was Stacey Peralta's Dogtown & Z-Boys, all about the early days of modern skateboarding. It's a great documentary, especially for a guy who loved skateboarding videos when he was young. I had watched it before and this time, I was more carefully watching for technique and visual clues that might be useful for my documentary.

Then there was the second film. This was called Incident at Loch Ness. Now, y'all now that I'm a nut when it comes to cryptozoological and supernatural stuff, so this was a natural for me. I love mockumentary filmmaking. It started with Spinal Tap, though others have been just as successful, like Meet The Rutlles, Best In Show and even The Blair Witch Project. Incident at Loch Ness follows all of these in its methods, but it plays the field between legitimacy and comedy with a deft turn of the shoulder at exactly the right moment.

Werner Herzog is one of those guys that film school geeks love to talk about. There are many legends, like his direction of Klaus Kinski in Aguirre: The Wrath of God where, story goes, he directed Kinski with a gun pointed at him. He's also done some other films that make him seem like a mad man, including Fitzcarraldo where he insisted that a riverboat be carried up a mountain. Some would say that he has an over-abundance of dedication to the bit. Supposedly, Herzog is directing a film called Enigma at Loch Ness while having John Bailey (a HUGELY respected cinematographer)



filming a documentary on his life called Herzog in Wonderland.

Producing the Loch Ness film is Zak Penn. To give you a good idea of the type of guy Penn is, take me, shave my head, give me a little talent, a lot of connections and a little bit extra chutzpah. He's a wheeler and dealer and doesn't seem to have a care in the world about legitimacy. My type of guy. In reality, he's actually the director of Incident at Loch Ness, which is strange, but understandable. It's that type of movie.

The cast is mostly composed of actual working filmmaking types. The guy playing the soundman is a working, Oscar-winning soundman. The Cinematographer is a big name cinematographer. It's a great piece of business if you're trying to make your fake doc seem legit, though the look of the film is never on the level of documentaries. The Blair Witch Project did that better than anything else as it all seemed like it was exactly done like a documentary shot by college kids. This was clean and steady and well-built, all things that modern docs don't seem to be. I've

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From Christopher J. Garcia

learned enough about filmmaking to know that as bad as things get for the crew, they actually go far better than for most crews. There are petty arguments: Herzog wants to make a simple doc about the myth of Loch Ness and Penn really wants to do a big budget action

piece. The sound guy can't work on the boat because the engine is too loud, so the producer strongarms the Captain of the boat to put in a smaller and quieter motor. Penn even hires an actress/model, Kitana Baker of the Miller Light Catfight Commercials, to be their sonar operator. Much of the comedy comes from the conflicts between these two, though there are other bits that are great.

As they get out on to the Loch, things start to get weird. Zak has told his camera man that he plans to do some effects as 'Recreations', something which Herzog really doesn't want to do. But things start to happen and Zak keeps claiming that he has nothign to do with it. This is where things get interesting and the plot starts to roll along.

I thought the cast was really great. Herzog is uber-serious adn with that voice, you can't help but enjoy him. Penn is probably the weakest, as he's perfect as



Zak Penn Turns the Tables on Herzog



Kitana Baker preparing to jump into the Loch

the coniving bastard producer (Ghod, how I miss that role!), but there's always a hint of a smile behind everything he does as it relates to the weird things that are going on around the boat. Michael Karnow, as the cryptozoologist, is hilarious and made me want to strangle

him at the same time as laughing my head off at the stupid things he said. This plays into the story very well as we roll along.

Shockingly, Kitana Baker may have been the best actor in the film. Her presence adds a strange comedy to Penn's vision and her scene where she legitimately goes down to a bikini and jumps into the freezing, black, peat-heavy water of Loch Ness shows the lengths she'll go to for her craft. She also is the one that makes all the strangeness around the boat seem legitimate. With her reactions to the dark



Karnow and Herzog

movements and strange humps in the water, we wouldn't have a reaction that we would understand.

She's surprisingly good at playing real emotion, even though they give her one of the lamest things in the entire script by having her say that she was hired to play the sonar operator, so she studied up on actual sonar and did well enough to actually operate the sonar on the boat!

I'd say that Incident at Loch Ness is worth your time and a little bit of money. I bought it, I love Herzog, and I'm glad I did. It would make an good triple feature: open with The Last Broadcast, go on to Incident at Loch Ness and close with 2001's Session 9 starring David Caruso. That would be a nice way to spend an afternoon and evening.



Art Bell: My Hero

Bringing up Loch Ness made me think of the guy who I respect so damn much that I once said I'd name a child after him. Art Bell is a radio personality whose show Coast to Coast was a favourite of mine for a long time in the early part of this decade. He's had his ups and downs, but he's always been my favourite radio guy.

Art is best known for being the one who will tackle everything from conspiracy theory to UFOs to ghosts to those mysterious Shadow People. He's also a well-known HAM Radio operator and a collector of antique radio equipment. He's headquartered out of Parump, Nevada, where he supposedly broadcasts out of his trailer. I've never quite believed that, but it seems that it's true.

Art started out young, about 13, as a radio guy, using a homemade HAM set to connect with folks. He later went on to start a pirate radio station while in the army. This station, which could have easily got him in big trouble, played rock 'n roll all night. He later was the main disk jockey on an English-language radion station in

Okinawa. He set the record for longest DJ run with 116 hours and fifteen minutes. He did more radion stuff in Asia and Alaska, but he eventually ended up in getting an all-night radio gig out of Las Vegas' KDWN for Chancellor Broadcasting. That's where he gained a huge national following.

Sometime he has strange guests on. What am I talking about? He ALWAYS has strange guests on. He has brought Hollow Earth folks on to talk about the Snake People and Tiny Earth people to talk about the Cosmic Giant. In 2001 and 2002, a called brought up the concept of Shadow People, strange moving patches of darkness and the Art Bell show took off, with hundreds of reports from around the world, opening up a whole new area of paranormal study. His shows from that period are some of the best he's ever done.

He has some classic reoccurring shows, like his annual All-Ghost Story episodes, which have produced some of the greatest tales radio has ever heard.

The strange thing is, I'm never quite sure if Art believes in the stuff, or if he just has an open enough mind to not block anything out of the sphere of possibilities and present it as potential fact. It's that sense of respect, even when it's obvious that he's not sold on something, that I highly enjoy.

Still, everyone who has been on an episode is cool in my book. David Icke, who I consider to be the greatest nut of the New Century, was on not long ago and Art even made him sound respectable. That's incredible! When the whole Segway thing happened, Art was the first guy to get the goods.

Yeah, he's that good.

12 pt. Courier New by Jay Crasdan
Chris loves Art Bell. So
does M. I don't get it. He's just
a crazy guy and a fraud and they
eat up everything he says. I will
admit, the guy has a great voice,
but really, I'll never understand.

His Name is Charlie Kaufman

I love movies. I always have. I like to think that if The Drink Tank says anything about me it's that I worship at the gates of film and science fiction, often at the same time. It's not the film that I regularly watch that keep me coming back for more, it's the off products that come along the conveyor belt of Hollywood that keep me watching. There is a man who causes more of those factory irregulars than anyone else. His name is Charlie Kaufman.

Charlie Kaufman started off his writing career doing the struggling thing. He wrote for the National Lampoon, he worked for a Minneapolis Newspaper, he even moved to LA without a job or even a prospect for a job. It was that move that did it for him, actually, much in the same way that my move to Boston with nothign lined up and found the job that I've held now for almost 7 years. He eventually was asked to move back to Minneapolis, but he instead got a gig writing for the Chris Elliot Fox-TV programme Get A Life. The show, in it's second season, was on its way to cancellation, but Kaufman put soem really weird stuff out there and that started him writing regularly for sitcoms. He worked on a lot of second seasons, including shows like Ned & Stacy (I think he wrote the Mr. Belvedear Episode) and The Dana Carvey Show. The latter proved to be a ratings success, briefly, but it also got heat from censors and sponsors for it's content and comedy methods. He wasn't well-known, even in the TV field, but if you wanted a quirky writer and you knew enough to sell something to Fox, you



might just get Charlie Kaufman.

He had been writing film scripts all along, though he couldn't get anything sold. He wrote one about a poet in Paris that actually sounded great. He was a terrible poet, but he didn't know that to be the case. It never got made, though the script is circulating on the internet, even as we speak.

Charlie started to write a script about a guy who falls in love with a woman who is not his wife. That's the seed of the script that made him famous. He started to hang odd little bits around the premise, like a hundred year-old boss, a main character who is a puppeteer and a guy named Malkovich. This led to the Spike Jonez film Being John Malkovich, which got Charlie an Oscar nomination and a lot of respect. It also led Charlie to have to follow it up with something great.

And he did three great things right in a row. Human Nature, a film which much of the world hated but I found impossible to not watch. Rhys Ifan is brilliant, as is Patricia Arquette. That was followed by a film called Adaptation.

Adaptation is perhaps the most important film for screenwriters of the last decade. It's brutal honesty about how Hollywood works, combined with it's genius humor, made it the best script of 2002. He got another Oscar Nom, and that was followed by Confessions of a Dangerous Mind, based on Chuck Barris' book.

In 2004, Michel Gondry made Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind, which Charlie wrote and won the Oscar for. It's the single best piece of subtle SF ever made. Witty, heart-warming/ breaking and fun, it's a delightful film that proves Kaufman is the Greatest.

They'll Turn Anything into a Bed + Breakfast These Days!



Fall River, Massachusetts is famous for two things: being the birthplace of Celebrity Chef Emeril Lagasse and the site of the Lizzie Borden Murders. In fact, it's far better known for the latter than the former. I'm planning a visit to MA for my friend Janice's wedding (Fall 2006) and I wanted to see about finding a nice place to stay. I found the website for the Lizzie Borden B+B and knew that I had to stay there. It also made me think long and hard.



No matter how romanticized the place has become, it was still once a murder scene, and even if Lizzie didn't do it, it's kinda gross to think of staying a night in a place which is based on her life and around the savage deaths of two human beings. Still, the place is quaint, and from what I understand, the place is supposed to be haunted (for more about my love of haunted places, read The Drink Tank issue 31).

Back about 1999, I got very much into reading up on the Borden murders. There's a lot of evidence both ways, that Lizzie did it (She hated her step-mother and killing her father may have seemed like the only way to keep him from finding out the truth to incest theories that represent pent-up rage exploding through) and far less in the way of Lizzie being innocent. There's also the possibility that the Maid did it, and I've seen a very good presentation on that very concept.

I'm not sure how I'd feel about supporting a place that sells itself as being the home of a famous murder. There are other places that do the same thing, but this one gets to me the most. I've heard of plans for a tour company to open up regular tours of all the People's Temple locations, including round-trip airfare so you can see the Jonestown site. These leave me a bit queezy.

So, I might, or might not, stay at the Lizzie Borden Bed & Breakfast. If I can find a nice place for less money, I'll stay there instead.

Strange E-Mails from M Lloyd

Lately, I've been getting great emails from M. I should say that I've been getting great email subjects from M as she has left the messages blank. Here are a few of my favourites.

- Dancing the Tango to Memories of Pamplona
- My Side of That Vietnam Story
- The Devil is in the Details, and That Sucks
- The Location of the Nazi Gold
- I'd Read Plokta, then copy everything they do!
- Anyone here afraid of Virginia Woolfe? Didn't think so.
- You're a Vice-President? Damn, I wish I was there to mock you for it.

My New Favourite Burger

I like coming up with burger concepts, and this one is a new favourite. It's kinda rigorous, but trust me, it's delicious. I call it the HamDog!

First, lightly sweat some finely diced shallots and garlic. Just a clove or two, and use butter. Save the butter, and add the shallots to lean ground beef, a bit of salt, pepper, a touch of cumin, a pinch each of celery and fennel seed, a bit of finely chopped parsley, a half of the shot-glass sized Tomato Paste can, bread crumbs and a bit of honey. This is a kinda middle-eastern burger.

Next take one string cheese. Roll it in a combination of chili flakes, or if you'd prefer something milder, onion or garlic flakes. Make a narrow meat trough, about twice the size of the string cheese. Lay the cheese on top of that and put more meat on top to form a hamburger sausage.

Brush a sausage with a bit of the butter from the garlic and shallots and lightly grill. Assemble and enjoy!



ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND AWARDS BY FRANK WU

Paul McCartney (whose birthday was celebrated this week) married Linda when she was 27 and he was 26. After Linda passed away, Paul married Heather Mills when she was 34 and he was almost 60. Paul re-marrying prompted a caller on the radio to remark that she was 17 when Paul got married the first time, and 50 upon the second. Thus, she'd gone from being too young for Paul to too old.

Earlier this year, the rules for eligibility for the Campbell Award for Best New Writer were suddenly changed just days before the nomination period closed. Usually, award eligibility begins upon professional publication of a novel or story, and runs for two years. The definition of "professional" was broadened this year to include electronic pubs like "Strange Horizons," which hadn't counted previously. One writer with a 2002 "Strange Horizons" credit thus went from being not-yet-eligible to past-eligible. (Eventually, it was decided that anyone eligible under any definition was eligible this year.)

My point - and I do have one - is that

sometimes things just are beyond our control. World events - big and small - wash over us and sweep over our lives in ways we can't predict.

Spider Robinson at Torcon sang a filk song called "50 Ways to Lose a Hugo." He sang that to win, you must "Have incredible luck, Buck. / It does help if you don't suck / But then it's random chance, Vance." That night, I was up - for the second time - for the Hugo for best fan artist. I wound up losing. By eight votes. Eight. My roommate (and his dad) could have - but hadn't - voted for me.

That sucked.

The sting has gone away, though, since I won the category last year.

Also, there was that weird thing that happened at the Illustrators of the Future in 2000.

There are two stages in that contest. Each quarter, three winners are chosen based on submitted portfolios. This contest is run in parallel with the Writers of the Future contest, which also picks three winners each quarter. (Now, I should add that there's ten times more many people entering the Writers than the Illustrators of the Future contest, so that affects your odds.) In the second stage, each of the artists is assigned one of the winning stories to illustrate. The judges pick one and give the artist a check for \$4000.

In my year, there was a general feeling that the best art had been done by a woman from the Ukraine, Yana Yadoshchok. However, when they announced the winner, it was me; I was shocked that they hadn't picked Yana. This is what happened: Yana had wanted to come to the awards banquet, but had had visa problems and couldn't make it. The judges probably felt that they had to give the award to someone there - or else that might besmirch the prestige of the proceedings, as if the winners didn't care - so they gave it to me, possibly the second-ranked artist. (One other artist was unable to attend, so maybe I was even their third choice.) Interestingly, after the ceremony, Yana was also quietly given a check for \$4000; I don't think this had

happened before. So my conclusion is that I won the Illustrators of the Future contest because someone else couldn't get a visa. (I've felt like a fraud ever since, so it's nice to get it off my chest.)

In most accounts, I'm listed as the sole winner that year, but I emailed Mark R. Kelly of Locus magazine online, to make sure that his awards database reflects the fact that we were, in a way, both grand prize winners that year.

Maybe it helped that I didn't "suck," but it sure seems that divine providence or grace granted me a win I didn't deserve.

In a post-season baseball game in

1996, 12-year-old Jeffrey Maier, sitting in the stands, caught a deep fly ball hit by Derek Jeter. That ball would otherwise have been caught, but the umpire incorrectly ruled it a home run, and Jeter's Yankees went on to win that game and later, the World Series.

Neil Armstrong, and not Buzz Aldrin, got to be the first man to step on the moon, solely because of the arrangement of the door and equipment aboard the lunar lander.

I could go on.

But... Doesn't it strike anyone as peculiar that I have a Hugo for art, but a lot of greater artists don't, like Boris Vallejo, Brom, James Bama, Wayne Barlow, Rick Berry, Alan Clark, Virgil Finlay, Frank R. Paul, Ron Walotsky, Richard Powers, Alex Schomburg, Tom Kidd, Gahan Wilson, Paul Lehr, Todd Lockwood, and I could go on.



FRANK WU AT THE 2004 HUGOS. IT IS WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT, AFTER NEIL GAIMAN, FRANK GAVE ONE OF THE BEST ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES EVER.

Not a single Hugo award them. Isn't that unfair? Yes, and yes, incredibly yes.

I've worked really hard, but more than that I've been unusually blessed in my career.

Does this mean that awards are meaningless? I hope not, but clearly they're not the end-all and be-all. It's lovely and wonderful winning one, but in all humility and good grace, I must acknowledge that it is a crap shoot. So, that said, as we close in on the deadline for this year's voting for the Hugos (July 8), including my category, best fan artist, feel free to vote for Steve

Stiles this year. He really deserves it. But then, it's all a crap shoot.

Or is it? Does it all eventually sort of even out? Pro baseball players will tell you that over the course of a year all the bad and good umpire calls even out. Those other artists who don't have a Hugo have achieved prominence, fame, money, and historical significance (not to mention other awards like the World Horror or Chesley) which I'll probably never have. The writer who went from being pre- to post-eligible for the Campbell will (I hope) go on to write wonderful works which will be eligible for Nebulas and Hugos in the future. Maybe the key is working hard and not worrying about the rewards or end results. What happens, happens, and there's not much we can do about it at all, except go back to the canvas or computer and create the coolest stuff we can. End of sermon.

*Emailed Words of Comment
from my Gentle Readers
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org*

Making a Run at the Harry Warner Jr. FAAn Award is The Drink Tank Regular, Eric Mayer!

Hi...back again...

I'm getting behind. Been so busy complaining to Arnie Katz about my sad faanish past....

but that's so entertaining to read!

A word about hecto. I really wouldn't leave out the glycerine. I expect you could print OK without it, except that even with the glycerine added the hecto gel quickly begins to get overly sticky and tends to tear. For the same reason, I found it best to use a tray the same size as the paper. The thicker the gel the less tearing.

Nice fresh new look this time.

I'm sorta getting the hang of this whole Fanzine thing. It only took me 30 issues, plus five Claims Departments. And a couple of Alternate Wildlys. and...

Excellent article on computers in film. Years ago someone claimed they were intending to make another "Oh,God" film with a digital George Burns but I never heard more about it.

I had seen it listed places, but didn't know they were thinking of inserting him digitally. That's sad. Oh God, You Devil was my all-time favourite film until I saw the Blues Brothers when I was a kid, and I've always been a huge George Burns fan.

The idea of digitally reanimating dead actors is creepy. How about sound recording? Wouldn't it be even easier to create digital sound imposters? Think of how many recordings there are of the Beatles, not just albums but endless studio tapes. I'd imagine someone could eventually come up with a program that would use such material to create whole new recordings. Can a computer take the part of all those typing monkeys and randomly make billions of arrangements of notes and somehow identify the ones likely to have some aesthetic value? Maybe that's what all us billions of humans are doing here. Occassionally, by random chance, an Einstein happens.

This is trickier, but actually takes less processing power, so it'll happen first, but the results are harder to make acceptable to human listening ears. With a visual, you are more likley to let an off sound go, but without it, you become more critical. Still, we're not too far away from music and movies being able to do whatever the hell anyone who buys the rights to something wants to do with sampled vocal tracks. That'll be a sad day.

--

Eric

Blog:<http://www.journalscape.com/>

The Drink Tank Issue 30 was edited by Christopher J. Garcia, using his favourite programme inDesign 2.0, and posted to eFanzines.com by the Soon-to-be winner of the Hugo for Best Website, Bill Burns. Anything written by Mr. Garcia can be published anywhere else with or without permission in any medium. That's just the type of bastard he is. You can see more of Frank Wu's art and words at www.frankwu.com. The next issue is the Winchester Mystery House Special and should be out early next week. Pong!