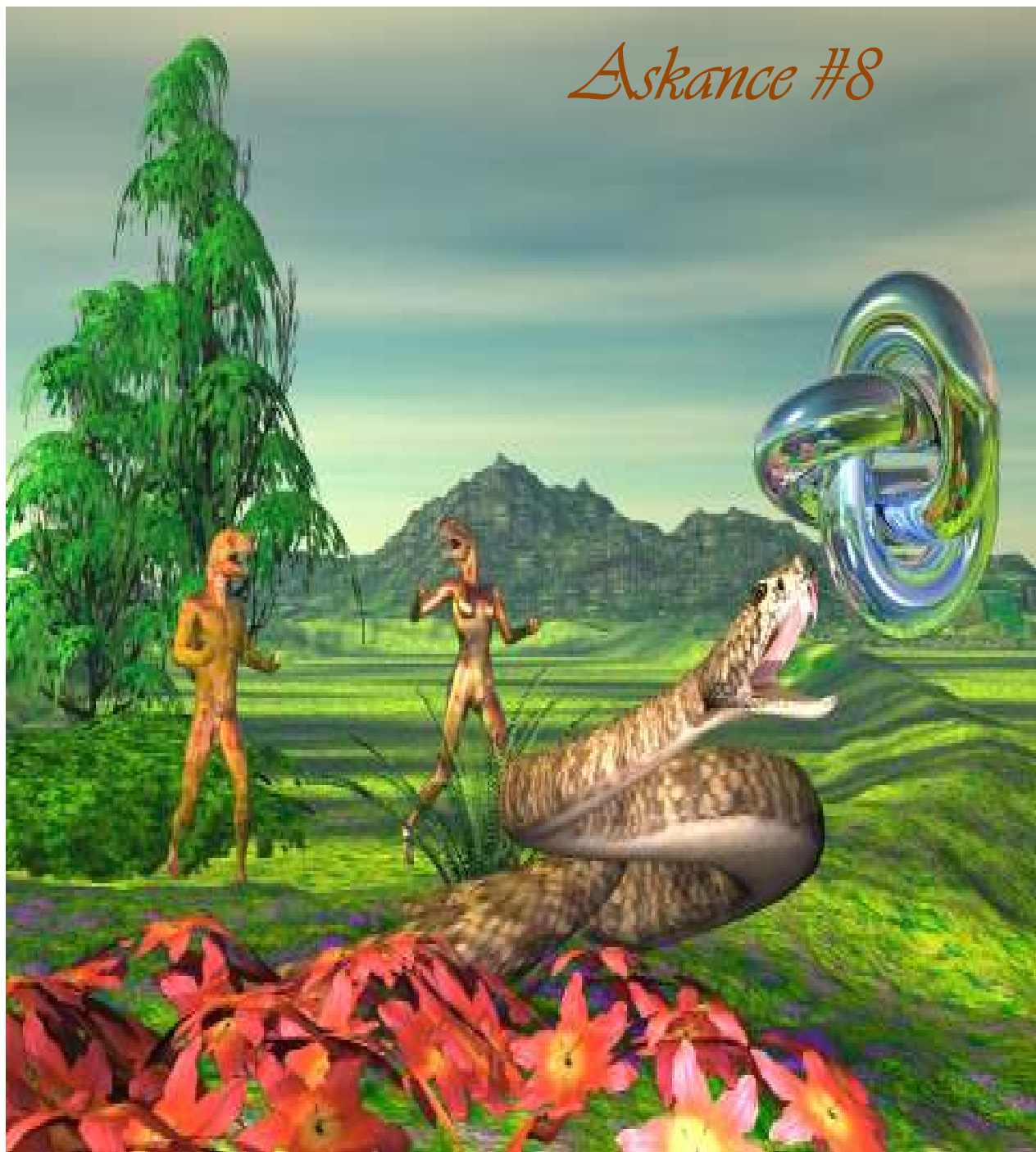
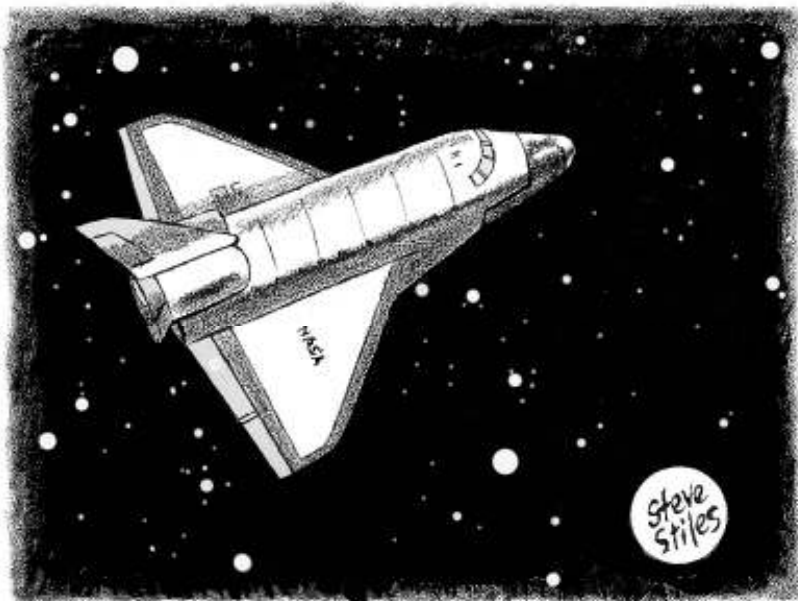


Askance #8



May, 2008



Bemused Hatterings

The Future is now

No wonder they're not twinkling anymore –we're out of gin!

Or so it appears, especially to those of us who virtual conned it over the weekend of April 25-27, 2008. I refer to, of course, Corflu Silver, the 25th gathering of the fanzine tribe in Las Vegas, Nevada. From what I could see – a limited view, of course, but that was to be expected – it looked like everyone had a grand time, and I certainly wish I could have been there. Up until April 10th, I was planning on attending. Unfortunately, life has a way of throwing a spanner in the works, and this time it was my wife's impending graduation from Sam Houston State University, and she has begun the job application process. Valerie's degree is in Criminal Justice/History, and her primary job possibility is as a criminal archivist: the person responsible for logging investigation results, researching criminal activity, and other fun stuff like that there. As an aside, I bet Eric Mayer would be interested in talking to Val. They share a common interest in murder and mayhem.

Thanks to the technical wizardry of Bill Mills – ably assisted by his wife, Roxanne, and other Vegrants at the con – I was able to observe some parts of Corflu Silver thanks to the invention of the Virtual Con Suite, a video/audio streaming link. It was a lot of fun – as you will see when you read my Virtual Con Report later in this issue – and the end result was the creation of an on-going U-stream link called the Virtual Fan Lounge. If you go to www.efanzines.com and click on the link to the Virtual Tucker Hotel (ably ~~man-handled~~ maintained by Peter Sullivan), you will find scheduled times when fans from around the world with computers can access chat-times with other like-minded fen. I took part in one such event on Saturday, May 17th, and it was a lot of fun.

So this is the world of cyber-fanac. We can now attend cons – or, to be more precise, observe and communicate with fans at cons – through the wonders of modern technology. And this can be from anywhere in the world. Last year's WorldCon in Japan had numerous fans updating their LiveJournals from Yokohama; *Askance* # 4 had my Virtual WorldCon report, and that issue posted less than a week after the WorldCon was over. The Corflu Silver Virtual Consuite was a blast, even with the expected and unexpected technical difficulties. As I intimated last paragraph, read what I wrote about sort-of attending Corflu Silver in "Lurkers in the Desert." Maybe then you'll get a glimpse of what cyber-fanac is like.

So I said to the guy, I says. . .

Well, the 2008 FAAn Awards were likewise handed out at Corflu Silver, and a few weeks later Arnie Katz pubbed the results in *Vegas Fandom Weekly #105* (a misnomer if there ever was one; this title will be morphing into something that will still maintain the VFW acronym, I suppose). This is kinda what I was most interested in this year because I wanted to see how well Askance stacked up against some of the finest fanzines ever published. In my estimation, 2007 was a banner year for quality fanzines, and I was quite happy to see *Prolapse* win the Best Fanzine category. Peter Weston has done a mighty fine job with that zine, and I congratulate him most heartily.

Here are the top 5 finishers in each category, copy/pasted from page 24 of *Vegas Fandom Weekly #105*. Actual vote totals are forthcoming.

2008 FAAn Awards Results

Best Fanzine

1. Prolapse (Peter Weston)
2. Banana Wings (Mark Plummer & Claire Brialey)
3. Vegas Fandom Weekly (Arnie Katz)
4. Trap Door (Robert Lichtman)

Best Fanwriter

1. Arnie Katz
2. Mark Plummer
2. Claire Brialey
4. Bruce Gillespie
5. Ted White

Best Fan Artist

1. Dan Steffan
2. Brad Foster
3. Harry Bell
4. Mark Schirmeister
5. Taral Wayne

Best Website

1. efanazines.com (Bill Burns)
2. The Voices Of Fandom (Bill Mills)

3. fanac.org
4. Trufen.net (Victor Gonzalez)
5. Ansible.co.uk (Dave Langford)

Best Letterhack

1. Robert Lichtman
2. Lloyd Penney
3. John Purcell
4. Mark Plummer
5. Milt Stevens

Best New Fan

1. John Coxon
2. Clare MacDonald
3. Warren Buff
4. Kristine Kopnisky
5. Peter Sullivan

Number One Fan Face

1. Arnie Katz
2. Chris Garcia
3. Robert Lichtman
4. Pete Weston
5. Ted White

Now for my take on these results.

There is no question in my mind that *Prolapse* is a deserving winner. Peter Weston is producing one of the most fascinating fan-historical zines, and each issue provides even more information about British fan history. The service eminent Peter is providing definitely deserves this award. The other top four zines are likewise wonderful, and in *Vegas Fandom Weekly #105*, Arnie Katz provided the full listing of the vote-getters in all the categories. This humble yet spiffy fanzine was in fifth place, which surprised me because there were so many fine zines pubbed last year. Allow me to thank everyone who voted for *Askance* in this difficult category.

I also believe that Arnie Katz is a deserving recipient of the Best FanWriter category, but it had to be a close finish. I mean, look at these names. My choice was Claire Brialey, but all of these folks are great writers. Whow! What a cast of characters.

Dan Steffan definitely is a top-flight fan artist. Now if he would just win that fershlugginer Fan Artist Hugo like he deserves, Dan would have a nice complimentary pair of awards. Brad Foster is definitely a wonderful artist who just keeps getting better all the time, and Harry, Mark, and Taral round out another quality group of artists.

There really should have been no contest with efanazines.com as Best Website, but I bet TVoF can be a strong contender next year, to say nothing of the new Virtual Fan Lounge. This is an exciting category to watch in the future as the technology continues to advance. In the meantime, what Bill Burns is doing is phenomenal, and I for one am eternally grateful for his maintaining this website. It is a joy and a privilege to be involved with it in my own small way.

At first I thought I had a chance to take the Best Letterhack category this year, but with Lichtman's informative, quality locs appearing all over the place, I bow down before greatness. Bob is a fine writer, and I wish I could have been at Corflu Silver to meet him. Since he and Lloyd Penney keep swapping this title every year, maybe the only chance I will ever have is to put out contracts on these fellows. (Just kidding.) Seriously though, I would like to know why Claire Brialey didn't finish in the top five. She is another excellent loc-writer. Claire may not be as prolific as Robert, Lloyd, or I, but every loc is a gem.

Some day I hope to meet John Coxon. It is good to know that there are youngsters out there who are getting into fanzine production, be it online or dead tree, and doing a good job with it. John's zine *Procrastinations* is growing nicely and already is assuming its own personality. There should be good things in store from John in the future, and I have to say that if Kristine Kopniski keeps her zine *Consonant Enigma* (great name for a zine!) going for another year or three, she will definitely have made her mark. Already Kristine's zine is a quality piece of work. Needless to say, it's viewable on efanazines.

As for Number One Fan Face, I was surprised that Chris Garcia did not win this category, but Arnie is a deserving soul. This past year has been very productive and eventful for this desert denizen, so Arnie's copping this award may not have been such a surprise to me. It is just that that damned Garcia kid is all over the place. Now this year I can't open a zine without seeing James Bacon's accompanying an article. So much for marriage slowing down James' written production.

Who and what are in this issue. . .

Bill Fischer

He needs no introduction, so just enjoy the latest Figby adventure. Next issue might see another Wikiphilia entry, so consider yourselves warned, everyone.

Christopher J. Garcia

This is another fellow who needs no introduction. What you will be reading herein is merely the fourth chapter of Chris' 50,000 word TAFF report – and it's already done! John Coxon supplied me with some photos of him and Chris so I could slap them into this report. Thank you, John, to offer proof that you and the rest of British fandom survived the Garcia onslaught.

Lloyd Penney

Oh, heck with it. Why bother introducing Lloyd, too? He sent more fanzine reviews. Enjoy.

Joe's Not Here, Man

An AggieCon 39 report by John Purcell



Editorial note: What follows is taken from my LiveJournal entries – <http://profgeek.livejournal.com> – with a little bit of editing to give it a bit of flow. I figure it is best to follow this convention in diary entry form.

Besides, I really want to get this issue out in a frigging hurry!

Day 1 (March 27th):

Got down to the MSC - Memorial Student Center - tonight on the TAMU campus where the main action is to get Dan and I registered for the weekend. For a whopping \$35, we both have full con passes (\$10 for Dan, \$25 for me), and the badge art is fun, of course. Carl Lundgren did the cover art for the program book, touching up a painting he first produced in 1991 by photo-shopping Chilly Willy into it and adding the con name to it. Very nice, indeed. The colophon information has a glaring error, listing the con's dates as March 22 - 25, 2007, prompting me to comment to one of the con officers that we are all now a year younger. A few jokes flew about AggieCon being a Time-Traveling Con, so this may evolve into the unofficial con slogan, Officially, the con slogan is "Penguins are stealing my con!" That's cool; I like penguins. They are so sensitive to my needs.

Today and tonight are mainly for registration as people straggle in, but the dealer's room was open - the temporary con suite was too, where I chatted with some more concom members - and it was pretty laid back and quiet, so I wandered a bit through the huckster's room, went outside to sit in a chair where I could over-look the Flag Room while perusing the program book and keep an idea on people's comings and goings. It looked like the weekend could be fun.

The Guests of Honor are these: Ellen Muth, Media GoH; Carl Lundgren, Artist GoH; Todd McCaffrey, Writer GoH; Tiffany Grant, Anime GoH. Other writers, artists, and such listed as guests are Jeff Turner, Bill Bean, C. Dean Andersson, Darlene Bolesny, Mark Worrell (know him from last year), Andrea Von Scoyoc, J. M. McDermott, John Ringo, Roxanne Conrad, Cat Conrad, Mel Hynes, J. Grant, R. K. Milholland, Preston DuBose, Bill Crider, Gloria Oliver, Kerry Tolan, Mel White, Scott Cupp, Tom Knowles, and Steven Brust. Joe Lansdale is not listed in the program book, leading me to suspect that he may be up in Salt Lake City, Utah this weekend for the World Horror Convention. We shall see. People tend to drop in for a day at AggieCon, so eventually I'll find out. If anything, I have Lansdale's e-mail address (thanks to James Bacon) and I can always contact him that way to see what gives.

All in all, the prospects look good for AggieCon.

Day 2 (March 28th):

Because we got down there much later than expected, Dan and I were not able to see that much - since it was 8:30 PM, things like the Art Show and Dealer's Room were closed - but we were able to sit down in the LAN gaming room and play a couple hour's worth of Ultimate Tournament (I think the game is called), Dan did much better than I did, of course. The graphics on this game are incredible, and it was a fun way to pass some time.

We left at 11:00 PM since Dan's soccer team had a game Saturday morning at ten, and thus ended a calmish and brief night.

Day 3 (March 29th):

Okay. In the spirit of *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (which had its obligatory midnight showings both Friday and Saturday nights of the con), this entry can easily be labeled "Let's do the time warp again."

Today Dan and I got down to the con around 2 PM; his team won their season opening soccer game 6-0 (Dan scored a goal off a rebound), and Aaron Mattox, our goalie (yes, I'm coaching again this season), also wanted to come down to AggieCon. So we picked up Aaron and his older brother Gavin and hit the convention. I took them to registration, where Aaron and Gavin bought one-day passes, then the boys loved wandering the dealer's room, easily located the console gaming room (MSC 228) and the main computer game room (MSC 206), and generally people watching; it is always a blast seeing the college kids in costumes and acting kinda stupid. (I never did that sort of thing when I was in my 20s... Costuming, that is, not acting kinda stupid. That I most certainly did - and far too often, I am afraid. But I digress.) Asking about, I discovered much to my chagrin that Joe Lansdale was not in attendance. So much for the interview. (E-mail interview time, I guess.) However, I did have a chance to chat briefly with Bill Crider and some other local fen whom I remembered from last year's con. A swing through the small but well-appointed Art Show resulted in my gathering up a half-dozen business cards of artists to bug for future covers of *Askance*. Artist GoH Carl Lundgren had some wonderful work on display.

After getting the boys set up in the console game room, I headed over to the Rudder Tower (via the con suite for a quick drink and snack) to try and catch Steve Brust before his panel with John Ringo at 3 PM. This worked beautifully since I spied the Brust having a smoke and chat with Ringo outside the building. After the obligatory pleasantries, we talked for a while, which was when Steve hit me with the bombshell that one of our old Minn-stf buddies, Curtis Hoffman, was at the con! Steve warned me, "You won't recognize him. I sure didn't."

He was right. We ran into Curtis exiting the elevators after Steve's panel, and chatted. Then the three of us - well, four, since Steve's girlfriend Reesa was with us - walked down the hall over to the MSC. That was when Steve said, "This is so strange. Here I am, walking down a hall at a con with John Purcell and Curtis Hoffman, and it's in *Texas*, no less." Side-ways glances at each other's graying hair and middle-aged paunches required no further commentary. A tacit understanding between us existed: time plods onward -- unfortunately.

To shorten all this up, we split up, I found my boys wandering the MSC hallways. I told them that we would be heading home to grab a bite to eat, then come back. Aaron wanted to stay the night with Dan (Gavin went home), which was fine by me. One last swing through the dealer's room was in order. That was when Carl Lundgren and I talked - he even sort of remembered me from cons during the mid-70s! -



and he sold me one of his signed prints for half-price! (What a sweetheart.) I asked him if he'd be willing to do a cover for *Askance*, and Carl said, "Sure. I'd love to." He made a note to visit efanazines to see the latest issue, and homeward the boys and I went.

When we got back, Aaron and Dan had more fun in the gaming rooms while I sat down in the lobby outside MSC 201 where the Cosplay Contest was going on. I positioned myself so that I could have a view of the

costumes from time to time. Some of them were really good, too. Curtis Hoffman swung through eventually, sat down, and the two of us had a great two and a half hour conversation catching up on each other's doings - he lived in Japan for a while, and has worked with Dragonball and been involved with other Anime projects - since last we met. It was great: sitting there in the lobby, talking, while college kids (and old kids, too, of course) walked back and forth in Cosplay and Rocky Horror costumes. Some of the young ladies certainly made the corsets and lingerie look mighty fine. There was one gal in a Magenta costume who obviously had spent a lot of time perfecting the outfit. Very convincing.

And so it went. Curtis left about 12:15 AM (as RHPS began in room 201) for his hotel, then I gathered up the lads and took them home.

As for Sunday? Probably not. We shall see what transpires. I did, though, learn that the dead dog party would probably be at Rob and Pat's house around the circle from my house. (My family lives in 3744 Marielene, while the Cepheids gather at 3702 Marielene.) I might just drop over tonight for a bit.

Day 4 (March 30th):

For a student-run convention, this one certainly does a good job of spreading the events out. Didn't go this morning, since the dealer's room and everything basically closed at either noon or 1 PM, so there was nothing really worth seeing. There was, however, a panel scheduled - "Old Aggiecons, Old Pharts" - at 10 AM, but I wasn't really interested. That, or I simply didn't want to be reminded of my advancing years. Oh, well...

Still, the Dead Dog is tonight, and on my block, so I will wander over for a bit at one point. Thus there might be a bit more to report on here.

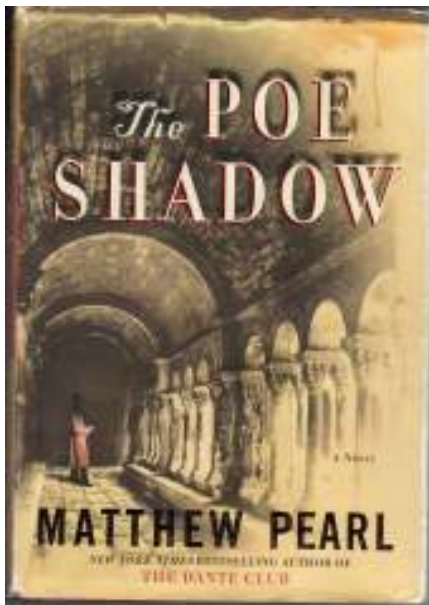
Later that night:

Yeah, I dropped by the Dead Dog party for about a half hour, chatting with some of the kids who ran the con. They are a good bunch, and some of the more Serious and Constructive club members were sequestered in one of the bedrooms plotting out the basics for next year's AggieCon. Needless to say, I left before getting sucked into *that*. My estimation of the 39th edition of AggieCon was that it was a success – even without Joe Lansdale present. But next year, he had better be there or there will be hell to pay in Mud Creek, Texas.



BOOK REVIEW IN A BOX

The Poe Shadow, by Matthew Pearl. New York: Random House. 367 pages, 2006.



This is one of those historical mysteries – almost an alternative history novel – that seeks to explain in a fictional setting the mysterious death of Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). Set in Baltimore during the years 1849-1852, local up-and-coming lawyer Quentin Clark, a big fan of Poe's work, witnesses the dismal, burial of his favorite author, and is so struck by the abject poverty of this funeral that Clark determines to investigate the circumstances of Poe's death.

And thus begins a strange, elaborate journey that takes Clark to Paris in order to enlist the aid of the man who inspired Poe to create the world's first literary detective, Monsieur C. August Dupin. Being a lawyer, Clark's method of inquiry is quite, well, methodical, but Matthew Pearl does a very good job of portraying Clark's investigation as bordering on being obsessive. His quest to clear Poe's legacy – in fact, Clark had been retained by the famed author as legal representative for Poe's proposed literary journal, the *Stylus*, just before Poe's death - is definitely an adventure that Clark never envisioned, nearly destroying his career and pending marriage.

One of the problems with the book is that Pearl wrote in the literary style prevalent in early Victorian age literature: a bit wordy, heavy on the adjectives, and replete with descriptive phraseology. After a while the reader gets used to the language and style, and the story moves along at a pretty good clip. All in all, it's a fun read, and I recommend this novel to those of you who enjoy reading alternative history and mysteries.

TAFF Report, Chapter 4

by Christopher J. Garcia



Monday - I'm the Operator with My Pocket Calculator...

(typed in the Science Museum London above the Making the Modern World gallery on March 17th, 2008)

Woke up ready for London proper. I finished a little reading (old issues of MAYA that Mark gave to me) and showered and headed downstairs around 8 or so. Claire was up and we drank coffee. You see, there...it's a theme! OK, after coffee, toast and fucking good jam, we headed out the door to take the tram. I've got a thing for trams. I love them. We don't have them in the BArea, but they're fun and Claire was kind enough to take me on the tour of the city of Croydon on the tram. What magic love and light and joy this seems. Really, Croydon seems like any of a hundred other American cities I've been to, but it also has a certain something that makes it seem like the England that makes its way over to America via PBS TV series. We did a pass and ended up at the station where I would catch the train to Victoria Station. By the way, that's a great stripper name.

Nothing happened on the train. In fact, there were five total people in the car I was riding on. So little happened that I couldn't even bring myself to take out my laptop and start typing because I thought it might ruin the vibe of nothing going on. It was a shame because trains with action, yammering people on cell phones, arguing couples at leisure, people talking about the invisible radios in their fingernails, they make trips very interesting. This had none of that. Perhaps I'm too American. I expect hassle and strangeness and the bizarre. This says more about what I think is normal than what is or is not reality. Go figure.

At Victoria Station, I checked my bag. There were about a hundred other people in front of me checking their bags. They all seemed to be yammering in German. Three different times three different people said 'Klaus. Stille!'. That's how I knew it was German. I had to take out my CPAP and my camera

and then re-pack and replace the bag. Once I was free of that bag, I headed to make my day.

I knew I had to experience food. I chose a pasty shop. They had a wide selection of things in dough. You can seldom go wrong with things in dough. I chose Roast Pork. Not kosher, but it turned out to be very tasty. It was better than any meat pie of any sort I'd had in the US...save for pirogi in a few restaurants whose names I can not pronounce. I made the mistake of ordering a Coke with it. Sadly, sugar is not nearly as sweet as corn syrup and I much prefer the latter. Go figure. I ate it while watching celebrity news on the big TV screen above the entryway into the train station. It just seemed like the right thing to do.

Now, I had mapped out my way on the Tube to the Science Museum. I would take the Circle line to South Kensington. Now, I'm still not sure why, but I decided to go outside and try and walk instead. There is a magical disconnect between the reality of a map of streets and the reality of a map like London A to Z and the reality of a bunch of streets. For some reason, I chose the last of those. The first thing I did was walk out the door and try to find a garbage can. Not an easy thing, it turns out. I have heard that many garbage cans disappeared during the time when it was fashionable to leave bombs in enclosed spaces like bins, so I wasn't too surprised, but still, you gotta have somewhere to dump your junk. I finally found one about three blocks down towards Hyde Park.

Now, I'd heard of Hyde Park, but I knew not where it was in relation to where I wanted to be. I figured a walk along the edge wouldn't hurt. And in fact it did not, but I had to go across and try to make my way to where I thought the Science Museum might be. I crossed the street and saw something odd: Ben. Ben McAllen is a friend of mine. I've known him since 1990 or so. He used to date Judith and was a friend of Jay's back in the day. I hadn't seen him since about 2000, when he came out after getting a messy divorce. He was a nice guy, six three and full of the gangly. He had arms that seemed to dangle from unattached sockets. I knew him immediately, and hardly remembering that he lived in London, I questioned whether or not to yell out 'Ben, you grimy fucker!'.

Of course, I did just that.

He turned around and stared for a moment before pulling out the right card in his memory. "Garcia? What the hell are you doin' in London, eh?" The voice was nearly impossible to understand, but he rushed over and gave me a traditional man-hug.

The art of the man-hug is seldom practiced outside of bars and sports playing fields. It requires attention and a stern resolve to not hold on too tight or long. We had it down right. We chatted for a few minutes. He was dating a new girl name of Jesse Crawley who had appeared in a couple of films. He was the kind of guy who could boil down ten years into a minute and a half, and he did just that.

"You want to go and get a drink?" he asked.

"Nah, I gotta get across to the Science Museum." I answered.

"Fuck all! I'm heading over that way. Jesse's over at the cafe at the Natural History Museum!" he said and we walked over together while talking about M and SaBean and Judith and Jay and so on. They were all up in Finland entertaining Manny and CJ. I had wanted to go and visit, but the timing was bad. We walked and we talked and he said he couldn't believe he had run into me. I asked him if his plan to build the first ignorance-powered railroad had come to fruition and he said no, but he'd never truly give up on it. WE LAUGHED AND TALKED AND MADE INAPPROPRIATE JOKES. That was so what we all did. He

dropped me his phone number and he was off to the Natural History Museum and I just around the way to the Science Museum.

I had made a date to chat with one of the curators and get up-close with the Babbage Engine. I showed up and introduced myself and was told that the curator I had arranged with was out for the day. I was bummed. I thought about leaving, but I was there so I may as well get a look at the exhibit I had come to see. I headed upstairs to where the Computing Exhibit was, fully ready to see the Babbage Engine fully behind glass like every other patron, and I would have, had there not been a camera crew.

First off, I'm a camera. I saw that it was a high-quality camera crew the likes of which we use to shoot footage of significant computing stuff for the museum. The Engine's glass case was off and pushed over to the side. The Original Babbage Engine, reconstructed from plans that Babbage did by a group led by my colleague and pal Doron Swade, sat exposed to the world. There were a few folks milling about and I stepped up to one of the guys in the lab coats.

"Excuse, me, are you with the museum?" I asked.

"Aye." he said.

"Hi, I'm Chris Garcia. I work at the Computer History Museum in Silicon Valley. I was just hoping that I could get an up-close look at the Babbage Engine."

"I don't think I can let ya. The crew is shooting the footage for the Computer Museum in San Francisco." The dude said.

"Wait, that's my museum."

"Really? Then you must know Doron." he said.

"Of course I do."

"Well, let me get him for ya." and the guy went behind a little thing and called out 'Hey, Doron! You got a visitor.'

That's when I noticed the other Babbage Engine, the one that's coming to our museum in three weeks, sitting on the other side of the divide. There, right next it was my pal from the museum, Doron Swade. Two times in one day.

"Chris, what are you doing here?" he asked.

"On vacation, Doron." I answered, shaking his hand. He led me behind and gave me a demo.

"That look on your face is the exact right reaction to the thing" he said as I groggled at the massive mechanical calculator. He turned the crank, using a lot of force. One of the newest units of measure is the Crick. It's the amount of force required to do one turn of the handle to operate the Babbage Engine. The crick for this one was much greater than for the older one. Doron pointed out that this would lead my developing bigger arms and a smaller gut.

"Don't worry. I'll take the arms, but I'll just make sure to eat more to keep the universe in order."

He showed me around and then we went and had lunch. The museum's cafe was a good one and I was most pleased. Doron showed me around and we talked Exhibit philosophy a little and work stuff. It's

what we do. I was most impressed with the place, though Doron says that they gutted it from when it was at its peak when he was running the joint. They had a Differential Analyzer from Cambridge which was most interesting. They had a water-based Analogue Economic Calculator that was really neat. The Ferranti Pegasus, tons of calculators, a recreation Punched Card room, the works. Our exhibit, when it's done, will kick this place's ass, but for what they had, especially the Babbage and Scheutz Engines, they're the best I've ever seen.

I said goodbye to Doron and made my way to the Making the Modern World Exhibit. Trains, Cars, Planes, stuff. The layout was weird, but there were things. Old steam engines from the late 18th and early/mid-19th centuries. There were all sorts of engines and cars and models of engines and cars, and a few calculators. There was an awesome speedboat from the 1920s that Wooster would have looked just smashing in. There were three things that really hit me. The first was the Pilot Ace. That was the computer designed by Alan Turing, one of the



first and most important early laboratory computers in the world. I believe it used to be in the Computing Exhibit that Doron put together and moved when they decided to wipe the mark of Swade from the place. The computer was simple, a wooden box, very nicely made, and a metal rack with tubes which some bozo labeled as valves. What the crap was that? I enjoyed looking at it far longer than anyone else who wandered by. The second was one of the first VCRs from AMPEX, a company from my neck of the woods. I've seen them before, but this one was earlier than any of the others I had seen. The final one was the Cray-1A Supercomputer. I've seen, and even played on, these beasts and this one seemed smaller than the ones I'm used to. Much not get as much sun out in the UK as the ones we have back at home. The Clock of the Long Now was there too. Designed to keep time for 10,000 years, I didn't know that they had one. We thought of getting one, but only because it would be cool and not because it has anything to do with computers save for the designer, Danny Hillis, who designed the Connection Machine for Thinking Machines Inc.

At this point, I'm betting you're wishing what I was wishing, that I hadn't left Linda's digital camera in my checked bag. I'd love to have all sorts of photos to show, but sadly, the ones I've included here are from my museum. Now, I'm writing this no more than ten minutes after I finished looking at the Making of the Modern World exhibit, so how do I know that I'm going to use images from my Museum? Well, it just seems like the right thing to do, but I could always surprise myself. Only Future History will decide!

(This part started while sitting on a bench in front of the Nation Art Library in the Victoria -Y- Albert Museum, March 17th, 2008 at 4:14 PM)

Museum day (without a camera) continued. I headed next door to the Science Museum and discovered the Natural History Museum. They checked my bag and then I headed in, only to stop and stare at the preserved Woolly Rhino that was in a niche above the security check area. It was very cool and it got my hopes up.

Sadly, the rest of the museum didn't do anything for me

It was a science museum with a few fossils and a bunch of stuff that I'd seen at other museums. The Volcano exhibit was cool, but it would have been a little nicer if it had actually had some real artifacts and not just staged mock-ups. Still, being in the Japanese grocery store during a simulated quake was kinda cool. And by cool, I mean totally sweet.

I only stayed a half hour or so before I headed out and across the street to the Victoria & Albert Museum. It's a design museum and the first turn I made brought me into the Chinese section. That flowed into the Japanese section and then into the Korean section. OK, let's talk about that arrangement. The Chinese section gets the best position because it's China, everybody's favorite right now. Then there's Japan, the second best though the artifacts they had were very cool, much cooler than the ones that they had for China. Then there was poor Korea, stuck out in a hallway with no room of its own. It's always been the one that China and Japan have looked down on. Apparently the V+A go along with that thinking.

I then headed down to the Medieval Rooms. These featured dozens of effigies and the fronts of Cathedrals...all redone in Plaster Casts. Now, while I'll give it up to people who display the plaster casts of rock star units, I'm not one to go to a museum and only see castings. Yes, they're impressive and the stories of the techniques they used to make such incredible casts would have been great, I go to Museums to see real stuff. In one room, there was only one artifact of any real value. It was a cross from the 1200s which was totally sweet, but otherwise, the room of stuff was as false as anything you'd find at Disneyland!

Wandering around, I did come across what I hoped was real statuary and some beautiful museum-quality real stuff living in one hall that was closed for reinstallation but you could look down on from the gallery. That would have been cool enough for me. Then I saw Michelangelo's Dave and realized that I'd been duped again. The bastards!



I headed away and found myself standing in front of the Hereford Screen. It was incredible. A piece of magnificent metalwork that I think might be the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. It was magnificent and had wonderful elements of metal and wood, paint and gleam. I could barely control myself. I plopped down on a bench nearby and wrote this section hoping that I could

make it clear that this was significant, that this screen was somehow effecting me. The screen was a masterpiece that hit me far harder than almost any art exhibit I've ever seen. I've been within inches of DaVincis and Sergeants, Cassats and even owned pieces by Rothko and Motherwell, but nothing put me

in my place like that Hereford Screen. The story of how it went from Hereford Cathedral to the Vic and Al was great stuff. I love a good museum story, but that's a part of the whole Museum Lifestyle. While the trip itself was a significant part of my life story, the screen, the experience of a twenty foot high metal screen, was incredible. I wasn't going to come to the V et A, but I'm so glad I did. I stared for several minutes and then made my way to my next stop.

I then moved on past Ironwork, including many, many iron chests and an awesome Coffin from the 16th Century. I like coffers, what can I say? I headed down a flight of stairs to the musical instruments. That's my scene. There was a serpent, a wind instrument that winds back and forth a few times with a series of finger-holes. There were cellos, harpsichords, pianos, hurdy-gurdies, viols and music boxes.

I saw over the edge to the next floor down where all the clothes were. I'm pretty sure that Linda is going to want to spend some time there when we have to come back on Tuesday or Wednesday. I found myself a place to sit, on a table surrounded with clear plastic chairs in the middle of the gallery. To my left was a case containing bras, slips, dressing gowns, girdles, a bustle and, of course, a corset. Nothing made me happier than seeing these. The words just kept coming as I typed my real-time report, looking

at the clock and knowing that I didn't have long before I had to run to South Kensington and catch the Tube to Allison Scott's, my next home away from home.

I couldn't go quite yet. I had to look at the stuff from 1600 to 1800. There were tapestries and beautiful works of wood. One room had swords and guns. You gotta love those things. While the Flintlock Rifle was very cool, I thought the stiletto was cooler. I stopped and typed this section in the Jones Collection of ceramics. A ceramic vulture, white as Bogota's finest, sits in the middle, completely ignoring the Yank typing on the iBook that is every bit as colorless as he.



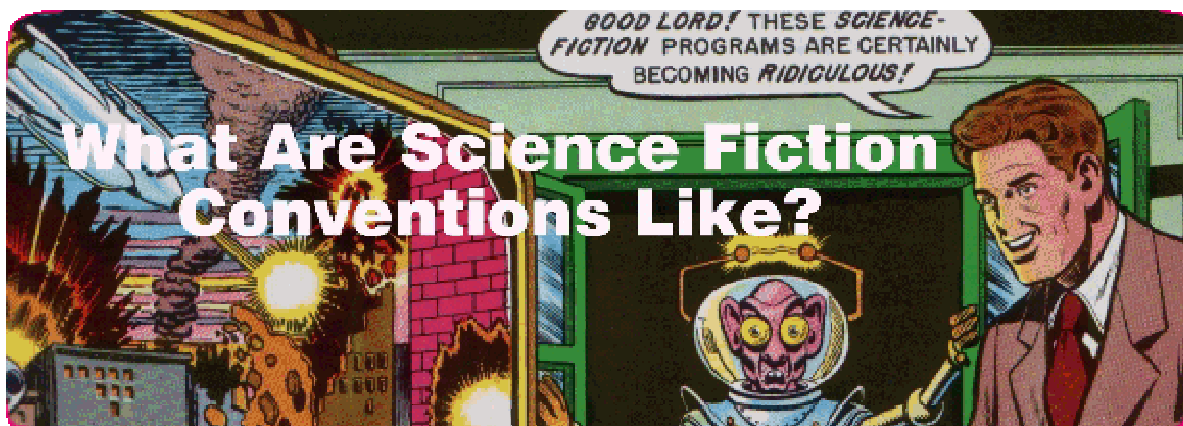
John Coxon and Chris Garcia caught in an intimate moment during Orbital, 2008. (blackmail photo obtained from John Coxon.)

The day had to end and it was off to Alison and Steve's place. I had been given very good directions to their place and was off. It was easy going through Victoria to the end of the line, but I was also overconfident. I ended up lost. Not irreversibly so, but enough that it could have ended up very badly. I missed the street that sort of materialized out of the train station. How I missed it I'm not sure. Actually, I am sure. I'm an idiot. I got to their place and Alison was madly Photoshopping away on the cover for the next *Plokta*. I can only say that this met with huge admiration from me. She was doing a Facebook takeoff that was really, really funny. It had a lovely bite of snark to it. I was very glad to be one of the first to see it.

While she was working on that, Steve was chatting with me and managing the kids, Marianne and Jonathan. They're good kids who made me miss Evelyn quite a bit. I've seen energy like it in kids before, but never to this level. The little guy was cool, he jumped on me quite a bit and Marianne made some

very snide remarks at him. She had me laughing quite a bit. After Alison finished it off, we walked out to get some food, only to find that Eat 17 was having bread training. That's right, they were teaching bread to kneel and obey its mistress...or maybe they were trying to corset down its waist to 13 inches. We turned around and ordered Pizza Hut, which was a good thing. We got sides and everything! It was a good deal better than the Pizza Hut back home. Totally happy with it I was. The kids eventually went to bed, which lowered the energy a bit and meant that I could relax. Too much of that and I was flat tired. Steve had showed me his collection of Melodeons, which are way cool. We talked for an hour and a half or so and then I had to sleep. These things happen. I retired to the room at the highest room and immediately picked up the computer to record these tales as well as prepare myself for sleep: the best use of my writing time!

- Chris Garcia



A good point. This is especially true when one considers the following con report.

If you keep in mind that I am a creature of bizarre habits, then what follows makes its own perverted sense. This was written in the spirit of my Not-WorldCon Reports, of which last year's Nippon 2007 report is one example. See, the wonders of modern technology are making it possible to attend conventions without actually being there. Last summer, many fen were posting entries to their LiveJournals while attending the Japanese WorldCon, which was actually kind of fun. In truth, the changing face of fandom is directly a result of the rapid growth of communication technology. I really don't think anyone will debate that point, but this technological boom may be having an indirect affect on our hobby interest: fanzine fandom.

Therefore, keeping this thought in mind, our attention now turns to a con that is near and dear to the heart of many of us, Corflu: the annual gathering of the fanzine fandom clan.



Lurkers in the Desert:

a Corflu Silver Virtual Con Report

by John Purcell

If I had actually been able to physically attend Corflu Silver, this report would be much longer, full of anecdotes about what happened here and there, who I chatted up, where and what we ate on Friday night, and so on and so forth. In other words, a typical con report. Unfortunately, I could not be there. However, thanks to the technical wizardry of Bill Mills and others, many fen from around the world were actually able to “attend” Corflu Silver in Last Vegas last month via the Virtual Con Suite that those folks set up. It may have consisted only of one camera, which allowed for only one view, and was only available in the main meeting room, but if you had a computer, you could have watched and listened to opening ceremonies, the fan cabaret music session, panels, and the banquet/Guest of Honor speech/FAAn Awards on Sunday. Virtual consuiters could only watch and listen, although Bill had set up a chat room through which fen could type messages back and forth to not only folks at the con, but also with each other.

The weird thing was that I felt like the proverbial fly on the wall, watching and listening to the music - I missed the opening ceremonies, drat it all to heck! - on the virtual Corflu Silver consuite link. Still, it was a lot of fun. The audio wasn't as bad as I expected, but there was still the occasional lag in signal that bollixed things up. I called Pat Virzi afterwards and told her two things: 1) to tell Bill Mills that he did a great job and that all of us around the country who were chatrooming it (Curt Phillips, Geri Sullivan, Kip Williams, myself, and a bunch more) really enjoyed it; and 2) to give everybody there a hug for me. Pat said that could be a physically daunting task, but she was up for it. I can't wait to hear from her - and hug recipients - how well her mission went.



The VFL was active again on Saturday, so my plan was to drop in from time to time. My son's soccer team had two games that morning – at 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM (they won both games) - so that left me time to check in later on in the day to see what was happening. For future reference, since this is now part of the permanent record, here's the link: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/corflu-silver-virtual-con-suite>

It really was fun, despite the distorted visuals and stop-and-go audio. Eventually all conventions will go this way, mainly to allow supporting members to partake of the festivities, and the only foreseeable

problem could be the loss of registration fees. Perhaps the best way to avoid this problem is to make access to such a feed password protected, this password being provided only to supporting members of the con in question. This is food for thought for future con-committees to digest if they are considering providing a live feed like this.

Doing the virtual con was a lot of fun. A special award was created by the virtual attendees - courtesy of Curt Phillips, who instigated it, and none of us stood in his virtual way (not good to cross the electronic streams, apparently) - and e-mailed to Vegas, whereupon said award was presented to Bill and Roxanne Mills after the FAAn awards were announced. A mighty roar went up from not only the actual attendees but from the virtual audience as well.

While there were technical difficulties - as were to be expected, since this was a new thing - the historic nature of this feed was not lost on any of us. Part of me found this very exciting, and the fan-historian in me wants to record my thoughts for posterity. All I can think of at this juncture is that it the con was immediately preserved - much like many of the attendees who looked like they were feeling the after-effects of Too Much Fun.

Lots of cool people were checking in and out of the Virtual Con Suite.. At one point on Sunday, April 27th, 22 fans were logged in from around the world; heck, James Bacon wanted to go to bed (he did eventually, and he brought his computer to bed it seems; poor Simoné), but James stayed up for the FAAn Awards for the broadcast of the banquet, awards and general speechifying (Andy Hooper was the GoH this year). It was almost like being there, and the virtual attendees amused themselves greatly by heckling the attendees while they ate. It was very funny, and some marvelous zingers were flying. Many opined that bouncing potatoes had to be part of the meal. Someday someone is going to have to ask Robert Lichtman about sneaking bites off of Jack Speer's plate. Stolen fork and napkin comments flew, and a grand virtual time was had by virtually all.

Without question, this was fan history happening before us. Here was a live feed from a con, and many of us were interacting with people there via the chat room. The technology exists for live cam and audio, and as the technology improves, so will the quality of the stream. This is truly an exciting time to be a science fiction fan. I shake my head at the wonder of it all. We are living in a science fiction world. Oh, my, what a thought.

- John Purcell



FROM THE HINTERLANDS



Here we go again with still more unexplainable missives from somewhere out in the great unknown. In fact, it is for these unexplainable missives that I pub this nifty, bimonthly fanzine, so keep them coming, folks. They are all greatly appreciated.

It somehow seems appropriate to begin with a loc from way up north. In fact, I understand things are thawing out nicely in Canada this spring. What is even more appropriate is that this loccol is being edited with the Stanley Cup Finals, Game One, on in the background: Pittsburgh Penguins vs. Detroit Red Wings. Go Penguins!

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April 15, 2008

Dear John:

It is massive catch-up time for locs on your zines, and with some luck, some fanzine reviews. First of all, time to comment on

Askance 7, the first annish! Congrats on that, and what else to say?

I'm sure you're finding that while a regular fanzine is fun, real life takes you away from having more fun. That's why I've had to refuse any and all invitations to join apas. The job hunt is keeping me busy, and I am also taking on more voicework projects. I have to see if I can do another fanzine column before heading off to Vegas and seeing you and lots of others at

Corflu. That's my mission this week to get caught up and get locs off to those who I'll see.

I was still expecting to see David Burton's *Pixel* return, so that's a shame to see that. Did David send out a general e-mail about *Pixel* not returning? *{No, I learned this via an e-mail from Lee Anne Lavell a few months ago.}*

James, what I take from your essay is that Nazism, in whatever form or name it takes, can happen here. To be honest, to see how liberties and freedoms were restricted by the Bush regime, plus the hint of it that came from the new Department of Homeland Security, made me think that Nazism or fascism could arrive on this continent. I think I was among the first to describe some of Dubya's actions as being fascist, and I see I am not the last. The rule of law must be enforced fairly, and applied to all, and Dubya will start looking like a fair man once the prison at Guantanamo Bay is shut down.

Robert Sabella's list of future histories sum up my own reading interests...adventures in a set universe in the future, with good people and amazing ideas, settings and actions. Seeing that most of these series are set in the future, did we all enjoy these stories because we were worried about our future, and the stories gave us some ease from that worry?

I agree with you, John, fanzines are a fun way of participating in fandom, and in my own experiences, costumes, collecting, art, filk, and so many more activities, are also fun. You have to put into fandom to get something out; you can't just sit there and demand to be entertained. I know some who have, and were disappointed.



Cars are in our future, too. We own a 1998 Suzuki Esteem station wagon, and it was a new car when we drove to the Baltimore Worldcon in 1998. It's taken us to a few more Worldcons, and to dozens of other conventions, but now, it's a little rusty around the edges, there's more than 270,000 km on it.

I seem to be the kind of fan that usually works on most of the conventions he attends, unlike Andy Tremblay. Yvonne and I have been away

from conrunning for about three years, and we have now decided to call it a vacation. We will be rejoining the local convention committee, and seeing what we can do to advertise the con, and get more people involved. It was 25 years our first time in; who knows how long we'll last this time?

My loc...found out that Chris Garcia himself will be running the fanzine room for Denvention. We will be tossing some ideas around to see if there are any ideas we can share. If we are all fringe fans as Randy Byers says, I sure there will be those who say they are at the fringe of the fringes, and will complain loud and long, or simply rejoin in their difference. Instead of feeling pushed to the fringes, that's where we'll feel the most comfortable, away from the centre no one wants to be in. Let's just call ourselves fans, no matter our interest, and we'll all feel included.

Dale Speirs may not be considered for the fanzine awards, but Dale has won in the past an Aurora Award in the category of Fan Achievement (Fanzine) for *Opuntia*, and with his zine being the only nominee on this year's ballot, he's about to win a second Aurora. He has been recognized for his work, but he should have had a FAAn award by now.

Chris Garcia has already used two zines to produce part of his trip report, so I hope it will be ready soon. What are you waiting for, Chris? Several Garcia-zines have seen the light of day; he must have had a laptop and was typing away all through his trip. I plan to do much the same thing on the way to Las Vegas. On our trip to Las Vegas for Corflu Silver, in about ten days or so as I write, we will be leaving Toronto very early in the morning, and will have an hour's layover in Houston. Our flight will take about 7 hours each way, so we will be back in Texas much sooner than we expected, although not for long.

Yrs., **Lloyd Penney**

{As you can see from this issue, here is one of the many chapters Chris Garcia wrote about his TAFF trip. At 50,000 words, this is one epic con/trip report.}

{As for fanzines and participating in fandom, there are many forms of being an active fan.}

There is no local club here except for when the school year is in session, so the only other way to be active around here is to either start a club – no time for such shenanigans on my part – or simply do fanzines and the like. It's all fun, and I do enjoy what little I do. This is, of course, the whole idea behind being a fan: for the fun of it.}

- - -

Another long-time fan (and math teacher) has some interesting ideas to share, to say nothing of distilling the Core Fandom discussion into a cold equation. (Ya gotta love the stfnal reference there!):

12 April 2008

"Robert Sabella" <bsabella@optonline.net>

Hi John,

Thanks for *Askance* 7. I was disappointed to read that your plans to join FAPA last month had to be put on hold until you finish your dissertation. Hurry up, John, I'm looking forward to seeing you in the FAPA mailings!

Arnie Katz' article on "Core Fandom" discusses the latest version of disputes which have been going on since I joined fandom several centuries ago (or so it seems). I guess it goes all the way back to the fannish feuds in the 1930s which carried over to the first WorldCon. I have translated the gist of the situation mathematically as follows:

If A = fandom is a microcosm of society, thus various groups of fans have different interests than other groups;

And B = being a microcosm of society, some fans are tolerant of others' differences while others are not;

+ C = being a microcosm of society, some intolerant fans keep their intolerance private while others belittle other fans ("They are arrogant snobs who rejected me" being a typical attack);

Ergo, Σ = people who belittle others publicly are disgraceful, whether they be fans or otherwise.

I have always been primarily a fanzine fan—and proud of it—but for many years even fanzine fandom was split into two components: serconish and faanish, and those two groups did not get along any better than any other sub-groups of society and/or fandom. I wonder if the shrinking of fanzine fandom has finally brought those two oft-warring groups together?

Are there people who look down upon each one of us? Of course there are. Are some of them fans? Probably. Maybe definitely. But we should never let those people bother us. They are the ones who are missing out on what could be some very interesting friendships. If some people want to belittle all core/fanzine fans publicly, I don't feel as magnanimous as Arnie in wanting to "set the record straight." I would just as soon circle our wagons and keep our very warm and comforting campfire to ourselves.

Thanks for lots of good reading.

Bob

{Interesting equation, Bob. I find that I agree with your summation in part, mainly that fanzine fans should not let the opinions of others bother us. In fact, I am with one of Arnie's points, that being we should be willing to talk about our hobby interest and allow others in who want to participate in the conversation that is Fandom.}

{Your "circle our wagons" analogy is sadly one way of responding to criticism of our choices, but I believe that if an "outsider" wants in, then we should let them sit down by the fire and join us. Most of fandom – and by this I mean all the various subsets of it – is quite accepting of fresh blood, and that is definitely A Good Thing. I agree with you that if someone doesn't want to sit down and chew the fat with us, they will be "missing out on what could be some very interesting friendships." A truer statement hath not been spoken. To quote one of Paul McCartney's sappier songs completely out of its original context, "Open the door/Let 'em in." This attitude is what I have always enjoyed about fandom: its openness.}

- - -

A new voice is being added to these pages, and it belongs to this year's Best New Fan FAAn

award recipient, none other than John Coxon himself:

14 Chapel Lane
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ENGLAND

17th April 2008

Dear John,

The time has finally come. This is it, this is the big one, this is the letter of comment. I would like to apologise wholeheartedly for having taken so long. *{It is never too long, mate. Welcome to the fannish pool!}*

So, *Askance* #7, then. A great list of contributors to start out with, and who should I find having written the first article but the ever-genius James Bacon. It's a very good article – I've not read much alternate history stuff, but one book that stands out from when I was reading as a schoolboy was a book which described the tale of two boys in the Hitler Youth after the UK had been invaded by the Nazis. It also had things about spying and The Resistance and other similar concepts, which didn't hurt at all!

One book I also really, really like is *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – a totally brilliant work of literature and the ending is just superb. It really makes you think about personal liberties and similar things, and it's something I'd recommend to anyone who asked me for advice on books.

I read Arnie Katz's article on Core Fandom with particular interest since, to the best of my knowledge, that's not a phrase we have in British fandom (although I may well be wrong) – we have SMOFs (Secret Masters Of Fandom) instead, and such people appear to me to tend to be concerned with running conventions instead of publishing zines, although this may well be another gap in my knowledge (I'm sure a British fan reading this LoC will come up to me at a convention and gladly fill in my holes).



John Coxon and Chris Garcia at Orbital, 2008.

I, personally, have never really felt excluded from any aspect of fandom (except perhaps fanzines, before I started writing my own), but I have also never really been interested in being in any particular part of fandom. I know people who I get along with and who will probably buy me a pint/accept a pint when I see them in the convention bar, and I talk to and socialise with those people. I confess that my status as a fake fan is slipping, however – secretary of ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the Douglas Adams society; editor of *Procrastinations*; newsletter editor for the 60th Eastercon, LX, in 2009 – the list is growing. The only thing I should start doing now is reading SF!

I will just close with a word about one Christopher J. Garcia. I met him at Orbital 2008 and he's brilliant – his announcement that his report is now ready is surely the fastest completion of a TAFF report in recent times? It will be very good to hear from him on the subject of the convention. I have some photographs of him and I enjoying a bonding session I can give you, if you'd like!

Yours sincerely,

John Coxon.

{We have SMOFs here in the colonies, too, John. Most of the time we ignore them, but recognize their importance in the Grand Scheme of Things mainly because without these oddballs, fun things like conventions would not

be possible. SMOFs do indeed serve a purpose, as all of us do.

{Judging from what you say, the dictum that you only get out of fandom (or life, for that matter) is what you put into it is very true for you. You are getting involved in various aspects of fandom (zines, cons, clubs) that will result in more and more fans coming to know who you are and will thus be more likely to strike up a conversation with you at a con or in print. Keep it up! I myself can't wait to meet you someday. We need young whipper-snappers like you to give us old pharts something to do and to pass the buck onto.}

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*Once again, **Joseph Majors** checks in with some assorted comments on the last issue. Welcome back!*

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March 27, 2008

Dear John:

Bemused Natterings: The Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium in Dayton, which we had had to miss this year (something about a foot of snow here and more as you headed north) has had papers on things like other actors (besides William Gillette, Basil Rathbone, and Jeremy Brett) who have played Holmes. I keep on urging people to come every year and no one does.

New Amsterdam, New York, New Berlin: I've read that book, *Invasion*, by Hendrik Willem van Loon. He also wrote a book that could be classified as fantasy, *Van Loon's Lives*, where the premise is inviting famous people back from Heaven for dinner at the van Loons'. Sometimes much hilarity ensues (as when Peter the Great runs up a huge telephone bill trying to call the new Tsar in St. Petersburg) and other times much other feeling (as when van Loon dances with Theodora and finds out what all was going on, though this was a book fit for stuffy old maiden librarians and couldn't mention the story about her alleged regret).

As for *Invasion*, I had a problem with the mechanics of the invasion van Loon describes. But I don't want to get into excruciating details. Anyone who put that scenario forward in the alternate history groups I frequent (soc.history.what-if on Usenet and the alternatehistory.com website) would provoke an uproar that would make the Sealion debates seem pacific.

As for *The Plot Against America*, ...I found [it] full of unnecessary historical errors. To take one that I can check by going for a short drive, the airport in Louisville then was not five miles out of town. Looking on a somewhat broader scale, the South did not support isolationism, so Roosevelt could count on more than the bureaucratic vote in Maryland and Virginia.

Roth does display all too vividly the subtle but strong discrimination Jews encountered. I find his portrayal to be somewhat blunted by his associated dislike for Jewish families.

Science Fiction and History: Barry Malzberg once offered a definition for SF on the order of that it was literature that reflected the reality of change in society. This would, for example, make *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) SF, seeing as it reflected a change in society, a German conquest of Britain, made possible by technology. Future wars were a significant part of speculative literature after that until real wars became all too vivid.

Penney For Your Thoughts: I've heard that until the seventies, Robert Heinlein was the only SF writer who actually lived on his earnings from writing SF. And I've also heard about the porn connection. Mike Resnick has been very explicit is thrusting his memories into receptive receptacles of . . . stop that!

This goes back in a way to Bob Sabella's article. Until Gernsback, there couldn't really have been said to be a specific genre, though there were SF works. Writers wrote all kinds of stuff. Originally a magazine would publish all kinds of stuff; the same publication would have mysteries, westerns, sea adventure, fantasy, and even a story of scientific speculation (not even the term "scientifiction" existed then). Then, there was a "sorting out" as magazines devoted themselves to a specific topic; I don't think there was a *Spicy Cowboy Romances*

Magazine, but I would believe it if someone found a copy. And now the SF magazines and the mystery magazines, each appealing to a specific audience, are the sole survivors.

Anyway, writers didn't really specialize. And vice versa; ordinary critics read (and enjoyed, which is all the more surprising) Rider Haggard's *She* and Wells' *Time Machine* to the same degree that they read Oscar Wilde (before that unfortunate dust-up with Queensberry) and so on. So writing porn was a reversion to the old ways, not something new. And Earl is in the tradition.

Once Upon a Time: Lee Anne Lavell comments about dinosaurs and chickens. When I was young, I read a book by one Oliver Butterworth titled *The Enormous Egg* about a chicken laying . . . a triceratops egg. Much hilarity ensues as the egg hatches and the triceratops grows. Given what we now know and believe about the relationship between dinosaurs and birds, while this remains absurd, it is less absurd than it was. So it was Triceratops Little who shouted, "The sky is falling the sky is falling!"

(*The Enormous Egg* is still in print and can be obtained from Amazon.com.)



Book Review in a Box: "[The] Texas frontier town of Mud Creek, which is more-or-less in the environs of Lansdale's hometown of Nacogdoches, Texas, and without question, Mud Creek is not a pleasant place to visit." In such circumstances I would hearken to the wise perceptions of Groucho Marx, who observed that "Nacogdoches is full of roaches."

From the Hinterlands: But my input wasn't needed, as the Francises won DUFF easily enough.

Namarie, Joseph T Major

{One of the things that I enjoy the most about late Victorian writers is the way they wrote novels and stories that covered a broad spectrum of interests. After all, it was very much an age of exploration, conquest, and new frontiers, to say nothing of the rapidly growing knowledge base of science. It is not surprising to me that writers of that era explored all sorts of topics. Interestingly, murder mysteries grew exponentially, perhaps as a result of society's inability to cope with the rapidly changing world around it. Was this an early extrapolation of Toffler's term "Future Shock"? It makes me wonder.}

Eric Mayer always has something pithy to say about zines. I really must try to get him to write something for me again besides just locs.

Eric Mayer"
<maywrite2@epix.net>

29 March 2008

John.

Very much enjoyed *Askance 7*, although you caught me at a bad time during one of my self-created work weeks from hell. Every so often I resolve to crank through a project, going

from dawn to dusk, so I can then spend a few days pretending I am retired. However finding time to read *Askance* was not overly onerous....

Great cover by Brad Foster. Heck, it looks even brighter on my computer than hectography. Wait, I don't think my computer would take well to hectography. Come to think of it hectography doesn't produce anything that bright anyway. Maybe from the viewpoint of an observer embedded in the hecto gel.

I guess my loc last issue pretty much constitutes my comments on Arnie's article. As I indicated, I think that what he defines as "Core Fandom" is really an extended group of friends, as opposed to a group based on a hobby/interest/activity. And, perhaps to those involved, all the more valuable for being that. But it is a lot harder to join a group of long-time friends than it is to get involved in a hobby which may help explain why Core Fandom is getting so long-in-the-tooth.

To join a special interest group you need to do whatever the group does, but to join a social group you need to be accepted by the group as "one of us."

Arnie mentions publishing fanzines as a sort of activity by which one might gain entry but I really think the role of fanzines in Core Fandom is far overrated. I'm a big fan of baseball sabermetrics as promulgated by Bill James. He had the idea that a lot of what everyone agreed about when it came to baseball turned out to be wrong if you looked at the empirical evidence. For example, it is accepted baseball wisdom that it is good strategy to move runners over by bunting, but when you look at the statistics, giving up outs is usually bad. I am pretty sure if you considered the facts, you would find that membership in Core Fandom correlates much more strongly with steady, frequent convention attendance over a period of time than it does with steady, frequent, fanzine production.

Speaking of the idea that accepted wisdom might be misleading, that was a very interesting article by Robert Sabella. As a kid I gorged on

science fiction before giving it up, for the most part, in my early twenties. Since then I've never fixated on a particular genre, but Mary and I do write historical mysteries. Both of us (she a former sf reader herself) are fascinated by history and perhaps, if Robert is right, we haven't really changed in our tastes but just made a slight temporal shift. I have often said that I find the world of sixth century Constantinople as alien and fascinating for its exotic differences as, say, an sf writer's vision of Mars. Maybe what we are really looking for, whether in sf or historicals, are other worlds, alternate realities.

Those were terrific stories by Lee Anne Lavell, and one amazingly awful pun (did that shaggy chicken story qualify as a pun of some sort?) I've never had a problem with food-seeking bears. I often orienteer at Hickory Run State Park in Pennsylvania and there are signs all over the place warning people not to keep food in their cabins because of the bears. The course setter's notes for meets invariably warn runners to be aware of the bear population but I've never seen one. I find myself glancing warily at the thick patches of mountain laurel I pass. Once, someone else reportedly spotted a bear up a tree during a meet. I did once see a huge black bear though, out in our yard. I find icy roads such as the one Lee Anne describes scarier than bears. I've managed to avoid any disasters, or rather been lucky enough to avoid the,. I once did a complete 360 degree spin at the top of a curve on a steep hill. I was fortunate none of the gravel-laden trucks that frequent the road were coming around the corner at the time. I wouldn't be writing this. There was one memorable afternoon when I emerged from a local community theater event to discover an ice storm has got underway. Not exactly Kismet outside, I can tell you. Somehow I managed to creep home without leaving the road, unlike many vehicle I passed. They closed the highway I used about five minutes after I exited. I can write about snow without shaking now because it has finally vanished here for another half year.

Valerie's missive was hilarious. Sounds like she

knows almost as much about cars as I do. I know what she means about the waffle maker leaking. Cars are so waffle! And you sure have quite a vehicular menagerie, including a Cutlass. I drove my parents' Cutlass Supreme when I was in college. That was quite a cool looking car -- huge, hood which widened out in front and the body tapered back into practically nothing. That was in the early seventies so too old for your collection. I've spent most of my life driving cars older than ten. My present car is only eight, but I hope to drive it for many years after it turns ten and probably will need to. My Chevette was still running fine as it neared nineteen and I was looking forward to getting a classic plate when it turned twenty but the body rusted out so it wouldn't pass inspection. I would've loved having a classic plate for a Chevette!

Best,

Eric

{In a sense, I agree and disagree with you about being accepted as part of a group. Definitely, yes: the more one does, the more likely it is that one will be "accepted" as a peer. But does being involved with Core Fandom require fanzines over convention attendance or club activity? I think they all come into play in various ways, but fanzine fandom gives everyone a chance to get in on the action, especially nowadays since the Internet is making cyber-fanac so accessible and affordable. Convention attendance is still good -- especially if there are multiple cons in a reasonable driving distance, like this part of the country (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Arkansas) - but gas prices are currently making that a very dicey and expensive part of fanac.

{As you could probably tell from my "Book Review in a Box" earlier this issue, I have getting into historical mysteries. They are very interesting, indeed, and I think your statement that we are looking for "alternate realities" might ring very true. Alternative history novels are becoming more and more a major part of the sf/fnal reading world -- always have, when you

think about it -- and if written well, they are a ton of fun to read. I for one am really beginning to enjoy them.}

*To bring this loccol to a close, I shall bring in the lovely and talented **Lee Anne Lavell** to take things out:*

31 March 2008

Greetings,

What a fine issue for your first annish, John! I really loved the cover, but then I am all-fired Brad Foster fan! There is much meat to comment on.

I shall start with how saddened I was to read of the death of Arthur C. Clarke. At this point I shall now proceed to relate my own close encounter with A.C.C. To preface it, it is necessary to recall an old skit that was presented several times on the Ed Sullivan television show. It starred Hermione Gingold and Billy deWolfe (in drag) playing two women on a train, one saying she was on the way to visit her sister and the other saying she was on the way to Ceylon. As they conversed they were tippling and getting "tipplier" and "tipplier" as the conversation progressed so that by the end of the trip they were quite drunk and one says to the other, "I'll tell you a little secret. I don't have a sister." The other replies, "And I'll tell you a secret. There is no such place as Ceylon." Well, anyway, back in the late fifties I got a phone call, and in response to my "Hello" a voice said, "Awthuh C. Clawk heah." He went on to explain that he was on a plane layover at our local airport and had just spent some time talking to his old first fandom crony, Bob Madle, who was living in Indianapolis at the time who had suggested that he call me, and that he was on his way back to Ceylon. At that I went completely dumb. I think my conversational responses consisted mainly of "Duh." All I could think of was "There is no such place as Ceylon." The irony of the whole thing now is that there really is no such place as Ceylon.

I found James Bacons article-book reviews on alternate reality SF (and I agree that SF stands more accurately for speculative fiction) very interesting along with Robert Sabella's "Science Fiction and History." However, they beg the question of what is the dividing line between SF and ordinary fiction. Sometimes this can be quite obvious as in *The Man in the High Castle*, but at other times it can be more tenuous. My particular cut-off is whether the story reflects something that is known but does not affect the outcome of known history, as opposed to one that does. Thus, historical novels that do not essentially change what really happened (except in bad research or trying to make things fit plot-wise, as in *Gone with the Wind*) is straight fiction, while contents that do change history as we know it is SF. Thus, for instance, the television show *The West Wing* is SF since it postulates a liberal president in our present. So, it is an alternate reality. But how many consider it SF?

"The Thin Veneer": I think Arnie shows a bit of paranoia in this article. On the other hand, if fans are *really* out to get Core Fandom, perhaps one of the problems is the name. "Core" implies heart, and the heart is the center of something. And people don't like to feel that they are not the center of things. It seems to me that what Arnie is trying to achieve with the so-called Core Fandom is a harking back to when fandom seemed less disparate. He also seems to feel that fanzines were the heart and soul of fandom then, which is not the case, although they were certainly an important part, since they were a major way we had of communicating with each other. But so were club fans and convention fans and correspondence fans etc. etc., all of us clinging to each other because there were so few of us. So why not call it what it is: Retro Fandom, going back to the times when we were the nerds of the mundane world? Just think, if we called ourselves Retro Fandom, we could say we were just trying to achieve the ambience of those Good Old Days and even think of ourselves (secretly, of course) by that acronym.



"When Life Stuffs Lemons": What can I say? Funny, funny, funny. I doubt if there is any car owner in the world who couldn't relate to this in some way.

A follow-up to your follow-up: I too was recently burrowing through one of Walmart's dvd bins (not the \$1 one but \$6 I think) and found a four-disc compilation of Hitchcock things which includes some of his silents such as "The Lodger" as well as later talkies such as "The Lady Vanishes" and "The 39 Steps." It even has a couple of episodes of "Alfred Hitchcock Presents."

One final note: Apparently *Pixel* the zine may not be dead although David Burton's *Pixel* is. David informs me that he has handed over the

reins to Dave Locke, so where he goes with it we shall see. I have heard nothing from him yet.

Again, congrats on a wonderful first annish and hopefully many more will come throughout the years. I am proud to have been part of it.

Cheers...**Lee Anne Lavell**

*{I defer to your longer-than-mine experience in fandom regarding the Core Fandom discussion. Retro Fandom sounds good, but it sounds almost as if we're dating ourselves. Granted, we really **are** getting on in years, and that's to be expected. The numbers tell the story more than anything. For example, the first Minicon I attended was in 1973, and the total convention membership was somewhere around 150. Everybody knew each other, including the pros, many of whom were ex-fans (or still were fans, for that matter). By the mid to late 80s, Minicons boasted attendance figures in the low thousands, and the con-committee probably numbered around 150, counting gophers and other volunteers. The growth was phenomenal, partly because we had a rep for throwing one helluva great party.*

{When Randy Byers said an issue or so ago that he considers himself first and foremost a fan, and a fanzine fan at that, that was all that mattered to him. This, I agree with. Labeling things like Core Fandom, Retro Fandom, or even Fanzine Fandom and Big Tent Fandom, is all a part of human nature: it is easier for us to assimilate changes and information if we can chunk things together. And again, like I have said before, I think this whole Core Fandom discussion is a reflection of older, long-term fans merely trying to redefine their place in the fannish cosmos of the 21st century. It is so different from what it was a mere 30 years ago.

{Which dates this change-over precisely, I believe. In other words, it's all George Lucas' fault. Him and Spielberg; even Roddenberry, the Great Bird of the Galaxy, had a hand in this. But now I'm getting silly. Still, think of it: when did it become fashionable to become a science fiction fan? This is indeed something to remember.}

I ALSO HEARD FROM

Not everybody who writes to me gets their loc pubbed. Far from it. So with that in mind, here is a listing of folks who I love hearing from in one way, shape, or form:

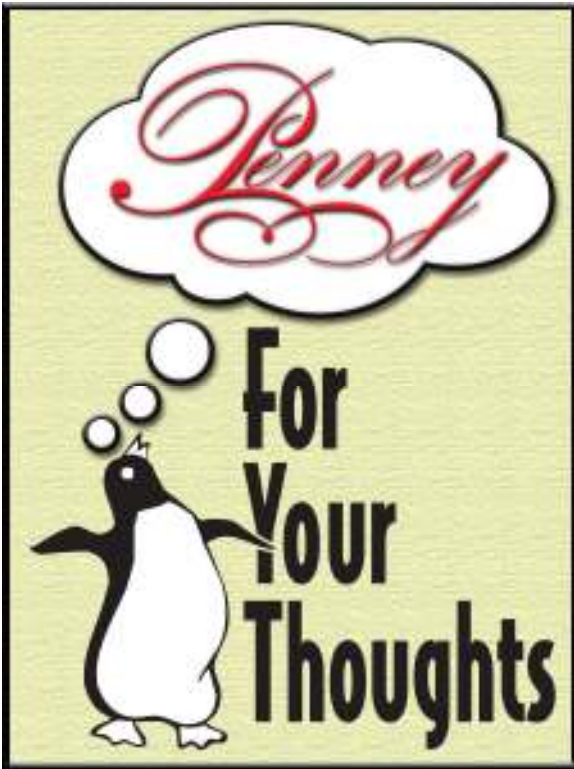
Matthew Appleton, James Bacon, Lenny Bailes, Brad Foster, Curtis Hoffman, Arnie Katz, Dave Langford, Guy H. Lillian III, Dave Locke, Bill Mills, Chris Garcia, Curt Phillips, Garth Spencer, James Taylor, Venecian Todoroff, Andrew Trembley, Peter Weston

If there is anybody that I have forgotten, you have my apologies.

Askance Caption Contest #1:

Devise a caption for this cartoon, and submit it. The top three entries will be pubbed with this cartoon next ish.





fanzine reviews by Lloyd Penney

Peregrine Nations is the recently ended fanzine created by Jan Stinson, and I'm sorry it's done.

PN went on for about seven years or so, reporting on Jan's personal situation, medical state, and move from Florida to Michigan. A lot has happened to Jan over the years, and the fact that she has opened her heart and history to her readers is part of the attraction to her zine.

In spite of the personality that infuses the zine, Jan never put much of her own writing into the zine, except for an editorial piece, but she did get interesting articles and reviews to fill half the zine, and a solid letter column that filled half the zine, and created a community within it. I guess you get back what you put in it. And, there was great art from Brad Foster, Alexis Gilliland, Alan White, Paul Gadzikowski, Sue Mason and many more. I think the zine could have used more artwork to break up the blocks of type, but the content of the writing made up for it.

Jan's been through so much...the loss of her husband, some serious health problems, a move across the country, and she has stood up to that with courage, and I admire that. She genuinely enjoys pubbing her ish, and now that *PN* is done, she has a C.J. Cherryh zine to work on, which will reduce her zine workload quite a bit to look after her health. I expect that she will also continue with Bruce Gillespie on one of the zines reviewed last time, *Steam Engine Time*, but I expect that her editorial presence in that zine will be even less than it was.

Why review a finished zine?

You can always find the back issues at <http://efanzines.com/Peregrine/index.html>, and see the contents of Jan's zine, and her life as well. I wish her well, and hope that another of her zines will see light of day soon.

The other zine I will write about is R. Graeme Cameron's *WCSFazine*. I never said I was objective...Graeme's zine is one of the few non-club publications in Canadian fandom, so it's quite

welcome, and rare. WCSFA is the Western Canadian SF Association, and it's not a club, but a corporation. Good excuse for Graeme to indulge his passion for writing a zine.

Graeme is up to 8 issues, and each issue seems to get bigger each time. In many ways the zine is meant to illustrate Vancouver fandom, with lists of clubs, groups and e-groups on MySpace, Facebook, LiveJournal and more. He also tries to do the same for the whole country, with a fair amount of success. That's a good intro for new local fans, but there's much more for the fanhistorian, especially the Canadian fanhistorian, like Graeme. There are reports on the initial VCons held in the late 1970s, Canadian fanzines going back to the 1940s and 50s, artwork from Canadian fanartists of all eras, and clubs going back to the beginnings of Canadian fandom. There are reports on CUFF, the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, including Graeme's own CUFF adventures. There's so much to learn about Canadian fanhistory. Add to all of this great illos and weird bits here and there, and it's a fun zine to read.

Part of the more modern aspect of the zine is the reports on local authors, including Graeme's wife Alyx Shaw, freshly minted as a pro writer. The end of the zine is the loccol, and I've usually got something in there to comment on the zine or add to the historic tales within.

I am not sure how well this zine is circulated among Canadian fans. I wish more could read it to find out about what it's all about, and how much they could learn from it. Check it out at <http://efanzines.com/WCSFA/index.htm>, and learn about fandom from north of your border.

Contact information:

Peregrine Nations: Janine Stinson, P.O. Box 248, East Lake, MI 49626-0248. e-mail to tropicsf@earthlink.net (please use *Peregrine Nations* in the subject)

WCSFAzine: R. Graeme Cameron, Apt 72G – 13315 104th Ave, Surrey, B.C., V3T 1V5. e-mail to rgraeme@shaw.ca



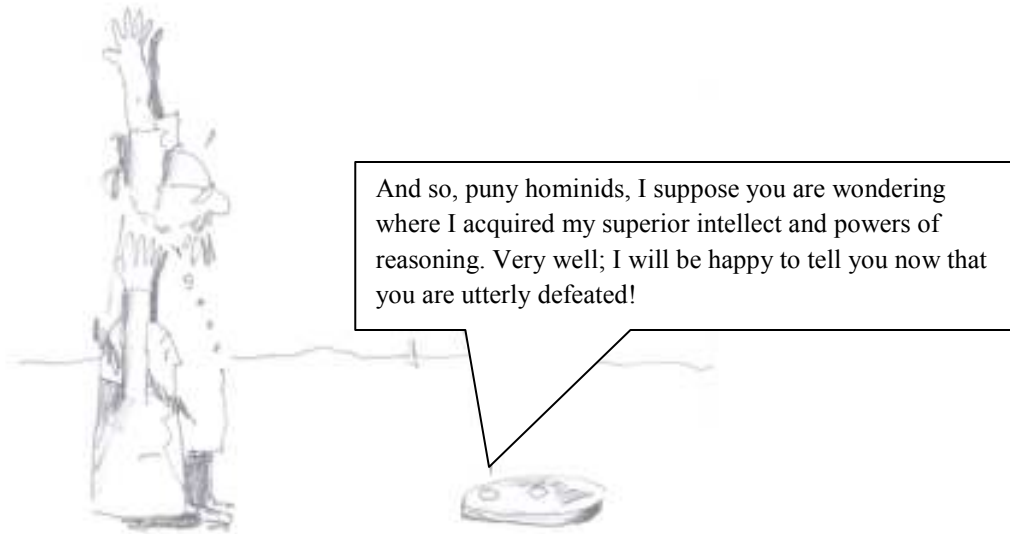
Fanzines received and viewed listing:

Ansible #250
BCSFazine #419-420
Cargo Cult Books & Notions (Mar/Apr '08)
Drink Tank #164-170
el #37
Фантастика у Фентзй #28- 30
Fanotchka
Feline Mewsings #32
File:770 #152
Interstellar Ramjet Scoop (April, 2008)
Ish #4
Journey Planet
Middle Tennessee Science Fiction Society # 67
MT Void #1485-1494
My Evil Plan
No Award #17
No Sin But Ignorance #48
Orphan Scrivener #50
Outlaw Mutation Boogie #65

Procrastinations #5
 Science Fiction in San Francisco #62-66
 Some Fantastic #14
 Skug #17
 Steam Engine Time #8
 Surprising Stories #106
 Taboo Opinions #102-107
 Time & Again
 Two Year TAFF-Life #4
 Up to Now (Jack Speer's 1939 Fan History)
 Vanamonde #733-747
 Vegas Fandom Weekly #105
 Virtual Tucker Hotel #3-5
 Visions of Paradise #127-128
 The Voices of Fandom #15 (Podcast)
 WCSFAzine #9
 Zanthic #2-3 & Corflu Silver Program Book
 The Zine Dump #19

FIGBY by Bill Fischer

I, Roomba: the denouement





REGIONAL CONVENTION CALENDAR

Arkansas Anime Festival

Anime con for Northwest Arkansas.

May 24, 2008

Holiday Inn

Springdale, AR

Cosplay, video games, two viewing rooms, tabletop gaming, anime activities, guest panels, Japanese food, displays by local artists, some local vendors, door prizes (we are working on a dance) and much more!

For more information, [send email](#)

Sponsored by [Realms Anime](#) at 2579 N. College Ave. in Fayetteville, AR

A-Kon 19: Turbo Charged and Fuel Injected!

The Southwest's Largest Anime Convention

Anime, comics, cosplay, media, & gaming convention

May 30-June 1, 2008

Adam's Mark Convention Center and Hotel

400 North Olive Street

Dallas, TX 75201

(Metroplex area/ downtown Dallas)

Dealers Room, Guests, Seminars & Workshops, Multiple Video Rooms, Gaming & Tournaments, Premier Film Showings, Art Show & Auction, Autographs, Banquet, Costume Contest, Goodie Bags&Freebies, and Musical Concert

For more information write:

Phoenix Entertainment

3352 Broadway, Suite 470

Garland, Texas 75043

Or [send email](#)



SoonerCon 2008

Science Fiction, Fantasy, Gaming Con

June 6-8, 2008

The Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City

401 South Meridian (1-40 and Meridian)

Oklahoma City, OK 73108

GOH: John Ringo Artist GOH: Tom Kidd Toastmaster: Selina Rosen Special Guest: Walter Koenig

This incarnation of SoonerCon is deliberately designed to celebrate all aspects of fandom. We don't intend to have a solely "books" or "TV" or "art" emphasis. The emphasis is on FUN. Events include: Film Festival, Art Show, Gaming, Cosplay and Masquerade. Charity. Panel and Workshops. Video Rooms. For more information, write:

SoonerCon
6006 S. Western
Oklahoma City, Ok 73139

Bayou Wars XVI

Wargaming con
June 20-22, 2008
Radisson Hotel, New Orleans Airport
2150 Veterans Blvd
Kenner, LA 70062

(greater New Orleans area)

Diverse gaming experiences, sponsored tournaments, and special Guest seminars and panels.

ApolloCon 2008

Houston's Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Conference

June 27-29, 2008

DoubleTree Hotel Houston Intercontinental Airport

15747 John F. Kennedy Blvd.

Houston, TX 77032

GOH: Allan Steele

Editor GOH: Lou Anders

Artist GOH: Brad Foster

Filk GOH: Margaret Middleton

Fan GOH: Anne K.G. Murphy

Additional guests: David Lee Anderson, Jayme Blaschke, Steven Brust, Rosemary Clement-Moore, Bill Crider, Scott Cupp, Gail Dayton, Bradley Denton, Linda Donahue, Marianne Dyson, Rhonda Eudaly, Melanie Miller Fletcher, Larry Friesen, Bennie Grezlik, Beverly Hale, K. Hutson Price, Kandy Jarvis, Rocky Kelley, Alexis Glynn Latner, Julia S. Mandala, A. Lee Martinez, Maureen McHugh, C. J. Mills, John Moore, Cat Osborne, Lawrence Person, John Picacio, Derly Ramirez, II & Kathy Thornton, Jessica Reisman, Chris Roberson, Selina Rosen, Caroline Spector, Rie Sheridan, Shanna Swendson, Mikal Trimm, Victory, Martha Wells, Mel. White.

A single event for fans of speculative and imaginative fiction of all kinds, including literary, media, and interactive. Combining interesting and informative programming on literary, media, science and culture topics, networking opportunities for clubs and individual fans, art exhibits, and sales of books and other SF/F/H items.

Now in our fifth year. Panels, Art Show, Masquerade, Dealers Room, Gaming (including LARP), Filking, Book Exchanges, Short Film Contest, Media Room. Writer's Workshop.

For more information, write:

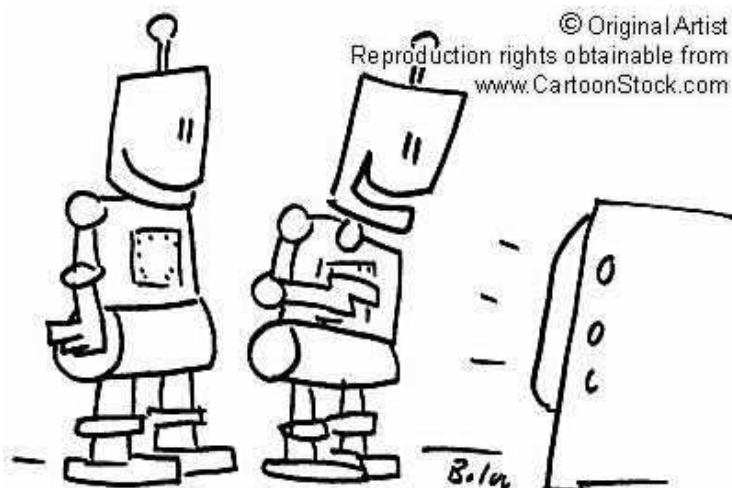
ApolloCon

P.O.Box 541822

Houston, TX 77254-1822

[Or send email](#)

Sponsored by the Houston Science Fiction Association, a 501(c)(3) organization.



"Hey! — they're rerunning the
Commander Data show!"

AniMix 2008

Where Anime and Gamers Unite
July 18-20, 2008
Plaza Hotel and Conference Center
1721 Central Texas Expressway
Killeen, TX 76541

Guests: Tiffany Grant (Asuka Neon Genesis), Shanon J Weaver (Ginji Amano: The Getbackers), Jon St. John (The voice of Duke Nukem, Bruce Lewis (Manga artist responsible for Robotech: Invid War Aftermath), The Slants (J-rock band), Stephanie Yanez (J-pop singer), The One Ups (Video Game Music band), Chris Hazelton (Manga artist for Misfile), EK-S (Para Para group), Ric & Rick (Cosplayers)

Dealers Room, Artist Alley, Art Auction, Anime Music Video competition, and more! Above all the typical things that conventions have, we will have AniMix's original Final Fantasy VIII ball featuring the Rinoa and Squall. Ballroom champions David and Tammy will perform Rinoa and Squall's Venetian Waltz during the ball. So, bring your best FF costumes and show off during the ball. Also we will have video game Tournaments, table top gaming, new anime screeners, video game demos and lots of workshops and panels.

Lazy Dragon Con

A Science Fiction / Fantasy Themed Party Con
July 18-20, 2008
Quality Inn [Note: formerly Holiday Inn McKinney]
1300 N. Central Expressway
McKinney, TX 75070

(Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex Area)

Author GOH: Lee Martindale

Artist/Author: James O'Barr

Singer/Songwriter: Sarah Gillmore

Author: John Moore

Artist: Gwynn "Starrydance" Farrith

There will be Guests, Merchants, Artists, Gaming, Parties, Socializing, Contests, Women's Fun Jell Wrestling, a Video Room and Much More!

Also supporting the Breast Cancer Research Foundation

Babelcon 2008

General science fiction, fantasy, & horror con

July 19-20, 2008

Holiday Inn Select

4728 Constitution Ave.

Baton Rouge, LA

Media Guests: Suzie Plakson, John Hertzler, Bob May, (original Lost in Space Robot)

Author Guests: T.A. Chafin, Polly Luttrell, Randy Richards, Deborah LeBlanc, M.B. Weston, Randy Richards, Bob Greenberger, and Robin Mayhall

Science guests: Dr. Robert Hynes (LSU Dept of Theoretical Physics), Dr. Charles Gramlich (Xavier University's Dept of Biological Psychology), & Bill Lee, paleontology expert

Panels, gaming, live rocket demonstrations, belly dancing, SCA demos, a costume contest, Pirates of the Caribbean interactive show, a medieval Knighting Ceremony, and LARP games. At the end of the evening there is the Costume Ball featuring music by the Star Wars Cantina band, and The Rocky Horror Picture Show as performed by the Transylvanian Electric Company, and more!

BabelCon is a presentation of the Science and Engineering Education Foundation, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to Science education, using Science Fiction media to create interest. A large percentage of BabelCon's shows, panel discussions, demonstrations, and other presentations are related to Science and History.

Conestoga 12

Oklahoma's largest literary science fiction & fantasy con

July 25-27, 2008

Radisson Tulsa

10918 E. 41st Street

Tulsa, OK 74146

GOH: Diana Gabaldon

Artist GOH: Stephen Hickman

Fan GOH: Tim Miller

Toastmaster: Gordon Van Gelder

Featuring: Art Show, Panel Discussions, Writers Conference, Dealers Room, Short Film Contest, Gaming, Fangs Fur & Fey Mini-Con, Friday night concert, Gala Dinner with Diana Gabaldon, Filksinging, Author Readings, Masquerade, Charity Auction, Panels, Podcasts, and the inexplicably popular Penguin Playhouse Theatre! Of course, this is only some of the many activities and events we have planned.

MechaCon IV: Pushing the Sky

Anime con

August 1-3, 2008

Hilton Lafayette

1521 West Pinhook Road

Lafayette, LA 70503-3158

Cosplay, Contests, Gaming, Video Rooms, Panels, Dealers Room, Artist Alley, formal/semi-formal dinner, and more!

Tokyo in Tulsa

Anime con

August 1-3, 2008

Crowne Plaza Hotel Tulsa

100 East Second Street

Tulsa, OK 74103

Con centered around Japanese Anime and Culture. We are also highlighting gaming (both video and tabletop), webcomics, writers, and popular culture. Otaku everywhere and of every persuasion will find something to do and be excited about! Tokyo In Tulsa is about coming together, having fun and celebrating our common interests. Will have AMV, cosplay, hall cosplay, etc.



Houston U-Con

Comic Books, Gaming, & Collectors one-day con.

August 2, 2008

Northwest Community Unitarian Universalist Church (NWCUUC)

5920 Hwy 6 North

Houston, TX 77084

(Bear Creek area / northwest Harris County)

The day long convention (admission \$3 for all day) offers a range of activities, including a dealers' room packed with local merchants who are there to buy, sell, and trade: comic books; games (RPG, card, and board); toys; collectibles; DVDs; and other fantasy and sci-fi related products.

Six dedicated game rooms will run individual RPG games including: Space Regatta, (Serenity RPG) ; Star Wars Pocket Models ; Bleach TCG ; Magic the Gathering; Munchkin; Munchkin "Classic" featuring the De-Range supplement; Super Munchkin Impossible Blended (two different Munchkin games plus the

Munchkin Blender supplement); Frag!; and Ninja Burger with the Sumo Size Me Supplement along with live demos scheduled throughout the day.

Members of Men In Black from Steve Jackson Games, creator of GURPS will be on site as well as the creators of the Goth comic "Polyglot & Spleen" – artist Heather "Spleen" Stanley and writer Marc Moorash. Up-and-coming sci-fi writer, William Massey will be on hand to talk about his new book, "Legacy of the Panther" in addition to Kevin Brusky of Ape Games who created the popular "Order of the Stick" card game along with Trey Wickwire a staff member at Visionary Comics and creator of the comic "Mamluk," due early next year.

Denvention 3, the 66th World Science Fiction Convention

August 6-10, 2008

Colorado Convention Center

Denver, CO

GOH: Lois McMaster Bujold Artist GOH: Rick Sternbach Toastmaster: Wil McCarthy Fan GOH: Tom Whitmore Ghost of Honor: Robert A. Heinlein

Five days of programming on hundreds of topics from books to media, from art to costuming, from movies to television to anime, from science fiction to science fact, as well as an art show, masquerades, the Hugo Awards ceremony, dealer's rooms, and much more!

San Japan 1.5

Japanese Anime and Culture Convention

August 8-10, 2008

San Antonio Municipal Auditorium

100 Auditorium Circle

San Antonio, TX

Holiday Inn El Tropicano Riverwalk

110 Lexington Avenue

San Antonio, TX

Dealer's Room, Multiple Panel Rooms, Video/Table Gaming, Artist Alley, 24 Hour Video Room. 2 viewing rooms, gaming (both live action and computer) industry panels, and more. Further, trying to emphasize as a cultural convention, we will be bringing you panels, performances, and demonstrations of Martial Arts, Tea Ceremonies, Kabuki, Traditional Japanese games, and more! Come see what it's really all about!

Re/Max Ballunar Liff Festival

(Presumably August 2008)

NASA Johnson Space Center

Houston, Texas

Visit this exciting and educational family-oriented event at NASA/Johnson Space Center and enjoy hot air balloon competitions, evening balloon glows, skydiving exhibitions, commercial exhibits, concession booths, food from local restaurants, arts & crafts exhibits, entertainment and various aviation equipment displays.

Ballunar Liff Festival, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Its mission is to help the public learn about aviation and space exploration, and to sponsor and fund educational activities that encourage young people to learn about aviation and space and to study mathematics and the sciences.



ArmadilloCon 30

Literary Science Fiction
Convention.
August 15-17, 2008
Doubletree Hotel North 6505 N. IH-
35 Austin, TX 78752

Austin, Texas area

GOH: John Scalzi
Artist GOH: David Lee Anderson
Fan GOH: Kelly Persons
Toastmaster: Bill Crider
Editor GOH: Sheila Williams
Special Guests: Joe & Gay
Haldeman

Panels, Art Show, Gaming, Charity, Writer's Workshop, Dealer's Room, and more! ArmadilloCon is a literary science fiction convention held annually in Austin, with several hundred attendees. The primary focus of ArmadilloCon is literary science fiction, but that's not all we do -- we also pay attention to art, animation, science, media, and gaming. Every year, dozens of professional writers, artists and editors attend the convention. Sometimes they come to make deals, but more often they come to have fun!

For more information, write:

ArmadilloCon 30
PO Box 26442
Austin, TX 78729

Or [send email](#)

Sponsored by the Fandom Association of Central Texas, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Bubonicon 40

Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention

August 22-24, 2008

The Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel
(formerly the Wyndham)

2910 Yale Blvd SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Albuquerque, New Mexico area

Panels, Art Show, Dealers Room, Gaming, Auctions, Film, Readings, Autographs, Filking, Science Talk, Costume Contest, Green Slimes, Audience Participation Events, and more!

Each year, proceeds from Bubonicon go to worthy causes. In 2006, proceeds from Bubonicon 38 benefited the Roadrunner Food Bank, the Children's Hospital of New Mexico and the Williamson Science Fiction Library at Eastern New Mexico University.

For more information write:

NMSF Conference
PO Box 37257

Albuquerque, NM 87176

Or [send email](#)

AnimeFest 2008

Convention and Association for fans of Anime, Music,
Manga, and Japanese Pop Culture

August 29-September 1, 2008

Hyatt Regency Dallas

300 Reunion Boulevard

Dallas, Texas, USA. 75207

(Dallas, Texas [downtown Dallas] area)

Japanese Guests, Voice Actors, Manga/Comic Artists,
Dealer Room, 24hr Video Theaters, J-Pop, Gaming, Art
Show & Auction, Panel Discussions, Autograph
Sessions, Film/Video Premiers

For more information write:

AnimeFest

1631 Dorchester Dr., Suite 110

Plano, TX 75075-6332

Or call 972-596-3561

Or fax 972-692-5996

Or [send email](#)



Realms Con

Media, anime, comics, & gaming con

September 5-7, 2008

Holiday Inn Emerald Beach

1102 South Shoreline

Corpus Christi, TX 78401

Anime Music Video Contest, Anime Karaoke Contest, Anime Bikini Cosplay Contest, Cosplay Contest, Lisa Furukawa Ray Concert, Scavenger Hunt, Lingerie, Swimwear, & Evening Gown Model Walk, Rave, Hall Cosplay, Vic Mignogna Presents FULLMETAL FANTASY (A Realms Con Exclusive), Dead Texas (A Realms Con Exclusive), 24 Hour Game Rooms (With Your Favorite Tabletop Games, Video Games, and Tournaments), 24 Hour Movie Rooms (Anime & Japanese Horror), Question And Answer Panels With Anime Celebrities

For more information, write:

Realms Con

4730 Sea Island Drive

Corpus Christi, TX 78413

Or call 361-658-7446

Or [send email](#)

Starbase Houston Annual Chili & Dessert Cook-Off with Collectible Auction

One-day (1 PM-4 PM) annual fundraiser for Starbase Houston
(Presumably September 2008)

Houston, TX area

Cash Prizes and Awards for best Chili, Dessert, and Exotic Alien Dish. Original art by Bill Hughes donated for the auction. Starbase Houston's mission is to advance, promote, and sustain all the various facets of Star Trek, Star Trek Houston Fandom, and all things sci-fi. \$5 per person for food. There is no charge for entering the cook-off.

ProtoCon 10

Gaming con
September 12-14, 2008
Memorial Student Center
Texas A&M University

College Station, Texas

ProtoCon is an all-genre gaming convention run by gamers just like you. On top of all the games that everyone is familiar with and love to play, ProtoCon has an additional focus on independent publishers and prototype games. Our special events include the 2nd Annual Prototype Game Design Challenge, a Game Design Panel, and a live-action game design event (really, I kid you not).

We have a Dealers Room and a Game Auction on top of all the great gaming!

You can find the fun and familiar and the new and exciting all at ProtoCon!

G-Kon and Expo 3

A gaming, anime and science fiction and fantasy convention with a major focus on gaming of all kinds.
(Presumably September 2008)

(Dallas / Fort Worth, Metroplex area)

Sheraton Arlington Hotel
1500 Convention Center Drive
Arlington, Texas 76011

For more information, write:

G-Kon and Expo
3112 N. Jupiter-#315
Garland, TX 75044

Or [send email](#)

BroKon

Gaming convention offering Living Greyhawk RPGA Scenarios
(Presumably September 2008)

(in the greater Shreveport, LA area)

To sign up as a player or judge, please visit [Warhorn Sign-ups](#)

FenCon V

A Fan-Operated Science Fiction and Fantasy Literary and Filk Convention in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area

October 3-5, 2008

Crowne Plaza Hotel

North Dallas/Addison

14315 Midway Road

Addison, TX 75001

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

GOH: Gregory Benford

Music GOH: Three Weird Sisters

Artist GOH: Real Musgrave

Fen GOH: Gerald Burton

Special Guest: Jay Lake

ORAC Special Guest: Doris Egan

Plus many more guests

Writers, Filk, Panels, Videos, Lots of fun stuff. Writers Workshop, a Short Story Contest, and an Art Show and Auction. "Of the fen, by the fen, and for the fen...again!"

For more information, write:

FenCon

P. O. Box 701448

Dallas, TX 75370-1448

Or [send email](#)

FenCon is a production of the Dallas Future Society, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of science, literature, and music for the future of all mankind.



Shimakon

Rio Grande Valley's first Anime Convention....We are run by fans for fans.

October 3-5, 2008

Bahia Mar Resort

6300 Padre Blvd

South Padre Island, TX 78597

(South Padre Island, TX / South Texas area)

There's everything from gaming to

Cosplay to brunches with special guests. Dealers Room, Guests, Video Rooms, Table Top GAMING, Video Game Room with Tournaments, Autographs, CosPlay Competition

For more information, write:

63 Resaca Shores Dr. So.

Los Fresnos, TX 78566

Or [send email](#)

Oni-Con 2008

Houston's Original Anime Convention
October 19-21, 2008
George R. Brown Convention Center
1001 Avenida de las Americas
Houston, TX 77010

Houston, TX area

3 Anime Rooms, Anime Music Video Contest, Arcade Gaming Room, Art Show/Auction, Artist Alley, Banquet, Concert (Sat 9:00 PM to Sun 12:00 AM), Console Gaming Room, Cosplay, Dance, Dance Dance Revolution, Dealers' Room, Gaming Tournaments, Hentai Fest, Karaoke, Live Action Room, Masquerade Ball, Model Contest, Opening Ceremonies, Panels, Scavenger Hunt, The Brunch Club Premiere

Millenniumcon XI

Gaming con.
November 14-16, 2008
Wingate Inn & Conference Center
1209 North Interstate Highway 35
Round Rock, TX 78664

Round Rock / Central Texas area

Our convention caters to many different gaming tastes and styles. Unlike other conventions that support multiple genres, we don't have one group trying to be all things to all people. The historical miniatures and board gaming events are hosted by [Lone Star Historical Miniatures](#). Our RPGA events are hosted by the [Austin RPGA](#).

To participate in the RPGA games, you must first register for the convention and pay the registration fee and also register for the RPGA events. This is two separate registrations. You must do both.

We're looking for all sorts: RPGs, Board Games, Card Games, and Miniatures.

Millennium has a particular need for classical historical periods (ACW, Napoleonics, Ancients, etc). Last year, there was more demand for these types than we could meet, and the slots filled up quickly.

Izumicon 2008

New Adventures in Anime & Manga
November 21-23, 2008
Sheraton Midwest City and Reed Convention Center
5800 Will Rogers Rd.
Midwest City, OK 73110

Oklahoma City, OK area

Cosplay, panels, screenings, dealer's room (including artist alley tables), guests, and more!

OwlCon XXVII

Gaming, Fantasy, & Science Fiction Convention

(Presumably February 2009)

RMC/Ley Student Center

Rice University

Houston, TX

OwlCon is an annual gaming convention at Rice University, Houston, TX, dating back to 1980. We will feature table top and live action role playing games, miniatures games and events, historical miniatures, board games, card games, a dealers' room, and more. OwlCon 2k2 gaming events will include RPGA events, official tournaments for Warhammer 40k, Warmaster, Shadowfist, and Mage Knight, Matchbox-scale Car Wars, World of Darkness tabletop games, a Vampire LARP, a Call of Cthulhu LARP, a Crossroads fantasy LARP, and many other games with prizes galore! OwlCon will once again be swarming with official demo folks for various game systems to give you a chance to try some of their great games. We will also have open gaming, an anime room, a TV lounge running movies, some "all nighter" events, and our second annual OwlCon party and costume contest in Valhalla.



ConDFW

A Science Fiction & Fantasy Event

(Presumably February 2009)

(Dallas / Fort Worth / Metroplex area)

Author Guest of Honor: Jim Butcher

Special Guest of Honor: David Weber

The Expected Activities:

Art Show, Autographs, Dealer's Room, Con Suite, Panel Discussions, Gaming, Readings

And the Unexpected:

Cliche Challenge (NEW), 3rd Annual Sci-Fi Spelling Bee, Pro Artist Drawing Competition, Charity Book Swap, Hard Science Panels

For more information, [send email](#)

Sponsored by the Texas Speculative Fiction Association

AggieCon 40

Oldest & largest student-run science fiction convention in the U.S.

(Presumably March 2009)

Texas A&M Memorial Student Center

College Station, Texas

Brought to you by Cepheid Variable

Staple!

Independent Media Expo
(Presumably March 2009)

Austin, TX

Panels, dealers room, Animation Show, and more!

An event to promote independent creative media: comics, art, animation and self-published literature.
Building a community to encourage communication between creators and their audience.

All-Con 2009

Multi-format convention featuring autographs, gaming, comics, & a burlesque show.
(Presumably March 2009)

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

For three days All-Con provides an umbrella of content supporting fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Renaissance, Anime, Costuming, Theater / Performing Arts, Mystery, Art, Crafts, Collecting, and Film Making. To help 'give back' there are several charity events at the convention every year.

For more information write:

ALL-CON, LLC

PO Box 177194

Irving, Texas 75019-7194

Or for general information / questions [send email](#)

ChimaeraCon 2009

South Texas Gaming & More Fest
(Presumably March 2009)

San Antonio, TX 7

Three days of fan-run, locally-organized game, anime and science fiction/fantasy events.

Game Genres: Old Skool, New Wave, Table Top, Miniatures, Card, Electronic, Scale, Role-playing.

Game Titles: Shadowfist, DBA 2.2, Warmaster Fantasy, Morituri, Batailles de l'Ancien Régime (BAR), OmniQuest, Feng Shui RPG, Dreamguards, De Bellum Napoleonica, In Nomine LARP

Registered events list/details/updates available at

[Event Grid \[Schedule\]](#)

[Event List \[Schedule\]](#)

Special Features:

Costume/Cosplay Contest; Anime Room; Game Demonstrations; Vendors; Artist Alley; Door Prizes and more to come!

Charity: San Antonio Area Chapter, American Red Cross.

For more information, [send email](#)

REVELcon 20

The Little Con with the Texas-Size Heart
(Presumably March 2009)

Houston, Texas

Revelcon is THE only fan-run relax-a-con/zinefest in the Southwest US. It's a fab weekend of vids, panels, art, zines, merchandise, food and fun! [Note - Revelcon is an adults-only/18-and-over con.]

[REVELcon/Friends of Fandom Art Show](#)

[AtsuiCon 2](#)

Anime con

(Summer 2009)

Houston, TX area

AtsuiCon Cosplay, Anime Music Video Contest, Arcade Tournaments, Art Show & Auction, Hentai Art Show, Concert, Ero Genki Adult Cosplay, DJ Laen's Tokio Dance Contest, Card Dueling Tournaments, Panels/Meet & Greet, Hentai Fest, Dealers' Room, & more!

[Anticipation, the 67th WorldCon](#)

August 6-10, 2009

Palais des Congrès de Montréal

Montreal, Canada

Guest of Honour: Neil Gaiman

Invitee d'honneur: Elisabeth Vonarburg

Fan Guest of Honour: Taral Wayne

Editor Guest of Honour: David Hartwell

Publisher Guest of Honour: Tom Doherty

Master of Ceremonies: Julie Czerneda

Five days of programming on hundreds of topics from books to media, from art to costuming, from movies to television to anime, from science fiction to science fact, as well as an art show, masquerades, the Hugo Awards ceremony, dealer's rooms, and much more!



What's next

Well, this issue is actually done about two weeks later than I originally intended, but in a way, I guess I am not surprised. This past Spring Semester took more out of me than I expected. Busy times for busy people. Remind me to remind you folks not to pursue a PhD while teaching a full load and having a family all at the same time. It's a madhouse, I tell you. A madhouse!

Another casualty of this issue is the Joe R. Lansdale interview that obviously could not be conducted at AggieCon 39 since he was not there! **grumble** Not to be deterred, I am still going to write out my questions and e-mail them to Mr. Lansdale – which should take a few days travel time since even e-mails in Texas travel by Pony Express – by the first week of June (good grief! That's only 8 days off!) so that I can edit it down to publishable length, and maybe even make it coherent in time for the July issue, which I am going to shoot for a posting date of July 14, 2008. Wish me luck.

In addition, that very same issue will contain yet another article by England's version of Chris Garcia, James Bacon. James is a big Joe Lansdale fan, and many months ago when I announced my intention of putting together a special Joe Lansdale ish, James leaped at the opportunity. He hasn't written his contribution yet, but I am positive he could crank it out in his sleep, which is how Garcia produces zines.

Other items on tap for the July issue are a cover by Steve Stiles, a wonderful fan-autobiography by Lee Anne Lavell, and another installment of "Figby", maybe even a new entry to Wikiphilia courtesy of Bill Fischer. Beyond that issue, the tenth edition of Askance may have a cover by Dan Steffan, definitely a Ditmar if he can't (I have a CD full of Ditmar art that is simply astounding to behold), regional convention listings, and more good stuff as I come across it.

Mentioning Ditmar (a.k.a, Dick Jensen) reminds me that I would like to present a portfolio of the artwork culled from the CD he sent me. There is a reason why Ditmar has won numerous fan and professional artist awards, and one look at some of these pieces will convince you that he is indeed a wonderful artist. I am not sure which ish might have that portfolio, but it is something that I have always wanted to do. Other artists who would be worthy of such a display are Brad Foster, Marc Schirmeister (who has offered to do a cover for this zine; thank you, Marc), Dan Steffan, Steve Stiles, Kyle Hinton, and maybe a new artist or two. Such portfolios would not be an every issue item, but maybe every few issues they would be a fine addition. If there are any artists you would like to see displayed in this manner, let me know.

So at the present time, those are the plans for the next issue and possibly even further into the future. Somehow that seems rather apropos for a science fiction fanzines, doesn't it?

Until we meet again – I am going to shoot for the 9th issue to be out around mid-July – have a merry one, and don't forget to send in those cards, letters, artwork, and articles, boys and girls.

All the best,

- John Purcell



"Messiah Portrait" by Ditmar