

Smooth Active Badgers

A Two-Shot Zine
from Corflu 2003

The Naming of Zines

... is a difficult matter. It isn't just one of your holiday games, after all. No, no. It has to be memorable. It has to make some tiny amount of sense (to someone, anyway). It has to be distinctive enough that no reader confuses one zine with another too easily.

Some seem to favor the single-word style (Plokta, Wabe, Chunga), with a subset going for adjectives or adverbs that have fallen out of common use or are simply neologically coined for the purpose of the zine. Some use phrases, many of which are often truncated when referring to the zine in conversation (Too Much Fun [Is Hard on the Heart], frex).

I had an additional difficulty when choosing a title for this, the gleaned-from-the-convention Corflu zine. You see, this year's Corflu was called "Corflu Badger." After a brief but heated battle to remove from my mind

the image of a Corflu Badger that flits from fan to fan dabbling inadvertent typos with correction fluid of one sort or another (like the tooth fairy, only for fanac), I found that there are in fact vanishingly few literary references to badgers available from the usual 'Familiar Quotations' sources. It's discrimination, that's what it is! What makes a badger less worthy of pithy quotes than, say, a fox or weasel? Even Shakespeare failed me.

However, I digress. Given all these obstacles, I finally settled upon the title you see in the masthead. I suppose you all deserve an explanation why. We are all, I trust, familiar with the following snippet of verse by famous fabulist Lewis Carroll:

**'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.**

Several words from even this initial passage have provided pithy and successful titles for various zines, livejournals, and more. However, many of us may be unfamiliar (as I was until today) with Mr. Carroll's explanation, further along in the same work, of what this poem actually *means*. One of his characters explains that when taken out of the archaic dialect in which 'Jabberwocky' was composed, the preceding paragraph translates to:

It was evening, and the smooth active badgers were scratching and boring holes in the hill-side: all unhappy were the parrots, and the grave turtles squeaked out.

I rather prefer the lyric flow and obscurantism of the first version, truth be told, but at least the translation (however clunky and boring) did give me a title! For we were we not all smooth, active badgers that

fateful fourth weekend in April, in the stately confines of the Madison Best Western InnTowner (with attached swanky Highland Club on the fourth floor, about which more later)? Did we not all scratch and bore holes in the hillside above the softball field?

I would like to posit that we were, anyhow. All comments to the effect that these beliefs on my part are merely a transparent attempt to justify my desperate choice of title will be treated with the dignity that they deserve, if any.

I Went to Corflu
Badger, and All I Got
Was This Stupid
Two-Shot!

What's a two-shot? It means I pub this zine and send it out, and then people will send

LoCs and comments and perhaps longer pieces about things I missed here. Then I pub the second ish, or second half, if you will, containing all that. You get a lovely bookended pair, that way, you see.

Most of the content in **this** particular zine you're holding was written at the convention itself, on my laptop (a lovely little silver number with lots of horsepower that I call 'Rolan'). You'll see them when you turn the page. All such pieces will be neatly attributed to their authors. Anything in this zine or its successor that isn't bylined is by me, Eloise Mason (néé Beltz-Decker, Future Favorite Fanzine Fan™). I also did the layout, and will do some mild editing on the shorts, mostly in the departments of 'misspellings,' 'bizarre sentence structure,' or maybe 'gross misrepresentations of events.' Ok, so maybe not the latter. I'll close things up with an idiosyncratic conrep.



Orange Mike Lowrey:

Here it is, the Saturday morning of my first Corflu, and I'm doing this instead of attending programming. What the hey, it's a zine con! I won't enumerate all the zines I've gathered already, but I anticipate a lot of time working on LoCs instead of my final papers for my history classes in coming days.

I am very glad I persuaded myself to come to Corflu Badger, despite the expense and lost family time. I get this "I am only an egg" feeling, meeting dozens of people whom I feel like I "know" from their zines and/or online presences, and have a sense of feeling all the more imbedded in this thing called Fandom which has for a quarter-century helped define my life. In some ways, a gathering like this must be more like the cons of old than many of our modern, circus-sized worldcons could possibly be: a few dozen folks, filling part of an out-of-the-way hotel, chattering away about the Council of Nicea and proper bagel preparation and the mechanics of stapling a bifold zine. All of the folk here present owe Madison fandom (including

those normally not thought of as part of zine fandom) a huge debt of gratitude for putting on this clambake.

Tracy Benton:

Well, well, another Corflu, another 48 straight hours trapped in a consuite. Okay, not quite trapped—I'm sure I'll get to leave the hotel sometime—and I did get to see Opening Ceremonies. (Of course, I had to close the consuite to do that... hmmm.) It's always very rewarding to feed Corflu attendees. They eat, enjoy themselves, and are very appreciative!

Three of my favorite fan artists are here: Dan Steffan, Georgie Schnobrich, and Steve Stiles. If only we could lock them in a room and not allow them out until they've produced fillos for this oneshot! Sue Mason, unfortunately, couldn't make it. Dan Steffan had his name drawn from the basket as guest of honor ... unluckily he wasn't in the room. I so wish I could have seen his initial reaction. Haven't yet heard any noises about past

president of FWA for 2002. I'm tempted to nominate somebody outrageous just to make trouble, but there's no need. There are more than enough trouble-makers around here, after all.

Jerome Van Epps:

Welcome to Madison everyone. Madison is my hometown, and it is fun to see people show up here for a con that moves every year. Fandom in Madison has since the 70's circled around WisCon, and a couple other media cons which

"Holy shit, that's like having all of England in your local calling area!" - Alison Scott

have come and gone. Personally, I am involved with the new Odyssey Con here in Madison, which will be in its third year, next year. Four years ago, when we were looking for a space for our first Odyssey Con, we took a look at this hotel, the Inn Towner, but it turned out to be a bit too small for us. I always found it interesting how when a Con comes to a hotel for a weekend it changes the geography of the place. For a few days, what was a bunch of empty rooms become specific

places: consuite, party rooms, program tracks, etc. Fans give each other directions to these temporary places, then, puff, in a couple hours on Sunday everything gets packed up and carted away.

Something it reminds me of, and this may seem like a silly comparison, but I read a novel about the Battle of Stalingrad, where for a few months the geography of the city was dependent on where you could go and not get shot

at. The distance of a half block would be an impossibly long distance to cross under fire, and then the enemy surrenders, all of a sudden the normal day geography of walking to the store to get a loaf of bread returns. Anyway, I hope you enjoy your stay in Madison and I hope you had some time to get out and see the city. Consider coming back for WisCon, which is every Memorial Day Weekend, or Odyssey Con which is April 2-4 in 2004. And thank you, Andy, for the copies of Chunga.

Linda Bushyager:

Madison is a beautiful city. I thought so when I was here 10 years ago for the last Corflu and I think so now. I thought it would be a lovely place to retire to — except for the snow. It is hard to believe it was snowing here a week or so ago, because today it is a beautiful spring day with trees just beginning to green and forsithia bushes blooming yellow and some tulips about ready to open. The sky was a gorgeous azure overhead as we went to the town square for a walkabout. There were jars of honey and maple syrup bottles, ostrich and buffalo and emu and deer meats including jerky, white mushrooms, cheese curds, cheeses, jams and relishes (including cranberry horseradish relish), hickory nuts, butternuts, muffins and scones, cookies and breads, popcorn (including on the cob), crafts and crockery, and much more for sale. The hotel's free shuttle ride included a scenic tour on the way back by way of the university and lake. In all a pleasant journey, and I bought chocolate turtle candy and rubarb jam for later consumption.



I almost bought some cactus plants to take back to Las Vegas, but that seemed a bit too weird.

We have lived in Vegas for over a year now and really love it. It is great to have a 1 story house and no snow and no state income tax. I probably have been gambling too much (I play video poker mostly, which is a game where you can beat the house if you know what you are doing), but I'm even so that isn't so bad. I hope all of you will come to Corflu Blackjack in Vegas next year. It will be downtown in a nice hotel with cheap room rates of \$39 a night. There is plenty for the non-gambler to do in Las Vegas — everything from seeing the downtown Fremont Street Experience of lights to touring the nearby strip hotels with their free pirate shows, volcanos, and more, to going to nearby Red Rock canyon for a hike. You can even visit the Grand Canyon on a day trip, or closer Boulder/ Hoover Dam and Lake Meade. I'll lead you on a gambler's tour of downtown casinos or out for a look at free sites on the strip. Food is quite cheap and good, and of course the entertainment choices are great. For \$5.95 you

can see the world's funniest ventriloquist plus get a free drink, or pay \$120 for the fantastic "O" Cirque du Soleil show (order tickets several months in advance if you want to see them), and there are scores of choices in between. Or of course, you can stay in the hotel and just do Corflu. I'm not involved with the bid at this point but I support it.

I hope Corflu will continue for another 20 years. Also hope that those of you who attend it will support Ditto - coming up in Eugene Oregon in Oct. 2003 by the way.

Allen Smythie:

An SF joke.

An interglactic empire takes over the planet Earth and their war leader announces. "PEOPLE OF EARTH, YOU ARE NOW PART OF VAST GALACTIC EMPIRE, AND WE HAVE ASSIGNED A SPECIFIC TASK TO EACH PLANET IN THE GREAT WAR EFFORT. ONE PLANET MAKES STARSHIPS. ONE PLANET MAKES LASERS. ONE PLANET MAKES DEATH RAYS. THE TASK OF YOUR PITIFULL PLANET IS TO PRODUCE ONE HUNDRED TRILLION PAIRS OF PANTS. WE ARE RETURNING TO THE HOME WORLD NOW, BUT WE WILL BE BACK IN ONE YEAR, AND IF THE ONE HUNDRED TRILLION PAIRS OF PANTS ARE NOT DONE WHEN WE RETURN, WE WILL

DESTROY THE PLANET EARTH!"

So the entire economy of the planet was turned over to the production of pants. People worked night and day producing pants, but the one year was almost up, and nobody knew what to do - they were still short on the number of pants. No one knew what to do, except for one old tailor who told everyone not to worry about it, he would talk to the aliens and work it out.

So the aliens returned. "WE

"Lt. Mary Sue spread the wide lips of Uhura's flower as Sulu pumped and jerked above them. 'Frequencies open and swinging, baby!'" - Why You Got This Zine Is Late

ARE BACK. WHERE ARE OUR ONE HUNDRED TRILLION PAIRS OF PANTS? GIVE THEM TO US NOW, OR WE WILL DESTROY THE PLANET!" So the old tailor goes. "You want the pants? You got the ticket? No ticket, no pants."

So the aliens flew back to their planet to get the ticket.

Jim Caughran:

Last night I was not enthusiastic about Corflu. Exhausted by the effort of doing nothing all day while being flown from here to there to Madison, I tried to get into the

conversation, but everyone was shouting, just because everyone else was shouting, and no one (especially me!) could hear anything. I decided I was too tired to carry on like that, and went to bed.

Today, amid fanzine panel discussions and remembering way back when, I feel much better about the con. I'm ready to go pub my ish, loc every zine that comes by, write like crazy for anyone. Amazing how this kind of fannish zeal turns us on at cons like this (and how quickly we forget).

May the spirit of Harry Warner infuse us all with letters of comment, and may we all pub our ish regularly.

Nigel Rowe:

Hah, hah! I arrived late last night and hadn't pre-registered so I managed the "super cheap" option of ensuring my name wasn't in the GOH hat. Now my secret is out so it might not work in the future ... but I welcome Dan's selection and look forward to his multi-media 3D presentation, whoops I mean speech. Is Corflu really 20 years old? I can remember

reading reviews of Corflu 1 and dreaming of the day when I could attend. Now I spend my days dreaming about being back in NZ while attending Corflus. Sigh, sometimes one is never satisfied. Enjoy it while it's still fresh.

Alison Scott:

The place to be Saturday afternoon was certainly the park, where adults chatted cheerfully while our children wore themselves out on the swings, slides and climbing apparatus. At least, we fervently hope they wore themselves out, given that we don't want a repeat of yesterday's 'bouncing around the con suite till 2 in the morning' incident. The lovely spring weather (translation for Brits: "glorious summer day") was perfect for sitting around, and besides, it got us out of the hotel for a couple of hours.

Fanzines; we're dishing out Plokta, and have picked up Chunga, Velleity, Rain on Cherry-Blossoms, Snapshot, Random Jottings and an old Yhos. In addition, there appear to be several British fanzines, distributed at Eastercon, which are only available to Americans.



It's discrimination, I tell you.

Don Fitch:

"The Farmers' Market in Capitol Square opens at six this morning," I announced brightly at about 1:30 a.m. to the fans in the Smoking Lounge. The average response seemed to be on the order of "We'll wish the Farmers well, if we happen to think about it at the time." Chancing to wake a bit after eight, I took the bus up to the square, where there were millions of Madisonites milling around — or, more correctly, moving slowly counter-clockwise around the square ... except for the 12,000+ (to go by the numbers they were displaying) runners who were massing for some kind of Charity Race. I elected to allow the rotating mass to carry me around the area (twice, actually), looking at the wares displayed in the booths. Lots of interesting plants (the "Spring is here at last" feeling permeated the event, and a few {mostly young} people were bare-footed), most of which wouldn't do well back home in Southern California (much less survive the trip in my luggage), stands with a variety of honeys, cheeses, and breads. Lots of

jerky — beef, venison, buffalo, emu, and ostrich — and three stands with a variety of cultivated mushrooms ... so much for my dream of morelles fried in butter; they probably won't be popping up until several weeks from now.

Saturday evening/Sunday morning — the Smoking ConSuite has turned into a Party with 23 people ... at least 18 of whom are talking at any given time.

Judith Bemis:

I got up this morning, went with Jim Hudson and family to the Farmers' Market; we were back by nine, as most of the convention was just waking up. There are advantages and disadvantages to being a morning person in fandom/fanzine fandom. I had been posing people the question of what 1953 fanzines they thought we should find for the Noreascon 4 retros and the FANAC web site; many said they don't know what was available in 1953, or they didn't correlate fanzines to years well. Geri Sullivan's response was to search Lichtman's index and copy me every entry for

1953 — much more useful, but it may be more than we want to put up, even with unlimited space.

Hildifons Took (a.k.a. Gary Hunnewell):

Boy, I've missed Corflu. Too long of a wait, too many friends gone. Oh, well, I am glad to be back. Pleased as pie that everyone liked the propeller beanie. I will even walk away with half a dozen fanzines and some gummie-The-Lord-of-the-Rings-I-can't-believe-they-make-

**"Well, we ended up at somebody's house out there, and I set it on fire."
- Dan Steffan, GoH speech**

this-crap-in-England (won at auction). I have a feeling that I need to get away from this one-shot and visit with my fellow fen. That's (mostly) what this is all about. If you've never been to a Corflu and you have enough money to get to one and you are interested enough to read drivel like this, you have no excuse not to attend.

Tom Becker:

Since meeting Spike and stealing her away I've come back to Madison many times. This Corflu was a great excuse. They could have had no con at

all and I still would have had a good time hanging out with the Madison fans. But of course this is one of the better Corflus, and I get to hang out with interesting fans from all over. I've also been pleasantly surprised by the hotel. It's a bit of a ways from the center of town, but there's nice walking up into the residential neighborhood and the other way onto campus and to the lake. The Arabian (Lulu's), Korean (New Seoul) and Midwestern (Smokies) restaurants have all been very good. I can also recommend Mickey's

Dairy Bar where we had a very nice breakfast. So far the high point of the convention has been Andy's play. Or maybe it's the excellent beer. Or all the great conversations. Or it may be Dan Stef Fan as Guest of Honor. We'll see later this morning as the con rolls on.

Hope Kiefer:

I am happy to read (above) how much people have been enjoying Madison, our farmers' market, and my neighborhood. I love Madison. I love Madison fandom. It may be a duel (us

vs the Nashes), but I think we have the edge on "shortest commute to Corflu Badger": our family walked three blocks to get here. I have lived in Honolulu, London, and Philadelphia, but I always come back to Madison to live. Never say never, but I expect to continue living here a very long time.

Being at Corflu makes me think I should pub my ish. This is my third Corflu. The first two I attended were before I pubbed anything besides my apazine. This third is long after I ceased publishing Cube.

Maybe, maybe...

Joyce Scrivner:

Something.
(Which I've just typed.)

Three people I'm missing this weekend - Bruce Pelz, John Foyster and the Lynchi. Two I won't see again, two will be at Worldcon.

But what glories in those who are here! The Madison crowd - Jeanne, Jim, Tracey, Jae, (others) - the Brits - Alison, Steve, Claire, Mark, Eve, John, (etc) - and all those others I seldom see. Especially those who lurk in the smoking room like Don, Dan, Ted, Steve, (etc) because I don't make it there very often.



Well done to Andy for raising money for TAFF, and Eloise for offering this platform to One Shot. What fun to be here.

Next year in Las Vegas.

Karen Babich:

Kudos first to Eloise Mason (néé Beltz-Decker), who took a flippant comment seriously and left her laptop in the Con Suite for the purposes of this here one shot. Go Eloise.

The softball game had a hit, a very palpable hit (More than one hit, actually). Everyone seemed to have fun, and no one sustained any permanent damage. In future Corflu auctions, look for the signed game ball, team photos, and a (rumored) blooper video featuring the semi-comic collision of Jeff Schalles and Martin Smith over first base early in the game.

The crowd was especially pleased to discover heretofore hidden talent in Britfan Mike Scott, who claims never to have played softball before but somehow knew to catch that foul ball — and counted as one of the many runs scored by the victorious A's. Forrest Kiefer Hailman, the youngest player on the field, also achieved a base

hit at his first ever Corflu game. Forrest made it to second base on a walk by Frank Lunney and to third on another base hit by Uncle Don Helley. Helley, local fan and once mayoral candidate for the city of Madison, hit his first home run in forty years — and just happened to sweep a couple of teammates in with him. Gary Hunnewell, voted (after Scott) Second Most Likely Ringer, contibuted some of the best fieldwork of the afternoon in addition to solid work at the bat.

The game also sustained the multinational flavor of Corflu by the participation not only of the Brits Scott and Smith but the antipodean (by accent, anyway) Damien Warman and Corflu veteran Nigel Rowe. Warman ably shagged^[1] several flies in right field, and Nigel managed a base hit despite the sudden appearance of sheep jeering from the sidelines. Diversity wasn't quite even-handed across teams. The Abnormals counted two Canadians, Colin Hinz and Alan Rosenthal, while the Unnaturals had only one,

Catherine Crockett. The Unnaturals also had all of the lefties, none of them pitchers.

The pitching contest heated up early as Art Widner, starter for the Unnaturals, struck out several players. Andy Hooper relieved Art in the fifth inning: after 96 pitches, Coach Hooper was concerned about saving Widner's arm for next year. The pitching contest became the Battle of the Coaches when Bill Bodden strategically relieved Mike "The Lob" Dobson in the

**"Hey, you guys, get a room!"
- Spectators at the softball game, in response to the repeated collisions and embraces at second base.**

bottom of the seventh inning. It is suspected that money changed hands while Bodden warmed up, the crowd speculating furiously over such factors as the brisk breeze and whether the strain of running Corflu would affect Bodden's pitching. With the bases loaded and Hooper already on strike one, Bodden saved the day for the Abnormals by striking Hooper out.

It was a fine game.

^[1] *In America it means something else. Really.* -KB

Corflu 20: A Newbie's View

Despite having pubbed three ishes of a perzine and been Pagemaker Monkey for the house organ of Midwest Fannish Conventions, Corflu was my first actual fanzine con ... and the first time I actually saw more than, oh, one person who'd done fanzines before face to face at once.

Daunting, really. At first, I smiled blankly at all these utter strangers and offered, hesitantly, packs of all three ishes of my perzine to people whose names didn't look familiar. I was worried, at first, that some folks might not want them. Hah. Zines at Corflu are apparently like little logo-imprinted yo-yos and pens at Comdex: swag! *Everyone* loves swag. I got rid of all my paper back issues of 1 and 2, and managed to give away almost all of 3 I brought with me to the con.

I finally found a roommate in the consuite as midnight approached (a good thing, as the hotel itself was out of fresh rooms). Thanks, Ron! More than that, I got to stay in one of

those swanky suites up on four.

Those of you who didn't go to Corflu may need a digression, here: it is not possible to get to the fourth floor of that hotel without a room key that belongs to a room on the fourth floor. Why is this? The rooms, while nominally 'suites,' are not in fact much bigger or nicer than the rooms on 3 (where I spent Saturday night). They do, however, come with free drinks and breakfast and hors d'ouvres in what is effectively their very own consuite. Niiiiiiice.

While I went to programming (and laughed at the radio-play until I squeaked), real purpose of Corflu, so far as I could see, is the conversation and the chance to meet so many other faneds. Consuite chatter ranged from classic movies to Canadian politics (only one of the speakers was actually Canadian) to Klingon linguistics and far, far beyond. I spent most of the time knitting and listening, or just plain listening. I hope my contributions to the communal conversation were valuable, or at least not stupid. See you next year!



Smooth Active Badgers
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1. Part of the milling line Sunday morning waiting to get into the Brunch Banquet.
2. Some of the participants in the Sunday softball game.
3. Guest of Honor Dan Steffan giving his GoH speech ... as reflected in the Ameche Room ceiling.
4. More of the milling brunch line.
5. A ball of butter at brunch, looking disturbingly like vanilla ice cream.
6. Juliette Woods, at lunch on Saturday.
7. Ron Bushyager, Sunday afternoon.
8. Julie Humphries, lounging around on Sunday.
9. Mike Scott, Mark Plummer, and Tom Becker at the 'radio play' Saturday night.
10. Jae Leslie Adams and Lisa C. Freitag, Friday night.
11. Damien Warman, playing left field with finesse and verve in the Sunday softball game. And his Utilikilt. Mmmmm.
12. Claire Brialey, Damien Warman, and Jeff Schalles, having fun giving the Live Fanthology '97 panel.
13. Catherine Crockett, lounging around on the bed in the consuite's beer room.
14. The hotel itself, in its glory.
15. Bill Bodden, conchair to the stars.
16. The iron chicken statue.
17. Did I mention beer?
18. Colin Hinz and Randy Byers, in the audience of the Fanthology panel.

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 Larger versions available on request.