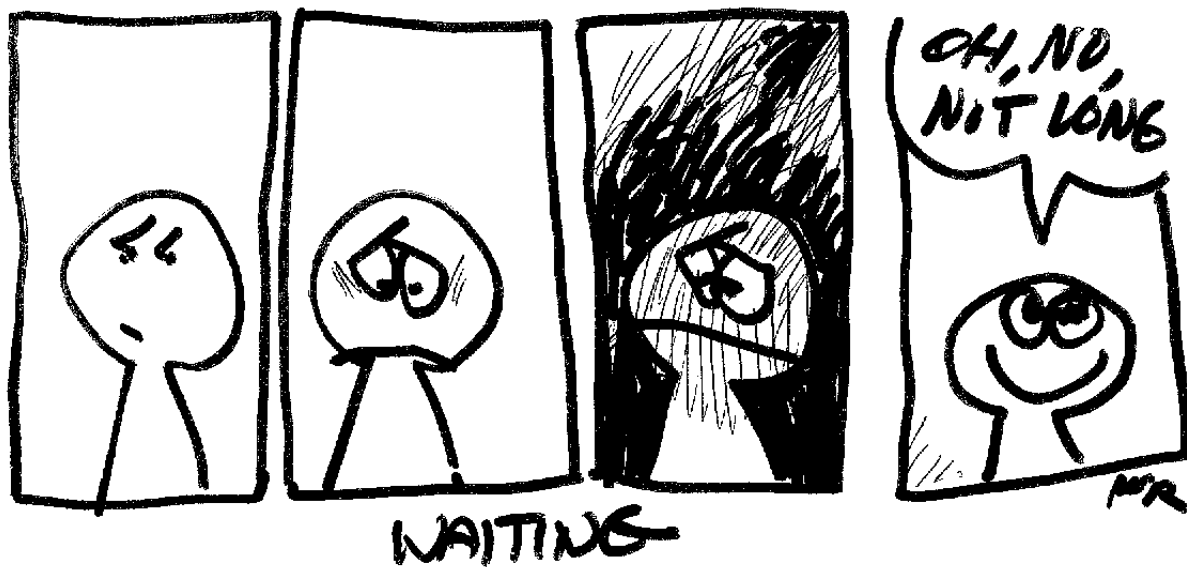


Virtual Tucker Hotel



Issue One

<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/the-virtual-fan-lounge>

From: Peter Sullivan, peter@burdonvale.co.uk Boring webpage at <http://www.burdonvale.co.uk>
Slightly less boring livejournal at <http://ceemage.livejournal.com>

This is the first issue of Virtual Tucker Hotel. (“What's a Virtual Tucker Hotel?” Read on, and find out...) VTH is primarily an electronic fanzine, available on <http://www.efanzines.com>. Paper copies of this fanzine do exist, however, and will be available for the fannish usual. In any case, e-mails and letters of comment are, of course, welcome.

Member fwa. WAW with the crew in '52.

The Concept

Before we go any further, I need to make one thing perfectly plain. It's all Curt Phillips' fault.

I, like a number of other fans, didn't get to go to Corflu. But we still had a real good time. And that, without **any** shadow of a doubt, is all Bill Mills' fault...

Bill has already been involved in bringing technology to fandom, being the main man behind The Voice of Fandom podcasts. But for Corflu, he either volunteered – or got drafted – to set up a live video feed of parts of the convention. The video feed came with its own built-in chat-room

It is a fannish maxim that fans love to talk. So we all took to the chat-room like the proverbial ducks to water. When there was a live feed (as for the panel sessions, or the FAAN Awards banquet) we discussed what we were watching. When there wasn't a video stream, we discussed – well, just about everything else. We even managed to get a certificate designed and e-mailed, for presentation to Bill at the FAAN Awards Ceremony. As a small thank-you for all the work he put in, both setting it up and keeping it running throughout the convention.

One of the other things that we discussed was that we'd like to do it all again. Curt Phillips was the one who uttered the immortal words “What would you all think about having a fandom-wide live audio chat on a regular basis?” Starting the process that lead to the setting up of the first Virtual Fan Lounge and this fanzine.

And, before I get a stream of irate e-mails, I'm sure there are precedents for fannish video feeds and chat-rooms before. Both in All Known Fandom (roughly defined as any fandom that thinks the Worldcon is part of their culture, however fringe). And even in what is

increasingly being referred to as “Core Fandom.” (I know that some people don't like that term, but I'm not sure why. Be grateful – if it was up to me, I would call it (with a due nod to Prince) “The Fandom Formerly Known As Fanzine Fandom” or “TFFKAFF.”)

But, unless anyone knows differently, I feel that Corflu Silver is the first such effort in Core Fandom to reach critical mass, and (hopefully) leave a lasting legacy.

The Name

We came up with the name "Virtual Tucker Hotel" in the chat-room – which I quite like, and hence have appropriated for this fanzine. It's intended as a modest tribute to Bob, 'fanfather' to us all – whom I never had the privilege to meet.

And fans have always joked about 'the eternal convention' - this may be the nearest thing that we've got to it yet. It was Dian Crayne who suggested that the chat-room was, in effect, being “held in a virtual Tucker Hotel!” But this time, there's absolutely no need for any of you to send bricks.

The Logistics

As is probably typical in a chat-room, our ideas were evolving pretty rapidly. Originally we were thinking about using one of the instant messaging services like Yahoo, AOL or even the venerable Internet Relay Chat (IRC) system. But, thinking on this later, I wasn't keen on this, as expecting fen to install software is pretty much the kiss of death – we really need something that just works within a browser.

Looking back at the transcript, I notice I **did** have what I'm going to call a "Mickey Rooney moment." (As in, the bit in every one of his early movies where he turns to 'the gang' and says "Hey, let's do the show right here!") I

wrote “The other option is that I guess this chat room will still be here after the convention ... This doesn't involve anyone having to install any extra software to join in.” The more I think about this, the more sense it makes.

As it is, Bill Mills has kindly set us up a new chat-room, under the name “Virtual Fan Lounge” (<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/the-virtual-fan-lounge>) but still using the ustream.tv service that we used for Corflu Silver.

To use the chat-room, just go to that web address. On the left hand side of the page is the live video feed – replaced by a slide show when there isn't anything happening. On the right is the actual chat-room. You can see what everyone else is typing on top, and add your own contribution.

You will be assigned an initial user name in the format “ustreamer-12345.” If you'd rather change this – to your real name, livejournal name, or whatever – you can do this by clicking the “Sign Up” link at the top to register for free. Some people have been slightly put off by the amount of information that the registration form asks for, which I can empathise with. But registration is entirely optional – you can simply stay as “ustreamer-12345” if you prefer.

The Timings

Although the chat-room itself is always open, we probably need to have some agreement about when to meet up. What we are proposing is a regular weekly chat session at Noon on Sundays for those on Pacific Daylight Time. This then works out, if I've read the World Clock page correctly, at 3pm for the East Coast of America, 8pm for the British and Irish, 3am on Monday morning for Western Australia, and 5am on Monday morning for Eastern Australia.

This is a tad unsocial on the Australians, for which apologies. Suggestions for better start times are welcome. But I suspect that finding a time that suits everyone may be tricky.

In addition to that, there may be other events happening in the chat room during any given week. For instance, this week, the first live video feed will occur on Saturday, May 3. The Vegrants invite you to join them for their meeting, which is likely to include music by Bill

Mills and Teresa Cochran and discussions featuring some of the Vegrants. The approximate starting time is 8:00 PM PDT (but it wouldn't hurt to check in earlier). The Virtual Fan Lounge will have a live feed from the club on the first and third Saturdays of every month.

(Part of the role of Virtual Tucker Hotel the fanzine is to provide details of these extra events in advance wherever possible.)

And, of course, the chat-room is always open anyway, although whether there will be anyone else there to talk to is another matter...

The Transcripts

One thing that the regular users of the chat-room probably need to discuss and come to a view on is the privacy issue.

We can either say that the chat-room is public space, and people are free to keep transcripts, discuss chat-room discussions elsewhere and so on.

The alternative is to adapt the etiquette that has grown up on fannish mailing lists – that material posted to the list shouldn't be quoted off-list without specific permission.

Or we could have a mixture – say, that the regular chat sessions are open-access and “transcribable,” but that people should be more cautious about things said at other times.

I'd welcome debate and discussion on this, as I'm sure that I don't have all the answers.

Corflu Transcripts

Speaking of which, I have an almost-full transcript of the Corflu Silver Virtual Con Suite, from the morning of Friday 25th to the evening of Sunday 27th. This is stitched together from the transcripts that Geri Sullivan, Len Bailes and I kept over the weekend.

As above, it would probably be unfair, from a privacy point of view, to post the full transcript on a web-page or other publicly-accessible places. But if any fan wants a copy, they can e-mail me at peter@burdonvale.co.uk.

The transcript is almost 70,000 words (424k) and, as with most chat-rooms, people talk (or type!) over each other in places. But there's a lot of interesting fannish discussion and humour (intentional or otherwise!), so worth a read.

But then, I would say that, wouldn't I?

I have already done a summary of the virtual consuite's reaction to the panel on Saturday morning, which I posted during the convention to the corflu community on livejournal (<http://corflu.livejournal.com>). What might be interesting would be to re-present this as a two-column format, with a transcript of the actual panel on the left. We'll see if I get a round tuit.

Also probably worth doing a summary of is the virtual consuite's reaction to the banquet ("Stop talking with your mouth full, Lichtman!") and the FAAN awards ceremony.

Finally, I'm also intending to do an edited down version of the silly/funny bits - almost an "Interlineos Edition," as it were. The beauty of this is that interlineos are traditionally unattributed anyway, so no privacy issues with this.

All of this will be offered to Arnie and Joyce Katz for the Corflu Souvenir Book, assuming I can get them done in time.

Why This Fanzine?

Why not just a post to the main fannish mailing lists, or the main fannish blogs? (We're doing that as well, by the way, so don't worry.) Well, there just seemed something fundamentally right about doing a fanzine about this, given that it grew out of the Corflu chat-room - Corflu really being the core convention of fanzine fandom.

Art Credits

Front Cover: Bill Rotsler, of course. This is just about the only Rostler illo I have. It was sent to me, along with Science Fiction Five Yearly, and the admonition to 'pub my ish.' Which I'm now doing.

Ironically, it's also actually a pretty good representation of me in the Corflu Silver chat-room between 1 am and 5 am on Sunday morning Vegas time. When I was the only person still active in the chat-room.. I passed the time by virtually tidying the virtual con suite, emptying the virtual ash trays, and building a virtual tower of virtual bheer cans to the moon...

Below: Ross Chamberlain, via Arnie Katz. This may well appear as a mast-head on future issues.

Video Streaming

Perhaps inevitably, the second event to be video streamed on the Virtual Fan Lounge also hails from Las Vegas. See details below. However, other fans groups or conventions are cordially invited to share live video feeds too. If you can reschedule your event to fit the regular chat-room sessions on Sundays, that's fine. But if not, we'll just add it as another event, and plug it here in Virtual Tucker Hotel.

Of course, either way, you'll have to suffer the chat-room commentary on whatever's going on. Personally, I reckon that your best bet is to remember Oscar Wilde's famous maxim that "The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about."



Schedule for this week

Vegrants Party

The Vegrants invite you to join them for their meeting, which is likely to include music by Bill Mills and Teresa Cochran and discussions featuring some of the Vegrants.

- Saturday 3rd May, 8.00 pm PDT (Pacific Daylight Time)
- Saturday 3rd May, 11.00 pm EDT (Eastern Daylight Time)
- Sunday 4th May, 3.00 am UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time)
- Sunday 4th May, 4.00 am BST (British Summer Time)
- Sunday 4th May, 11.00 am WAST (Western Australian Standard Time)
- Sunday 4th May, 1.00 pm EAST (Eastern Australian Standard Time)

Regular Weekly Chat Session 1

What it says – there probably won't be a video feed, but that won't stop the conversation flowing.

- Sunday 4th May, 12.00 noon PDT (Pacific Daylight Time)
- Sunday 4th May, 3.00 pm EDT (Eastern Daylight Time)
- Sunday 4th May, 7.00 pm UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time)
- Sunday 4th May, 8.00 pm BST (British Summer Time)
- Monday 5th May, 3.00 am WAST (Western Australian Standard Time)
- Monday 5th May, 5.00 am EAST (Eastern Australian Standard Time)

Regular Weekly Chat Session 2

The second instalment of the everlasting convention...

- Sunday 11th May, 12.00 noon PDT (Pacific Daylight Time)
- Sunday 11th May, 3.00 pm EDT (Eastern Daylight Time)
- Sunday 11th May, 7.00 pm UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time)
- Sunday 11th May, 8.00 pm BST (British Summer Time)
- Monday 12th May, 3.00 am WAST (Western Australian Standard Time)
- Monday 12th May, 5.00 am EAST (Eastern Australian Standard Time)