

Grant

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File 770 #161

MIKE GLYER'S FILE 770

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Editorial Notes by Mike Glycer

I couldn't be sorrier than to say that Diana and I separated in February. Except to add I'm entirely to blame.

As a result I have the change of address below.

It's taken me quite some time to pick myself off the deck and do something with this fanzine. But here it is at last.

John Hertz: Two Chicon Exhibits

In May when Leo Dillon died I felt that Chicon VII (officially "Chicon 7" for the Mercury 7 astronauts) really ought to have an exhibit honoring the Dillons' work, two of our finest illustrators over fifty years. I found nobody else was yet planning one. I got valuable advice from Vincent Di Fate and Jane Frank.

Mark Olson had the swell idea of displaying books the Dillons had done. Alice Massoglia rounded up two dozen decent-quality reading copies – not collectors' copies, I wanted to let people pick them up and look through them. A good handful of Harlan Ellison books, issues of *Fantasy & Science Fiction* with Dillon covers, the Byron Preiss collection, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* with their cover and interiors, *Ashanti to Zulu* which won one of their Caldecotts (and reminded me of my Nigerian drum teacher), *Pish, Posh, Said Hieronymous Bosch* which they did with their son Lee, the hundredth-anniversary *Wizard of Oz*, some Lafferty, *The Snow Queen*, and a host of others reached me in Los Angeles, were sent on to Chicago, and arrived safely.

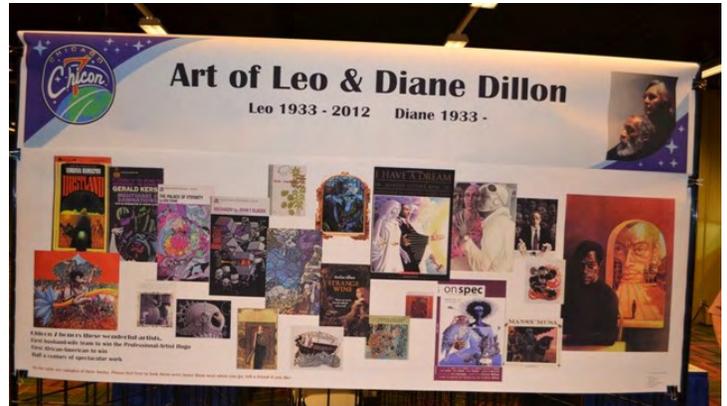
Elizabeth Klein-Lebbink resplendently with her electronic powers made three banners, one for the top with "Art of Leo and Diane Dillon" and a color photo, one mounted under that and one mounted on the front of the display table with images of every shape and size, some we had physical examples of and James Baldwin, Martin Luther King, Shakespeare, Mark Twain.

Richard Lynch took photos so you can see how it looked. This involved his climbing onto a chair on top of a table muttering "This is stupid, this is stupid" while Nicki across the Exhibit Hall wondered.

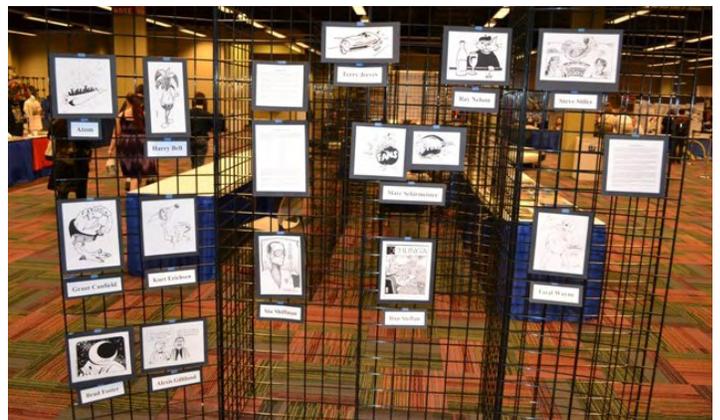
Richard also helped me put up the Rotsler Award exhibit and photographed that for you. My guide through various spacetime problems with it was Randy Smith, as ever a big help. All three judges, Claire Brialey, Mike Glycer, and I, were at the con, but no more than two of us ever managed to be in the same place. If we all had, that might have popped Dave McCarty into the 14th Chorp Dimension.

Which reminds me, Dave, what happened to the Jay's potato chips?

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(Above) Banner for the "Art of Leo & Diane Dillon" exhibit. (Below) The Rotsler Award exhibit.



Expert Elst Finds Cable Fame

Elst Weinstein appeared in an April 2011 episode of A&E's *Storage Wars* as an expert helping to identify a strange old medical device.

Storage Wars follows four bidders competing to score big at storage auctions. In "Live and Let Bid," episode 19 of the show's first season, someone found a peculiar old brass mechanism and turned for help in identifying it to The Southern California Medical Museum. Elst, a pediatrician, also is an avid collector and happens to be the museum's volunteer curator.

He knew the item on sight. It was scarifier, probably dating to the 19th century and used by a doctor to bleed patients. Not long ago Elst's museum mounted an extensive exhibit about medical bleeding, full of fleams, scarifiers, glass cups and leeches.

Elst was on screen for about two minutes. But A&E has repeated the episode over 100 times since April. As a result, he's enjoyed many times his allotted 15 minutes of fame.

The show returned to consult another expert at the Southern California Medical Museum in Season 2.

Storage units rarely figure prominently in fanish news – really, the last time was 1994 when Marty Cantor was working as the manager of a U-Haul facility and auctioned off an unclaimed locker in which the winning bidder found several decomposing corpses. Eventually the original renter was tracked to Jakarta and arrested for murder.

Gerhartsreiter To Be Tried For Murder

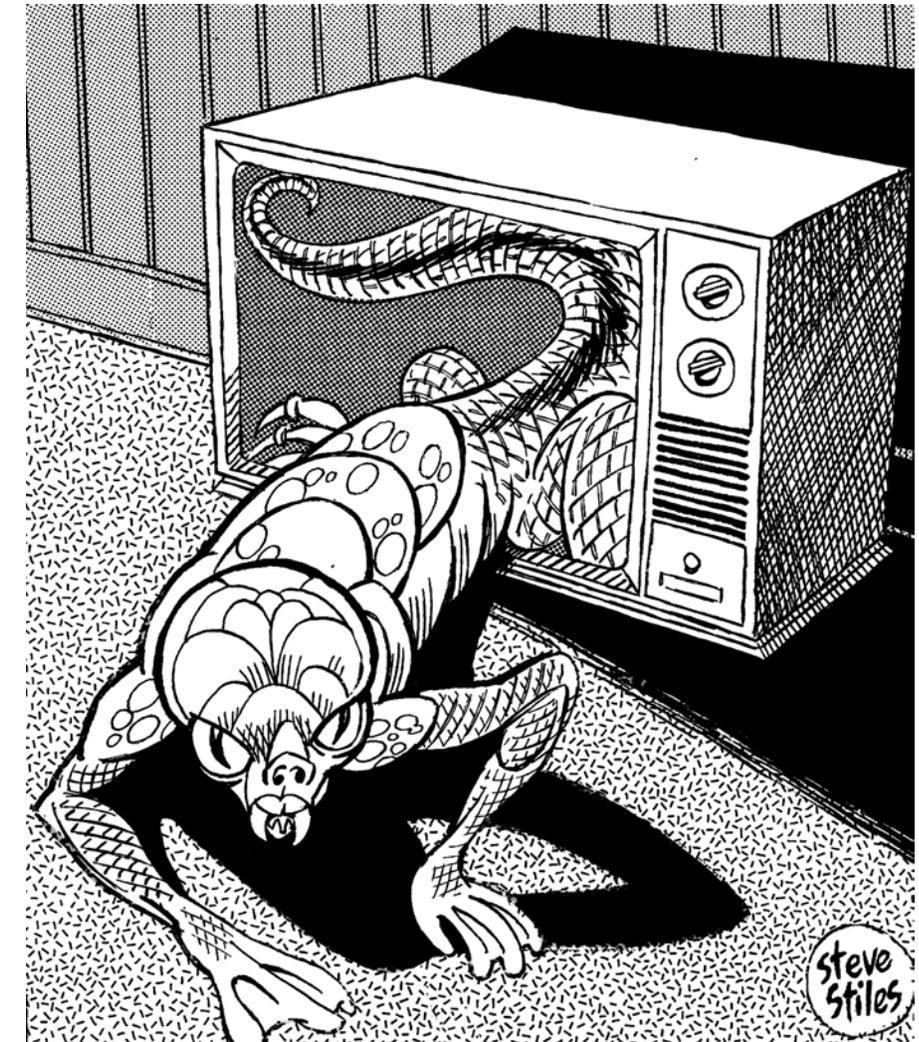
Christian Gerhartsreiter was bound over for trial on charges of murdering LASFS member John Sohus in 1985 after a week-long hearing in January during which prosecutors called 23 witnesses.

Linda Sohus, John's wife, also disappeared around the same time. No further trace of her has been discovered to date, although a dubious postcard supposedly signed by the couple was mailed from Paris to her employer at Dangerous Visions bookstore months after they vanished.

Among the last witness questioned in the Gerhartsreiter hearing was Mihoko Manabe, who knew him by his alias Christopher Crowe, and during his transformation to Clark Rockefeller. They dated and lived together until about 1994, having met while working at a NYC securities firm.

The *LA Times* reported: "In 1988, Mihoko Manabe received a call at her New York apartment from a Connecticut detective looking for her live-in boyfriend, a man she knew by the name Christopher Crowe. She took a message and hung up.

"When she gave Crowe the message, their



News of Fandom

lives were turned upside down, Manabe recalled in court Tuesday. The boyfriend told her that the person who called wasn't with the police, but a bad guy who was after him. He dyed his hair and eyebrows blond, grew a beard, and insisted they shred documents. They began using P.O. boxes for their mail, threw away their garbage at public shopping malls and walked on opposite sides of the street.

"Some months after, Manabe testified, he began using the name that would later gain national notoriety — Clark Rockefeller."

Fallen Angels at 20

Loscon 38 celebrated the 20th anniversary of *Fallen Angels*, Niven, Pournelle and Flynn's novel starring over a hundred Tuckerized science fiction fans out to save two downed astronauts from a tech-hostile government.

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle and facili-

tator John Hertz discussed the novel's enduring appeal with a standing-room-only audience.

Pournelle said the book is still selling about 30 copies a week, which is especially gratifying because a Baen Free Library edition has been available for years. He theorized these sales were driven by referrals from Amazon's "customers who bought *this* also bought *that*" robot.

The characters in the novel were based on fans the authors knew – although Mike Flynn lived on the East Coast and hadn't met many of the people Niven and Pournelle incorporated in the story. So Larry Niven said one thing he was proud of is that Mike Flynn was able to recognize a particular person based on his description of her in the book.

Ed Green in "Air Collision"

If you're an airline passenger in a movie titled

Air Collision, count on a rocky ride. And Ed Green pitches and yaws with the best of them in the action movie released in 2012.

When a solar storm wipes out the air traffic control system, Air Force One and a passenger jet liner are locked on a collision course in the skies above the mid-west. Bad news for Ed — he isn't aboard Air Force One.

Tepper, Levin Engaged

LASFS member Matthew Tepper has announced his engagement: "Debra Levin and I plan to get married this coming October. At present I'm 58 and she's 45. This will be my first, and her second; she is the widow of Rob Levin, aka 'Lilo,' founder of Freenode."

Schalles Retires

Jeff Schalles, after 33 years doing commercial digital graphics, from Compugraphic and Genographics through Prinergy and CSS.5, retired from both printing and the union. Says Jeff, "This is great!"

Chainsaws in Toad Woods

Geri Sullivan hosted a NESFA Other Meeting combined with a "BYO Shovels, Rakes, and Implements of Destruction" work party on June 24 at Toad Woods to cut up a large tree knocked down by Hurricane Irene. Fans had two and three chainsaws going at a time. "Miracle of miracles, no fan were injured in the process," reported Geri. "Mark Hertel even found Suford Lewis' eyeglasses caught on a cut-up branch after they went missing from her pocket."

2012 TAFF Results

Jacq Monahan won the 2012 Trans Atlantic Fan Fund race – her Eastercon report appears later this issue.

Voting	NA	Europe	Total
Warren Buff	28	2	30
Kim Kofmel	15	12	27
Jacqueline Monahan	27	8	35
No Preference	2	6	8
Total	72	28	100

Warren Buff did not get 20% of the vote on both sides of the Atlantic, therefore he was disqualified under a rule. His votes were redistributed and in the second round Monahan achieved more than 50% of votes counted, winning the race:



Voting	NA	Europe	Total
Kim Kofmel	29	13	42
Jacqueline Monahan	35	10	45
Total	64	23	87

DUFF Will Hold Over Funds

By John Hertz and David Cake: This year's Down Under Fan Fun voting was counted on June 1, 2012 by John Hertz the North American Administrator and David Cake the Australia – New Zealand Administrator.

Founded in 1972, and supported by donations from all over the world, DUFF each year votes for a delegate from NA to ANZ, or the other direction in alternate years. Anyone active in fandom may vote.

The 2012 candidates were Juanita Coulson of the United States and Murray Moore of Canada. Moore in his platform urged voters to choose Hold Over Funds and said he would not go if elected.

The decision was clear from first-choice votes. Counting lower choices was not needed.

Hold Over Funds received 38 first-choice NA votes + 19 ANZ. Coulson received 24 first-choice NA votes + 1 ANZ. Moore received 11 first-choice NA votes + 2 ANZ.

Funds will be held over. No delegate will be sent in 2012.

Each Administrator received some out-area votes (e.g. Britain) which were included in the totals above.

2012 CUFF Winner

Debra Yeung won the 2012 Canadian Unity Fan Fund and attended When Words Collide/Convention in Calgary Aug 10-12.

CUFF Administrator Kent Pollard reported the vote totals were: Debra Yeung, 29; Jane Garthson, 12; No Preference, 1.

Medical Updates

Melbourne fan **Carey Handfield** suffered a stroke November 5. Doctors found a major blood vessel in his neck blocked by cholesterol plaque and did emergency surgery to clear it out. In January, Handfield told fans that his recovery was going well, he had started back at work part-time basis, and he had resumed driving.

Handfield has been on every Australian Worldcon committee, most recently as Treasurer of Aussiecon 4 in 2010. He founded Norstrilia Press with Bruce Gillespie in 1975.

Dave Langford had successful eye surgery on January 20 for a torn/detached retina.

R. Graeme Cameron reported in *Space Cadet* #18 that he had hernia surgery in January.

Judy Newton, president of the Washington Science Fiction Association in 2011, was hospitalized after a heart attack on February 8. Her husband, Barry, the current club president, reported soon after she had successful bypass surgery.

Eva Whitley underwent knee replacement surgery in August on both knees.

LA fan **Beverly Warren** was diagnosed with esophageal cancer and had surgery in February. Her husband, Bill Warren, reports that the biopsies on the lymph nodes showed no sign of cancer, improving her chances of surviving to 80%.

In October, Bill and Beverly they traveled to Maui to celebrate their 47th wedding anniversary.



Fandom's Tangled Web

Why Didn't Tolkien Win a Nobel Prize?

A secret archive containing the deliberations of jurors who awarded the 1961 Nobel Prize in Literature was unsealed after 50 years and some material made available for public review. Fans will be pleased to discover J.R.R. Tolkien was considered for the Prize. And annoyed to hear why he was passed over.

Who nominated Tolkien? None other than his good friend C.S. Lewis. The Swedish Academy invites certain academics, former winners and other institutional representatives to nominate. Lewis, as a professor of literature, was qualified to submit a recommendation. That Lewis might have nominated *someone* was known from his January 7, 1961 letter to Alistair Fowler (published in *C.S. Lewis Collected Letters, Vol III*).

One thing we now know is why Tolkien lost. Critic and jury member Anders Österling declared the prose of Tolkien “has not in any way measured up to storytelling of the highest quality.”

We also know for the first time how many other notable writers — Karen Blixen, Lawrence Durrell, Robert Frost, Graham Greene, and E.M. Forster — were considered for the 1961 prize ultimately given to Yugoslavian writer Ivo Andrić.

From what I've read about fellow Inklings Tolkien and Lewis, I can only imagine Tolkien would have been mortified to learn Lewis had sent in his name. I wonder, did Lewis ever tell him?

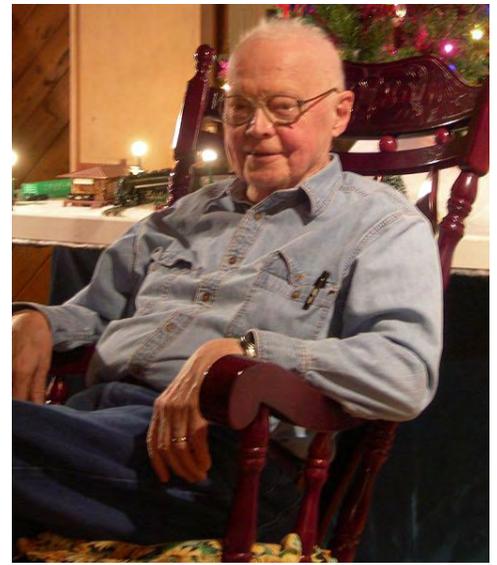
Ballantine, Lerner and X-Men's Claremont Donate to Columbia

Chris Claremont, who worked on Marvel's X-Men and Uncanny X-Men series for 17 years, had donated his archives to Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library. *Publishers Weekly* reports that Claremont's archive includes materials for all of his major writing projects over the last 40 years, from notebooks with story ideas to drafts of short stories, plays, novels and comic books as well as materials from Claremont's early training in the theater, and his career as an actor.

Columbia University Libraries also received significant gifts of sf-themed material from Fred Lerner and Betty Ballantine.

Fred Lerner, past president of the Columbia University SF Society, donated long runs of sf prozines including *Amazing*, *Asimov's*, *Astounding*, *Fantastic*, *Galaxy*, *If*, and *F&SF*.

Betty Ballantine gave a collection of books



(Left) X-Men's **Chris Claremont**, who donated his papers to Columbia University. (Right) **Fred Saberhagen**, whose papers have been given to NIU.

and papers relating the work of her late husband Ian and her in their long and distinguished careers in publishing. Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library got an archive of their work since the sale of their company to Random House in 1973, covering the next twenty years spent as independent agents, editors, and publishers. The Library also received a nearly complete run of Penguin titles and a full set of Ballantine and Bantam paperbacks.

Saberhagen Papers Go to NIU

The first installment of the papers of Chicago-born SF author Fred Saberhagen has arrived at the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at Northern Illinois University.

Saberhagen, who passed away in 2007, lived for last thirty years in New Mexico. He published 60 novels and numerous short stories, most of them belonging to one of his well-known sf and fantasy series, like the famous Berserker series.

The Saberhagen papers are a gift to the university from the author's widow, Joan Spicci Saberhagen. “I'm quite pleased knowing Fred's papers will be valued and well cared for at NIU,” she said, noting that many of her husband's works were set in the Chicago area. She spent more than a year communicating with University Libraries staff before selecting NIU for the donation. “The campus visit sealed the deal. The archival staff impressed me with their professionalism, conge-

niality and knowledge of the science fiction field. You have a treasure in Lynne Thomas.”

Lynne M. Thomas is curator of Rare Books and Special Collections for NIU Libraries, and an sf celebrity in her own right, having won a Hugo at Renovation for *Chicks Dig Time Lords: A Celebration of Doctor Who* by the *Women Who Love It* which she co-edited with Tara O'Shea.

Thomas calls Saberhagen's papers the “crown jewel” of the library's science fiction and fantasy collection. The collection already holds the papers of more than 50 authors.

Changes of Address

The Doerings, 1402 Alpine Way, Provo, UT 84606

Dan Goodman, 2740 Minnehaha Ave., . Ste. 130, #64, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Marie Rengstorff, 2860 Ohina St., Kihei, HI 96753

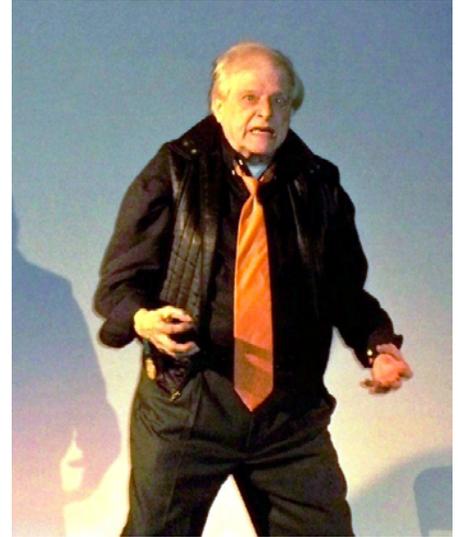
Neil Rest, 1728 W. Juneway Ter., Chicago IL 60626-1014

Alex Slate, 604 Cider Press Loop, Joppa, MD 21085

Craig Smith, 1033 Sunset Blvd NE, Apt. 19, Renton, WA 98056-2994

Joy V. Smith, 404 E. Beacon Rd., Lakeland, FL 33803

Marie Rengstorff: I'm making the Hawaiian Shaka, a celebratory hand signal that looks like a Vulcan greeting with his #3 and 4 fingers missing.



Harlan's Back!

By John King Tarpinian

After only one other public appearance in the past four years Harlan Ellison is back to his old irascible yet loveable self. The Silent Movie Theatre was a complete sell-out for his talk on November 15, 2011 – plus, at the last minute they announced a live web-cast which drew over 2,000 viewers.

The topic for the evening was billed as Harlan and his TV career but anybody who knows him knows that directing Harlan is like driving a Porsche on the Autobahn without a steering wheel, which is part of the fun. The host of the evening and a friend of Harlan's was the Oscar nominated screenwriter Josh Olson.

Harlan had been reported in ill health the

past few months, even he made mention of it by not attending his own Eaton Conference last February. But there was zero evidence of any ill health last night. He talked for over three hours with no let-up. However, he did only pick one fist-fight with a woman in the audience so maybe he is slowing down at bit at age 77...while also denying that he ever threw a fan down an elevator shaft.

Harlan talked about having written for *Alfred Hitchcock*, *The Flying Nun*, *Ripcord*, *Outer Limits*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Star Trek*, and so on. Among the guests of Harlan was Arlene Martel who co-starred with Robert Culp in *The Demon with the Glass Hand*. He praised so many people he met over

the years from Robert Culp to Norman Lloyd. He talked about his loving having written for Buster Keaton on an episode of *Burke's Law*. And his having convinced Gloria Swanson to appear in an episode by climbing over her security fence and bluffing his way into having her butler give her his script.

After 11:00 p.m. he was still going strong and signing while kibitzing with those of us who stayed. He had first editions of many of his most famous books for people to purchase and he signed everything. Then it was off to Pink's for a well deserved hot dog.

It is good to have him back in full force.

SCA Will Pay \$1.3M To Settle Abuse Case

The Society For Creative Anachronism reached settlement in October 2011 with victims abused by a local leader in Pennsylvania a decade ago. The settlement calls for a \$1.3 million payment. The Society plans to cover a large portion itself while fighting to get its insurers to pay the full amount.

Ben Schragger, then 43, was convicted in 2005 of charges including rape of a child, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, indecent assault and corruption of minors, all crimes committed against 11 children participating in SCA programs to make medieval-style armor and weapons for mock combat.

Known in the Society as "Lord Ben the Steward," he led a chapter for more than 10 years and directed the youth program for the society's East Kingdom, which stretches from Canada to Delaware. Schragger was accused

of sexually assaulting nine boys and two girls between the ages of 6 and 16 from June 1999 to August 2003.

An initial civil lawsuit filed in 2007 against the SCA on behalf of six victims was dismissed, then a second civil lawsuit was filed in 2009. The second suit claimed \$7 million in damages on grounds that the SCA should be held liable for Schragger's actions, and for allegedly not having effective policies in place at that time to protect the children. Three individuals serving as local officers of the SCA during this time were also named as defendants in the lawsuit.

When the SCA's insurers resisted paying the settlement, the organization sued them. As a result, one insurance company agreed to pay \$450,000 of the indemnity. The SCA is still pursuing a suit against another insurer for the

remaining \$850,000.

In the meantime, the SCA's parent organization asked all its local and regional units in the U.S. to help fund the rest of the settlement payment by contributing 18% of their cash balance, which it said represented an equitable distribution of the burden.

Kingdoms and affiliates outside of North America were not required to contribute as they were not named in the suit and are separately incorporated in non-U.S. jurisdictions. Affiliates include SCA-Finland, SCA-Sweden, SCA-Australia and SCA-New Zealand.

SCA leadership told members it has changed how youth workers are vetted and expects to make more changes after seeking legal advice. The new policies include criminal background checks on anyone wishing to administer youth activities.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS: NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF FANZINES

Drink Tank #300

The celebration for their Best Fanzine Hugo had barely ended when it was time for the next party to start. Chris Garcia's and James Bacon's *The Drink Tank* reached another century mark – Issue Three Hundred -- in an epic way. The dynamic duo collected 320 contributions from a bodacious number of writers and artists to fill 272 pages, 11 megabytes of faanish goodness for those of you who read *Drink Tank* electronically. ("Is there any other kind?" barks Col. Jessup.)

Chris and James got 18 pages just from listing the contributors. The quick and the dead alike were pressed into service – “fan artist” Hieronymus Bosch being an example of the latter. All the others, with the exception of Harlan Ellison (shh! it's a secret! at least from Harlan) enthusiastically and willingly joined this great zine's victory lap.

Many took inspiration from the issue's themes: wrestling, Los Angeles, and “Your Worst Idea Ever.” There are also articles by people who seem to have thought there was a theme “But wait, I'm important too!” And of course you are.

The number 300 was a theme itself. Julian West's sublime “300” is a grunt's-eye view of glory at Thermopylae, limned in gallows humor.

Contributions come in every form, genre and style — a haiku by Kevin Roche, computer code (“The Garcialyzer”) from Liz Batty, a micro *fotonovela* with art by Rick Bretschneider, an extremely cool travelogue by Eleanor Farrell, Liam Sharp's interesting short-short “It Was Like Sorrow”, several reviews, and an interview with Michael Whelan conducted by Sarah Lorraine Goodman.

Some of my other favorites include seductively-titled bits of ingenuity like Bill Higgins' “The Shmoos of the Tevatron,” which is actually nonfiction, and Dann Lopez' brilliant, masterful, and don't let me forget to say hilarious Wizard of Oz parody “Ozzie's Broom.”

Jason Schacht even lost 150 pounds for the occasion. Well anyway, he really did lose 150 pounds – and it's all documented here.

Beanie Goes To Congress

In the 1940's Ray Nelson appropriated the propeller beanie as a symbol of science fiction



Andy Porter came up with the idea of getting a group of fans to commit to giving 25 dollars or 15 pounds annually to the cause. Rob Jackson and Curt Phillips are the current co-administrators.

2012 FAAn Award Winners

The winners of the 2012 FAAn Awards were announced April 22 at Corflu Glitter.

Best Website: eFanzines.com, hosted by Bill Burns

Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award Best Letterhack; Robert Lichtman

Best Perzine: *A Meara for Observers*, ed. Mike Meara

Best Single Issue or Anthology: *Alternative Pants*, ed. Randy Byers

Best Fan Artist: Steve Stiles

Best Fan Writer: Mark Plummer

Best Genzine or Collaboration: *Banana Wings*, eds. Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey

#1 Fan Face: Mark Plummer

Corflu Gives Lifetime Achievement Awards

Earl Kemp and Shelby Vick received Lifetime Achievement Awards at the Corflu Glitter banquet on April 22.

The Lifetime Achievement Awards “salute living fans for their excellent fanac over a long career in Fandom,” Arnie Katz explained in *Glitter #61*.

Convention chair Joyce Katz presented Kemp and Vick with framed certificates featuring art by Dan Steffan.

fandom. Fans ever since have cast a jaundiced eye on any mundane exploitation of our icon.

No manifestation of the beanie could have been more unexpected than on Alaska Representative Don Young's bulbous noggin during a Congressional hearing on November 16. Public radio station KMXT reported, “Alaska Congressman Don Young gave Interior Secretary Ken Salazar a piece of his mind on the Obama Administration's energy policy Wednesday. Young tried to drive his point home by showing up late into the hearing wearing a beanie on his head. It was topped by a propeller, and sported a pin that said ‘Obama's Energy Plan.’”

Corflu Fifty Picks Hansen

The Corflu Fifty will bring UK fan Rob Hansen to Corflu XXX in Portland, OR next May.

Hansen wrote the epic history of British fandom *THEN* with the help of the late Vince Clarke.

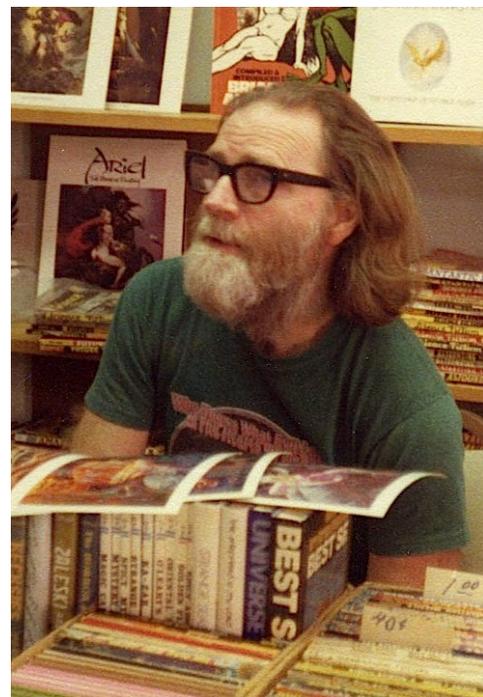
The Corflu Fifty is an outgrowth of the successful one-off fundraisers that brought Bruce Gillespie and William Breiding to Corflu Titanium in 2004 and Harry Bell to Corflu Quire in 2006.

Rep. Don Young (R - Alaska)



FILE 770

Obituaries



(Left) **Ray Bradbury** showing off one of his medals to the audience at one of his plays. Photo by Diana Glycer. (Middle) **Rusty Hevelin** and **Gay Haldeman** at the ICFA in 2007. Photo by Andy Duncan. (Right) **Rusty** at a 1970s Boskone when his hair was still its original color. Photograph by and copyright © Andrew Porter.

Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury, one of the field's most cherished science fiction writers, attendee of the first Worldcon, and a member of LASFS since the Clifton's Cafeteria days, died June 5 at the age of 91.

Full tributes by Bill Warren, John King Tarpinian and myself have been carried over to the next issue.

Rusty Hevelin (1922-2011)

James "Rusty" Hevelin, a winner of First Fandom's Sam Moskowitz Archive Award (2003) and a past Worldcon Guest of Honor, died December 27 at the age of 89. He had been hospitalized with poor circulation in his legs. A planned surgical intervention was cancelled because of Rusty's deteriorating condition and he spent his last days in hospice care.

As a teenager living in Riverside, Califor-

nia, Rusty somehow discovered the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. He attended a meeting in 1941 (and from that experience deemed Laney's "Ah, Sweet Idiocy" not grossly exaggerated!) Later that year he hitchhiked to Denver to attend the Worldcon.

After Denvention, Rusty moved to Philadelphia where he soon was elected President of the PSFS. He also began publishing a newzine, *Nebula*. When World War II began he joined the Marine Corps and served in the Pacific as a meteorologist.

Once Rusty came back from World War II he resumed his role as an active fan organizer. Still the last President of PSFS, he suggested a merger of Philadelphia's two small sf clubs. He also served as a director of the National Fantasy Fan Federation during its tempestuous postwar era, the N3F having been founded in 1940 at the suggestion of Damon Knight.

At the same time, Rusty took over publica-

tion of *StefNews* from Jack Speer. Other zines he published over the years include *Aliquot*, *H-1661*, and *Badly*.

A curious measure of the ebb and flow of Rusty's role in fanhistory is the way Harry Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* repeatedly cites him as a mover and shaker in 1940s fandom, yet judging by *A Wealth of Fable* in the following decade the only historic thing he did was keep Bob Tucker from stalking out of the 1956 Worldcon after missing Al Capp's speech. (Tucker was one of the victims of events which produced the catchphrase "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here.")

Tucker and Hevelin were great friends. Tucker enjoyed introducing Rusty as his "Dad", winking at the fact he'd been born eight years before Hevelin. Tucker would also say, "Some people wonder out loud why dad's surname is not the same as mine. It's a simple answer. He didn't marry my mother."

Rusty did eventually marry. His four sons are John, Scott, Bruce and Will.

After a long hiatus that ended in the mid-Sixties, Rusty became active in fandom again and began huckstering at conventions.

He was always popular. Rusty was elected the 1975 Down Under Fan Fund delegate and attended the first Australian Worldcon. For his trip report he created a slide show and presented it at conventions around the U.S.

Though Rusty kept his hand in as a huckster and conrunner as the years went by (assuring that Pulpcon kept going after its first year, 1972, with the aid of Lynn Hickman and Gordon Huber), his memory really rests on his reputation for friendliness and the good times people had in his company.

Rusty's contributions to fandom were celebrated by Denvention 2 (1981) where he was Fan Guest of Honor.

Jim Young (1951-2012)

Jim Young, who helped make Minneapolis fandom legendary, died peacefully on June 12, a week after emergency surgery for a malignant brain tumor. He was 61 years old.

Jim was present at the creation of MN-Stf, The Minnesota Scientifiction Society, in 1966. He "did nearly everything" at the first Minicon in 1968 remembers Fred A Levy Haskell. Even Minicon's famous *blog* was rumored to have originated as a punch recipe learned from his mother.

Jim was the original spearhead for the Minneapolis in '73 Worldcon bid. Having been lucky enough to lose to Toronto, Minneapolis fans never stopped throwing bid parties.

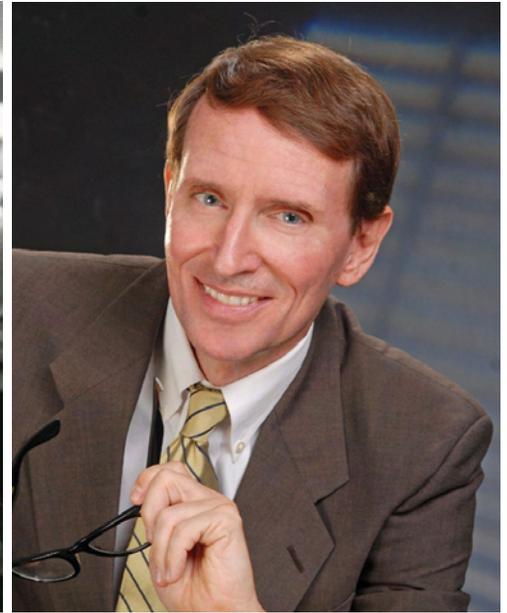
And naturally Jim participated in Minneapolis, the local amateur publishing association.

Jim's career in the State Department's Foreign Service took him to Botswana, Russia, Nigeria, and England. After retiring as the U.S. Coordinator for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) he moved to Southern California and worked tirelessly to break into the entertainment industry on stage and in movies.

Jim also made his mark as a pro writer with two SF novels, *The Face of the Deep* (1979) and *Armed Memory* (1995), and four stories. "Microde City" inspired the cover of *Asimov's* June 1993 issue, which depicted one of the Hammerheads who use their genetic engineering technology to transform humans into sharks.

Jim's final two published stories were "The Whirlwind" in *F&SF* (Jan./Feb. 2011) and "Spamhead" in *10Flash Quarterly* (March 2011).

In one of my last conversations with Jim he said he had a novel on submission with Tor. Moshe Feder reveals it was, in fact, a trilogy: "I had every intention of publishing it. We never formalized the deal and started the revi-



(Left) **Jim Young** at ConFrancisco, the 1993 Worldcon. Photo by and copyright © Andrew Porter. (Right) **Contemporary headshot** of actor James Maxwell Young.

sion process because of health issues on my side, but Jim was unfailingly kind, patient, and understanding about that. Of course, we both thought we had plenty of time . . . I can't begin to describe how guilty, sad, and cheated I feel. But that pales into triviality compared to how unfair fate has been to Jim and, by extension, all of those who loved and will miss him."

And last year I exchanged e-mails with Jim as we worked to get a story out of his latest role – Adolf Hitler in the movie *Nazis at the Center of the Earth* (under the name James Maxwell). Jim was waiting on a green light from the director, in whose good graces he

Kathryn Daugherty, 2006 Hugo Ceremony coordinator.



naturally wanted to remain. For whatever reason we never got that done and the project went straight to video this spring. I'm sorry I didn't get to write that up, and the rest of the stories that might have come from the acting career he enjoyed so much.

Kathryn Daugherty (1950-2012)

Kathryn Daugherty passed away on February 24 after a two-year battle with cancer.

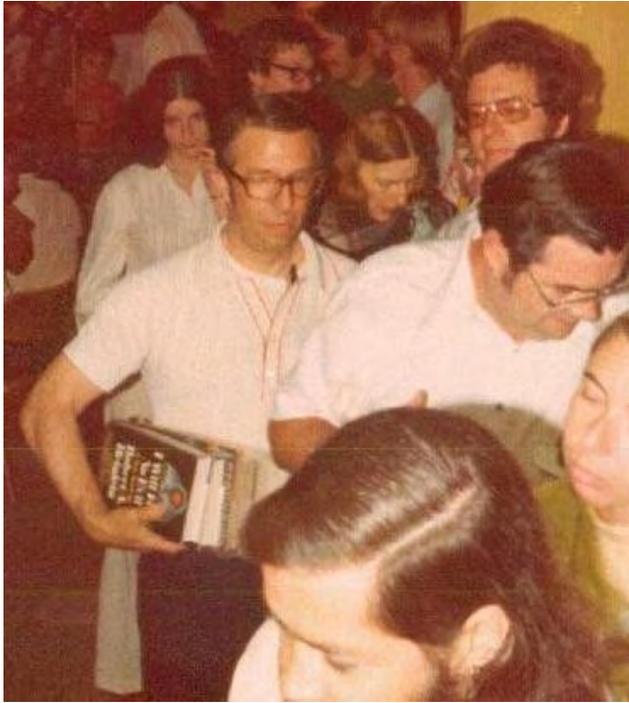
She was among the most respected sf convention runners, having done indispensable work as a department head and division manager at many Worldcons, Baycons, and serving as the "beach chair" of the 2000 Westcon in Hawaii. She also was secretary of San Francisco Science Fiction Conventions.

Chris Garcia credits her invitation to participate in BayCon for his return to fandom in 2000.

Kathryn was gracious and charming. She was also really funny, too, in the penetratingly acerbic way fans love best. I remember her scoffing about the MagiCon "pocket program" – "Did you actually carry around that mammoth publication in your pocket? Even my purse wasn't big enough and somewhere in there is the map to the Lost Dutchman Mine and Judge Crater's phone number."

And it was Kathryn who furnished the pineapple jellybeans Gardner Dozois shot out of his nose at the Millennium Philcon in 2001...

Kathryn and James, her husband of nearly 40 years, were Loscon 31 Fan Guests of Honor. Her brief autobiography wistfully chronicles the many ways fandom called out her gifts:



Dick Spelman in the line for Robert Heinlein's autograph at the LASFS clubhouse in 1973, center, holding a copy of "I Will Fear No Evil". Photo by Bill Warren.

"One day the woman said to her husband, 'Look, there is going to be a convention in the city Right Next Door for people who love fantastic literature. Let's go.' They went and discovered a new world to explore. The woman saw people singing. She had a good voice and thought, 'Maybe I could do that too.' The woman saw people with beautiful costumes. She had a sewing machine and an impressive collection of cloth. She thought, 'I could make a costume some day.' She saw artists and writers and scientists. 'Maybe there is a place for me there,' she thought. But when she was asked to be a door guard for the masquerade, she knew she had found her calling. She got a ribbon to wear and got to hang out with the people who were actually running the convention. She began to travel to other conventions to volunteer. She began to plan other conventions. One day she was even the Chair of her very own convention."

Kathryn and James were genuine globetrotters. Over the years they visited a very long list of countries. She once told the SMOFs list that among the places she most liked to explore were Cambodia, Bali and Vietnam. Kathryn even lived in New Zealand for a time. Her blogs were filled with photos of international travel and accounts of cruises and tours.

Most people discover fandom through their love of the stories and once they become absorbed in its social aspects the reading tapers off. Not in Kathryn's case. I found her current

and complete familiarity with the latest works in the sf field one of the most impressive things about her. Some years she read 200 books. She was so knowledgeable and articulate fans loved to attend her one-woman convention programs to hear pointers about new writers and take notes on her award recommendations. Or sometimes she'd be the centerpiece of a panel: one of the best times I ever had was appearing with her and Chris Garcia to handicap the Hugo nominees at the 2008 Westercon.

Her legion of friends, myself among them, will miss her strength, humor, and knowledge.

Sue Blom

By **Michael J. "Orange Mike" Lowrey**: Long-time Milwaukee SF fan Suzanne Alles "Sue" Blom, author of the excellent alternate history novel *Inca: The Scarlet Fringe* (Tor, 2001) [and unsold sequel(s)], died at approximately 5:30 p.m. June 23 from complications of intestinal cancer. "She had friends around her talking politics when she just slipped away."

Formerly a student of ancient history in Iowa, Sue came to Milwaukee as a VISTA volunteer, working for the local tenants' union, and ended up staying here. She became a tax preparer, helping people "keep the tax man away from the door," and has been a mainstay of Milwaukee progressive politics behind the scenes, as well as an active member of the Wisconsin fannish community.

Due to insufficient sales of the first volume, she was unable to find a publisher for the planned sequel(s) to *Inca*; but it garnered her more than one person's nomination for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer (although she'd had a novelette, "In Memory of Prince Edward", in the April 1993 issue of *Tomorrow Speculative Fiction*). Sue was also the co-creator of the Verdant Lore Tarot, a plant-centered tarot deck.

Dick Spelman (1931-2012)

Dick Spelman passed away March 6. After radiation treatments failed to eradicate his cancer, declining health led to his hospitalization with pneumonia and finally placement in hospice care.

A renowned book dealer at Midwestern conventions in the 1980s, Dick was usually

found at his huge island of tables in the best spot in the huckster's room. He sold that business in 1991 to Larry Smith and Sally Kobee, retired, and moved to Orlando.

Dick had early contacts with fandom involved writing letters to the prozines. His brother Henry belonged to Boston's Strangers Club. Dick attended the 1952 Worldcon in Chicago but he didn't go to another until 1972 (L.A.con). By then he was living in Los Angeles and that's when he transformed into a real actifan.

I got to know him when he joined LASFS in 1973. Dick joined the short-lived sf discussion group we started once LASFS bought its first clubhouse. Milt Stevens, Elst Weinstein and I were among the others in the sparsely-attended group.

During the Seventies Dick was an active collector and researcher. In 1978 he issued four well-respected chapbooks which listed the production of several book publishers: *Science Fiction and Fantasy Published by Ace Books (1953-1968)*, *Science Fiction and Fantasy Published by Arkham House (1939-1976)*, *Science Fiction and Fantasy Published by Ballantine Books (1953-1977)*, and *Science Fiction and Fantasy Published by Avalon Books*.

Along the way Dick developed his book business and moved back to the Midwest. Dealers who make the rounds of conventions have a golden opportunity to become influential figures in fan politics and Dick made a rapid ascent. A chapter is devoted to him — "Dick Spelman: From SMIF to SMOF" — in Mike Resnick's *Once a Fan*. He became a director of the Chicon IV (1982) Worldcon committee, served as president of ISFiC, belonged for awhile to MCFI, and chaired the 1982 Windycon. He worked many more conventions as staff.

Resnick published two of Dick's stories in the most fannish of his anthologies, "The Forgotten Worldcon of '45" in *Alternate Worldcons* (1994) and "The Worldcon of 2001" in *Again, Alternate Worldcons* (1996).

Dick was honored as Fan GoH at the 1987 Windycon and the 1991 Marcon.

Don Markstein (1947-2012)

Don Markstein, colorful, entertaining and, in his early fannish career a sometimes controversial figure, died March 11 due to respiratory failure following a prolonged illness. Don spent his last years in Arizona but remained deeply linked to New Orleans and Southern fanhistory.

Don was among the charter members of the New Orleans Science Fiction Association (NOSFA) founded in 1967. The other charter members were John Guidry, Doug Wirth, Don Walsh, Justin Winston, and Rick Norwood.

Don co-chaired DeepSouthCon in 1968 and 1973. He became official editor of the

Southern Fandom Press Alliance in 1970. Guy H. Lillian III credited him for a boom in the apa's popularity and for this Don was honored with the Rebel Award in 1978.

Irv Koch introduced me to Don at the 1972 Worldcon in Los Angeles. The three of us had become acquainted through our fanzines.

Throughout the 1970s Don sporadically published issues of *Rally*, his fannish newzine. What was surely *Rally's* most controversial story ever criticized Harlan Ellison ahead of his GoHship at the 1978 Worldcon in Phoenix. Ellison planned to dedicate his appearance to raising consciousness about the Equal Rights Amendment because ERA supporters had declared a boycott of businesses in non-ratifying states after Ellison accepted the invitation, Arizona among them. Louisiana was another. When Ellison went to New Orleans sometime before the Worldcon Don lambasted the appearance as a violation of Ellison's pro-ERA stance. Ellison was outraged, for his activities there had included lecturing in support of the ERA.

Don's consuming passion was comics. He collected tens of thousands of newspaper comic strips. In 1981 Don and his wife Gigi founded *Apatoons*, an apa for research in the field of cartoons. In 1999 he created a comics history resource, *The Toonpedia*, and wrote for it daily until health prevented him.

Don edited *Comics Revue* and books on comic history, including *The Prince Valiant Companion*. He also wrote Walt Disney comic book stories for such characters as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck — and the rather less famous Bucky Bug.

Don was educated at LSU in Baton Rouge. For a time he worked on the staff of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, writing for the Sunday magazine. Over the years he did restaurant reviews for the *Phoenix Business Journal* and editing and production work for *Arizona Living*, *Arizona Women's Voice*, *Comics Interview*, *Comics Revue*, *Phoenix*, *Phoenix Resource*, and *Louisiana Weekly Employer*.



Don suffered a stroke in February 2011 and had been in long-term care.

Vale, Bob Sabella

Fanzine fandom lost one of its most faithful and frequent contributors when Bob Sabella died December 3. The final diagnosis was an inoperable, malignant brain tumor (a stage 4 glioblastoma). Sabella had retired from teaching only a year earlier.

In the next-to-last issue of his fanzine, *Visions of Paradise*, Bob mentioned the results of a medical test for cancer and that he was "taking care of it." Evidently it wasn't something he was ready to comment about in any detail.

Bob Sabella was Official Editor of fan-

dom's oldest apa, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

His book *Who Shaped Science Fiction?* was published in 2000, commenting on such figures as John W. Campbell, Jr., Hugo Gernsback, Gene Roddenberry, Stanley Kubrick and a host of writers.

Gene DeWeese (1931-2012)

Gene DeWeese died on March 19. "He had been in great pain (physical and mental) from Lewy body dementia," reports Mike Lowrey, "and it finally took him pretty suddenly, after months of pain and mental suffering had traumatized [him and his wife, Bev] badly."

Bev and Gene had been married for many years. Beverly Amers and Juanita Wellons formed the Eastern Indiana Science Fiction Association (EISFA) in the early 1950s and in time wed two other club members, Buck Coulson and Gene DeWeese.

Buck revealed in a *Pixel* interview: "When we first got acquainted, he wrote voluminous letters to loads of people but would barely say two words in a face-to-face contact. A friend of mine met him once, and after he'd left, asked, 'Does he talk?'"

The Coulsons' fanzine *Yandro* won the Hugo in 1965. About the same time, Buck and Gene launched pro careers as collaborators on a couple of *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* novels. Later they wrote several sf novels, plus two murder mysteries set at Worldcons, *Now You See It/Him/Them* (1975) and *Charles Fort Never Mentioned Wombats* (1977). A third Worldcon-themed story, "Queen of the Timies," appeared in Mike Resnick's *Alternate Worldcons* (1994). In that story, *Time Tunnel* fans gather to honor Time Fleet Admiral Bjo Trimble and the show's creator, Gene Roddenberry, presents a special cut of "The Trouble with Trimbles."

DeWeese, writing solo, also did novels based on TV sf shows like *Star Trek* and *Lost in Space* and wrote gothics under a pen name. His YA novel *The Adventures of a Two-Minute Werewolf* was made into a TV movie. His last story may have been "The World of Null-T," published in 2010.

Before turning to fiction DeWeese was a technical writer in the Apollo program of the 1960s.

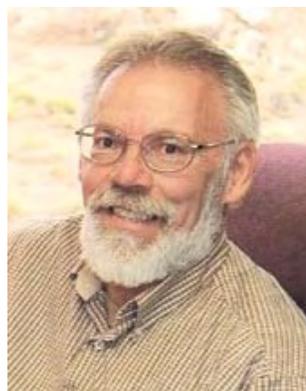
Bob Lovell (1947-2012)

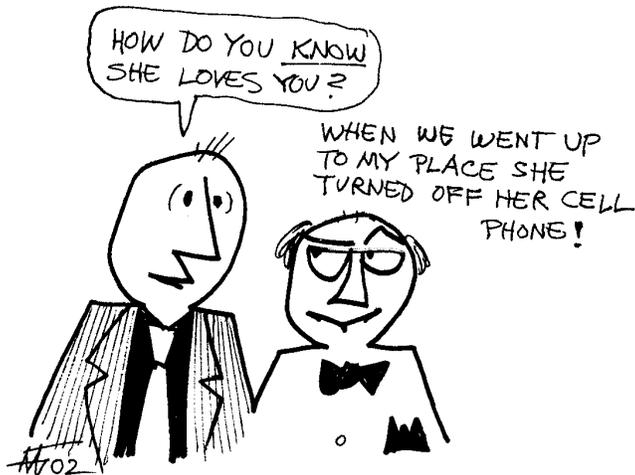
Robert G. Lovell Jr. — known in fandom as Bob and, when wearing his antlers, as "Chocolate Moose" — died January 15 in Houghton, Michigan. He was 64.

Lovell famously supported the successful 1983 Worldcon bid by giving "Backrubs for Baltimore" at cons around fandom.

Though he was a less active fan in later life, Lovell did make it to Chicon 2000. He

(Left) **Leo & Diane Dillon**. Photo by and (c) copyright Andrew Porter.
(Right) **Bob Lovell**.





attended in his scoutmaster's uniform, recalls Michael Walsh.

Lovell is survived by his wife Sue and sons Endicott and James.

Ray Beam

Ray Beam died April 8 at the age of 79. Curt Phillips wrote, "Ray was a long time SF fan, a member of First Fandom, a regular at many midwestern conventions including MidWest-Con and Pulpcon, and a fixture in old-time Cincinnati Fandom. I knew him as a very pleasant fellow and enjoyed some great conversations with him about Fandom and old science fiction over the years."

Beam won the First Fandom Science Fiction Hall of Fame Award and the Sam Moskowitz Archive Award.

During his career Beam worked at Mallory Metallurgical as a Powder Metallurgist, where he earned many patents.

Leo Dillon (1933-2012)

By Ken Keller: *Born in 1933, he died on May 26, 2012. Dillon was an artist who col-*

laborated throughout his career with his wife, Diane Dillon, and they shared a Hugo Award for Best Professional Artist in 1970, among many others. [Steven H Silver on SF Site.]

I had the privilege of working with the artist team of Leo Dillon and his wife Diane back in the mid-'80s. This was in producing a pair of fine limited edition art prints of their beautiful hardcover dust jacket paintings for Joan Vinge's Hugo-winning novel *The Snow Queen* and Harlan Ellison's short fiction collection *Deathbird Stories*. These prints were signed and limited to just 300 for each painting; they were published by my company Ground Zero Graphics, so named after the Dillon's fine establishment, Ground Zero, their one-time Brooklyn coffee house.

In fact Leo and Diane were, for a period in the '60s and '70s, strongly associated with Harlan by their cover art on most of his books; they produced many beautiful, distinctive covers for his and other writer's books in this same period.

In addition to their Hugo Award and World Fantasy Award (for Life Achievement), the Dillon's were multiple winners of the prestig-

ious Caldecott Award and a *huge* number of other important awards for their original, unique art. They worked in every medium and style you can imagine, always as an artist team, their finished artwork a perfect, seamless blend of their different styles and singular talents.

My own association with them in the mid-'80s was friendly and very cordial; we enjoyed swapping fond tales about our mutual friend Harlan Ellison and discussing the details of their lives in and out of the fantasy and science fiction genre.

I'm so sorry Leo has been forced by lung cancer to break his long marriage and artistic partnership of more than a half-century to Diane. What a loss for her, for their family, and to the world of art.

The beautiful work they created together, as a distinctive artistic team, continues to live on in hundreds of fine books and art prints published, fondly held and remembered by many thousands of their admirers.

Myself included.

Michelle Mujsert

Michelle Mujsert (Muysert) died in Melbourne on November 8 at the age of 49. Muysert was her birthname, changed to Mujsert after she moved from New Zealand to Australia in 1983.

She co-edited *The Space Wastrel* in the 1980s, with (future husband) Mark Loney and Julian Warner.

She stood unsuccessfully for three Fan Fund races (FFANZ in 1983, DUFF in 1986 with Mark Loney, and again with Mark in 1990 for DUFF).

Bob Briney's Passing Revealed

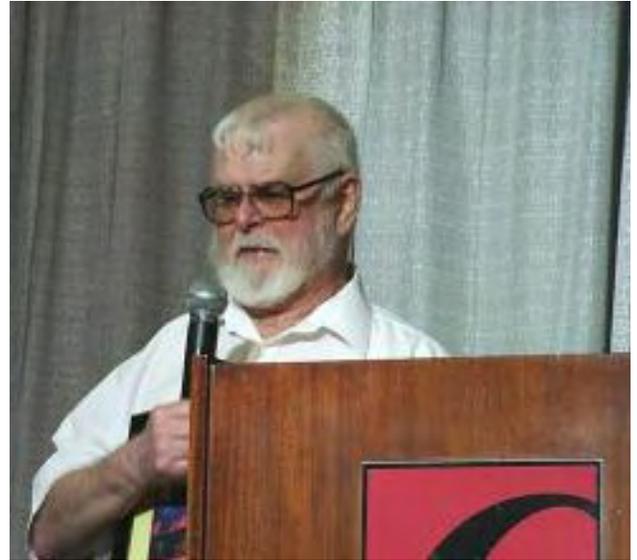
Robert E. Briney, a co-founder of Advent:Publishers and an active sf fan in the 1950s and 1960s before he became a mysteries fan, was found dead in his home in November. He was 78.

Francis M. Nevins, Jr. announcing his passing on the *Mystery File* blog, said: "Bob Briney was something of a universal genius. Physically he evoked Orson Welles or Nero Wolfe but was soft-spoken and totally without their irascibility and moved with a certain gingerliness as if he were afraid he'd crush something if his movements were more forceful."

Advent was founded by Briney, Earl Kemp, Sidney Coleman, James O'Meara and George Price, Jon Stopa and Ed Wood in 1955. The follow-

(Left) Terry Hughes and Susan Palermo Piscitello in the early 1980s. Photo by and (c) copyright Andrew Porter. (Right) Christoffer Schander.





(Left) **Alicia and Robin Johnson** in Montreal attending the 2009 Worldcon. Photo by Rich Lynch. (Right) **Ray Beam** at First Fandom Awards in 2000. Photo by Keith Stokes.

ing year Advent's first book appeared, a collection of Damon Knight's critical essays, *In Search of Wonder*.

Briney was also involved in publishing a fanzine, *Cataclysm*, with Del Close, which was published irregularly from 1949 to 1954.

Susan Palermo Piscitello

New York fan **Susan Palermo Piscitello** died November 23 after a long battle with *glioblastoma multiforme*. She entered fandom as a member of the Brooklyn Insurgents in the early 1970s.

I first met her on a visit to Lou Stathis and Norm Hollyn after the 1974 Worldcon.

Susan went on the road with Patti Smith and was a member of an all-girl rock band, Cheap Perfume, which starred in a *fumetti* in Marvel Comics' *Crazy* magazine.

In recent years she began acting in and scoring music for ultra-low-budget independent horror videos.

She is survived by her fiance, Edward X. Young, children Bart and Rita, and grandson Tyler.

Ian Macauley

Fifties faned Ian Macauley died on June 3 in Las Vegas. The news was announced by Harlan Ellison, who emphasized "what he meant to sf and especially 6th Fandom, and Arthur C. Clarke, and to so many of us."

Macauley wrote prolifically for fanzines in the early 1950s. His own zine, *Cosmag*, a product of the Atlanta Science Fiction Organization, first appeared in March 1951. Like Ellison's own fanzine and many others, *Cosmag* became a member of "Fanvariety Enterprises," an affiliation of fan publishers put

together by Max Keasler and Bill Venable.

Ted White's discussion of Sixth Fandom in *Science Fiction Five-Yearly #4* tangentially mentions Macauley:

"Silverberg felt that [*Quandry's*] death would signal the demise of Sixth Fandom, and a group of younger fans, triumphantly led by Harlan Ellison, eagerly awaited that death to announce their formation of Seventh Fandom. For many fans of that period, the 'Seventh Fandom Group' made up of such fen as Ian McCauley [*sic*], John Magnus, Jack Harness, Joel Nydahl, Charles Watkins, Ellison and, while he wasn't looking, Dean Grennell, were a lot of noise and not much else."

Yet they made enough noise that, 60 years later, we are still talking about them...

In Passing

UK fan **Chris "Keris" Croughton** lost his life in a head-on traffic accident on November 10. Best known as a filker, he was inducted into the Filk Hall of Fame in 2007.

Anne McCaffrey, 1994 Worldcon GoH, died at home in Ireland on November 21 shortly after suffering a stroke. She was 85.

Danny Lieberman died October 19 of leukemia. Lieberman attended and volunteered at many conventions. His service included leading the Facilities Division at Bucconeer, the 1998 Worldcon, and the "Tardis and Couch Division" at Millennium Philcon, the 2001 Worldcon.

Sandra Culley died November 7 after a long illness at the age of 52. She is survived by her husband, Martin Wisse.

Swedish fan **Christoffer Schander** died suddenly on February 20 at the age of 51 reports Ahrvid Engholm.

In the 1980s Schander was active as a fanzine publisher and conrunner. By profession he was a marine biologist on the faculty of the University of Bergen, Norway and only a year ago was named director of Bergen's University Museum.

Schander helped organize RegnCon 1981, where unbeknownst to him, an imposter claiming to be Canadian fan Bob Webber told people he had flown into Sweden for the con. The fake Bob Webber was shown a great time and asked to give a speech on the program, where he revealed his true identity. The stunt is detailed in *Mimosa 14*.

Andre Barker Bridget, also known in fandom as A.J. Barker, passed away December 23 at the age of 64. She was married to Bill Bridget. They were active in the Southern Fandom Press Alliance in the 1980s.

Todd E. Frazier, 57, Ed Meskys' friend and partner in the fanzine *Niekas*, died February 8.

Irish fan **John Berry** died of cancer on November 25. He entered fandom in 1954 after meeting Walt Willis. He was fan Guest of Honor at Detention, the 1959 Worldcon in Detroit. The following year, Berry was voted best fan writer in the *Skyrack* poll.

Alicia Johnson, married to Robin Johnson for 20 years died on March 12 of cancer.

Georgia fan **Amy Rutledge**, 51, passed away July 12 from complications of diabetes and high blood pressure.

LepreCon 38



A Con The Way They Used To Be

By Francis
Hamit



Joe and Gay Haldeman in Tempe for LepreCon 38.

LepreCon 38, held April 5-8 in Tempe, Arizona, was, in many ways, a return to the kind of science fiction/fantasy convention that got me into Fandom in 1978. Leigh and I have not been going to many conventions in recent years, so this was only my 108th. The World-Con in Reno, where we spent almost all of our time in the poker room at the Peppermill, was one of two we attended in 2011, followed by Bubonicon in Albuquerque a week later. Neither was the kind of friendly, welcoming experience you want to repeat and both carried a sense of “been there, done that” that made us

wonder why we’d bothered. Certainly it was not money well spent, but since it was part of a longer book tour, we endured anyway.

LepreCon 38 invited us, and wanted us both on the program, and we hadn’t been to a previous one for many years. But we remembered those kindly as small relaxicons where interesting programs and great conversations were to be had. Tempe is where Arizona State University is, and the hotel, the Tempe Mission Palms, is right next to the campus and the Mill Street neighborhood half a block away reminded me of Iowa City when I first lived

there in the mid 1960s. Very mellow, positive vibes.

The hotel is also very fan friendly, with a very soft security posture, great rooms and plenty of opportunities for that writers’ sport of people watching. It is an aircrew and military pilot hotel, with a good restaurant. One need not leave the whole weekend, but if one does, Mill Street is nearby. I made early morning pilgrimages to the local Starbucks.

Patti Hultstrand did an outstanding job of putting together a program that would do a much larger convention proud. Some panels, unfortunately, outnumbered the audience, and some were cancelled because no audience appeared. This was especially true for readings where one lesser-known author after another found themselves addressing an almost empty room. One of the frustrations for panelists I heard more than once was that a panel they wanted to attend was often opposite one they were on, which might account for the low attendance at so many of them. I was in five events, but only made one panel as audience member. It was a very diverse program with lots of options, but perhaps, next time, “less is more”?

I have the impression that a much larger attendance was anticipated than actually came. Certainly there were almost none of the usual suspects from Los Angeles, which is only a seven hour drive away. Aside from myself, my roommate and editor Leigh Strother-Vien, and Michael Donahue, I don’t recall seeing another L.A fan there. That might be because of the current economic problems, but it’s a



pity because it was a very good event.

Mike Donahue only came over for one day, and that was because the convention very kindly scheduled a panel with the both of us about our forthcoming motion picture *Marlowe*, which is based on my 1988 stage play, "MARLOWE: An Elizabethan Tragedy." Since becoming a film director, Mike has thrown himself into one low-budget project after another and now is in various stages of completion with three features. Only one, *Pool Time*, has been released. Complicating matters was the looming demise of Barry Workman, a close friend of his. But people were very interested and showed up for that panel, which is helpful in creating "buzz", and we also sold a few copies of the first-draft screenplay at a signing and from a dealer's table.

I was also on a military-related panel with Joe Haldeman, who was the Author Guest of Honor. So were seven other people. Joe being there was another reason for me to attend. He and I were classmates at the Iowa Writers Workshop in the 1970s. We were on a similar panel at the 2008 WorldCon in Denver, after which he became very ill. He was a combat engineer in Vietnam and Agent Orange put him in the hospital with a near-fatal bout of pancreatitis. In Reno he was still obviously suffering from the aftermath, so it was very good to see him looking healthy again in Tempe. I had been worried about him. I had my own illness last fall, after Reno, not as serious, but still very scary. The panel was nine guys who'd all been in the military, and started by outnumbering the audience, but eventually filled even. Joe and I were not the only ones on that panel old enough to be Viet-

nam veterans. There were a surprising number of ex-military, some of them with long careers, on the program and at the convention. It gave us something to talk about. War stories were exchanged. Nor was it entirely a male conversation. There were at least two other female veterans aside from Leigh.

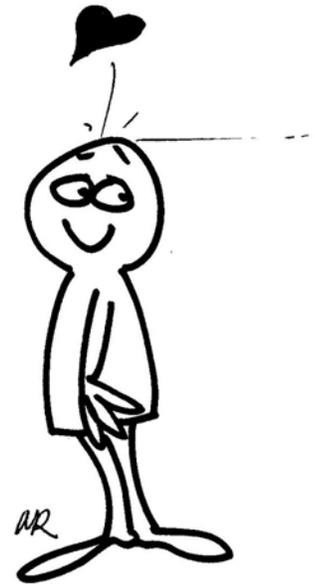
The proximity to ASU should have drawn some new fans, but there was a noticeable "graying of Fandom" at work. Very few kids and very few young adults and teenagers. The hotel is a little on the pricy side, but the security was kind enough to look the other way from those who chose to sleep in the courtyard or some of the smaller lobbies. The convention security, colorfully designated "The Watch", was also abundant and well-run. Steve Lapota, another ex-combat engineer in Vietnam, was in charge and also a genial host.

The media guest of honor was Steven Furst, of *Animal House* and *Babylon 5* fame, and he was, if not entirely one of us (I am told it was a paid appearance), an interested tourist who decided to throw an Animal House style Toga Party. That was right after my third panel of the day and, in deference to my own months-long recovery from complex pneumonia, I went to bed instead. Mr. Furst also gave panels on film directing and related topics.

The Green Room/ Staff Lounge and the Consuite were at opposite ends of a long hallway on the second floor and on the other side of the hotel from the room where Leigh and I were staying. Some of the function rooms with program items were also there, while the Dealers' Room, Art Show and Registration were across the courtyard on the ground level. It made for a lot of walking, but was not as

tiring as it might have been. Con-kibble was plentiful, as were sandwiches and hot entrees, and a generous selection of soft drinks and bottled water.

So this was, for me, a return to the kind of convention that first got me to be a convention-going fan. These days, age and health have a big impact on whether or not we're going to go to one, and like, Jerry Pournelle, I'm not inclined to go unless I can contribute by being on a program item or two...and sometimes, not then. (We no longer do LASFS events.)



Colorado Fans Evacuate

Kent Bloom and Mem Morman temporarily evacuated their home in Colorado Springs on June 26 to escape the Waldo Canyon fire. The Waldo Canyon fire had burned 347 homes by June 29 according to the *Denver Post* but theirs was spared. Bloom chaired Denvention 3, the 2008 Worldcon.

Utah Wins 2014 Westercon

Salt Lake City will host the 2014 Westercon. Although the Utah in 2014 bid was unopposed I suspect Utah chair Dave Doering was looking over his shoulder all the way. The previous year's business meeting had reminded everyone that running for Westercon unopposed guarantees nothing.

Now that he's won, Doering says, "Don't know if we want to call it CONgratulation or CONSolation."

The site selection vote tally: Utah 59; Tonopah, 4; Maui, 3; Both, Los Angeles, Portland, Unreadable, None of the above, 1; No preference, 4. Total ballots cast: 75.

The 2014 Westercon will be held July 3-6, 2014 at the Salt Lake Marriott Downtown at City Creek in Salt Lake City, Utah. Guests of Honor will be Cory Doctorow and the Writing Excuses team (Mary Robinette Kowal, Brandon Sanderson, Howard Tayler, and Dan Wells), and Fan Guest of Honor Christopher J. Garcia.

Memberships begin at \$50 attending and \$25 supporting. Voters who pre-supported have full attending memberships. The conversion fee for voters who did not pre-support is \$25, while the fee for pre-supporters who did not vote is \$30.

CS Lewis Declined CBE

C.S. Lewis is among the many who rejected royal honors named in a disclosure made under a freedom of information ruling. Lewis declined a CBE he was to have been awarded in the New Year's list of 1952.

The disclosure only lists names, it does not reveal the reasons for anyone's refusal, reports the BBC. This has misled some commenters

to assume the reason for Lewis' refusal is unknown. Far from it -- the explanation appears in a published letter.

By 1952 Lewis had enjoyed a substantial scholarly and literary career, and achieved fame as a speaker and Christian apologist. His most recent work at that time included the first two Narnia books, *The Lion, the Witch and The Wardrobe* (1950) and *Prince Caspian* (1951).

Mere Christianity would be published in 1952, subsequent to the New Year's list.

When Lewis was offered a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) by Winston Churchill in 1951 he answered, "I feel greatly obliged to the Prime Minister, and so far as my personal feelings are concerned this honour would be highly agreeable," he wrote. However, he added that many people said or believed that Christianity is basically, "covert anti-Leftist propaganda, and my appearance in the Honours List would of course strengthen their hands. It is therefore better that I should not appear there."

Contraflow 2011

Report by Guy H. Lillian III

It was a small convention, about 300 people, attracting mostly locals and regionals from the Gulf Coast. But Contraflow, held the first weekend of November 2011, was a welcome delight to most concerned. It took place, after all, at the Clarion Inn on the Westbank Expressway across the Mississippi from New Orleans -- the first science fiction convention in or near the Big Easy since Hurricane Katrina.

Chair Rebecca Smith states that the con broke even, which is great, and that the second Contraflow will jump up a level in accommodations to the Doubletree in Metairie the first weekend in October, 2012. This is also great. The con aims to grow -- to host a DeepSouth-Con and then to serve as basis for the New

Orleans bid for the 2018 Worldcon. (Pre-supporting memberships will be available RealSoonNow.) All of this is well and good, but the real joy of Contraflow's first outing was the simple fact of its existence. We Orleanians in Exile came for the usual reasons -- to enjoy GoH David Brin (very accessible and happy) and meet new people -- but also to renew friendship with fans scattered to the four winds by the hellacious winds of 2005.

Rose-Marie and I live in Shreveport, now, banished to Louisiana's northwest corner before Katrina, but no less anxious to see our people. And of course, this being a first convention, there were problems. Though the hotel was friendly in its staff, it was also diminutive in its facilities. The program was fan

-oriented, great fun, and occasionally quite moving -- such as when the convention paused in its festivities to memorialize the late James Mulé. But I encountered one misstep, a "Slave Auction" idea borrowed from Mobile's MobicCon; too many participants were overlubed with the essence of the grape and the event frankly came across as gross. Nevertheless, New Orleans friendliness and Mardi Gras magic prevailed -- and if the Art Show was tiny and secreted far from public accessibility, so it goes. Next year will be better.

Fandom in New Orleans may once have lagged behind the rest of the city in recovering from disaster, but no more. Contraflow was a terrific "contra" to the flow of Katrina, and the Easy is Back.

Stu Shiffman Hospitalized

Stu Shiffman suffered a stroke on June 14. Three days later he was described as awake, though lethargic, and able to speak clearly. In between he had two brain surgeries.

The day before his second surgery, Stu managed to get out of bed then fell, breaking one kneecap and hurting his nose as well. The kneecap was surgically repaired on June 25.

In the following months Stu has been back and forth between ICU and acute care, depending on his breathing and heartbeat. By October he was reported on a gradual upswing and doing therapy daily.

Stu is a highly popular fan artist, winner of the Hugo Award and the Rotsler Award.

His partner, Andi Shecter, has been visiting constantly. Tom Whitmore has faithfully maintained a Caring Bridge online journal, allowing Stu's friends to keep abreast of daily changes.

Taral Wayne has produced a one-shot, *The Slan of Baker Street*, that he hopes Stu will soon be reading. Taral wrote, "I don't remember my first thoughts when I learned of Stu's stroke. I doubt it was until the second day, or even the third, that I decided Something Ought to be Done. Since I was unable to perform miracles, I decided that perhaps a one-shot, get-well zine would help cheer Stu up, and aid his convalescence."

The Slan of Baker Street contains memoirs from Taral, Andrew P. Hooper and Rob Hansen, and artistic tributes by Taral, Sheryl Birkhead, Kurt Erichsen, Alan White, Steve Stiles,

Brad Foster. Its grand finale is a gallery of Stu's work from the Seventies and Eighties

Klein is Big, Door is Dear by John Hertz

The late Jay Kay Klein, the photographer of science fiction, donated his photographs to the Eaton Collection. It is best to arrange such things while one is alive.

Klein shot all of us -- sounds tempting, doesn't it? -- fans and pros. He was there, usually with several cameras. In monochrome, color, stereo, he took a hundred thousand photos.

The Eaton Collection, on the Riverside campus of the University of California, is the world's largest publicly accessible holding of s-f, with books, prozines, fanzines, ephemera. Terry Carr's, Rick Sneary's, and Bruce Pelz' collections made Eaton the largest in fanzines.



The Klein photos are a perfect match, and in their own right an element -- I use the word deliberately.

Since seven years were needed for a preliminary index of the Pelz collection, Eaton librarians delighted in finding Klein's photos carefully identified. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that when I talked with him by phone about it he chortled. It had not been by the power of his mind alone that he laid hands on pictures as needed.

How good are they?

Look at the Photo Yearbook in the 75th Anniversary issue of *Analogue* (January-February 2005). The photos are Klein's. See in particular his portraits of Campbell, Heinlein, Moore.

He's been as valuable a reporting photographer as a portraitist. Look at the Asimov Appreciation in the June 1992 *Locus*. He can write, too. He recounted the memorial gathering, then gave the closing reminiscence, after Hartwell, Gunn, de Camp. Asimov "loved to have someone top him if possible. Seldom possible."

Photography is an extraordinary combination of an artist's vision and of fact. Of this Jay Kay Klein has been illustrative.

No one can top an act like that, but I promised to say something about Selina Phanara's door. It arrived safely, was placed duly, and is enjoyed muchly.

Eaton is eager to make its resources available. It has a Website and a copying service. Visits in person are welcome.

Capclave 2012

Gaithersburg Hilton

October 12-14, 2012

Report by Martin Morse
Wooster

What do you want to know about this year's Capclave? They moved the con suite back to a function room this year, so all the food was pre-packaged to satisfy the vigilant health inspectors who worry about fans suffering from cookie poisoning. There wasn't a WSFA Press book because neither of the two guests of honor, John Scalzi or Nick Mamatas, had any surplus material for a book.

Oh, and while in the past I had my cake *after* the Saturday night awards ceremony, this year I had the cake *before* the awards ceremony.

The point is that Capclave is pretty much a formula now. Ever since the Washington Science Fiction Association decided to stop expelling members, their stable membership has figured out what they want Capclave to be. They have a long-term contract with the Gaithersburg Hilton, and will be there next year, where a big crowd is expected because George R.R. Martin is the guest of honor. You can pretty much guarantee that membership will be somewhere between 300-400 with about 40 comps for the pros and that the members will have a pretty good time.

When Capclave has two guests of honor, the tradition is that they interview each other. Nick Mamatas realized at the outset that most of the audience was there to hear Scalzi and spent his time asking Scalzi questions. At one point Scalzi apologized for taking up so much of what was supposed to be a joint session, saying that this happened to him at Comic-

WE'VE SOLVED ALL
THE PROBLEMS OF
DRINKING FROM A
FIRE HOSE EXCEPT
KIDNEY FAILURE!



Con once, where Scalzi was on a panel with Wil Wheaton. The audience preferred to hear Wheaton and Scalzi lurked in the background.

As a speaker, John Scalzi is very personable. Scalzi is extremely good at promoting himself. He is very charming, even when, as at his Capclave appearance, he apologized for running on no sleep and too much diet soda, explaining if he wasn't chugging down the soda, "I'd literally collapse in the lobby."

Scalzi has achieved new heights of fame with *Redshirts*. Hollywood loves it when you can explain your book in ten words. *Redshirts* only takes one word to explain, making it the highest of high concepts. Scalzi said that when he told his editor, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, that he was writing a novel called *Redshirts*, Nielsen Hayden moaned with delight and said, "oooooooooh! And then I went to the Tor sales staff and they said, oooooooooh!" Sales so far have matched Tor's enthusiasm.

Scalzi also explained the genesis of his *Little Fuzzy* novel. In the summer of 2008 he had just finished a lengthy proposal for another book. The proposal reached his publisher just as the world seemed headed for a depression, so his publishers "decided to low ball me aggressively." Scalzi's response was just to write a novel for fun, "Because I was really pissed off by the business end of publishing." Because *Little Fuzzy* is in the public domain Scalzi didn't have to get anyone's permission, but he says that thanks to strenuous efforts linking "I've steered tens of thousands of people to *Little Fuzzy*," available on the Project Gutenberg website.

Old Man's War is currently under development in Hollywood, and Scalzi hopes the movie will appear in 2014 or 2015. One problem is that the scriptwriters appear to like the story of *The Ghost Brigades*, the sequel to *Old Man's War*, much more than the original novel. Scalzi told the production company that if they *really* liked *The Ghost Brigades*, that

he would be very happy to be paid by them a second time, since they only had the option for *Old Man's War*. Thus far there is no final script, no cast, and no production date for *Old Man's War*, but Scalzi hopes to have more news next year.

As for Nick Mamatas, he said his name is pronounced "mama toss" and he gets really mad if you mispronounce his name. Apparently Terry Bisson was so clueless about how Mamatas's name is pronounced that on one panel they were on, Mamatas had to respond, "Thank you, Mr. Bison."

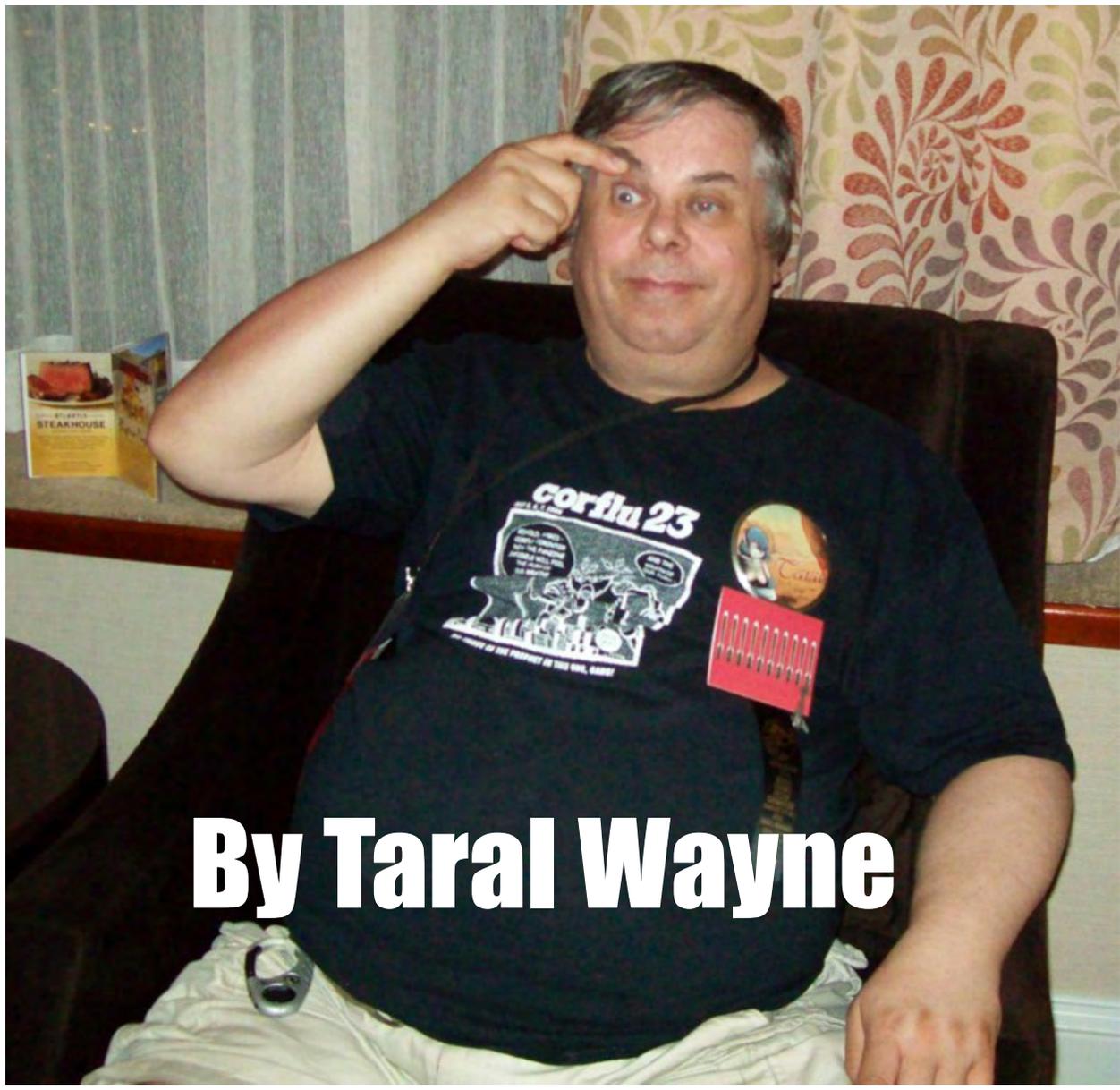
Mamatas's day job is editing and translating a line of Japanese sf. At Chicon, he escorted a group of Japanese writers around Chicago. One Chicago treat they didn't like was deep-dish pizza. The wife of one of the writers, Mamatas explained, took many photos of deep-dish pizza—for a photo book she was compiling of awful foods around the world!

Saturday night was the awards ceremony. The guests received their prizes, which this year were glass ornaments created by Steve Scherer, a Kentucky glassblower. Mamatas's ornament had Chtulhu attacking Buddha, or maybe it was Buddha attacking Chtulhu. I forget. Scalzi's, of course, had a guy wearing a redshirt. Mamatas thanked his wife, and Scalzi once again apologized for being so sleep-deprived.

Cathy Green then announced the winner of the WSFA Small Press Award this year was Tansy Rayner Roberts for her story "The Patrician" from the collection *Love and Romanpunk*. Roberts sent a congratulatory email saying that she was sorry she couldn't attend, since she lived in Australia, but "the 2010 trophy has a place of pride in my house" and she was happy to receive another prize from WSFA.

Since I already had two slices of cake, I went home.

Throw of the Dice Renovation - 2011



By Taral Wayne

Taral Wayne at the British Worldcon Bid Party. Photo by Steve Stiles.

LAST THINGS FIRST

One question has you burning with curiosity, no doubt. Let's get that over with right away.

Yeah... I lost the Hugo again. For the *tenth* time.

You know what? I don't really care much. I mean, it seemed predictable. I've been placing at the bottom of the final ballot consistently, usually under Steve Stiles. If any fannish upstart was going to win the rocket away from the internet stick-figure cartoonist who was also up this year, it would have been Steve anyway. And *he* was miles from it. Under the circumstances, I'm firm in saying that Brad Foster's win was about the best possible outcome we could expect, and my only objection is that it was so damn little surprise. The Hugo voters are clearly creatures of habit. The fact that I was nominated again proves it! How else can I explain how I've been nominated the last two or three years, even though I feel I have done far less fan art lately than I should?

I had another reason not to expect to win this year. During the rehearsals, I was led offstage into the darkened wings and onto a ramp. It was very dark. The ramp was lit by two rows of bulbs to follow, and to either side was a rope. What I couldn't see was that the bulbs marked the edge of a higher level, and that there was a drop of about a foot between them and the hand ropes. I stepped over the lights and took a spectacular, cartwheeling tumble!

Picking myself up and reassuring everyone that I was alright, I heard somebody in the background say quietly, "I was *worried* something like that might happen."

Really? Why wasn't something done about it then, instead of waiting for me to break my neck and prove their point? Had I my wits about me (and a good lawyer), I might have extorted a spare Hugo out of the committee. They would have had to give in, you know. A Hugo is a hell of a lot cheaper than a lawsuit. But I didn't think of it... and, fundamentally, I'm too good a sport for such underhanded methods. I did regard it as an omen, though.

Nevertheless, it was a bit of a sad moment when I flipped over my Hugo pin badge. I had made two of these – one for me and one for Steve Stiles. Both showed the ten nomination pins we had earned up to this point, lined up against a red background. When we heard the winner's name read from the stage, we must have both turned our badges over to the side that read "Ten Times Loser" at the same time.

My attitude toward the Hugo has evolved over the years ... from "hopeful," to "frustrated," to downright "angry" ... but now seems to have settled on "indifferent" for the time being. What I cannot change, I must find the strength to endure.

That subject out of the way, let's go back to the beginning.

At first, I had no intention of going to Renovation. Schirm kept bringing up the subject. Maybe I could save up. Put aside a small amount of money every week. I reminded him that even if I squandered not a single Loonie, the surplus from the pittance I made every month was unlikely to add up to air fare, a share of a hotel room and meals ... not until 2016, at any rate. I think Schirm got the message, because he began talking behind my back to another one of my oldest friends, Alan Rosenthal.

I'd known Alan since he was a teenage kid who turned up at an OSFiC meeting, 'way back before whenever. Since then, he'd graduated as an engineer, moved to Seattle to work for Microsoft, run a Corflu, bought a house, gave it away, left Microsoft and settled into a small farmhouse near Sonoma, California, with Jeanne Bowman. Somehow, we stayed in touch through all this, and remained friends.

Between the two of them, Schirm and Alan shamelessly concocted a scheme to bring me to the Worldcon in Reno that, surprisingly, succeeded.



Surprisingly, because there were so many obstacles. Foremost was the cost, but Alan contributed his frequent flyer points to secure me Executive Class passage with Air Canada. Executive Class is a blessing, and it's a pity that it's priced out of most people's reach. In reality, all it amounts to is what passengers expected as a matter of course in our parents' generation: room to stretch your legs, meals, complementary drinks, a pillow and newspaper. But these days, ordinary riffraff have to *pay* for that. I was handed a menu, and noticed with unfeigned dismay that even a hot dog or slice of pizza cost in the neighborhood of ten bucks – and they only accepted credit cards. I had none, only cash. It looked like a hungry four-and-a-half hour flight. But then the flight attendant smiled and informed me that – as Executive Class – I was fed *gratis*. I was offered my choice of wines and liquors with the meal, as well. I luxuriated in a beef entrée with red

wine – and promptly spilled the *vino* all over my pants... (Did I mention how difficult it was to get by the comfortable arm rests in roomy, Executive Class seats?) The attendants were very helpful in bringing bottled water to the restroom, so I could wash out as much as the stain as possible. And the day after, in LA, the stain vanished entirely in Schirm's washing machine... thanks, possibly, to my prompt action in the air. The flight, then, was one obstacle down.

My own state of health was another obstacle. While not unwell, per se, I suffer from a condition known as Myasthenia Gravis. I had a problem with run-of-the mill arthritis in my back that had been growing more serious for the past few years. But sometime between 2003 – when Schirm visited me to attend Torcon – and 2009 – when Schirm accompanied me to Montreal for Anticipation – my ability to walk deteriorated alarmingly.

It turned out to be less because of the rhumatiz than because of an uncommon neurological condition. The symptom that gave it away was a droopy eyelid. I had complained about it to my doctor for at least a year, but when it finally drooped enough to interfere with my vision, my complaints became louder. "You need to see an ophthalmologist!" he said. No shit! The ophthalmologist referred me to a neurologist, and the neurologist stuck electrified needles in my face to watch me twitch. Apparently I twitched to his satisfaction, because he pronounced me suffering from a disorder I had only heard of in a Heinlein story – you may recall it – "Waldo, Inc." Yep. Waldo had Myasthenia Gravis too. Immediately, I had visions of myself confined to a wheelchair, as helpless as Steven Hawking but not half as bright. However, evidently, the disorder is not normally as dire as that. But it does leave the sufferer weak and tired after even moderate exertion.

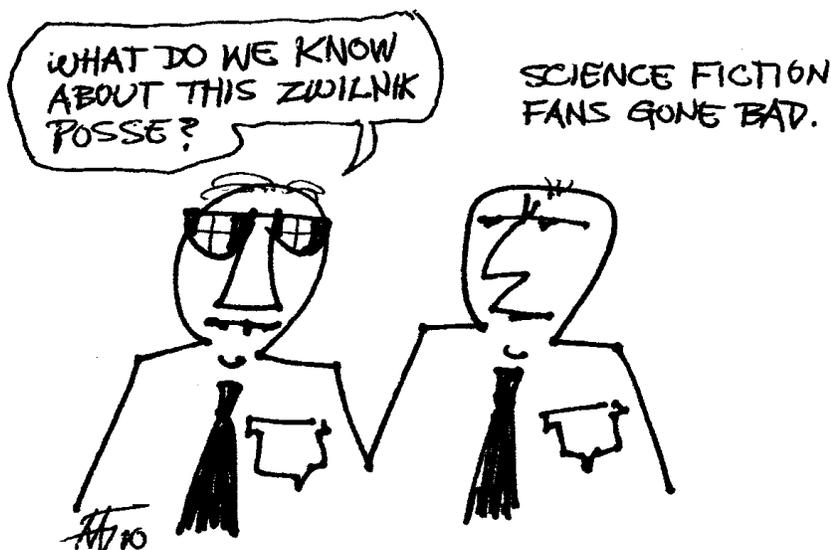
To digress into technicalities, the muscle fibers lose their

sensitivity to nerve impulses too quickly, and stop responding to signals to contract. The result, in my case, is a droopy right eyelid and a tendency to start out walking as though I am as fit as ever, but by anywhere from 500 to 1000 feet I'm reduced to a wet noodle. For someone who once walked miles – not only to save transit fares, but because I liked to – this is the kind of blow that takes the sugar-frosting out of life. However, I've found that I can nevertheless cover practical distances on a good day, if I take frequent rests.

All the same, navigating the vast expanses of an airport posed a formidable problem. Alan dealt with it by arranging wheelchair service to begin from the moment I left the bus and checked in. I was wheeled everywhere ... from check-in to customs, and from there to the Maple Leaf Lounge. I didn't mention the Maple Leaf lounge earlier, did I? That was another little perk of Executive Class ... an actually *comfortable* waiting area, with leather seats, a buffet and a bar. (On the return trip from LA, the attendant who pushed my wheelchair took me to the *regular* lounge, with the hard plastic seats and with no amenities but watching the hands crawl around a clock. I never squawked louder in my life – but then I was taken to the *correct* lounge). Getting in a wheelchair was embarrassing at first. It wasn't as though I was crippled, after all. I could walk. I could pull my own luggage. A couple of hundred feet if necessary! But I quickly gave in to the convenience and luxury. Had I had to drag myself and my luggage on foot, I would have had to do it the way I get around my neighborhood – slowly and with frequent rests. It would have taken ten times as long, and cut into the time I had to spend at the buffet and bar.

At boarding time, I was wheeled to the plane and entered ahead of everyone else... who had been waiting like cattle in a pen. Four-and-a-half hours later, I was wheeled off the plane to a disembarkation area, where I was once again on my own. I had gotten used to being waited on hand and foot by then, and only resumed responsibility for myself again with reluctance.

A further obstacle to my travel was finding a place to stay. Schirm offered to put me up at his place, and then we could drive together from Pasadena to Reno. I hadn't been to LA for at least 10 or 11 years. To be honest, I had long wanted to return and see the desert and mountains again. Trees are all right, if you want shade and greenery and that sort of thing, but I've always been drawn to the more austere landscapes of the Southwest. I might not be comfortable living there, and the year-round heat can turn you into a dry-roasted peanut in no time, but I can't think of a place I more





want to visit periodically. While at *Renovation*, I would share Schirm's hotel room. I needed someone to look after my cat, as well. Fortunately, a lady down the hall had already shown herself competent in that regard – she had looked after Sailor while I was in Montreal, for *Anticipation*. I needed a passport, but thankfully I had gotten one for my birthday a few years ago. It was still good. I also had to make sure my rent and utilities were paid up and the power wouldn't be turned off while I was away, and I needed to renew my prescriptions before leaving town as well. It hard to believe, but the timing of everything was *perfect*.

That left only a small number of minor matters ... spending money for one. Again, Alan came through with enough to cover meals and necessary expenses. If I was careful, I could even buy a few books and whatnot.

Then the only true obstacle was my reluctance to break from routine and undertake an adventure.

Although this was only a matter of stepping out of the door and locking it behind me, but psychologically it was the biggest obstacle of all.

L.A. BOUND

Everything went smoothly all the way to LAX. It was only after debarking the plane – and finding myself, for the first time that day, among a crowd of people who were in no way looking after my interests – that I began to feel renewed doubt. Where was Schirm? In the past, he had always been at the airport to greet me. I wandered around in circles for a while, hoping to find the familiar figure lurking behind a pillar or information kiosk, but with no luck. At last, I fell back on my brains. Didn't I have to leave the debarkation area and go to baggage claims by myself? Yes, I seemed to remember something like that from 10 or 12 years ago. I ventured warily toward an exit, asking the first uniformed body along the way if anyone waiting for me would be at baggage claims. Of course, she said, looking at me as though I were a half-wit, then shooing me along. Sure enough, Schirm was at the bottom of the escalator, arms outstretched, baggy pants nearing half-mast, and on his head a peculiar little fedora that I had last seen in 2003, that cost him all of ten bucks. We hugged.

I don't make a habit of this. I grew up in a straightlaced era, when people rarely showed greater enthusiasm toward one another than a smile. In a wild display of emotional abandon, they might even shake hands. But hugging to show friendship seems socially acceptable these days, and when in Rome... Or Los Angeles...

Hell, I've even been known to unbend enough to let my sister Christine hug me on Christmas and Thanksgiving. And Schirm *was* something of a special case. I'd known him since 1978; and if *someone* didn't reach behind him to pull up the back of his pants, there might be an embarrassing incident.

Our plan was to kick back and relax in Pasadena for a couple of days before beginning the car trip to Reno. Schirm advised we get one obligation out of the way first thing, though. Sooner or later, I was expected to drop in on a problematical acquaintance in Orange County. We'll call him "Marvin," though that's not his name. I had known Marvin since before Ronald Reagan had been made a saint by the Republican Party. Amazingly, we hold almost no opinions in common, and our tastes are at polar opposites. I often find him thoughtless, narrow-minded and insensitive. But furry artists were a tight little clan in the 1980s. *Everyone* knew *everyone else*. Nobody seemed to like this particular artist much, unfortunately. It somehow ended up that I was nearly the only person who would go to dinner with Marvin when the dealers' rooms closed and we threw the sheet over our goods. One reason he lacked company was that his invariable choice of venue was a Denny's. I really *didn't* mind the guy all that much, most of the time, even though he complained endlessly and echoed talk-radio propaganda as though it was his own thinking. It was so over-the-top that I was more often amused than outraged. It's hard to take that dumb a cluck seriously. Nor was he without talent as an artist... though his favorite

To depart from the story for just a moment, while in Littlerock, I described to Schirm an exotic sportscar called a Panoz. The subject came up for reasons no longer remembered. Despite the Italian sounding name, the owner of the company is Irish and the car is built in Braselton, Georgia.



The GRT model is among my favorite cars because it is aptly nicknamed “The Batmobile.” No other car on the road could remotely justify that appellation, but the Panoz GTR, if painted black and armed with bat-gimmicks, is exactly what Tim Burton was aiming for and only approximated in his two movies. I had a model of one, and had seen photographs, but never one in the flesh. I still haven’t. Panoz made another model, the AIV Roadster that was rather better suited to driving and not so stylish as an accessory to crime-fighting. The AIV was what Plymouth and Chrysler attempted to do when they introduced the Prowler to the market. But while the Prowler made do with a 200 h.p. 3.2 litre V6 borrowed from your daddy’s sedan, the AIV Roadster was fitted with a magnificent 5 litre, Ford Mustang V8, capable of over 300 horses. I had never seen one of the Roadsters, either.



Since waxing enthusiastic about the Panoz cars to Schirm, barely 10 minutes had gone by. But, coming out of the gas station’s convenience store, I practically stumbled over a Roadster tanking up at the pump! Naturally, I had to drool on the pearl-finished paint job. The owner came out a moment later, and as he began to reclaim his possession from my obviously lustful intentions, I pressed my luck.

“Lovely car,” I said, meaning it. “I have a 1/18 scale diecast model of one, but in yellow. I don’t suppose... would you pop the hood so we can have a look?” The owner took pity on me and pulled something under the dashboard. The hood came loose, but he had to heave it up further to see under. There it was in all its glory. The Mustang power plant filled almost every available square inch under the narrowing nose of the Roadster. A minute later, the AIV was roaring down the highway, with me looking at its bobtail rear end disappearing in the dust. I supposed that I’d never see another. I hadn’t even had my camera with me... It was in the Honda, parked up the street.

subject matter was of the sort it was better not to ask about.

Unfortunately, Marvin usually gave Schirm a splitting headache on sight.

Sure enough, on the day we visited Marvin, Schirm got a

headache. He had good reason, but let’s not go into that.

On the second day, Schirm suggested a leisurely drive up into the San Gabriel Mountains overlooking the north end of LA. The Angeles Crest Highway wound 66 miles through the Front Range, much of it over 7,000 feet, and reaching a summit of 7903 feet at Dawson Saddle.

Although it is a modern, two-lane blacktop road, the innumerable sharp curves and precipitous drops make it more hazardous than most. Schirm regaled me with stories of flaming wrecks and violent deaths while homemade memorials flashed by on the roadside. If you ever saw “It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World,” it begins with Jimmy Durante’s car flying over a sheer drop from a curve in the road and plummeting to a melodramatic death-scene. The entire sequence was shot on a section of the Angeles Crest – not unlike the one we were driving.

The scenery was spectacular though, just as it had been every time I’d made this drive with Schirm. No matter how many trips I’ve made into the Front Range, I could never tire of it. Every vein of igneous or metamorphic rock, every fissure in a cliff face, every scree of slowing moving debris fascinated me. We reached a vantage point that Schirm may have had in mind from the first, and pulled into a parking area. We had stopped overlooking an notch-like valley that receded beyond one screen of craggy, pine covered mountains after another until it faded into the distance. The scale was immense. Not even Paul Bunyan’s axe dragging behind him could have excavated such an abyss through the mountains. In other words, it was time to fumble in my shoulder bag for my cheap digital camera and start using up batteries.

Reluctant to go home again so soon, Schirm decided we’d continue through the Back Range and into the Mojave Desert. He thought we should see the Devil’s Punchbowl. I had seen it once before, in my 1984 trip. But little remained in memory other than a rocky glen and some of the other fans with us being less than enthusiastic about getting out of the car to walk. On this trip, I paid more attention to how we got to where we were going, enjoying the sight of breathtaking chasms first to this side of the car, then to the other. At last, we began to descend from the 10,000-foot Back Ranges to the ridges and valleys before the Mojave Desert stretches out in its shimmering monotony of mesquite and ticky-tacky commuter communities.

The Devil’s Punchbowl is more than a stony declivity. Its rock-lined sides and upended slabs of wind-rounded sandstone formations are the visible manifestations of the San Andreas Fault. In this spot, the forces wrenching Southern California away from the American mainland were so strong they bent the rock into a steep V-shaped notch, snapping the stone like graham crackers where the angle was acute.

There was a small ranger station with maps and brochures. There was also a display of live rattlesnakes and scorpions, to show us the sort of neighbors we have in this part of the planet. There was one particular scorpion that was about the size of a cigarette lighter, the kind you buy for a dollar and throw away when empty. It was in an open-topped enclosure you could just stick your hand into ... if you wanted to spend a week in bed with an arm swollen up like

a salami in a delicatessen. Unbelievably, Schirm had come in sandals! The grit and gravel from the unimproved trails got in between the leather and his socks, with predictable results. Sao, while Schirm stuck around the car and ranger station, I tried my luck down a short trail.

It was then, for the first time, that I encountered difficulties that were much greater than I expected. I got *down* the trail alright. I discovered a view of a wind-swept formation of sandstone in the distance that somewhat resembled waves on the ocean. But on the way back *up* the hill, I was brought to a stop in only a hundred feet. I rested a bit, and moved on. After another 100 feet, I was brought to a stop again, panting from exertion and with my legs as weak as rubber bands. My weakness was much worse than I expected, but at that point I had no idea why.

I had my photos, and Schirm had had enough of small stones bruising the soles of his feet. It was time we were headed back to Pasadena.

We stopped in a picturesque tourist trap named Littlerock for drink and a snack. We also gave into the temptation to browse through an equally picturesque little used-book emporium... where we found little. The only purchase I made was a Lee Hoffman western – “Wild Riders.”





Above: Ghost town of Bodie. **Below:** Home with glass window porch. **Bottom:** The Methodist Church.



Afterward, we walked down to the gas station/convenience store. Then, with Twinkies and Stewarts under our belts, we were on our way.

Tuesday we spent foraging in used book and music stores. I wanted to find albums by *Gentle Giant*, *Wall of Voodoo* and *Captain Beefheart* that had been eluding me back home for some time. I was disappointed in the *Gentle Giant*, but found almost too many other albums of interest. I *was* spending other people’s money... but had to go easy on it anyway.

THE ROAD TO RENO

Wednesday morning we were on the road to Reno. Not as stylishly as Hope and Crosby, and no Dorothy Lamour – alas – yet you might say there was a song in our hearts. Without consulting me, Schirm had taken along a vast number of CDs he wanted to play along the way... Most were the sort of offbeat, oddball novelty numbers that Schirm liked. If there was a foxtrot named “Red Hot Mama With an Itch For Yokohama,” or a song with the title “I Have Pancake Flour in My Hair and Gum on My New Shoes Blues,” Schirm would probably have brought it along to play. If you’ve guessed that my own taste in listening is a little different, you’d be correct.

The miles rolled by under a deep blue sky without a cloud. To my surprise, we were not headed directly north and up the Owens Valley. After leaving the Mono Lake area, to my surprise we continued to drift westward. Having a look at a map, I discovered what I should have known – that the state lines trend west, and Reno was very near the state line.

I tentatively suggested that it might be fun to drop in Bodie on the way. A little to my surprise, Schirm thought it a splendid idea. I had thought we wouldn’t have time, silly me.

Bodie is a ghost town. The real thing. It’s rather a way off the main highway, along a twisty two-lane road that winds between the hills. We last visited Bode in 1984, and back then the route was a single-lane dirt road with holes in it that were appropriately the size of mine shafts.

Bodie was founded on a gold strike in the hills in the 1850s, but overshadowed by other gold rush towns until the 1870s, when it suddenly became a boom town in its own right. In just a few years, Bodie’s population swelled to thousands, until it may well have been the third-largest community in the west, after San Francisco and Virginia City. In 1877, though, the mines began to play out. Operations continued for decades after, but inevitably the population shrank as the gold diminished. By 1900 or 1910, Bodie was a shell of itself, supporting only about 250 inhabitants. Surprisingly, the number of people living in this desolate location began to grow again, but in 1932 a fire was started by some kid playing with matches that



Left: How Reno likes to see itself. **Right:** What most of Reno looks like to the visitor.

consumed most of the business district – which by this time, was mostly deserted wooden shacks, and must have gone up like kindling, although even brick buildings were destroyed by the blaze. The mines were shut down by government order in World War II, and that was that. The town was officially abandoned.

After about ten minutes of driving through a desolation that reminded me more of Mars than anywhere else, we had our first sight of the town. To one side of the road and some hundred yards away, scattered cattle browsed on whatever grew. Straight ahead was the town. It was only a collection of wooden structures laid out in a vague grid-like pattern in the saddle-like hollow between the surrounding rounded heights. Up the sides of one hill that was a little higher than the others, sheds and workshops sprawled. Mine tailings that were visible on the side of the hill looked like worm castings. I decided I wanted a photograph, and asked Schirm to stop the car.

As soon as I got the shot framed in my view finder, a huge recreational vehicle roared by. It kicked up a huge plume of reddish dust that would in itself have ruined the photo. But then the RV swerved to the side of the road and stopped squarely in my sights. About a dozen tourists in cliché Hawaiian shirts piled out of the slab-sided vehicle and lined up to take photos of Bodie just ahead. Evidently, if I thought this was a good shot, *they* would have to take pictures too – giving not a thought to spoiling mine. I strode into the dust cloud to give them a piece of my mind.

They moved on, probably not entirely certain what my rather colourful English meant... That may have been just as well. I got my shot after waiting a couple of minutes for the dust to settle.

Today, Bodie is preserved in a state of what is kindly

described as “arrested decay.” Nothing will be restored, but nothing is allowed to actually fall down, either. A museum and gift shop had been built into the old Miners’ Union Hall (next to the saloon, naturally). It was one of the few radical changes. Many of the surviving homes and buildings are in surprisingly good shape, considering decades of neglect and the extremes of the climate. Interiors of the remaining structures are mostly just as they were when the residents closed the door for the last time and went away for good. It cost a small fortune to bring furniture and other trappings into Bodie by wagon or train, and would cost just as much to remove them by a four-banger, flat-bed truck. Whatever it was, it wasn’t worth the cost and had to be left behind. A number of homes are stable enough that the park rangers allow visitors in... but only so far. Back rooms are screened off so that you can only look – no doubt to discourage souvenir hunters ... but also possibly to keep them from crashing through the floorboards.

Among the notable buildings still standing were the Methodist Church, a saloon, a schoolhouse and a home with a unique glass window porch! I’m certain the glass was new, and there were traces of white paint on the clapboards behind it. The paint made me think. Although every building that remained was dark and weather worn, at one time they had probably all been painted – not only white, but canary, sky blue and pea green. The schoolhouse had likely been red, just like the “burning schoolhouse” fireworks I used to relish lighting as a kid. It even had a bell tower in the center of the roof... instead of a roman candle. Then again, it would cost as much to bring paint to such an isolated spot as anything else. So, perhaps the white porch had been a sign of conspicuous consumption after all.

There were a number of brick structures, as well, though

their purposes were impossible to guess.

The church had been built in 1884, if I remember rightly. It was still much as it had been when services were last held. A pipe organ that must have been the congregation's pride and joy looked as though it might still be played – but not by living fingers. Bodie had also had a Roman Catholic church, but *their* God hadn't been as lucky and the church had burned down prior to the great fire of 1932. There was even a small China Town at one time.

Peering into the old saloon, you could see the bar with a number of drinks apparently still set up. Bottles that once continued "Red Eye" whiskey or Champagne were draped in cobwebs and dust. A card table sat behind one window, an empty rack for wine in the corner. A doorway in the back led to somewhere, but if the ghosts of miners still played Poker or Faro back there, I couldn't see. A historic photo postcard shows a billiard table. Today, it is most likely used for storage by the Rangers. A couple of storefronts with boardwalks out front looked as though they had been last trodden by Wyatt Earp. But there were only dusty boxes and stacks of weather-worn wood inside.

Nearer the parking lot, an outdoor exhibit had been made of heavy equipment recovered from the mines. The shafts and mills were understandably off-limits. I can name any number of dangerous places – front row in a protest march in Syria, for example. The passenger seat in a NASCAR race. A dentist's chair. But an abandoned mine shaft is high on any sensible list. Among the exhibits were huge steam pistons, an old steam boiler, and toothed gears the size of flying saucers. A complete timber shaft (or pit) head



had been reassembled, along with the open bucket elevators in which the miners were lowered at the beginning of the day and raised again at the end of their shift. Any steam-geek would have fallen in love with the rivets and lapped iron plates. In the distance, across the shallow pan in which Bodie lay, were the grey sheds and warehouses where the ore was processed.

Although we managed to walk at least three of the existing streets from one end to the other, I suffered every step of the way. I should have been able to manage the entire length of each, but felt as though I was moments away from a lethal heart stoppage after every 100 feet. I still didn't understand what was happening to me. I just struggled on and barely managed to get back to the car without Schirm actually carrying me on his back. He carried my bottle of water as a compromise. I should have known at once what the trouble was, though. There was a very obvious give-away.

The sky. It was blue, blue, deep blue, almost purple, as the sky looks on the edge of space. It was wonderful and shamed the limpid, baby-blue skies of Toronto. But that's exactly what the root of my problem was, even if I hadn't worked it out yet.

If I said that the rest of the drive to Reno would be uneventful, I'd be lying. Schirm and I had one more adventure along the way.

About two hours of driving lay ahead of us. It was late afternoon, turning into a beautiful evening, with hills and mountains to either side. Ahead of us, I noticed a small smudge on the horizon above the crest of the hills. As we drove, the smudge turned into a wisp of smoke. Then the wisp became a column. "Schirm?" I asked. "Are there any volcanoes in the mountains around here?" It was not an entirely unreasonable question. There had been plenty of volcanism in the Mojave, all up and down the Owens Valley and around the Mono Lake area in particular. Why *not* here? But he said no. "Then there's the mother of all wildfires ahead."

It was indeed a monstrous wildfire. When we were close enough to wonder if the fire itself would heave into view around the next foothill, we came to a road closure. A workman told us that traffic was being redirected for miles around the fire. We ended up viewing the catastrophe from three sides, and saw some fantastic countryside that we hadn't counted on.

We didn't lose sight of that column of smoke until we were nearly in Reno. I don't recall actually seeing the smoke drift over the city during the next few days, but the fire apparently continued to burn throughout the con. Like the fire that had destroyed much of Bodie, this one seemed to have been started by someone careless with matches. Why are so many people in the American southwest intoxicated with starting fires? Is it, like the obsession for firearms, a



"Schirm? Are there any active volcanoes around here?" asked Taral.

part of the Wild West heritage? Or mere stupidity?

RENO AT LAST

It was dark when we arrived in Reno, and the city was a confusing tangle of neon ribbons streaming along both sides of the road. Now and then one knot of neon light would resolve itself into an I-Hop or Midas Muffler Shop, but we weren't looking for any of those. Our hotel turned out to be off a major intersection with the highway. All things considering, it really wasn't hard to find. While not much different from any other hotel, the Hawthorn was going to be our home for the next five nights, and couldn't have looked more welcoming if dinner had been kept warm for us. We were even more delighted to find that the hotel had a laundry on the premises, and a breakfast buffet every morning until 10 o'clock.

We saved a lot of time and money at that buffet! The menu included eggs, scrambled one day and cheese omelet the next. One could choose either bacon or sausage on the side. As well, there was a waffle-making machine that made the best waffles I've had in decades. It was as heavy as a cylinder out of a Harley Davidson, and looked about as businesslike. But it was surprisingly easy to use. You poured the batter over the grid, lowered the upper half and turned the whole thing upside down with a handle sturdy enough for a billy club. Two minutes later, a bell informed you that breakfast was served. If you fancied something different, there was a toaster with bread or bagels, with butter, jam, or cream cheese. Then again, you might prefer cereal and milk. They had it. Also hot coffee (latte or espresso), hot chocolate and two juices. There were muffins, yogurt, fruit cups and fresh fruit to finish the meal. I was never able to have one of everything – there was just too much. I usually skipped the muffin or yogurt, and gave little thought to cold Cheerios, thank you.

Replete from breakfast, Schirm and I set out for the convention center in a *very* satisfied mood.

Thursday was the first day of the con. While there may have been program already in progress, there were not yet very many people, and most of the activity seemed to be about setting up in the dealers' room and art show, registering early members and, if all else failed, just looking busy. The convention center was humongous. It was just plain *too big*, in fact.

Why is it that the older and grayer and more infirm fans get, the larger con facilities grow? I didn't take a yardstick to the place, of course, but just off the top of my head I'd say that the distance from the parking lot entrance to the registration tables couldn't have been much short of a thousand feet. The door to the exhibition area was to the left of Registration, and you had to backtrack a little. Once inside, you could just see the dealers' area and art show in the distance. It must have been another thousand feet if it was an inch. Along the way you passed various displays, rather like oases in the Sahara. I never looked closely at more than one or two, but recognized a glass case full of Hugo awards about mid-way. A little farther along was a table and backdrop for the *Fancylopedia III*. I discovered that this was where Joe D. Siclari spent most of his time during the day. Along the wall, opposite the *Fancylopedia* table, was an enclave that had been made into the Fan Lounge. This turned out to be where I probably spent most of my time during the day.

The only other place I was ever likely to be found was the dealers' area. Frankly, the immense size of the convention turned out to be too much for me – wherever I was, was where I tended to stay.

While much of the time spent in the lounge was quiet enough to hear eye tracks being laid, it was enlivened

whenever Chris Garcia bounced in. The Fan Lounge was his bailiwick and it lacked almost nothing – there were tables, paper, pens, chairs, sofas, a line of computers plugged into the Internet and a printer. The only thing there didn't seem to be enough of was Chris, who was apparently doing his best to obey wave-particle dynamics and be a little bit everywhere at once. This appears to be so at *all* conventions Chris attends. I wonder if anyone has actually had a conversation with him that lasted more than a hundred words.

I spent most of my day at the con in the fan lounge for several reasons. For one, sooner or later everyone I knew came by. For another, I could sleep on one of the sofas. I had been having trouble sleeping nights since arriving in LA, and every wink was treasured. Also, the lounge wasn't very far from the dealer's area – relatively speaking, in the vastness of the convention facility. To get there, I needed only haul myself up from a comfy sofa and limp over to the entrance of the roped-off dealer's area. It took barely ten minutes. Once there, I would take my time browsing up one row of tables, then stop, take a breather, and start down the next. After all, I had to consider that ten minutes it took to limp back to my comfy sofa. The less often I did it, the better.

Due to Alan's generosity, I had a bit of spending money in my pocket, augmented by a little I had saved before the con. You wouldn't think a fan would have much trouble spending it at a worldcon. In fact, I was a little slow getting started. There were plenty of books, but I was not the diehard science-fiction reader I had been in the 1970s. I had little interest in the genre, truth be told. Tim Powers was Guest of Honour that year, but I had actually read most of his work years before, and had a number of early first editions from when they were only Ace and Harlequin paperbacks. Later, his books were published in hardcover,

and were too expensive from the get-go – let alone once they had become "collectables."

Bob Wilson had had good things to say about the first volume of Bill Patterson's massive Heinlein study, though. I bought a softcovered copy for a surprisingly reasonable price. I bought a hardcover reprint of Earl Kemp's *Who Killed Science Fiction* – though I expected it would be just about the dullest reading imaginable. But I didn't have one, and wanted it as a match for my original copy of *Why a Fan?* I also found a *ST:TNG* technical manual done up to resemble a well-known series of automotive self-repair manuals. It was a bit more pricey than the others, so I made it very nearly my last purchase at the con.

Among other things that I frittered Allan's hard-earned money away on were a boxed set of *ReBoot* DVDs and the complete *George of the Jungle* cartoons. The cartoons were surprisingly cheap, but not so the complete *ReBoot*. Still, I had never actually seen all of them, and wondered how the series came out.

Dealers' Rooms have evolved over the years. Gradually, they've become a sort of Oriental bazaar, with cluttered booths selling brass lamps, exotic pendants, brooches the size of hand grenades, gaudy rings with glass bezels, strings of beads, shells and shards of glass, ornate daggers, impractically curvy and engraved swords, tartans, leatherwork, hand-carved flutes, pottery, tarot cards, scarves, bongos, belt buckles and bling taking up fully half the tables! That kind of flea-market standby must be meeting a need; no one pays for a table if they make no sales. But, to *me*, it looked suspiciously like a room full of my grandmother's old junk.

Of course, there's junk and then there's junk I'd *buy*. But I saw no Muppet action figures, model spaceships or Airsoft toy guns.

Banana Wings' Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey.



Given the immensity of the con facilities, I may have been lucky that I had relatively little to do. One panel I was scheduled for was called off because the panelists were the only ones there. I also had to make an appearance as an artist, sketching by request. The table was not *exactly* where I had been led to believe it was ... looking for it made me about a quarter of an hour late. I took my place next to some on-line cartoonist I didn't know, but who was apparently very popular. Not only did I receive no requests, the line of the other guy's fans soon concealed me from view. Since my program item had been scheduled opposite Steve Stile's slide show, I was annoyed already. Not only was this sort of ill-considered scheduling sabotaging fanzine-oriented programming all the time, but I wanted to *see* Steve's presentation! After five minutes spent sitting

unproductively behind whatsisname's line of admirers, I gave up. I went to see Steve instead.

Thus I added another quarter-mile walk to the one I had made to find my table.

My luck had turned slightly, though. Steve hadn't started his slide show yet. The computer running the projector wasn't working right. He got it fixed ... sort of ... and began the show. But the images grew progressively more distorted with time, until Ditmar and Foster looked altogether too much like Dali. It was a small and intimate group, though, so if nothing else, we had fun laughing and making wisecracks.

All too soon, I was on another half-mile trek, to somewhere in the casino opposite the con center. There was no chance of getting lost, at least. You only had to follow the double line of burnt out scooters and motorized chairs along the sides of the trail.

There was a stand selling overpriced hotdogs in the cavernous space that contained the dealer's area, art show, displays, secondary program events and fanzine lounge. There was another overpriced snack stand in the smaller area outside, where Registration, Lost & Found, Flyers & Publications and Information were set up. But the only practical places to find a meal without a long drive was in the casino. Although separated by a busy street, the convention center and casino were connected by an enclosed overpass. The hike from Fanzine Lounge to stepping into the casino seemed about two-and-a-half miles. I may exaggerate ... slightly ... but it was more than I could manage all at once. I needed to sit down three or more times along the way. It was an inconvenience to the people with me, but, regret it as much as I did, I had no choice. It was either sit now, or carry on a little while longer then collapse on the cheap carpet in an exhausted heap.

Strider's race across Rohan had nothing on us. Unknown to us, our journey had only begun once we stepped inside the casino. Of several restaurants, there was only one that was affordable and that everyone in our party could agree on. In fact, it must have been a popular choice, going by the countless numbers of fans we saw coming and going. We passed any number of steak & lobster grills, cozy nooks for costly aperitifs and Ristorantes Italiano. But *our* destination naturally lay at the far end of the casino. Another three-quarters-of-a-mile walk if it was an inch, although the twisting, serpentine path through the jungles of digital slot machines may have made the trip *seem* longer than it was.

It was my first time in a full-blown casino. Oh, I had seen a seedy, spiritless casino once, in Beatty, Nevada, on a trip to Death Valley with Schirm and Ken Fletcher, many years



Moshe and I take pictures.

ago. It also masqueraded as a family restaurant and bowling alley. But it no more compared to a major casino than a change of traffic signals does to a coronation. The place I found myself in was as black as the infernal pit that waits for the Godless. All lighting came from either video gambling machines or garish neon tubing, so that whatever wasn't electric purple, scintillating red or psychedelic green, was the absolute blackness of space. Every city block or two, baby spots would illuminate table games or a small lounge area. Overall, it was ghastly – I don't know if the experience was more like being trapped in a bad "Lost in Space" episode or watching the new version of "Tron" while on speed. (I've done one, but not the *other*, you see.)

Along the way I bought a pink Cadillac El Dorado convertible – 1959, a vintage year, the model with the most outrageous tail fins every styled for any automobile, a grill that leaves a Broadway marquee looking drab by comparison, the longest body on any passenger sedan – and, of course, it simply cries out to be painted *flamingo pink*. The '59 Caddy did come in other colours, but after you've seen pink, red and blue simply fail to capture the true essence of America's most flamboyant land yacht. This sucker was so gigantic it actually had two gas tanks! Marilyn Monroe's massive insecurity could be lost in the back seat.

I wish I could say I drove the Caddy home again, but though the casino seemed to go on forever, it wasn't actually large enough for an automobile showroom. I bought my Caddy in a gift shop. It was 1/32 scale and only six inches long. But both doors open, the dash is well detailed, and a chromed V8 motor is visible under the hood. Over dinner, I showed it to Schirm, Stiles and the others in our party, basking in well modulated admiration.



rehearsal at Renvention seemed rushed and sketchy at best. I was herded up onto the lit stage, shown which wing I was supposed to exit by, and given a gentle nudge down a ramp behind the curtain. “Next!”

Then I did a 360-degree tumble down a ramp and ended up on the floor half tangled in the hand ropes.

It’s worth reminding the reader that I began this trip report by saying *that* was moment I knew I was going to lose for the tenth time.

Up until then, I had little enough hope of going home with the Rocket. Friends had told me the “He should have got it last time” factor should kick in this year. It hadn’t the year before, because that worldcon was in Australia. It ought to have been the turn of the homeboys Down Under. Perversely

enough, Ditmar not only didn’t win the Fan Art Hugo in 2010, he wasn’t even on the ballot. Fair dinkum! That made 2011 the first year that voter’s remorse could work in my favour. I was skeptical, but not willing to rain too much on my own parade.

All the same, next time I’m up for the Hugo and plan to attend the worldcon, I’ll carry my lawyer’s card in my wallet.

I made up for my stupidity at the Reception, by eating and drinking as much of the free eats as I could. Not without a twinge of guilt, though. The reception must have cost a pretty penny on the face of it. The food was excellent. I had a ticket for two shots of real booze. There were ice sculptures. And lots more red velour. The last time I bellyached about the cost of worldcon memberships, this was exactly the same sort of lavish, self-indulgent, two-tier discrimination I had in mind. I made a mental note of it to mention in my worldcon report, then stuffed my face with some more deviled crab and chocolate covered strawberries...

I had nothing remarkable to wear at the Hugo Reception, or at any other time during the con. I own no suits, no “good” clothes of any sort, and see no reason to wear anything but my casual duds even while trying to look like I’m someone important enough to be up for an award. I hadn’t noticed quite *how* scruffy I looked, however. I was wearing a pair of shorts that I feel comfortable in, with military pockets all over, a bag full of stuff I didn’t think I could leave behind slung over one shoulder, and my Anticipation t-shirt. But the t-shirt was a pale grey and the shorts a pale tan. I was completely unaware that they gave the impression of pajamas, or a track suit, when worn together. It didn’t help that my myasthenia kept one eye practically closed, while the other strained to see for both. It has also become unadvisable to smile, since I lack

Our waitress said it was just adorable. Perhaps I didn’t mention that, despite a wheelbase rivaling some semi-trailers, the ’59 Caddy is *really* a lady’s car.

After dinner, I had to rush back to the convention center. The entire distance is a blur now... To tell the truth, I’m not sure what it was that was so urgent that I couldn’t have taken a leisurely cruise by boat around the circumference of the casino, and then hired a native caravan to carry me through the convention center.

No doubt I am getting many of the events of the con out of order, there is such a sameness to these treks – the endless expanses of polyester fiber carpeting, cavernous spaces that swallow speech and echo sounds and the endless parade of fan faces I’ve never seen before.

For instance, I know that I attended the Hugo rehearsal. But I’ve forgotten whether it was the day before or the same day as the ceremony. It couldn’t have been the *day after*. All I clearly remember is that it demanded another desperate expedition to get to it. For whatever reason, the Hugo ceremony would be in The Peppermill, an entirely *different* casino and hotel than the one the convention center was connected to. The con had arranged a regular shuttle bus making the trip both ways. The rehearsal and the actual ceremonies would be in a theater on the second floor. The lobby out front of it was decorated in opulent gold brocade and red velour. Yhe Phantom of the Opera would have felt perfectly at home. The actual theater, however, was darkened. One could only sense the plush with the sixth sense.

WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF...

The rehearsals for the Renvention Hugo Ceremony were nothing like the rehearsals for Anticipation’s Hugo Ceremony. Those had been informal, but detailed. The



Hugo Flintstone a.k.a. Chris Garcia.

strategically located teeth. Altogether I'm a mess even at my best, and must have looked like "Mad Eye" Moody, the Auror, in Hogwarts' gym uniform.

Meanwhile, everyone else at the Reception was putting on the dog. I saw Foglio in something that reminded me of a Bratavarian Duke in some Tintin adventure. Many wore suits. Somebody or other was dressed in a Mandarin's robe. Even those who dressed casually did it with élan.

Moshe Feder insinuated himself next to me, like an usher at a funeral. I didn't know he owned such clothes. He had not only a suit on, but double lapels and an aggressively striped tie that I just *knew* wasn't a clip-on. "Taral," he said, "Don't you have anything better you could have worn than that?" My friend! Sure, *make me feel like a bum!* See if I patronize *your* funeral home after I've hanged myself for shame. "Nope. Not a stitch," I answered. "I guess dressing up gives some people pleasure, but for me it just seems like pretending to be someone I'm not." And, for the moment, I believed it.

The Hugo Ceremony itself followed on the footsteps of the Reception. The con made sure nobody got lost or distracted in the casino by providing guides. One even hung back so that I could keep up.

I was shown to a decent seat in front, to the side, but still well positioned to see everything. I watched two would-be comedians waste what seemed like hours of the audience's time with lame in-jokes and routines that wouldn't make a

hyena laugh. I sat and squirmed while watching a music video about fucking Ray Bradbury that was neither good music nor amusing, and saw a run-of-the-mill Dr. Who television episode win the award for Best Short Dramatic Presentation. I witnessed a bit of bubblegum about female viewers who watch Dr. Who win another Hugo, beating out an extensively researched work on Robert A. Heinlein. To make matters worse, I learned that Bill Patterson, the unfortunate author of *RAH: In Dialogue With His Century* developed complications of Diabetes while at the con, and had to have part of his foot surgically removed. *That's* losing the Hugo the hard way. *I* only tumbled off a ramp.

Some good did come of the Hugos that year. Possibly the highlight of the ceremonies was the moment when Robert Silverberg mounted the stage and showed the audience how comedy *ought* to be delivered. But there was one other sublime moment...

"The Hugo voters are clearly creatures of habit," I had said. You might be surprised to learn that I said it to Phil Foglio. Phil and I have had issues between us since his last Hugo, in 1977. They were long-dead issues, I thought, that I certainly lost all passion for. But emotional baggage has a way of coming along for the ride long after the voyage is over. Rumours reached me that the mere mention of my name still had a way of souring Phil's mood. As it happened, his party and mine – me and Schirm, basically – were seated right next to each other during the ceremony. After Phil accepted his second Hugo for "Girl Genius" he announced that he and the crew were withdrawing from consideration for next year's award. I considered this a handsome gesture, and a unique opportunity to end a non-feud that had no reason to continue. When the ceremonies were over, Phil rose to leave, but I was quicker. I shook his hand and congratulated him for a fine sense of fair play. He seemed genuinely surprised and pleased. We spoke briefly after that, and that's when I spoke the immortal line about "creatures of habit."

It was only a minute later that I realized that Phil just might possibly have found that a little ambiguous ... I continue to hope for the best.

Not the least satisfying moment was watching Chris Garcia win the Hugo for Best Fanzine. I have to admit I was surprised. I like *Drink Tank* as well as the next zine, but always regarded it as a mixed bag. One issue might be chock full of delight, and in the issue after there might be only an articles on Mexican wrestlers or reviews of comic books I never read. As Forrest Gump says, *Drink Tank* is like a box of chocolates -- "yo never know what yo'll gyit." Whatever I think of the zine, however, I've *never* seen anyone so obviously gobsmacked by his good fortune as Chris. He didn't just weep, he didn't just babble, he went way over the top, wrapping his arms around the Rocket and rocking back and forth on the stage in a catatonic ball



Dave Kyle, second oldest fan?

until he was led away. I don't think I could stand being that happy. I would kill myself first.

However, I did experience a mildly unfamiliar pleasure when Chris thanked Mo Starkey and me as from the podium as two of the people who helped him win the rocket. Surely I must be the most regular contributor to *Drink Tank* these days, but what faneditor ever thanks contributors while enjoying his moment in the spotlight? I was never happier myself, that day, than that moment. And I lived to say it!

The moment was as close as I felt I'd ever been to my own Hugo... and as close as I might ever *get*. I was reminded that it isn't only *Drink Tank* that I've helped push over the top. If I don't count *that podcast I refuse to name* as a fanzine – and I don't – my writing and art were also in *all of the other* nominated zines in 2010. It had been just the same the year before. And the year before *that...* except for *Plokta*. I admit, I've never contributed to *Plokta*. And it was the same even the year before *that...* except for *Plokta*. Having aided so many fine, deserving people like Chris, Claire Briarly, Mark Plummer and Mike Glycer to get their due, don't you think some day I should at least be allowed to take a Hugo home of my own... just for a month, maybe? I *promise* I'll mail it back.

I noticed at some point during the ceremonies that Schirm had gone missing from the seat next to me. When all was done, I went looking for him and found Schirm outside in the lounge, reading. Apparently, he'd had a bellyful of the Hugos and decided he didn't need to hear any more. I knew how he felt. Taken altogether, I'd heard enough myself to last another year.

However, I wasn't finished with the Hugo quite yet.

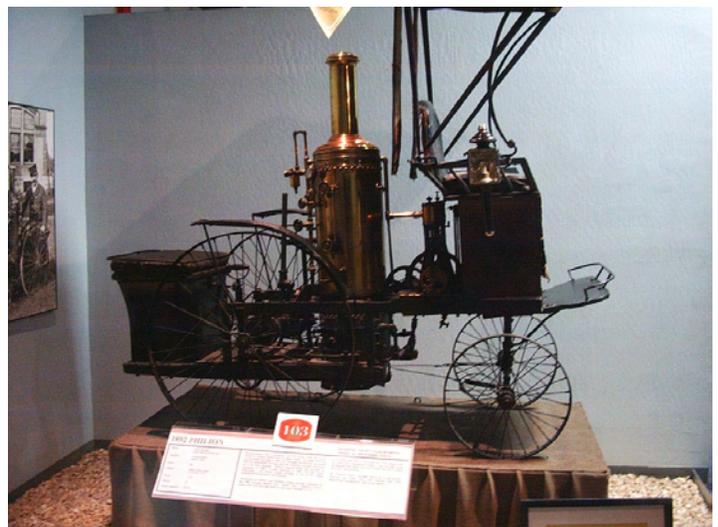
As the end of the con rolled closer, I wondered when I would be given the customary pin that nominees receive. I had gotten virtually all of mine by mail and wasn't familiar with the procedure. I might have brought one of the nine I had at home, but since the fool things fall off if you so much as look down at them, I never wore them at all. Instead, I had scanned one of the pins with *Photoshop*, created eight copies of the image and pasted them up in a row on a red background, then printed out two copies. Each read "Nine Times Loser." One I wore myself. The other I gave to Steve Stiles, which he proudly wore. After the Hugos were presented, one or both of us could flip it over to the other side, which had 10 pins instead of 9, and read "Ten Times Loser." As it happened, we *both* flipped our badges over.

I noticed, however, that Steve was wearing one *real* pin along with the ones printed on his badge. He said it was the one for this year, given to him by Renvention. With a sinking feeling, I said that I still hadn't gotten mine! Slightly panicky and a touch resentful, I went down to the Information desk next morning on the last day of the con. "Where is my pin?"

"In your registration envelope."

"What?"

"It would have been in the envelope with your program book, ribbons and other extras."





Virginia City — a ghost town for the living.

“Oh Gawd!” I thought. I could have been wearing mine just like Steve all this time. Naturally, I didn’t have the envelope with me. I had to wait until I got back to the hotel room that evening to shake the stupid little shit out of the envelope onto the bedspread. Why didn’t somebody *tell* me! I could have thrown the envelope away, thinking it was empty!

I had one or two other bad moments with the pin before I was home. I kept storing it in one place in my luggage, thinking it more sensible, forgetting where it was, then putting it somewhere else after a frantic search. It hasn’t given me any trouble since getting home, thank goodness. But maybe I should go and check now, just to be sure...

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU’RE SICK OF THE CON

Schirm and I had arrived in Reno fairly late Wednesday night, and registered at Renvention on Thursday morning. I had thought to find little going on. Bad guess. There was quite a lot going on. I had not been a regular at Worldcons since the 1970s and had not a clue about the norm in modern times. Never mind Acapulco or Miami, for many fans their week’s vacation every year was the Worldcon. They arrived Wednesday and often stayed until Tuesday the following week.

I didn’t have quite that much time, as my trip had to include the drive to Reno and back to LA, where my flight left. As well, I wanted to spend time in Los Angeles. So Schirm and I left bright and early Monday morning.

Nor can we be said to have been particularly devoted to the con, even during the time we were in Reno.

While it was true that there was a lot of activity on Wednesday, much of it involved setting up the art show and dealers’ room. People were lined up at registration like S-curves in an Alpine car chase. I saw few people I knew

just well enough to say hello, but only one or two stopped to give me the chance before they rushed off again. It must have been much the same for Schirm, because he suggested we see the auto museum instead.

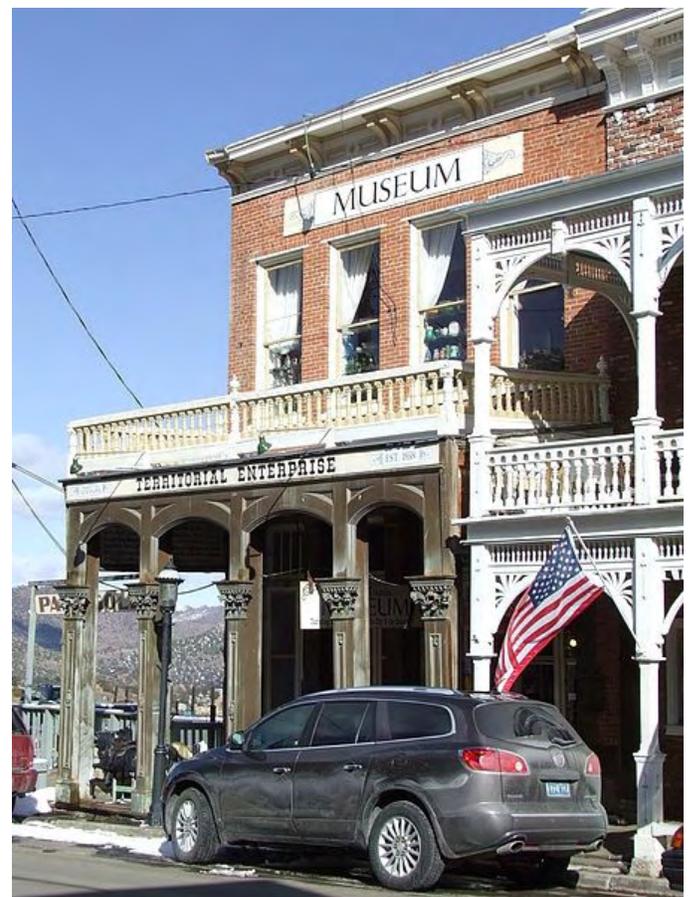
“What auto museum was that?” I asked.

Apparently one of the city’s founding fathers was casino pioneer Bill Harrah. Along with owning half of Reno, he owned one of the world’s largest private automobile collections. After his death, the collection was threatened with auction. Fortunately, the entire collection was donated toward the establishment of the National Automobile Museum. And it was in downtown Reno, not very far from the convention center!

Be honest with me. How many of you thought of bailing out of the con to see it? I didn’t think so... but you *should* have. You can see Joe Siclari anytime... Same with Marty Cantor or Linda Bushyager. Even Dave Kyle will probably live another year to be seen at Chicon. But to see the National Automobile Museum is an experience to be treasured, since few people find any reason to go to Reno twice. (Even if Arnie Katz *does* want you to.)

Schirm and I were a little early. We parked and sat on a

Mark Twain once worked for the *Territorial Enterprise*.



bench in front of the entrance, and watched the mighty Truckee River flow by. The Truckee was a cheerful little brook – a few buckets would carry it away, but it flowed briskly and looked just as clear as a mountain stream... which it was. It was crystal clear and invited you to dip your hands in for a drink. I suspect that it would have been highly unwise to do so, however. Besides, someone came to unlock the door.

The first sight to greet us inside the door was a puke-green, fiberglass-bodied motorcycle of uncertain provenance. Schirm was beside himself with joy. He told me it was a long lost Ed “Big Daddy” Roth creation.

“Big Daddy” didn’t just paint nifty looking purple monsters covered with warts behind the wheel of a blown and chopped 1937 Ford Anglia, he also built some of the most iconic hot-rods ever. There was the *Beatnik Bandit*, *Tweedy Pie*, *The Outlaw*, *Mysterio* and so many others that they sometimes got lost. The motorcycle that excited Schirm so much seemed to be one of the “lost.”

Once properly in the lobby, I saw something an even more impressive example of “Big Daddy’s” work – the actual *Beatnik Bandit* itself! I took a number of photos to help me with someday detailing the unbuilt 1/24 scale *Revell* model kit I had at home. The lobby also contained a vintage 1990s Corvette ZR-1 that some lucky museum-goer would win if he made a donation. On the other side of the room was a gold plated DeLorean. (From class to crass.)

Once in the museum proper, we found there were four



large galleries. The first was dedicated to the pioneering years of automotive history, the Burgess Shale era of four-wheeled vehicles, of which not all had four wheels. One of the first exhibits was of an 1892 Philios. It was so basic that it resembled an automobile in roughly the same way a roller skate resembles an ATV. The four wire wheels supported a canopy-covered buggy seat up front, a tiller, a brass boiler and smoke stack. There an seat out in the open in back for an engineer, who apparently fed coal from a basket to the fire. Technically, it was more of a steam locomotive. It was exactly this sort of exotica that Schirm took the greatest pleasure in. If it looked impractical, comical or plain bizarre, Schirm dragged me over to it for a long look. I tended to be more interested in models I’d heard of and had some historical importance, such as the Stutz Bearcat and 1912 Mercer. There was a Stanley Steamer, naturally, but not the famous runabout – this one was a bus, seating ten or twelve. The hood had been removed to show the steam boiler, whose ceramic body looked like nothing so much as a large jug of moonshine.

The second room displayed cars from the 1930s and ‘40s – the era of elegance. Garden variety Packards were a dime a dozen. Of more interest was the pearly-silver Mercedes 500K Special Roadster, the slinkiest and sexiest car made in five decades. There was also the Kaiser Allstate, a car you could in theory order from the Sears catalog, at least two examples of the supercharged 1937 Cord 812, the incredible 1948 Tucker Topedo, Lana Turner’s futuristic, custom-built 1941 Chrysler Newport, a 1937 Lewis Airomobile that looked just like something from a cartoon and many, many other fascinating sets of wheels.

The next exhibit hall was for the 1950s. Not to be outdone, there were Mustangs, Chargers, Cadillacs, Ramblers, Corvettes and all manner of more modern cars. But as I grew up with these models, I don’t seem to have taken any photos – all except for one I took of the magnificently miscalculated 1958 Edsel Citation.

The final hall was something of a catch-all. Schirm and I left our eye-tracks on a Bonneville Flats rocket car, a priceless McLaren Can Am racer in its orange livery, one of Don Garlit’s famous Wynn’s Charger “rail” style dragsters (its engine was larger than an entire Smart car), a Mini-Cooper that had been sectioned to make a two-seat coupe, and about 50 other vehicles that I can’t recall. Schirm was particularly impressed by one old flivver that had been used to cross Asia in an early century competition – it still bore the dust of the Gobi desert.

All good things end, and – in spite of over 200 cars in the entire collection – so did the National Automobile Museum. I insisted on spending a little more of Alan’s hard-earned money on a 1/18 replica of the 1936 Mercedes 500K. It would present a challenge to stuff in my luggage on the way home, but I had been wanting one for a long time and this was first to come my way.

Every red-blooded boy ought to know who “Big Daddy” Roth was. He only created the monster hot rod genre single-handed! He began by painting vans, then for a larf spray-painted one of his signature monster figures on a t-shirt. Soon, the entire nation was wearing monster hot-rod t-shirts. One even turned up in an episode of *Leave it to Beaver*, in which he learned yet another one of those stupid lessons of the era about how you should never, *never* stand out. After the t-shirts came comic magazines like *Hot Rod Cartoons*, *Drag Cartoons* and *CARToons*, that inspired thousands of impressionable kids to grow up to be artists. (Me, for one.) “Big Daddy” even created “Rat Fink.” Oh, come on, don’t tell me you never heard of “Rat Fink?” Do you even know what a hot rod is? *This* is a hot rod.



Schirm and I felt equally footloose the second day of the con. Instead of joining a dinner party, Schirm suggest a drive to Lake Tahoe, about an hour away over the western mountains. I think Schirm had done some scouting around Tahoe as a kid, or just been out that way with his family. The lure of going back was essentially nostalgic. I had never seen the lake before, so for me it was a new pin on the map. Our drive through the mountains was drop dead *gorgeous*.

The country around the lake reminded me in odd ways of cottage country north of Toronto. Not that we have any mountain-rimmed lakes, but we do have lakes and the pines and rusticated cabins with stacks of firewood out back were all very familiar. Not so the \$2,000,000 price tags even the meanest cabin probably fetched.

Where I tend to moon over cars, Schirm moons over rustic

homes. We couldn’t pass some dilapidated, wood-frame cabin with a half dozen wood piles on the front lawn that he didn’t want to move into. Like many people who live in a big city, he yearned to try life in an isolated community, surrounded by trees and the smell of fireplaces burning resinous wood. He had given in to similar wistful thoughts when we were in Littlerock [[CA]]. Usually, the impulse lasts only until the romantic urbanite tries to use a cell phone, or discovers he can’t get cable or internet. In Schirm’s case, his flat over the garage is nearly as primitive as anything we saw in the mountains anyway, and he has neither a cell phone nor a computer. Schirm *might just* be the exception that proves the rule. I used to have similar illusions about living in the country, but I got over them when I realized that the city has too many attractions for me that I hold dear. Photocopy machines. Dollar stores. Public transit. Pizzerias. You *can* compensate for the inadequacies of life in the country... but only if you’re *rich*



enough.

Schirm nosed the car down a final lane to park within a short distance of the lake, and we got out. We no sooner had our shoe leather in the pine needles and sand than Schirm found a fellow dog-owner to engage with in a long and pointless conversation. I spent my time photographing the lake in the remaining minutes of Sierra twilight.

I believe we had dinner in South Shore. The imaginatively named town seemed actually along the west shore of Tahoe, as far as I could tell, so possibly we ate in Stateline instead. They really needed someone with more sense of poetry when they named those towns. We had a little trouble settling on a place, but after driving through town two or three times chose one that suited us. It was also a casino, naturally. Where else *do* people in Nevada eat? But the food was good, and we were quite at home in the timbered dining room atmosphere.

It was still daylight when we tucked away the last of our meal, but the hour's drive back to Reno saw night fall. It was still early enough that we returned to the convention casino-hotel to look for parties. Schirm had the advantage over me in that he was able to get around pretty easily, while I had to toil at it. I'm not naturally as sociable as Schirm either, who seems as happy in a crowd as a tick in a bath house. Most nights of con partying tend to blur together in my memory at the best of times, but a few things stand out. I won't guarantee I can sort them to their

proper parties, or even the right nights.

One party had fabulous food – three kinds of chicken. I think perhaps it was a Texas party.

I recall bumping into Julie Czerneda and being utterly astonished that she recalled me from Anticipation. Unfortunately, I failed to recognize Eugene Heller from Anticipation, and mistook him for someone I was more familiar with. They actually do bear an uncanny resemblance. Used to being mistaken for his doppelganger, it was my good luck that Eugene was amused.

Mark Plummer and I had a pleasant conversation in what I took to be the British Worldcon bid's party. I also got my first real look at Roger Bacon, who was serving bar. Roger seems to be the hit of parties, but it was Mark – shy and soft-spoken – that I was drawn to. Steve Stiles was a little the worse for drink, I thought, but was capable enough to handle my camera and take a picture of me wearing his *Corflu* t-shirt.

The last day of the con for Schirm and I was Sunday – as mentioned. But we didn't stick around the con. Neither of us were big on programming, and we had seen the dealers' area and art show over and over. Sometime in mid-afternoon, Schirm suggested we drive over to Virginia City. Virginia City was a different sort of ghost town than Bodie. For one thing, thousands of people still lived in it. It was a ghost town all the same, because most of the once thriving gold rush town, largest in the west after San Francisco, had fallen into decay, and the remaining population seems to live mainly on the tourist trade.

There was no shortage of tourists. They thronged the main street from one end to the other, a distance of about a mile. Both sides of the street were busy with bars, gift shops, mineralogical stores, bars, candy shops, taquerias, restaurants, bars, music halls, gun shops and bars. I may exaggerate slightly – I'm not sure if there were any actual taquerias. Did I mention the bars? They advertised authentic gold rush flavour, but the music that blasted out through the swinging doors was more Nashville and unquestionably late 20th century "good old boy" tub-thumping noise that I was happy to stay away from. We did enter one such fine establishment – the *Bucket of Blood Saloon* – to see a famous poker table. Either someone won \$100,000 at it and lost the entire fortune five minutes later, or was shot. Likely both. No table in the Wild West ever got famous for the food served on it.

The buildings along the main drag were all in the High Wild West style of architecture, of course. They were about half authentic, but primped and painted like \$2 whores, even to the quaint touch of lace curtains in windows. What may not be widely appreciated, though, is that this is as the original inhabitants would have wished. Reality in Gold Rush country might have more closely resembled the set of

a Spaghetti Western, but it was not the “look” that people of the time aimed for. There was a boardwalk along both sides of the street, awnings over most of the length of it, and many buildings had a false front to match those that had genuine second floors. The effect was somewhat spoiled by the non-stop line of Hondas, Subarus, GM SUVs and German BMWs slowly cruising by.

The crowd on the boardwalks was orderly, but – on the off-chance that anyone got out of line – there was a police presence that was just as colourful as the town. Schirm and I stopped to talk with a Deputy Sheriff who wore the traditional Boss of the Plains “cowboy” hat, boots, spurs, black shades and a whopping huge Smith & Wesson. I dropped a hint that I was interested in firearms, though owned only toys and replicas. The Deputy very obligingly slipped the .45 from his holster a ways to let me inspect it. I made obligatory sounds to show I was impressed, and the cannon slid quietly back into its leather resting place. A cop in Toronto, if he had shown me his piece, would have had to spend four hours filling out paperwork to explain himself to his superiors, and would then likely have drawn a reprimand.

The reader may know of Virginia City from the old 1960’s TV Western, *Bonanza*. The genuine article could not have been more different. Apart from the fresh paint and the Subarus, the real Virginia City is built on the side of a mountain, with rugged peaks looming over it right behind. The town tilts steeply, like a washboard in a tub, with the main drag near the upper end and the residential area lower down in the suds. From where we stood on C Street, there was a clear view of the eastern peaks rimming the horizon. On one knob of rock in the middling distance were two of the city’s boot hills, the Masonic and Mt. Saint Mary cemeteries. Evident in the farther distance, were

mine tailings, mills and the rail head.

The Virginia City known to the Cartwrights, however, is a set somewhere in Hollywood, as flat as a parking lot, with no evidence of mining activity whatever. It regularly stood in for other small towns in *The Rifleman*, *Bat Masterson*, *Gunsmoke*, *Have Gun Will Travel*, *Maverick*, *The Virginian*, *Rawhide* and every other television Western on the airwaves. The trees are a nice touch whenever the plot demands a lynching, but totally out of place on a desert mountainside.

Unfortunately, Schirm and I arrived rather late in the afternoon. The sun was already going down behind the western peaks, and shops were beginning to close. We had a bite to eat in a likely looking place with a terrace overlooking the valley – the taco basket really hit the spot – then we moved out.

We didn’t fancy the “Opera House,” which visibly trembled from corn-pone music played at supernova volume. The mines and museums were closed for the day. But we found the store built over the original premises of the *Territorial Enterprise* still open. *The Enterprise* was to Virginia City what the *Epitaph* was to Tombstone: its only newspaper. The chief difference between them is that in the 1860s a naïve young Samuel Clemens arrived in Virginia City to work for the *Territorial Enterprise*, and thus the future Mark Twain was introduced to the literary world.

The original building on C street was destroyed by a fire, from what I understand, but the presses and type in the basement were untouched. A new building was erected over the site after the fire, and serves in the present day as a gift shop. However, if you give the proprietor \$4, he will lead you to an inconspicuous door in the side of the store,



I got in the habit of collecting figures years ago, when I visited LA more often, and had been given the Cook’s Tour of a number of animation studios by friends. The pros were all up to their elbows in one sort of toy or another, and cartoon figures were understandably popular. Imitating them seemed the thing to do at the time, and I do have some quite nice examples from *ReBoot*, *the Muppet Show*, *Treasure Planet*, Tim Burton movies, a number of classic NHL hockey players and the Beatles from *Yellow Submarine*. I even have one of Dr. Evil, and the two McKenzie Brothers. Not to mention a small number of original sculptures of some of my own characters, made for me by artists I know. But at this point I’m merely showing off.



Alan Rosenthal and Schirm on the veranda in Sonapanoma...

For that matter, the altitude of Reno itself may explain why I was not the *only one* having difficulty negotiating the endless corridors of the convention center and the labyrinthine caverns of the casino. Quite a number of overweight and graying fans could be heard complaining about the distances they had to cover on foot. At 4,500 feet above sea level, the barometric pressure at Reno doesn't compare with that of either mining town – but is respectably rarified, nonetheless.

Not that such altitudes would have bothered me ten years ago. In 1984, Schirm and I climbed the Mt. Whitney Trail to something like 11,000 feet before we began to lose awareness of where our feet were going, and decided it was a good time to turn back. But the distance between 10,000 feet and 11,000 feet is nothing compared to the distance between age 50 and age 60. Especially if one suffers from a neuro-muscular disorder.

One wonders whether the Mexico City Syndrome will be felt by many during the upcoming Corflu? Of course, we ought to have the answer long before my Worldcon report goes to press.

That evening was the last one at the con for Schirm and I. Tired though we were from the day's activities, we were determined to hit a few parties before hitting the sack. Most of the party rooms were in the hotel tower attached to the casino. Naturally, this was as far from the convention center parking lot as it was possible to be and still remain in Nevada. To spare me the walk through the casino, Schirm dropped me at the hotel entrance. There I waited for him to return before we ventured to explore the party floors. And I waited. And waited.

The first half-hour wasn't so bad. I talked with one of the limousine chauffeurs and added to my store of useless knowledge the fact that stretch limos *do* have seat belts, but the passengers almost never wear them. As the second half-hour began to stretch into a third, I began to worry in buckets. What could have happened to Schirm? It wasn't *that* long a walk for a normal person. I imagined him trying to walk *around* the casino, perhaps, and getting hit in traffic on one of the busy four-lane streets that seemed all there was in this part of Reno. If something *had* happened, I was in a very tight corner, with little money, nobody to phone, and no idea where the Hawthorn Hotel was. It was looking more and more like time to panic ... until I had a thought. It was one I should have had an hour or more earlier, but it never occurred to me until then that maybe Schirm hadn't actually *said* he'd come back for me. If that was the case... the bastard had been up in the hotel, enjoying himself at the parties the entire time I had been sitting on a cold, metal bench out front! I went to the desk to ask how to find the elevators, went upstairs and methodically searched the parties. Fortunately, when I

a rope will be dropped and you will be allowed to climb down a rickety wooden staircase into the actual press room where Mark Twain worked. You can not only see, but touch the desk where he wrote his early humorous stories. You cannot actually climb onto the stone composting table where Twain and his workmates sometimes took an afternoon snooze, however. The proprietor frowns on it. In its day, the pressroom was a dusty, dim cavern of a workplace, with undressed stone walls and full of clanking, steam driven machinery. Lit with kerosene lamps, it must have seemed like the smoking lounge for Hell.

I was particularly happy to see the *Enterprise*, such as it was. Years before, I had also seen Mark Twain's childhood home in a Hannibal, Missouri museum. Now all that remains is to put a check mark against the townhouse he briefly lived in while in New York, and another against his Connecticut home, Stormfield. Twain also lived briefly in Buffalo, New York, but I believe I have been somewhere in the general vicinity of it... and that's close enough.

I was less happy to learn that the elevation of Virginia City was around 6,150 feet. This was a factor I had not taken into account when trying to fathom my inexplicable fatigue everywhere I went. Yes, it was *mainly* due to my Myasthenia ... but I hadn't been this badly off back home in Toronto. The lakeshore of Toronto, however, is a meager 249 feet above sea level. I suspect the tip of the mast of the *U.S.S. Nimitz* stands nearly as high above sea level as that!

But if the altitude of Virginia City accounted for my rubbery legs, what of Bodie – the ghost town Schirm and I visited on the drive up to Reno? Who knew it was at a stratospheric 8,400 feet! No wonder I was reduced to stopping to gasp for breath every couple of minutes.

found him, I was too relieved to see that Schirm wasn't roadkill to kill him myself.

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN... IN FACT YOU HAVE TO

Schirm and I dallied over our last breakfast at the Hawthorne. I love breakfast, a fact that likely comes as a surprise to people who have any knowledge of my lifestyle. The fact is, the best breakfast foods are expensive, and deeply inimical to your health. Ask a dietician. You'll find that some sort of boiled paper pulp or chaff is their breakfast of choice. So, sadly, it's a meal that I only give lip service to. But offer me bacon, ham, beef sausage, three kinds of eggs, pancakes, buttered toast, bagels with cream cheese, muffins, rolls, fruit cup, bananas, oranges or apples, coffee, hot chocolate, tomato juice, orange juice, grapefruit juice, prune juice and an after dinner-mint, and my response will be "Bring it on! All of it!"

That was more or less the description of my last breakfast at the Hawthorn.

It was on that last day, too, that I discovered I had been mailing home postcards with only a single U.S. stamp that was insufficient postage for Canada. The clerk at the desk who took my money, then my card, seemed unaware of this – as though the hotel had never had guests from out-of-country before. Maybe the woman at the desk was thrown off because I spoke English like an American and didn't have a thick accent to identify me as a barbarian. Or maybe her job description had only read, "must be able to make beds and leave a chocolate on pillows?" She was nice about it when I pointed out the problem, but the damage was done.

Once I started using *two* stamps, my cards began arriving back home.

Schirm had fretted about the route home again throughout most of the convention. It seemed a simple issue to me – go back the way we came, or plot a different route. Why it took more than a minute to think about, I'm not sure, but in the end our decision was made for us. Alan Rosenthal, one of the authors of my trip to Reno, invited us to drop by his place on the way back to LA.

I really didn't have much idea where the place was, however. Somewhere in central California, between Reno



*It's not the reconnaissance I mind, it's filling
out all that paperwork afterwards....*

and San Francisco, was as close as I could point to on a map. Not that I hadn't asked more than once, but the answer was never as helpful as you might think.

"It's on Hill Road, not far from the town of Glen Ellen."

"Where's Glen Ellen?"

"Well, it's a few miles from the city of Sonoma."

"Sonoma? Is that in Mexico?"

"No, Sonoma, California. That's about 15 miles by major highway from Napa,"

"And where is Napa?"

"In the Napa Valley, of course, About a two-hour drive from Santa Rosa."

"Sigh. And *where* is Santa Rosa?"

"About *three* hours from downtown San Francisco. Got it?"

"Yep." Clearly, at some point the attempt to pin down Allan's location began to get me *farther* from San Francisco than closer. "Just one thing... *where do you live?*"

Fortunately, Schirm was doing all the driving. I have a license, but his gold, Honda Fit was a stick shift, and I only drive automatic. The directions seemed fairly elemental to him, and we only got lost three or four times on the Napa Highway between Sonoma and Timbuktu. As we penetrated farther and farther into the Central California wilderness, my heart sank. I had been picturing a quaint one-floor Craftsman in cottage country. But we were clearly one-step away from clearing the mesquite with machetes and rolling pumpkin-sized rocks off the road. Finally, Schirm did a sudden left-hand turn into the most primitive lane yet. It was only barely wide enough for the car and consisted of two ruts between a wire fence on the driver's side and raw brush on the other. It led a few hundred yards up a gentle slope and came to an end in front of... a shack.

That was my first impression. I next became sensible of the junkyard of rusting wreckage of old iron machinery strewn about. Nothing major – no abandoned steam broilers from the *Lusitania*. No obsolete printing presses the size of Greyhound buses. Most of the junk seemed to be broken backyard hand pumps, truck rims, broken metal framework, oil drums, as well as cogs, levers and bearings of unknowable mechanical origin.

The next thing we noticed were probably the goats. Most were in a large fenced meadow to one side, and could be safely ignored. Two or three were wandering loose in the front of the house, though, and seemed interested in whether cotton and polyester blend tasted as good as salt grass.

There was also a Big Friendly Dog. I immediately forgot his real name, and called him Meathead as long as we were there.

Although I described the house as a shack, it's more fair to say that it is a collection of shacks. The main building is a square, clapboard frame house, one floor, painted white with green shutters, and has a saggy front porch that is about as bouncy as a trampoline. Inside, however, the main room is surprisingly modern and neat. Alan and Jeanne have been working steadily on the place since moving in – the front room was largely complete and tastefully furnished. Their dinner table was at the far side of the room, against the sliding glass doors. In one corner stood the computer work desk and a TV. A couple of couches occupied the middle of the room. In one of them, Martin Morse Wooster was asleep. That was never fully explained, but it was no stranger than the goats, I suppose.

To the right of the entrance was the door to the kitchen. That was in constant use, and had therefore had less renovation done. There was a door to a bathroom, but we were cautioned not to use it as the toilet didn't work. Still another door led to a second bathroom. But we were to use that bathroom only if we wanted a shower. If we wanted a

toilet, there was a *third* and distant bathroom that could only be reached through the kitchen. That was alright, because Schirm and I would be bunking down in a separate cabin that *also* could only be reached through the kitchen.

Schirm and I were lodged in what I dubbed "the south wing." It was a small but well-kept-up cabin that was long enough for a sleeping bag laid out on the floor. At the far end was a mattress on a ledge just under the ceiling. I got the mattress instead of a sleeping bag because I'd had persistent trouble sleeping since I left Toronto. It proved a mixed blessing, however, since I had to climb down from the heights every time I needed to make an nocturnal visit to the can, tip-toeing past Schirm on the floor. His nose was about 18 inches from the cabin door.

I wasn't able to relax once out of the cabin, either. The 15-foot trip from cabin to the main house's breezeway was a no-man's-land of cables, drain pipes and sagging wooden steps that felt as though they would give way at any moment. You reached the "third" bathroom only to discover it had two doors... neither of which would fully close and one of which had a screen window with no blinds.

Surprisingly, the bathroom at our disposal was in what appeared to be yet *another* out-building, the one that also contained the larger of two bedrooms. It was currently in use as a store room, and full of boxes. Alan and Jeannie preferred the "master bedroom" outdoors. During the summer months, the weather was always warm and it rarely rained, so they dragged the double-bed outside to sleep. Trees and brush provided all the privacy needed.

There was a tiny "third" bedroom where Martin was sleeping, but just where on the map it fit eludes me.

Our stay with Alan and Jeannie was maybe not quite as much of an adventure as it sounds. Schirm, in fact, was charmed with the rustic quality. Schirm himself lives in a rusticated setting, in a loft over the garage that is only two steps up from a duck blind. My own tastes run to floor-to-ceiling walls, roofs that don't leak, floors that don't sag underfoot, and doors that don't shake and fly open again when slammed. I'm also not partial to mold or mildew, and have issues with the aesthetic qualities of rusted scrap metal. In other words, I was just short of appalled that anyone with Allan's exquisitely urban upbringing and bookish sensibilities found his country home so perfectly suited to his taste. I like roughing it, but *living* in nature is ... well ... *unnatural*.

I gave the place the blessing of a nickname. Even Jeannie and Alan seem to have taken up calling their rural paradise *District 9*.

By then, I'd been getting inadequate sleep for a bloody long time. The deficit caught up with me all at once the

next day. I got up, had breakfast, and promptly went back to my cabin to fall asleep again. For most of the one full day we spent at *District 9*, I was out like a light. Schirm had a small adventure, however.

While I napped, he and Alan drove to the Jack London home. Schirm seems to be a big fan of London, and wanted to see where the writer lived. He had been talking about it all the way from Reno. To be honest, the author never meant anything to me and I haven't read a single one of his stories – so I didn't feel as though I'd miss much by taking a snooze. Still, I was surprised to hear later that it wasn't a *house* at all. It had *burned down* ages ago, and all that remained to see was a foundation – four stone stubs of walls in the grass where the house once stood. Be that as it may, Schirm enjoyed the excursion. Next day we were on the road again.

As it was more or less the most direct route to LA anyway, we had agreed to take Alan to San Francisco for a job interview. The drive through the final, coastal ranges was inspiring – particularly when we rounded a bend and saw the headland of Marin Country, capped with a dazzling white mantle of fog. Under a bright sun and deep blue sky, the fog worked its way around the bluff and intertwined itself with the cables of the Golden Gate Bridge in a breathtaking photo op. Because we were in a moving car, I couldn't take the picture...

Then we were crossing the bridge and in downtown San Francisco for only the second time in my life.

It is a beautiful city, full of character. It has all the 19th century architecture that survives in Toronto, but San Francisco is built on a topography that makes Toronto look like a lumpy lawn. Alan took us to a busy breakfast place he liked with wooden booths and tin ceiling. There we had a last meal together.

By noon, Schirm and I were making the miles fall behind us. The way home followed the Central Valley's southern end and provided much tamer sights than we had become used to. But we were winding down from the con and many hundreds of miles of travel already. We were content to relax and let the low hills and cultivated fields roll by. At one point Schirm turned off the road, and surprisingly quickly the landscape turned starkly barren. It could have been mistaken for Mars, except for the clear blue sky. Schirm wanted to take a look at the San Luis Dam.

Nestled among the bleak sandstone hills was a respectably large body of water. The two million acre-foot San Luis Reservoir is the largest off-stream reservoir in the United



Schirm. photographed by Taral, at one of the last meetings in the old LASFS clubhouse on Burbank Blvd. in North Hollywood.

States. I say respectably large because it was in the middle of a wind-swept range of desert mountains. To be honest, I look out on more water every time I go out on my balcony and view the western end of Lake Ontario. The dam itself, though, was world-class. We goggled at it a while, then went back to the car. The stop was brief as we wanted to be home, if at all possible, by nightfall.

We nearly made it. We were speeding through Big Tujunga Canyon in the San Gabriels just as the sun began to flash between the peaks. By the time we were in the Valley it was dark.

THE LAST DOG IS HUNG AT LASFS

Most likely the origin of the “dead dog party” comes from the expression, “when the last dog is hung.” My references are divided on the subject, but the dog in question is probably the human sort, as in “when the last desperado is strung up by his neck.” Not that the very last meeting of LASFS at its old clubhouse resembled a necktie party. It was somewhat more cheerful than that.

I had been to one other LASFS meeting, far back in the dim mists of time. 1984, to be more specific. Not much had changed, except that the folding chairs now faced the back of the room instead of one side. The faces were all greyer as well, more grizzled, more deeply lined, and the bodies more adipose.

Schirm and I arrived too early to find a crowd. Among the few bodies present, I recognized Marty Cantor. A couple of other members sat at a table at the back of the room, going

through a photo album. Someone else sat at the door, counting money in a cash box. One or two seats were occupied by additional unfamiliar faces. While Schirm renewed old acquaintances, I took a few photos of the nearly empty meeting hall, the stacked boxes along the walls, the narrow closet from where a now-dusty mimeo and Xerox copier once issued numerous fanzines, the empty soft drink machine, and the cheap wood grain paneling.

The old LASFS clubhouse was two buildings, actually. Freehafer Hall, where meetings were held, was a cinder block square in the back lot. In a previous life, I think it must have been an auto body shop. The building fronting the street was known as Building 4SJ. Its maze of tiny little rooms contained a library, a sitting room, a space with a typewriter and what else I have no idea. I never saw anyone spend any time in the front building on either occasion I visited. It more closely resembled the sort of claustrophobic little shop where you ordered 1,000 printed business cards for only \$4.98. Between the two buildings was an open space paved with asphalt.

Someone had set up tables in the open space and spread the contents of a number of boxes out for display. It was an impressive selection of DVDs at *very* reasonable prices. I bought a boxed set of *Top Cat* cartoons that I hadn't seen since they first aired on TV, a copy of *Bubba-Hotep* to replace my videotape and one or two other things.

Maybe LASFS should reconstitute itself as a flea-market?



Slowly, the meeting hall filled up.

Funny how it is. All those people that I'd known in Los Angeles, yet aside from Marty the only other one I met that night at the last meeting of LASFS was Milt Stevens. Where was everyone? As well, you might expect a memorable program on a momentous occasion such as this. I guess that's just not the way LASFS works... Instead, they argued about what parking would be like at the brand new clubhouse.

Schirm was going to introduce me as a guest, but was rather officiously ruled out of order by someone at the front. Nor was he invited to speak up later. That was fine by me. I had the opportunity to whisper in his ear that I'd as soon not be the center of attention – not that I object to it on principle, but I like attention to be meaningful. I suspected that not one in ten of the strangers in the room would know who I was, or could possibly care. So Schirm kept his peace.

My plans were thwarted, however, when I was announced by one of the talking heads up front. I forgot that one of them had gone around with a book and studiously took my name down when she realized I was new there. She must have been the Official Club Visitor Announcer. Nor did spelling my name phonetically for the record prevent it from being badly mispronounced when she read it back at a moment of her own choosing. It didn't bother me – I was distracted from my own embarrassment by the sight of Schirm turning two or three shades of red, each deeper than the one before.

It wasn't long before Schirm decided the meeting had gotten to be too much of a downer and suggested we leave. No doubt that's when the cases of free champagne were opened, and the naked dancing girls entered from the door marked "fire exit," to reveal a surprise guest appearance by Ray Bradbury.

There's little more to tell. I kicked around LA for another couple of days, limited somewhat in what we could do by my bad back and fatigue. We went to Little Tokyo to check out a store specializing in anime toys, and picked out one that was attractive but not too outrageously expensive. Anime figures serve no useful purpose, but are appealing eye-candy... and just very slightly better than living in an entirely female-less environment.

Schirm took me to a place called *Amoeba* on the last day of my stay. "What's a meebea?" I had to ask. It turned out to be the most amazing place to buy music and movies – I praised it as "*The Honest Ed's* of popular entertainment." If you don't know what *Honest Ed's* is, then you don't know the ultimate experience in discount retail, and have probably not read *Scott Pilgrim*. But where *Honest Ed's* will sell anything from shower curtains to butter dishes to snow tires to footwear – Schirm once bought a sturdy pair

of brogans there on one visit to Toronto – *Amoeba* is strictly for entertainment. Once through the door, I went nuts with what was left of the money I had from Alan.

How could I not, with classic albums such as Lene Lovich's *Stateless*, Devo's *Are We Not Men?*, XTC's *Drums and Wires*, and Talking Heads' *More Songs About Buildings and Food* going as cheaply as \$3.99? I would doubtlessly brought back far more music with the remaining money than I did, but I hit unexpected paydirt in the DVD section.

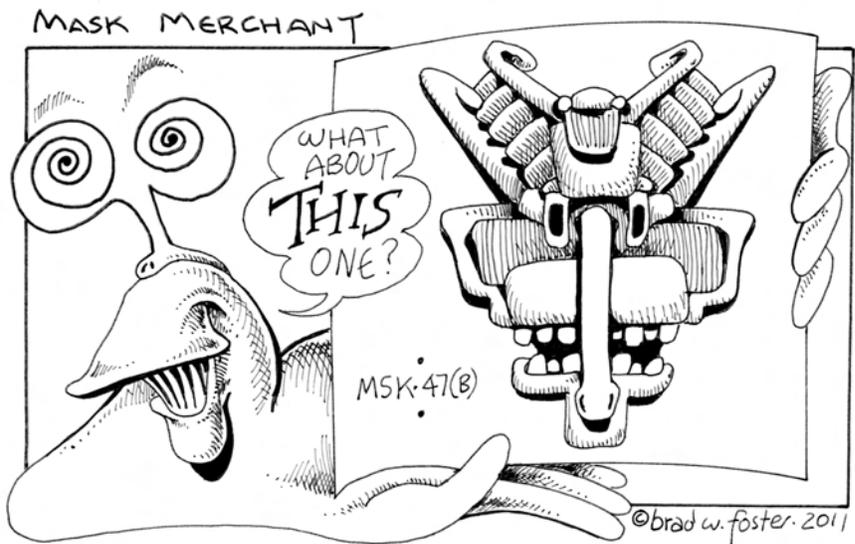
One of the ten television series I most desperately wanted on DVD was the 1960s sitcom, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. For years, I had a couple of public domain collections on VHS, each with three or four randomly chosen episodes. Then about a year ago, I found volume 1 of the complete *Dick Van Dyke Show* for twenty-five bucks at an *HMV* store, just before the local franchise was closed. I was never able to find another volume of the six seasons, and ordering it from a downtown store would certainly cost nearer \$50... each... if not more.

Almost the first thing I laid my eyes on when I went the upstairs level of *Amoeba* was seasons 2, 3, 4 and 5! Each at an extremely reasonable \$25! I'm the sort of person who only sings a single paean to the god of luck... and then I broke out in a sweat because I couldn't find the 6th and final season. Still, it was a fabulous find, and I hesitated only minutes before grabbing that there was. I calculated that if I put most of the music back, used up what was left of Alan's money, and then dipped into my own saved-up cash reserve, I could buy all four seasons.

I went home a broke but consumption-satiated man. Now I live for the day I can return to *Amoeba* with a significant roll of bills and show the checkout clerks what spending is *really all about!*

Incidentally, *Amoeba* has a web page: <http://www.amoeba.com/> Live a little and splurge.

We had just time to squeeze in a couple of visits. One of them was up to Monrovia, to have lunch with Mike Glycer. The other was to Mike Kazalah's home, an animator I knew casually, but who was an old bud of Schirm's. Like me, this Mike is a bit of a nut for old cars, and has a huge collection of Hot Wheels. I must have still been awful short of sleep, because I seem to remember dozing off in the living room while the others were reminiscing about Ralph Bakshi in the studio. The clock was clearly ticking down the last hours of my stay.



The flight back was mainly a repetition of the flight out, with one small difference. I had to make a connection in Montreal for a flight to Toronto. Also, having overspent while in LA, I didn't have the money given me by Alan to take a taxi home from the downtown island airport. I dragged my shit up to Queen street, a distance of about a quarter of a mile, and took a streetcar instead. It was a mistake, but I would do it again since I had little choice. Finally, it was all over but the unpacking.

The last trip report I wrote, I concluded with a moral. I'll be damned if I can think of a moral for this one – I suppose I could say something about being more careful with other people's money, but that's not very uplifting, nor am I really sorry about a penny spent. But let me thank Allan once again for being a more generous friend than in my wildest imagination I ever pictured having. Thanks also to Schirm, for driving me thousands of miles, sharing his hotel room, and picking up almost half my tabs for meals. As well, I'd like to thank "all the little people out there," who nominated me for the Hugo once again, despite a steadily diminishing output of fanart. I'm grateful to Mark Plummer for bringing me some of the new English coinage that I wanted for my collection. I'd like to thank the old lady who looked after my cat, Sailor, while I was away, but I don't need to. I had to pay her, instead. But most of all, I'd like to thank my own foresight for laying a plastic sheet on the bed under the coverlet... because the goddamn cat pissed all over it!

A week or so after my return, a couple of my photos of the last LASFS meeting were posted at Mike's *File 770* blog – the final bit of egoboo derived from a productive vacation from routine. You may have seen them... They were re-used in someone's fanzine not long after, credited to Marty Cantor I think, or maybe it was Milt Stevens.

Yes, life was clearly back to normal.

