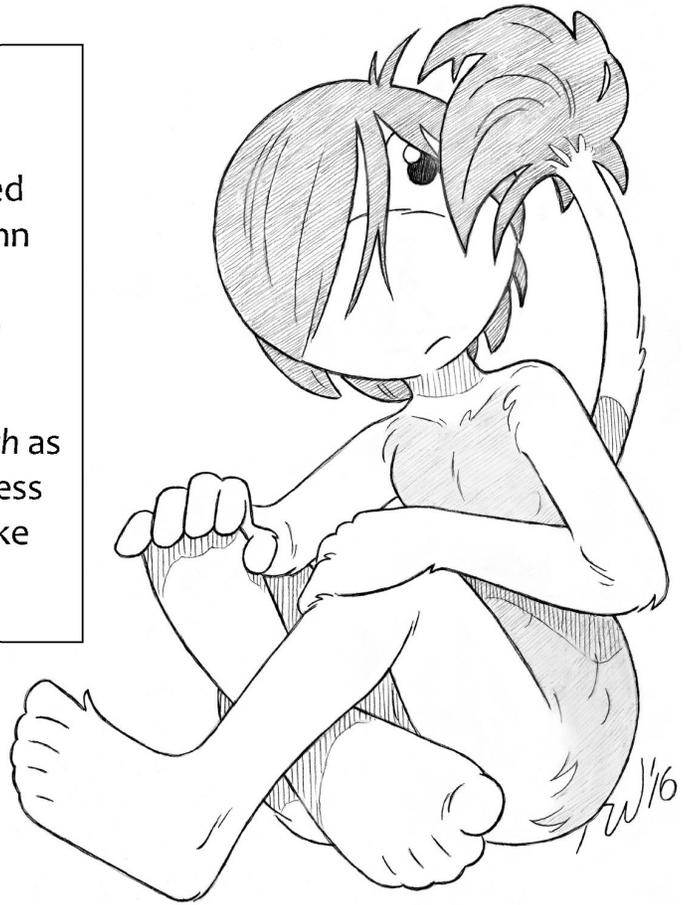


THE BALOOBIUS

A one-shot for material that needs to be used up in a timely fashion. Taral Wayne, 245 Dunn Ave. Apt. 2111, Toronto Ontario, M6K 1S6, Canada. Kiddelidivee Books & Art 323. (416) 531-8974 – Taral@bell.net

If you don't happen to have a **baloobius**, such as the one Darl Fraggles has, it is the quite useless appendage dangling from his butt, sort of like the holidays in general.



... For Every Season

I. Season's Gripings

Now 'Tis the season when all you Christmas-Haters come out, spewing your party-pooing bile on my harmless feast of nostalgia. I know who you are! You spoilers of the holiday spirit, you despisers of seasonal songs, you denouncers of gift shopping, you traducers of tradition, who respect neither boozy Santas nor left-over turkey. Don't confuse the issue ... this has *nothing* to do with the disputed concept of a god-king who ritually dies to redeem mankind's sins. None of that metaphysical stuff is my concern, no more than someone else's belief in Ba'al or Anubis. Christmas, *my* Christmas, is a secular affair, and attempts to rubbish *my* Christmas using faulty logic will be met with the contumely that it deserves. I will not allow the one to be conflated with the other without a protest from *me*. Having clarified the issue of the *real* Christmas, we may discard the provincial religious observances of unfortunate, earnest believers. Christmas to me is *far* too important to waste on murky events in the Middle East that may or may not have happened, and rest on highly dubious authority. Without Christmas, and the True Meaning of the Holiday, I would be lost! Without it, there is nothing at all between Hallowe'en and Easter to stave off five months of ennui and desperation!

And don't even get me started on Easter!

II. If a Tree Falls in the Forest

After putting it off, day by day, I finally roused myself to put up the tree. First, I had to get it down from the closet. Removing things from the overhead shelf in the closet is difficult for me these days, so I called the social workers in my building to come up to my apartment to help. Next day, I moved the stuff from my bedroom to the front room. On the third day, I actually removed the two-foot-tall tree from its box, and unpacked the ornaments and lights. Finally, I decorated the tree, with only a couple of days to spare before Christmas!

I shortchanged Santa a little.

In previous years, I decorated the tree with tinsel "icicles." Although the swirling reflections are quite pretty, it is a tedious and painstaking job to remove the stuff and replace it in the box. Technically, I think you are supposed to throw it away. But if you wrap it carefully around the cardboard forms inside the box, then you can re-use the tinsel indefinitely. Another departure from my usual practice was to put the tree up on the far end of the table in my front room. For more than twenty-five years, I've put the tree where it was out of the way, on top of my stereo turntable. But it is rather too high for me to work there, so I decided to set up the tree on the living room table instead. The cord snakes across the floor, which was a nuisance and potential trip-hazard, but I decided that I could live with that. Working at waist height was *so* much easier!

One other departure was worth mention. This was the second time I used my new tree. I bought it two years ago, to replace the one I had used for at least twenty years. That one had gotten too large for me to handle. The new one is barely half the size of the old one. I was planning to use it last year, but I was feeling rather blue most of that Christmas, even before the stroke, and never got around to it.

But this year I made an effort, and – in defiance of all odds – I have provided myself a full-scale Christmas! I have a turkey roll that I will put into the oven in a couple of hours, a can of cranberry sauce, three or four figgy puddings I bought, fruit cake, chocolate, oranges and everything I need except for the eggnog ... I forgot the eggnog. Now all I need is somebody *to be here*. I guess you can't have everything, so I bought a bottle of ice wine instead, and will share it with Saara, Tangel, Darl and Kiki and other friends of my imagination.

III. It Ain't New Years Until the Fat Lady Sings

Did I ever honestly think I would type that date, 2019? Surely not. When I was young, books said that a man born in 1951 could expect to live until 65, or thereabouts. When 2016 dawned, I expected to be dead. But the year became 2017, and even though I had a close call, I was assured by my doctors that I was a long way from being dead. I lived all the way through 2018 as well, and if anything I became stronger, healthier. Now it is 2019, and

I am still not dead. If it's all the same to you, I'm quite happy about how things have turned out.

Of course, I had not properly understood about life expectancies when I was 10, and thought about this for the first time, and people in 1951 did in fact have somewhat shorter life expectancies then. But a man in my position in 2019 can well expect to live into his 80s, with a little luck. I may need that luck, but it certainly is within reason to continue to flout the odds for another twenty years.

This is good, because I still have not met all of last year's New Year's Resolutions.

I do believe that I have successfully met at least one.

If you are interested, you can read the Journal here:

<http://www.furaffinity.net/journal/8578593/>

But to be brief, I made **Three Resolutions** last year. The first was to finish a commissioned comic strip. It has all been sketched out in rough pencil, and several pages were done over in heavy pencil, ready to be digitally scanned. Since then, little has been done. I have gone back to it now and then, but if I put a couple of hours' work into the current page, it seems that I am no farther along than before. I don't know how to explain it. I made a last-ditch effort to finish up in the last few days of the year, but I never even finished the page I had been working on all that year. All I can do is double down and start again, and hope that this time I begin making real progress.

I promise this, however. I am doing no more *comic strips*. It's just too much work, that I honestly don't like doing anymore. Nor do I need the money.

I may or may not be amenable to work I can do in the short span of a few days, assuming your idea piques my interest. Fraggles are on. Ponies are probably not a good bet.

Second Resolution. I'm happy to say that I completed my second resolution, and even did a bang-up job of it! I had undertaken to complete a full index of the fifty issues of my fanzine, *Broken Toys*. I might as well be cynical and admit that as resolutions went, it was pretty useless. If I had never done it, I doubt the history of Science Fiction Fandom would have been very adversely affected. But I *did* do it! That's something.

The Final Resolution involved another publishing project that had been hanging over my head for some time. It isn't worth the time it would take to go into details, but at last I have found a way in which I may be able to move forward. In short, I can job it out to someone else, who has shown interest in the material as a desktop publishing project. He has done

this for other people, and says he would work with me as well. All that is needed is for me to gather the material in the form of .pdf documents, and polish some final bits of writing to bring it up to date.

If we go forward on this at some time in the coming year, it will not only resolve an old headache, it will be something to brag about ... an actual book that I can show to people. Not a book I'm likely to make money from, or even interest many people in, but it will at least be something that I have actually accomplished ... after a fashion.

And when you have got to be 67, you do start to count up your accomplishments as though they might be your last. You never know.

THE SEASON OF CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION



This year, I put the tree up on the low coffee table, where I could decorate it more easily. As you can see, I have some fun ornaments. I also have some quite old, glass decorations that are a little too big to hang on a two-foot tree. I also can't spare any more from breakage over time.



These two decorations are from the movie *Space Jam*. Lola Bunny was a big hit among the fans, but laid an Easter egg with the studio executives. I have four of the five that I know about.



The mouse with the old-fashioned pan warmer was likely made by Hallmark, but I got it from the Sally Ann. Cute. The other is Buttercup, from *The Powerpuff Girls*. I also have the other two girls, Blossom and Bubbles ... but the "butch" one, Buttercup, is my favourite. I also like green.



Guess who also wears green? No, not Kermit, though he was at the start of this photo album. I mean Tinkerbell! I have another one just like it that is in red ... I suppose it is for Christmas. And next is Bubbles! Also a Chinese lantern that I think can be rigged to light up from inside.





I treated myself to these figures of Statler and Waldorf to go with my other Muppet figures. I don't know which is which without a program, naturally. They are fully articulated and ready to give Fozzy Bear a hard time in every week's show! There is a Swedish Chief set available, too.



Moon Equipped is one of those emblematic names you see from Hot Rodding circles. The truck is 12 inches long, dismounts from the trailer and opens to load the Plymouth Roadrunner inside.



This 8-inch-long (1/24 scale) racing Camaro was also a gift to myself. The detail is very good for a scale model of this size,



Acid Rain: Worldcon 2018

If there is anything I hate as much as I hate reading about how much fun some people have going to the Worldcon, then I don't want to know about it. It isn't enough that those people have enough money to travel almost anywhere they please, but can also stay in hotels and have nice meals twice a day for three, four, five and six days, as well as buying new books and whatever else strikes their fancy; but there are parties afterward, full of people they've known for years and who are eager to renew acquaintances. On top of all this, there is this sacred communal ceremony in which the shamans proceed on stage one by one, exhibiting their closeness to the Gods of SciFi with familiarity that only *they* share ... but that *you* may only witness.

It all sucks, man! When *you* can't go, either because of money or mobility issues, it just sucks, and you can't feel anything but acid jealousy.

As well, this just isn't fandom as I knew it. It grew too big, too full of things I have no interest in, that I have nothing in common with, and where nothing you've done has any relevance to anyone else. Past accomplishments and hard-won recognition count for nothing by comparison to the least important, trumped-up e-book author or flash-in-the-pan Hugo nominee. Indeed, nothing that anyone does is of any importance at all to 99% of fandom anymore. It sucks.

But I guess I'd go to Worldcon again ... if it ever returned Toronto. []

In the last couple of years I've pubbed three one-shots. The first followed my stroke last year, and the second (*Doctored Papers*) followed in November. It was revised and partly rewritten to make it more presentable. I don't want to make one-shots a habit – I have enough already!

