

LOST TOYS 9

The Swan Song last issue, composed *ex tempore* by **Taral Wayne** as a farewell to the digital apa, TePe, and mailed directly to the members. I figure I owe them that much. It was a brave effort, but one to which I've failed to adjust my expectations. The date is **16 December 2014**. Reach me at 245 Dunn Ave. Apt. 2111, Toronto, Ontario, M6K 1S6 Canada, e-mail at Taral@bell.net . This is Kiddelidivee Books & Art 292

I had thought I'd hung up my spurs with *Lost Toys 8*, but apparently not quite. There are a few things I feel I need to explain.

To begin with, my repeated complaints about this apa's chronic tardiness were driven in part by other dissatisfactions. I mean, really what did it matter if Arnie was a week, two weeks, or two *months* late? It's only a friggin' apa, and the guy's had problems. Maybe everything will be fine with the next mailing ... or the one after that? Why should I get into a lather about it?

The problem lies within me. I don't do things unless I'm highly motivated, and when my investment of time and energy doesn't seem to be taken as seriously as I did, it irritates me. To make matters worse, I've had to largely *manufacture* motivation for *TePe*. From the first, it wasn't really a project I wanted to be involved with, but allowed myself to be talked into because Arnie was a friend, and because I had turned down one similar invitation from him before. Besides ... it was a novelty that I *might* learn to enjoy.

After eight mailings, I know now that I was wrong. Putting *Lost Toys* together was not a huge chore, but it did take a couple of days every month. I might have skipped every other mailing, but, from previous experience years ago, I knew that would diminish any interest I took in the apa. In the end, I probably needn't have worried. I never got very interested anyway.

Sadly, I read three or four of the contribs in every mailing with considerable interest ... but the rest not so much. Even of those zines that I avidly read, the mailing comments to me were far more interesting than comments to other members that I glossed over. This tendency was getting worse with time, not better. I finally saw no reason to continue publishing an apazine just to generate a few comments from four or five people.

So I worked out my growing frustration by complaining ever louder about Arnie's lateness, and his inability to keep the members posted about the delays.

Now that I've made up my mind to bid *adieu*, I discover that I have no hard feelings about late mailings. In fact, I almost feel lighthearted and giddy with relief! I am so delighted that I want to tweak Andrew's cheek and laugh, "Oh, you silly boy!"

Curiously, I have been invited to join a different electronic apa, and I've discovered that some of the members are indeed also members of TePe! The invitation is flattering, and admittedly a little bit of a temptation. However, I have learned my lesson about apas. Also, it seems to me

that by quitting one apa, only to join another, I'd be making a statement that I don't want to make. So, thanks, but no thanks.

Instead of apa hacking, I intend to concentrate on *Broken Toys*. In fact, more and more, I'm putting my best into my own zine, and not writing as often for other faneds. As best as I can estimate, I've been fanacking at a feverish pace since around 2005 or 2006, and there's no question that I began to tire a year or two ago. It's become quite noticeable this year. Through 2013 I managed to keep up a breakneck pace of writing largely by using time I would have spent drawing. This year I redressed the balance a bit, by drawing more. But, as the gods will have it, I've written a little less.

Also, some of what I've written has been, well ... different. For instance, I have a large, unpublished, unofficial Fraggles encyclopedia. I wrote a short story last winter, and I'm trying to finish another one this winter. Some of the things I've drawn lately have also been quite off the beaten track. But I seem to care less about what fandom will think, since fandom itself means so much less to me as an institution than it used to. I think that's only fair ... since a bigger, less personal fandom cares so much less about me, and the sort of things I do.

But that's all right. I have *Broken Toys* and my readers, and that is probably about as good as it ever got in the Good Old Days of fandom, when you knew everybody and everyone read the same ten fanzines and went to at least two of the same conventions every year. If ever there *was* such a time. It was such a long time ago that I might well be indulging in senile fantasies.

One on-going project on my drawing board is a series of six to ten illustrations for a short novel written by my friend Walt Wentz. One day, on a planet very much like Barsoom – but never actually called that – a P-38 pilot becomes mixed up in a dog-fight with baroque-looking aerial warships, and from there rescues a princess, gets captured by desert marauders, fights with swords and the whole nine-yards. It's totally unlike anything I've worked on before.

I've a ton of other drawings to do, as well. Some are for an old commission I was never able to finish. Others reflect my current enthusiasms. I've let a little of this out into the fan community by posting it on Facebook ... so that people wouldn't forget I was a fanartist altogether. But I've haven't been at all systematic about laundering the art through the fan press. Much of my failure is due to not keeping records the way I used to. In recent years, I have sometimes sent someone a batch of files, but then wouldn't remember which, and what art I can send to other fanzines later. In the end, I usually shrugged and did nothing.

Having art in fanzines isn't the thrill it used to be. Partly, I've been there, done that. Also, a lot of fanzines shrink illos down to thumbnail size, a practice that does the art no favours. For that matter, my interest in most fanzines isn't what it used to be. The ones that I still enjoy most are often those that are most picky about what they publish, and want illustrations to be custom drawn for the articles. Another trend that worries me is the increasing amount of photos and junk files found on-line that end up in the pages of fanzines. The future of fanart does not seem to be very promising.

Maybe I should start publishing my own fanart, just as I'm publishing my own fanwriting.

Or would that still be thinking *inside* the box?

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