

a marvelous old world charm. The object of our walk, the Cemetery Church of All Saints, stood prominently before us. Hopefully we would be able to find grave markers with names of Valerie's ancestors there.

As it turned out, we did not. What names and dates we did find went all the way back to the 15th century, and there were numerous older, overgrown gravesites. Valerie quipped, "knowing my family, they're completely covered and forgotten by now." A sad comment, but considering the age of this church and cemetery, I would not be surprised. Everywhere we had been – even inside the Church itself – locals had said to her, "Oh, Prochaska? Ah, that is a common name." None of the tombstones in the churchyard cemetery had a single, readable marker with the name "Prochaska" on them. Not a one. A bit disappointed, we went back into the Church itself to go underneath it into the Sedlec Ossuary.

Words cannot adequately express the complete shock the three of us felt as walked down the steps and into the Ossuary. Its history dates back to 1278 when the abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Sedlec was sent to the Holy Land by King Otakar II of Bohemia, and returned with a handful of earth from Golgotha, then sprinkled it over the abbey cemetery. From that point on, this pious act resulted in that cemetery becoming a desirable burial spot throughout Central Europe. The church proper was first built around 1400, and has been periodically updated and restored. In the early 16th century, a half-blind monk of the order was given the task of exhuming the skeletons and stacking their bones in the chapel, arranging them in ornate patterns. The legend goes that upon completion of his task, the monk's eyesight was fully restored.



Valerie entering the Sedlec Ossuary.



The end result is staggering. Everyone entering the Ossuary was silent out of respect to the dead and the sheer magnitude of the bone arrangements. Massive pyramids of skulls stood in each of the four corners, and incredibly intricate designs were displayed throughout. It is estimated that the bones of 60,000 people were used, and more burial sites are discovered as restoration work to shore up the foundations and walls of the church continues. It is hard to describe the sight, At one point Valerie said that when she approached one of the skull pyramids she felt an energy that brought tears to her eyes. It made her wonder if the bones of her ancestors had sensed her presence and reached out. No question, being here was overwhelming.



Church of All Saints in Kutna Hora, Czechia.



Detail of just one decorative arrangement.



A section of ceiling decorative bones in Sedlec Ossuary.

Once we left Sedlec Ossuary, the three of us stopped at a local establishment on our return walk to the train station and enjoyed a late lunch. We all agreed that this was an experience that none of us would ever forget. A leisurely stroll back to the station for our return to Prague helped walk off the delicious meal, and we enjoyed the rolling

scenery of this part of Czechia. Valerie noted that she could understand why her ancestors chose to settle in Missouri because the rich Midwestern farmland bore a strong resemblance to their native homeland. That made good sense to me.

Eventually we made it back to our apartment in Prague before it became too late. We then packed up our bags to get ready for the next day. The less we had to do on the morning of August 18th, the better prepared we'd be for taking the train back to the Prague airport to catch our flight back to England.

The last leg of my 2017 TAFF Trip was at hand: one final evening in London at Fishlifter Central, then off to our train to Liverpool on August 19th. So far we had accomplished all of the main trip objectives but one: to walk in the steps of the Beatles. Then it would be over to St. Ockport one last time to see Paul and Cas Skelton, who would see us off at Manchester Airport for our flight back to Houston and home.

The long journey was almost over. But wait: more adventures awaited.

Suppressio very suggestion falsi.

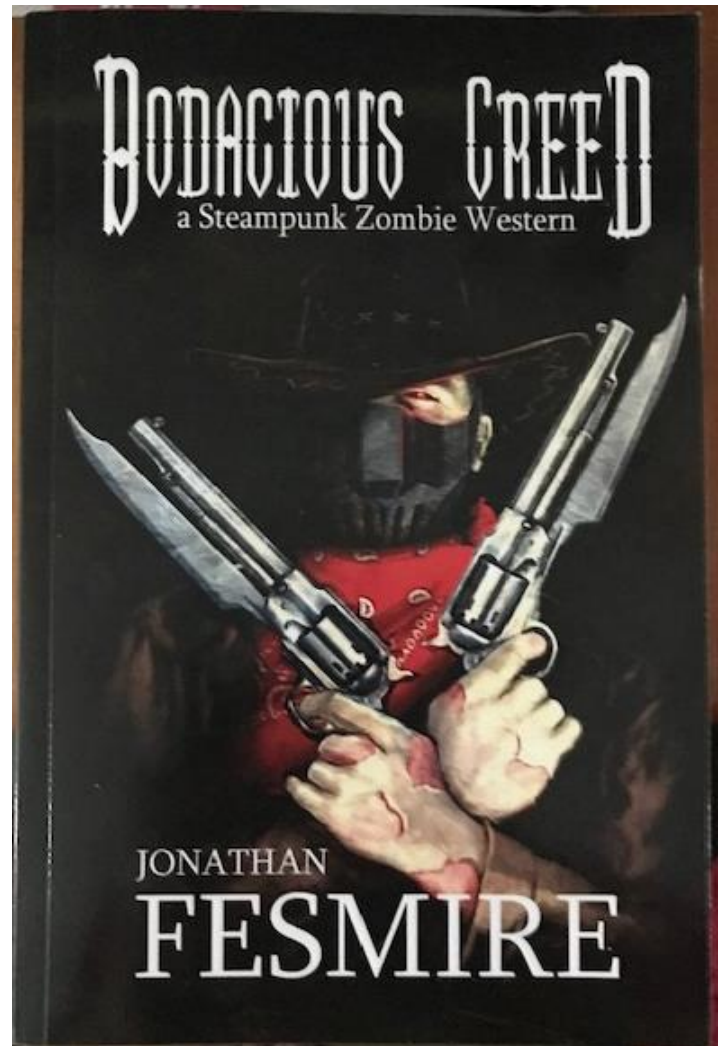
Book Review: *Bodacious Creed*,
by Jonathan Fesmire.

Self-Published, 2017. 361 pages.

One of last issue's contributors to that article about writing Steampunk literature is Jonathan Fesmire, who writes *The Wild Steampunk Blog*, which is on his homepage jonathanfesmire.com, and one can subscribe to the *Wild Steampunk Newsletter*. His previous novels are *Children of Rhatlan* and *Tamshi's Imp*, two fantasies that have been well-received. *Bodacious Creed* is his first full-length foray into Steampunk, and such a grand entry it is.

The hero of the book is U.S. Marshall James Creed, one of the most famous Marshalls of the Wild West (in this alternate time frame, that is), and his efforts at tracking down the notorious outlaw Corwin Blake has brought him to Santa Cruz, California. Blake has a reputation of being a savage, indiscriminate killer who takes great joy in taunting U.S. Marshalls who simply can never capture Blake and put him away once and for all. Blake has a knack for escaping from their clutches, and literally laughed in their faces while doing so. In short, Blake is a real Old West asshole. On the good side of the law, James Creed is a real Old West "gonna catch that bastard" U.S. Marshall with a reputation for always catching his man.

The set up to this novel is that Creed has tracked Blake to the west coast town of Santa Cruz, the setting of the book. Essentially, this is almost a standard Western tale, but this story is set in the time of steam, so there is a lot of the Steampunk ethos that lifts the plot to an interesting level. Add into the mix the heroine of the tale, Anna Lynn Boyd, the madam of the House of Amber Doves bordello in Santa Cruz, a very respectable establishment in Santa Cruz. Anna is also an inventor of various mechanical devices on the side, such as steam-powered steelies (think robots) and other mechanical devices in her secret underground laboratory beneath the bordello. Her lover, Jonny, is a mute who likewise is a brilliant tinkerer and doctor (well, not legally, but he's really good at mending bodies in various ways), and together they are quite a team. Naturally, all is not sweetness and light because Anna's House is in the upscale area of Santa Cruz while her rival bordello, Plowshares, lies across the railroad tracks, is a much seedier establishment catering to the rougher elements of Santa Cruz. Meanwhile the Railroad Flats area of town down by the bay is the real crime-ridden area, anchored by Iron Nelly's Saloon, and the



word around Santa Cruz is that Corwin Blake is circulating in that area and causing all sorts of trouble. Santa Cruz's head lawman, Marshall Bateman, already has his hands full with the criminal element in the Flats, and Blake is now a major part of that problem. There is also a rumor floating around that a crime Syndicate is behind the mess in the Flats, but Bateman has no firm clues about its existence. So Marshall Bateman has no idea of the disaster brewing in Santa Cruz, but simply knowing Corwin Blake is there, and if the famed Marshall Bodacious Creed (I love that name, by the way) is involved, Bateman knows this is going to be one crazy mess.

The ultimate plot twist that makes this story so enjoyable is that Creed is killed by Blake following one of the outlaw's vicious sneak attacks on the Marshall's Post in town. Head Marshall Bateman is killed, and Creed tears off after Blake, but is also killed by the outlaw. At this point Fesmire's carefully planted backstories come into play as Anna Boyd, following instincts based on her strong attachment to Creed, conspires with her lover/assistant Jonny to steal Creed's body out of the town morgue, and, in a brilliant steampunk nod to *Frankenstein* (duly referred in the story), brings the corpse back to her hidden laboratory in an attempt to revive Creed through mechanical, steam-planted devices and accessories. Thus, the mechanically resurrected Creed is a Steampunk zombie, not a traditional zombie. Anna and Jonny's machinations allow for Creed to remain a Good Guy, the hero of the tale, even though his appearance and unexpectedly enhanced physical abilities freak the living bejeezus out of the townsfolk.

That's the core set up to *Bodacious Creed*. Naturally, there are numerous back-stories and plot complications throughout, and Jonathan Fesmire does a fine job of blending all this information



together in a well-paced, tightly knit story. I really don't have the time to get into all the fun steam technology and such of Fesmire's alternative history of 1876 Santa Cruz, California and the old west of that timeframe, but bringing in little sidelights such as the popular use of Tesla bulbs, hidden underground laboratories, a mechanicals factory

run by Miles Morgan (who has a monopoly on technological invention in California), and Morgan is surreptitiously supplying Anna Boyd materials for her work – to whom she slyly supplies some of her inventions in return – and is being spied upon by an unknown Syndicate plant in his factory, and so on and so forth, and *Bodacious Creed* turns into a wild, raucous adventure in the Wild Old West of the Steam Age.

This book is a great start to what could be a fun series that proves Steampunk is not the sole province of Victorian England. No question about it: if you like Steampunk literature, *Bodacious Creed* is worth getting. Go to <http://jonathanfesmire.com> and follow the links to order your copy.

Ab abuso ad usum non valet consequentia.

FIGBY

By Bill Fischer

Bistritz, Romania ~ Seminar on Pan-cultural Folkloric Beliefs...

Think of it Figby: Here are we in Bistritz, one of the places mentioned by Bram Stoker himself!



...and so, we find variants of the 'vampire' planetwide: from the 'strigoi' of the Carpathians to the Penanggalan of Malaysia...



... To the 'Peuchen', or blood-sucking Serpent of Southern Chile!



Amazing that in this era of internet, satellites and Uber, there are still people who take this stuff seriously...

I just pack lots of garlic!

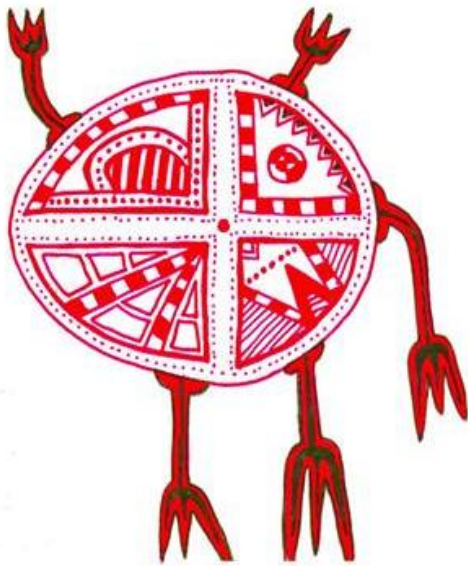


STATE OF THE FANZINES

Perhaps I should not be surprised that by working on the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards for 2020 – to be presented at the many times aforementioned Corflu 37 coming up in three months – I have seriously been thinking about what qualifies a fanzine as a ‘fanzine’ in this day and age of electronic fan activity. Two of the questions and issues that came to mind were “what truly defines a fanzine,” and “does the medium of a fanzine really matter?”. The way I started to think about it, these are two core questions that truly need to be answered. Or, at the least, agreed upon.

In reverse order, I basically believe the medium by which a fan produces and distributes his or fanzine

doesn’t really matter because it is the content that matters the most, especially when it is created by an amateur writer, artist, or editor/publisher. I am no professional when it comes to writing or editing, but it is still a personal goal to sell some fiction or poetry to a paying market. That would be another item to cross off my bucket list. Anyway, it bothers me when I see professional or semi-professional (individuals who have sold some work, but do not make a fulltime living off that work) writers, artists, and editors wedging their way into the Fan Hugo Award categories – writer, artists, fanzine – just to say that they are a “Hugo Award Winning” etcetera. In my mind, that cheapens the essence of the Fan Hugos. Let me just say that there needs to be a strict definition of “amateur” in the Fan Hugo Award categories Real Soon Now. It is bad enough that many old-time fans like me are severely disgruntled about



Art by Julie Gomoll

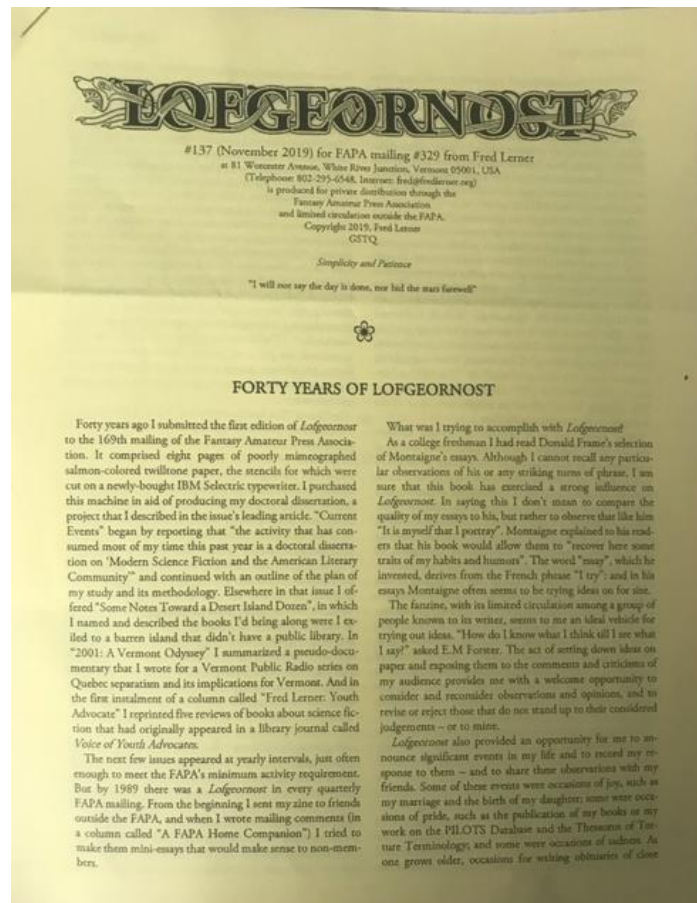
this entire matter and barely care about them anymore. The Mass Market Media Effect has swallowed quite a few major Hugo categories as it is, so what’s a few more calories added to that beast’s diet?

Urgh! The Hugo Awards give me headaches anyway. What about the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards – the FAAns – being presented at Corflu 37? Well, there are ten categories for any fanzine fan to vote in regarding fanzines published during calendar year 2019: Best Overall Fanzine, Best Genzine, Best Perzine, Best Whatchamallit-Zine, Best Fan Writer, Best Fan Artist, Best Online Activity, Best Special Publication, Best Letterhack, and Best Fanzine Cover Art. Nearly all of those can be found at Bill Burns’ fabulous repository of old and current fanzines, efanzines.com; more can be found at fanac.org, maintained by Joe Siclari and Edie Stern, plus even more old and new fanzines are found on sites like eBay, or the National Fantasy Fan Federation homepage. Just log on and search away.

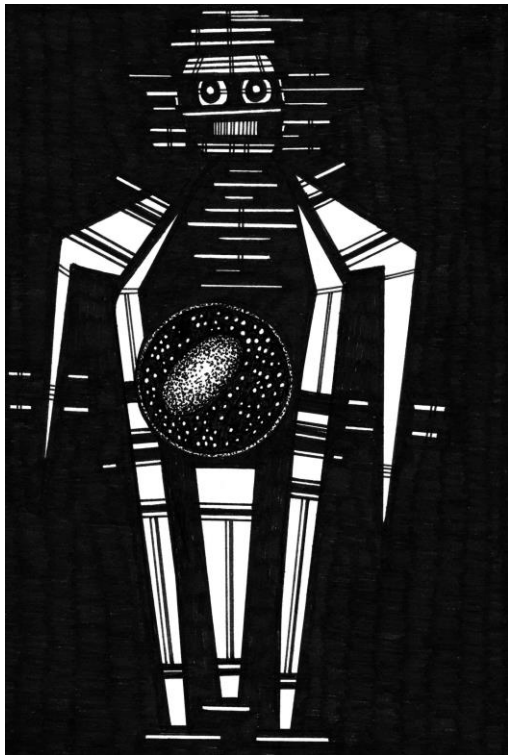
Now, I am wondering how many readers raised their eyebrows at the Best Whatchamacallit-Zine category. In short, that is a catch-all category – and I am sure I am going to catch it for creating this particular award, but wotthell – for an assortment of other fanzine fan activities: these include blogs, clubzines, newszines, comic zines, media-related zines, and Apazines. Thanks to the creation of the Internet giving science fiction and fantasy fans a wealth of expressive possibilities, I figured it would be nice to give out an award that encompasses this variety of fannish expression.

APAs – Amateur Press Associations – have been around for well over a century, dating back into the 19th century. These are designed as a means for writers to distribute their work through a central organizational hub – the Official Editor (OE) – where the collected members’ zines would then be shipped out in toto to all members. Fantasy literature luminaries involved with early APAs were H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, and many others, and the National Amateur Press Association (founded in 1876) is actually still in existence. As many SF fans know, the first science fiction APA – the Fantasy Amateur Press Association – was founded in 1937 by Donald Wollheim and John B. Michel, and is still chugging along, albeit at an historic low membership. I am not sure who the current OE of FAPA is, although Robert Lichtman, a longtime member, occasionally nags me to join. The longest running member at present is Robert Silverberg, who I believe has been active in FAPA since 1951. According to Wikipedia, as of August 2019, there are only 17 active members in FAPA.

I receive a few FAPA-zines in trade via regular mail – such as Fred Lerner’s *Lofgeornost* (current issue pictured here) – or via efanazines.com (such as Chris Garcia’s *Claims Department*). There are many other APAs still in operation, although the overall number has dwindled over the years as members have died or lost interest, but APAs are still out there. Bruce Gillespie informed me that ANZAPA (the Australia-New Zealand APA) is quite active and large these days, and R Laurraine Tutihasi directly emails her Stipple-APA (St. Paul, MN APA) *Purrsomal Mewsings* to me. The interest obviously is still there, and APAs in general have a long history of helping fans develop their writing skills to the point of turning into feefthy pros (like the aforementioned Robert Silverberg, but near as I can tell his talent was apparent from the get-go), which is definitely A Good Thing.



And yes, like many sf fans, I too have been a member of quite a few APAs over the years: Minneapa (Minneapolis), LASFAPA (Los Angeles), AZAPA (Arizona), and most recently SNAPS (Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society) from 2006-2009. However, my APA days are now gone, but I do remember them. Sometimes I tap into my SNAPS zine *Nukking Futz* for material for *Askance*. In fact, the first few issues of *Askance* reprinted articles – with the original writers’ permission, of course – that came from SNAPS, so right there is another great reason for APAs to exist: besides being part of the group dissemination of all members’ zines, fan editors of general circulation fanzines – “genzines” be their name – frequently raid their own or others’ APAzines for material. Rich Lynch has been producing *My Back Pages* for a number of years now that frequently reprints some of his writings in various APAs he has belonged to in the past, and other fanzines, and it is a lot of fun to read his zine. They bring back



memories.

This is where I think these musings are taking me. Perhaps the real meaning of fanzines of any stripe is that they are historical records of the people and times that produced them. This is something that has been mentioned before in many places over the years. Science fiction fandom is probably one of the most self-aware sub-cultural groups that maintains a running history of itself. “Time-binding” is a term commonly associated with this self-awareness, but I like to think of fanzines – and this includes APAzines – as a means of preserving sf fandom’s history. Call it a running chronicle. After all, these are documents that can be referred to over and over again to check on questions regarding fandom’s history. Wonderful examples of this are Andrew Hooper’s articles in *Chunga* and *Trap Door* where his articles about the first Worldcon of 1939 have been appearing, detailing not only what happened, but exactly who was there, and what was their connection to

Nycon I (as it was eventually labeled). It is fascinating reading, and a lot of the information Andrew has found comes from – you guessed it – fanzines produced during and right after that convention, in some cases also before the event.

So as the bottom of the page approaches, it’s time wrap this up. Fandom in general owes a lot to this literary critter, the Amateur Press Association. A lot of us have been involved with them from time to time, and they have helped develop our writing and artistic skills. Hopefully these thoughts will provoke interesting letters of comment – not mailing comments, thankfully – for the next issue.

Ira furor brevis est.

From the Hinterlands



Well, dear readers, I am in luck this time: there were actually letters received that I could use in the section for a change. It is sad that the nature of online fanzine publishing does not foment the creation of Letters of Comment (LoCs, as they are called) to fanzines due to these being essentially free to read without requiring responses; it then becomes necessary to try to publish something that can generate responses. Therefore, getting something in return for the effort is very much A Good Thing.

First up, an actual response to the 45th issue was received, so it makes sense to start with that letter first. My responses will be in this fancy-like font.

Jerry Kaufman
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10 September 2019

Having many things better to do, I shirked them all and read *Askance* 45. Thought I should drop you a note to say so, especially as I enjoyed many bits of it. In particular, I liked Kevin Still's review of *Cold in July*. I didn't know that Joe Lansdale was responsible for *Bubba Hotep*, having seen only parts of it on TV. But it makes perfect sense. Lansdale's books are a bit too violent for my taste, yet Kevin makes this one sound appealing.

I also really liked Teddy Harvia's bottom-of-the-page illoes you used in your convention listings.

I'll get around to #46 in due time; though steampunk's not one of my major interests, I've enjoyed the steampunky novels I've read.

Jerry

Sorry for missing this loc last issue, but then again, I think it arrived after I had finished issue #46. No matter. I will pass along your kind words to Kevin when I see him at the faculty report back day in mid-January. Joe Lansdale is one of my favorite writers, but I have to be in the mood for that kind of story; when I do, Lansdale never fails to entertain. * There are still more of those Harvia bottom dwelling liner illoes on hand, and they will likely find their way into this issue's pages somewhere.

Lloyd Penney
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CANADA M9C 2B2

10 September 2019

I thought I'd interrupt your papers-grading and hard work on the next Corflu to actually respond to *Askance 46*. It's got my article in it, too! Excellent! Time to prattle on.

Ah, life gets in the way, and happy projects like this one go by the wayside. At least you are the publisher as well as the editor, and you won't get any grief from upstairs.

I have certainly enjoyed the strange world of steampunk for the past ten years or so. Because Yvonne and I were costumers in the 80s, steampunk has allowed to return to that day and have some fun. I really can't afford the music or the books, so I certainly enjoy what I have. I have purchased, though, reference works on steampunk, which has certainly informed me as to steampunk's history and origins. Are you still thinking of a steampunk zine? Want to do it together as co-editors?

What few books I have, one of them is the first steampunk book from Stephen Hunt, *The Court of the Air*. He's written a ton of them now. Stephen was born in Mississauga, Ontario, which is walkable from where I am now, but he lives in London, I believe. *The Court of the Air* was a tough read, but only because it was so full of amazing ideas, it was difficult to absorb all at once. I would like to get more of his works.

Thank you for publishing my article! As I look at it, I found my own writing dull and sluggish, but it is all factual. We are still having a good time, and we have three shows to go to in October. I have made some Wizarding Worlds-oriented jewelry, and we will try to sell them at a Harry Potter event in Mississauga. Just for the record...the first photo on page 11 was taken at a general craft show in Pickering, east of Toronto, Yvonne as Queen Victoria on that page was taken at the Motor City Steam Con in Romulus, Michigan a couple of years ago, the picture of me on page 12 was on the second floor of Historic Bovaird House, while we were vending at a Christmas craft show. As you might expect, I certainly wasn't the

only one there in a suit and top hat... The final picture was shot in a vendor's row at the Coldwater Steampunk Festival in Coldwater, Ontario.

Enjoyed the fiction all around...veddy, veddy British, and splendid all. I had thought to write a letter of comment in a veddy British and steampunk style, but I realized I am not that far away from that as it is.

Are you going to FenCon? I see you have Julie Czerneda as a guest, and she is a sweetie. Her husband Roger also gives good panel. Dickens on the Strand looks like quite the fun event.

Corflu...sorry, John, not a hope of attending, and I will have to save up for anything supporting. I almost got myself a plum job downtown, but was told thanks, but no thanks. The hunt continues, and Yvonne ends her current assignment shortly, and returns to her retirement. Money is tight enough as it is, so no travel for us for some time. We will see you with the next Purcellzine!

Lloyd

I never find your writing "dull and sluggish," Lloyd; in fact, I thought that article was fun reading. As you will shortly see another reader felt that way, too. * No, we never made it to FenCon this year – next year, we hope so! – and we had to pass on Dickens on the Strand this year, but that is an annual event that makes for a wonderful reason to have an overnight stay in Galveston. * Hang in there on that idiotic job hunt, Lloyd. At least you can attend Corflu Heatwave via Livestream courtesy of Rob Jackson, who will be running that for the weekend.

Andrew Hooper
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Seattle, WA 98125

8 November 2019

I read [Askance #46] with some interest, as Steampunk has long been one of my favorite odd permutations of the speculative genre. It's a bit jarring to consider that something as "recent" as *The Adventures of Briscoe County Junior* could be seen as a seminal work of Steampunk, but yes, checking the dates involved confirms that its brief, delightful run was indeed 25 years ago.

Steam qua Punk is logically a phenomenon that can be no older than "Cyberpunk," from which the punk suffix arises, just as every political scandal since 1973 is called "something-gate." But as you observe, works which conform to the subgenre had been appearing for well over a decade. Moorcock's "Oswald Bastable" books – *The Warlord of the Air*, *The Land Leviathan*, and *The Iron Czar* – certainly stand out in my mind as the first extended exercise in Alternative Electric Victoriana. Anachronistic but marvelous technology showed up in a number of writers' work – Phil Farmer's riverboats and airships made a big impression on me. But Moorcock's series also looked at Victorian values and ideas about race, class and sex, and seemed to take great satisfaction in smashing them to bits with revolutionary technology. Steampunk shares a critical element with works by Wells, Verne and other early speculative writers, in believing that technology has the capacity to utterly remake the world. Proposing that this might have

happened in the past is another exercise which might lead it to happening in the future, so I don't see Steampunk as a "backward" field at all.

I have to admit that I do prefer works which examine the Victorian mind critically to those which seem to have a nostalgic interest in elevating its inequalities. One work I would recommend to your contributors who are looking for a story set outside the British Empire is Nisi Shawl's novel *Everfair*, which begins with Fabian Socialists in London, but swiftly shifts to the Congo, and proceeds through a cascading series of political and human consequences that are driven more by philosophical and political advances than by technical wonders, although such things still play a part. There is no question that is a work of Alternate History, but is it Steampunk? I think so, but I invite contradiction.

Another permutation of the Steampunk/Alternative history continuum is the "It just wouldn't matter" story. "Custer's Last Jump" by Howard Waldrop and Jake Saunders proposed that gasoline engine had been developed some 60 years "early," and quickly leap-frogged the age of steam. The American Civil War was fought with fabric-winged aircraft similar to the fighters of World War I – but Confederacy still lost, and the plains nations which had been their allies awaited destruction by the US Air Cavalry. It's clear from the tone of the tale that the aerial victory of Crazy Horse and his squadron will be fleeting, just as the real victory at the Little Big Horn only delayed the eventual end of the campaign. But Howard can't help himself from writing about losers, so this is only to be expected.

I understand that as far as cosplay and fannish theater are concerned, the idea behind Steampunk is to enhance the Victorian age's most baroque and gilded qualities, so judging any part of it through a contemporary political sensibility is probably counter-productive. But it still seems worthwhile to ask why we find it attractive – if it is all just top hats and fancy bodices, or is there a kind of reactionary subtext that says we wish Those People still knew their place?

Your questions to the four Steampunk authors generally steered clear of "meaning," although asking about the likely longevity of the field is also a way of asking why it is worthwhile to begin with. I liked Gail Carriger's observation that Steampunk is a concept that has escaped from literature to involve many other artistic forms and is embraced by diverse groups of people. One might argue that Steampunk is one of the reasons why science fiction has conquered the world, as speculating about the past is possibly more attractive than speculating about the future.

Lloyd Penney's article on being a Steampunk vendor at conventions was charming. I thought it was an interesting illustration of the way that fandom has changed over the years. Time was, any fan could bring a trunk full of sf paperbacks to a con and expect to at least swap some of the them with the fans and hucksters present. Now, fans can hope to sell things from vintage watch fobs to artisanal mustard at cons, and books are relatively scarce.

And then I must make some comment on your own fiction, "Sun Thunder." It's a brave fan who puts their own stories in a fanzine for the razorbills of the world to see; happily, your writing is pleasant to read, and I was happy to keep going to the splashdown. What was a bit funny to me, however, was that fantastic elements of the story struck me as reasonably believable, while the more mundane aspects of human behavior were more difficult to accept. It's true that the sudden reverse in the pov characters' attitudes toward their would-be hijacker was exactly the sort of thing that would find in Boy's Own Fiction of the era, but this didn't help me to take the enterprise seriously. I was also very curious about the air-bikes which the assailants used in their attack on the *Sun Thunder*. I assumed they had some sort

of envelope of gas or other lifting system, but you didn't give us a lot of description there. And anytime you set something in the postbellum south, you involve the whole question of Who Won the War and Why, and you also avoid giving any clue to those questions. But you have succeeded in interesting me in your world and making me wonder what happens next.

Taral's punning stunt in "The Grime is Afoot" was like a waft of Fandom's Silver Age, when Feghoots walked the Earth. SF Fandom has always had an affinity for Sherlock Holmes, whose adventures were both scientific and fictional. Stu Shiffman would have loved this piece.

So this was a cool issue. I like it when fanzines are *about* things – and those things can be jazz and sports cars, I don't mind – as opposed to the recounting of unremarkable personal experiences, jury duty, etc. Personal natter is also intrinsically interesting when I have any acquaintance with the writer, but it seems to take something more than diary entries and book reviews to get me to comment. Anyway, fanzines with no letter column are a sad thing, so hopefully this will spare you the necessity of publishing one in *Askance* #47.

Andy

**Andy, thank you so much for the fantastic letter! I edited out a little of the introductory section, but the rest of it was definitely worth running here. Therefore, some responses to your comments. *There are various types of Steampunk that I enjoy reading more than others, and the subgenre has grown enough to appeal to Young Adult readers, or those inclined towards dystopias/utopias, westerns, supernatural/horror, military, and so forth. Steampunk Literature is likely to be with us for a long time. * Say, I am pleased that you enjoyed my foray into the Young Adult Steampunk Western genre. Your comments on the ending match my feeling about the ending being too contrived; my original ending would have pushed the word count past the limit for the anthology I wrote it for, so I truncated it, and felt that the ending suffered as a result. I am in the process of revising it back to my original intent, and expanding the whole concept into a series of related stories featuring the two primary characters. Eventually the Toothless character becomes part of the story-line in a future tale. I need to work out the specifics about the air-bikes, and regarding "who won the Civil War," my basic assumption is that the Union remains victorious in my alternate steampunk history of post-bellum Texas.*



I also heard from: John Hertz, Jose Sanchez, David Thayer

Regional Convention Calendar

There are lots of conventions in the area, so as usual I have edited things down to science fiction, fantasy, comics, and some other major conventions of note – like on page 31.

Ikkicon

Austin's Premier Anime Convention
December 27 - 29, 2019
Renaissance Hotel Austin
9721 Arboretum Boulevard
Austin Texas 78759

Greater Austin, Texas area

"...We pride ourselves in bringing together the most amazing anime and pop-culture fans and guests to enjoy our events, panels, and workshops.... We are proud to be fan-run, fan-made, and will always put the community first to ensure we have the most successful convention possible."

"IKKiCON will have a number of events to enjoy, including but not limited to, karaoke, gaming, anime music videos, dances, live music, cosplay contests, a dealers room, an artists alley and art show."

Teen Comic Convention & Geek-fest!

Saturday February 15, 2020 9 AM - 4 PM
Manvel High School
19601 Highway 6
Manvel, Texas 77578
(Greater Houston, TX area)

See also: [Brazcon \(Brazoria County Teen Comic Convention\)](#)

A FREE family-friendly comic convention for ages 10-18, but all are welcome! Brought to you by the Brazoria County Library System, Alvin ISD, and Communities in Schools - Texas Joint Venture.



[Owl Con LII](#)

Gaming, Fantasy, & Science Fiction Convention
February 28-March 1, 2020
RMC/Ley Student Center
Rice University
Houston, TX

OwlCon is an annual gaming convention at Rice University, Houston, TX, dating back to 1980. We feature table top and live action role playing games, miniatures games and events, historical miniatures, board games, card games, a dealers room, and more.

Gaming events will include RPGA and PFS events and specials, official tournaments for Warhammer 40k and Warhammer Fantasy, many tabletop games, several LARPS including Vampire and Call of Cthulhu, and many other games with prizes galore! OwlCon will once again be swarming with official demo folks for various game systems to give you a chance to try some of their great games. We will also have an anime room and a Dealers room.

[PoP Con at San Antonio Public Library](#)

Popular Culture Celebration at the San Antonio Public Library
Saturday, February 29, 2020
Greater Houston, TX area
Author GOH: Charlaïne Harris
Author Panelists: Christopher Golden, Ilona Andrews, Grace Draven, David Liss, & Martha Wells
Artist GOH: Jeffrey Alan Love
Artists: Justin Chase Black, Kiri Ostegaard Leonard, & John Picacio
Special Guest: Sera Gamble
Fan Groups: Lothal Temple [Star Wars costuming], Amtgard, USS Bexar [Starfleet], Ghostbusters SATX, Star Wars Society of San Antonio
Panels, Anime, Gaming, Cosplay Contest, & more!

[North Texas Teen Book Festival](#)

Saturday March 7, 2020 8 AM-5 PM
Irving Convention Center
500 West Las Colinas Blvd.
Irving, TX 75039
Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex area

The North Texas Teen Book Festival strives to connect our reading community, adding dimension to the reading experience through diverse author panels and dynamic discussions in a safe and fun environment. ...Both Middle Grade and YA authors sign books, meet their readers, and discuss their books in over 50 small breakout panels.... Books will be sold for each author at the event.

NOTE: The Festival itself is free but you will need to pay for parking and you will need to purchase any books you want signed [see Web site about parking fee and bringing your own books from home to be signed].

NOTE REGARDING SEATING AT EVENTS: All readings and panel discussions are on a first-come-first-served basis unless otherwise indicated. The Speed Date with a Book event and some Author Signings will be ticketed.

Sponsored by Friends of the Irving Public Library; Irving, TX; Sam Houston State University; and MedAlert Occupational.

Women of Wonder Con

Women fans networking & education

Saturday March 7, 2020

Dallas Public Library

1515 Young St., 4th Floor

Dallas, TX 75201

Downtown Dallas area/Metroplex area

Women of Wonder Con exists to support women in creative industries of all types and to encourage new generations to follow in their footsteps. Women of Wonder con is a FREE [one-day]event that offers opportunities for networking, education, and encourages women and girls as they navigate sometimes difficult creative fields.

Women of Wonder Con offers information and guests from many media formats as possible (comics, graphic design, fine arts, film making, acting, etc.).

Sponsored by Friends of the Dallas Public Library, Dusk Comics, ShoNuff Studio, and Wilde Designs.

All-Con XVI

Multi-format convention featuring autographs, gaming, comics, & a burlesque show.

March 12-15, 2020

Crowne Plaza Dallas Near Galleria-Addison

14315 Midway Rd

Addison, TX 75001

(DFW Metroplex area)

For three days All-Con provides an umbrella of content supporting fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Renaissance, Anime, Costuming, Theater / Performing Arts, Mystery, Art, Crafts, Collecting, and Film Making. To help 'give back' there are several charity events at the convention every year.

All-Con is fan organized and built on community participation. We offer a track dedicated entirely to cross promoting clubs, conventions, and events. The best part is you may cross promote as a panelist for FREE as long as we have space and your content is appropriate. Don't forget to bring flyers for the flyer table.

Corflu 37 (Heatwave)

Fanzine fan con
March 13-15, 2020
Hilton College Station & Conference Center
801 University Drive East
College Station, Texas 77840-2116
(Bryan/College Station area)

Corflu is a small, annual convention of **science fiction fanzine fans**....Fanzines are **amateur magazines published by science fiction fans**, usually exchanged freely with other fans in trade for their own fanzines, or for contributions or letters of comment. Although they may talk about science fiction, they are just as likely to talk about any other subject, including the lives, activities, foibles, and opinions of other SF fans.

The SF fanzine field originated in the 1930s...Before the advent of the Internet, fanzines were printed, often by mimeograph, and mailed to other fans around the world. (SF fandom has been called, with some justice, "the paper Internet.")

Today, many fanzines are published online, either on efanzines.com or their own websites, although there are still plenty of printed fanzines being produced....

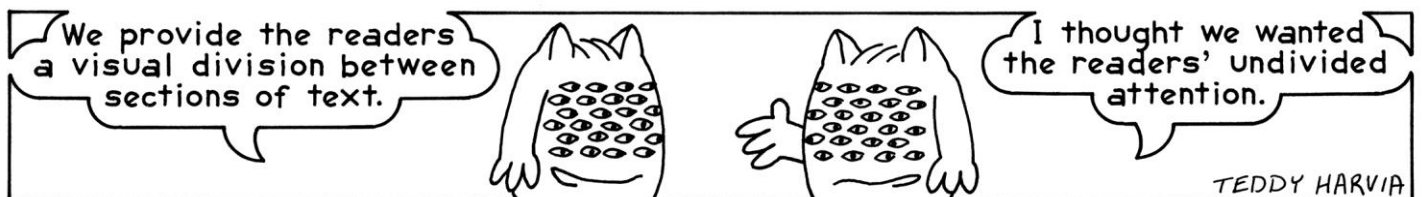
[T]he fanzines celebrated at Corflu and by the FAAn Awards are those that still focus on written SF and its fannish community.

The name "Corflu" is derived from **CORrection FLUId**, a substance that allowed typing errors in mimeograph stencils to be corrected, which was in much demand during the low-tech, pre-computer days of fanzine publishing.

What happens at a Corflu? Conversation, mostly. Corflu is a get-together and a social event....Though Corflu is in many ways a reunion of old friends who come back year after year to have a good time, new people are welcome if you are interested in the right thing – fanzines, of course!

If you want to have a good time at a Corflu, but you're new to the fanzine community, go to efanzines.com (though other sites with fanzines are of course available), and read a few of the zines there.

But more than just reading, the fanzine field is about having fun taking part. Don't just read – write a letter of comment (LoC) or an article....



RevelCon 31

March 20-22, 2020
Houston, Texas area

RevelCon is THE only fan-run relax-a-con/zinefest in the Southwest US. It's a fab weekend of vids, panels, art, zines, merchandise, food and frolic! [Note - Revelcon is an adults-only/18-and-over con.]

FanExpo Dallas

Comics, Sci Fi, Horror, Anime, Gaming.
Friday, March 27, 2020 4:00pm - 9:00pm
Saturday, March 28, 2020 10:00am - 7:00pm
Sunday, March 29, 2020 10:00am - 5:00pm
Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas
650 S Griffin St.
Dallas, TX 75202
(downtown Dallas, TX)

Comics, Celebrity Guests, Artist Alley, Panel discussions, Cosplay/Masquerade, Movies, Comics, Toys, Video Gaming, Games, TV, Horror, Original Art, Collectibles, Anime, Manga & More! Over 60,000 fans in over 600,000 square feet. Presented by Dallas Comic Con.

AggieCon 51

Anime, gaming, & cosplay con.
(Presumably March 2020)
Bryan/College Station, TX area

AggieCon is the oldest, largest student-run fan convention in the world! It is a bit of a "conglom-con," because we cater to all types of fandoms, including Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Gaming, Horror, Anime, TableTop Gaming and many more! Every one is welcome to our convention. We are proud to say we are a family friendly event!

The convention is proudly run by Cepheid Variable, one of the oldest Texas A&M student organizations who are devoted to the support and promotion of all things geeky.

We are excited about the return of AggieCon classics such as the 24-hour tabletop, anime, and video gaming rooms. As we get closer to Con we will be releasing more information. Hope to see all of you there!

See also: [AggieCon Facebook page.](#)
Brought to you by [Cepheid Variable](#)

Ad ignorantiam.

CyPhaCon

Lake Charles, Louisiana's Premier Anime, Gaming, and Science Fiction Convention

April 3-5, 2020

Lake Charles Civic Center

900 Lakeshore Dr.

Lake Charles, LA 70601

Lake Charles, Louisiana area

Anime Industry Panels, Anime Screenings, Artist Alley, Board Games, Charity Auction, Cosplay Events With Prizes, Dealer Room, General Cosplay All Over, Guest Panels, Live Action Role Playing, Role Playing Games, Video Gaming, Workshops.

Brought to you by Cypha LLC.

Teen Book Con: The Greater Houston Teen Book Convention

Mission: To celebrate and promote reading by connecting teens with authors.

April 4, 2020 Doors open at 9 a.m.

Cypress Woods High School

13550 Woods Spillane Blvd.

Cypress, TX 77429

Greater Houston, TX area

NOTE: TeenBookCon is open to everyone (and FREE thanks to our generous Sponsors). Priority seating will be given to teens at all sessions.

NOTE: There are **25+ authors at TeenBookCon**. You will be choosing from multiple panel sessions throughout the day.

Please see our [full list of sponsors!](#)

Hill Country Comicon

Comic convention

April 4-5, 2020

New Braunfels Civic/Convention Center

375 S Castell Ave

New Braunfels, TX 78130

Greater San Antonio / Hill Country area

Here to promote FUN, ART, LITERACY, & IMAGINATION through comics and pop culture.

Embrace your nerdiness at a family-friendly, comic convention. Comic books, toys, cards, games, artwork, cosplay, apparel, guest creators, celebrity . Break out your capes, helmets, light sabers, and wands as we gather for a fun weekend in the lovely Hill Country

Eastern Rim Funny Book & Vintage Con

Comic Book & cosplay con

FREE admission and FREE parking

Saturday, April 18, 2020 10am-6pm and

Sunday, April 19, 2020 10am-5pm

Lee College

200 Lee Drive

Baytown, TX 77520

(Greater Houston, TX area)

Cosplay Contest for cash prizes, Vendors, Special Comic Book Guests, Artists, Authors, Cosplayers, Panels (art, comics, cosplay, podcast, etc.), inexpensive food, fun, games, a Silent Auction, and prizes! For more information, email easternrimcon@gmail.com and/or see our [Facebook page](#).

South Texas Comic Con

Comic con.

April 24-26, 2020

McAllen Convention Center

700 Convention Center Blvd

McAllen, TX 78501

(McAllen, Texas area)

Comics, celebrities, art, collectables, cosplay contests.

Yellow City Comic Convention 2020

Gaming Con. For the Community, By the Community.

Friday, May 8, 2020 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Saturday, May 9, 2020 10:00 am to 10:00 pm

Sunday, May 10, 2020 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

Embassy Suites by Hilton Amarillo Downtown

550 S Buchanan Street

Amarillo, TX 79101

Amarillo, TX area

Guests, Panels (including fantasy writing), gaming, cosplay, video screenings, Dealers Room, Artist Alley, and much more!

Official charity: Children's Miracle Network Hospitals

Epically Geeky Expo

May 16-17, 2020
Central Texas College campuses.
Mayborn Science Theater
6200 W Central Texas Expy.
Killeen, TX 76540
Greater Austin, TX area

Epically Geeky Expo will be held in multiple locations on the campus of Central Texas College. Our fan-driven event features vendors, artists, programs and panels and some special guests. All proceeds from the event go to our Central Texas College Foundation, a 501(C)(3) nonprofit with a focus on providing student scholarships.

We want you to actively participate, learn and create at our event! When you come to EGX, you become part of our community -- you'll make new friends, learn new tips and tricks and get exposure to lots of different ways to express and challenge yourself through gaming, cosplay, fandom and more.

What makes our event unique is our FANS, PANELS AND PROGRAMS! The event is completely fan-driven, with a large group of volunteers serving to steer us in the right direction. You'll also find lots of hospitality, plenty of food, talented artists and vendors with an awesome array of geeky merchandise. It's the highlight of OUR year, and hope it will be the highlight of yours! All that awesome PLUS proceeds go to support our College Foundation scholarships and projects.

ComicPalooza: Texas' Largest Comic and Pop Culture Event

Comics & gaming con
May 22-24, 2020
George R. Brown [GRB] Convention Center
1001 Avenida de las Americas
Houston, TX 77010
Hotels (Host listings with skyways to GRB):
Hilton Americas-Houston [Primary host hotel]
1600 Lamar
Houston, Texas 77010
Marriott Marquis Houston
1777 Walker St.
Houston, TX 77010

Other official host hotels listed: The Westin Houston Downtown, Hampton Inn Houston Downtown, The Omni Houston Hotel

[NOTE: ComicPalooza usually has over 40,000 in attendance.]

(downtown Houston, TX)

ComicPalooza's mission is to provide the best and biggest annual multi-format pop culture convention in the southwest region of the United States, serving not only the fans of comics, science fiction, fantasy,

video and table top gaming, anime, music and film, but also as a trade show and showcase for the studios, publishers, and manufacturers in those industries.

Largest comic con in Texas. Over 40,000 attendance. Live Art Event, Comicpalooza Film Festival, industry panel discussions, roller derby games, quidditch matches, live music, dancers, circus performers, and much more. Comicpalooza is also one of the largest art events in Houston, featuring scores of artists as well as numerous writers, celebrities, and performers, and much, much more!

SoonerCon 29

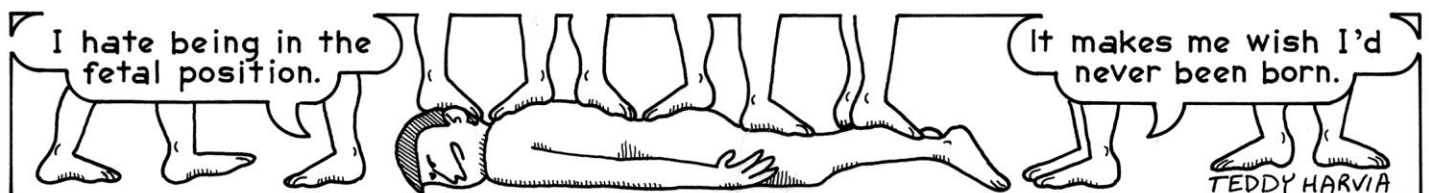
Oklahoma's Greatest Pop Culture Experience
Science Fiction, Fantasy, Gaming Con
June 26-28, 2020
Embassy Suites by Hilton Norman Hotel & Conference Center
2501 Conference Drive
Norman, OK, 73069
Oklahoma City, OK area

Join us for the 29th annual SoonerCon convention, the OKC metro's original longest-running SF fandom and pop culture convention. Events include: Art Show, Gaming, Cosplay and Masquerade. Charity. Panels and Workshops. Video Rooms.

Anime screenings and epic Cosplay Contest with prize support by BERNINA OF OKLAHOMA CITY and cash prizes. Plus, massive art show, tons of vendors, gaming, live performances, workshops and much more.

Calling all miniature painters! It's time to start working on those figures for the SoonerCon 29 Miniature Painting Competition June 26 - 28. Enter to win fabulous prizes from Game HQ Inc and Reaper Miniatures. We'll also have mini painting workshops, free Paint N' Take, Sophie Says and Speed Paint! See also [SoonerCon Facebook site](#).

SoonerCon is a 100% nonprofit convention, brought to you by The Future Society of Central Oklahoma. We are proud to announce that FSCOK is a federally recognized 501(c)3 public charity. THANK YOU for your support! For more information visit www.fscok.org or email charity@soonercon.com.



What's Next This actually is not hard to predict. Obviously, the fact that I am chairing Corflu 37 – nicknamed Corflu Heatwave since mid-March in College Station, Texas can feature daily high temperatures in the 70s – is going to take up the bulk of my time, so the 48th issue of *Askance* won't likely appear until late April 2020, or even the end of May. The contents of that issue will include a post-mortem/report on Corflu 37, which is going to be a unique angle for me to write from: organizing a convention instead of merely being an attendee. It will possibly be a reflection of what Michael Dobson wrote in his fanzine *Random Jottings* #17, although in a different voice. We shall see how that turns out when we get there. Naturally, if anybody else has something to contribute in terms of an article of some sort – no themed issue, so it's wide open for topics, gang – feel free to send it on in. This is, after all, a science fiction fanzine, and All Knowledge is Contained in Fanzines.

As for Corflu 37, there has been a bit of a shuffle at the management level. My cohort in crime, Pablo Miguel Alberto Vasquez, recently finished earning his Master's Degree over in London, England, and finally returned home to Austin, Texas, by November 2019. At the present time Pablo is getting it ready for publication – a good idea – and has begun the application process to doctoral programs. So he is still busy on that kind of stuff, but probably won't begin any further studies until next fall. Therefore, he finally has some time to help out on Corflu Heatwave. Well, while he was busy working on his Master's Thesis, I assumed full control of organizing Corflu 37: getting the hotel contract settled and signed, writing and publishing the Progress Reports – three of those so far; four, if you count the prospectus – and doing all sorts of other necessary things related to setting up a small science fiction fanzine convention. I drew upon my experiences of working on quite a few Minicons and attending Corflu Quire (Austin, TX in 2007), plus other conventions and worldcons over the years to help set up the basics for Corflu 37. A major thank you also goes to Michael Dobson for his marvelous pre and post Corflu 36 issues of *Random Jottings*, and Rob Jackson's *Inca* #16 of summer 2019, which have helped immeasurably in preparing Corflu 37. Additionally, I thank Bill Burns and others (Ulrika O'Brien, Curt Phillips, Nic Farey, Geri Sullivan, et al) for all of their help from running past Corflus who have provided valuable input towards ensuring a successful Corflu 37. I thank you all from the bottom of my fannish heart.

The end result of this is that I had the convention pretty well organized, with a few glitches here and there, by the time Pablo returned. We talked over an idea of mine recently, and he agreed we would assume new titles. Therefore, since Heatwave has been my baby so far, I will now be known as the Con Chair and Pablo, as my assistant, will be known as the Con Settee. This set up means that I can give him assignments where he can help out – such as publicity and during-the-con needs – from this point on. We believe that this will be a very positive arrangement. Ergo, the goal is for attendees to have a good time while here. Go to www.corflu.org for all registration information. The FAAn awards ballot is ready to go, too (watch your email and snail mail boxes). Thank you, all, and I look forward to seeing many of you fine people there.