

Frequent Flyer: Special Worldcon Zine

By Tom Feller

November 16, 2005

Po Box 140937
Nashville, TN
37214-0937
tomfeller@aol.com



Frequent Flyer

It was 97 degrees Fahrenheit when Anita and I left Nashville on the Wednesday before Interaction. We had previously arranged for a neighbor to feed and check on our cat Emily while we were gone. We flew on American Airlines from Nashville through Chicago and then to Glasgow. Our anniversary was in July, so we both bought each other books for the trip. Anita bought the latest Harry Potter for me, and I bought that latest Stephanie Plum novel by Janet Evanovich for her. We were in tourist class, of course, so our legs were stiff when we finally arrived. The airline fed us good, though, serving a snack, dinner, and breakfast. Anita brought two watches: one set on Glasgow time and another on Nashville time. According to the Nashville watch, it was 2 AM when our plane touched down. There were some fannish looking people on the jetplane, and, sure enough, I recognized a few of them later that weekend. We went to the restrooms before passport control, so we were last in line. However, they were still putting out the luggage after we got through so we really didn't waste any time. It was about 57 degrees and drizzling when we finally got outside. We then took taxi to our hotel, the Glasgow Hilton, which was the con's official party hotel.



They let us check in early, so we rested for a few hours before heading to the the Scottish Exposition and Convention Center (SECC). We took the train for the first and only time that weekend, deciding that it wasn't all that close to the hotel, and, furthermore, the walk back did not look safe at night. Then the walk from the station serving the SECC seemed too long, because of Anita's knees. Besides, the cost of individual train tickets was not that much more than a taxicab ride for two of us.



Registration in Hall 1 of the SECC, which is an excellent facility by the way, was very smooth. We got through a short line without any difficulty and were just in time for opening ceremonies in Hall 5 and the reception afterward. There were lots of people and quite a few that we knew. It was quite a good spread of food and drink.



By Friday, we developed a routine for the weekend. We would sleep late and have tea and biscuits in our hotel room and read the London Times. (We found that none of our hotels in Great Britain had coffee setups, only tea and consistently bad instant coffee.) Then we got dressed and took a taxi over to the convention center. Our first stop was a coffee shop there, where we could get some decent coffee and a sandwich. Since Anita and I have different interests, we would arrange to meet somewhere, usually the filk concerts, before attending the main event for the evening.

Frequent Flyer



Anita likes to attend the filk programming, which took place at the Moat House, shown both above and below. Since the concerts ran daily from 3:30 PM to 7 PM, I would usually meet her there at the end of the daytime activities. Consequently, I saw a few concerts myself, and my favorite group was The Weird Sisters, whom we have seen a previous Worldcons. This hotel is next door to the convention center through a passage way. It was also the site for the fan programming and fan lounge. We attended a reading there by British fan Sandra Bond of some the writers of various fans, including Fan GOH Greg Pickersgill. One difference between an American convention and a British one is that there is no free food nor drink in the con suite. We only used the fan lounge to get a quick dinner before proceeding to the main nighttime events. We were impressed by the amount of beer people were consuming, considering that they had to pay for it. I guess we're used to people who think of a convention as the opportunity to drink an unlimited quantity of free beer.



The main nighttime events took place (on time!) at the Clyde Auditorium, which is right next to both the convention center and the Moat House. The picture above shows it from the front, and it reminded me of the doomsday machine from the *Star Trek* episode of that name. The picture below is from the side and shows why its nickname is "The Armadillo". On Friday night, they had a play that spoofed *Star Wars* called "The Anger of George Lucas". They recapped the entire first trilogy in about a hour. The Masquerade took place there on Saturday night, but we found it disappointing both in quantity with 29 entries and quality with no costumes that really stood out. The Hugo Awards ceremony was on Sunday night. Because of the writing contract I've written about in previous mailings, I had not read a single of the Hugo-nominated novels. I have been on the *Plokta* (Best Fanzine) and *Ansible* (Best Semi-Prozine) mailing lists, so I was able to appreciate those awards, and we had seen *The Incredibles* (Best Dramatic Presentation: Long Form).





Hall 2 of the SECC hosted all the exhibits, such as previous European Worldcons and costumes, some quick service food outlets, and some chairs that you could use to rest. Above is Anita in front of one of the displays, the Star Gate. This also was where the convention tables were set up. We found it very useful for just sitting down and talking to people

The dealer's room in Hall 3 seemed to have fewer tables than what we are accustomed to at American Worldcons.

I did attend some programming, which was quite interesting and ran on time. In "After September 11th, are Vampires still scary?", Ellen Datlow, Jeffrey Ford, Tom Hunter, Kim Newman, and Liz Williams discussed the state of horror fiction. Datlow, who lives in New York, said that it was several months before she could even consider a story that mentions 9/11, because the memory was still too painful for her. While the consensus was that there is still room for good vampire stories, zombies are really hot right now, especially with the recent *Living Dead* sequels and remakes and new ones like *28 Days Later*.

In "Is *The Incredibles* the Best Superhero Movie Ever?", Doug Bell, Simon Green, Rebecca Moesta, and Lawrence Person all thought that *The Incredibles* is a great movie, but they were not quite sure that it is the best superhero film. Other candidates are the *Spiderman* and *X-Men* films, the first *Batman* and the second *Superman*.



Anita is always interested in the program items on space, so we did attend one panel together, "Mars 3-D". Simon Bradshaw made a beautiful Powerpoint presentation of 3-D images of Mars. Fortunately, they did provide the 3-D glasses.





There wasn't a great deal of hall costuming at this convention, although you wouldn't know that from one newspaper article we saw. Two American fans we know brought their costumes. Judy, picture above, and Brenley, right as a Klingon in a kilt, used to live in Clarkesville, Tennessee, but now live in Wisconsin. (They still return to the area for ConCave.) We had lunch one day with Brenley, which was also the only time we ate at the Café Rianza in the SECC. We found the food mediocre and overpriced. Brenley updated us on his movie re-enactment career. He has appeared as an extra in the films *The Patriot* and *The Alamo*.

One of the pleasures of attending a Worldcon is the opportunity to meet fans in the flesh whom you only know through zines and apas. I was glad to finally meet Sandra Bond and Bridget Hardcastle Bradshaw, both British fans. This is the third Worldcon where I've gotten to spend some time with Franz Miklis, an Austrian artist who did illustrations for me when I was more active in fanzines.

Other SFPAns in attendance were Janice Gelb, Gary Robe, Eve Ackerman, David Schlosser, and Rich and Nicki Lynch. I had only met David and Kay on one previous occasion, at a dinner for LASFAPA at the 1993 Worldcon in San Francisco. This was the first time that I had met Random, however. Of course, I've been reading about him for years.

Anita and I do not attend conventions to meet the pros, but we were glad to see James Hogan who doesn't make it to Southern conventions as much since he sold his house in Pensacola.



Frequent Flyer



As I wrote earlier, the parties took place in meeting rooms on the second and third floors of the Hilton after the main event for the night. This definitely had the advantage of reducing the elevator usage! Above is Anita and an American fan we kept seeing at parties. Below is Anita and the James and Cathy Fulkerson, who used to live in Nashville, but now live in Chicago. The No-reason thank you party was probably the most impressive. Denver in 2008, where I had a glass of wine, DC in 2011, Kansas City in 2009, Montreal in 2009, Australia in 2010, and Chicago in 2008 all had bid parties. Columbus in 2008 was a no show, which was a surprise to me. LA Con IV and Nippon 2007 combined to hold a party. Fans from different countries such as Sweden, South Africa, Germany, and Texas also had parties.

We used the parties as meal substitutes and only had one meal at the Hilton, which was terrible in both price and quality.



The Xerps in 2010 people held an illegal party in their room on the 17th floor of the Hilton and were shut down once. Above is Frank Kalicz and a friend and below are Millie Kalicz, Gary Plumlee, and Sherri Beyke. We got there just after they were shut down, so we talked in whispers for about several hours. They did not decorate as extensively as they do for an American party, and obviously they could not play loud zydeco music as they usually do. Nor did their "skippies", short for "Skip and Go Naked" drinks. taste the same. The main ingredients are beer, vodka, and limeaid, but since they could not get the same brands that they use in the U.S., it affected the taste.

Overall, we had a good time and were glad we went. The convention seemed well organized, and the events came off on time. I'll be sending a report on the rest of the trip in the next mailing.

