

## Askew #37 (July 2022)

The barely there skiffy-related sf fanzine - a personalzine is the specific genre – from John Purcell.

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art credits: nicked off internet – 1, ; clip art – 1, 3;  
Tara Wayne – 6; Teddy Harvia & Brad Foster – 10.

Lino on the bottom of page 9 taken from the animated movie “Smallfoot” (2018)

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### Beisbol Season

Most of you know that I am a sports fan. One of the things that surprised me when I first became involved with fandom is that there are a lot of sports fans in science fiction fandom. Who knew, right?

The thing is, I grew up in the typical suburban nuclear American family: no dog running in the yard, no white picket fence either, but we did have two kids (my brother and I), mom, dad, a nice house with a decent-sized backyard to play in, and a detached single-car garage. My brother and I would, like most boys growing up in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, play baseball in the summer, football in the fall, hockey in the winter, and slog through a typical messy spring thaw to start the cycle all over again. Rick and I (he’s two and half years older) went through both levels of Little League and Pony-Colt baseball, and even as adults we played on our company softball teams: him for Apache Corporation, me for St. Paul Companies. Yeah, we remained physically active for many years.



Right now the major league baseball season is halfway through with its annual All-Star Game two weeks from now (it’s the Fourth of July as I type this section). The Minnesota Twins, my favorite team, is still in first place in its division, but not by much. Rick and I enjoy nattering back and forth while we watch ballgames on either ESPN, one of the Bally Sports Networks, or whichever channel is broadcasting the Twins or some other interesting baseball game.

Except the New York Yankees. We can't stand those damn Yankees. That should get some of you readers writing letters of comment. Such is my evil plan.

## **TAFF Trip report update**

A couple things to note here. First off, the 2022 Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund delegate to this summer's WorldCon in Chicago (September 1-5), Fia Karlsson, posted her travel itinerary for her trip. I have the more detailed itinerary set to be published Real Soon Now – end of next week, so looking at July 24<sup>th</sup> – in *Askance #53*, but here is the abbreviated list of trip stops between August 13<sup>th</sup> and the end of Chicon 8: Washington, DC; New York City; Boston area (Toad Hall, to be exact) in Massachusetts; Minneapolis, MN; and then onto the Windy City for the main event. It sounds like a wonderful sweep of fannish enclaves despite no western half of the continent on her itinerary. The best way for western and Canadian fans – and others as well – is to get to the Worldcon. Have a great trip, Fia!

As for my 2017 TAFF Trip status report, it is nearly completed in terms of content and layout. A large chunk of my free time for the past month has been tied up with this project. Now I have to contemplate printing considerations because I have set this up in a trade paperback format. That seemed logical to me because essentially it is the chronological tale of my travels across the pond and back. Stay tuned for any further developments on this front. Thank you all for your patience.

## **David Cummer: May 18, 1956 - March 7, 2022.**

Every single week a notice is posted on Facebook or Twitter or in an email about the passing of another of our science fiction fandom friends. David Charles Cummer, a very active and delightful member of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, Inc. (Minn-stf) passed away a few months ago, and it has taken me this long to process this loss.

A founding member of the League of Super Davids, David was probably one of the most energetic members of Minn-stf and a fun person to simply be with. His sense of humor was infectious, he loved theater, dance (he was a member of Minn-stf's belly dance troupe, if I recall correctly), active in multiple apas, worked on Minicons and other local conventions... Just everything in the club and beyond. There wasn't any activity that escaped his touch. All in all, David Cummer was a good man in all aspects and was the kind of person you truly enjoyed being with. I know that's how I felt. Godspeed, David: you are missed in person but will always be in our hearts.

## **Robert Lichtman: August 27, 1942- July 6, 2022**

The science fiction fandom world lost one of its stalwarts at the beginning of this week when Robert Lichtman passed away due to cancer. I never met Robert in person but feel as if I knew him well because of our constant trading of fanzines and letters of comment over the years, notably during the run of *Trap Door*, which never ceased to amaze me with its fantastic writing, artwork, and impeccable production. Truthfully a great fanzine, and seeing my letters of comment alongside fannish giants such as Ted White, Dan Steffan, Greg Benford, and so many others I have long admired totally croggled my mind. We do share being TAFF winners – he in 1989, attending *Contrivance*, the British Eastercon held in Jersey in the Channel Islands (so cool) – and fan publishing, and Robert was named the recipient of the Corflu Lifetime Achievement Award at Corflu Heatwave in 2020. Like I said earlier, we never met each other. Even so, I

feel like I lost a good friend this week, and along with the rest of this fannish community, I celebrate his work and contributions to our little universe. Definitely, Robert Lichtman will be greatly missed.

## What I Have Been Reading

For quite a few issues now I have been “threatening” to review the current print science fiction magazines I subscribe to and actually read. Unfortunately, my reading of these is usually six months or so behind publication date, and I suspect that I am not alone in this regard. The initial plan was to actually review the entire magazine, but I have decided to scrap that and instead comment upon some of the particular stories that left a strong impression.



Let me start off by listing the print fiction magazines that I subscribe to: *Strand Magazine* (mystery), *Alfred Hitchcock’s Mystery Magazine*, *Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine*, *Analog*, *Asimov’s Science Fiction*, and *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. Of the dozens – or so it seems – of the online science fiction and fantasy magazines currently running, the only one that I receive on a regular basis is *Beneath Ceaseless Skies*, and I will be honest, the vast majority of the time I cannot stand those stories. Once every three months a decent (meaning readable) story appears, but even then they really are not that good. The other major online sf publishers of shorter fiction – *Clarkesworld*, *Uncanny*, and *Tor* – I honestly do not wish to subscribe to any of them. Simply being up to snuff on \*everything\* being published these days is a fulltime job, so I much prefer being selective and rely on recommendations from sf readers that I trust to follow up on by reading x-author and their y-story or z-novel. At any rate, all this is enough preamble to establish the caveat that what follows is a very limited exposure to “current” science fiction, fantasy, and mystery magazines.

Yeah, current. The oldest issue in front of me is the March/April 2021 issue of *F&SF*. Most of you likely already know Sheree Renée Thomas is the current editor, assuming that role at the end of 2020. The stories published so far under her tenure have been an interesting mixture; some are outstanding while the vast majority are either okay (most of them) or disappointing in terms of readability and content. Case in point: in this particular issue the stories by Harry Turtledove (“Character”) and Robin Furth (“Jack-in-the-Box”) are my favorites, followed by Cat Rambo’s “Crazy Beautiful”, Meg Ellison’s “The Pizza Bot”, and “Speak to the Moon” by Marie Brennan. The remainder in this issue are all decent stories, but these five tales stand head and shoulders above them. Chalk it up to personal taste.

The next two in this stack are both September/October 2021 issues of *Asimov’s Science Fiction* and *Alfred Hitchcock’s Mystery Magazine*. Let me start by stating flat out that the cover story for *Asimov’s*, “The Dust of Giant Radioactive Lizards” by Jason Sanford did not deserve the honor. I simply Did Not Like It. The plot was recognizable, but the writing style was annoying, plus the premise did not make sense to me. \*blech\* Better stories that would have provided much more interesting backgrounds for the cover are “Sleep and the Soul” by Greg Egan, “Singular Days” by the late James Gunn, and my favorite of this issue, “Billy the Kid” by Rick Wilber. All these are excellent stories, clearly plotted with solid characters and believable settings. In contrast, the cover story for *AHMM* was “Glass” by James R. Benn, and I really enjoyed this story’s premise, pacing, and characters. Yes, it’s a mystery story, but I like a well-told whodunit as much as a well-told science fiction, fantasy, horror, or steampunk story: if it all hangs together coherently and keeps me interested, that’s the ticket. This particular issue also contains a story from a longtime science

fiction fannish contact, Michael Bracken, who cowrote “Blindsided” with James A. Hearn. Good stuff. As can be expected from any collection of short mystery stories, there are some clunkers in this issue. At least editor Linda Landrigan chose a story that deserved this issue’s cover art honor.

This section of seriously short capsule reviews of a wee selection of magazines ends with the relatively recent March/April 2022 issue of *Analog*. As far as science fiction stories go, I really enjoy what is called Hard SF: stories based on scientific information that is extrapolated into an interesting otherworldly or future setting that captures my interest. Of the seventeen stories herein, the only one that really stands out is “In Transit” by J. T. Sharrah. Really liked that one. This story, besides ticking off the above criteria includes a mystery that needs to be solved. I really don’t want to give the plot away, but the basic setting is that a human attempt at colonizing another planet runs into a serious problem with the indigenous ecosystem. I think I will just leave it at that and say that “In Transit” is, imho, the best story in this issue. A very intriguing idea that is clearly presented and the plot logically progresses to a satisfying conclusion.

Well, that’s kind of what I have in mind for “reviewing” the current print magazines that plop into the mailbox. Next issue I will probably cover the two latest issues of *The Strand Magazine* that arrived together the first week of this month. Nice thick envelope. You all need to know that this is the rebooted version of the *Strand* that began in 1998. Oh, how I would love to acquire copies of any issues from this magazine’s 1891 to 1950 era. \*sigh\* Allow me to dwell with that thought in mind for a while.

## Skewed Results -

*Before I get into the traditional fannish correspondence section of this zine, a brief editorial statement is in order. As is common in many science fiction personalzines of recent vintage - let’s say, of the past three years or so – many fan writers have been opining away about politics in America, and the first half of this year has been dominated by news about the Russia-Ukraine war. Since I love to follow a trend, I did the same in *Askew* #36, and some readers definitely shared their views on that topic. However, I think the invasion of the real world into fanzines has now reached a saturation point for me, so I am going to refrain from commentary on Real World Events in future issues and attempt to focus my comments more upon personal and fannish topics. Ghu only knows how crazy those things can get anyway.*

*Ergo, this ish’s feature loc – because, hey, I want to call it that – comes from Canada, and it is NOT by Lloyd Penney (he is in here, too, so all is right in the fannish universe). Here it is, fellow fen:*

Taral Wayne

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8 March 2022

Gawd knows I don’t loc much, nor have much spare energy to do so. But did notice a couple of things that caught my attention with this issue, and if I don’t put it off too long, I might actually loc. On the other hand, I may not remember any of my thoughts from two days ago.

Of course, fandom may cease to exist at any moment if Vlad the Bad decides that reconstituting a bigger and better, Glorious Soviet Empire is worth destroying civilization. I would have though he was too calculating to risk that much, but recent events seem to indicate that he has reached a state in which he will risk anything. Enough of that ... we are all thinking on the same wavelength. . . *{Yes, we are, and enough of that for now.}*

When I was a kid of maybe three or four, I think, I was in the back seat of my uncle's car, when another car backed out of a driveway and into my uncle's front end. I remember it clearly to this day. I got hit in the head pretty hard when I catapulted into the back of the front seat. We went to the hospital to check my head, and the X-Rays seemed to show nothing had been broken. I didn't have a concussion, so none of my later peculiarities as an individual can be blamed on a childhood injury. But I do wonder if that wasn't the beginning of my life-long hearing deficiency. It was well diagnosed by audiologists as a 10% loss of hearing in one ear and 15% in the other. So far as I know, the degree of hearing loss remained the same for decades. Of course, I'm 70 now, so I suppose it is only likely that my hearing has decayed at last. Still, I don't seem to be losing my hearing at any great rate.

*(My hearing loss is)* unlike a friend of mine who was a dedicated audiophile, who used to build his own amplifiers and had a fabulous stereo setup that I could only drool over. His hearing began to decay in early sixties and is serious enough that he complains about not enjoying his music as he once did. He invested in a hearing aid – I don't recall if it was for one side or both – but he wore the aid for a few months. He said he was hard to get used to in a number of ways. One was that the aid picked up conversations on the other side of the room that he had no interest in, while confusing the conversation he was trying to follow that was only three feet away. In the end, he gave up on the hearing aid, and just turns the volume up more.

I never used a hearing aid myself. The audiologist aid that with my degree of hearing loss it was my call about whether or not to do without. Hearing aids back then cost money I didn't have, so I did without. Much to the annoyance of people who didn't like to speak up, or neighbors who expected quite in their apartment when I wanted to listen to TV. The world very much insists that the "deef" have to be silent when it wants to sleep, and what the "deef" is no interest to them. So, I don't listen to music on my stereo set either, though I had a fairly nice one, and a big vinyl collection. Instead, I listen to CDs on my computer speakers. I have no trouble with volume when the music (or a movie) is only two feet from my ears.

It might amuse you to know that John Millard, who was chairman of Torcon 2, was an audiologist. *{I did not know that. Thank you for sharing that information.}*

You can kick any sort of ball you want, but it's still just pummeling leather bladders to me. It's not any kind of sport for a Canadian. Not that I watch that either, but I can abstractly accept it. I once owned a hockey stick. I was even once hit in the mouth by a puck. That was all the Canadianness I needed after that.

I read some volumes of Lovecraft when I was younger, and felt it was my duty as a fan to know everything possible about the genre. But I never liked it. The writing was stilted, the writer fetish ridden and the subject matter repetitive. Now, of course, he's being written out of history by the movement to cleanse everything from our culture that is less than 20 years old ... if not less.



For instance, one of the founders of our nation is John A. McDonald (no relation). As little as six years ago, the Royal Canadian Mint struck a \$2 coin bearing John A's image, commemorating his birth in 1815. I guess it was two or three years ago that mass graves began to be exhumed in various locations that marked the burials of Native Canadian children who died at government residential schools. The children were forcibly separated from their parents, in an effort to educate them to be more like white, European children. Of course, it was a total shemuzzle, but the even though the worst of it was probably several decades ago, the schools were not entirely closed until the 1960s I believe. There is no question that the governments of the time (and the Catholic church) are complicit in these crimes. But it was part of

history that everyone knew about who knew much at all about the First Nations relationship with the government. In other words, the average person didn't know much, but average people also don't usually know about Louis Riel or the War of 1812.



But I'm more interested in history than is normal for people, and certainly did know about the residential schools ... though doubtlessly underestimated the numbers. What I'm leading up is that two or three years ago, John A. McDonald was suddenly branded as genocidal. Public schools named after him were renamed, libraries also, and his name removed for every other public building. Statues were knocked over. His image, which had been on Canadian currency since the 1970s, was removed from the \$10 bill where it had been for so long. Remember... he had been commemorated

by the mint as recently as 2017! Now he was a genocide! What was found maddening is that I'm not at all clear how much was John McDonald's doing. He was only prime minister for a certain number of years, and the government's policies were religiously followed for decades. Also, what about the other fathers of Canadian Confederation? How about Wilfred Laurier, who is on our \$5 bill, and at 7th. prime minister is certainly as complicit in the residential school scandal as John A. McDonald. But nobody seems to care... Sacrificial blood was drawn, so I guess the mob is satiated for now.

To illustrate how the mania for iconoclasm spreads, a statue of Terry Fox was splattered with red paint ... I forget if it was tipped over or not. Terry Fox is as close to being Canadian saint as we have, who attempted to raise funds for cancer research by running cross-county with a leg he lost to cancer himself. Unfortunately, he succumbed to the tumor before he finished. Yet, apparently under the assumption that all important, white males are evil, his statue was defaced.

Finally, I get to how this relates to Lovecraft, who's racism has always been a well-known fact. However, he was *never* celebrated for being a racist, but for profoundly influencing the course of weird fantasy. All that is to be erased, I gather, the good as well as the bad. I don't think this can end well.

## Taral

*{Thank you for the lengthy and interesting letter, Taral. Greatly appreciated! (\*) I am also a coin collector, but it is not an extensive collection and mostly consists of modern American coinage with a smattering of foreign currency. Your input on the history behind some of the figures emblazoned on Canadian coins is fascinating. The history behind McDonald is eye-opening, to say the least, and*

***American political leaders of past and present have included some racist individuals, such as Woodrow Wilson and George Wallace, to name just two prominent politicians (a president and a governor), and this tendency likely will continue.***

Lloyd Penney  
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*18 April 2022*

Hello! Sorry to take so long to respond to *Askew 36*. I have been busy editing another SF book, plus taking on some responsibilities with the conference staffing agency I do some occasional work with. I got Yvonne on board with that company, so we are now both taking the time to make a little extra money. Now that time finally allows, I can get caught up with correspondence.

Reality truly sucks sometimes. As if Trump and his disgusting politics weren't bad enough, it looks like his star pupil was Vladimir Putin, who has invaded Ukraine with reasons not even closely related to reality and conducting an mis-/disinformation campaign teacher Trump would be proud of. Thousands have died because of lies and the mental illness of Putin, who takes his place among the deadliest despots of history. It seems it is now the hallmark of right-wing parties to tell bald-faced lies and nonsense in order to try to gain power. We get that in this country, too. It is difficult to wait so long, but more and more, it looks like the truth will come out, and Trump and his cronies and family will have many, many charges laid against them re their roles in the January 6<sup>th</sup> disgrace. Can't come soon enough. ***{Well, the hearings are ongoing and pretty much are exactly what was expected, so no surprises. How and when they will actually end, and whatever conclusion they come to, is yet to be determined, albeit predictable.}***

I might have to deal with hearing aids myself. My hearing is good, but my tinnitus is getting worse, and I might need noise-cancelling earbuds to make my hearing clearer. I will have to see if there is anything here that could cover the expense, or if it might be considered cosmetic, which means I'd foot the bill myself.

We've got both kinds of football here...the Canadian men's footy team has made it into the World Cup for the first time in nearly 40 years, so interest here is very high, especially from European immigrants who have always has footy/soccer on their minds. I need to have a look at the standings of MSL to see how well Toronto FC is doing... 3-2-2, 5<sup>th</sup> place overall in the Eastern Conference. As far as the other football goes, the CFL season should be starting in early June. The Grey Cup game will be played in Regina, Saskatchewan this year. There is still consideration of a CFL expansion team somewhere in the Maritime provinces.

Unfortunately, you know how old you're getting when your friends start to leave. Of them all, I knew Bill Mills and Roger Sims best of all, which wasn't much, seeing where they live and where I am. We'd always chum around with Pat and Roger at Worldcons and have ourselves a good time. Bill Wright always sent me his fanzines for some response, and I dared not disappoint. ***{The aging of fandom's cost. ☹}***

My locs...re the unmarked graves at residential schools, a group of indigenous Canadians went to visit with the Pope, and they got an apology out of him, and the promise of a visit to Canada for a more personal apology. Whether there will be financial reparations, it's not known yet. Joe Biden is doing a far better job than Trump could ever imagine, but I keep reading that he is losing support even in his own party, which

is only laying ground for another Republican presidency, either Trump again or another insane Republican. I'll move to a happier topic, and that's hockey. The Leafs don't look like the Leafs, mostly because they are having the most successful season in franchise history. Their current record is 50-20-6, which means they have 100 points for the first time ever, plus several players who may score 100 points or more in the season. Leafs are third overall in the league, 8 points behind the Florida Panthers, 10 behind the Colorado Avalanche. For most Leafs fans, this is fantasy, this never happens, but this year, it is very real.

Re the Chinese Worldcon...the only person I know who is planning to go to the Chengdu Worldcon is ProGoH Robert J. Sawyer. He has been very quiet about this lately, for he must know how unpopular the decision is, but he has been a guest at Chengdu a number of times in the past, and he has enjoyed the experience.

## Lloyd

*{Well, I am not surprised that Robert Sawyer is keeping a low profile right now, and don't blame him. As far as the Chengdu Worldcon is concerned, I suspect any real, honest appraisals will not be heard and published until the affair is over. Whatever. Quite frankly, I am getting quite disgusted over the matter and cannot wait until it is done.}*

Ray Palm

Somewhere in the wilds of Michigan

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8 March 2022

Good to hear you recovered from your end-of-the-year blahs and that you've returned to zining. Me, this time of year I deal with SAD/the hibernation syndrome. Being from Minnesota you know what it's like when the sky is gray and the high temp for the day is only 0°F without adding the windchill factor. But sometimes inspiration strikes, and I have the energy to bang out another edition of my zine.

I agree with you that the investigations into the criminal activities of the fat orange polyp are taking too long. What's going on is the opposite of a rush to judgement. I saw an article that claimed Republicans overall commit more crimes than Democrats. And let's not forget some GOP leaders also commit moral transgressions, breaking the Commandments while cloaking themselves in the holy white light of Christianity. C'mon, Matt Gaetz belongs to the so-called Family Values party? Anyway, don't be surprised if Biden pulls a Gerald Ford and pardons Trump. *{It's possible, but I doubt Biden would do that. He'd lose practically all party support if he did.}*

I don't have a problem with Lovecraft. Just a matter of taste. Yes, his writing is "thick" but when he writes a description like "unwholesome antiquity" I'm impressed. After I read *The Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath* I was hooked. *Dreamquest* and his other works were unlike anything I had read before. Of course, the cancel culture went after HPL for his racism. Yes, he was a racist but from what I know he didn't lash out vehemently in person at minorities like a member of a violent hate group. It's a matter of degree, how much actual harm is done. I heard they're going to cancel Ernest Hemingway for farting in church.

## Ray



*{Farting in church is funny. Always. (\*) Lovecraft had issues, yes, but he was such a product of his time and upbringing. Despite that, quite possibly because of it these influences, he wrote some wonderfully evocative and memorable stories, and "The Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath" is one of my favorites.*

Curt Phillips

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6 March 2022

Thanks for *Askew 36*. No real comment hooks for me, I'm afraid. Politics: I agree with you (and all right-thinking people) that Trumpelstilkeskin *{sic}* should swell up and burst and be done with it. Football? Zero interest here as it's obvious that the only real sport worth talking about is Cricket, and I don't have a clue of how Cricket works, so I can't add anything. Except that in spite of my near complete ignorance concerning the game I nevertheless hanker to start the Abingdon Cricket Club, mostly so I'll have an excuse to wear white flannels and consume vast quantities of lemon squares and tea.

**Curt**

*{I would pay good money to see you in white flannels. Oh, wait a minnit... Maybe not.}*

#### **SHORT TAKES – A.K.A., the I ALSO HEARD FROM LISTING:**

**Nic Farey** (who corrected me, and rightfully so, that the writer of the "Footy" articles in Nic's zine *This Here...* is David Hodson, who has admirably covered that topic for over two years now. I sit corrected and properly chastised.)

**Bill Fischer** (who wrote, "I thought this *Askew* was a good read, John. The only thing that had me concerned for a while was the picture of Marjorie Taylor Greene's butt in the lab container with the microphone. Then I realized it was a picture of a human *brain* and not her buttocks, so I knew that it had nothing to do with Ms. Greene".)

**Jerry Kaufman** (who sent the briefest e-moc on lastish: "Thank you!" on March 5<sup>th</sup>)

**Jose Sanchez** (who sent some artwork, which is always graciously accepted and appreciated. Thank you, Jose!)

**Marc Schirmeister** (who sent some artwork, too, which needs to be scanned and used to enhance this fanzine and also *Askance*. Thank you, Marc!)

***Thank you everyone for writing, gang. Keep those cards and letters coming!***

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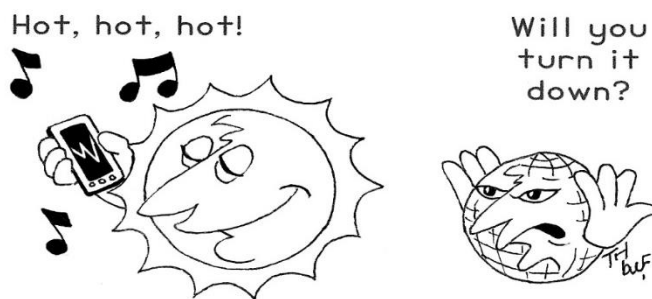
"So we didn't fall out of the butt of the great sky yak?"

## Closing Natter

One of the problems with producing fanzines is when the text on hand ends up on an odd-numbered page, which then raises the problem of what to do on the last even-numbered page to make that particular issue work out nice and balanced. A common solution for most faneditors is to start typing away until something of note pops in mind that he or she or it or they or...you get the idea...latch onto a topic that he or she or they or etc. can use as a jumping off point to blather away in a coherent fashion and flesh out and fill up this offending last empty page of the issue so that it is no longer empty.

Guess what? I just thought of something to write! See? It works!

This illustration, courtesy of Teddy Harvia and Brad Foster for Corflu 37, which was held here in College



Station, Texas over the March 13 to 15<sup>th</sup> weekend in 2020, squeezing in just under the wire before the Covid-19 pandemic forced Governor Gregg Abbott (boo! hiss! Catcall!) to shutter the state. That convention was nicknamed Corflu Heatwave because Texas gets a lot of high temperatures for a major part of

each calendar year. Over that convention weekend the average high temperature was a pleasant 68° Fahrenheit. For the overseas attendees that's 20° Celsius. Lovely weather for a lovely and relaxing convention.

What a difference two years and four months make! As this issue is finished – mid-July 2022 – the current temperature is a modest 98° F, which is the lowest daily high this part of Texas has had for the last two weeks. The daily highs since June 26<sup>th</sup> have been over 100°F, and starting tomorrow the daily highs are projected anywhere between 101 to 108 for at least the next ten days, most likely into mid-August. It is not as hot as it gets in Las Vegas, Phoenix, or Albuquerque in the American Southwest, but face it: this is still pretty dangd hot!

To put all of this into perspective, in the over 20 years we have been living in this godforsaken hellscape, no summer has been as hot as this one. High temperature records are being broken nearly every day. A typical hot summer in Texas runs from Memorial Day Weekend to the end of September. Since that time, this period of mega-summer has gradually extended to now being from just after Easter to Halloween. There is no projected change in sight, either. Needless to say, we deal with persistent periods of drought, heat warnings, fire hazards, rolling blackouts, and water restrictions. The thing is, Texas is not alone. Look at what's happening out west in California and other states. Even northern states are dealing with drastic changes in climate.

The bottom line to all of this natter is that, based on my personal experiences here in Texas, there definitely has been a tangible increase in planetary temperature. There is no doubt in my mind that humankind's activity on its home world has negatively affected the biosphere. We are in trouble, and I fear that there is very little time left to do anything about it. Perhaps Joe Manchin should move here and see firsthand what it's like to live in reality.