



Broken Toys is a personalzine by **Taral Wayne**, and in no way implies that my other zine, *New Toy*, is a dead letter, just more bite than I can chew at present. The letter column overfloweth with equal parts news, good cheer, egoboo and bile. As has been the case for a third of my life, I live in partly self-imposed exile at 245 Dunn Ave., Apt. 2111, Toronto Ontario M6K 1S6. Contact or loc me at Taral@Teksavvy.com however. The date is early November **2012**, not long after the World has begun breathing again ... now that Barack Obama has been re-elected President of the You-Know-Where. This is ExtraTaraltorality (or Kiddelidivee Books & Art) **259**. © past, present, future & in all parallel Dimensions, except in a Galaxy far, far away.

FRANKENSTORM!

What a Halloween!

First, we were told by The Powers That Be that instead of perfect October weather – brisk, dry, autumn leaves, skeletal trees, bright moon, black clouds racing by – we were going to play host to Hurricane Sandy. It would hit the American East Coast hardest, bringing strong winds, heavy rain and a storm surge from the ocean that might well wash away parts of lower Manhattan ... but even in Toronto we were warned of wind and rain and the danger that our electric power would go out. Weather Canada and the Mayor were warning us to stock up on 72 hours of food and water, as well as batteries for flashlights ... as a precaution. I rushed out and spent half of my few remaining dollars on trail mix, beans and canned tuna that I could eat cold, then did what little I could to prepare for three days of abstinence from the computer, music, movies, hot food, coffee, running water, a toilet I could flush, and light to read by. Going out for a stroll in the midst of the hurricane was, of course, out of the question. Besides ... with the elevators out of operation, I'd never get back in my 21st floor apartment.

But before the actual post-tropical storm arrived, we'd be plastered by the cold front with which Sandy was colliding and merging. It poured all afternoon of the first day, and winds that night hit up to 90 mph. Trees were blown over and one unlucky elderly woman had her brains dashed out by a sign ripped loose in the gale. Sometime before dawn, it quieted down. Some 50,000 or 60,000 people in the north end of the city were without power, but I was fortunate ... so far.

The next day passed uneventfully, however. It was overcast, and light rain came and went. Power

was restored to the northwest end of the city.

On the third day, when Sandy was expected to loom right over Toronto like a vast, malevolent weather-spider, *nothing happened*. Oh, it was gloomy ... and there was more drizzle ... but this was *far* from the Frankenstorm we were warned against. You might even say it was a washout. I ended up with a cupboard full of beans for nothing!

I guess I shouldn't complain too much. After all, over the same weekend, an e-mail correspondent, who I had come to be very fond of in the last couple of years, died of a heart attack.

Thank goodness there's an even darker lining to every dark cloud... Otherwise I'd have to concede that the universe gives me a lucky break now and then.

Dave Locke

b. 1944, d. Halloween 2012

David Locke and I plainly didn't like each other.

That was more than 30 years ago, when I was almost another fan than I am today. Dave was a member of a Midwest fannish mafia that I didn't fit into and didn't understand. I was young, still trying to sense my place in the world, and hadn't yet unlocked the clues to what was friendly kidding and what was mockery. To be perfectly honest, I didn't get along well with that entire crowd, suspecting them of mockery all too often.

Dave and I sort of *rediscovered* each other a few years ago. I don't recall what led to it, exactly, but we were mutually astonished to realize how we had each smartened up and grown more laid-back in the interim. Though I think I must be around ten years younger than Dave, I suppose that with increasing age it's natural for two people to find they have a great deal in common - not merely receding hairlines, growing paunches and more trips to the doctor. Fortunately, Dave and I made the best of having lost all those years between. Once Dave and I began to exchange e-mail, we were gossiping like two old ladies on a park bench, who both had the same disappointing sons or daughters, suffered the same noisy neighbors, complained about the same stiff backs and sore bunions and who both wondered what this world is coming to.

It wasn't as though we agreed on *everything*. Dave loved the fanwriting of Charles Burbee. I could take it or leave it. He thought Dave Langford was the only writer in fandom who could touch Willis. I needed a lot more convincing ... However, we had learned how to accept that we saw a few things differently, and instead we shared the delights of finding fault with everyone but ourselves.

One of the things I learned in the weeks before Dave died was that he badly missed Jackie Causgrove. Sadly, she died quite a long time ago, back when I was still on the outs with the Midwest crowd. I took a few jibes rather too hard, and it erected a wall that I never troubled

to look over. While I was thin-skinned, my friend and partner in crime, Victoria Vayne, was extremely so. She took kidding the way oversteering a Ferrari on a sharp curve at 110 mph takes to grease on the road. I blamed the resulting car wreck of Victoria's gaffiation on Dave and Jackie for many years. Had I known them better, I might have had second thoughts about whether there *was* anyone to blame.

Certainly, I underestimated Dave. While we both evaded the issue for quite a while, eventually I worked up the nerve to mention it. It seemed to me that perhaps Victoria had over-reacted, and Dave's original comments were hardly as scathing as they had seemed to me more than 30 years ago. Dave wrote back to admit he knew that I had blamed him for Victoria's gaffiation, but he chose not to refute it. This was not the monster of insinuation and sarcasm I had known back in 1978.

Sure, Dave Locke could be venomously funny. He had clear-cut opinions and wasn't afraid of sharing them with anyone. He did not suffer fools gladly. These were traits I appreciated ... as you may have noticed, I had developed some similar quirks myself. Yet, tact was another side to Dave Locke that I hadn't expected.

On occasion, he confessed to me how much he missed the companionship of Jackie Causgrove. He impressed me as a lonely man, who had seen far too much of the best things in his life slip away over the years.

I'm glad I made friends with Dave, late in the day though it was. It was in time to contribute several times to his last fanzine, *Time & Again* - a class act. And Dave was developing into one of my most dependable loccers for *Broken Toys*, appearing as recently as the previous issue.

I couldn't have known that letter was the last one from him I would ever read. I called Dave Locke a friend for a far briefer time than I would like, but I feel grateful to have been his friend at all.

Left-over Pieces

ERIC MAYER, GROGGY.TALES@GMAIL.COM

Excellent logo, and your instructions to Dave Locke regarding how you get that effect guarantees that I will never, ever, even think of attempting it. I've never bothered trying to learn Photoshop, or Gimp which is I guess the open source equivalent. I once downloaded Gimp, but the apparent difficulties outweighed any obvious utility for me.

You need outlets for your art other than Furry perverts and Fandom. There's only so much inspiration to be drawn from a skunk's genitalia, and Fandom doesn't always gauge quality very well. Just now I was writing the third chapter for the next Byzantine mystery. This is where I put my major creative

efforts these days – into books. I've never come within two miles of a Hugo nomination, or even being considered to be in the running to be nominated, never won a FAAn, never won an egoboo poll. But the mystery books get rave notices, starred reviews from the major, professional publishing trade papers. The whole nine book series is about to be reissued from a major UK house. Pretty funny, since over the years I've been told that every single British fanwriter is better than I am. Go figure.

Funny that...

If you depend on fandom's opinion, you are shortchanging yourself. Maybe fandom just isn't your ideal audience. Obviously fandom is not my audience. That's the problem, finding your audience. You'll never convince the wrong audience of your merits, which are considerable. During the seventies and early eighties I got too hung up on Fandom. I was stunned how readily accepted my work was when I turned to mini-comics in the mid-eighties. I didn't stick around mini-comics long, because my life went through an upheaval and then too my drawing talents are limited. But it was great fun while it lasted.

Well, for a while I thought the newly emerging “anthropomorphic fandom” was the place for me. And, for a time, it was. I made out like bandits at cons and was doing my own comic for a while. But, the comics mostly faded away after the big black & white comics implosion and the fandom evolved in to (ugh) “furry fandom.” Finally, the internet flooded the market with millions of free pornographic funny animal images every day, and that was the end of that. I also tried magazine illustration, but black & white was “old fashioned.” Now I’m just too old to go looking for a new audience.

After Mary and I were married we began to co-author and sell fiction, which satisfied my creative urges and my need for egoboo. A few years ago I discovered I could enjoy fandom as a relaxed hobby without being overly concerned with egoboo (or lack thereof). I don't know what your ideal audience would be. But you have superior skills. I am sure, like me, you could do something, for some audience, that would give you more love than fandom has done.

I haven't really done that badly in fandom, but you know ... no “love” is ever enough. I want a damn Hugo!

The unfinished painting has an interesting composition. Maybe you could add a little more color and leave parts uncolored and call it finished. It would symbolize the US moon program. Unfinished. I am not a huge fan of manned exploration of space, which I think has drawbacks, but when I think about the moon landings being so far behind us it makes me sad because it reminds me of the days when I thought the future would be better, but you see what we got instead.

BRAD FOSTER, BWFOSTER@JUNO.COM

Broken Toys 8 has arrived through the miracle of pixels over the weekend. Out of town not making any money at a Steampunk convention in Oklahoma City, but, at least had some fun. And various panels on trying to figure out what the heck “steampunk” is all boiled down to “goggles,” so there's that bit of information gained.

Sorry to hear of the downturn in your feeling even the urge to draw recently. I can identify though, as it seems the older I get, the more I spend time simply thinking about what I want to do, and have already half-finished it in my head, then I'm eager to get onto the next idea, and less inclined to taking the time to complete the first idea on actual paper. Not to mention, since I still love the ol' Rapidograph pen, if I don't use them for a couple of days, I have to go through all the cleaning-out process to get them ready to work again. Still, when I do finally put pen to paper the old joys of drawing come

back, but it's the struggle to get my fat ass in the seat and start that drawing that is the battle. As you note, there seem to be too many distractions.

I had a Rapidograph set once. I could never get them to work for more than five minutes, no matter how I cleaned the damned things! I kept them for years, but finally gave them away.

Regarding your fetish-art customers and the comment: "Never mind what they ask for?" Details, you must reveal the details! Of course we want to know the depths of *other* people's kinks: how else to measure the level of our own? Personally, I've been amazed over the years to find out how very vanilla of a fellow I am when it comes to sexual perversion. (You could take advantage of modern on-line zine pubbing, and put up the section of the zine going over some of the more "interesting" requests in a white type face which would not show up on the screen until that area was selected. Hi-tech!!!)

Such requests usually resemble something like, "I want Wilma Flintstone and Judy Jetson doing cunnilingus in a swimming pool full of Spaghetti-O's, and Yogi Bear is making a video while Boo Boo porks him from behind." Now, did you really want to know that? And I have to go to bed at night knowing I do this for money.

I've gotten variations of the "will this be worth anything" question in regards to my own art, too. It always floors me, and I want to argue with them: shouldn't you just be buying this because it is something you enjoy looking at? But I did come up with an answer I like a few years back. I now tell those who ask a question about "value" that I will personally guarantee them, if the piece they have bought is not worth at least half of what they paid for it in twenty years, and they can manage to track me down, then I will, at that time, give them my most heartfelt apologies. And that is something they can take to the bank!

(On the flip side of that comes the much rarer comment of "is that all?" in regards to my pricing, I let people know that if they feel guilty about paying too low a price, they should feel free to give me more. Funny, no one has ever done so ... in fact, usually if someone comments about how low my prices are, it's a sure sign they won't be buying anything at all.)

Loved your Duck page for the *Worldcon Sunday Funnies*. Wish I could have gotten to play there too, but by the time they got it together and sent me the info on deadlines and such, I was already hip-deep in other projects and had no time to work on it. Now, after seeing the results from everyone who did send something in, probably a good thing I didn't try to rush something out, since any puny ideas I might have come up with would have fallen flat beside most of the great material it had. (It was nice the con put it up online for anyone to view. I've not been able to attend or afford even a supporting membership to a Worldcon in a decade or so now. Got excited when I found out the next one would be in San Antonio – not only close enough to get to without having to pay for airline rates, but my mother lives there, so there would be no big hotel bill, either! Then found they had moved the dates back to the Labor Day weekend, and we are already committed to an art festival then. Bummer, almost in my backyard this time, but can't go again.

That's a bummer, alright. Sure there's no way to drop the art off at the art festival and attend the con instead? Also, how long is this festival? Worldcons are 4 or 5 days long, remember and you might catch some of it!

MARK PLUMMER, MARKFISHLIFTER@GOOGLEMAIL.COM

I'm curious as to why Rich Lynch (letters, *BT8*) thinks that the new Hugo definition of a fanzine as a 'nonprofessional periodical publication' should exclude blogs like *SF Signal*. I admit that I haven't

closely followed this debate and I haven't attended any of the business meetings where it's been discussed, so it's entirely possible that I'm missing some nuance here, but looking at what the words mean, I really can't see how a Hugo administrator could safely rule something like *SF Signal* ineligible if it gets enough nominations to make the ballot next year.

Some terms are defined within the Hugo rules. If a substantial block of Worldcon attendees were to decide to nominate 'Taral Wayne' for best novel, I imagine a Hugo admin would have no difficulty in ruling you ineligible, as you are demonstrably not 'A science fiction or fantasy story of forty thousand (40,000) words or more.'

There is I believe now (and again) a definition of 'nonprofessional,' or rather there's a definition of 'professional,' and so nonprofessional is defined by exception. I'm not aware that *SF Signal* is professional by the new definition, although I might be wrong. So that leaves 'periodical publication' and I'm not aware that either term is defined within the rules.

A 'publication' is pretty much something that is published, which would include presentation on a website as well as traditional print media, so what about 'periodical?' Looking in my Shorter OED, I do see reference to an adjectival definition of 'published at regular intervals longer than a day but shorter than a year.' *SF Signal* does make several posts a day, but equally there are several traditional fanzines -- and also Hugo shortlist regulars -- that only appear annually; and if it's a requirement that periodical publications appear at *regular* intervals, that would seem to exclude the majority of print fanzines. But there are other definitions of periodical which seem to allow for things that recur at regular or any interval so that seem to let print fanzines back in, as well as, well, *SF Signal*.

But ultimately, given the Hugo administrators are usually non-interventionist, I can't see that there's anything about *SF Signal* which would allow an administrator to say it is categorically not a 'nonprofessional periodical publication.'

(And just to add that, for all that I may seem to have an interest in the question, I don't personally have a position on whether it should or shouldn't be eligible.)

Because Rich probably understands the term “**periodical**” to mean what I think it means – a recurring, separate appearance of discrete issues. A blog is more like a roll of paper towels. You unroll it and unroll it and unroll it ... ad infinitum. There are no separate issues of a Blog. Without more than one iteration, how can a blog be “periodical?” It can't ... unless the Rules Committee have an idiosyncratic definition of “periodical.”

LLOYD PENNEY, PENNEYS@BELL.NET

Many thanks for *Broken Toys 8* ... produced by an Old Fan and Tired, just like me. I'll respond to this issue, and I think, after a quick scan, the most common word will be 'agree.' Let's see what all the agreement is about...

It's good to be creative and in demand, but you've been creating art and writing for a long time. You're still in demand, but you're feeling under-appreciated. With the writing I do, I am feeling that way myself. I write locs on an awful lot of zines, and sometimes, they are forgotten in their in-boxes, and never mentioned, let alone printed. And then, there's a few people who are sick to death of my locs, and actually wish I wouldn't write so many. The appearance of my locs is up the editor, not me, so I'd like to redirect their complaints. After 30 years in the local, it is getting tougher to write about

something new, and I've had some constructive criticism about what *not* to write about any more, that I've done it to death. And, I've seen some pretty rude remarks, too, but not directly to me, so I usually ignore such lack of bravery. I've thought about reducing my writing, or even dropping locs altogether, and trying my own zine. Or not.

Sadly, we ought to look at fanac as something done purely for the fun of it, and not be swayed by issues such as popularity and awards. Being human, however, it's difficult to be pure about anything, much less something both of us have put an enormous amount of effort into and have invested with so much significance. The truth is that fanac is not done entirely for fun, but for other reasons that may be as personal as seeking a sense of purpose or validation. It's also hard to ignore awards and fan funds, and it's impossible to overlook how popularity becomes a judgment of worth.

Some of the fetishes I've seen in some of the newer local fans...Lolita, dark Goth, even bodybuilder/muscle. Some of these folks are just strange, even without the fetishes.

I understand what you mean about the Hugos. I feel the same way about the Auroras. I have been nominated for an Aurora 16 times now, and have won twice. That's a lot of feeling good enough to be nominated, but not good enough to win. My only consolation is that there are others who may have won more Auroras, but have lost many more than I have.

You might also take some solace in knowing that many of the winners have likely done little to deserve one.

The local...I am not sure why *SF Signal* won the Hugo for Best Fanzine this year, either. It really is a blog. However, the days of the big paper fanzine seem to be gone, and most active fans these days don't know these zines exist, knowing only about electronic communication.

Why don't people write a loc to the zines they enjoy? Not sure, unless it is simply lack of time and impetus, and, as Ned said, coherency. Merle Insinga produced a lot of artwork for Noreascon 3 back in 1989, if I recall correctly. Jim Hines is a professional fantasy writer, and based on his website, I have no idea how he got the Hugo for Best Fan Writer.

Perhaps I see so many fans at conventions, especially the pro-run cons, like WizardWorld and Fan eXpo, as passive consumers because almost everything is provided at the event, and all you need do is sit there, and have it all happen around you. Yvonne and I have participated extensively for just about all our fannish lives, about 35 years each, and we've enjoyed conventions and other events and interests more when we're a part of things, or making things happen.

Nope, I do not live in Mississauga, but in Etobicoke. *[Oops.]* The First Thursdays provide the stage on which people can be social, or network, or whatever they want to do. Not everyone likes to go to them...we get perhaps 15 to 25 at First Thursday, and we have more than 140 people on the mailing list. Some have said they just want to know that fandom is there and busy, even if they don't care to participate themselves.

Time to check out, think I got this one done now. Fandom has provided a lot of good friends and fun times over the decades, and we are finding newer interests, within and without fandom, to keep things fresh and interesting. I see too many cranky types in fanzine fandom, and they carp over the fact that fandom has changed. Well, duh, that's what happens, and they fail to do anything about it. We have, and we've benefited from it.

I did like the idea of fandom being invitational, by anyone already invited.

However, I am not ready to go along with the idea of this being like Facebook. I used to be on Facebook, and it was a good way to find out about people I had not heard from in decades. However, Facebook exists essentially to sell your identity to advertisers, much the same way as Google makes all its money. I am not ready to trade convenience for being a commercial commodity. So if I were ever to return to Facebook, it would be under a totally fake identity. However, Facebook keeps insisting you use a real identity. Not going to happen.

So, the wonders of modern drug therapy are to be superseded somewhat by a walker frame. At the retirement village, we have a certain number of people using them. Electric scooters are even more common. Good luck getting the frame that way.

It wasn't a walker frame I was trying out, but a similar contraption on wheels that I didn't have to pick up and move ahead with each step. At it happens, I've given up on it. The contraption is too big to get into stores or on streetcars, and weighs a ton. Nor did it address my basic problem, which is that I tire out in a few hundred feet, whether I'm pushing the damn thing ahead of me or not. What I need is a scooter, unfortunately. It's not that I can't get around for short distances, but I can't go anywhere far away, and just going out for the sun and fresh air is no pleasure when it's exhausting.

We are in the Euromess zone, as Greg Benford put it, at the moment. Copenhagen to Amsterdam by train. The Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers and canal system by boat, to Budapest. We just got off the Prague to Berlin train, which is where I read your latest fanzine (and went back to check some of the outstanding unanswered mail). The pace of construction in Denmark, Czech Republic and Germany is considerable. The north of Europe looks fine to me. But I do think Greg is right to avoid [investing in] the crazy currency.

Mind you, a bunch more educated professionals will be leaving Greece. I hope some decide Australia is a good place to live.

Jean Weber must have read the article about the dangers of sitting. One day I took delivery of a large desk for her. It had an electric motor, and a lift mechanism, so you could raise it (and its contents) from sitting to standing height. Jean uses it standing a lot of the time.

I guess I will send this when the Internet connection in this Mercury Hotel in the former East Berlin next co-operates. Luckily, we are in the rear of the hotel, facing the courtyard. The whole street out front seems to be under construction from the Berlin station and beyond.

Best of luck with your ailments.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM — Ned Brooks, nedbrooks@sprynet.com - who has just finished his 266th zine for the 290th mailing of SFPA

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM — **CHRISTINA LAKE !!!**

In a Corporate Board Room, Far, Far Away



I read on Mike Glycer's blog that the Disney Corporation has bought Lucasfilm, lock, stock and Ewok. At first, I thought this was a bad idea. A little later, it occurred to me that this was still a bad idea. But now, I'm convinced it's a *very* bad idea.

First of all, does Disney have to own *everything*? First they bought Pixar. When I heard that news I swore at my gods, because I was hoping the sheer brilliance and originality of Pixar's animated films would continue to show Disney up for the withered laurel of Walt's genius that it rested on. But all that happened is that the corrupt studio bought out its more vigorous competitor. A few years later, Disney bought Jim Henson's organization, along with the Muppets. It was absolutely *no* consolation that the gem in the crown of Henson Productions, Jim Henson himself, up and died shortly afterward. Then, a year or two ago, Disney bought Marvel Comics. What's next? What's *left*? If I fell into a ten-year coma, would I wake up to find Disney had also swallowed up The Simpsons, Rocky & Bullwinkle, Transformer Robots, Michael Jackson and Studio Ghibli?

As objectionable as Disney alone is, I'm even more incredibly sick-to-death of Star Wars! The first movie that Lucas made in 1977 was a splendid revel in science fiction nostalgia, and said everything there was to say in film about that sort of swashbuckling pulp Science fiction. However, every Star Wars movie since has just been squeezing the last juice from the lemon. They have made us groan over bad acting, insulted our intelligence with plots that consisted mainly of outrageous coincidences and irrational decisions, ruthlessly ransacked the film genre for substance, and skirted perilously close to racist clichés. Worst of all, Lucas promised three series of three films each, to extend his vapid vision of science fantasy across several generations of new audiences. The official word was that nine films had been his intention from the beginning.

Nine films to rule them all, and in the darkness bind them? Well, something like that.

The facts don't bear out this quaint story. Apparently, Lucas was pessimistic at first that he could even sell the idea to a producer. When he did, he was terrified the film would bomb and he'd never make another. Does this sound like a man with a plan reaching far into the future? Other considerations suggest not. For instance, the many inconsistencies that developed as the series progressed, and which Lucas has spent most of his career retroactively fixing by releasing one revised version after another.

The fact is, the coming-of-age of Luke Skywalker in the original movie is all that ever need to have been said. There is nothing new about the background of the story, nor anything of interest about the hodge-podge of westerns, jungle adventures, interstellar empires, WWII movies and

Samurai epics that comprise the setting of Star Wars. Yet the “story” has been extended into the past, and it appears will now be extended into the future ... even though none of the early “episodes” have the least thing to do with Luke’s coming of age, and even though it seems unlikely that future “episodes” could have much to do with him either. We have been told by Lucas that the “dream” will now live another 25 years. But, should anything as unoriginal and unimaginative as Star Wars ever be called a dream? A more honest statement would be that Disney dreams that the profitability of its new franchise will live for another 25 years.

From all indications, it seemed unlikely that Lucas would ever have filmed the final three Star Wars “episodes.” For one thing, he’s already blown up the second Death Star and killed off both villains. In effect, the larger story of the fall of the Republic and the overthrow of the evil empire is over. What’s left for the triumphant rebels to do? Establish their own oppressive empire and be overthrown in turn? That would be too cynical for the sappy, uncomplicated mental universe of Jedi Knights and petulant princesses. Disney, however, promises a new “episode” every two or three years, ad infinitum ... rather like a comic book.

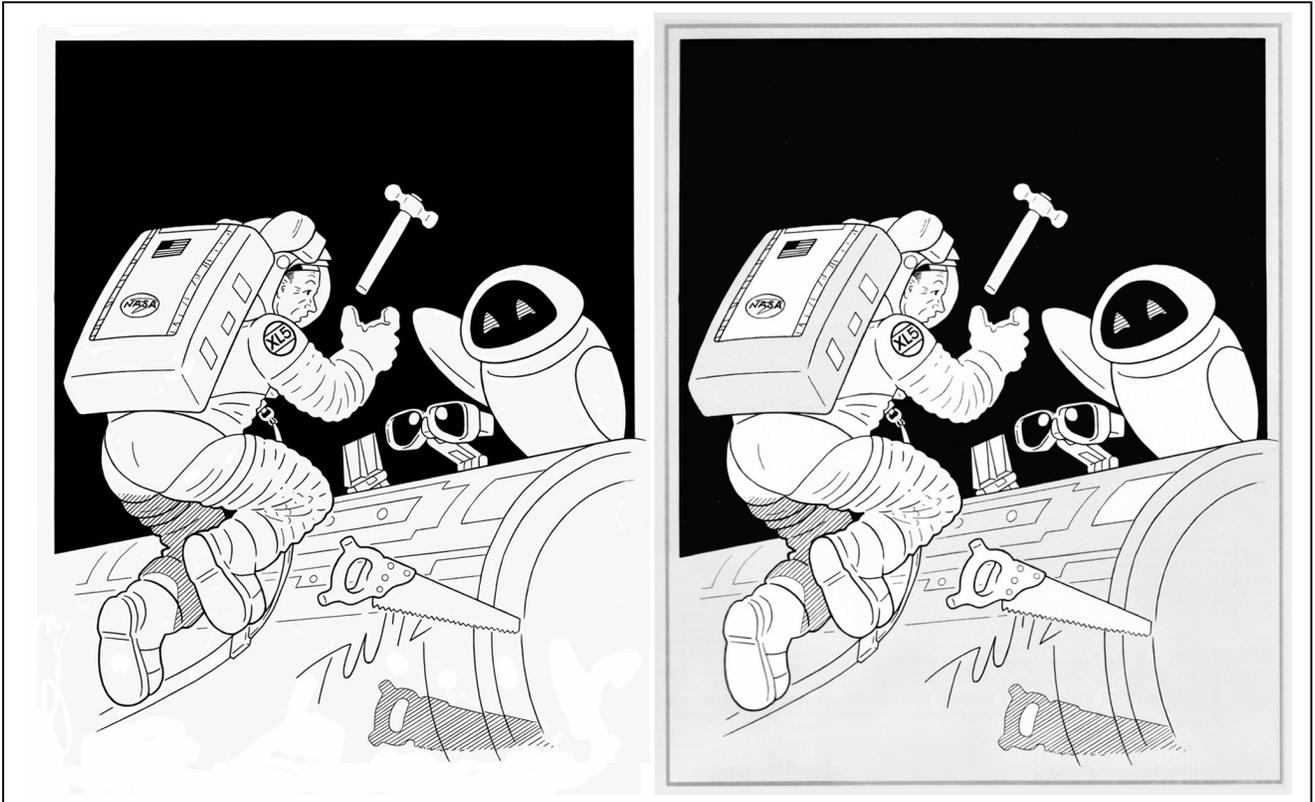
It’s probably no coincidence that Marvel Comics intends to exploit their audience the same way – rebooting their titles every now and then when the actors grow old and flabby or the story grows stale – hopefully without end. It’s no coincidence either that Disney owns Marvel comics. We see in these plans an ossified and manipulative corporation that is no longer capable of creating new ideas, and instead seeks a guarantee of profits that no longer have to be earned by originality or taking risks.

When I first read the news, I was a little surprised that Lucas, who claimed that Star Wars was a creation of love, would sell it with no apparent hesitation. Admittedly, the \$4.05 billion paid for Lucasfilm can buy more love than your or I would experience in several lifetimes. But, sticking to that metaphor, George Lucas was hardly an unloved man. He must already have been worth considerably more than the total value of everyone who was a member of the last Worldcon. Afloat in liquidity, what on Earth (or Tatooine) could he possibly *want* more money for? Doesn’t he have enough \$100 bills to bale them up and lay around his mansion as a hedge?

It turns out that Lucas really doesn’t want the money. He probably sold Lucasfilm when he realized that he was getting old and too creatively flabby to ever film the final three Star Wars “episodes,” and decided to pass the legacy on to someone who would. In a press release, he has said he will use the money to advance education and do other good works. Geeze. Here I hate him, and he goes and does a good thing ... sort of. I mean, he could easily burn all the prints of Star Wars in his back yard, and still have plenty of money to do all the good he wants. But as things go, this is a pretty decent gesture. Instead of a greedy shit, he’s only a dumb shit.

Well, I can always hope that Disney will do for Star Wars what it did for John Carter of Mars and for the Narnia series. With any luck, the next “episode” will be so mind-fuckingly awful that not even the uncritical fans of Star Wars will be able to stand it, and it will be the last we ever hear from that tiresomely predictable galaxy, far, far away.

“*Darth Vader’s New Boss Is The Mouse*” <http://file770.com/?paged=2>



The Real Story

Not long ago, a couple of contributor's copies of the Chicon VII program book were mailed to me. I had produced a full-page, black-and-white illustration of the Guest of Honour, astronaut Story Musgrave, and although it was two months later, this was the first time I had seen it printed on the page. I was a bit taken back.

It was suggested that I drop a line to the editor, so I did. Doing so was a bit like closing the pod bay door after the astronaut got in – that is, it was too late to do anything about it by that time. Nor did I want to come across like a prima donna at the sight of the defaced art when I finally saw it – I suffered merely a *minor* trauma, after all.

I had been rushed to do the work to begin with, so rather than full colour I settled on a fairly simple black-and-white design. For that matter, I don't remember if I was aware whether or not colour was an option. Had I known, I wouldn't have had time for it in any case. So, expecting to see the crisp, bold, black-and-white work I submitted, I was surprised to discover that a spurious grey tone had been added.

The grey border wasn't a bad idea as far as it went, but the tampering went further, adding a grey fill to large areas of the art itself. The art wasn't designed for grey tones at all, but had they been limited to just the simplified Hubble Space Telescope, it wouldn't have been *quite* so bad. But parts of the art had been filled that shouldn't have been, and other parts were filled incompletely. It was almost as though the job had been done at random.

But a part of the astronaut's backpack had also been filled with grey tone ... though in every photo *I've*

studied, the backpack should be as white as the rest of the spacesuit. Furthermore, parts of the background that ought to have had the same fill as the rest of the HST are left bare. You can see there is an area in the loop formed by the astronaut's tether and his boot that was left white, and also the hole in the handle of the wood saw ... *and* its shadow. Along with one panel and other small details, the unfilled spots are distracting to the eye.

Whoever retouched my work was no doubt in a great rush ... but think of how much time would have been saved if *none* of that unnecessary retouching had been done!

I'm pained to say that the result is rather amateurish-looking, and *I* am the one who will be blamed for it by the thousands of people who viewed the program book. It almost calls into question the credit at the bottom of the page ... as though it *ought* to read, "Illustration by Taral Wayne, 2012 Fan Artist Hugo Nominee" with a question mark at the end. Yeah. Hugo Nominee. Right.

It also worries me that anyone thought that *more* had to be done with the artwork than simply leaving it as it was. Now that we have computers to do full-colour, three-dimensional, photo-realistic images, has it become mandatory that *all* art be *cg?* Is black-and-white line work obsolete? The more that computers enable us to do, the more everyone seems to expect be done ... regardless of whether it needs doing!

If so, it's bad news for an old fanartist and tired, like me.



Now we are 61.

It happened a couple of days ago, almost unexpectedly. My sister had seemingly forgotten the day. She finally left e-mail for me, asking if I wanted to go to dinner for my birthday, that I didn't get until a quarter to six the same morning.

Naturally, I did. I don't get to pig out at an all-you-can-eat buffet often. In fact, only once a year, on my birthday. The Mandarin is a suburban restaurant that once had a fairly substantial choice of traditional Chinese dishes, but over the years the Fu Yungs and Moo Goo Gai Pans have dwindled to a very small selection of noodles or rice. Most of the four buffet counters are set out with crab, duck, three kinds of rib, six kinds of chicken, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, spicy sausages, dumplings, fish, mussels, zucchini and cheese, sushi, pizza slices and about 19 kinds of desert, including five sorts of cheese cake – New York, chocolate, strawberry, blueberry and pumpkin. Hog heaven, with refillable coffee or soft drinks!

The trick is to not drink too much beverage. If you fill yourself up on something worth only about five cents a glass, you won't have as much space for food. The same stratagem is valid for helpings of rice and noodles. Much as I like a good Shanghai Beef Noodle, it's mostly cheap pasta – even with chunks of bell pepper, onion, mushroom and water chestnut, a plate of noodles is

barely worth half a buck. No, the trick is to go straight to the meat! Meat is expensive. Meat is good.

While it might be better for my blood cholesterol levels, the fact is that I don't get as much meat in my diet as I'd like. For cooking-at-home, I can afford hamburger at \$2 a pound, the occasional pork chop and various parts of chicken, but that's about all. Nor do I have the means to prepare my food in very many different ways. I fry chicken breast in a shallow pan, while wings and legs go into the oven to bake. I can't make Lemon Grass Chicken, Deep Fried Chicken, Honey Garlic Chicken, Pepper Chicken, Chicken Balls or any of that. Pork chops I fry slowly, and add jerk. As for hamburger, I only use small amounts in my pasta sauce, though it can be added to instant noodle dishes in much the same way. I don't actually consume as much beef as the instructions on the side of the package say to use – a full pound. Instead, I divide burger into uniform servings of about 1/3 pound and freeze them. I used to have a more diverse kitchen, but that's about all that's on my at-home menu these days.

So, letting me loose in the Mandarin is like giving the Wehrmacht free run of Poland. I leave just about as many bones carelessly strewn around, too.

When I was younger, I just porked away until I bloated up like an amoeba about to divide. Then, a couple of years ago, I began to regret exploiting the buffet so thoroughly, and began to push away from the table a plate or two earlier. The problem is that, if I eat in greater moderation, I can't possibly have *some of everything*. This year, for instance, I never did sample the crab legs or roast beef. Although I had plenty of cheesecake and a bit of pumpkin pie, I had little fresh fruit, no cake and none of the chocolate coated strawberries.

It just isn't fair! When I eat at the Mandarin, I should have rights to "next day seconds," don't you think?

CONFESSIO

Tomorrow is the Friday, first day of the local SF convention, SFContario. I attended last year and the year before, took some photos, and wrote a few notes that subsequently appeared in Mike Glycer's File 770 Blog. Why spoil an emerging tradition?

One reason to spoil it comes to mind. I'm rather reluctant to go. The con hotel is *not* out of the way, but since it has become more difficult for me to walk, the hotel has become more difficult *for me* to get to. SF Contario is also a relatively small convention, where I'm not convinced I'll meet many out-of-town fans that I know. It'll please me no end if I'm wrong, of course, but even if there are people at the con I want to see, they'll be wasting their time with the usual convention nonsense – sitting for hours at a time while listening to blowhards at the front of the room talk about science fiction. I can't imagine anything more excruciatingly dull! There's bound to be other distractions to limit my access to visiting fans, as well – costume events, filk-singing, auctions and a lot of similar time-fillers that I haven't the slightest interest in. While the fans are closeted with their arcane goings-on, likely I'll be sitting in the hall, twiddling my thumbs.

Of course, conventions also have attractions more to my liking. SFContario has an artshow ... though, from past experience, I expect it will be a very small one that shouldn't take five minutes to peruse from end to end. The con has a dealers' room, too - also very small, consisting mainly of a few local collectors who want to unload unwanted items, and Bakka, the local SF bookstore, is bound to have a table or two. But, even if it were a huge dealers' room, I haven't the money to spend in one.

One of my best buddies is in France this weekend, and the other says he's busy this weekend - so much for sponging off them for lunch. Then around dinner time, everyone will form up into groups of various sizes and leave the hotel for the usual convention treat - an expensive dinner. While *they* cram themselves with calamari, moo shu or mee goreng, *my* only option will be to scrounge peanuts and cheese squares, by myself.

So, what am I? Nuts? Why am I going if I expect to have a mainly bad time?

In two words: Chris Garcia. To my chagrin, SFContario announced last year that their next Fan Guest of Honour would be Chris. How could I just shrug and pass up an opportunity like that to see what the guy is really like?

Don't get me wrong ... I've been writing for the guy for years, and will soon rack up a solid 100 published articles in *Drink Tank*. I've *met* Chris before, as well. In fact, twice - at Anticipation, in 2009, and again at Renovation, just last year. However, all I really saw of Chris was an orangish blur going by. Our verbal exchanges were limited to pearls of wit such as, "I have to pick up some printer ink from Staples, so can't stop to talk," and "sorry, I have a panel in five minutes." Absolute pearls! SFContario may be the only chance I ever have to see whether or not Chris can actually construct complex sentences or articulate an abstract idea.

As for writing my observations on the con for File 770 ... ask me about it on Monday.

Better still, read about it in the next issue, in December.

NUDES

There is a fan artist from T'ronto,
Who draws like a pro and like pronto.
But whose work, it's well known,
Can never be shown,
'Cause the nudes that he draws are full fronto.

