

Broken Toys

10



TW '14



Broken Toys 40 is the first issue since the earliest that actually sticks to my originally intended schedule. It has been a full six weeks since the last issue ... instead of only a month. It is **mid-July, 2015**, and regretfully I am still **Taral Wayne**, living at 245 Dunn Ave., Apt. 2111, Toronto, Ontario, M6K 1S6, Canada. I was hoping by now to be superhuman man-machine hybrid and live in my own starship. Oh well, at least this is the future! I can be reached at taral@bell.net if you wish to loc (or, if by some freak Whim, to send money). As usual, **Broken Toys** is available as a free download from eFanzines, <http://efanzines.com/> This is **Kiddelidivee Books & Art 299**. Yow - 300 next!

EDITORIAL CONFESSIONS

You may as well resign yourself. It looks more and more as though *Broken Toys 50* will be the last issue. The end of the month rolls around earlier and earlier, it seems, catching me unready and increasingly unwilling to begin work on the next issue. By the end of the year, I ought to be just about ready to throw in the towel. The good news, though, is that many of you still have a chance to repair your miserable records as readers. There are quite a lot of people on my mailing list who have received all 40 issues (counting this one) and **have not written to me even once!** That's pathetic. I mean, what's the big deal? Is it too much to ask an occasional "keep up the good work," or "I know I don't say it often enough, but I really enjoy your writing?" What are you so busy doing that you can't find 30 seconds now and then to reward a hard-working faned? Fortunately, you have ten more opportunities to make up for your negligence ... so don't blow it!

When I began *Broken Toys*, I never expected it would turn into a journal of my health problems! That does seem to be what's happened over the last year or more. But it's hard to keep such matters from dominating the zine, since they have totally dominated my life. I had hoped this to be a more "fannish" zine. But what contact do I have with fandom? What can I write about people and events far away that weigh so little in my mind? I do my best, but overwhelmingly *Broken Toys* is a personalzine. At least I've been growing more chipper over the last few issues.

This is looking to be a very long issue. For one thing, I appear to have nearly 22 pages of locs. Despite complaining about readers who never write, I have very loyal "regulars" who keep "Left-Over Parts" full to overflowing. Maybe I'll run a photo gallery in the final issue, along with all the other vainglorious things I have planned.

A Little Time in Little Italy

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Friday evening was getting on. I had gotten up very late and my daily routine was running way behind, so it was already 8:30 before I noticed the answering machine had a message on it. The message was from Steven Baldassarra, a close friend. I didn't owe him any money, so I returned the call right away.

The first words out of his mouth were that we hadn't seen each other in a while, so he wanted to get together. Unfortunately, his family had already scheduled the entire weekend coming up. Instead, would I come up to his neighborhood where we could have a bite to eat and hang out for a few hours?

Steven lives in what everyone calls Little Italy, a strongly ethnic neighborhood that has become very trendy. There are restaurants offering a wide variety of cuisines other than Italian, bookstores, and a number of other attractions. Best of all, it is quite close to Parkdale, where I live. "Close," of course, means that it takes a little under an hour to walk from here to there. Back when I walked nearly everywhere I went, I thought of an hour's walk as "short," a welcome opportunity for physical activity that I didn't get enough of.

Since then, my growing immobility made a walk to Little Italy impossible. Even public transit was more of a physical challenge than I was usually up to, and my visits to the neighborhood became infrequent. Finally, I entirely stopped going to Little Italy.

All that changed this year, when I began using an electrically powered chair to get around. "Traveling Matt" has a range of several miles, giving me access to parts of the city as far away as downtown and back. Once again, Little Italy was a short distance away.

At first I was a bit reluctant to accept Steven's invitation. It wasn't the distance I was concerned about, though. I had been up to Little Italy on an earlier opportunity. But 8:30 PM was a little late, and there was rain in the forecast for that evening. I dithered a bit, then looked out the window to see that the sky was, frankly, not very threatening. What the hell, I thought. Even if it did begin to rain, I have an umbrella stashed in Matt's backpack, and I'll only be out in it a short while. "Sure," I said, "I'll be out the door as soon as I shut down the computer."

I timed the trip to Little Italy as taking just about 30 minutes.

Steve met me at his door. He lives half a block from Little Italy's main drag, College Street, so he suggested we have a bite to eat there. I hadn't eaten yet, so readily agreed on a nearby Taqueria. I like taqueria food, but rarely get it. The place Steven took me to was small and rather Spartan, but the menu was large. I asked for a chicken burrito with just about everything on it except olives. When it was wrapped, the "burro" was almost as big as a roast chicken, and delicious. After dinner, Steven suggested dessert at a Sicilian gelato place a few blocks in the other directions. I ordered "the Inferno," which was just a fancy name for a banana split, and Steven had the Tartufo.

We were pretty replete after that, so ordered coffees to talk away the rest of the evening. We didn't break up until after midnight.

The drive home was uneventful. It grew a trifle cool for this time of year, but it never did rain. Obviously, I need to be less of a worrywart and not let forecasts intimidate me. Risking a little rain now and then is well worth an evening like this, and I'm looking forward to more of them as the summer unfolds.

“The best way to live an incredible life is to have modest expectations.”

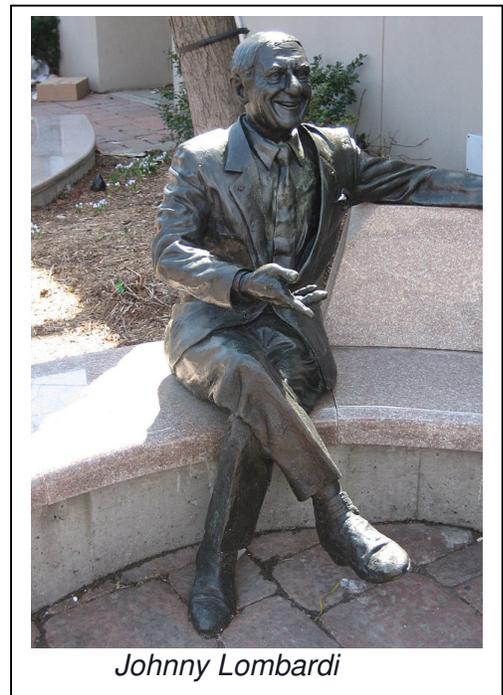
You'll have to forgive me for writing about Traveling Matt yet again. It must seem as though this has become the Fanzine About Life in a Wheelchair, but that is not my intention. However much I might prefer to hang out at the pub four nights a week with the most luminous stars of Beautiful Fandom, and attend a con once a month, the fact is that going to Wal-Mart once a week, or seeing the doctor, is about as much excitement as my life offers the reader. I do intend to go to a coin show later this month, so perhaps I can work up a bit more excitement with that as my subject. Nevertheless, Traveling Matt is necessarily at the center of my current social life, whatever it may be ... so you will have to bear with me.

FLAT OUT IN LITTLE ITALY

Last Saturday could have gone better. It began well enough with another invitation to Little Italy, to attend a barbecue at Steven Baldassarra's place. He lives within half a block of Little Italy, and this Saturday, of all days, was when the neighborhood held its annual Italian festival – in honour of Johnny Lombardi perhaps. I'm a little unclear just why the local Italian community holds Johnny in such high esteem – broadcasting and multicultural events come into it – but there is no mistaking the affection they hold for him. Should there be any doubt, there is a life-size bronze statue of Lombardi on the neighborhood's main drag, smiling benevolently over Little Italy, almost as though it were his own creation.

So College Street was going to be wild with people enjoying the pasta from steaming pots, savory sausages, live bands, thousands of green-white-and-red paper flags and the overall *brio*. I could almost see the escaped balloons from Parkdale when I set out, around 6:30.

The trick was not to drive along College Street, where the festival was held. Instead, I approached Steven's place from Dundas Street, a long block south. Maybe it wasn't such a smart idea, however. I joined Dundas at Gladstone Avenue, and turned east. About two blocks later, I noticed that Traveling Matt was insistently pulling me to the left. It became impossible to ignore, so I looked over the port side and immediately saw that the tire was losing pressure. Two more blocks, and the tire was flopping around the rim in an all-out flat.



My first thought was, “What had I done? This was my fault, surely, but what did I do, when did I do it?” By that time I was more than half-way to Steven’s place, so it seemed as though the most sensible thing to do was press on.

Steven had instructed me to turn into the little alley off his street, and arrive at his place from the rear. He said he’d leave the garage door open for me so I could park Matt in safety, and then proceed through the garage door into his itty-bitty backyard.

When I arrived, all was as planned. I could even see that others had arrived and that the barbecue was already in progress. It was really a barbecue in miniature – there was just about enough room for a table with the food laid out, a patio table for the partiers, a few chairs, an ice chest and the gas barbecue itself. I would have had a fine time ... except for my flat tire, that is. It could not help but preoccupy my mind the rest of the evening. After all ... *somehow* I had to get home!

I cannot fault Steven’s efforts with the barbecue. He was a perfect host. There were dogs, there were burgers, there was potato salad and the garden variety. There was a freezer chest full of soft drinks and pilsner. Steven even served whiskey or Kahlua on demand. I ate my fill and drank three Pepsis, followed by a shot of that savory sweet, dark amber nectar from Mexico!

Still, that damn flat was *always* in the back of my mind.

I didn’t know most of the people at the table with me. There was Steven of course, and a friend of his who I knew fairly well, Yi Li. But there was also a Paul, who I had met once some years ago, a Janet who I didn’t know, and another couple who were equally strangers to me. Not that it is a bad thing to be in unfamiliar company. But with my mind on other things, I wasn’t following the small talk well. I tended to eat in silence, only speaking now and then, which is unusual for me.

I caught the name of someone I knew in the conversation, but didn’t follow it up. I hardly remember the rest, except for an amusing anecdote of Steve’s.

As you may recall, I’ve cast in written form a number of his little stories – some six or eight, I should think – and there are at least two or three more awaiting literary immortality.

Steven is not a scrupulously religious sort, but is a good son of the Church. While watching one Good Friday procession with a group of his relatives, a number of old ladies became overcome by the sight of the statue of Jesus as it was carried by. They were not just praying, but weeping, like penitents of the Middle Ages, calling out “Jesus! Oh, what have they done to you?” “How could you bear it?” “Don’t leave us!” All in Italian, of course. One of them became so agitated she began waving her arms in the air and pounding the others on the back. For 13th century Italy, this would have been well within societal norms. But for 21st century Toronto, outward passion of this sort was clearly going way overboard. The Pope is probably more blasé than this at Easter mass.

After a little while of listening to this excess, Steven couldn’t take any more. Suddenly he spoke up, in Italian, announcing in a voice loud enough to be heard all the way to the other side of the street, “He comes back, you know!” After that outburst, he said, you could hear a sin drop.

We all got a chuckle out of that.

At some point during the evening, I became too anxious about getting home to stay any longer. Steven said he’d take a look at the tire, in case there was something he could do. I have to mention that Steven has more tools than most hardware stores, and an automobile tire pump was among them. He and Yi managed to wrestle

the wheel off its axle while I stood around, flapping my hands uselessly. Unfortunately, Steven ran into problems right away. The valve stem was twisted out of line and at first he couldn't unscrew the cap. Then the hose attachment wouldn't fit. The wheel turned out to have an inner tube, and there was no tube patching kit. In the end, there was nothing to do but hoist the 200 lb. chair up on its side again, and replace the wheel as it was. But we did extract a ruddy one-inch roofing nail from the tire!



Life size!

I powered up Traveling Matt and seated myself with misgivings, but what choice did I have? Leaving the chair at Steven's and taking public transit home was not an option. There was an irreducible amount of walking involved, if only from the garage to Steven's front door, and it was beyond me. So I began my way home down the alley behind Steve's place, leaning over to one side in the hope that most of the weight would be supported by the good wheel!

For a while, it didn't go too badly. The rubber tire remained in place on the rim and the wheel turned smoothly. But it only took the least little thing to unseat it, and then, "flubba-dub, flubba-dub, flubba-dub!" Once unseated, the tire just would not return to a stable configuration, so it noisily flopped around all the way home. You wouldn't believe how much noise a small tire on a chair moving no faster than about 3 m.p.h. could make. It was like I was driving a semi-trailer with four simultaneous flats at eighty over a washboard road. People's heads turned to stare at the source of the commotion the entire way. Sometime during the last quarter mile, other, more alarming sounds appeared. I still have no idea what *those* were about. Hopefully, nothing as vital as the left-side wheel's motor-bearings giving out.

Noise was not the only problem. With the rubber tire buckling and slipping around under the metal rim, steering was precarious at best. I might be headed more or less in the right direction and then suddenly veer to the right, or lurch violently to the left. At one point, I went off the curb and into the street. Fortunately it was a side street and late at night – there was no traffic. Traveling Matt came to a dead stop as soon as I let go of the joystick, of course, but to my chagrin I found that my foot was trapped between one of the guide wheels and the curb. It was uncomfortable, and I couldn't budge it. For a frightening moment it seemed as though the chair would not respond to the joystick, and back up. But it did, and I freed my foot. For the rest of the way home, I drove a little slower. It was a tricky business, not made any easier by it being late at night and my stamina reaching its limit.

Next day was Sunday. A day of rest and stewing over the things I needed to do but couldn't.

But Monday came around, so that I was able to phone the supplier of my chair. They told me that I wouldn't have to wait long at all for a repair. A man could visit me on Wednesday and replace the entire wheel. He had some concern that driving on the flat tire could have damaged the rim ... a very reasonable concern, considering I had put that sucker through a grueling, grinding, mile-and-a-half trek. I'm surprised the tire wasn't actually hanging by shreds. In fact, apart from being flat, it didn't look bad at all. The man I spoke with suggested, also, that we not replace the flat with another pneumatic tire, but replace *both* of them with foam-filled tires that don't go flat. That sounded so logical that I wondered why the tires weren't foam filled to begin with. Who would want tires that go flat?

The catch was that I had to get in touch with the Ontario Disability Support Program office to tell them about the problem. If I did, ODSP would pay for the service visit and wheel replacement. If I didn't, it would set me back about \$135. Now, my circumstances are so very much better now than they have been most of my life that I said, "Sure – if I have to, I can cover that." And I can. But I'd rather not, if I'm not required to. So my next job after talking with the supplier was to phone ODSP.

That's where my luck ran out, I think. I wasn't sure who my caseworker was, and all I could get was an automated receptionist who would only ask me to enter my caseworker's number if I knew it. I entered the last one I thought might have been correct ... and reached *another* answering machine! This one was so inaudible that I had no idea what it was telling me – the caseworker was away from her desk, gone home, on vacation, or maybe even deceased! Was I being asked to leave a message, phone tomorrow during regular office hours or possibly never to bother her again? I left a hasty message comprised of absolutely everything I could think of about the case, and reluctantly hung up. I tried again later than afternoon, only to listen to a repeat performance.

The ground floor of my apartment building has a LOFT office. LOFT is a volunteer organization of social workers who assist helpless old geezers and dimly lit old ladies in dealing with the world. They sure helped me get through some very difficult times. Tomorrow, bright and early, I'll go down to their office and see if they can get me directly through to Disability, so that I can be certain I have this covered. As matters stand, I don't know where I stand ...

If worse comes to worst, though, I'll just reach into my piggy bank and pay the man on Wednesday. I won't like parting with the money, but that's what money is for. The most important thing is that, no matter what, at least Traveling Matt will be *traveling* again!

The end? Ask me Wednesday.

In fact, Wednesday came and went without a sign of the promised service agent. I called back but they didn't understand what happened at the office, and could only promise their man would show up on Friday. I was on the verge of calling the office on Friday when the service agent did finally appear! Without his tools... Fortunately, I had a set of socket wrenches to lend him, and he put Traveling Matt back in traveling shape with no further hitches. In a rush, I got everything together that I needed to cash my monthly check, pay the bills and do a bit of shopping ... only to discover that my check was post-dated to Monday! Monday will still be in time for rent and utilities, but – just my luck – it meant it would be quite pointless to attend the coin show on Saturday. However, even if I had money burning a hole in my pocket, I still wouldn't be able to attend the coin show downtown. An unusual low-pressure system is sweeping slowly south of the Great Lakes, bringing downpours, wind and unseasonably cool temperatures over the weekend. Rain and cold is not the sort of weather you go out to sit in the open for thirty or forty minutes ... each way. Ah well, at least Traveling Matt and I went out for a spin in the beautiful weather we had that Friday evening! Almost as though to make up for the disappointment, I found a genuine silver quarter in my change that evening – the first silver that's crossed my palm in twenty years, I bet! It may well be the last to turn up in change, as well.

Left-over parts 40

WAHF: **Jim Linwood**, who is good with plucking *Broken Toys* from eFanzines and doesn't want it sent directly. **Jim Calvert**, who has had a quick look at BT 39 and may reply once he has read it at greater leisure.

Ned Brooks nedbrooks@sprynet.com

Thanks for the zine. Aside from needing really strong sunglasses, have you tried a hat with a wide brim so that your eyes are always shaded? I see you are wearing a hat, but it doesn't have much of a brim. I have not gone out in the sun without sunglasses in decades.



I was wearing *this* number ... or one like it whose brim is a bit stiffer that I recently acquired. When I pull it down more over my eyes, it's pretty shady. But the problem with the bright sun has been troubling me less as I spend more time outdoors. I think I just needed time to become accustomed to the brightness -- build up more visual pigments in the retina or whatever.

I never understood the Gnostics. What Eric Mayer describes sounds like the Cathar beliefs, that the world was entirely controlled an evil force, and God could only be worshiped as a spirit.

See: <http://www.briancreese.co.uk/cathars.htm>

The basic tenets of the Gnostics (as revealed by Me) is that there was a secret layer of knowledge about Christianity that couldn't be taught to the laity. It involved hidden meanings of the gospels and life of Christ that were mystical in nature, and had nothing to do with your life on Earth, day-to-day conduct, or questions of ethics, but with the magical struggle between the forces of good and evil in a sort of Platonic reality between heaven and Earth. I don't believe that the Gnostics were Manicheans, per se – that is, they didn't hold that the world was irredeemably corrupt, created by an evil demiurge, and an obstacle to knowing God. The world was not made by an imperfect creator. The Adversary is merely the enemy of Jesus, opposing him in a heavenly sphere of battle. The world was simply irrelevant. Knowledge of the true state of affairs, of course, gave you power and a free ticket to salvation. The Church hated Gnostics because, in effect, they said that the Church's teachings were just a dumb-show for the common clods, and not the *real* truth. It implied that the priests and bishops (who were not Gnostics) were also common clods, not fit to know the truth. There really isn't too much else you really need to know about Gnosticism if you don't plan to become one. Joining the Masons is close enough.

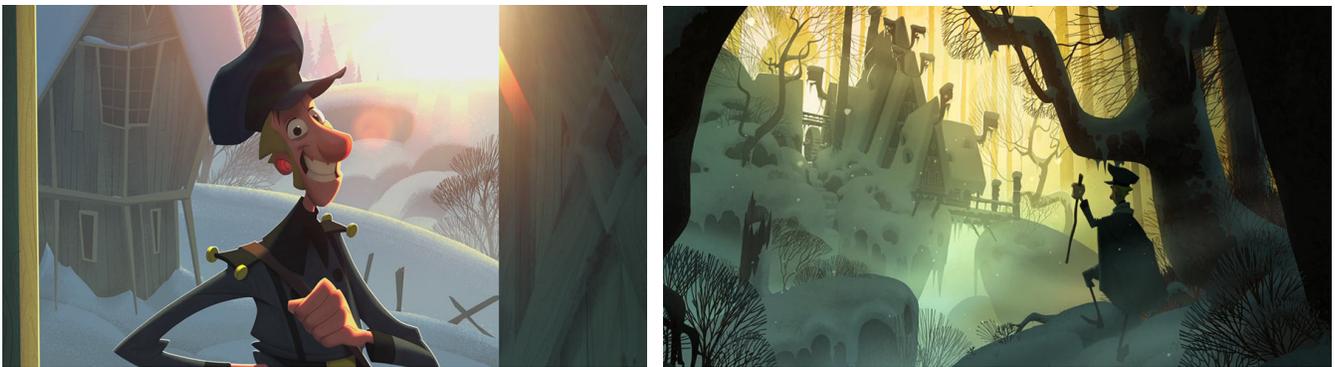
I used mimeo for decades - mostly two RexRotary M4s - and at worst got a little ink on my fingertips. But I remember Phil Harrell doing a cover with a lot of solid black so that he had to use a Roneo. He wouldn't even let me watch, but came out covered in ink.

When I ran the mimeo to print text pages, it was usually a straightforward job and not at all messy. But art with large black areas taxed the machine's abilities. It was always on the verge of under-inking, over-inking, the stencil floating and wrinkling, ink dripping into the works and spotting the paper, and a half-dozen other calamities that would inevitably end up getting ink on my hands – and from there to clothes or furniture – no matter how careful I was.

E.T. Bryan abpix.gremlin@verizon.net

Check it out. Unfortunately, the movie hasn't even gotten investors yet, let alone green-lighted. <http://www.cartoonbrew.com/interviews/sergio-pablos-talks-about-his-stunning-hand-drawn-project-klaus-exclusive-113621.html#comments>

The movie is called *Klaus* and there is a well produced, intriguing trailer. *Klaus* is apparently hand-drawn, rather than CGI but *looks* as gorgeously real as computer rendering. I hope they get the money they're looking for, but the trailer is so slick that I suspect they will.



David Redd dave_redd@hotmail.com

Thanks for BT-39 which deserves appreciative comment.

You continue to enlighten me in unexpected ways – had heard vaguely of *Magnus Robot Fighter* as something semi-legendary in the half-glimpsed background of SF, so was nice to see a cover in your archive there. Nice juxtaposition with Jerry Lewis in the mix.

I used to love *Magnus* and still think it was one of the best SF comics of the Silver Age. Unlike the “space cowboys” in other comics *Magnus* had a real science-fiction feel, and introduced me to many mind-blowing ideas. The artist was Russ Manning – a perfect match of art and words. Ironically, Manning had pitched a Tarzan comic at the publisher, Gold Key, but they weren't enthusiastic. Thankfully – I think his Plan B was infinitely superior to yet another loinclothed King of the Jungle. Yet there are undeniable similarities between Tarzan and Magnus. Both are muscular men of action – perfect human specimens. Both are brought up in a non-human environment – among apes in one case, by a wise old robot in the other. Both

have rather immodest taste in personal apparel. But while Tarzan has little but tired old imagery about wild animals, primitive natives, evil hunters, and the health benefits of living in a malaria-infested jungle (with no proper sanitation), Magnus lived in the 40th century city-state of North Am! They had robots, hovercars, starships, and diabolical devices that stimulated volcanoes right in the middle of North Am's giant Walmart complex! Fuck the jungle. It just couldn't compare.

Manning illustrated and wrote only 21 issues, beginning in 1963. The rest of the final count of 46 issues were either reprints or stories by other artist/writers. They were unable to recapture the spirit, however, and the series came to an end in 1977.

In 1991, Valiant acquired the rights and rebooted *Magnus*, introducing new concepts. North Am was updated to reflect the zeitgeist of the 1990s. The politicians were corrupt, the streets crime-ridden, and an underclass simmered ominously in the lowest levels of the continent-wide supercity. I collected the new series, but did not entirely like the new direction the editor, Jim Shooter, took it. In his hands, *Magnus* was crossed over with other story arcs and so gradually petered out. The rights eventually reverted to Western Publishing (Gold Key) and Random House has reprinted all the original Russ Manning stories in three trade paper volumes.

Damn... I've wasted a perfectly good topic for an article!

Oh, I picked up a copy of *Wonder Warthog* in a local corner shop decades ago, thought it scurrilous fun but not essential enough to keep ... then started wondering, hey, where on earth did that come? Was a long time and many failed searches before I realized the boy behind the counter must have slipped it onto the shelf in hopes of a sucker giving him money so he could buy the next one... This must have happened with another less-than-mainstream comic consisting entirely of toilet cartoon strips (UK) but I was never moved to seek out *that* one again.

Liked Steve Jeffery's careful differentiation between collecting and accumulating.

Fireball XL-5 had its moments, mainly for a great theme song, or at least an ineradicable one.

Time's up. Should have written up globalisation/Japanesisation for you over something in BT39 – I observed my granddaughter in dress and headphones looking exactly like some Japanese cartoon-type calendar characters seen 20 years ago which were distinctly weird-future then but have become part of the mix. This is progress?

Hope all goes well and your personal cherry bowl continues to fill up again.

Eric Mayer groggy.tales@gmail.com

I quite enjoyed the twenty pages of locs. Were they especially good or was I just in the right mood? In my faanish senescence (oh, hell, let's be honest, senescence - period) my enthusiasm for fanzines waxes and wanes. Back in the Seventies a new fanzine always excited me. Today, that isn't true, but still, there are times when I can lose myself in a zine the way I used to.

I never know whether or not I'm being too self-indulgent be running every loc at pretty much full length. But readers seem to like the letter column. I don't plan to fix it until it's clearly broken.

Do you really want to stop at fifty? Or revert to a longer, less frequent zine? I prefer shorter zines. I get bogged down in big ones, and am a loss to loc adequately. Better several small, unassuming issues, rather than one huge impressive one. The exact same material, broken into more palatable bites, suits me. Thus says the guy whose only publication last year was a single issue collecting a year's worth of essays!

Running 30 pages or more for several months now, can we really call *Broken Toys* a short zine? I doubt reverting to *New Toy* would mean 80 page issues – more like 40, and that's assuming I get enough letters to keep the letter section as lively as it's been in my current zine. Whether I do or not is impossible to say – a less frequent zine may not possess the immediacy to urge readers to write. The main reason I may revert to *New Toy* is to slow down my schedule, and perhaps to take a slightly different approach to editing. I may retire the embedded titles, for instance, and have full-blown covers again, and run more of my art. I also have some major articles I've been saving for *New Toys 4* and *5* for as long as two years, I think. They would have overwhelmed *Broken Toys*. So think of the impending change as a shift in style more than a change of substance.

Nine miles in a powered chair is quite a trip. That's as far as I usually take the car these days. I'd be just as happy with a simple chair (I hate cars) but I suppose it wouldn't do so well on the highway. How far do you think you can stretch the range? I'd be a little leery of cutting it too close. If you used up half the power, mostly going downhill, you might not have enough to get back uphill. You'll have to map out what's within your range. Do you have some way to attach an umbrella for inclement weather?

I would guess 15 miles is the practical limit of Traveling Matt's range, though I was told it might be as high as 20. That figure assumes ideal conditions, though – not too hot, not too cold, no steep hills, no stop-and-go driving. Ideal driving conditions, though, are unrealistic. 15 miles would probably leave me with about a quarter of my charge, which is a reasonable cushion against the unexpected. I have yet to find a destination that pushes my 9-mile limit, however. I haven't found any need to go farther.

Weird how badly the sunlight affected your eyes at first. I guess the level of lighting inside is much lower than we realize as compared to sunlight. The eye deals with a remarkable range of light without our being very aware of it. That's why reading from a monitor can be more tiring than reading a physical book. The words on the monitor and on the page don't seem that much different to us but they actually are of a very different intensity.

Indoor light levels even in a well-lit room are hundreds of times dimmer than outdoors in the sunlight. A quick search of the Internet did not yield a precise figure.

Those comic book covers evoke an era that's long past, when the pages inside were pulpy and the colors were dull. When we lived in NYC my ex-wife came across a place that sold European photo romance comics which were pretty amusing. We were astounded by the slick paper and gorgeous colors. I think the comics were printed in Italy. Now everything's that way.

Italian comic books are called *Fumetti*, though in English we use the word specifically to mean *photo-caption comics* (which are very popular).

Modest Medusa is strange, disturbing and interesting. Neat that you were able to meet the artist,

and neater yet that he wanted to trade with you. Of course, theoretically, you could have had a display there. I liked a strip that ran for a couple years called *Prometheus*. I was amazed at how many jokes the cartoonist managed to milk out of a guy chained to a rock.

Terry said I should have had a table there. Curious about it, I asked Jake what they cost – and it was not unreasonable – about \$150. But had I \$150 worth of anything to sell? I do still have some copies of Beatrix, lots of my CD Rom, “Off-Colour,” and a binder full of sketches and prints I used to sell at furry cons. But I strongly doubt I could sell those. Given the content, I might even be asked not to exhibit them. I seriously doubt I could sell enough of the other material to cover the cost of the table, so all I would accomplish by having one is to fritter away my diminishing stock of Beatrix for no return.

I recall the story about the feckless druggies and the almost equally feckless cops. Hilarious. Glad you reprinted it for a larger audience. (I think *E-Ditto* was my one great idea for an e-zine. Unfortunately no one saw it.)

It was a darn good zine. It's just too bad you didn't direct e-mail it to everyone you could think of. Letting it speak for itself on eFanzines may have limited its audience unnecessarily. Also, you have so very little connection with fandom per se that I'm afraid your writings may not have had wide appeal in fandom. But, *perhaps* I underestimate the readers. I think we can accept as fact that many readers no longer feel the necessity of feedback to a fanzine's editor and contributors.

In regards to your comment to me in the loccol about "artsy" stories. You're right that authors hold up a mirror to the human condition no matter what style they employ. They can hardly help but do so. But it seems to me that a lot of artsy SF/fantasy authors are mostly concerned with holding a mirror up to themselves and saying "look at me, ain't I brilliant!" I don't think the sick pups really care about old-fashioned narratives. Their only concern, really, is political content. If someone wrote artsy, virtually unreadable crap, that managed nevertheless to be discernibly right-wing they'd be perfectly happy with it.

I've read SF like that, but I think the “artsy” template has moved away from “experimental” writing to a different model – one that stresses introspection and sensitivity to personal “issues.” Stories I've read that came out of that mold are rarely hard to understand or follow ... they just don't interest me much. In so far as they reflect the author, I think they don't say “Look how brilliant I am,” so much as “Look how socially-aware I am.”

You say to Steve Jeffery, "A magazine that pays nothing for its material is a bloody fanzine...." Exactly. Anyone can put up a "magazine" on the Internet today and so what. You don't need to have your stories "published" in someone's fanzine. You can do that yourself. Which is why I recommended the SFWA list. All those places pay what the SFWA considers a professional minimum. Since the SFWA is a professional organization, publications which qualify you for membership are, by at least one objective definition, professional.

And re your comment to Ron Kasman, doesn't it seem like more people want to write than want to read?

The same goes for artists. In furry fandom, it seemed every other fan was trying to sell their art to the rest. A few artists managed to stand above this ratio – everyone wanted their work and they rarely bought anything – but most of us were seeing diminishing returns.

Milt Stevens' remarking about how Sputnik panicked US schools into trying to turn everyone into engineers brought back bad memories. That misguided hysteria harmed my education and was part of what made school a misery. My smarts are on the verbal side. I've never cared about numbers or been very good with them. During my earliest schooling, before arithmetic reared its ugly head, it was determined that I was bright. Ergo I should be engineer material. Teachers were confounded by my inability to grasp long division right away. How could anyone be smart but unable to do math, which was the only measure of intelligence in the days after Sputnik. It did not compute! My parents even had a friend of my dad's tutor me, to no avail. As the years went on I was forced to take all sort of math classes, where I learned nothing, instead of being allowed to take things that might have been useful to me. Finally I was a lost cause. In high school the guidance counselor was endlessly calling in those potential engineers for chats, pointing out opportunities, strategies for the future, college possibilities, scholarships, etc. Me? After the obligatory interview, during which he learned I was not good at math but only at words, I never heard from him again.

Wow. Your Spider Man moment. Pretty damn cool. I no longer own a suit. Or a sports jacket. At both my weddings I wore a sports jacket. The first wedding was at Borough Hall in Brooklyn where they had a weird little enclosed chapel set up in the middle of a larger room. Mary and I were married in our living room in Rochester, NY, with the ceremony presiding over by Judge Valentino, who lived on our street.

Brad Foster bwfoster@juno.com

Issue 39 received, and all praise to *Fireball XL-5* in the logo!

You note an improvement in things since the last ish, while it's gotten a bit ... well, let's just say "super-funky" around here in the last two weeks.

We did a street art festival up in Oklahoma City over the 3-day Memorial Day holidays. The show itself went very well, even with the threat of bad weather all weekend, plus a couple of periods of very high storming rains. It's been raining/flooding so badly up in Oklahoma for the past month or so, a "regular" rainfall doesn't slow them down anymore, and they still come out for the shows.

However, while our tent and displays stood up well to the storms that rolled through, not quite so lucky with our fan. After the festival shut down on Saturday evening and we were heading back to the house of some friends we were staying with there, rains were almost blinding, and coming down hard. We saw an intersection ahead of us with several cars stuck in the rising water. Wisely we stopped, and decided to turn around and head back up hill to a parking lot we had seen where we figured we would just wait it out. Unfortunately, the area we turned around in, while it looked to have only six inches or so of water in the road, we could not see the rather deeper pothole, and the front of the van dropped into that and the engine died. Stuck in the middle of the street, in the middle of a storm. Bummer. Nice fellow with a big truck pulled up less than a minute later, though, and offered to push the van up and out of the intersection, and off to one side where it would no longer block the road, or be buried in the water.

While there, called up AAA, and they said could have a tow truck out, but might be two hours.

Said they would call back-- of course, had been using the cell phone all day at the festival, not thinking we would also need to use it most of the evening, and the battery kept getting lower and lower. Afraid would miss their call. After about two hours sitting in the rain (though it was lessening, and the flooded intersection was now just "wet"), thought I'd try one of the houses near us to see if could get a charge going again.

I figured the odds of someone opening their door to a soaked, bald and bearded stranger in a black tee-shirt were going to be pretty low. I took the phone, the charging adaptor, and an extension cord we had in our supplies. Figured if I could just get someone to even answer their door, I'd ask if I could just slip the end of the extension cord in to them if they opened the door just a crack, and they would be good enough to plug it in, I'd sit on their porch while the phone charged, and not bother them at all.

Turns out first house had this super-nice lady who had actually seen our van die in the intersection, then get pushed out. She not only invited me in to use a power plug, but asked if I was alone. And when I said my wife was still in the van, insisted that I go get her to come sit in the dry house while we waited for the tow to show up. Super nice, super lucky. Going to send her some artwork as a thank you.

Lots more tales of trying to find a palace to get it looked at to see if it could even be fixed, plus backup plans if not. Turns out by Monday we found out the engine was totally dead, so Cindy had to rent a cargo van to get back to the festival that evening to help me load all the display and tent stuff up from the street. *Then* we found out cargo vans were only for "local" use, and would cost a fortune to use it to return home. So next day we rented a U-Haul truck, transferred everything from van to truck, drove both to the other location, dropped off van. Drove home that day, they next day rented a small car to be able to get around in town, and turned in truck.

Right now seeing what, if anything, we can squeeze out of our budget for a car payment for a new (read: older, used) vehicle. Plus, insurance is looking over the van up in OKC, and will give us word this week if they think it is repairable, or total junk now. (Has 240,000+ miles on it, so I think we got a pretty good run out of it, thought I -was- hoping we'd get a million!)

Add to that, the Dallas area got hit with record-breaking, all-time insane rainfall amounts in a three-hour period a couple of nights ago, and the back room that I use as a studio got totally soaked from water flowing in. (Backyard looked like a small lake lapping up against the walls of the house.) Have had minor water seepage here over the years, but nothing like this. Spent most of the night just trying to keep it from getting worse as it continued to rain. Since then, have been ripping out all of the carpet and underlinoing, down to bare concrete. Thinking a bare concrete floor might not be so bad-- maybe paint it looking all art and such?

Anyways, kind of sucky just now. So, I am hoping to be able, in another month, to say as you do here: "should notice a continual improvement in tone..." I don't know how we are going to swing this new expense, have already cut back so much on so many things. But, nothing else to do but continue to work at it. Hoping to pick up some more paying jobs, but then I've been "hoping to pick up some more paying jobs" my entire career, so it's just a continuation of that.

The good news-- after about six weeks where only two or three days were without rain, we are actually looking at a week with no more rain in the forecast. Hurray!!!

And with that, I should get back to work, and get a few more sections of soggy/moldy carpet pulled out. (I'm getting too old for this crap!)

Yipes. I forgot all about you living in the newly enlarged Gulf of Mexico! All that and an invasion of the US Army by Obama's personal order! Will sexually transmitted Ebola be next, or perhaps Christopher Hitchens will rise from the dead in a Black Resurrection, and preach global climate change. If he does, listen closely ... there may be something to it.

Lloyd Penney penneys@bell.net

Here I am, fallen behind again. I was scrambling to get caught up, and get to issue 38 of Broken Toys, and 39 arrives. I must respond to both, and I shall try to do so as soon as possible.

By missing two consecutive issues, you were well on your way to a Hat Trick! But a loc is better...

38...Is this weakness of the eyes and hand still part of everyday life for you? I am not much familiar with myasthenia gravis, but you are all too familiar with it. I've got my own medications to take, but they seem to be nothing compared with what you must take. At least you have medications, and doctors to consult with. I have American friends who would envy us what's available to us, and yet others who see what we have as evil socialism. Well then, let's be evil, shall we? (Cue evil laugh)

I'm having far less trouble with either problem now that my dose of Pyridostigmine has been increased from 6 to 8 pills a day, and I'm taking 4 capsules of another drug called Micophenolate. The former increases the time that neurotransmitters have to stimulate muscle fibres. The new medication suppresses the immune system, and is a bit riskier, but has led to dramatic improvement. All in all I take 20 pills a day, now, including Rosuvastatin, Losartan, Terrazosin, Colchicine, Furosimide and a couple of common vitamins. Eleven of them I take at once, when I get up ... all in a day's work. But to think ... there was a time when I was reluctant to take an aspirin.

It has been a very long time since I have tried to polish up a piece of fiction for submission to a publishing company. I know nothing about current markets, so like you, I'd be merely wondering if I was doing something right. I rarely get to Bakka, and the last time I did, I surprised many people. We were there for the remembrance of Michael Lennick.

Something "right?" Do you mean something "wrong?"

I have seen some of Karno's work, and he seems to have become quite popular. Like Kim Huett, I do not own my home, so I may have to move at some time in the future. With that in mind, I might consider giving away my fanzine collection. That would at least free up a locker in my apartment building. We might also give our book collection a substantial weeding.

I've known Karno for quite a long time – he was Iceland's only furry artist... and was close to being Iceland's only porno artist too. A few years ago he managed to immigrate to Arizona, where he has a girlfriend and can indulge in his gun fantasies. In spite of drawing very violent comics, Karno is very mild-mannered and polite. He is about 7 feet tall, he is as thin as a line of coke, so tends to stand out among artists in one way,

at least. Karno has been in Toronto a couple of times and dropped in on me. During the most recent visit, he stayed at the Gladstone Hotel, a few blocks away. This was before the Gladstone's big, trendy renovation. Built as a luxury hotel in 1889, It has basically been a flophouse for the last few decades, and Karno said his room only cost him \$11 a night. I believe it. The walls were stained like a chain-smokers teeth, and the remains of old posters that had been torn down covered the yellowed paint like dry rot. The rooms had no bathrooms ... instead, every floor had a communal bathroom down the hall. If he ever passes through Toronto again, he may be dismayed to find the Gladstone full of fashionable Yuppies, and the custom, artist-designed rooms costing \$180 a night.

I see lots of reminiscing about Gestetners and other printers...I wanted to learn how to use them at school, but the teachers at my schools always kept the Gestetners and Dittos under lock and key. I get the feeling that past students who had shown an interest might have damaged the duplicators, and the little beggars aren't getting their grubbies on these machines ever again...

I've only seen the Concorde once, and we lived close to the northbound flight path into Pearson. We were with friends who didn't believe that the Concorde was at the airport, and we were able to show them how wrong they were as the plane flew northwards.

When I have seen how the Hugos have been hijacked by these two Puppies' groups, and quite easily, too, I must join others in how they feel about the Hugos, and how their luster is completely gone. I do not have a vote any more, and that's fine with me. I wish fanzines fans still had a chance to win those silver rockets, but it doesn't look like we have any chances any more.

Fanzine fandom ceased to be relevant to most fans a number of years ago, and now that they vote in the fan categories of the Hugos, they vote for what they know ... which is what they see at the Worldcon. Unless new categories are created for the activities that have wrongly been permitted into the existing fan categories, and the rules better defined, it is useless to think the Hugos have anything to do with us anymore.

I have had some experience with costumes, with Yvonne being an experienced dressmaker and tailor, and she has made me some great reproductions of movie costumes. We've had more experience through our interest in Steampunk. Yet, we do not cosplay. I like the look of the costumes, but do not like assuming a character to show the costume off.

39...Well, life is looking better, always good to see. Health and finances, and mobility...after that, most things can be handled. Things are looking up.

I wonder if it might be an idea to scan your past issues of *New Toy*, and other titles, to create .pdfs, and place them on eFanzines.com, and the other sites you list.

I have the most recent *New Toy*, along with most of the other zines I've done in the last 15 years, posted to eFanzines. Plans were to scan a few others to add to the archive, but then I got too busy with publishing new fanzines to pay much attention to the old ones. If I stop publishing *Broken Toys* with number 50, I may have more time for archiving.

You use the key word here...freedom. Health and money and mobility all help to provide it. It sounds like decent sunglasses, and a hat or cap with a large brim should take care of the sun for you.

There is never really a need to give up the things you love. Often, our hand is forced by space or time or money or availability. Some friends have left the fun and insanity of fandom, saying it's time to grow up, but I've never seen the need, and I hope I never do. I do follow some webcomics ... *Namir Deiter*, *Wapsi Square*, *Girl Genius* and *Sabrina Online*. Used to do others, but they go away, or you lose interest in the story line.

My own diabetes seems to be under control, but I have read about losing parts of your legs to it through injury. My toes are slightly numb, but I am still careful about what happens to my feet.

Excess sugar in the bloodstream damages nerve endings. But I guess that's been amply impressed on you by your own doctor.

Allan Maurer's loc details what I like about fandom... we create. We write, we draw, we make things. Seeing I am now a vendor of steampunk jewelry, it is great to create, and feel that you're creating something of value when someone buys what you've made. I did not have that feeling until about 5 years ago.

Nope, I've been fine lately, no trips to the hospital, but I have more responsibility at work, lots to get done at home, and just lately, an anniversary, a birthday and a big lunch at work I promised to bring food to. As most people, I am not usually in control of my time, and have far too many responsibilities to do all the things I'd like to do. I have to consider retirement some time in the next 15 years anyway.

Assuming the Conservatives aren't still in office and haven't raised retirement age to 80. Or eliminated it.

Hope this makes up for lack of my writing in the locol, one nice big chunk to fill it with, should you choose. May you have happier days with more health and mobility, and see you with the next issue, which shall get a sooner response, I am sure.

Dave Heren tyrbolo@comcast.net

A thoroughly enjoyable issue of *Broken Toys*.

I did think that a mighty boot with a cry of "Stolen lies!" might have been a more amusing story about the bible-pile. However you were on your best behavior.

I had the good fortune to have an older cousin, an only child, who had a monstrous pile of comics. I was allowed to read them all and he had the good stuff !! Lots of good clean entertainment and the EC stable as well. I don't think the parents had vetted all of it but there were some real hair-raising stories in the pile. He had all of the *Purple Claw* comics and some epic of mummified saucer pilots buried in the sand for thousands of years. The war comics were written and drawn by veterans so they were a good example of realism adding verisimilitude. A few years later the nanny state decided these were corrupting innocent children. It probably turned them into SF fans in later life.

I spent the first few years of my life too isolated to have seen a comic book. So the closest I came to the EC age of comics (with their war, horror and crime titles) was around 1960, when I saw this issue of *Mad* I a smoke shop in 1960. It was the first I ever saw. Wish had bought it, but I was very young and didn't carry quarters around with me any more than I did \$50 bills. I never saw the comic book version of *Mad* nor any other EC title for another 15 years. I never did develop a taste for them, other than *Mad*.



The Hugo controversy is hilarious but getting involved with either side is a real bad idea. It reminds me of the *Illuminatus* where one of the heroes describes his parents as acting as the mouthpieces for opposed revolutionaries (Bakunin vs Marx), still arguing over their differences after they had both died of old age. Anybody dumb enough to pay for a con membership just to spite some despised other needs to have their money gratefully accepted and banked with a thank you. That's why they call it a con.

Other than a couple of cheap shots, I've stayed well away from the controversy. I saw this, or something like it, coming years ago, and now that it's happened the genie is out of the bottle ... and he's cranky. Everything that can be said has been said. I couldn't possibly add anything to the debate, so won't try. I have nothing to lose or gain, anymore.

I have a nice advantage for Cosplay, I look like an ancient version of Black Leg Sanji of the Straw Hats [from an anime/manga series called *One Piece*], therefore an effortless lack of makeover to enjoy the activity. That is my favorite long running series (Episode 695 this week).

So you noticed Lee too. I note that rarely is there a reason for his being included. At least Stephen King does a good character bit when he shows up in a movie.

I believe there was some sort of legal settlement between Lee and Marvel, that is expressed in contractual necessities to include Smilin' Jack in every Marvel movie until he's dead. Maybe even after that ... after all, characters in comic books can never be counted on to be permanently dead.

Modest Medusa looks interesting particularly since clutter and glitter seem to be the current substitute for talent.

Before that the fashion seemed to be do draw like a six-year-old with premature arthritis, so show that your comics are to be judged on “literary” terms, and are not just childish illustrated adventures for looking at the pictures.

You need a bigger LOC section.

I keep working at it. So far I’ve tried to enlist every letter writer I’ve encountered in a fanzine, but there just aren’t that many of you! Also, some inexplicably won’t write to my fanzine, only to UK fanzines, or to so-and-so’s fanzine, presumably a buddy. All I can do is stick pins in their voodoo dolls and look for someone else.

Ron Kasman ron.kasman@gmail.com

Hi, Taral. They let us go, saying that they know what the jury demands are for the week and they don't include us. That made everyone in the room very happy. I have been home, mostly cleaning and drawing. I finished a page last night. I am in the middle of another now, page 94. My son is coming home only for a day on Friday. We are having a bunch of his Toronto friends over so I am cooking and getting the house ready. It is time-consuming and hard to fit in with the demands of the new family and of the drawing that I must now get done.

I am taking a break from the drawing. I haven't been to the TCAF for more than 10 minutes since its first year. I may have a bit of the Groucho Marx disorder where I won't become a member of any club that would accept me as a member. More than that, I sometimes don't feel that I have a lot in common with the people there even though we are doing similar things. I went to the San Diego Con almost 30 years ago and felt that way. I went to supper with associates, but they were all much younger than me even then, not married, no kids, involved with a specific company which I was only loosely associated with and already had established cliques. I don't know who I would talk to at TCAF. Probably no one, though it would have been nice to see you there. Besides, I have things to do.

I feel that way about the local furry group. I did attend one of their get-togethers once, but I doubt I will again. Most are under 25, certainly under 30, but there were a small number of oldsters, including at least one my age. But I found I had nothing in common with them. I’m just an artist who has a thing about animal cartoon characters, and those guys were into gaming, totems, role playing, anime and *real* animals. I can only touch bases on one or two things with them, and the rest is opaque as NASCAR or Wicca.

I didn’t talk to anyone at TCAF but the artist I went to see, and the acquaintance I bumped into by accident. I wouldn’t really have known how to break the ice with anyone unless I could have bellied up to the tables to look at the comics more closely – which wasn’t possible. Curiously, I discovered that Hope Leibowitz attended earlier in the day. I asked why on Earth she would go to a comics con – who would she know, and what did she care about comics? She said she knew a couple of people – I think she meant you, for certain – and that she used to love comics, citing Kenneth Smith’s *Phantasmagoria*. “Hope,” I said, “that was more than 50 years ago! No one talks about it any more. It’s not even on Wikipedia!” It wasn’t even a comic – *Phantasmagoria* was one of those slick-paper, offset “fanzines” from the 1970s, lavishly illustrated by Smith in an opulent fantasy style of the time. I wouldn’t call it a comic, and I suspect it has been almost entirely forgotten. I suspect the real reason Hope attended the Toronto Comic Arts Festival was mainly to

get out of the house. Unlike you and me, she has nothing to do there and hates to be stuck at home. No port unless a storm.

I am impressed that Traveling Matt can go as far as it can. I had no idea those things had that kind of range. Sounds great.

Now if only I could afford to drop \$10 whenever I went out, so that I could have latte and a hamburger or burrito whenever I'm on the road!

I remember my early childhood as a comic reader of *Classics Illustrated*, *Batman*, *Superman* and occasionally the Julie Schwartz titles, and not much else. Marvel, until about 1964 seemed to be for retards. Of course they did have good titles at the time but you had to wade through crappy titles to find them. *Archie* took five minutes to read, which wasn't worth it for 12¢. I didn't enjoy the Harvey titles at all. I also loved the Duck stories by Barks. They were the best thing going and are still unrivaled. I read *Mad Magazine* too, my sister's copies. I really loved *Superman* for its complexity. They had a whole alternate world there with the Fortress of Solitude, Krypton, all the Kryptonites, all the LL women, his pals at the newspaper and all the women who wanted to marry him. Curt Swan was also about as subtle an artist as was working in comics at the time. Kirby was crude next to him and so was everyone else. I had a near-religious conversion at age 8 though. I was sick in bed and my aunt gave me a stack of comics. *Avengers #4* was in it, which would become the heart of the *Captain America* movie fifty years later. After that I made mine Marvel. I also remember kids on the block who didn't take comics as seriously as I would one day, making theirs Marvel too.

I remember the first Marvel comics and could have bought all of them – and later have made a literal fortune selling them. But I just didn't like the ugly art and dismal colours – they seemed all purple, grey and bilious green! And Kirby couldn't draw for beans compared to Swan, Infantino, or Manning ... or Barks. I get it that Kirby is sort of "impressionist" or something, but I still think it looks like he grabbed the "ugly brush" by mistake. Ditko? He was just *different*. He had a style like those ads for X-Ray specs and hand buzzers on the back of your favourite comic.

On my book, the inspiration is *TinTin*, though it is not *TinTin* enough to suit most people. [Ron has a contract to publish a semi-autobiographical graphic novel.] Though I have limited chops, I still feel a bit like a Win Mortimer looking for work at a time when guys with not half his ability have the door open for them, but finding none. They want stuff that looks naive or like Kurtzman or like Manoz (I think that is his name-- he is an expressionist whose work is deliberately ugly). So my work is understated but the Marvel 1973-look still creeps through. What the heck? I have signed the contract. And, in a nutshell, I got rejected by Top Shelf though they asked to see the rest of it based on ten pages. The guy who rejected it said he would buy a copy when it came out but he wasn't going to print it. Then I applied to 18 companies simultaneously and was rejected for 15 simultaneously by their not returning my note. The other 3 rejected me one after another. The guy who finally accepted it, Gary Reed of Caliber, accepted it within a few hours of my sending it to him. I have often found that the people who accept my work have done so almost immediately. Anyway there is another year to go.

Philip Turner farrago2@lineone.net

Thanx for your PDFs of *Broken Toys*. About all we seem to have in common is membership in COKOB -- the Confederation Of Knackered Old Blokes. I appear to be a little older than your good self and a lot less knackered! And the period when I was having to scoff 21 pills per day is being swallowed by the mists of time.

I never went back to comics after I abandoned *The Eagle*, *The Hotspur* and *The Rover*, apart from the British edition of *Mad Magazine* and a modest collection of copies of *Scream*, *Psycho*, *Nightmares* and *Vampire Tales* from the early 1970s. And a set of *Fabulous Furry Freak Bros*.

Well, naturally... no one who calls himself literate should be without a set of the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*... It would be like being a cinema fan and never having watched *The Three Stooges*.

I used to be able to view your home team in action on the internet -- when tsn.ca was showing CFL matches, including those played by the T'ronno Airgoes. [Toronto Argonauts, or Argos.] But ever since TSN decided to stop sharing the CFL with furriners, I see the Airgoes only when they play the Blue Bombers. There's a Bombers fan who was putting his team's matches on U-tube last year. I'm now waiting to find out if he'll do it again this year.

There doesn't appear to be much about the CFL in your zine. Is this an oversight or simply a lack of relevance?

While I thoroughly approve of the CFL as a matter of Canadian National Identity -- there's no reason why there should be American football but not Canadian footfall -- I don't have any personal interest. I did feel a slight stirring of pride that the Argos won the 100th. Grey Cup, though! Still, hockey seems more uniquely Canadian, so wins my theoretical loyalty. In cold fact, I don't actually follow any sports at all ... not even drag racing or curling.

Anyhow, I'm off to book my seat for some replayed Indycar racing from Texas (it's T'ronno's turn next weekend) and then the Canadian Grand Prix.

Ah, have they restored the Canadian Grand Prix? I can never understand how those races come and go, and change names like children's breakfast cereals. There was race here in Toronto for a time, called the Molson Indy. It was at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds for a few years, which is less than half a mile away from where I live. I couldn't watch the race (without paying a fee) but I sure could hear it! The noise was like having a lawn mower running in your living room. Most people in the neighborhood hated the race, but I didn't mind. Now its gone, as far as I know.

p.s. Aren't you legally obliged to publish documents in both Canadian and French where you are? Or do you know someone influential?

Not at all. Only if I were canning peaches or selling cornflakes. Books, comics, etc. are not required to be translated. I think it may be because the Quebec literary mafia thinks it would be wasted on *Les Anglais*.

Rodney Leighton rodney.leighton@gmx.co.uk

Well, I just made a fire. Seems kind of silly to be making a fire on May 24. But it's cold, damn it all! And I am [here](#) in the house.

For all I know about the climate in Nova Scotia, that's normal. Maybe you should be shoveling glaciers off the front walk until July? But it's been unseasonably cool in Toronto most of the Spring and the Summer (so far). We may pay for it later in scorching hot temperatures until October... the weather is usually screwy these days. But there is no global climate change! Steven Harper's employers in the oil industry say so.

Spent most of the night trying to breathe, figured I would go try to work today but, well, that malevolent God you write so eloquently about had other plans. Figured that the likely reason it feels like I am drowning if I lie down is that I am. Chatting with a guy at the store recently who said I should go to a doctor. Yeah, I know. But then he would likely want me to go to hospital. Ah, that's great, he tells me. He was in there for 2 weeks. Nurses will go in the shower with you, he says. They will wipe your ass and wash your balls.

And you wouldn't want that? Actually, my stay at St. Joe's was rather relaxing, and I got to go to a washroom in the Cardiac Care Unit to wash myself. I have suffered through the indignity of having a male nurse SHAVE my balls for surgery, though, many years ago. You learn to ignore the most astonishing things when you have to.

Well, hell. Happens I have a slight acquaintance with a couple of them. Time was I would have enjoyed this idea. One of them is hot enough to warm up my house without a damned fire. But now that nothing much works...

Ah... you've come to your senses...

Anyway *BT 38* appeared about the first of the week sometime, I read it with interest as usual. I wrote a much tamer and gentler version of your Satan piece a couple years ago, showed it to someone recently and got accused of slander. But she's my sister and a strong Christian. We have differing views. I don't totally agree with you; I think there is a God and a Satan; just God is a sadistic bastard.

How did you find out about the FAAN votes? Somebody must have published them, hmnnn. All I have seen were the "winners." I would say you did really well. Given that they were in England you knew that the awards would go to Brits. I was looking forward to having some fun twitting Mike Meara on his, since he was administrator and all and the sneaky so-and-so didn't take any!

Of course the FAANs went mostly to Brits at a British Corflu! Those that didn't went to those with close ties to Britfandom. The sheer *predictability* of the results was one reason I didn't bother to vote this year – not really a protest, but laziness. I didn't want to have to think about who to vote for if **not** the "usual suspects," then end up voting for them anyway since I could think of no-one better. I also have to admit that, after so many years, not winning a single FAAN does not sit well on me. But, as I was recently reminded by one of my correspondents, *his* fanzine and fanwriting has *never* even been in the running. And I can name first-rate fanartists who have never come close to winning a FAAN either. For someone who cannot make personal contact with the voters, I guess I do surprisingly well. Still...

Someone sent me the breakdown of the voting, and fortunately I had kept it. A search on the internet doesn't turn them up! The site of next year's Corflu has a link to the vote analysis, but it doesn't take you to the information – just to a blank ballot. It appears the 2015 break-down is not available at present.

According to John Purcell and The Graeme, top perzine was *Vibrator*. Given that Andrew Hooper was likely at the event, and you know that you have to be present [at Corflu] to get the things, I would say *BT* did well to be tied for second. Sixth as fanwriter is rather ridiculous. But then, well, those guys told me that Mark Plummer won. That woman whose name I can't spell [Claire Brialey] was likely second [Yes]. Mike was probably third. [Roy Kettle, actually. Mike was 12th] Who in the world was fourth I wonder? [Graham Charnock, who I think was a sounder bet.] Well, aMFO usually has some pages about those Corflu things and some pictures. Maybe Mike will list the people and zines who received votes. I hope he prints a picture of Avedon Carol, I am interested in seeing that.

As you'll see from the data I sent you, being tied for 2nd. was *last* year. This year I dropped to 3rd by a very wide margin, with *Vibrator* and *Meara For Observers* taking top honours. In the Fanartist category I was 5th. after pretty much everyone who is at all prolific. But then I haven't *been* very active as a fanartist lately – I'm not giving much of a damn, anymore. As a fanwriter I made 6th place. It was a straight British slate for the top 4 positions, and Andy grabbed the 5th. spot.

Now enough of that! I'm trying to ignore awards.

Your gift-horse tale was a hoot. Girl was likely pulling your leg. But who knows?

I once spent most of the time on a bus, in the back, playing with the twat of a total stranger, from somewhere in Saskatchewan to Winnipeg. At the terminal she tossed out some hints and went to the bathroom. After all the passengers and driver had disappeared I went along; found the bathroom door ajar a few inches and started in. Slam! Shoved the door shut. I was, c'mon, it's me, what's up. Mumble, go away. So I did.

You probably made a strategic error. Some times people tell you things you shouldn't believe because they may not mean it, and it will almost always put you in the wrong whether they do or they don't!

A bit later, in the terminal, I spied her with an Indian. Should be "Native Canadian" or something now ... back then he would be an Indian. Big one too. I figured she had learned that Hubby was close, or maybe just remembered he was going to pick her up. Guy had about 10 other guys with him. I had visions of half of them showing up in the bus as I was hammering the chick. Ah, the silly things you do when you are 20 or so years old.

Precisely ... Anyway, that's "member of the First Nations," now. I have it on good authority, though, that they usually call *other* First Nations people "Indians." Around here the preferred name is "Nishnawbe" which I think is more or less Cree for "people".

Milt Stevens miltstevens@earthlink.net

In *Broken Toys #39*, your comments on your early comic book reading caused me to think about my own pattern of comic book reading over the years. There were three periods of my life where I was reading a fair number of comic books. The first period was in the early Fifties when I was around 10-12. The second was when I was in college around 1964-65. The last was in the Eighties when a fan named Rob Gustaveson opened a comics shop right next door to the LASFS.

When I started reading comics in the early fifties EC Comics were prominent. I didn't like them at the time, and I've never changed my mind. I don't know whether my dislike of horror fiction in other forms had anything to do with this early exposure or not. My favorite comics were *Tarzan* and *Uncle Scrooge*. I have no idea what that juxtaposition might mean. It certainly wasn't good business sense, since EC Comics are worth a bunch while *Tarzan* and *Uncle Scrooge* are worth very little (last time I knew much about the subject). I read *Mystery in Space* but was never much impressed by it. It was like they were trying to do science fiction without having any idea what science fiction was like. On thinking about it, *Mystery in Space* was a rather ambiguous title.

I never saw early *Mad* comics in stores, and don't know how easy they were to find in Canada – they were kaput by the time I was able to go into stores for myself. Even the comic book *Mad* was gone. However, there were other horror and supernatural titles in the early 1960s. I turned my nose up at them without exception, so I doubt I would have cared for the EC variety. It wasn't just that they were about murder and zombies, it was because they were formulaic. To take over his cigarette factory, Babs and Frank would shove her husband, George, into the tobacco shredder. I knew from half-way down page one that he was going to come back from the grave, and do them in the same way. The last panel would show a pack of cigs with Babs' and Frank's name on it, or something else that was supposed to be droll.

There was a vogue for Marvel Comics when I was in college in 1964-65. Marvel Comics were popular at school and at LASFS. I've never been much for vogues and trends, but I Marvel Comics of that period were entertaining. By comparison, comics aren't much discussed at LASFS these days. A couple of weeks ago, I listened to one guy at LASFS explaining how many varieties of Kryptonite there had been. I'd had no idea. However, I haven't heard many other comments on comics in recent years.

Off hand, there's green, red, white, blue, yellow, and silver (a hoax) that I know about. The Wikipedia article on the subject revealed there were two or three more that I didn't know about.

Having a comics shop next to the LASFS opened all sorts of opportunities. When nothing in particular was going on at LASFS you could always wander over and see what was new. I bought a lot of issues of the various *Conan* titles. I was a little surprised about that, since I had never been interested in the stories in print. I was also fond of *Howard the Duck*. There were all sorts of other items that temporarily seized my attention.

A friend of mine loaned me his Marvel *Conans*. After a little initial reservation, I grew to quite like them. A couple of years later they began a *Conan* magazine that I bought religiously for 15 or 20 issues. I sold them a couple of years ago except for the first few that had Barry Windsor Smith art in them. He was the original *Conan* artist in the comics, and by the time of the magazines he had developed into a first-rate talent!

I also had all the *Howard the Duck* at one time. I sold them at a price that drew laughs ... for a while they were worth a fair amount of money. But I had the last laugh, since they are now just about worthless. A while ago, I bought back a copy of number one for a dollar. Original appearances of *Uncle Scrooge* or *Donald Duck* from the '50s and '60s, though, are worth \$15 and upward!

Graphic novels have arrived at just the wrong time in my life. Because of vision problems, most of my reading is now audio books. Graphic novels just aren't in my game plan.

Steve Jeffery srjeffery@aol.com

This seems to be something of a triple thread issue judging from the letterscol -- split between medical issues, theology and the problems of publishing and selling sf/f fiction. I don't have the latter problem. I proved to myself around 20 years when I edited an apa-style writer's workshop that I really didn't have the chops to sustain anything more than 2-3 page vignettes and "mood pieces." I could never develop them any further. I'm still slightly in awe of people who can do that and keep it going in interesting directions for 300-400 pages. (Slightly less in awe of people who then take those 300 interesting pages and spread them out over another 600 or so, but that's not exactly a modern phenomenon. Dumas and Dickens could be as prolix as their audience and publishers' demands allowed.)

Another way of looking at prolixity is that the contemporary taste for concise, fast-paced prose is just another fashion in literature, and quite as changeable as the last one. In fact, I suspect it caught on mainly to save money for editors who were paying by the word. "Does this description of peeling an apple contribute to the theme, does it move the plot? No? It has to go!" No matter that it might be interesting. Of course, the rules don't apply once you're Steven King or Robert Heinlein. Then no one dares interfere with *their* immortal prose!

I had forgotten Cherryh's *Chanuh* as an example of 'furry' sf. On a darker note, there's also the cannibalistic alien Asadi in Michael Bishop's *Transfigurations* (expanded from the 1973 novella *Death and Designation Among the Asadi*). And I've always wondered about some of the races in Steven Brust's Vald Taltos books. And of course there is Mary Gentle's *Rats and Gargoyles*.

The one I remember from way back, though, is Dora from Fred Pohl's classic story *Day Million*, which managed to blow my head in at least three different ways in the opening paragraphs when I read it as an impressionable 11 or 12 year old.

I'm going to pass on the theology discussion here about the goodness of God (or lack of any substantial evidence for the same), falling sparrows and whatnot, except to admit a slight sense of mystical wonder that the laws of physics could generate such as thing as a double rainbow, whose beauty is only appreciable by the human visual system. (If we had a wider visual spectrum, would it look even more impressive? That's one for you physics people out there.) I'll note, though, that your position (and that of several others in this issues letter column) is quite close to the Manichean heresy.

Unlike the Manichean heresy, my little "whimsey" about Satan, in the last issue, didn't involve a inferior demiurge who we blame for the creation of an imperfect world. I prefer to cut out the middle-man and

blame the Boss Himself.

Regarding Graham Charnock's letter, it is really important to take care if you are, or suspect you might be, susceptible to diabetes. Especially, perhaps, late-onset diabetes which has a habit of creeping up without warning. My dad had it. My brother has it – he's a runner, and can hardly be described as overweight.

I get blood tests pretty regularly. It's a worry, but my doctor told me that I shouldn't think it's *my* fault if it happens. In very many cases it just *happens*, no matter how active you are or how carefully you eat.

Bob Jennings is right when he says, "I don't see SF becoming absorbed completely into the mainstream and vanishing as a unique literary viewpoint." While sf themes and ideas are increasingly used by "mainstream" writers (or crossover writers, like David Mitchell, Michael Chabon and Michel Fabel, who are accepted by literary mainstream critics), there is still a huge amount of snobbery, condescension and outright hostility to "genre" SF and fantasy, as evidenced by the "As Others See Us" column in Dave Langford's *Ansible* (<http://news.ansible.uk/Ansible.html>) So it was refreshing to see in crime writer Val McDermid's tribute to Iain Banks (<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/apr/03/iain-banks-my-fife-friend>) that she read and enjoyed all his novels, including his science fiction "Culture" novels, and that these led her in turn to novels by others, including Neil Gaiman, Neal Stephenson, Octavia Butler.

I agree. There will still be SF even when all the best examples of it are co-opted by literature, given more sober cover art and moved to other shelves in the bookstore. It's the same with Mystery, Westerns, Horror and even Romance. Genre distinctions are a handy way for publishers to target the low-end market comprising readers who just want a familiar kind of read. A question I've long been wondered about is how the representatives of an interstellar civilization would look at SF.

"Have you ever read Heinlein or Clarke, Saara?"

"Oh, sure. They totally crack me up!" Surely, our guesses about the future and the universe would seem like tall tales from the Middle Ages, when wizards use flying carpets to discover a land of fabulous monsters and solid gold cities on the other side of an impassable mountain range.

This is the way to break down the barrier between genre and the mainstream, not by storming the barricades of the literary establishment - the attitudes of their current defenders are too entrenched - but by smuggling our best writers in by the back door. Especially when those writers, like Banks, have a crossover appeal or alternate between different genres (science fiction and crime thrillers in Banks' case), and by welcoming (and not embarrassing) those mainstream writers like Mitchell and Chabon who use science ideas in their own novels.

Attitudes are going to be hard to surmount. Recently, a touchy Ursula K. LeGuin was angered by one mainstream critic's remark about fantasy. As I recall, the comment wasn't unflattering, but, out of loyalty, LeGuin stoutly defended the value of fantasy as though it had been insulted. Attitudes about the genre run both ways ... In the very long run, of course SF will disappear. Nobody will read Poul Anderson, Frank Herbert or probably even Ursula K. LeGuin in one or two hundred years. There will be new popular forms of reading, and new Andersons, Herberts and LeGuins in those genres. Hopefully, a little SF will stand the test of time – Bester or Dick, perhaps. The future will decide – not we.

And before we get too serious here, I did enjoy your Spiderman moment as an honorary father giving away the bride. (That's bride, by the way, not "bridge". You are supposed to sell bridges, usually to unsuspecting foreigners, rather than give them away.)

I will see that my proofreader, Walt, is suitably flogged with a wet poodle for missing that.

(Mea culpa! Mea maxima culpa! – Proofreader)

Jefferson Swycaffer abontides@gmail.com

32nd of May? Now there's a publication date that stands out from all the others!

Better than the 34th... which is the date I thought would have to be on it for a while.

Thank you for the shout-out to *Modest Medusa*! That's fun! I've always been a medusa fan anyway -- you take your fetishes where you can find 'em! In my apartment, I have a reproduction of Bernini's sculpture of the Head of Medusa, up on one of my bookshelves. But, safety first! She's facing away from the viewer, with a mirror fixed in place so you can only see her face in the reflection. (I was getting tired of hauling away granitized friends and visitors!)

"My fear is that there are 100 million wanna-be writers in the world, yet only a single billion readers." Well, that's okay, so long as each of us readers reads at least ten books... I'm always dismayed by the factoid that the typical USAian reads one book in a year. Since I read hundreds, that means there are hundreds of guys out there who read *none at all.* And that just hurts to think about.

But they'd all have to read 10 different books, which means each book would only be read ten times ... doesn't it?

(I just started the "Richard Sharpe" series by Bernard Cornwell, from which the TV series *Sharpe's Rifles* was derived. Good stuff, although a bit sanguinary. Cornwell doesn't pull any punches. In his battlefield scenes, if someone gets gut-shot, he describes it pretty much realistically. Some of it is damn difficult to read. Oh, and the whole series is at my local library, so I'm reading 'em for free. Ha ha! Socialism in our lifetime!)

Me, I'm still cool with Stan Lee and his goofy cameos in movies. I like the way it's usually self-deprecating, as it was in *Thor (1)* and *Captain America (1)*. At least he's doing it with a touch of humor.

Now what *would* be funny is if Lee did his cameo, and the guy next to him on a seat at the airport was an Alfred Hitchcock look-alike. "Alfred" leans over and drawls, "Hah-ven't I seeen you befowah?"

(I was disappointed at the lack of a "end-of-the-closing-credits" vignette in *Avengers (2.)* That's such a regular thing these days, I almost feel entitled to it, and grumpy when denied it!)

Fun story about your emergency dexterity at the wedding, catching the collapsing stack of Bibles without drawing attention! Nice work! My own best emergency dexterity was on a San Diego

Harbor Excursion cruise, where the boat full of tourists goes pooting around the bay for an hour. So far, I've never been marooned on an island with six other eccentrics, but I keep hoping. Anyway, the wind came at me just right and whipped the glasses right off my face. I reached out - over the gunwales and into the open air over the water -- and caught 'em one-handed. Best damn "saving throw" in the history of "Oooooops...WHEW!"

I can remember a couple of moments like that ... on one occasion my bike skidded out from under me, but instead of cartwheeling end over end in the gravel I just stepped over the bike frame and was suddenly running! Didn't even miss a step.

Weddings have never been my thing. They're okay, but...I dunno. The whole ceremonial aspect is wasted on me. They could begin *and end* by sending around announcement cards. "Dear friend: Louise and Jack are now married. Thought you'd like to know." End of the fuss, and several thousand dollars cheaper. But I do treasure two specific weddings, for the choice of processional music. In one, the groom entered (usually the groom starts at the altar, but in this case he entered and walked down the aisle) to Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." In another, the bride entered to Edward Elgar's "The Enigma Variations: Variation IX: Nimrod." These two events really stand out in my memory, because they're cliché busters, doing something just a little different from what everyone else does.

If I ever get married, I want to have a "joke" wedding, where everything goes wrong. Paw marches me in with a shotgun, a lady runs in with a baby and declares, "No! For he is the father of my child!" A couple of the guests get into a fist-fight. The caterer brings the wrong cake. And the minister, more than a little drunk, launches into an eulogy for the dear departed.

(Maybe some day I'll do a big party with that theme. "Hey, Laurie, will you walk down the aisle with me? No, no, we won't get married: we'll just walk down the aisle!")

Why not mess with their heads by sending out announcements that you and the "missus" are getting divorced ... after of years of being *secretly* married?

Only Following Instruction I actually recall a kid my age, when I was young, who also built model cars. He showed me his latest car to me and was clearly proud of the results of his work. However, I saw that he had glued one set of hubcaps on top of another ... and then glued on *a third set!* I pointed out his error, but he took the instruction sheet out of the box and showed me how he had followed instructions exactly. Sure enough, the "exploded" drawings illustrated *three sets* of hubcaps that could be glued to the hubs. What he hadn't understood was that they were *options*, and he wasn't supposed to glue all three sets one on top of the other! That was when I decided I was destined for greatness. If other kids were that dumb, I must be a bloody genius. Subsequent events have not persuaded me differently.





Doug Winger: **Fallen Sparrow** ***Taral Wayne***

Today I noticed a tribute to Doug Winger on FurAffinity. It was written by a prominent artist who was, at one time, notoriously unwilling to acknowledge his own explicit art at one time. I will not mention his name, but I find it ironic that he should choose to remember Doug mainly *for his art* ... which was famous for hanging way out beyond where the laws of physics become meaningless.

Instead of talking about Doug Winger's art – which, to be frank, I could admire for its smooth professionalism even while his subjects it didn't appeal to me – I want to talk about the man.

First, a little about his background. Twenty-five years ago, more or less, Doug lived on the East Coast, where he was a successful engineer who worked for Fairchild Republic and contributed to the design of the PAVE Penny laser spot tracking system. Then, Something Happened. There's no good reason to dwell on the details. Enough to say that, over a short time, he became unemployed, lost his home and landed in a men's shelter. That's where Kevin Duane and Steve Martin eventually found him – they paid Doug's way to the West Coast, where he became a permanent fixture in Steve's home.

Doug's role at *el Casa Martin* was the fix-it guy. In exchange for his room and upkeep, Doug kept the several Mac computers in the studio out back running smoothly. That was no easy feat in the early 1990s, when system crashes and hardware meltdowns were routine. Doug was the one who knew how to restore order.

He also did laundry and any other odd chores that needed doing, to relieve his two housemates of the burden. Both Bob Guthrie and Steve were working artists – Bob had a regular job at Warner Brothers and then, later, at a commercial studio called JMP. Steve, who owned the house, was a freelancer. It was their combined incomes that supported the household. Doug, however, was strictly an amateur. Although talented enough to do a small amount of freelance work, he preferred drawing to amuse himself and others. When called upon by Steve he could lend a hand to beat a deadline, but otherwise Doug had no professional ambitions.

That was probably the saddest lesson that Doug learned from his ruin on the East Coast. In his mind, you could have it all, but life could just snatch it away from you at any time. Doug applied that lesson assiduously at *el Casa Martin*, and was never led by ambition to do anything he didn't want to do. He was perfectly content to be the general factotum around the house, and to draw only to please himself.

Although his skills in engineering were out of date, by his own statement, Doug might well have found some lesser job in the tech industry. Or, had he wanted to, he might have found work similar to his friends'. But when asked if he couldn't use the extra money, Doug simply answered that there was nothing he wanted. He had a roof over his head, enough to eat, instant coffee and cigarettes – that was sufficient for him. He had all he wanted in life.

During the entire decade of the '90s, I was an annual visitor to *el Casa Martin*. I flew from Toronto to LA to attend ConFurence, the major anthropomorphic convention at the time, where I sold sketches, prints, publications and T-shirts from the dealers' room. I spent most of my time after the con in Pasadena, as a guest of Marc Schirmeister. But I made a point of spending a bit of my vacation in Santa Ana, visiting with Steve, Bob and Doug. It wasn't always an ideal arrangement – Steve often had other guests, who slept wherever there was space for them, and I was just one more body to accommodate. The place was in a perpetual state of perfect disorder.

You went to *el Casa Martin* to see the people ... and then left as soon as the chaos became too much for you.

Doug had a tiny bedroom off the hall. It was long and narrow, with barely enough room to walk in, turn and slide between the bed and the computer desk. That was home to Doug for many years, though. He filled it with his computer hardware and a few personal items, and, behind his closed door, drifted in cyberspace all the hours of his days.

In the first few years, I would usually find Doug out in the studio rather than closeted in his room. The studio was moderately small, and stuffed with two enormous drafting tables, file cabinets full of resource material, bookshelves, two computer stations, a large-scale printer, up to three artists all working at once ... and sometimes guests. Getting from one end of the studio to the other was like trying to dance in a packed moving van. Nevertheless, it was in that studio, using Steve's ancient Mac, that Doug showed me the elements of Photoshop.

Most often, Doug would be busy at his own Mac, either touching up some rush job of Steve's or painting one of his own prodigiously-endowed herms or macros. There was usually one of Steve's army of cheap coffee mugs next to Doug's keyboard, a smoldering, half-consumed cigarette in one hand and his other hand on the mouse.

I don't remember quite when it was that Doug began to retreat from the studio. But at some point, I realized that I was no longer seeing much of Doug when I was over at Steve's place. His computer had been moved, so instead of being planted in a seat in the studio, he was secluded in a seat in his tiny room. He often came out, though, and sometimes I'd find him leaning next to the studio screen door like a John Carradine with a bedraggled mustache, tall and thin and dragging on a cigarette. Or he'd be in the kitchen, waiting for water to boil for his decaf. I liked to engage him in small talk on those occasions.

The thing about Doug was that he might have been a fatalist, but he was far from apathetic. In fact, Doug was full of fiery opinions, almost all of which flew directly in the face of Steve's. Their arguments never became bitter, but they were a thing of legend, nevertheless. I suspect that, along with the chain smoking, the fur constantly flying may have been one reason that Doug finally retreated to his room.

When I did catch Doug out of his shell, though, I really enjoyed his conversation. He was knowledgeable, liberal in his opinions, had a cynical sense of humour I readily appreciated, and was extremely amiable. He could talk about politics, art, science, fandom or mutual acquaintances with equal fluency. He did not talk about his past ... but under the circumstances, that seemed understandable. He had cut himself off from his past and his family as though they were long-ago things that concerned another man.

Then I stopped going to California every year, and it was a number of years before I was able to return to *el Casa Martin*. Every time I was able to visit, Doug was rarely seen outside of his sliver of a room. From what I had been told, he was leaving it less and less often. He had never been much for going places and doing things out of the house, but “rarely” had become “never.” Doug was also having more and more serious health issues. Although he had perforce given up smoking, his hacking cough was as grating as ever. He suffered chronic sinusitis, abscesses and edema. But Doug, fatalist as ever, consistently refused to seek treatment. When pressed, he would insist it didn’t matter. “When my time has come, my time has come.”

The last time I was in LA was in 2009, to stay with Schirm for a while, and then drive up to Reno for the Worldcon. I was no longer in the pink of health myself, and experienced difficulty walking any great distance. But I wanted to drop in on the guys at *el Casa Martin* at least once, so Schirm drove me down to Santa Ana one afternoon. While I was there, I spent some of my time talking with Steve and some with Bob, but, to be honest, I don’t even recall whether Doug came out of his room. Then something came up after about an hour, and Schirm wanted to leave. If Doug in fact came out of his room that day, it would have been the last time I ever saw him.

Then, this month, Doug collapsed while taking a shower. He was rushed to hospital in serious condition and put on a tube. The prognosis was grim, but then Doug seemed to rally. He awoke for a few hours and was lucid. Unfortunately, he succumbed again and was finally taken off the tube, dying of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease on the morning of June 23rd. Basically, his lungs were withered sacks of black soot.

Since Doug’s death, I’ve only had the chance to speak directly with Marc Schirmeister about it. Later, Bob and Megan have corrected me one or two points. Much of what was been spoken of between Schirm and I will remain between us, but we openly regret the passing of a mutual acquaintance. I’ve learned that the family will not accept the responsibility of disposing of what little Doug left behind, nor deal with his cremated remains. I suppose it makes a little sense to scatter the ashes in Steve Martin’s backyard ... the home which Doug had hardly left for a number of years. But that may be just a little too close for comfort ... but the Santa Ana River is not far away, nor is the Pacific Ocean.

It will be up to Doug’s best friends Bob, Megan and Steve, to clear his belongings out of the tiny cell he called home. One oddity surfaced. Doug had somehow acquired a large number of hard drives, none of which anyone knows how to access, nor what might be found on them. There are also a large number of Doug’s sketchbooks. But there was very little else. Schirm said that the room was more like a telephone exchange than a personal living space. Aside from the bed, there was not much to indicate that anyone had lived there.

The tragedy of Doug Winger is not only that he died young, at 61, or that his art will be missed by his fans. That goes without saying. I think what’s most sad is that Doug had the potential to have done much more with his life than he was satisfied with. He had the talent to do far more with his art than pin-up characters with unbelievable anatomies. He would have been welcomed by many people, anywhere. He might easily have brushed off his engineering degree and at least found work maintaining the computers for some office.

With the money thus earned, he might have dressed and eaten better, gone to conventions if that was his wish, and had his own place, with room enough to stretch his legs. He could have had as active a social life as anyone.

What Doug did have was mostly known to himself. He was widely known in some circles of fandom, and may have enjoyed a richly interactive life online. It wasn't apparent to the people who knew him in real life, but who is to say it wasn't so? In that sense, much of Doug's life was an enigma.

Still, I can't help but feel that Doug was a *rara avis* whose wings had been broken by misfortune, and who never properly learned to fly again. We must cherish those sparrows who were wounded and fell, however, just as much as we admire those who have soared.



Another reprint of one of my favourite pieces from Eric Mayer's largely under-appreciated personalzine, *eDitto* – Issue 9, May 2011, with the original graphic that appeared with it.

This is a story told to me by a guy, who was told the story by a man, who was the best friend of an employee of a banquet hall, where a party of professionals came to celebrate their first entire year without a drink. Therefore it is as true as *most* things people tell me.

The hall was hired out to all sorts of professions – criminologists, barbers, tree doctors, sewage treatment specialists, greeting card designers, mimes, salesmen, priests, epicureans, aging roués and stage-door Johnnies, even recovering sex offenders. As long as they left a minimum 15% tip, there was no discrimination. And that was the sort of party that rented the hall that night – an indistinct crowd of men of all ages and appearances who seemed to have no common base.

There was *one* thing about them that it was clear they all shared, and that was their membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. The waiters were told in plain language that until after-dinner coffee was served, the only drink for this party was water. That the diners had all been hard drinkers *once* was undeniable – they demanded their water in *big* glasses, and emptied them almost as quickly as the waiters could bring fresh rounds.

Nothing of special interest happened during the appetizer course. Bowls were laid out and precisely two ladles of Campbell's best chunky-style was served to each banqueter. Crackers and breadsticks were brought to the table, one basket for every four diners. The soup was supped, the baskets emptied and the first round of plain, pure water was drunk without incident.

Second course was salad and rolls. Glasses were surreptitiously removed, washed, filled and returned. It was then that the waiter, who was the friend of the guy, who told this story to my friend, who told it to me, noticed something a little out of the ordinary. The diners had been a remarkably sober group while they were seating themselves around the table. No jokes, no laughing, no horsing around. It was as though getting through an entire year without the solace of alcohol had left them little to celebrate. But, after the salad course, they were obviously warming up.

Appetizers were next. Aromatic sausages about the size of a baby carrot were served with toothpicks, eight to a plate. Glasses and soiled tableware were replaced yet again.

The main course came – breaded veal cutlets, Boston baked beans, buffalo chips and apple sauce on the side for the cutlets. Serrated steak knives large enough to render blubber went into action, with a little laughing and joking. Glasses rose and fell, to be removed and replaced with efficient service. When at last the plates were cleared away, there was a distinct air of joviality about the diners. Hands fumbled with knots and ties grew looser. Shirts became rumpled and spotted with food here and there. One or two of the diners were distinctly slumping in their seats!

The waiters were quick to notice the change. They gathered in a dark corner of the hall to whisper together. Clearly, the banqueters were growing intoxicated!

The headwaiter said, “impossible! We’ve been serving them no drink but water.”

One of the waiters sniffed the glasses he had carried away from the table. “I don’t smell any alcohol.”

“Did anyone see hip flasks, or another way they could have sneaked a drink in?”

No one had, and who is more observant than a waiter anxious for a good tip?

Matters didn’t improve when the next course was brought in. There were two sorts of desserts. The diners had a choice of Black Forest cake with dark chocolate icing, or deep-dish apple pie with French vanilla ice cream. By the time dessert was finished, hilarity was the order of the day. Jackets had fallen to the floor. One elderly man with a bristly mustache was asleep with his head on his folded arms on the table. The banqueters were seriously drunk – and without benefit of even a single drop of alcohol!

What was going on, wondered the mystified waiters?

At last, the waiter, who was the friend of the guy, who told this story to my friend, who told it to me, had an idea. “Did anyone notice who this group was?”

“Other than that they’re from the AA? No,” was the answer. “Maybe we should ask the boss.”

So the waiters sent one of their number to the kitchen to ask. He came back a few minutes later with the oddest look on his face.

“Those guys,” he said to his friends, “are all Homeopathic practitioners.”

“You mean...?”

“Uh-huh. We served another party whiskey in those glasses earlier, and the more often we washed them...”

Waiter? Bring the rim-shot, please?

the TAFF and I

It is a strange fact that no Canadian has ever won TAFF. Both Mike Glicksohn and I have run, but lost out to our – ahem – esteemed opponents. Both Glicksohn and I have *also* lost out in our runs for DUFF. It does make you wonder a bit. Why *has* no Canadian ever won either fan fund?

The question might be asked whether the funds were ever *meant* to include Canadians – I suppose we could be considered “Americans” of a sort. That seems to have been how the matter has been regarded until now. Yet, I recall that a few fans back in the 1970s did argue that Canadians should *not* be eligible to run for TAFF or DUFF – if they want a free trip to England or Australia, they should organize their own funds. Could this have been a factor in my ignominious defeat?

Probably not. While I suspect there may have been some voters who felt that way, most voters probably gave my Canadian identity no thought at all ... nor Mike’s.

The main reasons for my defeat were my opponents. It was no part of my plans to run against Avedon Carol! Before I threw my hat in the ring for 1983, I looked carefully around at the fannish landscape to see if there was anyone likely to step up and give me a serious contest. At the time it seemed unlikely, so I gathered my nominators and announced my candidacy. Then, as soon as I was committed to the race, Avedon Carol came out from behind that inconspicuous little islet and blew my hopes out of the water.

It must be understood that Avedon was an unstoppable phenomenon at the time, widely perceived by fans as the principal victim of Topic A – a particularly nasty campaign of invective and slander between Avedon and her friends on one side, and Richard Bergeron and his little yellow minions on the other.

Avedon was hugely popular in the UK because of her relationship with Rob Hansen, a leading figure in English fandom at the time. Both were foremost as banner carriers for the feminist movement in fandom ... then in its first, and by no means least divisive, incarnation. Avedon was a member of half a dozen hot new apas of the day, such as *A Woman’s Apa*, *Azapa* and *Oasis*. She was the publisher of an impeccably fannish fanzine, *The Invisible Fan*, and the co-editor of *Chuch* with Rob Hansen. Given all that, even *I* wouldn’t have voted for me.

It wasn’t just Avedon, either. In rapid order, Grant Canfield and Larry Carmody also declared themselves. I knew then that I had about as much chance as chum in the shark tank.

It didn’t help, either, that the other three candidates all had names beginning with C. Their platforms appeared on the ballot on page two. My name, beginning with W, was all by itself on page three. I wonder how many voters even knew there *was* a page three?

Everything was against me! By some peculiar configuration of the planets in the zodiac, the British convention was Eastercon, held on – so help me – Easter. Instead of the usual ten-or-so months to campaign, I had only five-or-six. In case you think that wouldn't matter, think again. I drew a number of elaborate campaign cartoons for myself, and distributed them to various fanzines. One of them was a two-page parallel-history story that included my most worthy opponent as a character. But fanzine editors *then* were no more likely to pub their ish on time than they are *today*. Not a single one of my brilliant cartoons saw print until after the bloody votes were counted. I might as well have drawn naked bunny-girls for all the good they did me.

In the end, I had to concede that the best man ... er, best Avedon won. But I admit that I was more than slightly chagrined when Avedon later up-and-moved to the United Kingdom, to live there with Rob Hansen ... who incidentally won TAFF *himself*, the year after. Is it any wonder that I've spent the last 32 years hatching conspiracy theories?

In 1989, I tried my luck with the Down Under Fan Fund, and self-inflicted more injury to my ego. To tell the truth, I don't even remember the campaign I mounted. Did I even try? Once again, I had little chance against the eventual winner, John D. Berry. How could I compete against that cute snub nose and ponytail ... not to mention his many excellent zines and keenly sought-after fanwriting?

Mike Glicksohn met his own disappointment when he ran for DUFF in 1985. He was philosophical about it, saying he had probably lost because he had been the Fan GoH at the first Aussiecon, a few years before, and the voters thought one free trip to Oz was enough. Still, it must have been slightly embarrassing to lose to Marty and Robbie Cantor.

What Mike may not have entered into his calculations was that Robbie had risen far in the mighty LASFS hierarchy, and could probably count on the support of more than enough club members to run away with the race.

Robbie is curious in another way, though. She was from Ottawa ... as in Canada. This might throw my thesis that no Canadian has ever won TAFF or DUFF into some small doubt. *However*, Robbie Cantor had been living in California for a number of years when she and Marty won, and Marty himself was not an insignificant part of their joint appeal.

Ever since my twin defeats, I have been licking my wounds. Although the rules permit a defeated candidate to run again, the idea seemed slightly tacky. I felt that fandom had rendered its judgment, and would probably judge me no differently the next time around. Then, as the 1980s drew to a close, my interest in fandom began to sputter and die. Big changes in my life cast a shadow over the petty vanities and intrigues of Hugos, cons and fan funds. I'm sure many of you have passed through similar phases in life.

But once a good fifteen years had gone by, fandom wasn't looking so bad anymore. I began to respond to zines that came in the mail, sent out some art and started writing again. By 2009, the year I was Fan Guest of Honour at the Montreal Worldcon, I had become demonically possessed by a need to contribute art or words to every fanzine that was any interest to me at all ... and then

some. I was a regular contributor to *Drink Tank*, *Askance*, *File 770*, *Challenger*, *Banana Wings*, *eDitto* and quite a few other titles.

I began to think about TAFF again. Not seriously at first. I still felt that I had shot my bolt, and it was the turn of others to aim and miss the target. I also felt that I might not be very well known to newer fans, despite the feverish pitch of my fanaticism. Fandom had changed considerably in the previous fifteen years, after all. New faces were only the half of it. By far, my worst deficit was that I had hardly attended any conventions in all that time, and conventions had, by default, become the true heart of fanzine fandom.

In other words, hardly anyone knew me on a personal basis. Not even those fans I knew from the 1970s, when I attended conventions regularly, had seen much of me in the intervening thirty-some-odd years. Unfortunately, personal ties count a great deal more than your accomplishments in fandom when it comes to funds and awards.

At no time did I have the heart to set myself up for another fall, so I let the matter slide...

Now, in clear hindsight, I see that I shouldn't have.

In the early years of the millennium, I began to notice back problems and leg pains that seemed to have no cause. By 2008, I was having noticeable difficulty walking a few dozen yards due to shortness of breath and fatigue, and later that year I was diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis. MG is an autoimmune disorder in which the body produces antibodies against its own muscle cell synapses. In effect, my immune system attacks the signals the nerves give to my muscles, and they fail to respond. Without medication, MG leaves me weak, I tire easily, I slur my speech, my vision is blurred and I cannot even type or chew easily.

With medications, the condition is livable, but robs life of far too much pleasure.

Moreover, coping with Myasthenia Gravis is a constant struggle. It was bad enough at Anticipation, where the con loaned me a scooter, but my condition has worsened in the interval. These days I can go *nowhere* without assistance, not even down the hall to the garbage disposal chute. However, a roller will only take me so far, since it isn't support I need but physical strength, and even with a roller I become fatigued in a very short distance. The main advantage a roller confers is that it at least gives me a place to sit and rest. This year, since I gained Traveling Matt, the electrically powered chair, my mobility has expanded twenty-fold. With Traveling Matt, I can go anywhere I was once able to walk ... except up a flight of stairs, or onto most streetcars and buses, or into some stores and restaurants. But getting to an airport, through customs and to the right boarding lounge, would be a nightmare. And then what? Leave Traveling Matt behind?

What would I do in England without Matt?

So there it is. It is too late to ever think of running for TAFF or DUFF again. Even if I won, the difficulties would be nearly insurmountable. Worse, I'd make a crummy guest who was unable to go anywhere or do much, who needed constant minding. I would worry all the time about little

things such as my prescription schedules. I take pills first thing in the morning, but cannot eat for an hour afterward. I take more pills three times a day ... but I can't take the last of them until two hours have passed since my last meal. Finally, some of the less mentionable side effects of diuretics, immune-suppressants and anti-inflammatory drugs make it essential for me to keep an eye out for the nearest public facilities. I am routinely faced with the decision of whether or not to carry a fresh change of linen when I go out.

Perhaps it's just as well that I never visit England ... I never did like the beer around which the life of British fandom revolves. I would be a terrible stick-in-the-mud ordering a Coke or coffee, and aiming with unnatural accuracy in the men's room.

For once, I have no snappy, upbeat, or at least amusing, finish. TAFF and I are just a story that has come to a pointless stop ... one that I regret much more than you probably imagine.

1982-83 TAFF PLATFORMS

These are the platforms of the 1982/83 TAFF race, reproduced verbatim (including typos) from David Langford's version of the ballot. My proofreader blames my defeat on me for being too self-effacing. At the time, I was afraid of bragging ... but perhaps too much modesty is not good either?

Grant Canfield Recovering recently in the restful Glades of Gafia following a harrowing convention experience with a Moby Fan wearing a shoulder dragon, GRANT realizes his name is no longer the household word of yore, when Fanac's Flame burned in his breast, and he earned annual Hugo nominations as Best Fan Artist. He solemnly promises to rekindle the Flame and publish a cleverly narrated, profusely illustrated trip report destined to become a 'classic'. The real reason to elect him for TAFF, though, is that he's getting Really Old. You may not get another chance. (If it worked for Henry Fonda....)

NOMINATED BY: *Jim Barker, Harry Bell, Alexis Gilliland, Bill Rotsler and Dan Steffan.*

Larry Carmody A Fanoclast and Lunarian, co-editor of *Raffles*, editor of *Eternity Road* and a contributing editor to *Science Fiction Chronicle*. He also did a weekly sf/fantasy radio programme for a decade. At 14, he wandered into NYCon3 in 1967. Since then he has worked on numerous conventions. He prefers British football (and even played soccer in college). LARRY is not adverse to hanging out in a pub and has been known to quaff a beer or two or ... (and has recently helped form a weekly pub gathering in NYC). In real life, he is a mild-mannered sportswriter for a great suburban paper (plenty of stockrooms but, alas, no more enclosed phone booths).

NOMINATED BY: *Bill & Mary Burns, Teresa Miñambres, Linda Pickersgill, David Stever and James White.*

Avedon Carol Spurred on by a groundswell of support from all my friend, along with the usual fannish delusions, I've decided to jump right in and commit myself to show up in Britain, attend the appropriate convention, dazzle people with my strangely low-rent charm, and return to what's left of the USA to write a TAFF report and all that sort of thing. My credentials for this are that once upon a time I started reading sf, eventually discovered

fandom, went to (and worked on) some conventions, wrote some things and built some fmz's, and even wrote some creditable con reports, one of which was fake. My hobbies include collecting the humour of Hemingway and wearing cheap shoes.

NOMINATED BY: *Malcolm Edwards & Chris Atkinson, Hazel & Dave Langford, Terry Carr, Gary Farber and D. Potter.*

Taral Wayne He isn't sure why he's running for TAFF except that he'd like to win something and is one of the fans least able to fly to Britain himself. He thinks he ought to win because he's been in fandom for over 10 years and has done well at almost everything a fan can do -- publish 135 issues of zines, including *Delta Psi*, his personalzine *Red Shift*, and the news/genzine *DNQ*. Drawn a couple of hundred illos and written idiosyncratically for his and other fanzines. Belonged to Fapa and other apas. Run clubs and cons, appeared on programs, and been nominated for FAAn Awards. He's feuded and wears the funniest fan 'costume' of all. What else can a fan do, except gafiate or win TAFF?

NOMINATED BY: *John Berry, Linda Bushyager, Moshe Feder, Marc Schirmeister and Bob Shaw.*

Vanitas, Vanitas!

Speaking of fannish vanities, there is one I haven't intended to mention: The Aurora. It is given at the Convention, which, like Eastercon, is hosted in different cities from year to year. To be quite honest, I have no idea in which Canadian city the Convention is this year, but I do seem to recall that it will not be held until late in 2015 ... November, I think. Although I had some significant input into the rules when they were drafted, some 30 years ago I suppose, it was a perverse point of pride for me that I had never been nominated for any of the three fan categories that I had devised. Whatever the rest of the globe thought of me, I apparently fell off the radar of Canadian fandom. Being an accomplished egotist, I regarded this as more of a comment on Canadian fandom than on myself. My pride suffered a blow, however, two or three years ago when I was finally nominated for something – fanwriting or for *Broken Toys*, maybe. However, my ego was salvaged when I lost ... I don't remember to who, or for what. I thought that was the end of the story. However, a while ago I stumbled over a thread on FaceBook, where R. Graeme Cameron was being congratulated for his nomination this year. A few comments down from the top, I discovered that *I had also been nominated* ... for a second time. Drat. Nor was I given the opportunity to withdraw my name from the running, since no one had informed me of the nomination! I have little to fear, however. Graeme's own zine, *Space Cadet*, is running against *Broken Toys*, and is almost certain to have the odds overwhelmingly in its favour. I look forward to another sound drubbing, and expect I will be able go on assuring people of the general worthlessness of the Aurora for at least another year. My only worry is that I might win ... then what?

And now for something completely predictable... The following are the two pages of an alternate history I drew for my TAFF campaign. The story appeared in Ansible 31, the February 1983 issue. It did at least appear before the voting closed for the TAFF race that year, but probably not in time to sway much opinion. Two of my fellow candidates appear in the story, though one in very subtle form. I'm not sure about Larry, though. If he does, I can't spot him now ... oh, wait. Come to think of it, maybe I can. After all these years, though, I can't imagine what I had against poor Larry Carmody.

AND NOW ITS TIME FOR- TAFF RACE 2000!

STORY & ART BY TARAL 124C41+

① THE SITUATION SO FAR...
IT IS SUSPECTED THAT TERRORISTS FROM THE THrice-LoSING SCANDANAVIAN WORLDCON BID HAVE TAMPERED WITH THE TIME-STREAM BY STUFFING THE BALLOT BOX OF A TAFF RACE 19 YEARS BEFORE. THEY HAVE ALTERED THE OUTCOME, HOPING THAT BY CHANGING THE PAST THEIR FIRST BID COULD BE MADE SUCCESSFUL. HOWEVER, ALL THAT WAS DONE WAS TO SPLIT A NEW PRESENT OFF OF FAN-DOM'S TIME-LINE, AS ANY TRUFAN WOULD HAVE KNOWN WOULD HAPPEN...

② AN AGENT FROM THE NEWLY MADE PRESENT HAS BEEN SENT BACK TO THE DEPARTURE POINT TO FIND OUT HOW TO RE-UNITE THE ALTERNATE TIME-LINE WITH TIME-PRIME. THE AGENT, BRAN, MEETS HIS COUNTERPART FROM TIME-PRIME AND DISCOVERS, OF COURSE, THAT BOTH TIME-LINES THINK THE OTHER IS TIME-PRIME.



④ JOINING FAPA OUR TWO HEROES DISCOVER THAT THE TERRORIST AGENTS HAVE BEEN USING THE MAILINGS AS A COVER FOR THEIR CONSPIRACY. BRAN HAS THE FAPA CYpher BROKEN BY AN EXPERT IN DEAD FANSPEAK...



③ CARRDON AND BRAN ARE ATTACKED AT A CON BY SVERIFAN ASSASSINS AND ESCAPE BY POSING AS PROS.



⑤ THUS IT IS REVEALED THAT TO ENSURE THE VICTORY OF THE SCANDANAVIAN'S CHOICE, THEY PLAN TO LIQUIDATE THE OTHER TAFF CANDIDATES! JUST TO COMPLICATE THE PLOT A BIT MORE, A PROMINENT BRITISH FAN HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IN HIS OPINION TAFF SHOULD BE ABOLISHED. IF TAFF IS ABOLISHED IN 1982, EVERY POSSIBLE FUTURE OF FANDOM IS IMPERILLED!

6 **OUR STORY:**

NOW MORE ESSENTIAL THAN EVER TO LEARN WHO REALLY WON TAFF, OUR HEROES INTERVIEW THE WINNERS FROM EACH POSSIBLE FUTURE. TO BRAN'S SURPRISE...



8 MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER CITY, TARAL ACCIDENTALLY TIPS HIS HAND TO CARRDON.



10 BERSERK ROBOTS TAKE OUT THE NEXT TAFF CANDIDATE BEFORE OUR HEROES ARRIVE.



7 THIS IS THE BIGGEST UPSET IN FANDOM SINCE LEE HOFFMAN...



9 ALRIGHT—YOU'VE DISCOVERED THAT IN REALITY I AM AN OBSERVER FROM ANOTHER PLANET... NOW, WHAT DO YOU WANT?



Finis!