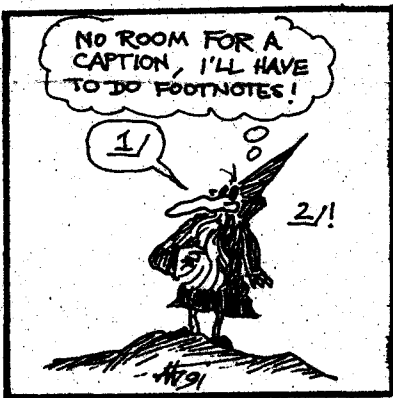


SPENT BRASS

The frequent fanzine of alternative fanac, published by Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, of 315 N. Ingersoll, Madison, WI 53703, members fwa, and available for the usual, 29 cent stamps, or \$1.00/2 issues. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #118, 5/17/91. All material is by us this time out. Art credits: Spent Brass title by Jeanne Gomoll, Page 1 by Alexis Gilliland, Page 3 by Craig Smith. Pamanian marches on!

All because the North held the Round Tops...

BRING THE JUMPING BEAN by Andy



It wasn't until we were waiting on the sooty platform of the El Paso train station, at the end of the weekend, that the usual wave of Corflu Melancholia hit me. It hurts to think of someone as one of your best friends, when that's as often as you get to visit in the flesh. This life of paper can be a trial sometimes. And then, there was the spectre of a two-day train journey back to the Union, customs house at St. Louis, and no doubt many delays, to underline the expense and difficulty that make Corflu precious to us.

I suppose that this year's convention was even more like journey to the Second Foundation (A Stfnal metaphor, how quaint) than usual. Like Asimov's Trantor, Texas is all the Confederacy's

greatest achievements gone slightly off. There must have been millions of dollars and pounds poured into the construction of downtown El Paso at one time: The opera house, the Baruch library, the equestrian statues of Simeon Hart and John Baylor, even the grand colonnade of the old Plaza hotel where the convention was held, all spoke of money brought by Big Cotton, Big Cattle, Big Oil, and Big Iron. Commerce of five nations once flowed through El Paso del Norte, back to the time of the silver train, and governments -- lots of 'em -- swiftly followed behind.

That the town is a little past its prime, cracked and silting up, is hard to ignore with a hundred thousand squatting everyday on the other side of the wire and water in Ciudad Flores. Scarred hands twisted through the barbs, old soldiers and young both intoning "La Guerra, La Guerra," with a hopeless look. Many had the twisted white lines around eyes that saw nothing, and these they touched, and said "Durango," nothing more; the word "gas" came into the mind unbidden, both that which came like a ribbon of milk in the wind, and the kind the fighting was all about. I know that fans from Northern Virginia and Birmingham and Atlanta and Memphis could see them as well as those from Free Manhattan or Saint Paul or Seattle, but no one said a word, not a word.

The heat was considerable for Wisconsin travelers, but the breeze kept both it and the worst of the smog at bay. The long, late sunsets brought blood onto the bright yellow and blue tiles of the patio where we swilled our Corona and lime, and called for mas tamales; but with the night, we saw the smudgy fires on the ground across the river, and the smell of burning rubber and dung drove us indoors once more.

I think there was a strong, if unspoken, feeling that it was high time that Corflu came back to the CSA. Since the Kentucky Corflu of '87,

"It's alright, I always wanted to die on Sunday."

we've flitted from Northern California to the U.S. Corflu in '89, and then to the Free City last year, and I think a number of southern fans chafed under the need to be diplomatic and rotate from region to region. But then, if not for the largesse of the original Corflu committee, the convention might have never left the Bear-Flag Republic at all; and I think the chair's selection of Lucy Huntzinger-Bartelt as Toast-Mistress was a tacit acceptance of that debt. But then, Lucy was such an exemplary and entertaining "Tostada," that there need have been no political motive behind her selection. Besides, no one can stay angry at a Californian for very long; so much work for such little result.

As if to make the most of an opportunity that will be coming around only every four years, the flower of southern fandom was in full bloom. There were a lot of people from Atlanta and points south, who seem to move in a cloud with Lee Hoffman. Charlotte Proctor proudly introduced her Irish-Slovenian guests, and the resulting collision of accents was enough to warrant State disaster relief. Watching the two groups orbit the room, I fancied that I saw the fluttering of fans.

Only Ted White and a few of his friends from North Virginia, with their facility for moving between the two capitals, seemed equally at home discussing both northern and southern fan concerns. If these ambassadors of good will could involve themselves in the bid, it seems certain that the on-again/off-again Washington bid for Worldcon would be able to overcome all resistance. Alas, the exclusionary policies of the D.C.F.S. make this impossible, since Ted is hardly likely to renounce his citizenship just to run another worldcon.

Yet, it would be inaccurate for me to make it seem as though Carrie and I spent the weekend sitting glumly as conversations we did not understand swirled around us. Spike Parsons, transplant from the Iowa prairie, introduced us to a small mob of BArea fans, and our own Muppett from Hell, Bill Bodden, convinced the assembled group to try out a franchise barbecue pit which he had enjoyed in Austinville, called "The State Line." An old joke was told about toothless lions and sea gulls being fed to undying bottlenose dolphins, which might normally have led to mayhem; but we were so busy groaning and holding our bellies in, that the worst puns would have gone unpunished.

And then there was Dick Brandt, longtime scion of El Paso fandom, who had put together the bid virtually single-handed. His - well, there is no other good word - girlfriend Michelle Lyons was the primary architect of the food and drink we enjoyed over the weekend, and I guess one or two other people from the area helped out a little bit, but Dick's was both the vision and the muscle behind much of Corflu Ocho, and I think he deserves both praise for the good job he did, and a hefty dose of laudanum to keep these night horrors from asserting themselves once again.

It is a measure of how specialized our interests have become that no one from the large and active El Paso fan group even bothered to attend Corflu to hold up the banner of the local club. I guess that was actually a blessing in disguise; the convention had the intimate feeling I enjoyed so much in St. Paul two years ago, where the tiny local fan population has always prevented them from holding even a creditable regional convention.

Somehow, when I'm with southern fans, the conversation always turns eventually to war. First we spoke of the Great War in Europe; both Dick Brandt and Dick Lynch's uncles had flown Lockheed Lightnings over Germany, and mine did two tours in the B-21. That was the beginning, we agreed, that was when we started to come home again. Smiling and drinking on the patio in the friendly dusk, it was good to think of brother nations united once more, even if reality fell a little short of our dreams; and of course, that led us to the war of Southron Indepen-

dence, although some troublesome Manhattanites wanted to talk about the war in Panama instead. Once we convinced them we had no need of current concerns for the evening, it was on with the old rebel glories.

"Did you know that the southernmost Union cemetery in North America is in El Paso?," offered Brandt. "A hundred Illinois soldiers captured in the battle for Island # 10 were brought to the prison camp, and they almost all died before they could be repatriated. Fever, mostly, and malnutrition. Anyway, they were given their own section off the main military cemetery, and every year on July 4th, a group of Union enthusiasts put little stars and stripes on their graves."

"Sounds kind of like fanatic," offered Annie Thomson.

"That sounds like most of the Unionists I ever knew," replied Dick Lynch. "None of them could ever let go of the war. I used to think that there was just something degenerate about the North, inbred; but since I've gotten a little older myself, I begin to think it's a kind of sadness, that just won't give up." He turned to me, and smiled. "What about you? You're from the old northwest. The home of the Iron Brigade. What do you think it is?"

I shook my head and smiled. "How can I explain it? To you went the spoils. It's like Thomas Wolfe wrote, every northern boy has it in him to go back to that hot July day in 1863, before Sickles' charge. To be there under the trees, with the troops all drawn up, the banners out of their cases but not yet unfurled, the sun on all the bayonets and so on. To go back to that moment where the war was not yet lost, and wish for whatever outcome, whatever world we might imagine. I'm surprised you can't understand that; I mean, that's the very heart of fannishness, isn't it? Imagination and wishing for another sort of world? Not all this smug recollection and, well, pride."

Everyone fell rather silent at that, and I felt bad, embarrassed. I had made what amounted to an off-color remark.

The moon was rising over the mountains, orange and low to the ground. Someone I didn't recognize was silhouetted by it, and looked up into its dusky face. "Someday," she said, "maybe someday."

"Where we're from, the birds sing a pretty song...."

PICO GEMELO

By Carrie



Craig Smith

Spending four of our ten vacation days on the train put Andy and I in an odd alternative reality, as you will have gathered from Andy's piece. Very close to the end, (but not as close as we thought, thanks to Amtrak) we were driving north from El Paso, well after midnight, returning my parents' car to Las Cruces. We had borrowed it for Corflu Ocho, as I knew from growing up in the area that there is no public transport in El Paso, and that no two places in the southwest are within walking distance of each other. And, since this was a shoestring vacation, we were returning the car late Sunday night (cutting the Corflu Perro Muerte only a little short by doing so) in order to save a night's hotel cost.

Anyhow, I was flogging a rather lethargic conversation, trying to keep Andy at bay. When I commented on how much Corflu GoH I had seen in the chapter Pete Martel on Twin Peaks. You know the simple thing (the one on the front). So we started naming the characters we had in some way or other of someone in the Twin Peaks cast.

Later, we discussed whether or not we wanted to publish this, because we were worried that people might think we really saw them as similar to some scheming television character. Well, we don't; there was just some physical resemblance or similar accent, or we decided that somebody had to play a given character, and it was just for fun, anyway. So here they are, in alphabetical order, and we offer them without further comment.

Alyson Abramowitz - Shelley Johnson	Bryan Barrett - Jacques Renault
Tom Becker - Dr. Jacoby	Linda Blanchard - Norma Jennings
Bill Bodden - Deputy Hawk	Vijay Bowen - Audrey Horne
Richard Brandt - Sheriff Harry Truman	Dave Bridges - Thomas Eckhardt
Miri Bridges - A Northern Pine Weasel	Terry Carr - The Jiant
Lise Eisenberg - Catherine Martel	Moshe Feder - Dick Tremayne
Don Fitch - Agent Gordon Cole	Jack Hennegan - Hank Jennings
Andy Hooper - Leland Palmer	Lucy Huntzinger - Agent Dale Cooper
Ken Josenhans - Doctor Hayward	Jerry Kaufman - Jerry Horne
Michelle Lyons - Lucy Moran	Dick Lynch - Major Briggs
Pat Mueller - Donna Hayward	Patty Peters - Madeline Ferguson
Sarah Prince - Margaret, the Log Lady	Barnaby Rapoport - James Hurley
Mark Richards - Bobby Briggs	Carrie Root - Mrs. Briggs
Vicki Rosenzweig - Deputy Andy Brennan	Dick Smith - Pete Martel
Leslie Smith - Blackie	Jack Speer - Andrew Packard
Spike - Nadine Hurley	Ray Tackett - Mayor Milford
Amy Thomson - Josie Packard	Suzle Tompkins - Eileen Hayward
Bob Weber - Big Ed Hurley	Joe Wesson - Leo Johnson
Ted White - Ben Horne	Art Widner - "the man from another place"
Leah Zeldes - Albert Rosenfield	

COA's: Linda Blanchard and Dave Bridges (and Miri, the Motorboat Baby):
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Bill Bowers: P.O. Box 58174, Cincinnati, OH 45258
Joe Wesson: 55501 Utica Ave. #72, Lubbock, TX 79414

Well, we were a week late in doing this issue, but since we refuse to publish our schedule, you didn't know that, did you? Upcoming issues will feature articles by Peter Larsen, Bob Weber and Ted White. Say, we could sure use some more of those 2" square cartoons....

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