

CHUNGA EDITORS POSE FOR THE CELEBRATED PORTRAIT BY SIR DANIEL STEFFAN (BATMAN COLLECTION)

Chunga 17

CHUNGA

When laid down in 1921, CHUNGA was the largest fanzine in the world, with innovations including the hexapodal main mast and protective egoboo bulges. Torpedoed by USS Helvetica off the Andrushack islands, she broke into two pieces, one populated by trufans and fan editors, the other by fuggheads and hucksters. Before a oneshot could be completed, both halves sank, with a total loss of life.

Available by editorial whim or wistfulness, or, grudgingly, for \$3.50 for a single issue; PDFs of every issue may be found at eFanzines.com.

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✂ Issue 17, December 2010 ✂

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Tanglewood

Ab initio

We seem to have become an annual fanzine despite our best efforts to publish more frequently. The original goal was to publish this issue in May. Oh well, at least we're coming out more frequently than *Plokta*. (Whatever happened to them?) Seventeen issues is nothing compared to publishing giants like the Fishlifters, let alone chrIS garCIA, but it still seems like a prime accomplishment to me. We've been at this for eight years now, which I guess means we're actually still averaging over two issues a year. How the hell did we crank out so many issues in the beginning? I mean, we were old fen and tired even then.

Speaking of which, I turned fifty in September, and while fifty may be the new forty, it still seems like a good moment to take stock of what I've accomplished in life and what I'd like to do in my "waning years" (as one of the birthday cards I got so subtly put it). *Chunga* certainly fits into the future plan for me. The 40s were good years for me, and *Chunga* is one of the several reasons why. It's hard to imagine life without the occasional editorial meeting with Andy and Carl, where the fanzine slowly takes shape in a puff of smoke. Every fanzine creates its own universe out of the materials provided by fandom, and I like living in this universe. I suppose if slow glass is one of the materials we've unintentionally made use of, it's not the end of the world.

Meanwhile, Yvonne Rousseau wasn't the only correspondent to notice a stutter at the end of our last issue. That was a production error by the printshop. We were unwilling to disassemble and reassemble all 250 copies to remove the repeated final page/back cover. I blame squirrels.

—Randy

I mean no insult to my current co-editors, but I feel we need to recruit a fourth staff member. This future partner must be a resident of the United Kingdom (or the Republic of Ireland), and therefore eligible to win the Nova Award. This individual will be responsible for distributing the fanzine to UK and Belgian correspondents, and, when applicable, showing up to lose the Best Fanzine Nova.

I think it must have been reading an issue of Steve Green's efanzone *The Fortnightly Fix* that put the idea back into my head. He proudly pointed to his success in opening the Nova awards to Irish publishers, which made me wonder: Whom else might the Novas eventually embrace? Residents of Shetland, Faeroe and Channel Isles were already included, but what about Falklanders? Bermudans? Staten Islanders? As long as Steve is spreading his mantle of Sun Kingly munificence, perhaps he can open the Novas to mere Anglophiles as well. It's a shame that Steve lost his bid to win local office this past spring; but surely he is still one of fandom's beaming bürgermeisters, chest proudly outthrust and wrapped in a green satin sash as he officially opens the

James Bacon Memorial Young Person's Costuming and Electronic Publishing Centre in Swindon.

Now, after completing the first edition of this editorial, I received news that Chris Garcia has shared in the 2010 Best Fanzine Nova Award, in his capacity as one of the co-editors of *Journey Planet*, the exceedingly slick and sercon genzine he e-publishes with James Bacon and Claire Brialey (and sometimes Pete Young). Certainly this deserves congratulations, not least for publishing an sf fanzine so "hard" it could poke holes through several Larry Niven novels at once.

At the same time, I feel slightly rueful at the almost entirely electronic nature of this year's winner; indeed, *Journey Planet* gives the impression that it could only have physically existed during a few nanoseconds following the Big Bang, when curious states of being were briefly possible, and Father Tucker was only 29 years old. However, I am assured that some small number of paper copies are generated for hand distribution. I had fantasized that British fandom was still so much smaller than its American cousin that it might be possible to put everyone in it—well, everyone who *cares*—on a paper fanzine's mailing list. But I realize that is a fancy caused by our own compact list of British correspondents. Their fandom is just as vast and Balkanized—and international—as mine. Still, until this November, they had always chosen a fanzine demonstrably published on paper as the best of the year. And as titles like *Banana Wings*, *Inca* and *Prolapse* appear regularly in print, Britain may still prove to be a land of hope and glory for the paper fanzine. With other fanzine awards now officially open to podcasting sock puppets, my ambitions are permanently fixed on putting *Chunga* in the same Elysian company as *Epsilon*, *Tappen* and *Saliromania*. I'm quite willing to work with Chris Garcia, if that will help in some regard.

I await further instruction from the bürgermeister.

—Andy



The Future Fair



Early this year, we began thinking about what we wanted to publish in *Chunga* #17. We do not typically assign a “theme” to our issues, or solicit material on specific subjects. When we ask a fan to write for *Chunga*, we give them the freedom to consider any subject that they find inspiring. But as we approached the composition of #17, I found myself thinking fondly of old sercon fanzines with a dozen or more contributors, pondering weighty topics like space colonization and sexual equality. Could I get today’s graying, distracted fandom to consider any topic together, even in the pages of our old-fashioned fanzine? And what would be a fit point to inspire such a serious and constructive conversation?

I phrased my answer in the form of a question: What is the Future of Futurism? As fandom grows older, it is natural that we have different attitudes toward the future than we did as callow young fen. We’re not as likely to see the future ourselves, for one thing—an interest in the future becomes more speculative and altruistic as one comes ever closer to one’s own final issue. We’ve also seen society leave behind the technocentric optimism of the 20th century, and enter a more uncertain age, unsure of what it wants or what it is likely to get. One might argue that we need futurists now more than ever—especially as we have seen the inspirational, if not causative effects that rumination on the future can possess. But as science fiction grows more and more old-fashioned in popular culture, replaced by fantasies as timeless as they are talent-

less, where do we look for the cellular phones and radioactive medicines of tomorrow? Are we really so satisfied as a culture that we have lost the imperative to imagine what we might still achieve? Or are we sufficiently addicted to change that the idea of stability sounds more like stagnation, and the perils of relentless intervention and innovation are preferable to an enervating continuity?

With that extra-chunky solicitation—taken nearly verbatim from the email I sent to more than 20 fans in March of 2010—I opened the conversation that follows. I know that we will continue to imagine outlandish futures—movies derived from vampire and wizard novels contend for box office supremacy with fantasies of alien conflict, on Earth and in space. But it’s possible that the special convergence between fantastic literature and scientific and social progress that characterized the 20th century may have finally passed us by, and may not occur again in any of our lifetimes. But the fact that the future is always stranger than we can imagine makes it a rewarding subject for speculation, and the naivete of our predictions is one of the pleasures of a long life.

The articles which follow take very different attitudes toward the future, but each conveys a passion for the subject that I find very reassuring. Fandom’s vision may require more correction than it once did, but we continue to squint at things to come.

—Andy Hooper



“**W**hat is the Future of Futurism?” asks Andy Hooper in his e-mail of 3 March. If we take the question literally, the answer is surely “none whatever” — Futurism as an artistic phenomenon largely came to an end with the outbreak of the First World War, which suited its founder’s violent and misogynist principles down to the ground (“We will glorify war — the world’s only hygiene — militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman”, to quote its founder, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti), and its revival as a political movement in the 1920s is linked so indissolubly with the rise of Mussolini that it is now almost impossible to treat Futurism as other than a ready-made cultural manifesto for Italian Fascism.

On the other hand, the Wikipedia entry for Futurism does have this rather intriguing coda:

Futurism was, like science fiction, in part overtaken by ‘the future’ ... Nonetheless the ideals of futurism remain as significant components of modern Western culture; the emphasis on youth, speed, power and technology finding expression in much of modern commercial cinema... Echoes of Marinetti’s thought, especially his “dreamt-of metallisation of the human body”... surface in mangal anime and the works of artists such as Shinya Tsukamoto, director of the “Tetsuo” films; Marinetti’s legacy is also obvious in philosophical ingredients of transhumanism... Futurism has produced several reactions, including the literary genre of cyberpunk – in which technology was often treated with a critical eye – whilst artists who came to prominence during the first flush of the Internet, such

as Stelarc and Mariko Mori, produce work which comments on futurist ideals.

Unpack that lot in five thousand words or less, why don’t we....

But that would only be necessary for those who lack an instinctive grasp of the issues which that (slightly edited) paragraph summarises. Instead, let’s focus on the rather bald claim that “science fiction has been overtaken by the future”, and drop it down alongside the statement in Andy’s e-mail that “science fiction grows more and more old-fashioned in popular culture”. Is there, despite their different origins, any overlap between them?

There might be. In the 1990s, John Clute was raising, in reviews in *Interzone* and elsewhere, what he called “the crisis of agenda SF” — that is, an SF which since the 1950s had looked forward to an era in which the locus of human endeavour slowly shifted from the planet’s surface into space, and which had perceived the Apollo lunar landings as the first step along that road.... only to see that road suddenly coned off with signs saying “Too Expensive” and crewed exploration brought to an abrupt halt which it has never resumed. Not that you’d have noticed if all you’d been reading was science fiction; as late as the mid-1990s, stories about guys fighting over the last oxygen cylinder on Mars and whatnot still predominated. Paradoxically, however, it was around this time — as it became obvious that crewed spaceflight meant the Shuttle and nothing else — that the “new space opera” of Iain M Banks et al began to emerge: an imagined far future in which all our existing problems had been leapfrogged and space travel on the gigantic scale was a given — almost as



though its writers were attempting to recapture the lost agenda which the politicians had taken from them. (Indeed, I wonder if recognition of this point might have been one of the new space opera's inspirations.) More or less in parallel with this, one saw the rise of filmic and televisual SF (or "sci-fi") which, thanks to CGI, was eventually able to depict the giant spaceships and interstellar battles which had previously been confined to the printed page — another example of SF's old vision of the human future which had been overtaken by the real future.

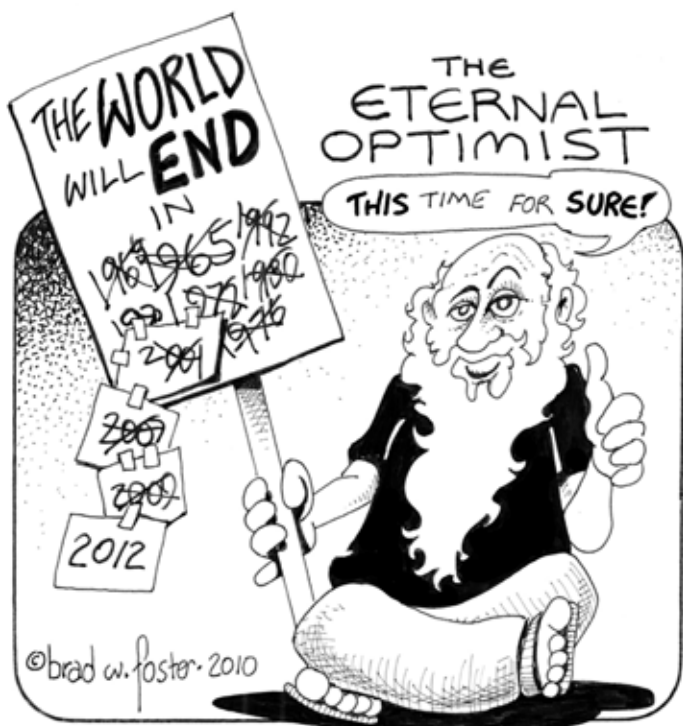
The new space opera and the likes of *Battlestar Galactica* could be said to be taking place in a parallel universe where that old vision was never aborted. Here in our universe, however, the probable reality is that, bar a few demonstration-style missions aimed primarily at making political capital back on Earth — for example, the gerontocrats in Beijing sending half-a-dozen taikonauts to spend a year on the Moon — the era of crewed spaceflight is over, killed off by its own huge costs and (let's be honest) essential pointlessness. Bluntly, there is nothing which humans can do which robot machines that do not need supplies of air, water and food, or the means to make more, cannot do more cheaply — and by doing so, deliver more. (As Stephen Baxter pointed out in the afterword to *Voyage*, if spending on crewed spaceflight had continued through the 1970s and 1980s at the same level as the 1960s, we would know just as much now about the other planets of our solar system as we did then.) Claims that private enterprise will some-

how substitute for governments are utter fantasy, because only governments have the stability and longevity (and therefore the ability to borrow the sums required for the lengths of time required at the low interest rates required) to make the enormous investments across the extended time horizons necessary for any space colonisation project. By contrast, the board of directors of any company which announced that it was prepared to spend gazillions over the next umpty-ump years on a project to (say) mine the asteroids, with no guarantee that any of the money would ever be seen again, would find itself rapidly removed from office and the company returned to its core business of making widgets — and thus dividends for its shareholders.

But it would be a mistake to assume that because agenda SF is dying if not yet dead, and that because crewed spaceflight is over, then it follows that science fiction itself, and speculation about the future of the future, are also at an end. But here science fiction and the future diverge, and need to be treated separately.

The public image of science fiction, as sci-fi, may rest heavily on the likes of *Battlestar Galactica* and *New Who*, but what is interesting — to those who look further — is the extent to which SF ideas and tropes have penetrated our culture. Obvious reference points might be television series such as *Alias* and *Dollhouse*, happily consumed by those who would otherwise claim not to touch sci-fi at all — never mind *Flash Forward*, which poses as a police thriller, and even more mainstream fare such as *Spooks*, each series of which quite explicitly takes place one year ahead of that in which it is screened. In literature, one could cite Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*, Audrey Niffenegger's *The Time Traveler's Wife* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (to name but three examples). Computer games, where they are not re-fighting World War Two, have a significant science fiction content. Much of the visual language of modern advertising seems to have been borrowed from SF. And so on — wherever you look, indeed, it seems that (to quote one reviewer for *The Guardian*) science fiction has "powered its way to full-spectrum dominance of the cultural battlefield", very often to the extent that it no longer looks like science fiction at all. This may be one reason why (to reference again Andy's remark quoted earlier) its depiction in popular culture seems so old-fashioned to SF fans: because in restricting the term's application to programmes with spaceships in them, SF fans may have failed to recognise the extent to which science fiction has mutated.

This of course means that it is no longer a proud



and lonely thing to be a fan — unless the term is tightly redefined to exclude those who merely passively consume, but even then it would still encompass several thousands (possibly tens of thousands) of people with whom one had no point of overlap: people who write slash fiction, people who dress up as their favourite characters, people who post their amateur films on YouTube, and on and on. Nevertheless, considered from its position of full-spectrum dominance, science fiction is a remarkably successful cultural phenomenon, perhaps with a brighter future ahead of it.

The future of the future, however, is rather less bright.

It seems obvious, from the failure of last December's Copenhagen talks on a successor to the Kyoto Treaty, that there is no political will to take meaningful action to tackle anthropogenic climate change. Individuals who understand the issues will do what they can to scale back their own carbon impact; but politicians, focused largely on getting re-elected, lack the courage to tell their electorates what wrenching social and economic changes are required to commence living within the planet's carrying capacity. (Where the politicians have not been captured by the denialist lobby and think that anthropogenic climate change is simply a gigantic hoax, that is.) It seems likely that another decade or so, perhaps even two or three decades, will need to elapse before the need to take the action required will become environmentally undeniable — once the leading players in the denialist lobby are dead, once the fossil fuel industry is in decline due to peak oil, once there is a new generation of politicians and public officials who understand climate science, once more scientific evidence has been accumulated, once there have been year-on-year increases in the frequency and nature of severe weather events, once it has become clearer that we are approaching the environmental tipping point from which recovery is impossible. But by then it will be too late, because there is a twenty-to-thirty-year lag between the injection of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and their consequent effects, meaning that the chances of constraining the average rise in global temperatures to below 4°C (never mind the 2°C that scientists are agreed is the environmentally permissible maximum) will have gone for good. We'll be heading for an average rise of 6°C, and possibly more.

That might not sound like much, but it should be remembered that most organisms inhabit a fairly narrow temperature range, and outside that become either dormant or die. This is particularly

true of the soil organisms on which agriculture depends — an industry which accounts for a fraction of global GNP, but which the human species can't do without. The result, inevitably, is that agriculture in large parts of the world will become impossible, leading to a combination of mass starvation and mass population movements to find somewhere more suitable to live and farm.

Allied to the various other crises which the human species will be facing in the twenty-first century — increasing scarcity of the rare metals required for the wired world to function; falling production of the oil on which technological society depends; drying up of river systems due to glacier retreat and over-abstraction of underground water; elimination of biodiversity through the Sixth Extinction we set in train a thousand or so years ago — it seems evident that, by the dawn of the twenty-second, we will be at the beginning of the end of the Anthropocene Epoch: the one named after ourselves, because of the impact that our species has had on the planet. I would estimate that, a century from now, we will have proven the late Fred Hoyle's observation that industrial civilisation is a one-shot affair, using up all extractable resources and leaving nothing for successor generations, and have reverted to a world powered (as it was a few hundred years ago) by wind, water, wood and muscle. And a world with far fewer people in it, too — perhaps a few tens of millions, grouped in the still habitable regions at the extremities of the continents: South American south of the River Plate; Canada; Scandinavia; southern Africa; northern Siberia and Japan; New Zealand. The only positive point to be derived from this is that in a world of such scarcity, where the recycling and re-use of everything will be essential to the continuation of organised society, Marinetti's glorification of war will be an unaffordable luxury.

The only escape from this might be the one envisaged by those who eulogise the post-human future to be found beyond The Spike ("the rapture for nerds", as Ken MacLeod once described it), but





this is highly unlikely. Even if there is a Spike, and we can augment our bodies with all kinds of technology, the fact remains that the brain is a biological organism which, like all biological organisms, is destined to die. Death can only be avoided if consciousness can be digitised, and uploaded to a non-biological organism — but that would first require that consciousness be described mathematically, which no one is anywhere near doing. Never mind explaining what consciousness actually is, or how it is generated.

I personally expect the human species to be extinct by the end of the third millennium, if not sooner. But sooner or later the Anthropocene Epoch will come to its end, and in time almost all traces that we were ever here will be gone too. The most that we're likely to leave by way of evidence will be geological: a thin smear of sooty deposits representing the burning and destruction that's been characteristic of our species. Plus a depleted fossil record for the next few million years, as the Anthropocene's long tail winds towards its conclusion — as biodiversity declines, as clades of organisms go extinct — and the stage is cleared for the next great burst of life, for new species radiating out into the vacant niches of the Post-Anthropocene.

It would be an exciting sight. Were there any humans around to see it! ♣



I Used to Live in the Future

by Tom Becker

I used to work in the future. I got a job at the wind tunnels at NASA/Ames Research Center. The most beautiful made thing I ever saw was a 1/100 scale model of the Space Shuttle.¹ It was machined out of special alloy that nobody could touch with their bare hands because fingerprints would corrode it.

It had working controls. It had an external fuel tank. It had model booster rockets on the ends of

¹ For a picture of a similar model in the same wind tunnel, see www.archive.org/details/AILS_ACD06-0051-010. Now imagine a model 1/3 the size but with the same amount of detail.

steel rods wrapped in fuzzy strips of some tough fabric so they approximated the shape of the exhaust plumes. The whole thing was on a separation rig so they could independently move the orbiter, boosters and tank, while blowing air past them at up to 1.45 times the speed of sound. Should you need to abort a launch, the orbiter needs to separate from the tank and boosters so it can land. This changes the air flow around the tank, causing the tank to fly into the orbiter. So they worked on the tank design until they mastered the air flow. That is why it has some areas that are corrugated and others that are smooth. It is a very subtle design. All of us working there had a gut level understanding of the the risks.

One of the computers I used for developing wind tunnel data acquisition code was also the SETI project's computer. I'd be wrapping up my work for the day and this guy would come in with tapes of Arcibo data to analyze overnight.

Across the street was the 3.5 ft. hypersonic wind tunnel, the arc jets, and my favorite, the Giant Planet Facility. At the time, the arc jets were used for testing the thermal protection tiles for the Shuttle. They could get up to 5000°. The Giant Planet Facility was used for testing the heat shield for the Galileo probe, which was going to hit Jupiter's atmosphere at 100,000 mph.

Over in the NASA division that did human factors research and built flight simulators, one of my co-workers was in on the creation of the first practical virtual reality helmet. Seiko had come out with a TV watch, so they bought a couple of them, took the LCD screens out of the watch housing, and mounted them on a helmet.

There were many interesting and unusual aircraft in various stages of design and testing around the center. I supported a test on the X-29A forward-swept wing.² A friend was working on the wing design for the AD-1 oblique wing.³ The XV-15 tilt-rotor⁴ was finished with wind-tunnel testing, but I saw it flying around a lot.

There were competing visions of the future and not all of them were good. It was during the Reagan administration; tensions were high and con-

² For descriptions and pictures of the X-29, see www.nasa.gov/centers/dryden/news/FactSheets/FS-008-DFRC.html

³ The oblique wing research aircraft is described at www.nasa.gov/centers/dryden/history/pastprojects/AD1/index.html. When they say "unpleasant flying characteristics" they mean it.

⁴ For a picture of the XV-15 in the 40x80 wind tunnel, see www.windtunnels.arc.nasa.gov/pics/40x80/40G26.html. Yes, that is a full-size aircraft and they ran the jet engines inside the tunnel with the wind on.

BUT BOSS,
THIS COULD
MAKE A
TERRIFIC
SCI-FI MOVIE!

NEEDS
ACTION

START WITH THE
DESTRUCTION OF
THE GALAXY,
THEN WORK UP
TO A CLIMAX

GIANT METEORS
ARE GOOD



trasts were stark. My code was used in a test of the B-1 bomber, a plane that I thought was a wasteful pork barrel project at best. At worst it was designed to bring on a nuclear armageddon that it wouldn't last a minute in. But they had a bad crash so it was back into the wind tunnel for testing.

The future contained rather surprising amounts of old stuff. Moffett Field was the base for the US Navy dirigible, the *Macon*.⁵ Ames was established there in 1939 as a NACA center. The wind tunnels were built up during WW II and the Korean War, and then again for the space race. I remember running into a real, used, Apollo capsule in a storage area. Another time I remember when we installed a system at the 12 ft. Pressurized Wind Tunnel, the old computer system was still there. It was in a beautiful big cabinet with smoked glass doors. I pulled out a card and it said "Flip-Flop" on it. It had real transistors; none of those old-fashioned tubes.

The powers-that-be felt that wind tunnels, where I worked, were not the future. The future was going to be computing the Navier-Stokes equations in order to determine aerodynamics numerically. Ames was always one of the first places to get the newest and most powerful Cray supercomputers. Silicon Graphics started up next door and Ames bought a gross of graphics workstations to visualize the results. Or, until the software was written to network them with the Cray, to play around in the flight simulator. Numerical simulation was fantastic for generating detailed color 3-dimensional

views of the airflow around a wing. There was just one small problem. The calculated value for lift vs. drag was not accurate enough to tell whether the wing design would fly, or fall out of the sky. Some day the mesh size would be fine enough to get good results. In the meantime, the wind tunnels kept running. You could think of a wind tunnel as an analog computer for solving the Navier-Stokes equations very precisely by using actual air molecules.

I loved working at Ames but after seven years, it was time for something new. I learned the Mac toolbox and got a job at a biotech company. I worked on software for acquiring and analyzing data from a protein sequencer. Then I created some software for running a peptide synthesizer. Some of my code ended up in a new DNA sequencer they were designing, with the idea that someday it might be possible to sequence a person's entire genome.

While this was happening I could see Silicon Valley changing around me. The old orchards of the "valley of heart's delight" were mostly gone. In the fields of office parks, the electronics industry had already moved from transistors to integrated circuits and was starting to get heavily into computers. Apple started up in Cupertino, and Osborne over in Fremont marketed the first portable computer. Inventors spilled out of Xerox PARC and started 3COM for networking technology, Adobe for printing technology. Many of them went to Apple to create the graphical user interface for the Lisa and then the Macintosh. Sun Microsystems spun off from Stanford. Nolan Bushnell invented Pong and went on to found Atari and Chuck E. Cheese's.

⁵ For the story of the *Macon*, see www.history.navy.mil/photos/ac-usn22/z-types/zrs5.htm. For pictures of the *Macon* and Hanger 1, see www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/news/releases/2003/03images/hangar1/hangar1.html.



I was also discovering fandom, science fiction conventions, anime, and fanzines. I was making friends with fans who were commercializing artificial intelligence and expert systems, doing the first digital animation, and working for Ted Nelson on the visionary and never finished Xanadu project. Fannish parties were a mix of physics geekery, libertarian politics, and seminars on how much insurance you needed to buy for cryogenics. I got the distinct sense that I was living in the future, not just working there. It was kind of wacky, but I liked it a lot better than the alternatives of living in the present or the past. Everybody thought they were changing the world.

What happened?

In many ways the technology improved much more than we expected. Those amazing initial advances now in retrospect look like first halting steps. We also tend to overestimate the impact of technology on society. Human nature is very hard to change. (And that's a good thing—imagine if it were easy.) That feeling of being in the future is strongest when you're on the leading edge. It is the feeling of possibility. But when you build it and everyone has one, it isn't the future any more. It's just the present.

I'm okay with not living in the future anymore. Silicon Valley has become more connected to the rest of the world. It's a lot more diverse, and the food is great. Maybe the people coming here feel they are going to change the world. Maybe they actually will this time. ♪

The Future of Futurism

or

Past Gains Are Not a Indicator of Future Results

by Chris Garcia

About every other day, I get a question from a High School Student about what the future of computers will be. Every time one of those enters my InBox, I think about how I can best skirt the answer. There's no way I, a simple historian, can tell the future, and there's also no way I, the science fiction fan, can point to anything that would make a high schooler satisfied that I

took their question seriously. There is no answer to what the Future will be, and there never can be.

Why?

Because there is no future.

That may sound apocalyptic at best, or if you look at things through slightly rose-tinted glasses, defeatist. The fact is, while many people look at things long-view, there is no way you can realistically build for the future. In the last several centuries, there've seldom been any projects that weren't designed to solve an immediate problem, and the long-term problems we've dealt with have almost always been for the sake of some more pressing matter that just happened to become appropriated for such a purpose. We haven't even serious begun to tackle things like oil-dependence save for projects to save short-term money. Yes, there are wind-farms and the like, but mostly these were started as a way to save cash. PG&E here in California is famous for touting the projects they say were planned for decades to save the environment that were actually turned down again and again until economics mandated it immediately.

The fact is, the people who study the future have all failed, and it's completely their own fault. They have been taking a long-view of a world created by people who specifically reject the long-view. It's like trying to figure out what horse is going to win the Kentucky Derby by looking at the ground crew of Churchill Downs. The future is written in immediacy.

Take Twitter.

The prevailing take by people like Paul Saffo was that our new forms of communication would be instant, powerful, full of possibilities to express more and more thoroughly what you're feeling and to do so through images and voice. Twitter has made a bigger splash than all in the world of social networking. I specifically heard one noted futurist, Jacques Vallee, say that Twitter was an incomplete technology and would have no real effect. Of course, he failed to note one thing: it doesn't matter if it's complete or not, people like it today, right now. It limits expression to 140 characters, and while a serious user can add images and links and on and on, 99% of users don't, and those that do often get nothing for their efforts. Facebook has a far more flexible system, but usage of Facebook is different. It's a complete system that basically became the standard homestead for many because it's easy. But real updates, not App notifications or other App-generated content, are far fewer than those on Twitter despite the fact that Facebook updates are far stronger. Why? Phones are far easier to use with Twitter, though Facebook ain't

difficult either, and SmartPhones make no matter. Twitter was something that arose in an instant, and it's caught on, even though futurists would say that it shouldn't have and it goes against the grain of the logical flow of technology.

Which is why I shouldn't be the one that folks are asking for clarification in matters related to the future.

Groups like The Long Now Foundation are, in many terribly serious ways, complete jokes. They are looking to make things that can stand the test of time, yet they fail to realize that History and its study is a sine wave, ebbing-and-flowing through time. The Greeks were really into history, so were the Babylonians. The Victorians? Nope. Most of the Middle Ages? Not really. Sometimes it's fashionable to save the past, sometimes not. We're in a time of great historical interest, and we're still losing a great deal of content. It makes you think how much will be lost when this peak falls away and people are back to not caring.

And of course, there's always the disaster. A single disaster could destroy us, but let's not dwell on that.

Futurism is a very good study. It can give us much needed prospective, but it will never be a good measuring stick as to what will happen. If it were, they'd be running companies, making real money, instead of founding them, watching them flounder in the face of those who go for the quick buck, go Public, diversify, sell-out and then crumble. The money that those people make funds the next round, and the little that a group with real future prospects can scrape together will be spent on survival. Sustainable survival it might be, but they're usually eaten up, bastardized and put down hard by those big money machines founded by the Fast Buck. It's a cycle you saw in the 1960s with software services companies, in the 1970s with land trusts, in the 1980s with just about everything, the 1990s with solar and wind power and today with just about everything again.

And there's no reason to think that will ever change.

So, that's the dark side. The wonderful thing about a future that is not determinist is that at least some of the time, you're surprised. I've heard futurists talk about the future as an inevitable road that we started down when that monkey first grabbed a bone and used it as a cudgel, but that's not even close. We're on a road to nowhere, but the funny part is that we're laying the asphalt after we've already traveled it. Keeps things interesting, I guess... ♪

Our Old Future

by Gregory Benford

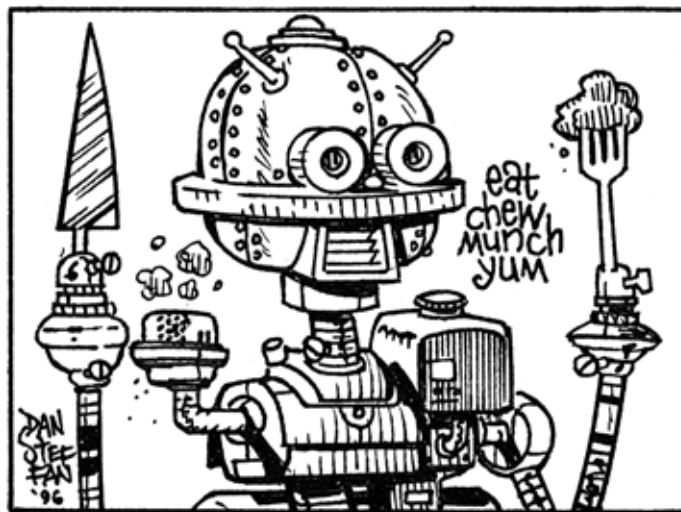
Our time is not the end of history, just the end of old illusions about our journey through history. All the old systems of futurist thought have become irrelevant, disposable, more confusing than enlightening.

Some, from Islamic radicals to Biblical fundamentalists to neo-Marxist academics have reacted bitterly to this loss of illusion. For such people, clinging to a fossilized set of beliefs is crucial to their psychological health. We can feel sorry for them, while fending off their assaults on our cities, our universities, and our culture with a steadfastness that should grow more obdurate as the obvious futility of their cause becomes clear. They are the cultural dinosaurs of our time, still destructive, but irrelevant. Our new future is too much for them.

Most people have simply given up on ideology. Bombarded with sensational rhetoric and religious fulmination, it is hard to criticize their opportunistic alternation between hedonism and career. Their world is adrift. They party to forget the day.

It wasn't supposed to be like this, "In the future," as we always used to say. In the future, we would all wear the same clothes and have some mythic figure to lead us, whether benign or malign, a new Gandhi or another Big Brother. The future, as imagined from 1848 to 1989, was supposed to be some kind of collective transcendence.

The paragon of the collectivist vision was the brief Khmer Rouge rule of Cambodia. From 1975





So...you're doing the "Has the future arrived" panel?



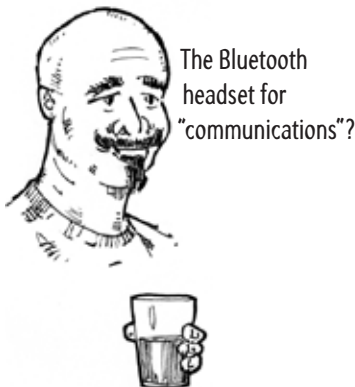
Yup.



The AV goggles for "virtual reality"?



Yup.



The Bluetooth headset for "communications"?



Yup.



The hammer for the first arsehole who asks "where's my jetpack"?



Yup.

to 1980, they created a society that lacked almost any trace of freedom, civilization, or humanity. The Khmer Rouge suppressed education, destroyed medical care, demolished transportation, and banished currency. They sent everyone to countryside collectives to lead lives uncorrupted by capitalism—

lives of starvation, indoctrination, malaria, torture, and dysentery. Everyone who could have contributed medical or technological expertise they killed outright.

All to escape modernity, to escape from freedom. But the Maoist killers of Cambodia were too perfect to last. Another post-American Marxist state, Vietnam, destroyed the Khmer Rouge in 1980. Still, French intellectuals (particularly Sartre) maintained that the struggle of the Khmer Rouge was the purest of all communist revolutions.

For many, the collapse of communism seems to make way for the triumph of the God-fearing faithful, but their collective vision is also but an ugly echo of history. Iran is the world's most successful theocracy, where the mullahs wield ultimate power. The Western image of Iran is of religious thought-police and dress codes. Yet younger Iranians, some of them now in middle-age, lead dissolute lives of promiscuity and drug abuse. Once a great majority of Iranians supported the Islamic revolution and their religious leaders. Certainly they did in 1980. Now they too are mostly weary and cynical.

The only thing that keeps the Religious Right in the United States from the same fate is the fact that they don't get to run the country in quite the manner that they want. We can all thank James Madison's Constitution for that.

Ironically, even science fiction perpetuated the old myth of the future, the utopian vision. From Ursula K. LeGuin's anarchist fantasy in *The Dispossessed* to Aldous Huxley's dystopian *Brave New World*, science fiction futures were frequently set in collective societies. There might be a few renegades bravely fighting against the collective machinery of society, but that machinery was still dominant. The shadow of Socialism has blocked the view of even professional visionaries for too long.

Cracks in the Edifice

No matter how we may fight to deny it, the Old Future is dead.

Life at the start of the 21st century is messy. People want the freedom to consume what they like, to sell their services at the highest price they can get, to say what they like in private, and to brandish their opinions on the Internet. People have pursued similar goals throughout history. Most want a happy family life, material comfort, and the opportunity to do what they like.

All these choices also inspire conflict and confusion. Indulgence does not necessarily bring happiness. For some, this provokes the comforting abdication of freedom that zealotry provides. It feels so

good to stop thinking, choosing, deciding!

Alienated youth often become pragmatic adults. But pragmatism should not be confused with virtue, civic or otherwise. Heroic and altruistic individuals appear, but they are exceptional. For every gentile who harbored Jews at the peak of the Third Reich, there were thousands who did not. We do not wish to idealize everyday pragmatism; it can be frighteningly callous.

But fierce ideologies and intemperate faiths do not purchase the loyalty of the great mass for very long. Perhaps the most obvious sign of the decay of ideology is that most people are now tired of it. They only want peace, affluence, and fun.

While Marxism is still the state religion of the People's Republic of China, just as Shiite Islam is the monolithic doctrine of revolutionary Iran, the Shanghai apparatchiks want to sell cars and Tehran mullahs want to buy them. Not only do most Chinese and Iranians just want to be better off, the modern cynicism of their rulers is also obvious.

Only North Korea remains as a monumental Inferno of ideology. If it weren't for its acquisition of atomic weapons and the vast suffering of its victims, it might be worth preserving it as a museum exhibit of the follies of collectivism. Not the least of its charms lies in its conversion to monarchical despotism, with the son of the previous ruler inheriting absolute power.

Journalists deplore the corrupt leaders of such regimes, missing the point that corruption is one of the most positive features of such societies. Violation of rigid ideals can mitigate the intimidation of the absolute state. The people of Cambodia knew that their rulers had feet of clay when the Khmer Rouge elite started to wear Rolex watches and fine silk scarves along with their revolutionary black garb.

But now these small cracks have widened, bringing down (in the case of the Soviet Empire) or radically compromising (in the case of the PRC) most of the significant collectivist regimes. The sullen demeanor of ideologues, East and West, is now palpable.

The Countervailing Tradition

There is a thoughtful tradition that has long opposed the powerful and the ideological. It is associated with Socrates, although it should be remembered that Socrates accepted the judgment of an intolerant Athens. Then his foremost student, Plato, only perpetuated Greek tendencies to absolutism. Aristotle, Plato's abandoned protégé, is perhaps a better candidate as a progenitor of the opposition to

collectivism, though more in his generally empirical curiosity than his specific political proposals.

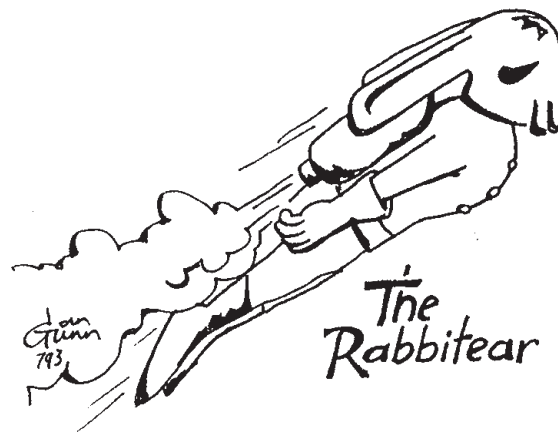
George Orwell was the 20th century's most generally accepted intellectual opponent of totalitarianism, particularly in *1984* and *Animal Farm*. Still, he harbored some collectivist sentiment. After all, Orwell was a man of the Left, and fought alongside the communists and anarchists in the Spanish civil war.

The clearest, and historically most important, expression of this tradition came out of the Scottish Enlightenment, exemplified by David Hume, Adam Smith, and Adam Ferguson, among others. This tradition emphasizes indirect effects, the futility of government attempts to control markets and international trade, the value of enterprise, and the limits of benign effects of concerted action.

This tradition had its most visible success in James Madison's Constitution for the American republic. Madison was perhaps the greatest practical student of the Scottish Enlightenment, and certainly the person who most effectively set about implementing its precepts. His design for the new state was one exquisitely contrived to prevent the imposition of domestic despotism on the American people. The United States of America has since shown both the value and the limitations of political and economic freedom for modern civilization. It certainly produces economic creativity and debate, with the crass and the tawdry as perhaps inevitable accompaniments.

In the 20th Century, the themes of the Scottish Enlightenment were taken up again by such figures as Friedrich von Hayek, Karl Popper, and Michael Oakeshott. Their books, such as *The Road to Serfdom*, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, and *Rationalism in Politics*, respectively, are among the foundation stones of an alternative tradition within the humanities and social sciences. Of course this tradition enjoys the marked hostility of the dominant traditions of contemporary critical theory.

In the natural sciences and related fields the





thinking of Aristotle, Hume, and Popper has enjoyed the greatest influence. Indeed, one might point to the entire edifice of modern technology as the fruition of this tradition of thought. Its empiricism and cautious speculation provide the cultural matrix for much of Western science. Charles Darwin, for example, can be seen as a child of this tradition, and indeed much of his thinking is an overt use (in his use of Malthus) or implicit appropriation (employing Hume's careful materialistic reasoning, for example) of themes and methods from the Scottish Enlightenment.

From Darwin, 20th Century biology derived almost all of its intellectually cogent framework, which then enabled Anglo-American, reductionist, molecular and cell biologists to pursue the details of biological mechanism untrammelled by religious, idealist, or Hegelian clap-trap.

What are we about here?

We wish to recruit new adherents. Our agenda is simply the view that solutions to political and cultural difficulties can be found in the deliberate cultivation of the empirical, individualistic, skeptical Western tradition.

Put another way: We wish to drive a stake through the heart of the dominant cultural traditions of piety, correctness, ideology, and faith. Then we would like to dance on their graves.

Western civilization used to be palpably great. Now it is too often mediocre, with enclaves of greatness: the military, the computer business, and scientific research. We're sure that you have your

favorites. But it is more notable that we have been failing regularly in areas we used to dominate: spying, making cars, education, economic growth — pick your debacle.

We want the West to have another resurgence of greatness, to be seen once again as the standard against which all other societies can be judged. We make no apology for ethnocentrism: "the West" is a cultural ideal, not a form of genetic differentiation.

The cellist Yo-Yo Ma is a paragon of Western civilization as much as Mikhail Rostropovich, the great Japanese geneticist Motoo Kimura as much as Gregor Mendel. And by this standard, Adolf Hitler chose to be as much an enemy of the West as Cambodia's Pol Pot did.

"The West" is an idea, a cultural tradition, an aspiration. It has survived through good and bad times since Periclean Athens. It has been the best hope for the entire species in our known history.

Let us hope that we do not lose it as we stumble out of the dark charnel house that was the 20th Century, into the light of our new future. For we have a great future, if we will but seize it. ♣

The Future Soon

by Claire Briailey

Science fiction was my passion when I was young. Because science fiction is about the future, and when we are young we are fascinated with our future worlds. That's natural, since when we are young we possess no past, or none worth mentioning; but we possess an endless future stretching before us. But I am no longer young. When we are old, the future vanishes from our life to become replaced with death. Accordingly we become intrigued, rather, with the past. We have the same escapist urge we had as youngsters, but it takes us back, into memory, instead of forward into science fiction.

— Adam Roberts, *Yellow Blue Tibia* (Gollancz, 2009), pp.164-5

The future is the year 2000

I was born in 1970. It made it easy to imagine the future: another year ending not just in a zero, but in three of them.





I've never actually read or seen *Logan's Run*, which is a product of roughly the same time as me, but I knew 2000 would be a year in which I would be impossibly grown-up. From somewhere I picked up that the film posited 30 as the cut-off age for population sustainability; but I hadn't previously realised that the novel — while envisioning death at 21, surely even more chilling for a reader of any age — also notes the year 2000 as the point when 'the youth percentage' of the world's population attained critical mass.

But I did know that 2000 would be a year in which the numbers would change and the world would change with them. It was the one fixed element of the future, a constant rather than an obsession; if anything, I've thought consciously and certainly written about it a lot more since the digits clicked over and the future was here.

I suppose as a young science fiction reader I did think, as the sf-writing character Konstantin Andreiovich Skvorecky contends in *Yellow Blue Tibia*, that science fiction was about the future. Maybe much of what I read then, written and published twenty to thirty years before, really was; maybe that's just how I read it then, in line with my expectations of the genre. But more and more I came to realise that science fiction was also — deliberately or not — about the time in which it was written and about perspectives on the times that had gone before: it was about society as much as science, about changes we could make now as much as changes we would observe if we could visit the future.

Yellow Blue Tibia was one of the six books shortlisted for this year's Arthur C Clarke Award (won by China Miéville's *The City and The City*, which this parenthesis is too narrow to contain). The Clarke Award is one of the prompts we have for discussions about what science fiction is, what it is for, what is doing it well, and whether it needs to know what it is. This year's shortlist was generally well-received — something of a rarity for any prominent award — and I personally enjoyed all six novels. But if I think about whether they engage with the future I would describe them as:

- A story whose recent past (which could be our imminent future) contains fracture and catastrophe
- A dialogue between the past and a possible future
- A mingling of futurism and nostalgia which is thus probably steampunk
- A story set in an extrapolated future, based at least partly on a classic novel and thus also

bringing with it ideas of the classic sf novel that's already done the same thing

- A near-contemporary visioning of how we interact with the world
- A revisiting of the recent past, with overt messages about science fiction's place in it

Those who want to know more may be interested in Chris Garcia's and James Bacon's *Drink Tank* collaboration on the Clarke Award (issue 248: efanzines.com/DrinkTank/DrinkTank248.pdf). In this context, though, what's significant for me is not how much these novels are science fiction (although they are), but that the Clarke Award provides an effective snapshot of what science fiction is for any given year. And on this basis it's not currently much about the future.

The future is in 2012

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To me, science fiction is about ways of living as well as ways of experiencing the world. I maintain that it's the ideal reading for public servants, because it's a literature of society, sustainable development and opportunity for change as well as the literature of ideas, technology and the future. And civil servants need to know about future thinking.

I first encountered the future professionally after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio; it had engaged and reflected growing concerns in both political and public opinion, spawning international agreements on climate change, forestry, biodiversity and sustainable development overall. And it meant we had to think ahead, beyond the five years that was the longest period a government could be in office without another election and far beyond the then annual process of agreeing public expenditure. General consensus was that thinking ahead to twenty years beyond the Earth Summit was realistic, and so we tried to imagine the world of 2012.

It would probably be too political to reflect on how far the UK's first sustainable development strategy got it right over sixteen years ago in our assessments of the problems, future trends, and opportunities for action; we obviously know more now than we could then, but it would definitely be inappropriate for me to opine about how much progress has been made since. But it felt groundbreaking at the time to be publishing a strategy that continually set out what we expected, or even what we intended, for the next twenty years or so. I'm not sure, though, how far we ever tried to visualise a complete picture of what 2012 would be like if we achieved everything we thought was necessary — and if we didn't.



But here we are now, nearly in that future; and in the world of science fiction we've reached the part of the Hugo awards cycle where those of us who can vote this year are ploughing through all the shortlisted works we don't already know, ready to cast our ballots in the next two or three months. And clearly we are in the future, even if we're still not sure whether anyone's thinking it forward, because all the shortlisted films (AKA Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form) are available on DVD for not very much money at all. And so for the first time ever I should be in a position to vote in this category.

This also means we're having more conversations at home than usual about modern science fiction films. They are even less sophisticated conversations, certainly on my part, than we have about science fiction novels; but one element of the discussion is about whether that's partly a function of the medium as much as it is down to us. One of the conversational loops in which we trapped ourselves after seeing *District 9* was whether it was using science fiction to tell a story about South Africa and humanity rather than actually being SF, or whether that's exactly what makes it science fiction. Is it in fact a meta-narrative about what and why science fiction is, with the overtly SF elements standing both as signal and misdirection for the message that this is science fiction and therefore all about us? Or is it something rather less than that?

Ultimately I am left with more questions. Did SF used to have to be not only set in the future but fundamentally to be about what that could be like and how we could get there? Having evolved to tell stories about what and where we are now, through the medium of the future, is it simply that we are now in the future so science fiction doesn't even have to be about any other time?

The future is in 2050

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In the public realm, though, the future has moved on. In terms of climate change at least, the timeline that began at the Earth Summit now stretches far beyond 2012 (no longer the future, although still a significant milestone) to a date which many of us aren't sure we'll live to see — one of the challenges of sustainable development. Under the previous UK Government, 2050 had become the planning point for climate change and sustainability; the route ahead may change in the near future, but I think we're still likely to be looking towards the same relatively distant horizon.

Back in 2010, again the power of numbers prompts us to think in similar terms. The Sci-Fi

London film festival this year was themed as 'Life in 2050'. Opening the event, festival founder Louis Savy explained that we'd recently been focused on the events of forty years ago: the moon landings, the start of ARPANET, the launch of the jumbo jet. Looking forty years into the future — for science, culture and society — should thus be a powerful spur for the imagination. My instinctive and self-centred reaction was that this particularly applies for those of us born forty years ago: after all, it places our own current viewpoint and place in the world at the centre of the timeline, with that added zero-ending neatness again. But my first reaction, before Louis spoke, reinforced the sense of the future as retro: the festival logo, writ large on the cinema screen and on the T-shirted torsos of many of the festival staff, read to me as 'Life in 2005'.

Seeing that, I accepted as valid and intriguing a full coherent programme of films made in 2005, imagining the future; films set in 2005 when it was the future; films showing 2005 as either the present or the future from the standpoint of our contemporary perspective. I'd thought it risked becoming a little self-indulgent and near-sighted — another manifestation of our own time being all-important to us as a community — rather than succeeding in its presumably grander plan of making us think forwards on a more challenging scale, given the pace and focus of change we would be able to see even on a five-year perspective. But I hadn't questioned that it would be a reasonable thing for the film festival to do, thinking about the future as the past.

The future is here

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Meanwhile, a cloud of volcanic ash had given us our own glimpse of a possible future, wholly familiar from science fictional imaginings of where it all went wrong. For several days in April Heathrow looked like the aeroplanes' graveyard, and many people began to discover not only all the ways in which air travel impacts on us but also how globalised we are. Some of us were surprised to realise how many people we knew who'd been affected by the ban on flights, whether stuck in the UK or overseas; many more began to learn what the fabled just-in-time delivery policies of most major supermarket chains really means.

Again and again I heard or read the suggestion, whether joking, nervous or thoughtful: what if the planes never flew again? Was this, I wondered, the point in the early pages of the SF novel where we all think that it will be over soon and then something else tips over? Were we already living not in the future but in the past, at the moment which some



future expert would eventually be able to identify as the first in the chain of catastrophic events that changed everything? Or have I just read too many Stephen Baxter novels? And it isn't over yet...

It's a truism that we live in the future now, so what do we now dream of? Is it all dystopia? Is it just easy living? It's been about twenty years since Francis Fukuyama courted controversy with his take on the notion of the end of history — and also arguably spawned a rather irritating fashion for 'the end of...' theories and titles: the end of evolution, the end of science, the end of time. So maybe it's time to ask if this is the end of the future; the rote response would be that it is instead the end of the beginning. But what if it's really the beginning

of the end?

Louis Savy also cast his look forward to 2050 in terms of their own look backwards, asking us to consider not only what our daily lives would be like then but also what we'll be nostalgic about. In the future, will we care about the future? Will it seem likely there's a long-term future to care about, to work towards, to imagine or avert? And will science fiction have served its purpose: a genre largely of the twentieth century, when thinking about the future offered not only hope and possibility but also an opportunity to reflect on the present?

If the future is anything like the way I'd still prefer to imagine it, perhaps when you find this record you'd be good enough to come back and tell me. ♣



What happened to "the literature of the future" and all that? The future as forecast in science fiction today will have a computer in every lunch pail and a rapid-mass-transit system in every L-5 colony. But is this all the future will be; a projection of the desideratum of today? No, I don't think so. The people of the future would seem wrong-headed to us, would reject our values. And behave in ways wholly unacceptable to us. Receding chins and facial hair on women will be considered beautiful in one possible future. Sex with other people will be dirty, except at their funerals. Pets will be dirty, except when they're stuffed. Collections of SF or comics will be remembered as something useless that grandparents keep in attics—the 21st Century version of wax fruit and piano rolls. No one will care about endangered species, or the ecology, since cancer will be curable. Unions will elect representatives to the legislative houses instead of universal franchise. Charisma will be an antisocial personality flaw. Popular music will be sung without instrumental accompaniment, while Beatles tunes are performed by quartets in tuxedos for high society. Hobbyists will be grounds for labour unrest. Everyone will be a civil servant paid by the government through their ostensible employer. Swingers will have wild Saturday evenings at the public mud-wrestling arena, especially on audience participation nights. Classist jokes will be popular. Smoking tobacco will be radical protest. Adult toys will be media spin-offs too, even stereos, TVs, cameras, and cars. World culture will center around Indonesia and India, but Americans won't know it. "Oily" will mean someone grasping and unreasonable. Computer programmers will qualify for food stamps. People will never bathe, and appreciate a manly or feminine redolence. Private ownership of books or records will be illegal. We would hate them on sight. If you think that any of this is unlikely, I think it has already happened, and science fiction fans are aghast at the changes that have taken place in the culture around them.

—Taral, "Limited Edition Special Collector's Item," 1982

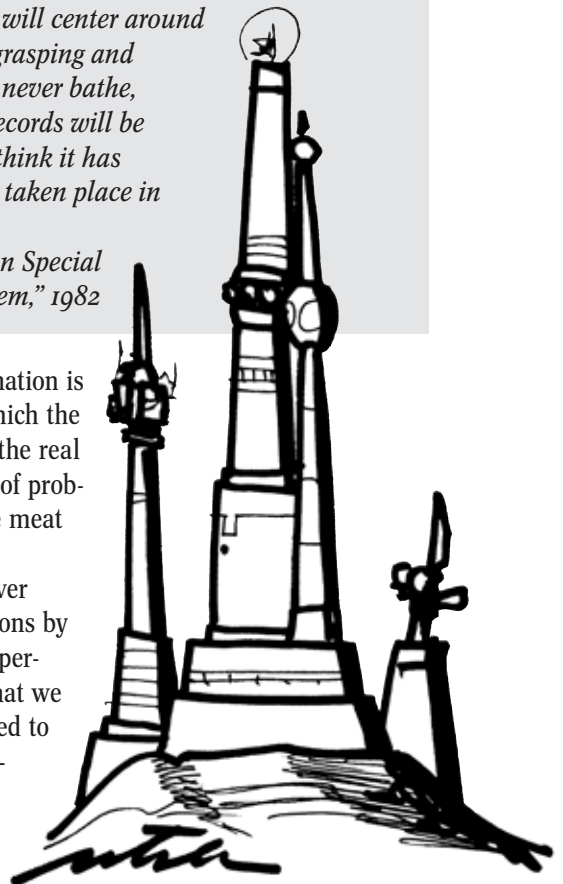
The Post-Nihilist Future

by Andy Hooper

Like most of us, I've spent my entire life waiting for the future to arrive, only to endure perpetual distraction by the unending march of the

present. The human imagination is the only environment in which the future can really thrive; in the real world, the spindly skeleton of probability can hardly carry the meat of our expectations.

Human ambition is forever pulled in conflicting directions by fear and desire. And it is a perverse quirk of our nature that we seem infinitely more inclined to ruminate on desires unrealized than on the fears that remain equally theoretical. We may be reasonably





frustrated that we have neither cured cancer, nor perfected microwave pizza, nor built industrial submarines to mine manganese nodules from the ocean floor. Our faith in these wonders has not been fruitful.

But when contemplating differences between reality and expectation, I try rather to appreciate our complete lack of alien overlords, psionic psuperbeings and murderous world-controlling supercomputers. We don't yet have to hide underground to escape from radiation or glaciation, giant insects do not hunt us for food, and society has not been infiltrated by androids seeking to build a perfect world free of the emotion you humans call "love." So many of our imagined futures revolved around events that could legitimately be termed "The End of the World" that some people must now be wondering what to do with themselves. The sad fact seems to be that even if the world does come to an end, you'll still have to get up for work the day after.

Which is not to imply that the End of the World fantasy is in any manner of decline. People take delight in the prospect of the apocalypse, whether through Christian dogma, the Mayan calendar or Chinese hegemony. The End of the World is a superb tool for the manipulation of human behavior, and practitioners as diverse as Edgar Cayce and Glenn Beck have used perpetually impending "Earth Changes" to inform some issues with greater urgency and render others pointless and empty. It's a dangerous line to walk; soul-saving zeal can descend into nihilist depression overnight. When you fill people with the desire to blow something up, they may not wait for you to leave the blast zone.

Admittedly, we have lived in an age when the End of the World seemed tantalizingly within mankind's grasp. As technocrats built the wonders of the 20th century with one hand, they threat-

ened the destruction of everything with the other. Beyond the unintended impact of industry and consumerism on the Earth itself, we have had the prospect of intentional Armageddon looming over us since 1945, and that certainly has not completely abated with changes in the political map. But for people who grew up expecting that they would inevitably be destroyed by a nuclear strike launched from East or West, the continuation of our lives can be mysterious. What responsibility were we supposed to have felt toward the radioactive slag that we assumed we would all become? When one descends to eschatology, shoplifting and littering cannot be far behind.

No wonder, really, that some people are grasping at any old doomsday in order to avoid feeling any responsibility toward the future. If we won't destroy the world, surely God will do it for us. Some people will always feel that if the End of the World is truly inevitable, they prefer to go out in a blaze of something — glory, gunfire and gasoline seem to be popular components of the formula. Even without the mass slaughter of war to claim them, many choose to live fast, die young, and leave a smoldering corpse. And plenty of us are foolish enough to envy them. The weight of the future can be overwhelming, and we have no end of strategies to try and escape from it.

What then, are we to do when the fire fails to fall? Or worse still, what if it comes and fails to burn us after all? When I was young, CBS white papers and educational film strips warned that without swift action, we would run out of clean water by the mid 1980s. This riveted my attention as thoroughly as the prospect of atomic annihilation, and I joined young peers in Cub Scout trash drives and rallies for "The Ecology." Then as hormones began to work their evil influence on me, I lost my focus on the impending water crisis, distracted by other desires and more elaborate fears. And no doubt because I let down my vigilance, we did indeed run out of "clean water" some time in the 1980s. What were the consequences? Well, some people had to drink and bathe in contaminated water, and some of them certainly suffered for it. And the US Environmental Protection Agency, under the direction of Ronald Reagan, dramatically raised the level of contaminants which water could carry and still be considered "Clean" for purposes of human consumption, changes which have never been completely reversed.

The Deep Water Horizon disaster of 2010 has released a great volume of petroleum into the ocean and it's not yet clear how much damage that has really caused. But the Niger River delta in



West Africa has seen spills of similar volume virtually every year since 1960. Enormous stretches of the delta are dead zones covered in rotting plants, dying animals and oil sludge. But people still live there; they travel through the dead zones to reach “clean” water, and they and the rest of Nigeria eat the fish and other creatures that they take out of the river and the ocean below. I’m not sure how much greater insult you could inflict on a region’s environment—you could set it on fire now, I suppose—but it remains densely populated. We may still be on a path destined to render the Earth uninhabitable, and most rational analysis would say we are. But that process may take far longer than any of us suppose, during which generations of humanity will live and die in increasing misery, with no recourse other than to curse the dead.

In our fantasies, the Earth is always destroyed quickly and spectacularly—a rogue singularity instantly squashes us all into something the size of a marble, for example. Killer asteroids and comets are popular, as are cataclysmic shifts of the Earth’s magnetic poles. Alien fleets and landing forces have a strong potential, but we tend to imagine we could successfully resist their invasion. Super-violent climate change seems particularly effective if you live in coastal regions, or if you can wait to be buried under a glacier.

Perhaps the most unrealistic aspect of our nihilist fantasies of the End Times is the notion that they somehow render what we do and believe meaningless. To my aging romantic perspective, the knowledge that the human experience might be coming to an end along with my own seems to put greater scrutiny on our lives and times, not less. Because, even in the bleakest fantasies of humanity’s demise, someone or something else evolves, survives, returns or discovers the wreck of all we were. After all, if we are the last of humankind, then we have an unparalleled opportunity to have the last word in our species’ long debate. What a disappointment if all we can manage is to look at our feet and mutter, “Whatever.”

Even if we ought to be grateful that we are still here, it’s also easy to appreciate that our contemporary world is one that falls short of many expectations. But to express disappointment is to admit that we actually care what happens—to us, and to the poor saps that will inevitably have to take over for us. In previous generations, such feelings would typically have been directed at our children. I don’t know who or what modern science fiction fans might be concerned for—perhaps their iPhones or Facebook pages. Who will update after we’re gone? What will all our apps do when we are no longer

here to select them?

Science fiction, and futurism in particular, would appear to be victims of their own hyperbole. I’m not sure when fantastic fiction acquired the reputation of being a rational effort to predict the future, but clearly that isn’t what the genre is about. We use science fiction and our curiosity about the future to suggest possibilities, some attractive, and some disturbing. It may have the power to inspire individuals who will shape our future, but that’s probably the only way our predictions will ever come true. Even in our fantasies, desire struggles with fear. What are the consequences if we come to live extremely long lives, pass between distant worlds, and alter the fundamental nature of human life? All these things, even travel between worlds, are likely to become reality one day. When they do, it will surely benefit us to have considered such possibilities in advance of the event.

Dissatisfaction with the world in which we live seems to be as fundamental to human nature as the impulse to improve it. But decrying the “failure” of our forebears to arrange the world as we would like it, has never been a productive area of endeavor. No matter what we do, future generations will still indict us for our failures, and forget our greatest triumphs. But it is also possible—it’s always still *possible*—that we might do something that changes life so profoundly, so enduringly, that future generations will be paralyzed by an entirely different suite of fears than we are. That future might not feature square-jawed spacemen and wise-cracking robots on adventures among the stars, but it still sounds cool to me. ♣



Autoview: Richard Brandt

Our crowd-sourced interview with Steve Green in the last issue apparently looked like a good meme to Richard Brandt, so he sent in his own answers to the questions. He encourages everybody else to join in. That's fine with us, but we request that future participants limit their answers to a more tweet-like 140 characters, if possible, so that we can fit everybody in.

—The Editors

What is your first memory of science fiction or fantasy—not fandom but of the genre?

When I took piano lessons in Bunker Hill, Indiana, at a nice lady's house not too far from the Air Force base where I lived, someone had left a copy of Robert Sheckley's *Notions Unlimited* for youngsters to peruse while waiting for the previous pupil to finish. This collection, with a wider range of moods than one might normally associate with Sheckley—some pretty grim tales among the more obviously satirical or light-hearted trifles—definitely is what informed my idea of what science fiction could encompass. (It was either this or *The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet*.)

What is your favorite movie that no one else seems to like, that's underservedly obscure?

Basket Case. A lot of pissed-off moviegoers left that theater, but I was ecstatic. Aside from unexpectedly sophisticated storytelling for an extremely low-budget film, it was a textbook case in suspense film pacing: nerve-wracking suspense builds up to a comically over-the-top climax; discharge nervousness with laughter, then repeat. Yet since the one time I've seen it in the theater, every other print deletes the funniest moment from the payoff to the first scene!

If a friend of yours had never read any science fiction whatsoever, and you wanted to recommend one book to introduce her/him to the genre, what book would it be?

Maybe *The Wanderer* by Fritz Leiber, or any of those SF/disaster novels that flourished for a while a decade or two later (Leiber being, as usual, too early on the scene to profit greatly from the vogue). Or maybe Ted Sturgeon's *More Than Human*, or Heinlein's *The Door Into Summer*, where one isn't overwhelmed by sfnal tropes. Are any of these in print, though?

You've had a long fannish career. What are your most and least fondly remembered episodes from that career?

Perhaps George Laskowski, a Hugo under one arm, saying that he thought I edited the best lettercolumn in fanzines. I put a lot of effort into giving it a conversational flow, and it was nice to have *someone* mention it. Or Susan Wood writing to say that she was incredibly swamped with work but something compelled her to dash off a lengthy letter of comment on one of my juvenile efforts. Bob Bloch giving me the scoop on what happened to one of his scripts once it left his hands, allowing me to beat the mention in his own autobiography into print by twenty years. Walt Willis sending me a photo postcard of Himself sitting on a park bench, waving to the camera and reading the first issue of the *Light*...in fact, that whole gang re-emerging from the glades in time for me to meet and get to know them all. Some fans' bizarre contention that I was qualified to stand for TAFF. (On the other side of the coin, perhaps wandering around the El Paso Civic Center with a newsletter from a 1965 Westercon whose attendance far exceeded mine, intoning "Gaze on my works ye mighty and despair!")

Name five fans most influential on your career in fandom.

Obviously Ted White, without whose stewardship of the Clubhouse column in *Amazing* throughout the Seventies many of my generation would never have discovered fanzine fandom when we did. Linda Bushyager, whose *Granfalloon* was one of the first real fanzines I received and massively influenced my conception of what a fanzine looks like; even my personalzines reflected its nature. Bill Bowers and Don Thompson, for demonstrating how baldly personal your fanzine writing might be. And my editors, Pat Virzi, not only for prodding me to write more but for showing me how one can straddle the fanzine and conrunning worlds, and Dick Lynch, who actually sent a piece back for a rewrite and clued me in to a flaw in my writing which I subsequently have tried to avoid. (Is that more than five people? Fuck it. It's tough enough narrowing it down as it is.)

What was the best piece of free "tat" given to you for attending a movie/press junket/convention?

Obviously I'll always regret not dropping by the exhibit at the 1976 Worldcon (my first, my first con in fact) promoting some forthcoming movie with the godawful title *Star Wars*. Not sure if the set of *Star Wars* trading cards I picked up from Films Incorporated at a college entertainment booking showcase made up for that.

How about the best party you've ever been to?

SPOONER RIDES AGAIN

Poor Prof Spooner is in treep double. He needed some xtra cash for xmas, so he took a temp job at the local radio station announcing the classical music selections.

The owner questiond the gen mgrs wisdom on this, but that worthy opined that classicl fen wd enjoy the profs deep sonorous baritone more than theyd be botherd by an occasional fluf.

But then came the Sith Fymphony by Budwig van Late Oven. The owner cald the GM, bud it was too late; the good prof saild ryt into his version of the orkestra; St. Martin at the Fields. The complaint switchbd lit up like a Las Vegas casino special.

Our reporter went round to sympathize w the unemployed anouncr. "I dunno what theyre so workd up about" said the unfortunate blooper, "look at what Fred Hoey got away with."

Well, Fred Hoey didn't "get away with it," but even todays rabid sports fen may need a litl history for this one.

Fred was a crackerjack baseball anouncr in the early days of radio for the Boston Red Sox and Boston Braves, B4 the latr fell on evil days in Milwaukee & Atlanta. He was also Irish & enjoyd "a bit of the creature" now & then & in between as well. He frequented McGonigal's Bar, across the street from Fenway Park where the Red Sox playd.

One day a brooding T-storm delayd the start of a Red Sox game he was to announce, & he had mor than a "bit" of the creature B4 he got to his box & pikt up the mike. He stared at it w an owlsh concentration, took a deep breath,



turnd on his special announcers voice and said, "Good afternoon, Fred Hoey, this is ladies & gentlemen."

Tom Yawkey's head, in the owners box down below, whipt around & he drew a finger across his throat to indicate "Cut this clown off the air." Fred chuckld as if he'd really intended to say that & plowd on. B4 the engineer woke up & saw Tom's signal, Fred blithely continued with "and here we are at butiful Penway Fark abt to bring U the first game of a crucial series between our walstart Said Rocks & the New Yank Yorkies." Unable to suppress a series of snickers, he was cut off in mid-snick, & never did another ball game in Boston, in spite of us loyal fen who bombarded the humorless Mr. Yawkey with bales of letrs & petitions.

Say me nay, Mr. Hooper, I dare U.

—R Twidner

Without a doubt Alan White's Rampant Nun party in Phoenix, the one where a particular Karen threw me onto the bed, as Alan snapped a photo and I commented, "Great party, Alan." (Karen was shack-ing up with someone else that weekend, a bit of trivia we continued to ignore for some moons after-ward.)

How do you feel about the current landscape of fanzine fandom, specifically, talking about age and experience?

I suspect I would feel somewhat irrelevant wander-ing around the halls of a DragonCon, and these

days perhaps even a Worldcon. Then again, even if a burgeoning fandom has somewhat left "my" fan-dom in the dust, I don't see why it should bother us. One can't argue that someone like Arnie Katz has done major work in bringing new blood into fanzine fandom and passing on its traditions; what better reason for some of us Old Pharts (as even I must occasionally recognize myself as being) to stick around? Besides I've always been comfortable enough with other aspects of fandom to have been seen in mysterious garb on occasion or to ask Mike Resnick when he comes to town if he remembers me finding him a smoking room for his interview

Honka-dori in English

by John Hertz

*See Shelley plain? Who could? His foaming sea,
His eagle's feather falling on the moor
That made a hand's-breadth of it shine alone,
His birth in wrecks of a dissolving dream,
His wild spirit, moving everywhere,
The monsters of life's waste fleeing like deer —
To him the strips of sky were paved with moon,
The flowers were sisters, waves were kissed by beams.*

[In Japanese poetry, *honka-dori* “allusive variation” has for centuries been the admired practice of deliberately re-using lines from others’ earlier poems. The new poet wants readers to recognize the older lines, now given a new context which recalls and re-illuminates while also standing on its own. As a *tour de force* an entire poem — classically one five-line stanza of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables, the leading form of Japanese literature for a thousand years, ancestor of the 5-7-5 *haiku* — may be composed only of earlier lines. See e.g. Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart* (rev. 1999, J. literature through the 16th Century).

[In APA-L, where my fanzine *Vanamonde* first appears before later being mailed to multitudes, Lee Gold had quoted Stephen Vincent Benét’s “The General Public” (1918) which begins by quoting Robert Browning’s “Memorabilia” (1855) (“see Shelley plain”). In reply to her I quoted the Benét, the Browning, and five works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Hellas* (1822), “Ode to the West Wind” (1819), “Adonais” (1821), “The Cloud” (1820), and “Love’s Philosophy” (1819).]

reprinted from *Vanamonde* 831

at Noreason? (Then we can move on to talking about Peter Lorre movies.)

What tipped you ‘over the edge’ into active fandom, rather than staying as a reader/viewer of sf?

I think I always considered myself as a potential author, even as a child, so it didn’t take much beyond receiving those first few fanzines. Thank God some of the earliest projects I conceived never took off. (The jelly did, though; ripped right out of the hectograph tray before I was finished.)

What other hobby, enthusiasm or obsession do you have besides fandom?

Poker. Movies. Photography (stock disclaimer that Ms. Huntzinger etc.) Women who are bad for me.

You’re an sf fan and a horror fan. Which novel or film, for you, combined the two most successfully?
Greg Bear’s *Blood Music* would make the perfect David Cronenberg movie. If I ever get the nerve maybe I’ll make it myself.

What do you like most about fandom and fans in general? What do you like least about fandom and fans in general?

They are the best friends I’ve ever had, people who would welcome me into their homes on the flimsiest of pretexts, and I’ve found myself enjoying the company of those who I would expect to have had massive disagreements about such subjects as the texture of fandom itself. On the other hand, they’re so goddamn insular.

If sf is always “not about when it is set, but when it is written,” is it a valid means of speculating about the future?

I’ll just say this: Paddy Chayefsky’s *Network*, which seemed ludicrously over-the-top when I saw it in 1976, seems more prophetic with each passing year. This was Chayefsky’s secret: He knew television people where they lived, and knew that, ultimately, nothing would be beneath them. Similarly, science fiction writers have a predilection for working out how certain ideas might take off, so are naturally disposed for this sort of thing and are liable to hit on something useful now and again.

If you could make one change in the way TAFF is run, what would it be?

The ringer should be less formidable a competitor than you imagined. ♣

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chutney

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Rockaway Hashish is made from tender
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(Bamboo) and Calcium Chloride (Indian
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"LET 'EM EAT CAKE"

Near-future Imperfect: *This Is Not My Life*

One day in the near future Alec Ross wakes up to discover he has a wife, two children, a home in a tony designer suburb, and can't remember any of it. Don't you hate it when that happens?

Like many another sf protagonist in a newly-conscious, low-information state he tries to make sense of the strangely self-contained world he is in and find his role in it. Is his amnesia merely the delayed after-effect of a recent fall, as he is urged to believe, or is the reality much more sinister?

This being the premise of a TV series, it's the latter. (The potential for dramatic conflict given even a crackpot conspiracy theorist character is dramatically increased when there's a real conspiracy afoot.) And much of the pleasure of *This Is Not My Life* comes from well-paced revelation, so I'll be circumspect. But the result is possibly the best sf TV series you will never see.

The small city of Waimoana, his putative home, is as central a character as Ross. A suburban oasis somewhere in New Zealand — where the series was produced and broadcast this summer — Waimoana appears to be a light-colored Stepfordesque community not entirely unlike the Disney-planned city of Celebration, Florida, in shades of antiseptic blue and beige. Celebration had its first murder and suicide this holiday season, and likewise there is a dark side to Waimoana not unrelated to the actions of Wellness, the somewhat overbearing medical service personified by frosty Dr Collins (a remarkably controlled performance by Tania Nolan). Moveover, hints accumulate, notwithstanding the firewall of the exclusively inward-focused local media, that despite the ease of living and the somewhat advanced technology in evidence the rest of the world is in great turmoil.

Paranoid stories like this one can massage the ego — yes, it really *is* all about you — but the risk these days is of being out-dystopia'd by the present. The early 21st century features a public to whom alienation and surveillance of one sort or another is daily portioned (with optional upgrades if you wave your credit card towards the camera), and the technology of surveillance and social control has become part of our bedrock media mythology, if only because its tropes make for concise (though factually improbable) visual storytelling for TV. (Every night on some procedural show or another somebody matches faces to ID databases around the world in real time, or dials up photos of suspects from security cameras that would not typically be networked, magically enhancing fifteen blocky pixels into a likeness. It is part of the air we breathe, like the will to torture.) For those who can identify with a mainstream Everyman like Alec Ross, this show offers a confrontation with both the future and one's own replaceable and contingent nature, in coolest Kubrickian tones.

Buffy fans uncertain if guarded enthusiasm, defensive ennui or naked fear are the appropriate response to news of a reboot version supposedly in development sans Joss Whedon (by the people who ruined the original movie) may in the meantime find the Canadian series *Todd and the Book of Pure Evil* pleasant solace.

While it is another replaying of the horror movie that is high school — this time as farce, with Satanists, puppets and CGI — this saga of the students and staff of Crowley High is extraordinarily effective in evoking adolescent life and its traumas, in a sort of Serlingesque manner whose karmic/cosmic, metaphor-made-concrete simplicity reminds me of the *Afterschool Specials* of my spent youth, minus the emotional treacle of either. The typical monster-of-the-week plotting pitfall is evaded handily by a leavening of self-awareness and a season-length discovery arc that of course leaves the viewer with more questions than it answers. A splatter-comedy for the youthful in spirit, it's all fun and games until someone's eviscerated, and then it's *just fun*. Silent Bob sez check it out.

— carl

BUY 1066



A "DEBBIE" SPEAKS

<p>"Dis Fu Manchu's a spiffy cig." Said Miss New York, N. J. "Dey ain't a butt dat kin compare In all de U. S. A."</p>	<p>"Doo et mon drot," the lady said, "All dis may sound like guff, But I will tell de cross-eyed woild Youse limeys knows yer stuff!"</p>
--	---

ARCHIBALD JELLIFFE-JELLIFFE

FU MANCHU RIPPING CIGARETTES

MARIHUANA ALFALFA CUBEB

A MOUSE MOVIE PROJECT

AND THEN WE BRING IN
THIS GIANT RADIOACTIVE
FIFTY FOOT CAT —

YEAH
YEAH

CUT TO
THE CHEESE



Amateur Hour



Fanzine Reviews by Randy Byers

“Is it me,” Christina Lake asks in *Head!* #9, “or is the quality of fanzines going up, despite the much discussed decline in numbers?” Well, I’m not sure about the quality, but I’m not even sure about the declining quantity lately, even on the paper fanzine front. Certainly I haven’t been able to keep up with everything that’s hit my mailbox, which inevitably means that I’m doing triage and making choices about what I’m going to spend my time on. Hard to pretend that I can make informed judgments about the state of the fanzine world, under the circumstances. All I can do is reveal my biases and my limitations. Hey, whatever gets a laugh, right?

So to begin with I just want to say that **Banana Wings**, **Relapse**, and **Trap Door** are for me the most accomplished fanzines of the day. If *Banana Wings* and *Relapse* get a slight edge, it’s because they come out more frequently. If *Banana Wings* is my favorite fanzine of all, it’s because I feel more a part of the conversation there, although by the same token I think *Relapse* will ultimately be a treasure trove of information for academics and historians. *Trap Door* is history in the making as well and has the timeless quality of an old circle of friends having a long conversation. In any event, all three titles easily make my Hugo ballot. **Steam Engine Time** and **eI** both make it if only because Bruce Gillespie and Earl Kemp have been giants of the field for decades and their zines (Bruce’s in collaboration with Jan Stinson) reflect the wisdom of their experience. (Wait, did I just say I’m nominating them because they’re old fans and tired?) And on another front, my FAAn Award ballot looked somewhat different because I believe in spreading the love around, and some of these titles have gotten a lot of FAAn love already.

So with those behemoths dispensed of summarily, what are we left with? Certainly there’s been a burst of activity in Britain after a long lull, not least in the form of two issues of *Head!* in the past year. As Christina is one of the major figures

in contemporary fanzine fandom, this is a very welcome development, if only so we can see more writing from her and her partner in crime, Doug Bell. Yet even with excellent pieces by both of them, the highlight of #9 is Peter Crump’s brilliant and hilarious production diary, “How to Make a Science Fiction Movie,” which is written in the form of a screenplay. If there is a core group of contributors running through large swathes of the fanzine world and making regular publication possible (cf. Taral Wayne, Chris Garcia, and James Bacon), what gives a fanzine its individual flavor are the contributors you *don’t* see anywhere else, and Crump brings the unexpected spice to this issue of *Head!* Major kudos to Brad Foster for the “Build Your Own Intelligent Robot Cubehead” cover as well, which is a pretty unusual flavor of fanzine cover in its own right.

Next up on the British list is **Inca** #5 from Rob Jackson, one of the Born-Again Seventies Fans, as Mark Plummer has called them, or BASF for short, which, because I was a TDK man myself back when cassette tapes spooled the world, means that our generation of fanzine fans should be called Those Damn Kids. Rob scores pretty damned high on the unique-contributor front with Alfred Bester, although this is tarnished somewhat by the contribution being an interview from that ubiquitous fan writer (and winner of the Best Fan Writer Hugo), Fred Pohl. Rob has the unfair advantage of a file full of thirty-year-old material still waiting to be published, half of whose contributors are now dead and can’t contribute anywhere else. Hard to compete with that for uniqueness. *Inca* is about the only place to see Rob’s own writing as well, and I really enjoyed this issue’s trip- and con-report for Corflu Zed. There are also front and back covers by the recently reinvigorated D West, working in

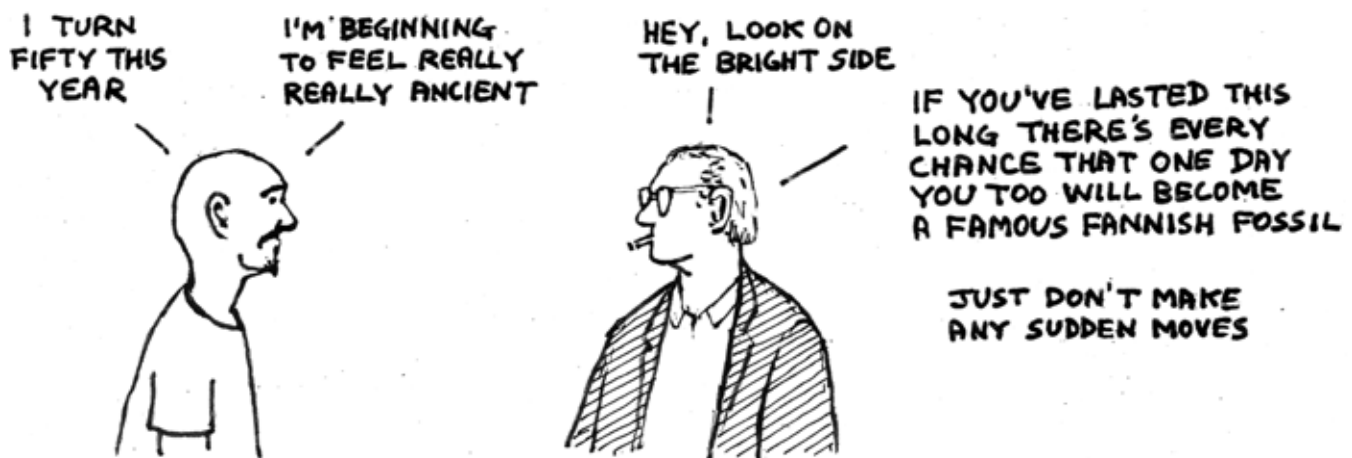
colour for the first time since his old Tolkien artwork in the early '60s, as far as I know. They aren't masterpieces, but good practice for the near-masterpieces gracing this issue of *Chunga*.

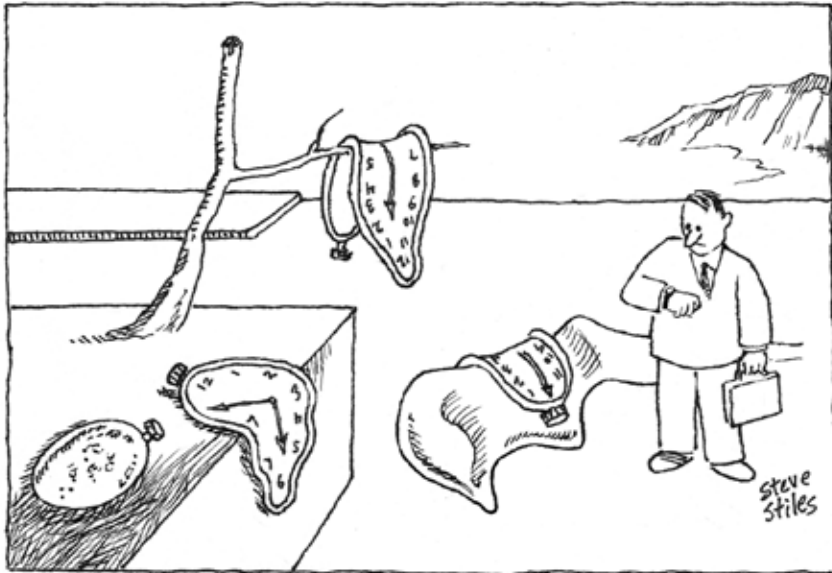
There were a number of zines produced around the occasion of Corflu Cobalt this year, which befits a convention for fanzine fans. Sandra Bond did excellent work on publications for the convention, including three progress reports with a wonderful series of reprints. This series continued in the **Corflu Cobalt Programme Book**, also edited by S&ra, with Vincent Clarke's "Some Notes Upon the London Fanthropological Expedition, 1954," which was first printed in *Eye* #2 in October 1954. Clarke scoffs at the conventional wisdom about convention reports by devoting the whole article to How He Got There (to the 1954 Eastercon in Manchester, that is), leaving out the actual convention itself. This is actually a fairly successful experiment, with a *tour de force* opening written in the style of a diary of a scientific expedition. (As for coverage of the convention, if you have *Warhoon* 28, Willis' report begins on page 546.) Elsewhere in the program book Rob Jackson covers familiar territory in considering the future of fanzines, although he smartly courts controversy (at least with the Corflu crowd) by concluding that if fans really are slans, they will move on to new things and leave fanzines behind. And that's pretty much what has happened, isn't it? Other than certain retrograde elements of fandom including yours truly?

As Rob notes, PDFzines are one of the current trends in fanzine publication, and the one PDFzine that I'm going to review was published during Corflu Cobalt. Katrina Templeton, with the help and encouragement of Geri Sullivan and Pam Wells, coordinated a one-shot called **Small and Far Away** that was put together by the denizens of the virtual fanzine lounge—or Corflu ex Machina, as the zine's back cover has it—which has become Corflu's newest tradition. (And for all that Corflu

is an inherently nostalgic convention, it's brilliant that—thanks to Bill Mills—it is the first fanzine convention to incorporate livestreaming and a chatroom into its proceedings.) Katrina does a nice job on the design, although I thought the fading title font was better in concept than in actuality, at least when printed. The list of contributors truly could be called the Unusual Suspects: Pam Wells, Sandra Bond, Katrina Templeton, Jacqueline Monahan (who won the FAAN Award for Best New Fanzine Fan this year), John Teehan, Peter Sullivan, and Geri Sullivan, with artwork from Ken Fletcher and Tom Curdy (via Kim Huett). Over all, it does a terrific job of capturing the peculiar energy of the virtual Corflu experience, and I especially recommend Pam Wells' "In Praise of Virtual Fandom" for the insight into both the comradeship and the hall of mirrors that can be found in online fanac.

The other fanzine that I got as a result of Corflu Cobalt was Colin Hinz's **Novoid #9**, which is the first issue of that title in many years. "The previous issue's been old enough to vote for several months already," Colin writes. Colin himself ups the uniqueness factor of this fanzine, since he rarely writes for anybody else that I'm aware of. Then there are brilliant covers by Freddie Baer and David Vereschagin, which you sure don't see everyday. The standout pieces for me were "A Monograph on the Parking Goddess, a Twentieth Century Deity" by Allegra Sloman, whom I've never heard of before, and Richard Brandt's "To Be Young, Stupid and Drunk", which is an utterly heart-breaking tale of, well, having your heart-broken by somebody you never had a chance with. Been there, done that, so perhaps I was projecting. (Never fixate on a bartender, that's my advice.) Colin and Taral both contribute contrarian pieces about environmentalists, with Taral reminding me a bit of Ken MacLeod's stance that the Greens are anti-progress. I hope the fact that Colin finally got his ass in gear to put this issue out means he'll start publishing





regularly again. We could use his cranky outsider perspective in the ongoing fanzine conversation.

Which brings me to Nic Farey's *BEAM* — which stands for Belligerent Eloquence Aimed Moonward. Yes, the old Farey fanzine factory has resumed production after a lull, cranking out this whiskey-soaked genzine and also the excellent (and more frequent) perzine, *This Here* . . . To my inexperienced eye, Nic has one of the best fanzine designs going in *BEAM*. Nic's band of Unusual Suspects actually includes many familiar faces, and my favorite piece in the second issue is, perhaps selfishly, "Where Fanzines Kiss the Sky" by Curt Phillips, which is another conreport about Corflu Zed. I don't think it's purely because of all the fine egoboo for yours truly contained therein. Curt's first encounter with a Corflu (where he was the guest of the Corflu Fifty) and the American West (he had never been west of Chicago before) seems to have charged him up, and he shares the buzz in a wide-ranging account that includes fascinating observations of the geology and geography he passed over at 38,000 feet on the flight to Seattle. The whole thing is stuffed to the hilt with fannish sensawunda and sensahuma. It's one of the best pieces of fannish writing in the past year. I should also note James Bacon's "Ah, Wrestling Is It?", which via the property of association connects pro wrasslin' to the gay closet. Shades of my vile homophobic youth, when we referred to wrestling as fag tag. I'm not sure this is what James actually intended, but that's what I'm left with. In any event, this is one of my favorite new fanzines and has leaped full-blown into contention with the best in the field.

Sticking with British ex-pats, we come to Rich Coad's *Sense of Wonder Stories* #3, one of the rare sercon fanzines to reach my doorstep. I've got a piece on Homer Eon Flint in this issue, so *caveat*

lector. However, what I've come to praise in this fanzine is Bill Burns, who is a regular contributor of offbeat pieces about obscure technology. In this issue it is "Nikola Tesla's Wardencllyffe Tower," which is about Tesla's attempt to develop wireless telephony and transmission of electricity. Bill is a good writer on technical matters, and he always finds interesting subject-matter. Furthermore, he scores high on the uniqueness scale, because I don't know of anybody else publishing his stuff right now. Meanwhile, Rich doesn't do anything fancy with his design, but I love his use of pictures and book and magazine covers to illustrate the articles. He makes good use of color, which is one of those things we're seeing more of in fanzines these days, with people once again printing their own zines, except on laser printers or inkjets instead of mimeos. (Pete Young was one of the pioneers of this, along with the *Plokta*-cabal.) Editorially, Rich has hit his stride, with a compelling mix of reviews of forgotten books and writers, a new column from Bruce Townley on SF artists, the technology pieces by Bill, and in this issue a terrific piece of self-referential humor from Roy Kettle. This is another topflight fanzine worthy of award consideration.

And finally we come to two titans of the American scene, both of them perennial Hugo-nominees. Mike Glycer's *File 770* is a winner of multiple Hugos, and it occupies a fairly rarefied niche with its emphasis on fannish news, much of which these days has been previously published on the companion blog at file770.com. (Mike is evidence — if Rob Jackson is still looking for some — that fanzine fans are evolving new methods in the internet era.) The articles in issue 158 of *File 770* were mostly written by those two busy beavers, James Bacon and Taral Wayne. However, one of the pleasures of this title is that it can also be relied on to provide a long-form piece from John Hertz — in this issue it's a LosCon report. As much as I admire John's jewel-like condensed articles in *Vanamonde*, particularly the tributes and memorials, I really enjoy the profusion of observation in his longer conreports. Meanwhile Taral tackles the timeworn question of what is fanwriting in a piece that is perhaps most interesting for dodging the problem of criticizing your friends by criticizing imaginary fanzines instead. On the other hand, this creates a feeling that Taral is talking to the voices in his head, which is admittedly a normal feature of fine fanwriting everywhere. Mike has been publishing *File 770* for many years, and it has long been an institution of great value. He's an underappreciated writer, too — or at least as underappreciated as someone who has been nominated for the Best Fan Writer Hugo can be.

Guy Lillian's **Challenger**, while a multiple Hugo nominee, somehow comes swathed in controversy, perhaps due to Guy's brash personality. Issue 31 is an old-fashioned brick of a fanzine like wot they don't make no more, clocking in at over a 100 pages of articles that cover a wider range of subject matter than are dreamt of in Taral's philosophy. Hell, there's even a piece about *American football!* (Although I certainly don't blame Guy for crowing about New Orleans' Super Bowl victory. It made me happy too.) *Challenger* actually represents a sector of fandom that I don't encounter much in other fanzines, so it scores high on the uniqueness scale for me as well, even with articles by a few very familiar names. On that score, amongst all the writing by big names like Mike Resnick and Greg Benford, the piece of writing the just jumped off the page for me was the letter from Lizbeth Phillips (Curt's wife). Liz writes that the previous issue of *Challenger*, with its Kelly Freas cover, had reminded her of her early days in fandom when she hung out with Kelly and Polly at conventions. She goes on to reflect on how she gradually drifted away from fandom and how *Challenger* reminds her of what she valued in the community and what she craves to rediscover as her kids move on to the next phase and motherhood places fewer demands on her time. I can't imagine a higher form of praise for a fanzine, or a more compelling argument for why we publish.



This letter explains in a nutshell why *Challenger* is on the Hugo ballot every year.

So is the quality of fanzines on the rise? Maybe so. There certainly seems to be a slow resurgence of publication by people who have been around the block a couple times before, and it figures that they'd know what they were doing. And that's not even mentioning all the stuff I've failed to find the time or inclination to engage with, probably to my own detriment. There's nothing like exposing your own ignorance to raise anxiety levels, but hey, a fella can learn. So what fanzines have you been reading lately? ♪

Fanzines reviewed

Banana Wings is only available in a paper edition. See www.efanzines.com/BananaWings for further information

BEAM is available as PDFs at www.efanzines.com/Beam

Challenger has a website at www.challzine.net, although the current issue available as HTML when I last checked was #30. Paper copies are available from Guy H. Lillian III for \$6 at PO Box 163, Benton LA 71006

The **Corflu Cobalt Programme Book** is available, along with all other Corflu publications, as a PDF at corflu.org/Corflu27Archive/pubsdocs.html

eI is available in both PDF and HTML formats at www.efanzines.com/EK

Many (but by no means all) issues of **File 770** are available as PDFs at www.efanzines.com/File770

The past two issues of **Head!** are available as PDFs at www.efanzines.com/Head

Inca 2-5 are available as PDFs at www.efanzines.com/Inca

Novoid is available for "your zine in trade, contribution (artwork, article, or letter of comment ... reviews especially welcome), or by editorial whim" from Colin Hinz at 148 Howland Ave, Toronto, ON, M5R 3B5, CANADA or asfi235@gmail.com. The PDF is said to be available at efanzines.com, but I don't see it there

Relapse (formerly **Prolapse**) is available as PDFs at www.efanzines.com/Prolapse

Sense of Wonder Stories is available for "trade, contributions, letters of comment, and whim" from Rich Coad at 2132 Berkeley Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 or richcoad@gmail.com

Small and Far Away is available as a PDF at www.efanzines.com/SmallAnd

Steam Engine Time is available as PDFs at www.efanzines.com/SFC/index.html#set

The past five issues of **Trap Door** are available as PDFs at www.efanzines.com/TrapDoor



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THE

Johan Anglemark

Fortified by a pot of tea, with a fire burning in the fireplace (it's around 5 F out there), I sit down to write my first LoC in years. I wonder why that is? That I've written so few since the mid 90s, I mean. Fanzines used to be the very thing fandom revolved around, at least up here — if you didn't LoC, it was hard to claim that you participated in fandom at all. Being a convention fan was all very well, but there have never been more than a couple of cons a year in this country. Being a fan meant either publishing a fanzine or at least reading and loc'ing. Sure, the Internet arrived and pooped the party, but there are still fanzines around. Ah, well. I guess I'm just lazy.

Steve Green writes (among other things) about the yellow-sheathed Gollancz SF books of his youth. Viewing yellow as the signal colour for SF is something he shares with me, because Sam Lundwall adopted it for his publishing company, Delta Science Fiction. For a Swedish fan who grew up in the 70s, yellow also means SF.

Having been a boy scout myself, it was fascinating to read Lisa Freitag's account of the Arrow of Light ceremony. Some of it could have happened here as well, but what struck me as the most obvious difference between both this and the Heart of the Beast ceremony and any equivalent thing here is of course the Native American elements. They would be completely absent here. However, they wouldn't be replaced by something that's native to

us either, like Sami or Norse pagan imagery, but simply be absent. However, I do disagree with what she says at the end, that Christianity lacks a proper coming of age rite. Surely Confirmation is just that?

I grew up (in fandom) with KTF reviews. Some of the leading fanzine reviewers here were big fans of the style, and of certain notable British proponents of it. And if the reviews weren't KTF, they were often the height of wit — disguised as travelogues or summaries of football matches or something similar —, so for me the concept of a review that just says something in plain words about a fanzine and its contents felt very alien the first time I encountered it. (the same with con reports.) To be honest, the compulsion to write scathing reviews was easy to fall prey to, because Swedish fandom was flooded by fanzines in the 80s, and very few of them were much good. A typical zine was written by a 17-year-old in a few hours, first draft on the stencil, and mailed the day after.

I still haven't made up my mind about what I think a fanzine review should look like. Any review that really tries to say something non-trivial about a fanzine ought to be frank, even though I agree that most of us knowing each other makes it necessary to show restraint. It is seldom worth hurting someone. We're all doing this mostly because it's supposed to be fun, and being subject to public execution because you tried to do something you're not very good at is absolutely not OK.

GOSH, HOOPER SAYS HE'LL
KEEPSENDING FANZINES "FOR
AT LEAST TWO YEARS AFTER YOU DIE"



TWO YEARS?



HE THINKS THAT
AFTER TWO YEARS
I WON'T EVEN QUALIFY
FOR THE WAHFS?

DON'T WORRY,
I'LL BE IN TOUCH

IRON PIG

I haven't reviewed fanzines for many years now, but my solution was to only devote column space to the good zines and just give the worse ones a very brief mention. That told the readers what they needed to know, gave the good faneds their egoboo and at least mentioned the rest.

Core fandom, then. I haven't made up my mind what I think of the term, but I definitely feel a need for one. While "fanzine fan" works for me in the international arena, back here at home it still only distinguishes me from convention fans, and as I happen to be that as well... The reason I feel I need a term is not because I want to convince myself or others that I belong to an elite, but simply because I want to be able to have a name for us who belong to the same fandom that was started in 1929. But any term should be descriptive also to *Babylon 5* fans, roleplaying gamers, and Tolkien fans who have never heard of Hugo Gernsback, Walt Willis, or TAFF, and that's where both "trufandom" and "core fandom" fail. In Norway some are using the term "gammelfandom" (old fandom). I'm not sure it's a good one, but perhaps it works for them. I've also heard "book fandom" (as opposed to media fandom) and "trad fandom". Whatever. Perhaps the best approach would be to go to the "non-core" fans and explain the matter and ask them what they would call us?

Andy sez: Don't be so sure about the lack of American elements in your ceremonial heritage. At the end of the last ice age, similar tool kits and grave goods pop-up all around the edge of the retreating ice, from Asia to America. There is a theory of "circumpolar shamanism" that proposes connections between the Neolithic forefathers of Scandinavia and America. Who knows, one day it may seem equally far-fetched to believe that Costumers and Comic Fans were once part of the same proto-fannish world.

Brad Foster

More great toons from D West, as usual. Just had an idea: I wonder if it would be possible to get the two fannish masters of the conversational cartoon,

West and Gilliland, to collaborate on some stuff, like Alex and Rotsler did way back? Just a thought, easy to come up with ideas to make other people do more work for my benefit!

Oh, and loved that back cover view of Seattle in 2014 via 1914. There's no future as cool as Retro-future, now is there?

Chris Garcia

I've seen a bunch of Ben Turpin films, I'm guessing about 10 or so, and several things are obvious. One, he was a great physical comedian, though nothing compared to the daredevilry of Lloyd or the precision of Keaton, and he could play for the heart better than just about anyone not named Chaplin, who, for all his faults, will always be the King of that routine. The comparison that comes to mind right off for me is Jim Carrey. The two made careers out of broadness, though both made plays for the more serious crowd as well, though neither was great at it.

Interestingly, Turpin was a hand, talent, a piece of a machine, and not a Player. Keaton, Lloyd, Langdon, Arbuckle and, at times, even Charlie Bowers and Mabel Normand were all Players, the ones who could pretty much get what they wanted. Turpin would get some control over his pictures, but nothing compared to the others. In fact, the thinking goes that Turpin is more recognizable as a face than as an actor, something I think Turpin understood well.

Still, his Essanay stuff is good, and the parodies that he starred in were pretty damn sharp for the time. If he had been a little younger and if Keaton hadn't been such a true physical genius, he'd probably be remembered



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as one of the Big Three. As it stands, people often over-look him except as that funny, cross-eyed face.

Andy sez: I love the way your letter implies that we have had an ongoing conversation about silent film actors—which we have, come to think of it. Ben Turpin had the misfortune to create just too perfect a look for himself—had he shaved the moustache and refused to cross his eyes, who would have cast him? It assured him regular work, but limited the range of parts offered to him.

Dave Locke

Very nice piece by Ted White on Don Westlake. Don was definitely one of my top favorite authors, and probably the most prolific one since John D. MacDonald. Tons of great stuff by him out there.

Among the SF he did are the Starship Hopeful stories, all of which are on his website. The best of the SF-related novels was *Smoke*, which came out in '95 and married his usual comic mystery approach with a plot gimmick about a thief who had (through a tossaway SF gimmick) turned invisible. I just got around to reading that in September of 09.

Next April, Hard Case Crime will publish *Memory*, a novel Westlake originally wrote in the early 1960s but was never published. Block worked on him to get it published, but it wasn't until Don died that there seemed any viability to the project. Plus, of course, Don wasn't around to object. I read the freebie sample of it online and very much look forward to seeing this novel.

There weren't any Parker books "published only in hardcover" unless some of those he published after his 20 year absence from the series didn't make it to paperback. All the original series books had at least one paperback edition, and I've seen (and had) them in paperback from as many as three or four publishers. The "Richard Stark" novels were excellent, and very different, and I recall Grant Canfield writing a good article about them in his old zine *Waste Paper*.



Alexis Gilliland

I am generally in agreement with D. West on core fandom, especially about fandom's essentially anarchistic nature, and note that one's personal circle of friends is also based on shared affinities having more to do with what we are than with what we read.

Fanzine reviews need to take into account the rather wide range of skills the reviewees bring to the table. My first wife, Dolly, who did review fanzines for several years, tried to be kind and accurate as possible, but eventually gave it up as thankless. The KTF reviews do little except drive away the next generation. Of course KTF reviews are not limited to fanzines. One hack music reviewer wrote: "One clash of Wagner's cymbals is worth all the symphonies of Brahms." I quite enjoyed Ted White's piece on Donald Westlake. On Andy Hooper's piece, I mention that the word Rus means rower, suggesting that the Russians might have been predominantly Scandinavian rather than Slavic. "Viking" is a non-national, non-tribal term like "Libertarian" or "Pirate," which derives from victualling, going out to look for food.

Andy sez: "Rower" sounds like someone at least figuratively chained to an oar. I would still think it referred to Slavic people that the Norse encountered as they moved south.

Jerry Kaufman

I had forgotten that you solicited questions to put to Steve Green for the TAFFish Inquisition, or that I asked such a good question. Steve's answer is sure to be controversial. Even I am willing to controvert it. For my part, if a candidate proposed going to a specialized US convention that concentrates on (to take Steve's example) filksinging, I would certainly vote against that candidate. It's not that TAFF belongs to my corner of fandom, it's that TAFF shouldn't belong to any specific corner. The Worldcon or national conventions like Eastercon belong to fandom as a whole. Let's not encourage a TAFF that sets filkers against fanzine fans against costumers, etc by giving them a means to use TAFF this way.

Lots of interesting articles in here, about which I have little comment. One that puzzles me a bit is Steven Silver's piece on Ben Turpin, a companion to his recent article on Keaton in *The Reluctant Famulus*. There's next to no evaluation of Turpin's place in silent comedy film history, and I don't get a sense of Steven having a great personal interest in the subject. I'm hoping that the complete set, with sidebars (as Steven says will appear in *Argentus*)

will have more insight and perhaps more about Steven's experience of watching these films.

I've tried reviewing fanzines from time to time, and have encouraged others in this pastime. My view of zines are that they are both personal communication and an art form at the same time. My emphasis on which aspect is more important changes from time to time, but as long as they are an art form and go to multiple recipients (unlike a letter addressed to one person), I think they're fair game for reviewing, critical assessment, considered response, etc. (This kind of fits with D. West's opinion that fandom is a bunch of performances for each other.)

With that in mind, I find Arnie's claim that critiquing fanzines is like "barging into someone's home" to be a false analogy. I don't print pictures of my home and mail 200 copies or put them on eFanzines. If Arnie puts his fanzines together with the expectation that only his immediate circle of friends will read them, then that's a different situation. But putting them on the web means to me that he's trying reach a lot more people than the ones he has pop over to have dinner. We're a small public, to be sure, but we're still a public.

On the other hand, his contention that we're too connected to each other to be objective has a lot of merit. I'm sure, for example, that if Martin Morse Wooster were to review *Chunga* you would not recognize the zine. On the other hand, if I reviewed it, I would probably be far too nice. (I'm far too nice anyway.)

I see fanzine reviewing to be very similar in that way to science fiction and fantasy reviewing. Nearly every reviewer in the on-line forums, in the few remaining prozine review columns and in the local newspapers (in cities with which I'm familiar) is an insider—a long time fan, a new professional, an established pro. Since we've lived here in Seattle, I recall Frank Denton, Marilyn Holt, and Nisi Shawl as being the most prominent newspaper reviewers. They may not have played favorites in their reviews, but who knows how they may have been affected by their knowledge of the field, its friendships and feuds.

Richard Brandt

Don Westlake also deserves mention for his screenwriting: *The Stepfather* is still one of the most brilliant scripts (one would assume because of his contribution) and his Oscar-nominated adaptation of *The Grifters*. I still fondly remember his *Help! I Am Being Held Prisoner* (a compulsive practical joker sent to a prison where his normal activities would NOT be appreciated), and still gathering dust on my bookshelf is *Trust Me On This*, an irresistible com-

bination of murder and tabloid journalism which has somehow evaded my perusal while I wait for my book-reading to get back into gear.

Steve Jeffery

Your guest interrogatee Steve Green is absolutely on the nail in answer to Ray Holloway's question (is sf a valid means of speculating on the future?).

I hadn't thought of PKD in regard to *Second Life*, and would probably have pointed to Vernor Vinge and *True Games*, but thinking about stories like 'The Days of Perky Pat', it fits. I've only seen Kneale's *The Year of the Sex Olympics* once, but I suspect the "reality" shows on some of the dodgier channels have far overtaken it already.

Oh, and let's not forget Vonnegut's 'Harrison Bergeron' (1961) on the current 'everyone must win, and all have shall prizes' dumbing down of education and the arts.

We are living on the dystopian times we so strenuously warned ourselves about so as to avoid. Philip K. Dick would be proud of us. Now, where's my fiddle and a box of matches?

While I can see where Arnie is coming from in his response to Sandra (Bond) in *VFW #113*, one of the holes in this argument is the presumption that because fanzines are produced and sent out as a hobby then they shouldn't be criticized or reviewed sounds more than a little like special pleading. Or perhaps an appeal to the Thumper's recalling, in a homely slew of double negatives, his mother's advice in *Bambi*, "If you can't say nothing nice, then don't say nothing."

And the argument falls on another point. It's not you barging into someone's home and criticizing the colour of their curtains, but they—via the post-box or email inbox—barging into yours, inviting you to read views and assertions that you might not agree with. In Arnie's view of fandom, then, the other alternative to responding to such a fanzine would have to be to treat it as junk mail and ignore it or bin it, unresponded. Which I suspect is not what he really means, unless he only counts thanks, praise and egoboo, rather than the possibility of discussion and argument, as an appropriate response.

His other argument, that fanzine fandom is so closely connected that it's hard to disentangle responding to a fanzine from any relationship with the editor (or contributor) has already been effectively addressed by sf critic John Clute in the phase that titles his sf review column 'Excessive Candour'. Clute makes the same point addressed to professional sf writing: that the scene is so small and interconnected and there is such a high probability that you will be reviewing the work of someone



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you know personally that the only proper response is to put those relationships aside and treat the job of reviewing as honestly and impartially as one can, without fear or favour.

And part of that impartiality, as Randy points out, and is also implicit in Abi Frost's 1984 column on fanzine reviewing reproduced from *Stomach Pump* #6, is to review the fanzine in hand on how successfully it achieves the goal of what it is trying to do rather than what the review thinks it ought to do.

The corollary of this is that the reviewer ought to have a wide knowledge of and sympathy for many different aspects of fanzine fandom, from the faanish to the sercon. This is probably where many the KTF reviews of the 70s failed, at least for newcomers hoping to find out where they fit in to fanzine fandom: they had a narrowing and uncompromising view of what the right sort of fanzine should be, and, fuelled by the spirit of punk abrasiveness of the times, trashed unmercifully those zines that didn't fit new order as they perceived it. (Though often in flights of pyrotechnics that were wonderfully entertaining in themselves unless you happened to be on the receiving end.)



Entertaining as those can be as performance pieces, I've more tended to the view that criticism, where warranted, ought to be as constructive as possible, the idea being to convince the editor to produce a better zine next time rather than none at all. (Although you might want to make an exception if you get a zine from a rabidly right wing, anti-Semitic editor whose interest in sf begins and ends with *Star Trek*).

And there hangs a point. There isn't and shouldn't be just one way of reviewing fanzines, anymore than a book review in SFX resembles one in the *Times Literary Supplement*. The readerships, and their expectations and knowledge are different in each case, and in the same way fanzine reviews might be pitched, as in the BSFA *Matrix* columns, at the newcomer who is looking for a general overview and starting point, or to long time fanzine fans who looking for a bit more depth than treating fanzines as an extended version of those Xmas round-robin letters from friends and relatives who either can't be bothered or don't know you well enough to write to you personally.

Andy sez: Many sensible arguments here Steve, but I feel like it is something of a waste of time to review fanzines—or indeed anything—about which we are truly impartial. If, as you point out, we are so closely involved with a fanzine's publishers and contributors as to make all our observations inevitably personal, then any pose of objective detachment is sure to appear less than completely sincere. I think people approach fanzine criticism in a very different way now than they did in previous decades, because we don't receive several of them every week, which was still the case when I began reading them in the 1970s. Almost no one is publishing without a general understanding of what they want to do and what their audience respects, which has substantially lessened the need for negative reinforcement.

Mike Meara

Pat and I share this house in France with a couple of friends who are too wimpy to do any housesitting in winter. So here we are, the two of us, in sub-zero weather, using up half the output of the local power station in an attempt to stop everything, especially us and the water pipes, from freezing solid. Good job they're mostly nuclear in France, eh? No carbon footprint to worry about. Okay, the light bulbs glow in the dark, but I think they're supposed to. When I went to use the car this morning, I found that the half-litre bottle of mineral water I'd

left in the door pocket had indeed frozen solid overnight. I would have been more impressed if I hadn't been using all my energy trying to stop the same thing happening to me.

I can't get enthusiastic about fanzine reviews, though I'll probably read 'em if they're done well enough. My attitude is pretty much that of Vince Clarke, as discussed by Claire. I'd just as soon see a list of fanzines received, with a brief note on the type, plus contact details of course. Then I can maybe provide my own "review" in the form of a loc. Dale Spiers proposed this in *Banana Wings* #40, and I'm pleased to see that the Flying Twoskins have taken it up. Others should follow suit, imho.

Lloyd Penney thinks the words "sinister zither" go together so well. Clearly the man is a non-drinker, and has therefore never tried to use the phrase during an earnest late-night pub discussion of film noir. We who know better can avoid the second-hand beer experience (known as "Lager and Lime") by using alternatives such as "that Anton Karas sure played a mean ... er ... thingy". By the way, if you *should* ever find "The Third Man Theme" rendered on the theremin — and I can hardly think of a more unsuitable combination of tune and instrument — be sure to let Bruce Townley know; he's a big fan of this particular ditty, and collects all the versions he can find.

Andy Sawyer

I really enjoyed *Chunga* 16, especially the background to Chabon's *Gentlemen of the Road*, which is odd as I haven't actually read the novel and can't even remember if I bought it that time I noticed it in a bookshop. It's interesting how little we know about how much of the world.

I think it's odd that the Scouts, as Lisa Freitag describes them, have a pagan coming of age ceremony. (When I was one, a long time ago and in a different country, the ethos was broadly Christian although I was told that the point of the Scouts was its internationalism and therefore the movement as a whole was never committed to any one religion, just the idea of religion itself. Sort of like AA.)

Not that I'm mocking ... I think Coming of Age Ceremonies are basically Good Things.

Earl's loc ... *Route 66*; gosh that was a memory-blast. I remember watching it when I was a kid and can't remember a thing about it other than it took the stars all round the country and a vague visual memory of the car. I almost certainly was too young to understand the stories. Would I enjoy it now? Perhaps I'd better leave it in the haze of forgottenness, like *77 Sunset Strip* (another show of which a memory of half a line of the theme song is

all that proves to me that I did, in fact, watch it).

Lloyd Penney

If it wasn't for letters of comment, I'm not sure what I could do to contribute to fanzines. I'm no artist, although I have had a few rough cartoons in *Askance*, and I truly think I need an assignment editor to think of suitable topics to write about. Locs are pure reaction, and I can certainly do that. I'm still having fun writing all these letters. I wrote 300+ in 2009 alone, and that was a kick. I have read here and there over the years how the letter column is the heart of the interest, and I still have my doubts.

My memories of the Boy Scouts are mixed. I passed my exams the first night I was at a Scouts meeting, and within a month, I was a patrol leader. However, within two years, all the others in my patrol left, and I was left to lead stupid kids with no ambitions. In my third year, I was at a Scout party, and someone dropped itching powder down my back. I complained to my leaders, they shrugged their shoulders, and I never went to another meeting. I had high ideals and big plans, and not even my troop leaders really cared.

I see in the articles, and cartoons, too ... we are still discussing Core Fandom. Maybe this was the idea all along, to keep Arnie's name on our lips? If so, he knows how to market himself, well done. Fanzine reviews? I do what I can for *Askance*. I've never said I was any kind of arbiter on any fannish publications, but I do like what I get, and I get a lot.



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As I read Chris Garcia's loc, I am reminded that today's *Globe and Mail* had in its obituary section an article about the passing of the last of the Coney Island strongmen. Joe Rollino was 104, and was killed by a van. (I'd better know; I'm sitting at my desk at the *Globe and Mail* right now.)



D. West

What strange mental process led you to take a perfectly good article by Ted White and fuck it up by jamming in two completely irrelevant cartoons? I mean, what in God's name is the connection between Egyptian pyramids (Kunkel), core fandom (West) and the works of Donald Westlake? Do you, perhaps, have some kind of confused idea that your readers will suffer brain haemorrhages if confronted with more than a page of uninterrupted text? (Well, perhaps they will. If so, let Natural Selection take its course.)

Anyway, you should know all this by now, so I guess you aren't very likely to change. Designwise, *Chunga* is like an Ed Wood movie: there's a certain awful fascination in waiting to see if it can go on to do something even worse. (Yes.) The people who write in congratulating you must be on drugs.

Randy sez: Those were actually Mayan pyramids, not Egyptian, which is no doubt the source of your confusion. The Mayans, after all, put the West in Westlake. (Although I'll grant you that not many people know that Carl is Mayan. It's one reason he doesn't allow photographs.)

Carl sez: Randy is having you on, per usual, as I didn't choose the photos for the cover of #16. (Like any insecure artist-type, I'm flattered by these perhaps transference-fueled projections. I hear the prognosis is good and am told

that the comparisons to Jesus will become rarer once he embraces his inner megalomaniac and/or visits Jerusalem.)

My objection to being photographed in public is chiefly an aversion to being compelled by social norms to feign ignorance of the camera and/or conjure an insincere smile (as evidenced by the pictures of me plastered across the walls of Randy's basement in a not-at-all creepy manner). Plus I think using flash in public places is often rude to bystanders.

My stance on human sacrifice continues to evolve.

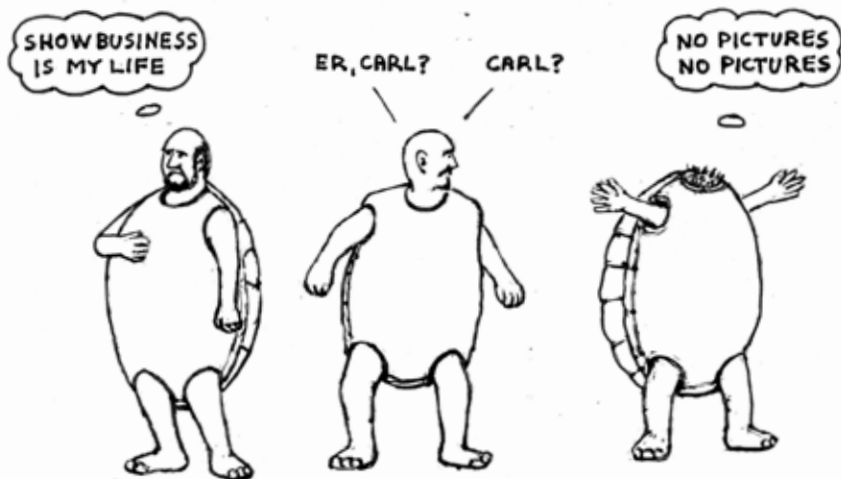
John Nielsen Hall

On the subject of fanzine reviews, I'd like to state a personal interest: I produce a fanzine every now and again. Some very kind people to whom I send it do write back and say what they did or didn't like or comment on the content. That's all the critical notice I get. You might think I would get more notice; poetry and even fan fiction used to provoke howls of anguished protest from some quarters in the Brit fandom of the 60s and 70s. Occasionally, as opportunity presents itself, one or, at most, two loyal people vote for my fanzine in the Nova or FAAn awards. Beyond that, my efforts go unremarked. Now I'm not saying that I want to benefit from any revival of *Fouler's* Blinding Pillar of Incandescence, although if I was in receipt of a few paragraphs of inky smudged four letter vitriol I would at least be inclined to think I had achieved something. I might defend myself, but I would be pleased that someone, anyone, had taken the trouble to write a review. Unlike Arnie, I would not take it personally. Indeed, I might make an effort to irritate my reviewer further in my next ish.

I was disappointed that Sandra felt the need to question her purpose in fanzine reviewing. I wondered if she was not questioning her wider devotion to fandom at the same time. (She is, after all, trying quite hard to be a Rock star at present). We need — I need — fanzines to be reviewed, as well as commented upon. Sandra, and anyone else who wants seriously to take up the calling of fanzine reviewer, should look upon it as a vocation, a service provided to fandom in its entirety and be thick skinned enough not to worry that some might take offence.

Maybe faneds who do find themselves of a sensitive disposition should proclaim the fact on their mastheads. "Please don't review this fanzine, as I am easily upset" is all they need to write. Anybody who then reviews the fanzine risks being branded a sadist — although that is a soubriquet of only very limited deterrence.

TEENAGE MUTANT CHUNGA TURTLES



Steve Stiles

Readers may be wondering about that “genie” on my front cover: he first appeared in print a mere thirty one years ago, in the pages of my sole underground comic, *Hyper Comics*. In the story “No Survivors!” Abrey Spittle (“Meanest Sunuvabitch Today”) was ultimately sucked into a black hole, only to reappear in the thousands over the White House, much to the dismay of President Smile. Abrey has made a second reappearance in 2010, this time on the cover of *Trap Door* #26, this time over the skyline of San Francisco House (funny things, those black holes).

Steve Green mentions that the tv puppet series *Thunderbirds* was one of his earliest contacts with science fiction. Oddly enough, I have a tenuous connection with that show; back in the 1980s my British cousin in law, Barry Ganberg, produced the ambient music for a modern dance troupe performing “Thunderbirds F.A.B.,” which I gather involved dancing around with models of Thunderbird rockships on their heads. Hell must be full of musical acts like that. (I’ll attach a copy of their poster.)

Great heading art by Dan Steffan for Ted White’s article on Donald Westlake; I’ve come to expect nothing less from Dan. As he did with Charles Mingus, Ted introduced me to the works of Donald Westlake, for which I’ll always be grateful; since then I’ve acquired a great deal of Westlake’s fiction, admiring most of it as storytelling at its best. Coincidentally I received a copy of *The Hook* for Christmas, and weeks earlier I found one of his Samuel Holt novels at my place of employment, Daedalus Books (the benefactor of our ever expanding library); the Holt book, unfortunately, was a victim of water damage, thanks to the December 26th flooding of our basement level rooms. From what I remember from the introduction, Westlake wrote under that pseudonym to see if his fiction still had legs when not being attributed to him; he never found out as his publisher broke their agreement and promptly revealed his identity, a double cross worthy of a Parker novel.

Andy sez: I appreciate the background on the cover, Steve. I dimly remember the contents of *Hyper Comics*, so there was something familiar about it all, but otherwise it appeared that you might be moving into an even more surrealistic period than usual.

John Purcell

Andy makes an interesting point in his editorial contribution. He mentions that he probably hasn’t written 50 locs over the course of his 30+ year fan-



nish career, and that’s alright. Lots of actifans don’t write many locs; if they do write something for fanzines, the result tends to be articles or they edit fanzines. An occasional loc is fine and dandy, says I, and maybe one those will wing its way towards my zine. *hint-hint* But I am sure that the main reason why you *Chunga* types get a goodly number of locs is due to your dead tree commitment. *Askance* is mostly an online zine, with a small print run (sadly, I get behind on this aspect of the zine’s distribution) mostly for contributors, so I don’t get nearly as many locs as you folks do. It seems like “the usual” works best for those of us still producing paper copies; the consensus opinion seems to be that online zines don’t generate response due to the “free” nature of the medium. That fact usually leads me around to considering making my zine “password protected”: accessible only to those with **The Password**, literally implying a subscription cost, which I really don’t want to impose. I value my readership, too, and understand that if I put in more effort to getting paper copies out to those individuals who prefer paper zines and will possibly respond, then results will follow. I get a steady response from a steady group of folks with occasional locs from others, which means I need to cultivate the field a bit more thoroughly.

My now 14 year old son was in Cub Scouts–Boy Scouts for four years, so Lisa Freitag’s article about the bridging ceremony brought back memories of that event (two years ago). The impression I came away with from the ceremony was that Scouting respects the land—having been on numerous campouts with Dan and his troop, I can readily attest to



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We also heard from:

Arthur D. Hlavaty

I would add only that there is a Westlake sf collection, Tomorrow's Crimes, comprising nine stories and the egregious Anarchaos.

Rudy Rucker

Thanks, this is a funny piece by Marc. And a very nicely designed fanzine! Rock on.

Ron Drummond

Andy says Marc's piece is fiction, but it seems like it takes the form of a legitimate ad campaign proposal that, aside from a few slightly demented jokes, Taco Bell might do well to take seriously.

Yvonne Rousseau

I don't understand the innerness of the duplicated final sheet – but an additional copy of a D. West cartoon is always welcome.

Christopher Carson

Thank you for your No 16 (2009 November). I shall be sure to send you 3 copies of the next 'Luna!' When it comes out – Real Soon Now, I Promise (tm). The Stars Are Ours!

Andy Robson

But I still cling to the knowledge that for me and the fanzine writers in the sky 'blog' means backlog and 'google' means Ben Turpin's eyes.

that—and tradition. There are many good traditions that scouting instills in boys and girls, and I believe that respect for nature and other people (including parents and elders; how about that?) is a strong part of the program. Responsibility is huge, too. Daniel is no longer in scouting—been two years out of it, now—but I know that those years gave him a good sense of why “giving” and “doing” are so much better than “getting” and “waiting.” That sense of accomplishment is something that can grow in a child, and one that can be carried forward. Kind of like the feeling I get when I finish pubbing my ish. It gets you right *here*, y'know?

Andy sez: I'll just note that I've written three letters of comment since *Chunga* #16 was published, so there may be hope for us all.

David Bratman

I did not read *Chunga* 16 in order, but turned first to Ted White's thoughts on Donald Westlake, much as I tended to be irresistibly drawn to Westlake's own novels, at least the funny ones. I suppose others of your readers were similarly attracted, because a lot of SF fans are also Westlake fans. Slightly ironic that is, for as Ted notes, Westlake's early SF is mostly not very notable. Some of his SF that also qualifies as crime fiction is collected in a book called *Tomorrow's Crimes*, but on glancing through this, the only story I remember as really sticking with me is one called “The Risk Profession,” originally published in *Amazing* during the Cele Goldsmith Lalli years. It's the story of an insurance investigator looking into an asteroid mining prospector's claim (“Oh, that one,” I hope some think at this point, because the title is Not Memorable), and it is quite clever in the way of so many SF stories from the 50s or thenabouts.

The few fans I know with a positive distaste for Westlake tend to be serious mystery readers, and perhaps that's because Westlake was never really much of a canonical mystery writer. Only a few of his books were default murder mysteries with a dead body at the beginning, clues salted in the middle, and a solution at the end, and in a comic caper novel like *Trust Me On This*, the murder is the least important or interesting part of the plot, and indeed is almost forgotten about for long stretches as the reader is caught up in the setting and characters, the staff of a shameless tabloid newspaper.

What I enjoy most in Westlake's work is the really big crime caper story, which you read for the pleasure of watching the lovable rogues carry it off, so I suppose even *Trust Me On This* falls into that category. Ted mentions—besides the Dortmund series, which is highly variable, both in quality and

style—the two biggest and best of Westlake's crime stories, *Dancing Aztecs* and *Kahawa*. Ted says he's read both editions of *Kahawa*, as have I, but I've never been able to find any difference between them except for the new introduction. In it, Westlake says he's made “minor changes in the text, nothing substantive,” but every time I thought I noticed something I didn't remember from the first edition and went and checked, it had already been there.

Coming as it did from Andy Hooper, I am not surprised that his guide to the peoples in Michael Chabon's *Gentlemen of the Road* was entirely serious and useful. I don't suppose it would have enlightened things much to have described the Jewish Khazars as the equivalent to Jews that Trekkies are to SF fans, though it's hard to avoid thinking of them as such: there were a lot of them, they came in a batch, and they had their own way of doing things. This despite the real possibility that many or most Jews of Eastern European origin of today are descended from the Khazars. I haven't seen recent genetic research on this, but general physical appearance proves little. Jews can come to look like the gentiles surrounding them without any genetic intermixing; see William Tenn's “On Venus, Have We Got a Rabbi” for more on that.

Andy sez: I too love a good caper story, in fiction or non-fiction. Many casual fans of the subgenre would probably be surprised to know that so many works star Westlake's Dortmund, because he has been given a half-dozen aliases and has never been played by the same actor twice. Among those who have stood in his sometime pseudonymous shoes include George C. Scott, Christopher Lambert, Martin Lawrence, Paul LeMat, Herbert Knaup and Robert Redford.

My impression is that contemporary Eastern European Jews are mostly descended from the Ashkenazi communities of the Rhineland—communities like the one Chabon's Zelikman was raised in. They had little genetic ancestry in common with the Turkic Khazars. The Khazars were most likely a partially converted people, whose Hebraic aristocracy was lost across the generations that ebbed and swirled out of Asia in the 1300 years since the fall of the Khazar Kagan. If they still have descendents living today, they might be anywhere from Belarus to Tibet to Toledo, Ohio.

Eric Lindsay

I do hope that Randy manages to get to the Worldcon in Melbourne this year. I must admit to not looking forward to Aussiecon 4. It is nothing I can

explain, and we finally got around to booking our hotel. It is more that attending an Australian Worldcon feels more like a duty than an event. I do not attend Worldcons outside Australia, so I am not in any sense a fan of Worldcons. I still attend smaller conventions in Australia, just as remote as Aussiecon. Indeed, we attended a con in Melbourne earlier this year. Unlike several of our friends who live in Melbourne.

I am glad to see one of your footers preparing visitors for Australia. "But don't press your luck by asking for water. This is very important."

Turning to Andy, and the matter of paper fanzines. More than a decade ago, I sent what remained of my fanzine collection to the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, for lack of a better idea. We had no space for additional paper when

we lived at Airlie Beach, but back in those days, a dial up connection did not encourage web browsing. However eventually (slow) ADSL reached us. We still have slow ADSL (despite the fibre optic connection to the premises). We still do not collect paper fanzines. If you have some way of letting us know a fanzine has reached efanzines, that would be our preference. Online is fine when you use 30 inch monitors.

Randy sez: We'll stop sending you a paper copy, and we'll leave this bit in for other faneds who may not have gotten the message yet. (We're probably the last to know!) Alas, I didn't make it to Aussiecon 4 after all. My plans changed, and I'll be going to Novacon and the inaugural SFContario (in Toronto) instead. On the bright side, that left more water for the rest of you. ☺



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Edd Cartier (1914–2008)

by John Hertz

He died on Christmas Day, as had Karel Capek seventy years earlier. Vincent DiFate in his superb illustrated survey of science fiction art *Infinite Worlds* (1997) says (pp. 46–48, 137–39),

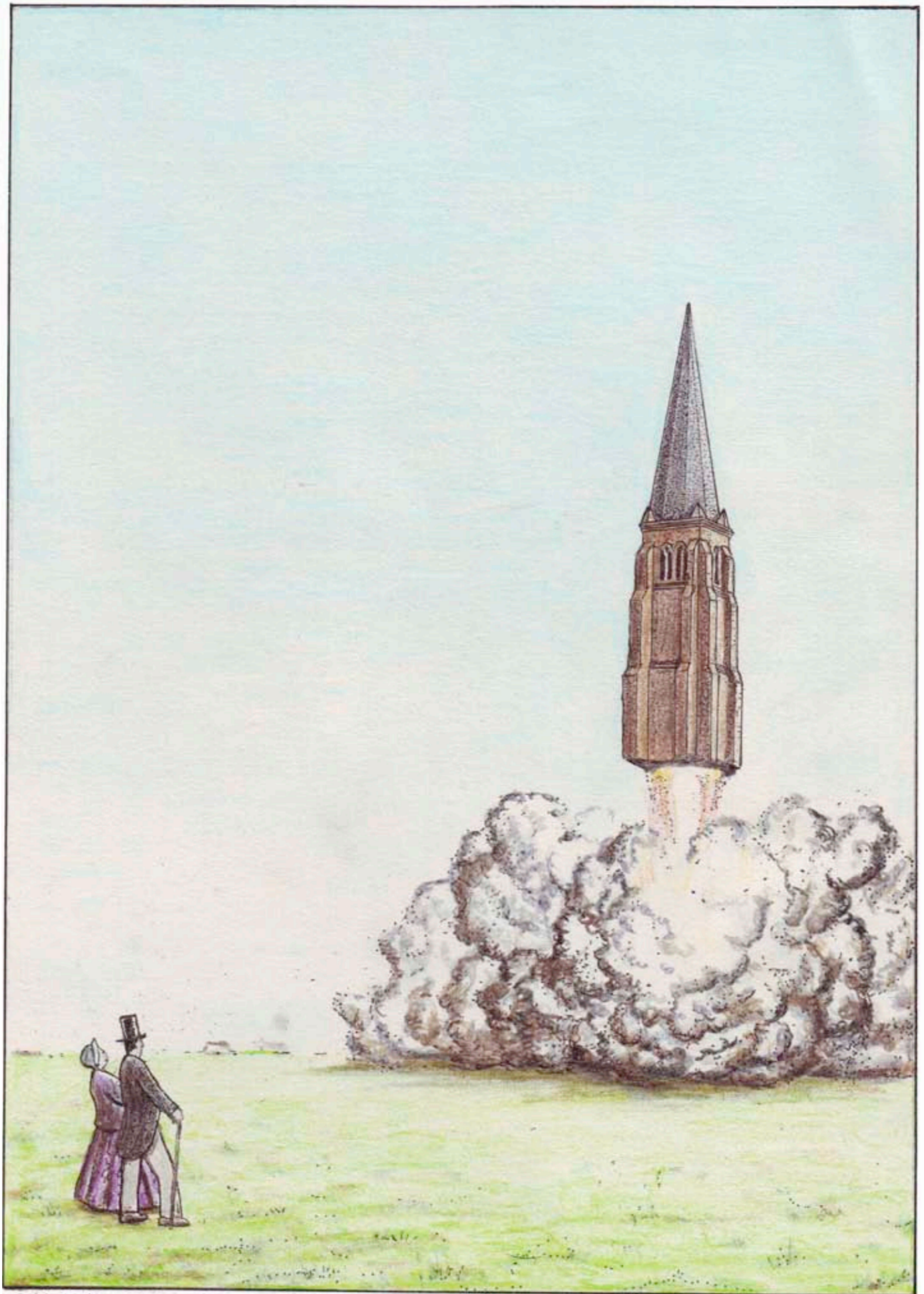
Sure, precise pen-and-ink style...his color paintings were quite exceptional...vignettes, pictures without clearly defined borders that fade gradually to the white of the paper...require carefully thought-out silhouettes and a strong design sense....few artists can capture the exaggerated gesture better...the best...to employ humor with any regularity were Frank Kelly Freas, Wallace A. Wood, and of course Edward Daniel Cartier....facile, well-drawn...illustrations began to appear in 1936 in Street & Smith's moody detective magazine, *The Shadow*....distinguished [by]...fluidity and action. Less somber, less shackled by the brooding *film noir* conventions...an airy vigor...dead-on characterization....In 1939...*Unknown* was born and Cartier became its key artist....cleverly conceived, comical aliens were something of a trademark....an *Astounding* regular....important work for both Gnome Press and Fantasy Press....especially influential during the great SF movie boom of the 1950s.



Cartier won the 1992 World Fantasy Convention's Life Achievement Award; in 1990 First Fandom, that happy band active by at least 1939, placed him in its Hall of Fame. *Edd Cartier, the Known and the Unknown* was published as a limited

edition in 1977. During World War II he enlisted in the Army, drew maps in Britain, and fought in France and Germany as a machine gunner with a tank battalion; in the Battle of the Bulge he earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart, then another Heart when his hospital train was blown up. He married in 1943; at the Pratt Institute he got a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1953. He illustrated Anderson, Asimov, de Camp, Dickson, Heinlein, Hubbard, Sturgeon. Irene Gallo said he was equally adept at seemingly effortless figure drawing, creature design, and hardware. Robert Weinberg said he was perhaps the finest pen-and-ink illustrator ever to work for the pulp-paper magazines. His wit was bright even in the dark; he could be simple, could be strange; he was vital, as a comedian must be; he gave us of his best, and our best. *R.I.P.*

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TRADITIONAL SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAMME ITEM: "THE FUTURE OF FANDOM-ANYONE FOR CHURCH?"