



The Drink Tank 101

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Issue 100 has sat long enough on its own and it's time to get back to what I do best: running pictures of large-breasted women! No seriously, this issue is going to be about fandom and blogs. Trust me, it'll be OK.

Why fandom needs more cons like Silicon

by Christopher J. Garcia

Another Silicon has come and gone and left no trace upon the Earth it touched so briefly. I really had a wonderful time and was most pleased to see that there were a lot of new faces that I don't normally see around cons. Hell, my buddy Jordan was there and I'd never had pegged him for attending. It was at the DoubleTree, which is where I've been going for cons since the beginning of time. The con had a lot going for it and I was glad that I made it.

You see, there's something about small cons that I really enjoy. Relaxacons are one thing: I wouldn't say I'm a big fan because a lot of times it's like sitting around at a big party. I like some programming, but not so much that it feels regimented. CorFlu had the right amount when I went in 2005. Conjecture had too much the years I attended, though they made up for it

by having really great guests. Silicon had another approach.

Friday was the Relaxaday. There was no programming (other than the Game Room being open) before the Meet The Guests at 7. That allowed for folks to mill about, register, get some dinner, all without fear of missing anything. It was during that period that I started meeting folks. I ran into my buddy David who proofs the issues of SF/SF, Kevin Roche (wearing a suit!), Andy Trembley, Leigh Ann Hildebrand, Dave Gallaher and various others celebrating the contract signing for CostumeCon 2008 26 at the DoubleTree. To me, this was a great idea, because it allowed the folks who were throwing

parties to do just that. It was a very good idea. It also allowed Silicon to be more about Night Programming. They had a film festival on Friday night and the parties and Rocky Horror. All these things were there to be had in the evening. It felt like a small con, certainly not as big as BayCon, but it was delivering a lot of bang for the buck.

It was a nice feel for a con. While cons like CorFlu deliver on a community feeling, Silicon left me with a very different feeling, more akin to the feeling I had leaving WorldCon. There was a general fannish glow to things that you don't find a lot of places, even BayCon this year didn't have the warm glowing warming glow. BayCon 2005 certainly did, though.

The second day was much different. There was programming, the art show, the dealers room, all of it running all day. if you only came for Saturday, you might have thought you were at a much larger con. There was a lot of programming that went lightly attended, but there was a good selection



of stuff to be heard.

Silicon sort of rode a strange line. There was a focus on Comics, but only a few comic book vendors (in fact, the entire dealers room was much smaller than the one for BayCon as far as selection) and there was a large artist's alley that I thought was very nice. It was also a general SF con. I found a lot of typical SFing going on, which is always nice. And there was a strong film presence, which I always appreciate. Cons that ride lines like that stand a good chance of drawing new folks from one into the other. There were people who came strictly to see Mr. Lobo and his Lobotronic Film Festival and there were folks there to see Mark Bode (Vaughn's son) and some were just there because they always go to BArea SF cons. It was an interesting crowd. The mash-up of folks really made me smile.

One thing that I've always loved about fandom is inclusiveness, and Silicon was probably the most inclusive non-WorldCon I've ever been to. It was a great time and I was so glad that Saturday was as good as Friday.

Saturday night was party night, including the Evil Geniuses party which is always a crowd pleaser. It was one of the favourite parties at WorldCon even, so you know it's gotta be good. They had a mess of folks and the BASFA party was low key and a place to go and chat if you wanted to. There was also Mara's Bar which had



a slave auction as always. There was a particularly fetching lass there, but alas, I did not get to speak with her.

All this party atmosphere was great, making the con seem like a bigger deal. I learned from the newsletter staff that there were probably eight hundred people over the course of the con, which is a very good number. It felt like a real honest to gosh local con. While BayCon is a regional drawing folks from all over the West Coast, Silicon has carved itself a niche with BArea fans and semi-fans. That's a good way to build a local fandom that's nice and strong.

The last day was interesting. We had the SF/SF panel where we took the Family Photo and talked about the zine. The folks who do read us seem very happy with us. There's just not enough people that do every week. This'll probably start the change. We actually managed to draw more people to the SF/SF panel than the GoH panel did in the same slot! We rock.

Silicon was a fun time and I ran around passing out TAFF ballots and gossiping and writing for the newsletter and just plain having a good time. I'm looking forward to next year already, even though I'm not sure where it's gonna be at (I understand that they're talking with the DoubleTree, which is great) and I have no idea who the GoHs will be, but if it's like this year, I'm certain to go home happy.



A Kinda Thorough Look at the United States National Recording Registry

I'm a mark for registries. The National Film Registry announcement of new films being added is a big deal in my eyes and I always look it up as soon as it's announced. Usually I'm happy and surprised with the selections, and those that I don't agree with make for good arguments.

A few years back, the Library of Congress launched the National Recording Registry to do for audio recording what the NFR did for the moving image. I'm a lover of music and spoken word and history, so this was an added event every year for me. I've spent a fair amount of time looking at the choices and here are my thoughts on many, not nearly all 200, but the ones that I think are very noteworthy.

From the 2002 Innaugural List

1) Edison's Exhibition Recordings including "Around the World on the Pho-

nograph" from 1888-89. You can hear it at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10311/10311-m/10311-m-001.mp3>. There were several pieces on these cylinders and there's no real clear copy of these since the technology wasn't perfected, but it's incredible to hear some of the earliest sound recordings. There's not much to it, but I listened to the whole thing.

2) The Jesse Walter Fewkes field recordings of the Passamaquoddy Indians from 1890. Talk about massively important to the history of these United States. This was probably the first field recording (the device he used was less than two years old and still tightly controlled) and the subject, the Passamaquoddy Indians, were one of the lesser studied tribes. We've got a good snapshot of the time, the language and their songs from these recordings. Sadly, I can't find them on the web, but I heard them at a lecture once.

3) Stars & Stripes Forever's first disc recording from 1897. This is another one of the major stepping stones as this might have been the first disc sold. There weren't a lot of disc players until about 15 years after this came out, but what are you gonna do.

4) Swing Low, Sweet Chariot by the Fisk Jubilee Singers. This is a strange one. The Fisk Jubilee was a group rais-

ing funds to support Fisk University beginning in the 1860s. They were a long-running groups and they sold lots of sheet music and early recordings. One of them was Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, which they made hugely popular in the 1990s on their tours. It's one of the first recordings, though the ones you'll find on the various Fisk Jubilee records are later.

5) Casey at the Bat recording from 1915 by De Wolf Hopper. Hopper is the one who made Casey at the Bat a big deal. The poem appeared in



the San Francisco Examiner and I've never been quite sure how, some five months later, Hopper managed to get a hold of the poem to read it before a packed house with both Chicago and the New York Giants in attendance. His many recitations around the world were amazingly popular and even though there is an older recording (by Russell Hunting), Hopper's is still the best. You can hear it by going through the Wikipedia entry at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casey_at_the_Bat. You can also hear the Hunting version.

6) The Victor Talking Machine Company's Bristol, Tennessee recordings from 1927. Wow, these recordings are what modern Country Music sprung forth from the Bristol Barn Session. A Victor talent scout by the name of Ralph Peer discovered several musicians, including the Singing Brakeman Jimmy Rodgers and the Carter Family. It would be impossible to overlook either of these seminal influences on the history of country music, especially The Carters who really hit huge. There are lots of commercial versions of these recordings available.

7) The Fireside Chats- FDR may have been a Democrat, but he was a charming man and had a marvelous voice. If it hadn't been for these broadcasts, he'd not have been a popular



President. Amazing look at the way a President can personally connect with his people.

8) Who's on First- the first Radio Broadcast in 1938. This is probably the best known comedy routine of all-time and one of the worst performances of it. The filmed version is much better, as were most of the Vaudeville performances. They speed through it but not in a way that makes it funnier. Even Abbott said that the radio version was crap.

9) War of the Worlds. Orson Welles would have been nothing if it weren't for this, even if the hysteria that was described in the popular culture of the

last 70 years was a bit of an exaggeration. Brilliantly constructed piece of radio drama.

10) Cradle Will Rock- This is the most important musical of the 1930s. The story of what it took John Houseman and Orson Welles to get this shown coupled with the brilliance of the lyrics and the fact that it was a spectacular piece of social commentary all come together in its inclusion.

11) The First Grand Ole Opry radio broadcast- believe it or not, without the Opry, there would be no rock 'n roll. Folks who listened to it started the rock revolution in the 1950s. This performance is a little hard to find, but it's worth searching out.

12) Kind of Blue from Miles Davis- If you wanted to explain Jazz to someone who had never heard of it, I'd play them this and say "this is the best of it." Miles with his crew that included Cannonball Adderly and Coltrane play some of the most amazing songs in the history of Jazz. So What is my personal fave. Everyone should own a copy.

13) The Message by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five from 1982- 'Broken glass everywhere, people pissing on the stairs you know they just don't care'. That's how the most important rap song in history opens. The

Message records the conditions of The Bronx in the late 1970s. It's an impressive piece of commentary as well as a wonderful piece of hip-hop.

There is literally nothing in the first year's choices that I disagree with or even question for a second. It covers such a wide range of things that it was the perfect way to open the list.

2003

This year it seemed that the focus slipped a little. While there were still plenty of things on the list that recorded American life, there were a lot more popular cultural recordings, several of which I didn't quite think belonged. Still, not a bad list.

1) 1898 Honolulu Cake Walk by Vess Ossman. If you ever want to understand the origins of Jazz, go to <http://home.earthlink.net/~ephemeralist/honolulu.ram> and give Honolulu Cake Walk a listen. It's all there.

2) The First Bubble Book from 1917. The Bubble Books were the first recordings done just for children and sold with illustrated stories. Remember those records which had various folks reading stories for you to read along with? Well, this is where those all started. These are hugely collectable now and can fetch very high prices on eBay.com.



3) Frances Densmore's Chippewa/Ojibwe Cylinder collection. These are incredible. As important as the Passamaquoddy recordings are, these recordings from the 1907-1910 time frame record many of the important figures in late 19th Century Chippewa history. These are much harder to find, but are wonderful.

4) William Jennings Bryan's Cross of Gold speech. Now, the Democratic National Convention of 1896 was a big deal. There was a battle between those who wanted to stay on the Gold Standard and those who wanted bimetallism using silver and gold. Bryan was one of the later and gave the greatest speech in the history of the Democratic party at the convention. He re-enacted the speech in 1921 for recording and you can still find it at <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354/>

5) Every Man a King speech by Kingfish Huey P. Long. Of all the political figures of the 20th Century, there's no one who moves me like The Kingfish. He was one of the best speakers in American history...even if he was cunning and conniving. Every Man a King was his motto and it brought him great success in his life. You can hear one of his speeches at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5109/>

6) Jelly Roll Morton interviewed by Alan Lomax in 1938. Lomax did a lot of incredible interviews documenting American music of the early 20th century. I always thought that his Woody Guthrie oral history was the most important of the ones he did, but the Jelly Roll Morton one was also incredibly important to the study of Musicology. You can find out a lot about Lomax and his projects at <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2006/lomax/index.html>.

7) WJSV's September 21, 1939 full day of Programming. If you want to really understand what radio was in the late 1930s, you need to listen to the whole thing, an entire day's worth of programmes. It wasn't like it is now, formatted stations were rare. Radio was still like TV is today, with networks carrying a full slate of programmes. Washington's WSJV recorded a full day's worth of programming and had it

placed into the National Archives. It's a wonderful document of one full day. You us places, but a college station in Boston once dedicated a full day to playing the entire thing. You can hear a Senator's game (they beat the Indians), an FDR speech, Amos & Andy, news and music from the day. It's an incredible piece that makes you realise just how important putting the pieces of a puzzle together can be compared to having the individual pieces to look at and study. That's what being a historian is all about.

8) Bob Wills & His Texas Playboys recording of New San Antonio Rose. What launched the Texas Swing sound was a feller name of Bob Wills. He had

formed a couple of bands and when he hit upon the Texas Playboys, he knew he got it right. He really had two bands: one a Big Band that played Big Band and Dixieland and the other, the far more interesting Fiddle and Steel Guitar stuff that I always associate with Wills. The New San Antonio Rose (the follow-up to the instrumental version they released in the late 30s) sold more than a million records. What's most incredible is that Wills made his biggest mark on California's music scene. He was a tremendous draw in Los Angeles (and modern Texano music is very much influenced by his work), and he had a giant radio show coming out of KGO in San Francisco which was recorded at the Fairmont



Hotel. Never let anyone tell you that it was Kenny Rodgers and Dolly Parton that crossed Country over into the mainstream.

9) First Broadcast of A Prairie Home Companion from July 6, 1974. Of all the shows that have run on National Public Radio, none have had the impact that A Prairie Home Companion has had. It's the only show a lot of folks listen to on NPR and it's introduced a lot of great old-timey music to the masses even before O Brother, Where Art Thou? did it. It's a pretty good episode, though it really took about two years to get great.

10) What's Goin' On by Marvin Gaye. I gotta say this threw me for a loop when I was first going over the list. There's a lot of Vietnam Era protest music that's not on the list (including nothing by Joan Baez), and while I don't debate Marvin's genius, I would have chosen something by Dylan or even Country Joe & The Fish. Still, it's a powerful song and an important recording.

The rest of the list is a mix of early recordings and music of the later half of the 20th Century. That's the section I had the most trouble with. Yeah, Crazy should be in, along with Judy at Carnegie Hall (which both came out in 1961) but I'm not sure Tapestry by Carole King should be.

Sgt. Pepper's, obviously, but Born to Run? I've Been Loving You Too Long (To Stop Now) by Otis Redding instead of (Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay? At Folsom Prison? Absolutely no question. Roll Over Beethoven by Chuck Berry instead of Rock Around The Clock by Bill Haley? These are arguments best left to historians.

The 2004 list was nearly as brilliant as the 2002 list. While I was going through it, I discovered that there were far fewer things to argue than were on the 2003 list.

1) Some of These Days by Sophie Tucker from 1911. Recorded for Edison, Some of These Days was a popular song for the zaftig Tucker. She was right up there with Fanny Brice as far as popularity goes on the Vaudeville circuit. There's a lot of her stuff out there, but you can find this recording at <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist2/days.html>.

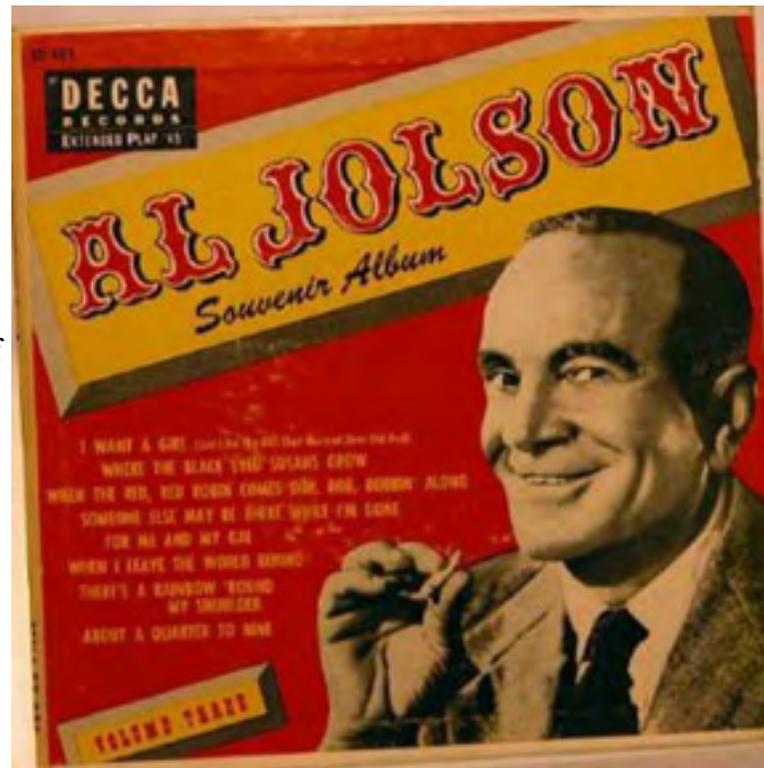
2) Swanee by Al Jolson. What can you say about Jolson? He was a giant performer and really one of the reasons that Radio music took off. Swanee is the best of his tunes and the filmed versions of him singing it are wonderful, but this early recorded version from 1920, is spectacular.

3) Sergey Prokofiev. Peter and the Wolf

from 1939 with Richard Hale narrating. This is the first version of Peter and the Wolf I ever heard. I distinctly remember the voice of Richard Hale from the all-in-one record player we had at Westwood Elementary. This version probably introduced more kids to classical music than any other piece of recorded music.

4) U.S. Highball from Harry Parch, 1946. Harry Parch, and let me say that's a great name, was a composer who used weird scales to do his works. He built his own instruments, using bizarre scales. U.S. Highball is hardish to find, but I heard it at a demo of some of his instruments at the MFA in Boston.

5) Foggy Bottom Breakdown by Flatts & Scruggs (1949). The greatest banjo player of all-time is Earl Scruggs. Foggy Bottom Breakdown is one of the



hardest banjo pieces ever recorded and I've always loved it, partly because it's also great chase music.

6) Lovesick Blues (1949) by Hank Williams Sr. You can't say that the Williams aren't the greatest music family in American History. Yeah, the Carters, and the Judds, but the effect that

Hank the Elder had on popular country, combined with Hank the Younger's popularity and talent and Hank 3's experimentation and ability to combine punk rock and real country makes them number one in my book. Lovesick Blues was a giant hit.

7) Guys & Dolls Original Cast Recording. Musicals were represented by Cradle Will Rock in the first set, but Guys & Dolls might be essential American musical. You could argue Oklahoma (and even Show Boat), but the recording of Guys & Dolls was by far the best-selling.

Douglas MacArthur's Old Soldiers Never Die speech. I've only heard this a couple of times and it's probably the best military speech I've ever heard. Big Mac was a stud, a real dyed-in-the-wool warrior who made questionable moves that sometimes paid off. Those choices cost him his job, and here is the source of the greatest protagonist's goodbye: old soldiers never die, they just fade away.

8) Song by Tom Lehrer from 1953. This is an outrage! That Was The Year That Was was easily the funniest album that Lehrer ever did, but they chose another album of his work, possibly because they wanted something studio instead of a live record. Still, they need to put TWTYTW in sooner or later. And for that matter, at least one Stan Freberg album (the US History one is my favourite)

9) Stan Getz' version of The Girl From Ipanema, 1963. Well, the most whistle-able song of all time deserves this treatment. There are other versions that are nearly as good, but this was the ultimate Bachelor Pad album, along with Brubeck's Take 5.

10) Star Wars Soundtrack by John Williams. Well, you could debate that there are better scores, but there are few as deeply buried in the minds of two generations. I'd say the only ones

that comes close are Indiana Jones and E.T., also from Williams.

The albums included in 2004 are a good bunch, though debatable. Live at the Apollo from James Brown is a no-brainer, though it begs the question that if they over-looked TWTYTW because it was live, then why include Lata? Pet Sounds, the single greatest Beach Boys album, was an easy choice, though I'd liked to have seen Miserlou from Dick Dale enter the Registry. The Allman Bros. At Fillmore East was an odd choice, but I could justify it to myself. Fear of a Black Planet by Public Enemy is the greatest political rap album ever and the only



one that can really hang with it as far as content is Straight Outta Compton from NWA. Nirvana's Nevermind is an odd choice when not a single Sonic Youth, Ramones or even a Velvet Underground album made the list. True, in many ways it was Nevermind that finally cracked punk into the collective American voice, but even Iggy Pop isn't in so I question the timing is all.

2005 featured a lot of interesting choices.

1) Fanny Brice's My Man from 1921. Fanny Brice was a giant star with a bizarre voice. Every shrill Jewish mother imitation you've ever heard is based on Brice. Her version of My Man was one of the big sellers of its day and is still an interesting piece to see a mirror held up not only to the time of production, but to the way we see these things today.

2) 1917 Over There by Nora Bayes. There were lots of recorded versions of Over There during WWI, and the Bayes version wasn't even the best seller (that was Billy Murray's) but Bayes was George M. Cohan's fave, so it gets the nod.

3) The Inauguration of Calvin Coolidge. This one's an interesting choice. There's a lot of history behind recording the first action of a President's



term, dating back to filming of the Cleveland edition. McKinley's is the earliest that's known to survive, but the Coolidge inauguration was broadcast coast to coast and I am fairly certain it was the first of them to be so treated. I could be wrong, but the timing is right.

4) First Transatlantic telephone conversation from January 7th, 1927. There's a story that this was considered to be the most important moment of the twentieth century because it really began the international communications as a reality. There's a solid argument there. I'm not fully convinced, but I could see why many would think

that. It's a good thing they had the common sense to hook up a record to the line or there'd be no record of it whatsoever...no pun intended.

5) Show Boat. Show Boat changed American musical theatre forever and the performance of Paul Robeson cannot be overlooked. It's aged badly to the point where trying to watch Show Boat is incredibly difficult for folks who grew up on musicals like Brigadoon, Hair, and RENT. I like it, but not nearly in the same league as 1776.

6) Archibald MacLeish's Fall of the City. Here's a classic that often gets forgotten. Orson Welles was already doing The Shadow when he did this adaptation of MacLeish's classic. Burgess Meredith and Paul Stewart also had roles. This one is on CD and is well worth finding. I love Welles' voice.

7) Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling from June 22nd, 1938. This was a legendary boxing match. There aren't a lot of sporting events on the list (in fact, there's only one baseball game (and it ain't the one with The Shot Heard Around The World) on the list so far. This was a great fight. There are other ones that were certainly recorded (including some of Jack Johnson's fights) and this one is incredible. It would be hard to find two fighters of such incredible intensity who were also such

great sportsmen. The fight is one of the best pieces of boxing calling ever, with Clem McCarthy being a true legend.

8) Blueberry Hill by Fats Domino, Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On by Jerry Lee Lewis and That'll Be The Day by The Crickets. These are all really important recordings, but where's my man Haley? Bill Haley has been overlooked.

9) Switched on Bach by Wendy Carlos. Electronic Music, ye have arrived. There are other very important electronic recordings, but Switched on Bach was the first to really enter the mainstream. It sold huge numbers of copies and to this day remains the biggest seller of its genre. Hugely important to the development of 1980s SynthPop.

10) Don't Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers from the Firesign Theatre. One of the funniest albums ever. You cant go wrong with Firesign, and this was probably their best piece. I mean, you've got Tirebiter, for Christ's sake! The Firesigns are still going today and they were in Campbell not but a year or so ago. I know Kevin Standlee went to see them, but I could not. They also received a Hugo nomination (and a win?) for one of their albums. They're a very funny group and if you become an acolyte of any one comedy group...

Issues with the Registry

First off, if you look at the National Film Registry (and eventually I will), you'll see that there are a ton of comedies. There was a lot of radio comedy produced over the last 100 years that's been over-looked. Stan Freberg is an obvious miss on the Registry, as I said earlier, but he's far from the only one. There's Lenny Bruce as the most glowing example. Religions, Inc. should be in and there are several recordings of it available. You can even find it on iTunes! It's an obvious one that needs to be included. Bill Cosby's Himself is another one. That had a profound effect on a generation of comedians and sold like mad. There's at least one George Carlin record worth preserving, and the same could be said of Steve Martin. In fact, Martin is, in many ways, the first comedian to become a rock star through the records.

You can't really blame the Library of Congress, they don't really get comedy's role in the world, I guess. There's almost the right number of rap albums (they've gotta get the first Sugar Hill Gang album, Straight Outta Compton and at least one Snoop and Dre album) and they're good on most of the early country. There's some Johnny Cash that has to make it in, a little more Jimmy Rodgers, some Patsy Cline and at least one of the Bob Wills shows from KGO.

I'd like to see at least one Kenny

Rogers and Dolly Parton album in. There's no question that they did a lot to promote Country as a mainstream art. Sadly, I think Garth Brooks might get in before either of them. There's still a lot of more modern stuff that needs to get in as far as country goes. The best selling artist of the early 1970s isn't in. Marty Robbins outsold everybody with his albums and his single El Paso was huge.

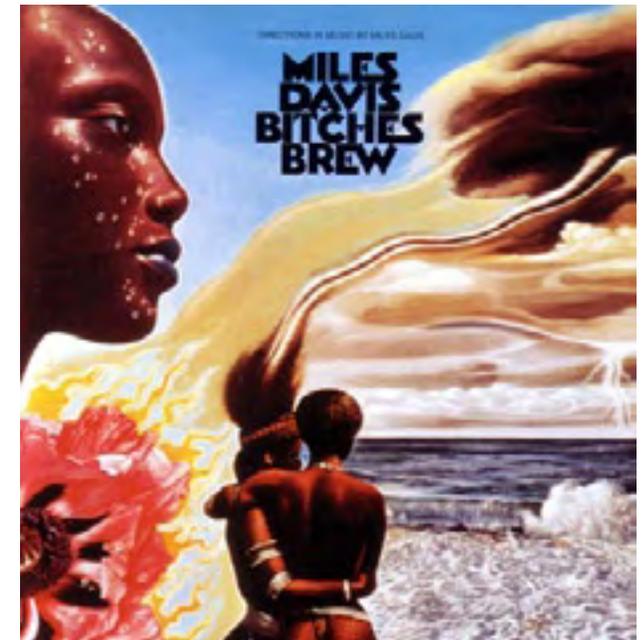
There's so much important Jazz, and almost all of it is American, that you really have to be a little more choosy. Bitches Brew should be in with the next batch. Miles Davis defined Fusion with Bitches Brew and that needs to be added to the Registry. There's also the Mink-Coltrane sessions, a few more Dixieland recordings, some early violin jazz and more.

Rock is much harder. The first thing that must, no question, go into the Registry is Bill Haley & The Comets. I'd put him right next to Chuck Berry as the reasons Rock 'n Roll turned it up so quickly. The fact that he's not in is a crime. After that, you have the Loving Spoonful and Bob Denver. Both sold tons of records and both had a defined effect on music of the 1960s and 70s. When you get into the 1960s, you have to include The Velvet Underground. There would be no modern alternative music without Lou Reed. To that add the MC-5 and Iggy Pop, who honestly had far more

effect on the future of music than Jimi Hendrix did (Are You Experienced is in). After that, you've got the Mamas & the Papas, Peter, Paul & Mary and at least one Kingston Trio to make things right.

In the 1970s, you have Zeppelin and you have Skynerd and you have Punk. The Ramones should be in, and so should The Talking Heads. There are lots of CBGB and Mabuhay shows that were taped. For that matter at least one Grateful Dead show should be in, perhaps the New Years Eve show with The Blues Brothers. Jim Croce should have gone in before Carole King, though I'm sure they'll say there was no single record that qualifies.

The 1980s are really tough. I'd say The Talking Heads, Thriller



and probably Born in the USA as the first ones that should go in. Rockit, by Herbie Hancock will probably be overlooked, but was a major piece of popular electronica. I'd say that there's gotta be at least one Run DMC album to add to that list. Appetite for Destruction, the seminal Guns 'n Roses album, is also a must-have.

Not all of the 1990s are eligible, but Nevermind is already in. I'd say that there's probably only one or two other albums that should make it in, but one is Britney Spears' first album. Talk about changing the world. Pop Music was forever changed and not for the better, but it is an important milestone.

There are a few areas where the registry is very weak. Soundtracks and musical scores for films are represented by a couple of pieces, but Philip Glass is nowhere to be seen. I'd say his score for The Hours would be his best, but the ones with the incredibly long names are the ones that should be added. Lalo Schifrin's works should be in as well. No Henry Mancini shows up on the list at all. Where's the score to The Guns of Navarone or The Magnificent Seven?

Completely left-out are some of the most sung songs of all-time: TV themes. I know, I know, very low brow, but you find me someone who doesn't know the words to Gilligan's Island or The Beverly Hillbillies! Flatts & Scrugs

also did some amazing flat-pickin' in that last one there. Good Times is another one that certainly expressed the age in which the music was produced. There are others from the 1950s (let's think about Mission Impossible and Peter Gunn are examples) that should be considered. The problem is they don't want to archive things for films that already exist in film archives, which makes me wonder why Star Wars is in.

There are a lot of musicals missing. 1776, City of Angels, Brigadoon, RENT (which will probably be in this coming year since it's eligible) and Jesus Christ Superstar all need to be in, as well as Hair. Grease is another one that's gotta go in, though I think they'll not do it because it'll be in the National Film Registry.

There are a lot of significant events that need to be in. The Olym-



pics of 1936 are very important and I know that those recordings still exist. The Rose Bowl was the first radio broadcast sporting event (as I understand it) and there's a recording of one of the very early editions. As for concerts, there's Woodstock as the most glaring problem. Then there's The Concert for Bangladesh. Both of these are massively important musical happenings and should be on the registry. I'm sure Woodstock will end up on the rolls soon, because there is a record version that's different than the film version and the event is just so damn important to defining the 1960s.

In the future, I'm not sure what'll go in. RENT is almost a lock for the 2006 list. In 2011 I'm betting that the 9-11 Black Box Recordings and several 911 calls will go in. I'd say that there's a very good chance that Dangermouse's The Black Album will go in as an example of Mash-Up culture. For older stuff, the first edition of Edward R. Murrow's This I Believe is still in existence (they played it on NPR the other day) and should be put in. Same with some Jonathan Winters material. Esquivel is another one. Mucha Muchacha needs to go in. There's little in the way of Hispanic music already in (there's Mambo Fever and a few others) and I'd say that some Banda or Texano music should be installed.

There's so much that I'm glad they're doing 50 a year!

**Letter Graded Mail
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my gentle readers**

And now...Kevin Standlee!

Congratulations on the milestone issue 100 of *The Drink Tank*! I'm glad I was able to contribute two bricks to the wall.

And a fine two bricks they were too!

More regarding the cost of Worldcons: One of the biggest reasons the memberships are so expensive is that the convention is simply the wrong size. It grew to the point where it usually needs a convention center, which loads the convention down with a huge fixed cost (over \$200,000, in ConJosé's case, to rent the convention center and decorate it -- none of those chairs and tables are free). But having done so, we did not keep growing to the point where we fully utilize the space we're renting and spread that fixed cost out over about 10,000 people or more. The variable cost of a Worldcon membership is around \$20. Everything else goes toward the fixed costs. Fixed costs go up in quanta. Once you reach a certain size, you need to jump up to the next quanta, and your fixed costs increase drastically.

I remember reading about FUnCon, the sorta rump WorldCon of the 1960s that pretty much paved the way for the larger WorldCons



that started happening shortly thereafter. Folks thought that the costs would be too high and that there'd be no way to make it work. And yet, it did.

Roughly speaking, Worldcon is either twice the size it should be or half the size it needs to be. At around 2,500 people, you could squeeze back down into hotel properties and bunch of fixed expenses would go away. At around 10,000 people, you'd finally get the cost per member down toward something that many of your readers may consider reasonable. On the other hand, I wonder what that cost would be. If it's what they paid in the 1960s or early 1970s to attend a convention, well, we're never going to get there again. But if we took the at-the-door cost of L.A.con II (1984) as a

baseline -- \$75 -- and ran it forward just on inflation, then an at-the-door membership would be about \$125, not the \$200 or more it is today. Still, I think a bunch of people think that's too expensive. For that matter, how many people reading this think that \$75 -- the 1984 price, remember -- is too expensive?

I'd not even bat an eye at \$100, but you're right in thinking that there'd be people who would find even that too expensive. We could do a 10k person WorldCon, though not for a few years and not without pissing people off by opening up the media can of worms.

Here's another outrageous bidding proposal to keep the cost down: a membership cap. Announce when you're bidding that, in an effort to fit into smaller properties and charge significantly less, you will limit attending membership to 2500 people or the number of site selection voters, whichever is greater. Voters get right of first refusal to buy an attending membership. You might manage to drop your fixed costs drastically that way. But, like my other cost-reducing proposals, you run the risk of antagonizing anyone who thinks that their "entitlement" is being attacked, and a bid for a "traditional, full-featured, inclusionary" Worldcon would have popular appeal.

That's a great idea, but sadly, I

don't see it ever happening. Of course, if a con bid and DIDN'T announce it until after they won, now that might work!

I'm afraid that we have a lot of people who complain about the cost of a Worldcon whose vision of what it should be is "the things I personally like, and get rid of the other stuff and 90% of the attendees so I can afford to attend it."

You're dead-on there. There are a lot of specialists who only want to see their stuff catered to. I'm a generalist and I love a little bit of everything, but I'd love to see somethings go to make it so I could afford to attend at least every other year or so.

Kevin

PS: In passing, and replying to the article talking about other fanzines that reached the century mark, I would like to note that Emerald City passed 100 issues; the (presumably final) issue will be number 134. Cheryl published monthly, though, so it took much longer for her to get there than it did you.

Quite true. Running monthly isn't easy either. It's amazing to me that she managed to do it for more than 10 years!



Something new and interesting happens every day around the Computer History Museum. This last Tuesday was no exception.

We have an annual fellows dinner and this year was

a brilliant set of choices. There was the requisite British guy (Sir Tony Hoare, software dude and inventor of Quicksort) and there was the Internet pioneer (Bob Kahn) and the former Xerox PARC dude (Butler Lampson). The other one was the guy I'd been pushing for us to honour for about five years: Marvin Minsky. He's an AI pioneer, wrote an SF book with my man Harry Harrison, and is well-known in various fannish circles for attending cons and such. He's a good guy and I was finally going to get to meet him.

Until he had to cancel.

OK, that happens. Marvin didn't show and I was bummed. I wanted him to see my handiwork putting together a display that featured his device The Muse: a sort of an electronic music maker.

Around 3:30, I got a call at my desk. It was Mr. David Brin. He had been speaking at Google and was interested in coming by for a very brief visit. I headed downstairs and met

David and his scientist friend I brought them into Visible Storage to start the fast tour.

Now, when folks visit for the first time, they tend to get this look on their face. It's either a giddiness or a stunned bemusement, I can never tell. David had the giddy one, no question. The first wall that you see is full of PCs from the 1970s to the 1990s. There's everything from the Altair to the Apple Cube that did so poorly. David scanned the wall, obviously finding several that he had used.

I powered them through, doing the entire circuit in less than twenty minutes. David was very interested in the very large systems like the Johnniac or the SAGE. It was interesting to hear his take. As we rounded the Supercomputer section, he took a few final photos and said, "minute for minute, this was the best part of my trip out here."

High praise.

OK, That's it. The Drink Tank Issue 101 is over. What's next? Well, I'd check out chrisfortaff.org for starters, then maybe read PrintZine. I'll be doing another PrintZine (Issue 5) and the first AhwahneeCon PR before I put out another Drink Tank, but I've already got ideas for it down.

**Until Next time...remember:
Chris for TAFF!**