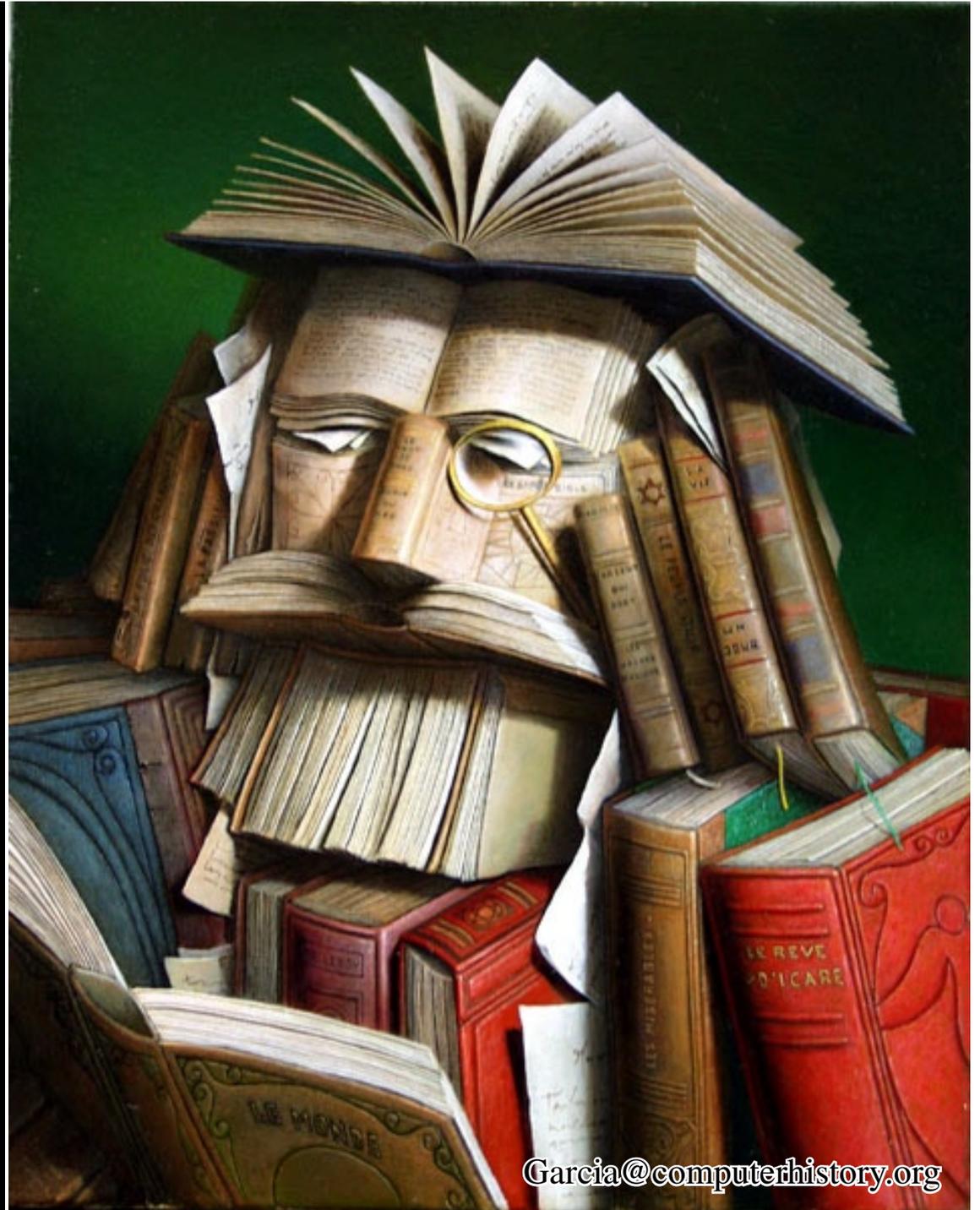


THE DRINK TANK ABOUT





It was an exciting weekend for Christopher J. Garcia, and that's not big news. I had thought that it might be a good time, but it was better than that. It all started on Friday night when I attended the Legion of Rassilon meeting. Now, I love Carl's Jr, the best burger place in the BArea, and that's where the LoR meets. This week was Torchwood, and I knew I'd only be watching the first episode. It was a good one, full of sex and no real story. I like Torchwood at the same time as understanding that it's not very good. It's fun! Capt. Jack is a great character. Any guy who would sit with a friend while he commits suicide is a pal for life. I liked the episode a good deal.

Now, the LoR, as their main

fundraising technique, holds a raffle for DVDs and other memorabilia. They showed a few Shaun the Sheep episodes as they set up the system and I loved them. It's from the good people at Aardman Animation and it's funny, funny, funny. While there are no evil penguins, there are hilarious sheep. There was a DVD copy of it last meeting, but I had to choose between the Prisoner gift pack and Shaun. I love The Prisoner, so that's where I went.

This time, I won the DVD set. I took it home and when I watched Evelyn on Saturday, she loved it! Score one for me!

Saturday night was the big poker tourney. It was Omaha Hi-Low. This was a pot limit tourney which was different for us. I'm not a great Hold 'Em Player (I've won one tourney and finished second another time) but Omaha is my number two game behind Razz. I'm also good at Seven and Five Card Stud and California Low Ball. I managed to start at a table with some wild bettors, and since I'm the wildest bettor of them all, I played almost every hand. I went down and I came back up and I made it to the final table where I eliminated Marin and Ryan on one hand. They're my old roommates and it was good to get rid of both of them at once so I could continue trash talking. I eliminated my buddy Mike and Donna on one hand as well and I personally eliminated more than one half

of the field. I ended up in second place losing to Mark, the Host. It was a really fun time and it'd been a while since I made it to the final two.

I went home and slept late, waking up just in time for the WWE Hall of Fame ceremony. They only showed the top four inductees, which meant that there was no Nick Bockwinkel or The Wild Samoans shown, though they were both inducted. I'm told the whole show will be on the DVD. They showed Jim Ross, announcing legend, Jerry Lawler, regional superstar and crack announcer, Mr Perfect Curt Hennig, who passed away but was a great star, and The American Dream Dusty Rhodes. I was moved by the Perfect and Rhodes inductions. I'm always moved at Hall of Fame Inductions.

That led to WrestleMania. I love Wrestling and WrestleMania is sort of like Wrestling Christmas. No real fan can get to sleep easy the night before. I had a few friends over and we watched the madness. There were guys dropping each other on ladders and pile-drivers onto steel steps. Vince McMahon got his head shaved. There was sound and fury signifying AWESOMENESS!!!

And so, I'm plum tuckered out. Everything happens in these little bundles and I'm glad I got to see all my old wrestling pals. Now, there is perfect time to make fanzines!!!

Garcia@computerhistory.org

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

Let's start off with my man Mr. Eric Mayer!!!

Chris,

Another enjoyable issue. I have to say, though, someone could tell me anything about rap, or ritzy art exhibits and I wouldn't know whether to believe it or not so it's kind of hard to comment. Maybe it's appropriate to feature hoaxes in the Drink Tank. Eventually you can reveal that it isn't a fanzine after all! Or maybe all the articles in this issue are true and that's the hoax.

Or The Drink Tank itself is a hoax and I'm really Arnie Katz in disguise (I'm Arnie Katz in Disguise, oh yes I am, Arnie Katz in Disguise...)

And now I understand you're going to have a Worldcon issue and I know even less about Worldcons than rap or art exhibits. (or hoaxes) But wait. I can blather on about conventions. Indeed, I can do I sort of pre-LoC. After all, I found Mark Plummer's reflections on whether, as I had put it, one could be more than an "affiliate" fan without attending cons to be very interesting.

I gather from what Mark said that he and Claire are not only



acquainted with most of the fans on their mailing list via written communication but have met them in person. However, he reckons that you can be a fully fledged fan just by participating in fanzines but there don't seem to be many such people. It's nice to know that not everyone considers con attendance as necessary. However, while I rather wish every fan shared Mark's sentiments I suspect that many don't. Actually, it would be pretty hard to. We all tend to feel a greater connection to people we've met, I think.

I can see that most folks in fandom think of fandom as Con-going fandom. I love Con-goers and Fanzine Fans who attend cons make me smile because I can talk zines with people.

I'm kind of recalling when I lived in Rochester, New York and was heavily into orienteering which I also mentioned in my last LoC. That was an activity in which I participated in person. But that was because, by chance, Rochester is one of the few hotbeds of orienteering in the United States. The Rochester club is one of the most active in the country. Participating in person didn't require any expenditure to speak of or any travel. (Plus, crowds get pretty spread out in parks, or you can just wander away into the woods if it gets too much!)

Living in Rochester, for orienteering purposes, was, I suppose, the faanish equivalent of living in a city which stages a big annual sf con. So, who knows, if I had ever lived in such a city I probably would've dropped in on a convention now and then.

My orienteering has dropped off to almost nothing since I moved away from Rochester since the available meets require a bit too much travel. Orienteering's popularity suffers from the fact that a lot of potential orienteers simply don't live near enough to where meets are held. To participate in orienteering you really need to go out on a course. That's what the hobby is about. **I will also point out that Rochester has one of the most active SF Fan**

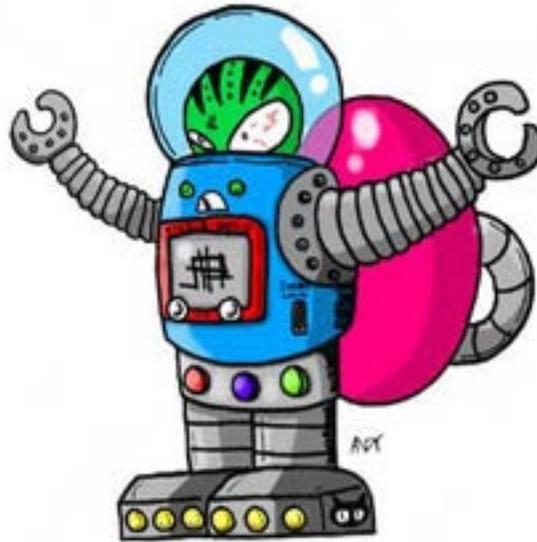
Clubs in the Country. There're a lot of orienteering groups out here in the BArea as well. There are more GeoCaching folks around too.

Fanzine fandom, potentially, can be open to anybody, anywhere, who wants to distribute a fanzine via the internet. (I know, that till excludes folks without computers or internet connections) Provided that fanzine fandom is primarily about fanzines. But I don't believe that's the case today, if it ever was. (I might add that the term "Core Fandom" makes a lot more sense if you don't see fanzines as the basis for fandom) If convention attendance is fandom's basic/most important activity then fandom limits participation in the same way as orienteering does.

That's a good point. I know a few folks who I would call fanzine fans who are seldom if ever seen in the pages of any fanzine.

I'm not saying it's good or bad. A hobby is what it is. Plenty of hobbies do require participants to live in proximity to other participants. If someone said to me, "I don't live near an orienteering club but I collect maps and I trace out routes, at home, on my maps, so I orienteer"...well, I don't know. I wouldn't say that person was really an orienteer. If I just write LoCs to fanzines maybe I'm just tracing routes out at home.

LoCs are a pretty big part for



Fanzines, though. I think a closer approximation would be being the guy who writes a zine and posts it on the net without any LoCs or anything from anyone else. I'm not saying that's a bad thing, but it's the isolationist method, I guess.

And, really, I don't know whether any of this matters, whether it makes any discernable difference or what sort of difference it might make.

By the way, I see you had an interesting letter from Gregg Trend. He also wrote a nice LoC to Pixel and I hope I keep reading stuff by him. Best,
Eric

It was good to see his email pop up. I hope we see more too. I know he's a member of The Cult...or so rumor has it!

And now...Mark Plummer!

Bloody hell, Chris, here you are, an aspiring TAFF candidate and everything, and you've never heard of Derek Pickles.

Never heard of Derek Pickles?

Worse, you think I've made him up? You do realise, don't you, that *if* you decide to enter the line-up for the next TAFF race, and *if* you actually manage to win, then that's not the end of the process. There's still a test. Greg Pickersgill and Peter Weston will be waiting for you when you arrive in the UK and if you can't show yourself to be fully cognisant of key events and personalities in the UK fan scene then they'll have you straight back on the boat to Californialand or wherever it is you come from, and without any sandwiches too. I'd start reading and memorising Then...

(<http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF-Archives/Then/Index.html>)

straight away if I were you.

I have done so and am now learning. It burns! Too...much...information... The thing is, I know I can outrun Peter in a footrace, though I've heard Pickersgill is wiley.

Derek Pickles. Old-time Bradford fan from the fifties. Here he is, with the rest of the Bradford group in 1952 (<http://fanac.org/Other Cons/Mancon/m52-001.html>). Back row, third from left, next to Mal Ashworth -

- and you have heard of Mal Ashworth, haven't you?

Oddly, I have. I recently spent a while trolling the waters of FANAC.org and remember seeing his name as co-editing a zine called Bug-Eyed Monster or something like that.

Most importantly, Derek's often credited with starting the idea of making fanzines available for 'the usual'. (See http://www.zeldes.com/fan/ditto/ditto14_pr1.pdf -- page 11):

'U.K. fan Derek Pickles and his brother-in-law, Stan Thomas, were the first to announce, in the June 1954 issue of Phantasmagoria, the three ways of getting their fanzine without paying cash: 1. No subscriptions are requested, if you send money we won't refuse it, but there is no sub rate; 2. You can make sure of receiving future issues, which will appear when we feel like it, by a. Writing a letter of comment, b. A contribution, c. Your magazines. This formula quickly spread. It's unknown, however, who was the first to sum these up in the useful phrase the usual.'

I always wondered who came up with that idea, and it makes sense that an imaginary fan invented by Mark Plummer would be the one! You've not fooled me, Mark! I'm a hoaxer, I totally know when I'm being hoaxed.

And anyway, what's this with



being suspicious of good old British names? Everybody knows that it's American fandom that has the exotic names what with people like Elmer Perdue, Calvin Demmon and Redd Boggs. I'm still not entirely convinced that Claire believes in Redd Boggs; I think she still suspects he's an imaginary character invented by Greg Pickersgill.

You see, Redd Boggs also makes sense to me. Redd is a perfectly cromulent name, and Wade Boggs, Redd's nephew I believe, was a helluva baseball player.

There's a vaguely serious point lurking in this which is that the exotic names of some American writers contributed to the sense of wonder for British sf readers probably through to the seventies. The UK's a lot more

multicultural now, but I remember Greg remarking that to a young fan living in the the bottom left-hand corner of Wales in the mid-sixties the very name 'Asimov' seemed genuinely exotic and almost as otherworldly as the books themselves.

Asimov still has a sense of the unusual, though only as a first name. There was a guy in my graduating class name of Asi Konogian and the Asi was short for Asimov. Needless to say, he was not a fan of the late Doctor's work.

I do sympathise with you feeling that 32 is 'a little bit old in the everyday world, and still [makes you] the young guy on the block in fanzine fandom!' I doubt it's consoling, but I feel pretty much the same way and I'm 43. At the last UK Corflu, the youngest attendees were probably Claire, Bridget Bradshaw and Tobes Valois, all then 27. I wonder though whether they'll still be the youngest attendees at the *next* UK Corflu when they'll all be 39. Actually, no, they probably won't be because there will likely be people along like Max and James Bacon and Ang (for GUFF) Rosin, but they're only a couple of years younger, and even the group-formally-known-as-Third-Row will be getting on for thirty.

Wow. I remember, back when I was in my 20s and the Third Row showed up on the collective fannish RADAR. And they'll be 30!!!

Unbelievable!

Oh, and without wishing to labour the point about the UK fanzine scene or lack thereof, but you say that 'there are a fair number of highly visible UK zines' and go on to cite Plokta, Zoo Nation and us, but that's still only three titles -- and, last year, seven issues -- which is about as many fanzines as you produce between breakfast and teatime.

What about Tortoise and Vector and Prolapse and Shiny and...and...there's that one by that guy. YOU know, the guy with the hair! I do cheat in my production schedule. I can only do so many by not taking teatime.

--

Regards
Mark Plummer
Croydon, UK

Thanks Mark! And now...John Purcell!!!

This will be a quickie loc on two of your zines, Chris; sort of an abridged Lloyd Penney-style loc. It was bound to happen sooner or later.

YOU know how I love a good Lloyd Penney-style LoC!

#121 - This was a very strange issue. Actually, it was very apropos for the day that I read this zine, April 1st. Amusing stuff, laddie buck. It kind of reminds me of that marketing class

that one fine April Fool's Day set up a booth in the student commons taking donations for the widow of the Unknown Soldier. By the end of the day, quite a bit of money had come in. Fortunately, the students and professor had already decided to donate any funds received to a real organization, Widows of American Veterans.

I had hoped to have it on eFanzines.com on April Fool's Day, but I wanted to get it a little earlier because I wanted the Handicapping the Hugos issue to get out earlyish in the progress of the voting.

Then there was the time in 1992 when NPR announced that Richard Nixon was declaring for the Presidency again. He was quoted as saying that, "I didn't do anything

wrong, and I won't do it again," which was going to be his campaign slogan. They even had video of Nixon making a speech announcing his intentions in PBS news reports. Stations across the country were inundated with calls from irate listeners, until finally NPR admitted that it was all a hoax, with Rich Little providing the voice of Nixon.

I like the idea of NPR doing



hoaxes. It's the way that old-timey Newspaper would do things!

God, but I love a good joke. Especially when it preys upon the gullibility and idiocy of the average American K-Mart shopper. It's just too easy.

If we can't screw with the rubes, who can we screw with?

#122 - You do realize, of course, that now you have to re-do your odds since *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* has been ousted by a recount in favor of *Pan's Labyrinth*, which is a much more deserving film. As much as I enjoy the fun and games of *Pirates*, *Pan's Labyrinth* is astonishing, and would be my favorite to win the Hugo for best long-form dramatic presentation.

And now I will revise my predictions. I'm saying that V for Vendetta is still number one with Pan's at number two and the rest the same. I'm thinking that Pan's will be well, but things will be much closer.

As for the rest of the Hugo nominees, I haven't read a single one of the fiction nominees, nor the short-form dramatic presentations, so related books and whatnots, thus really only feel qualified to vote in the Fan Hugo categories. Even those are suspect, in my mind. I mean, the fanzines nominated are all wonderful, but I personally don't think *Plotka* deserves the nod because of a lack of a definite fanzine presence throughout 2006, if that makes any sense to you. But over-all there are some really great nominees this year, and allow me to extend a hearty congratulations to you, Christopher J. Garcia, Esq., on your double nomination! Lay you even odds

Fandom is **not** a fucking war.

that you'll be able to plaster "Hugo-Losing Fanzine" all over *Drink Tank* #150+ once the voting results are in. Seriously, I'd do that if I were you.

Plokta did two issues, including one with one of my articles in it. True, I'd love it if the zines that put out a half-dozen or more great issues got the nod (Pixel comes to mind). I'm hoping that I'm up to Issue 150 by the time they announce the winner, because a Hugo-losing Fanzine needs a big number!

Ah, me. Done for now. I am glad you enjoyed *Askance* #1; the second issue is sort of in production, but it won't be out for another four weeks or so. I want to get chapter three of my dissertation done first. In the meantime, some locs are trickling in. I'm mailing out the remaining American and British copies this afternoon. So much fun.

I did a little LoCing myself

last night. Not much since I had WrestleMania to watch too.

Take care, and prepare that Hugo-losing speech, my friend.

I've prepared my loss speech and will deliver it at some BASFA meeting after they announce the winners. Should be interesting since I'm planning on opening with 'Since you fuckers didn't vote for me, I'm gonan do a speech!' That should lead to further votes for next year!

All the best,

John Purcell

The Matter of Collective Nouns
and the Undead

by

Christopher J. Garcia

I spent some time reading a book called *An Exhaltation of Larks*. It was a good book about the various collective forms of animals Kindles, Crashes, Prides, Parliments (whcih is a gathering of Funk Musicians and Ravens), Murders and so on were all enlightening. You have to remember that the English Language was conceived of by a bunch of freaks who decided that other languages just didn't have enough words or confusion (and Eng-

lish does have more words that any other languages!)

I went through the book three times and I couldn't find several things I was hoping to find. There was nothing for Teledu for example (which I have since named a Pander of Teledu), but there were a lot I didn't know (a fall of Woodcocks? A float of Crocs?) But there was the ultimate one missing:

Zombies.

What does one call a mess-load of Zombies? I've often thought about that when watching horror films. You never hear anyone, when first looking out the window at the on-coming mass of brain-eating evil, say anything like 'My Ghod! A gaggle of zombies!' or even 'Get me the shotgun, there's a zeal of zombies on their way up here!' No where in the Romero ouvre do we get that knowledge dropped on us. It should have been a part of the script for Night of the Living Dead. Hell, it should have been in White Zombie in the 1930s! The lack of coverage of this important fact means that someone else has to come up with the name for Zombies.

As I believe that they've not been assigned a collective noun, I'd like to officially announce that a bunch of Zombies is now called an Amble of Zombies.

"Man, those con-goers look like an amble of zombies."

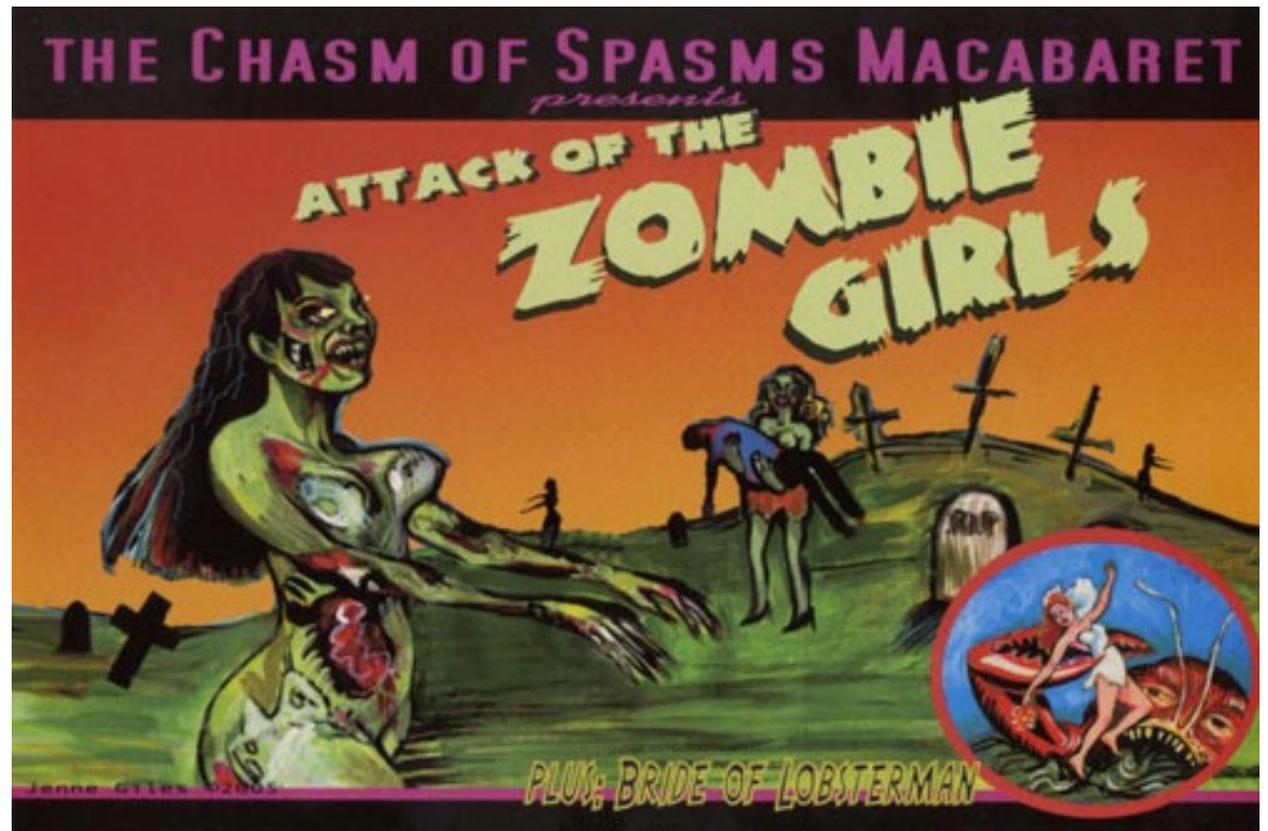
Or...

"There's an amble of zombies taking control of that shopping center! We must take action. Someone gather up a litter of shotguns!"

Now, I'm not a linguistics expert, but I know how I'd go about it in France. I'd go to the Francoph-one League, or whatever it's called in French, and petition saying that 'the lousy Americans have yet to decide what to call them. I recommend we name a group of zombies!' and they'd do it! In English, it's not nearly as easy. I guess you'd have to petition the folks who write Webster's or the Oxford

English Dictionary. That seems right, but I think even better would be to subvert the system and make a zombie film where the phrase shows up. Much like Beth coining the phrase 'bitch-cakes' and waiting to see how long it took to show up on Melrose Place. A noble experiment.

So, I've got to get the word out. I'm not sure what direction to take it, but rest assured that this injustice will not stand. Zombies will be given a collective noun and it will be exceptional and they will spare me because I'm the guy who came up with the idea!





San Jose- A City Changed! Centralia- A City Burning!

Every city goes through growth and contraction. San Jose is one of those cities that seems to have been growing forever and will never stop. That's not true, it's slowed slightly over the last decade, but it's still slightly up in population every year. I love San Jose, it's one of the reasons I wanna hold a CorFlu here and not in San Francisco. It's not always been the place it is today. In fact, in my lifetime the city has been reborn and redeveloped,

for better or for worse.

When I was born, San Jose had about 450,000 people while the rest of Santa Clara County have nearly 700k folks living on it. That number has changed with the total population of Santa Clara County well-over 2 million and San Jose itself being more than 900,000. That's a doubling in 30 years.

I remember Downtown from the late 1970s and early 1980s. It wasn't a dump, but it wasn't really a downtown either. It was like the rest of the valley, only with a strip of bigger buildings off of Santa Clara street. There were a

few old buildings that had been banks and such that were then mixed-use buildings for offices. There was a part of town where there was nothing but old movie theatres that had been converted into peep-shows and sex shops. The South End of First Street was awful and no one ever went there...unless they were looking for porn or prostitutes. It was the blightiest part of the city.

In the early 1980s, Tom McEnery, a guy who has been very supportive of my filmmaking over the last couple of years, became mayor of San Jose. He ran as redevelopment candidate. His first plan was to change that part of town where the sex lived into a place where people could go and have a good time. No...not THAT kind of good time. He wanted restaurants and clubs and book stores and a classy movie theatre. One of the first things that he had helped open near that part of town when he was a councilman was the Camera One theatre. It was the start of the Camera Cinemas that really took off and have honestly changed the face of the southern section of downtown SJ. Then a restaurant, Eulipia, opened up. With the beginning of the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, they started working on clearing folks out of homes in areas where they'd be building towers and getting rid of the sex shops. They encouraged businesses to move in, like Metro: The Silicon Valley's

Weekly Newspaper. Eventually, ReDev managed to attract businesses like the Cactus Club, Marsugi's, and The Usual to that part of town before South First Billiards stepped up. By 1989, they'd cleaned up that part of town and things were great, until they decided that they wanted a different kind of client and started pushing some of those businesses out of that part of town (like The Cactus) and replaced them with more high-falutin' kinds of places.

San Jose changed forever and it's for the best in many ways. Some of the old buildings are gone, but many of them still exist and have just been reused. If you look at the two pictures below, you can see one's from 1975 and it looks North along South First

Street towards the heart of downtown. To me, it looks like the worst parts of Washington DC (or any major city, but I've only experienced the worst parts of DC) The buildings are old and mostly falling apart. There's nothing positive about that location (except for the movie theatre, which was about to go porno). The other version shows how far they've come. There are trees, planted in the mid-1980s, that were originally to mask much of the decay of the street while they cleaned it up. The buildings have been up-graded while the original frontage has been saved. There's the Studio theatre during its run as Glo, a nightclub. It's also been Poly-Esther's and The Hive. It's a beautiful building and the preservationist in me is so glad they kept the signage. In-

side, it looks nothing like the old theatre. The brick building across the street is The Agenda, another club, though far more upscale than Glo. I only go there during Cinequest because they have parties there.

They've managed to bring some classy joints into the mix, a hookah bar, the California Theatre, a record shop, while maintaining the old ways.

San Jose is vibrant and has changed for the better for the casual participant, though many people had their homes relocated or were paid so they could bulldoze them and make the new buildings around town. The fact is that San Jose is still growing in a way a city might naturally grow.

But what about cities that are dying? Not merely contracting, but



waiting to return to the soil they rose from? We tend to think of towns that have fallen as ghost towns, or discover their ruins centuries later and give them long traditions that we try and unravel, but sometimes town have to die for various reasons. A long-running anthracite coal fire burning beneath the city would be one of those reasons.

The documentary *The Town That Was* tells the story of Centralia, Pennsylvania. My buddies Chris and Georgie made the film to tell the story of how Centralia has had change forced on it. From a town of thousands of people to the 8 holdouts living there today, Centralia has been turned into a waste land due to the fire burning beneath. The Federal Government bought out everyone's houses in the 1990s, but a few folks have decided to stay. Every time a family leaves, usually because they die off, their house is bulldozed into the ground leaving to evidence of it. A kid fell into a sinkhole and that caused the government to come out and try and solve the problem.

They saw that the problem, the fire, would cost half a billion dollars to correct, while simply paying people to move was much cheaper.

The town simply melted away, it would seem, save for the few squatters who stayed behind. Most of them stayed because they were too old to live anywhere else. One guy, the thirty-something John Lokitis, has stayed



because it was where he grew up. He still tends the lawns and decorates for Christmas. He is the only one able to keep the town running in any way. He decorates and touches up the paint on benches and tries to make it seem like Centralia is still a city.

The odd thing is the death of Centralia is another piece in a strange puzzle that makes up the life of a town. We're used to towns just giving up, the people going away and leaving the

buildings behind as husks that we can turn into tourist attractions. There's nothing that'll draw people faster than seeing the remains of what they'll never be able to experience. But Centralia's not a series of old, half-burned buildings. It's a meadow with a road running through it. It's a wide-spot where a few people still try to keep it up. When the last resident leaves and the Feds bulldoze it all again, it'll be nothing but a place where they used to have Veteran's Day events, where children grew up and people passed away and were buried. There'll be a few cemeteries and maybe a few light posts and for the next 250 years the mine fire that burns beneath the town, throwing up smoke and carbon monoxide. That's enough to bring those of us who want to experience the very end of a town, but not enough to make it attractive to visitors.

And maybe that's the point. There's no romance to what happened to Centralia. It was a government decision after they failed to make any other option work. There'll be no busloads to Centralia to see what was once the gas station of the former drug store. There'll just be a spot on the map in light ink saying Centralia until they stop even giving it that. Then it'll be nothing more than the footage in archives and the stories it inspired. It's a shame at town must devolve like that, but every town has its own story.

I've been working a lot on a new zine I'll be doing soon. It's called eZine. It's a companion piece to PrintZine, though not really. It's gonna deal with the best of various sites like MySpace and Tribe.net in a way. I'm starting with YouTube. There's a lot to be said about YouTube and I'm just scratching the surface with the ten pages I'll be doing.

As it stands, it'll probably be a PrintZine for a while at least. It'll probably become a part of my TAFF Race, as most of my zines have, and will certainly be at least quarterly.

I'm still thinking about the next issues of Half Dome Happenings and then it's the Drink Tank issue 124, which will either be another odd-and-ins issue or The Drink Tank looks at The Perfect WorldCon (for The Drink Tank) issue.

