

The Drink Tank 138



I had to do one more...



This should be the Cocktail Issue, or even This Were WorldCons. I've been working on both and they'll be out soon, I promise, but I had to do one extra because I had much to say and I had one of those experiences that just has to be written about.

I had my wallet stolen. A lot of you who read my LJ will have heard that part, but the

real big deal was that my cell phone was stolen too. That led to some great comedy.

You see the jackass who stole my wallet and phone must have given his number to his girlfriend. That was a dumb idea because less than 10 hours after it was stolen I had a new phone and that phone wouldn't be working any more. Be he'd already given out the number and hadn't told his girlfriend that the phone wasn't working.

And so it began with a phone call at 10 or so on Saturday.

"Hi hunny, it's Beth. I'm just sitting around thinking about you. Call me. Love you."

That was the voice mail. It was from a 209 number which is in the Central Valley of California.

She called again around Noon on Sunday.

"Hi, it's Beth. I just wanted to talk to you. Call me."

And then around 2.

"Call me, baby."

And then the texts started.

Hey babe- just wantd to talk to ya. Call me back so i can C U.

And then

Why havnt you called?

And then a bit later

You need to stop chillin with Steve and call me so U can com over and B wit me. K?

I figured that I could report the number and have them track my phone down, but more important was petty revenge.

I sent a text.

Sorry Baby. I'll pick U up in 20 minutes

I then did nothing. he called and left a

message.

I'm in traffic. B there in an hour

I didn't call again until very late when I left a text

Sorry. I'll come tomorrow.

She sent some very angry messages and finally, shortly before I got to BASFA, I got a voice mail.

She was mad.

"How could you do that? I've been waiting here and waiting and you brush me off! Fuck you! I don't wanna be with you anymore, asshole!" she couldn't be more than maybe eighteen. She sounded young and sassy and mad.

So, here's the funny part. I broke the two of them up without the guy who stole my phone even knowing that she was mad at him. Now you can't say that a guy who stole a cell phone and gave the number out was a dick move. If he had simply fenced it, I'd have had no problem with that, but his technique was shitful and therefull he deserves what he got.

Does that make me a bad person?



The lovely and talented Linda joins the ranks of my writing staff (if you can call my cadre of folks a staff) with what will likely be a regular thing about her two cats Pedro (who was called Saba before I redubbed her Pedro) and The Other Cat (referred to as the O.C.). And now...

The Fabuloso Adventures of Pedro and The O.C. **by Linda Wenzelburger!**

So Chris brought over a copy of Guido-
lon for me.

Pedro and The O.C. were entranced by the chicken image on the disc, so they stared at me and did their Jedi mind trick thing so that I would place the disc into the player and turn the monitor on for them.

Given that they are cats after all and don't have opposable thumbs, the only part of the AV system that they can have any hope of operating is the remote control, so they do require assistance with the whole 'setup to watch' thing.

Pedro was already ensconced on the couch. She deigned to raise her head up from full nap position to get a better angle on the screen. The O.C. was pacing the room anxiously waiting for the film to start.

As soon as it did, he sat down smack in front of the TV and gazed up as the story began to unfold. It was very much like 'His Master's Voice' only Chris isn't exactly what you'd call his master, so much as a rival. But that's another story.

About 5 minutes in, something, I'm not sure what, made The O.C. nervous and he glanced back at me then jumped up on the

couch and spent the rest of the film glued to my side. But he stuck it out, even though he was a little distressed. Might have been the volume. heh heh.

Pedro, finding nothing of interest to interact with on the screen, put her head down and pretended to sleep. She's more a film noir snob, so this really wasn't her cup of tea despite her initial interest in the avian subject. I'll let her watch 'Asphalt Jungle' again this week to make up for it.



The Man Himself, Kevin Roche as Vandamonde and Radar as Agatha Heterodyne from Studio Folio's Girl Genius comics. You should go and buy stuff at studiofolio.com. You really, really should.

Photo from Costume College by Linda!

Letter Graded Mail

sent to garcia@computerhistory.org

by my gentle readers

Monday 13 August 2007

Dear Chris (for TAFF),

This is just a Locette, really; since I'd finally decided that I should pull my finger out and send you a piece for your cocktail issue, I figured I could make the extra effort to respond to your most recent issues as well. A little sooner than October, even. In fact, now that you've gone and got yourself a life there's a possibility I might be able to keep up...

And I'm so glad you did! I was wondering if I'd have any European representation in the Cocktail issue.

Anyway, I was impressed both by James Bacon's article about many things bookshoppish in the UK and by your homage to James's flexible use of language that led to you crediting his article to 'Jame'. I can obviously ask James this myself, but I'm curious about how many books he's reading at the moment if he's buying about twelve a week.

There was a time I was buying fifteen of twenty books a week and reading 1 every three to four weeks. I was a FOOL! I did put many of them up for auctions.

As James mentioned, Foyles is something of an institution in the London bookselling world. It used to have a reputation for idiosyncratic practices; books were shelved predominantly by publisher and even if you found something you wanted to buy you had to go to at least two different desks in order to do



so. Much of the bookshop's character was established by Christina Foyle, the daughter of two booksellers (her father William founded Foyles); she died in 1999. Since then it's become more of a bookshop

than an experience, and may well survive.

Many bookstores are experiences, like the used shop in Downtown San Jose that is gone now. It was amazing! You had to climb over things and there was an added loft that required pay-offs to the Fire Marshall. What's funny is that they also put things by publisher too!

As Alison Scott mentioned in her letter in #137, London-based fan Julie Rigby used to manage the children's section at Foyles. Julie was also responsible for putting on at least one exhibition of SF art in the shop, getting some lovely pieces from big names including Jim Burns and Anne Sudworth and displaying them very well.

Anne Sudworth is my current favourite artist. She's on my desktop at work!

Despite increasing news and personal experiences of Waterstone's behaving less and less like a shop that wants to sell books to

people who actually want to read them, I must admit to a fondness for Huge Waterstone's as the Simpson's, Piccadilly branch is known in our household. This is despite what happens whenever I go in there (usually in mid-November, in the hope of knocking some Christmas shopping on the head before everyone else gets the same idea) which makes me wonder whether they've decided to attempt to emulate Foyles and develop idiosyncrasies of their own.

You have to seriously plan your idiosyncrasies. I've always said that.

Thus I find the appropriate department, look for the book I want, and then realise that they have invented a particularly bizarre shelving policy for that department alone. After a bit of fruitless twirling about, I approach the nearest counter and ask them to check for me. Half the time, despite the size of the shop, they haven't got the book I want. On most other occasions they tell me they have several copies in different departments, at least one of which is in their own. I ask them where it is; they tell me it's where I've just been looking, and I explain that it isn't. They go off to search for it themselves. Often they come back looking equally baffled and send me somewhere else. Eventually, having repeated this performance on another floor, someone offers to order it for me. I give up, decide to buy the book from Amazon, and move on to the next item on my list. In practice, much of the value of going to Huge Waterstone's – and the reason I still love real bookshops despite the convenience of Amazon – lies in the off-list books that I find whilst looking for something else.

My theory is that computers, wishing to inflict damage in revenge for what we've done to them, make you search like that. No, they wouldn't dare strike by making medical computers stop working, but a foul up at a bookstore is much more annoying.

It still seems to be the case that a determined and knowledgeable department head in a branch of Waterstone's can make a real difference; James mentioned the displays of books nominated for SF awards in the Croydon store, where the key has been the employment of a former Forbidden Planet man to run the SF section, leading in addition to a marked improvement in stock.

Lloyd Penney mentioned in his letter in #136 that he thought a fanzine lounge should have 'some quiet times, and some party times, too', with which I agree. In the UK there's a long-standing problem with the idea of either a fan lounge or a fanzine lounge; however well-planned and well-run they are, if they're called either of those things then lots of people won't go into them, fearing either a stereotyped huddle of elitist BNFs glaring at anyone they don't know who dares set foot in the place or a room empty of anything except tables groaning with fanzines that someone else apparently doesn't want. The fact that if most people don't go in then this is a self-fulfilling prophecy, and also that it's no fun whatsoever for the people who would like to have the space there and working well, means that we usually have to concede defeat and either not have a fan or fanzine lounge or just call it something else.

I need to call my lounges just Lounges. That might be weird. There were quiet times, but

they were during the day. And at night. Late at night. VERY late at night...

For the recent Year of the Teledu convention in the UK, there was general agreement that it would be good to have a lounge space within the con area where people could hang out, chat, relax, play games, use computers, and hold small informal programme items; having described it, there was further agreement that it seemed to need to contain all of the sorts of furniture, equipment and other items that might be found in an average (if rather larger than average) fannish living-room, and that's what it was therefore called. It was a great place to hang out after breakfast, before the programme got going, and have a final morning cup of coffee; it was an excellent meeting place (next to the con bar) during the day; and it was full of lively conversations and strange games late at night as an alternative to or continuation of the evening programme. And some of the programme items it hosted – like the ‘Stitch and Bitch’ circle – probably would have fitted in well at Robert Hole's alternative Westercon, as John Purcell suggests in his letter in #137...

The concept of the Con Bar is strange to me. I'm so used to a party floor. The simple little soft lounging space is a good idea. It was nice to have Mike McInerney stop by before work two mornings as an example.

It was, of course, a fan room – even though many of the people involved in the decision to create it are among those who react negatively to the idea of a fan room that's called that – except that it didn't have fanzines available for sale or giveaway; that would have

been a step too far into fuddy-duddy fannishness for most of the attendees, I think. We had a couple of League of Fan Funds tables, though, and ran a paper auction and a tombola which helped to raise a healthy wodge of cash for TAFF and GUFF.

We had little for giveaway, but we had a lot for reading. Good to hear that TAFF fundraising is going on. All us Chris For TAFFs (and Linda's for TAFF) all appreciate the effort!

Your exchange with Lloyd about Chris's Little Thing, as Leigh Ann Hildebrand put it – and your hand gesture; is it like giving someone egoboo? – inevitably reminds me of Dick Smith's fanzine *Uncle Dick's Little Thing*, which I enjoyed although I came to it after the event; indeed, the fanhistorical aspect of reading contemporary accounts of events I'd heard about subsequently was part of the appeal. Whatever will people make of Chris's Little Thing and the events described in 10 or 20 years' time...?

Best wishes,
Claire

Well, that EgoBoo signal would be a little too much like the Chris, Here's What I Think of You! gesture that many folks like to give me. To properly do it, set your hand palm down parallel to the ground, fingers slightly apart.



Then, bend your ring finger down at the first joint, jiggle it downward. That's the way it's done!

Thanks Claire!

And now, John Purcell!

Yes, cute people are oh, so very important. They make the world go 'round.

Damn right! And I'm surrounded by them!

Hey! It is good to see Alison Scott getting into the loccing habit. Maybe she'll respond likewise to my zine once I get some hard copies off in the mail in a couple weeks. It looks like I will be getting a decent-sized paycheck starting this fall - now a full-time faculty member at Blinn College; no more adjunct teaching (knock on wood; bring your head closer, Chris) - so I might be able to realize my goal of making all covers for my Dead Tree Roster recipients in full color. That would be lovely.

I would say you could pass me over, but I need them for the Lounge.

Now I know how you feel about that Who Wants to be a Superhero? show. I freely admit that it is a big bunch of hokum, but if taken at a really low level of expectations - and also a low volume level - it is a mindless bit of fluff, perfect background noise while grading papers or reading fanzines, which are much more important than stupid television shows.

I refuse to discuss that dreck!

Quick note: Did you watch Sci-Fi channel's premiere last night of Flash Gordon? Not much to it. More "Sci-Fi Original" fluff. It could be so much better. I guess all we can do - at least, all I can do - is give it a bit of time to see if develops at all. Personally, I say get rid of Painkiller Jane and bring back Dead Like Me. The sense of humor in the latter is wonderful, and my wife and I love that show. Must order the DVD set of the whole series. Can't believe we missed it when the show first aired a few years back.

Kevin Roche said it was crap. I miss Dead Like Me. Just so good...

Man, I sure wish I could have been at NASFiC; it certainly sounded like you enjoyed yourself. But you always enjoy yourself; that's your nature, and why I wouldn't mind hanging around with you at a con again. Remember that, roomie. As for big cons vs. small cons, it all depends on what your personal expectations of a con are when you're going in to it. I much prefer small cons, even if I really don't know that many people there. Then I have a much better chance to really talk to folks I know, make new friends, and line up contributors for my zine, hand out copies, and so forth. You can do this at a big con, too, but the logistics of large cons can be a bit daunting. When Minicons were in the 3000 attendance range, they simply became monsters, and there were times when I never ran into people I knew were there, but our paths never crossed. And I wanted them to cross, too! With a big con, unless you make arrangements to meet, it's tough to catch somebody.

I just love being able to mingle with lots of different people.

As for programming, I am not a big fan of multi-track programming. Heck, I am not much of a fan for programming, period. Give me a comfy chair or couch in the con suite, a spot in the hall leading to the con suite, or down in the hotel lobby, and I'm a happy camper. I really enjoy meeting people on the fly and conversing with them. Okay; huckster rooms are a great meeting ground, too. And Art shows, or auctions... Oh, fuggheadaboutit...

As a programming Junky, I gotta say I love Multi-Track, but two or three is far better than ten or twelve...

Archon should have kept its original name. The multiple-named con - Archon 31, NASFiC 2007, TuckerCon - simply got to be confusing. Why they did this was perfectly understandable, but I think I prefer a separate North American SF Convention in years when the WorldCon goes overseas rather than designating a certain regional that year's NASFiC, and keep it over the same weekend, if not a week or two later or before WorldCon weekend. Works for me.

I totally agree. I wish it could have been its own thing, but you can bring about burnout. That might mean more flexibility in dates.

Back in my heyday of going to Midwestern cons, I never made it to an Archon. Always wanted to, just never got to one, that's all. They have good people there in the St. Louis area, and I would like to get to an Archon some year. In general, midwestern fans are very relaxacon-party-oriented, but they can throw some really interesting panels and such into the mix. The central location really helps for travel, too. Kansas City is a great con city, too. I am

kind of hoping they win the 2009 bid. I know some folks up there, and it would be wonderful to see them again.

***coughMontrealIn2009cough* Actually, either way you can't lose for 2009. I really hope that Montreal gets it. THEY deserve it. Both parties at Archon were good stuff. The Centrality of Kansas City makes it great for a regional, but WorldCon should draw folks across great distances.**

Anyway. Many thanks for yet another Drink Tank, and by the end of this weekend I should have a few more locs rattled off. The latest From Alien Shores is posted to efanazines, and it is a real piece of eye treat. Simply gorgeous work. Plus there's that new zine from the Bay Area, Consonant Enigma, to loc. Good stuff and lots more fanzine activity from you Bay folks. Keep it up. I appreciate the effort.

I love From Alien Shores, and Consonant Enigma is one of those wonderful zines that I luckily got to be a part of. I'm thinking the BArea Zine Scene is looking brighter than it has in ages!

All the best,
John Purcell



Cover from Marc Schermeister, interior art from Wikivic, Linda Wenzelburger and Bill Rotsler.