



IN THE YEAR 2007 A.D.
ONE WRITER IS SICK AND TIRED OF
HAVING HIS LIFE'S WORK STOLEN,
PUBLISHED ELECTRONICALLY
AND GIVEN AWAY FOR FREE.
ONE WRITER IS SICK OF HAVING
TO SUE THE INTERNET.
ONE WRITER DECIDES
TO TAKE CARE OF HIS PROBLEM.
ONCE AND FOR ALL.
ONE WRITER BUILDS A TIME MACHINE
... AND TRAVELS BACK IN TIME
... TO 1967
... TO SUE THE ARPANET
BEFORE IT CAN BECOME
THE INTERNET.
THAT WRITER IS...

THE
HARLANATOR

CO-STARRING ROBERT CULP
as THE DEMON WITH THE ARPA HAND

The Drink Tank Issue 146

Cover by Frank Wu!!!

And now, let's hit some LoCs sent to garcia@computerhistory.org, starting with James Bacon!

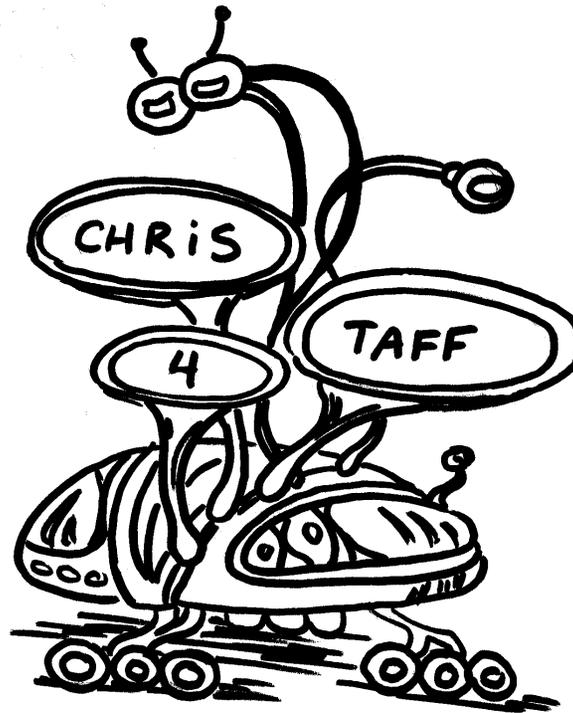
Dear Chris,

Well I must admit that I would go to the Moscow Eurocon, if you had decided that was your Taff destination, and you and Steve are correct to say that candidates have every right to state from the outset where they wish to head to if they win.

The one big problem is I don't speak much Russian and it'll be weird being in a country where I didn't speak the language and didn't know anyone. I've always felt like there was a de facto vibe that if you say you're going to another con, folks won't be happy. Then again, that's true about a lot of things.

But I am astonished that Steve Green thinks that a Taff candidates are 'showcased in some distant corner of a Worldcon.'

This small minded and parochial type of attitude does fanzine and taff fandom no favours at all, and is really quite unfair to the many people involved with Worldcons, who go out of their way to welcome and promote Taff. **I've talked to a couple of previous winners who said they wished they'd gone to smaller cons, but there is a double-edged sword there.**



The bigger the con, theoretically the bigger the exposure for the Fund. Conversely, there's the slight limitation of having such a huge con that attention is severely split and there's little focus.

I have first hand experience. I am pretty sure I met many Corflu attendees in the fan lounge (at the centre of activities, IMHO) at two Fan Fund receptions in 2004, and I was lucky to have Mark Plummer, Guy Lillian and Monsieur Hertz on hand to introduce me to dozens of fanzine greats.

There are regular CorFluites who

don't attend WorldCons, but there was a strong Fanzine Fan presence at LACon

I was asked onto a load of panels, including ones about fanzines (with over 70 people listening), I spoke about numerous subjects to hundreds of people, always introduced as the Taff winner, I was kindly supported by the worldcon, I was allowed to present a HUGO, and in doing so, make much mention of TAFF to thousands of people and generally I did my best to spread the word of Taff, fanzines, running conventions, getting involved and European conventions to as many people as possible. I also helped raise a load of money in a fan fund auction and I met many people whom I am still in contact with.

I could have done more, my antipodean fund mate, Norman Cates gave a video presentation in the main hall to hundreds of people.

It's Worldcon programmers, staff, tech, con com, area heads, gophers and planners who gave us that space, that stage.

It's Worldcon members who funded it.

Worldcon is 'fandomorientated', its run by fans, for fans, attended by thousands of fans, covers many fannish aspects and areas and embodies many fine qualities that many a small con can only aspire to. Peter Weston was the FGOH for

goodness sake at the time I was TAFF'ing. I got loads of fanzines and widened my fanish circle and to be honest, I reckon that any worldcon would support any decent fannish initiative or idea, like what was wrong with the Fan Lounge and programme in Glasgow, I thought it was amazing.

I don't mind someone making CorFlu their destination of choice, I would be interested to see how that would pan out, I firmly believe candidates can decide to do what they want, but I find it incomprehensible that in supporting this correct and notable assertion there is a necessity to denigrate another convention. Sure talk up CorFlu, why not, its a fine convention, I believe, I would love to know the reasons a small convention would be a better Taff destination, but on its own merits, not at the sake of knocking a Worldcon to do it, especially when its so inaccurate.

corner, indeed,

James Bacon

WorldCon has certainly been good to TAFF recipients as I'm sure Bridget will also attest. There's not nearly as much person-to-person contact as a con like a CorFlu would allow, but that's unavoidable. There's the trouble of individual attention vs. bigger exposure. It's hard to say which is the right way to go, as I'm betting either would probably work well.



If you look up fine fan writers in the dictionary, you probably won't find it. But if you did, Claire Brialey would be right there!

Dear Chris,

Once again I find myself some issues behind with several recent issues on which I wanted to comment when I first read them.

It's OK, I haven't read any of my recent issues either.

To start with there's Frank Wu's synthesis of racism in YouTube comments, for #143. And naturally I found many of the comments quoted to be offensive and unpleasant, as did John Purcell and Steve Green in their letters in #144. But, like them, although I was shocked and disappointed to see people openly expressing those sort of views, I

wasn't particularly surprised by them. In fact, what surprised me the most was that some people in the comments quoted were challenging the prejudice. My expectation (my prejudice) about comments on general internet forums is that most people who get involved don't have anything worth saying: that they're bullies who hate everyone, people who have an opinion about everything but can't adequately express any of it, or people who want to pick fights and will express any opinion likely to do that. So it's actually reassuring to see at least some people arguing back and airing more rational opinions. Mark recently forwarded me a splendid YouTube link to a sketch entitled 'If YouTube Comments Met Real Life Situations', which expressed very well both the general tone of comments on YouTube clips and the dichotomy of this interaction and normal conversation. Sadly I can't use it to help to demonstrate my point since the link now goes to a page stating, 'This video is no longer available due to a copyright claim by CollegeHumor.com', which may also say something about YouTube.

Bastards! The only group I'm openly prejudiced against is copyright holders! I think we should line them up and then release the hounds!

What also struck me about the quoted comments – although, again,

not unexpectedly – was the range of prejudice revealed. In the first batch of comments quoted, there is both some anti-Iraqi sentiment and some anti-Bush (or anti-US?) sentiment; then, as well as three comments which were expressly racist or supportive of racism – and one overtly challenging that – there was one which seemed anti-Islam, one claiming that another poster was ‘retarded’, and another claiming that an earlier comment was ‘gay as hell’ and that the situation in Iraq was now ‘a pussy war’. And I do realise that ‘gay’ is now often used as a generalised derogatory comment – but I don’t see that as any sort of positive progress.

It was the casual racism of the anti-Japanese posting in Frank’s third batch that I found actually scarier than the illiterate and ignorant racist ranting of some of the others. Doubtless the latter sort of bigotry is scarier in practice, if you meet such aggressive racism head-on in public. But it’s the casual, implicit prejudice of unchallenged assumptions that can prevent people from getting decent life chances (education, jobs, housing as you mentioned in your comments after the article) while all around people are saying, Things are much better, fewer people get beaten up now and we all know that the people who beat others up are just ignorant racists.

That’s an interesting point and one that gets overlooked far too often.

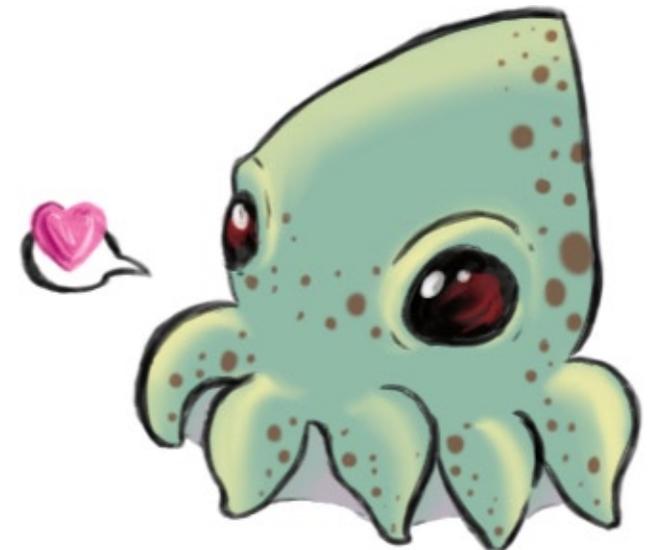
We tend to associate racism with violence, particularly in America where we strongly documented our violence against various races in photographs and film. Now things are much different, but it’s still an under-current. There’s a whole lot to be said for city planning as a form of racial segregation, but that’s another article.

There’s been some interesting research in recent years on equality, diversity and prejudice in the UK, which has found that prejudice here is still widespread although often against targets different from those who experienced most discrimination in previous generations. For instance, people in Britain seemed least concerned about expressing prejudice against Muslims and against gay men and lesbians, and most concerned about being seen to be prejudiced against older people or disabled people. People’s attitudes towards different groups seem to be based on stereotyped perceptions of each of these groups, and on the perceived ‘threat’, whether cultural, physical or economic, posed by each. It’s clear that relatively few people in Britain would now publicly express negative feelings towards someone else because of, say, their race or disability; but in practice public behaviour doesn’t entirely reflect what people really think. So I’m inclined to think that opportunities

to express views anonymously, such as the YouTube comments, would be inclined to bring out prejudice precisely because social norms are now less accepting of it; if you feel you can’t usually get away with such statements, what warped freedom must anonymity offer?

The veil, while somewhat thin, is enough to allow your deeper sides to show.

Meanwhile, in the rest of #143 and the next issue, in the parts that *were* boobs, wrestling, and stories about drinking – all those boobs are there because women, like men, deserve respect even when they keep their clothes on and regardless of how they look, right? Right? (You can print as many pictures of cute squid as you like, though. I know you respect them for their brains. Except that I find in #144 and #145 respectively



that Frank and John both want to eat the squid, which isn't very respectful either.) Respect and acceptance have a lot of strands, and that's something I still find difficult when I encounter views radically different to my own; indeed, I haven't entirely been able to shed the viewpoint that people who don't understand mutual respect and acceptance should have their heads repeatedly beaten against a wall until they do.

I once had a woman specifically say that she was only into me because of my brain. That actually hurt. I'd much rather be wanted for my body! In fairness, I have tremendous respect for women even when they do keep their clothes on (and in some cases Because they keep their clothes on, but that's another article). I happen to have a slightly over-driven appreciation for the female form. And if I am ever accused of respecting women equally with the way I respect men, I should be locked up because I so unfairly treat men! On the other hand, Squids...Man, I can't talk too much about them. There's a lot to be said. Jason Schachat has a theory that Cephalopod is actually an Olde English word meaning Onion Sack because old fishermen would stuff onions in the mantels of these squids and that fifty pounds of onions could fill the larger ones.



I'm not sure that's accurate, but he does live closer to the ocean than I do...

And then I found myself beating my own head against the wall, when I saw John Purcell's comment that his letter to you in #144 was his 150th LOC of 2007. (And you've done at least 50. And I gather that Lloyd Penney is around the 200 mark for this year already.) Whereas I was congratulating myself the other day on having written more letters to fanzines so far this year than in the whole of 2005, when I had a longer commute on which to read and write to fanzines, and twice

as many as during all of last year; and do you know how many LOCs that is? Including this one? Twenty. This year I've written precisely twenty fanzine letters of comment. And six of them were to you. Still, at least I find John in #145 noting that it feels like every other LOC he writes is to you too... ***Well, that's why I've only managed maybe 70 LoCs this year. I don't have the GarciaZines to LoC!***

Steve Green will probably overtake me in the LOC stakes in the next few weeks, judging by his letters to you as well as writing columns. (You might think, what with chairing the UK

Novacon in less than a month's time, and administering the Nova awards and everything, that he'd have more than enough to keep him occupied. But no, he finds time to read and write to fanzines too.) All that said, I have to disagree with him quite strongly about whether TAFF candidates should be allowed to choose their preferred main destination convention. There are some practical reasons for this, such as when you hold the race: Corflu in usually in the spring and Worldcon in late summer, with Eastercon similarly at Easter and Novacon (self-evidently) in November, so how should the administrators set deadlines for nominations and a race which might be sending a candidate to either the early one or the later one?

That's an interesting point that I hadn't considered. Of course, you could simply put the race so that it ended prior to January first and declare that the trip must be taken in the calendar year following, but I see how that could be a problem.

But more importantly I think there are profound philosophical reasons why it's a bad idea. Steve said, 'A smaller, fandom-oriented event such as Corflu would appear much more suitable a showcase for a UK delegate's talents than some distant corner of a Worldcon...' Well, I enjoy Corflu a great deal, and one of the things I particularly like about it is

that it's small enough to enable a good conversation with most people there over the course of the weekend. But for that very reason I think it would be a bad thing for that to be the main convention event in a European TAFF winner's trip. If they're a fanzine fan – and Corflu is explicitly a fanzine fan's



convention, which is another reason I like it and now feel so at home there – then they'll know pretty much everyone there already; if they're not a fanzine fan they're really unlikely to have a particularly good time.

I would say that's true. I wasn't really a part of fanzine fandom when I first attended CorFlu, but I did have a much better time this year when I certainly was.

Now, of course the point of Steve's suggestion is that a candidate who wasn't a fanzine fan could choose to go to a convention that they thought would suit them: Readercon or Potlatch or Wiscon, for instance, or a costume con or a filk con or anything that appealed to their sense of fannish community. But that would be the precise problem with this approach, for me: it would make TAFF into an explicit contest between different communities within fandom, all bidding for the money to get a trip for one of their own and/or import a special overseas guest for their convention – or, equally, be a way for different candidates to make a tactical bid for support from a specific fan group, whether geographically or interest-based, by choosing to visit a particular con.

That's a bit rougher but I see the point. The key in my eyes is that even if you were to choose something like CostumeCon (the



26th edition of which is in San Jose in 2008, or hadn't you heard?) you would still have to make it a mission to get to the rest of that side's fandom. If you chose to go to Eurocon instead of Eastercon, you'd better damn well make sure you hit the UK and see as many folks as possible. If you chose Potlatch, you better make an attempt to hit LASFS, BASFA, NESFA, NASFA and at least one other big convention to get to know the various fandoms. And I had no idea it was called Novacon because it was in November. I just thought it was a cool name!

Even if the candidates didn't announce until after the race which convention they were planning on, in each case the focus of the TAFF trip would then be within a particular section of fandom. Would anyone else get to learn about TAFF as a result of that trip? Would anyone outside that fan community feel minded to offer to invite the delegate to visit their fan group during the rest of their trip – or would they just assume that the delegate was only interested in meeting other fanzine/literary/costuming/filk fans?

I think that would more fall on the candidate in that case, though I doubt they'd have any problem finding people who'd want to invite them even if they chose a specific speciality con.

We can all set up special funds within our fan communities to bring over someone to a specific convention. It's been done for Novacon. And there are so many recent examples of it for Corflu – both Bruce Gillespie and William Breiding in 2005, Harry Bell in 2006 – that there is now an annual Corflu Award set up to raise funds to bring one fan or fan couple to each year's Corflu. (For more information, interested readers can see Rich Coad's article about this in VFW #98.) In many respects, it's a low-key one-off fan fund with a bit of continuity – although it doesn't at all prevent

someone from setting up another one-off fund for a particular fanzine fan to attend a particular Corflu. But with all that, why should TAFF be bent to that end too?

That is the best point of all. Targeted fan funds are ideal for bringing in people to those specialized cons, drawing monies from those who would be most interested.

I think someone running for one of the ongoing intercontinental fan travel funds (TAFF, DUFF or GUFF) needs to go to a big inclusive convention in the host continent, to have the chance to meet and interact with as many parts of the host country's fandom as possible. And I think that convention needs to know that they'll be getting a TAFF delegate, and to be able to plan on that basis. I understand the risk that Steve mentions, that a European TAFF winner may get stuck in 'a distant corner of a Worldcon' if the Worldcon itself isn't interested in the TAFF winner and the TAFF winner isn't interested in the Worldcon. But my ideal TAFF candidate is someone who is well-known and respected in their own country, and who is interested in their destination continent and in the fans there and has made an effort to make some contacts there who would like to get them over so that they can meet more people – and who, therefore,

will want to spend their TAFF trip meeting as many people as possible, getting involved in the convention they attend, visiting as many other fan centres as possible, and making people see the whole point and value of having fan funds in this day and age. It's hard work as well as fun, and it's one of the reasons I've never fancied standing for a fan fund myself.

There's a lot of good points there, but I can see the matter of WorldCon being less than ideal. Few folks get much face time with the delegate, and really it's close chatting and such that really brings folks to the table, as it were. Yeah, having a TAFF delegate present a Hugo or some such is a very big get, but it's not the kind of thing that turns the unknowing into supporters of TAFF. That's one of the reasons a smaller con could be more helpful. Yes, you get a wider chance at a WorldCon, but you also have less of an opportunity to make close connections with folks who might not be in tune with TAFF already. Double edged sword, no?

You said, Chris, that you'll stick with attending Eastercon if you win 'because it's the right time of year and a lot of folks I wanna meet will be there'. The latter point bears out what I was saying: lots of the people you want to meet will be at the Eastercon because it's the British

national science fiction convention. Novacon was Britain's second annual convention when it began back in 1971 and many people still consider it to have that status. So most of the people you want to meet might be there too; and it's a good con that I really enjoy, because I get to hang out with a lot of people I know and like. But at Eastercon you'd get to meet quite a lot of other people who, charming though they may be, don't go to Novacon, and



that also means they'd get to meet you. And they'd get to find out more about your fannish activities, and your home fandom, and about TAFF.

Steve said, 'A US delegate might well prove a better fit at Novacon than the three-ring circus Eastercons have morphed into over the past twenty years.' I wouldn't have a problem with a race running to the Eurocon or to a major Canadian convention instead of the Eastercon or a US Worldcon or NASFiC; that's about the geographical

scope of the fund, and that might be something the administrators decide to do some day in order to help us all remember that it's not actually just a UK-US fund. But I don't think that TAFF is just a club for people who only go to Novacon or Corflu (although I admit that my favoured candidates are usually people who'd like to go to both, among other cons). Nonetheless, there are people in British fandom who think that it is – including quite a lot of the people who don't go to Novacon or Corflu. And if all the other fans who go to Eastercon feel that TAFF is nothing to do with them, then I'm not sure that it does have a role in the twenty-first century of cheap flights and the internet after all. And that, to me, would be a sad end to a great tradition. ***When I present TAFF to folks who have never heard of it before, and that includes a lot of WorldCon regulars I met at NASFiC and WorldCon 2006, they all think it's a great idea and want to know more and some even wonder why they'd never heard of it before. Maybe that's something we all need to work on, a way to raise the profile. The best way is for the delegate themselves to go out and press the flesh, something that Bridget did very well at LACon. WorldCon seems to be the logical place for that, but then again, there's the percentages...***

So I really agree with the points John Purcell made in his letter in #145 about both a high number and a wide diversity of candidates in the current race being great for TAFF. I also agree with John that TAFF needs to continue to reflect its origins in fanzine fandom, and that it does do that; and I think it recognises what people have done in fandom and what they may yet go on to do. John might be considered to be a bit idealistic when he wrote, 'Maybe if more folks get involved with things like TAFF and the other fan funds they'll become more involved with fanzines.' But if you were to win, Chris, maybe that would actually happen. Your fanzines are easily accessible, and if a European fan met you at Eastercon and wanted to know more about you or just to stay in touch after the trip, they could almost as readily do that by reading and writing to *The Drink Tank* as by reading and commenting on your LiveJournal. The fact that you are involved in so many different aspects of fandom would also be a real asset, I think; you're not the sort of fan who only goes to Corflu (or Novacon) although clearly you do fit in well there, and I think that's right for TAFF too.

I'm going to make myself very unpopular with this next statement, and if I lose I can blame it on this one thing, but I really think we need to go beyond fanzine fandom and

become a major part of Fandom. I may be the only one who thinks so, but I really want TAFF to be a part of the whole fandom, SMOFs and costumers and filkers and furies and whatever included, not just something that is seen as a Fanzine Fandom Travel Programme., which I've heard it referred to as. This year's crop seems to speak to diversity, that's for sure. That's how we ensure the survival of TAFF, by making it a serious part of The Big Picture, and that would imply WorldCon attendance as often as possible, though there is room for change on that one. I think the Drink Tank is an accessible zine, though I wouldn't want someone whose never read a fanzine to come to The Drink Tank first. It is a little too different to be a gateway drug, as it were.

In the end, though, and with all due respect because I am one of your strong supporters here, if you win TAFF then like any of the other candidates you'll be going to Eastercon next year primarily because that's where this specific race is running to and that's what you've posted your bond to confirm! And if you win then you'll be one of the administrators, and you and your European counterpart (currently Bridget Bradshaw) will get to have this discussion for real and you'll have to decide what to do about the

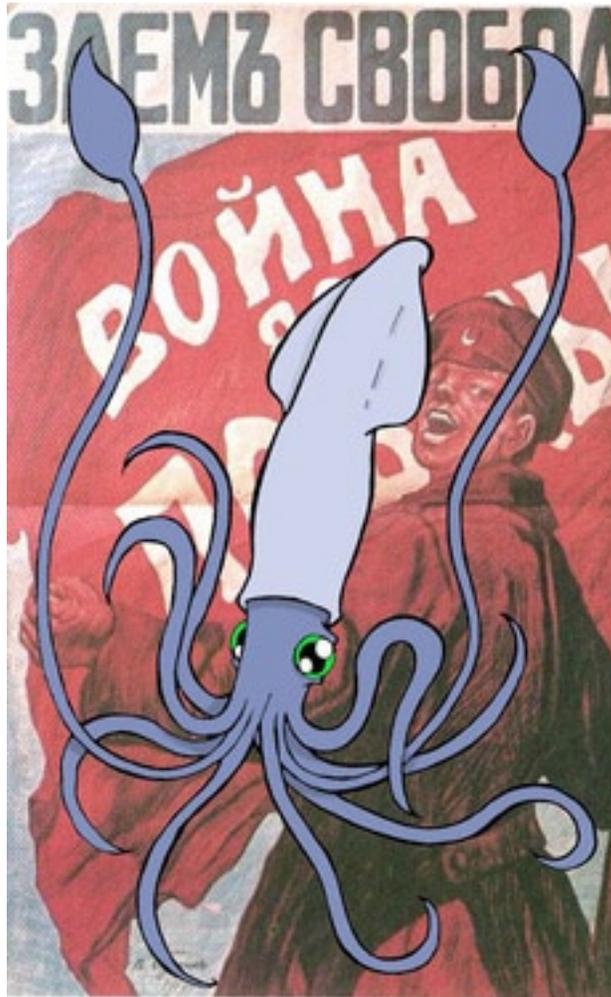
destination convention for the next two races...

Which is where things get interesting. I can say anything now and the worst it'll do is lose me votes, but once an administrator says something, it becomes a much bigger deal.

One final thought, with apologies if many other people have mentioned this to you as well; in advance of your corset issue, have you seen a copy of *Foundation and Empire*? It's a fanzine that Flick edited earlier this summer which I suspect was on paper only (it has a two-layer cover which wouldn't



reproduce as a PDF), and I don't know how many copies there were or if many made their way outside the UK. The reason I mention it is that it was mostly on the subject of undergarments (hence the title), featuring a few other topics that seemed to be fellow travellers, including me on the subject of high-heeled shoes. The rest of the cast list is Guy Lomas enthusing about bras, James Bacon enthusing at the length you might expect about nylons, Abi Brown ranting about suspender belts and shopping, Giulia De Cesare laughing about authors and underwear – and, perhaps of greatest relevance for your theme, an edited reprint of Sue Mason's article 'Friends of Foundation Garments' from *Attitude* #7 in February 1996 (an issue that also featured Alison Scott's article 'Vacuous Tits': bras again rather than corsetry but you may still find that of interest too, not least for the fanhistorical aspect of when British female fans started talking about this sort of thing loudly and in public). You might also recall Flick's own article in *Plokta* #31 about corsetry and all sorts of dilemmas she was having at the time. **You know, I've never got to read any of Flick's zines. I hadn't even heard about that one! I do remember her article in PLOKTA which was the first article I ever read in a PLOKTA.** Best wishes – and I really hope we get to meet again at Easter!



A Correction from Cheryl Morgan

Chris dear,

Very minor quibble. The Brownlow Medal isn't an exact analog of MVP. It is given to the "best **and fairest**" player of the regular season, and it is voted on by the umpires, who are perhaps best placed to judge matters of "fairness". Obviously you have to be good too but, to use a local analogy, someone like Terrell Owens

might win an MVP, but he'd never win a Brownlow Medal.

That's a good point. Us Americans have little use for 'fairness' in our sports, but the Canadians added it to the NHL in one of their awards (the Smythe, perhaps?) In an interesting analogy, Stan Mikita was the most penalized player for several years early in his career and won the fair play award later!

And you are right, all streaks do some to an end. One day my poor Tigers will start winning again (though I'm beginning to wonder if I'll live to see it).

Love 'n' hugs,
Cheryl

Don't stop believin' Cheryl! It'll happen!

And now...Steve Green!

Hi Chris,

Mea culpa. I wrote in my latest column that Georges de La Tour's work "languished in near-obscurity for more than 350 years following his death in 1652", whereas I instead meant "more than 250 years": he was "rediscovered" by the German scholar Hermann Voss in 1915, then brought to wider public attention through an exhibition in Paris in 1935.

Good to know. I would never have caught that.

Incidentally, I've never seen my

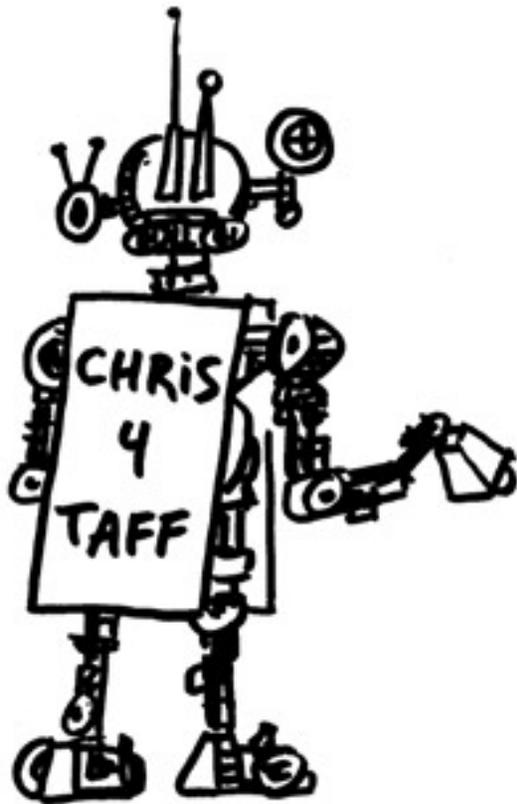
first name hyphenated before. Hardly seems worth the bother.

John Purcell may already have discovered that the excellent retro-movie *The Call of Cthulhu* can be ordered from the H P Lovecraft Historical Society, via **its** website (www.cthulhulives.org). Well worth twenty bucks.

Cheers

-- Steve

***And I highly recommend buying it!
Thanks much Steve!***



I work at a job where there are a lot of fun things to look at and play with. The Registrar around these parts, the Warden as she is often called, would kick me if she knew that i referred to working with artifacts as playing. I love some of the machines that we have around here and I'm always looking for fun new ones.

When asked which is my fave, I

usually have a few answers, but Johnniac is usually the one that gets the nod. It's big, the biggest single-piece computer we have in the collection. It doesn't weigh as much as the Cray-1 nor is it as large as the piece of SAGE that we have, but it's BIG.

Johnniac came on line the day my Dad was born and was one of the first ten computers to use the Von Neumann architecture. We've had it for almost 20 years after it sat out in the parking lot of another museum for a couple of years!





As always, I had a great time at Silicon. I stayed at the hotel, which I don't normally do, and just had a wonderful time with The Lovely and Talented Linda, Jason Schachat and the SF/SF crew and friends. Howieird, that fantastic photographer whose camera is constantly clicking, took these photos at the Con! Clockwise from Upper Left, Mike Miyaki conked out on a lobby chair, Me accepting Kevin Standlee's Ken Uhland Award (Thanks, Kevin!), Johanna, Andy's back (in his awesome Japanese thingee), a Guy I know but can't remember his name, Me and The Lovely and Talented Linda at Pancho's Crosstime Cantina, Chris and Richard, Me pouring a Drink Tank for Bosin, and the best Sandman Mystery Theatre costume I've ever seen!