



Shhhh...Don't spook  
him. He's likely  
to run!

The Drink  
Tank 148

Well, the Drink Tank did an unexpected theme issue last time and the Corset Issue is still coming up (and if you haven't sent me anything for it, you're EVIL!!!) and I'm putting together this one as I'm waiting for CNBC's show to start in the auditorium of my museum. Today, we had Bruce Jenner, yes, THAT Bruce Jenner, giving a keynote at a conference and that was OK, though loud. They did play a bunch of fun music after they were finished. I could have stayed and watched Fast Money, but I chose a long lunch.

It was, afterall, the last work day before my Birthday.

And that brings me to the subject of birthdays. I love them. I know it's simply a sign of being another year closer to the peace of the grave, but it's a wonderful time!

The sad part of my birthday was that it was the start of the SoCal fires. Sadly, M lost the house they'd just recently built. The older house, built in the 1920s, survived undamaged. Luckily, the folks were all still in Helsinki so no one was hurt. It hard though as she's been through a lot over the last year and this is just another thing. At least they're all coming back to the states to get things ready to rebuild. I'm going to see them at least once in the next few weeks.

And so this issue will be kinda short with one long article by me, some Steve Green for ya and LoCs!



***Here's some Fictional Non-Fiction satire movie writing that is so fake as to be completely unbelievable!***

### ***Why You Haven't Seen Stardance: The Movie***

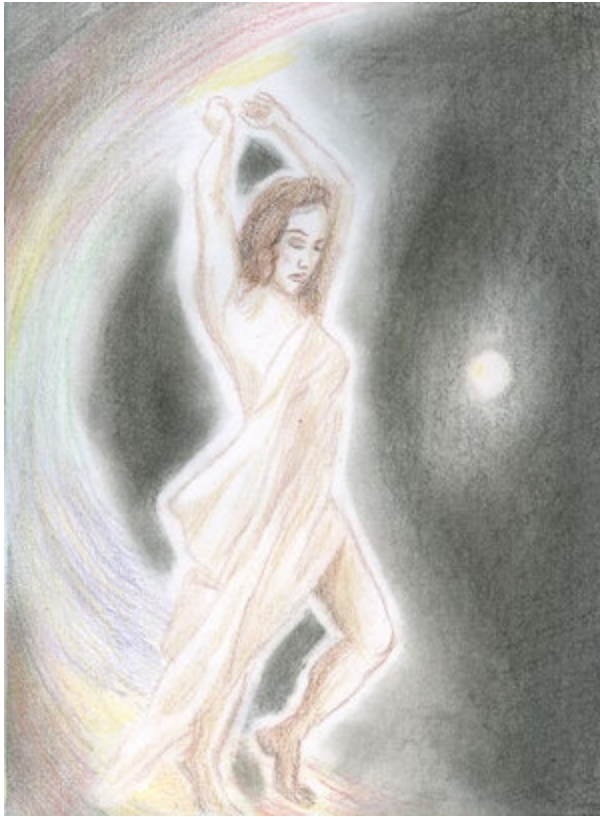
On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1989, Jean Blanc Beaumont sat, his elbows on his knees, staring down at the piece of paper that Mark Castner, his roommate, had delivered a few minutes before. The credits had begun to roll on Jean's film and the audience had begun the greatest roar of the night. A SIGGRAPH audience had never reacted so strongly to any of the computer animated films shown before the special interest group dedicated to the pixilated arts. Jean did not flinch, didn't acknowledge any of the events in the screening room a mere fifty feet away. All he did was stare down at a single slip of paper.

*Dear Jean  
They found out. They're calling in all the prints.  
Sorry.  
Mark.*

Jean Blanc Beaumont- The Guy in the Black Turtleneck

Jean Blanc was born outside of Montreal in June of 1959 to a librarian mother and a professional gambler father. Jean spent his childhood making stop-motion films with his super-8 camera using the voices of his younger sister, Esme. One of his short films, Le Puppe Merle, found its way to the festival circuit during his Junior High years and Jean traveled with his second film, McGusse's Travels, around Canada and the US. He ended up going to the University of Toronto to study film, but while working towards his degree, Beaumont discovered techniques for using computers to make animations. Jean ended up dual-majoring in film and computer sciences, graduating with honours and managing to win two Student Academy Awards. After completing his degree at U of T, Jean headed to Stanford for his masters work. While at Stanford, Beaumont made his first film combining live action and animation. Jean, a life-long science fiction fan, adapted Poul Anderson's *The Man Who Counts*. One of the first to see *The Man Who Counts*, Cyril Haynes,

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reported in his fanzine *Cyril Haynes is In My Brain* that *The Man Who Counts* was easily the best science fiction film in more than a decade, even though it ran less than an hour. Haynes and Beaumont became close friends, often working on small computer projects together using Haynes' access to computers at Stanford Research Institute, where he was a technician in the Artificial Intelligence Lab. This allowed Beaumont access to the Foonly system that had been used to produce the graphics for TRON, among other things.

After graduating Stanford, Jean

set out for his PhD at the University of Calgary. Shortly after arriving in Calgary, Jean took a job with Silicon Graphics Inc's Canadian division, managing a render farm on the overnight shift. The Render farm had been divided up into three shifts, each working on a different production. Since the series that had been using the overnight shift had been abruptly cancelled, there was no regular work for the overnights on that segment of machines.

"Jean was bored when he started working on *Mass is a Verb*." Said his co-worker, Pablo Sanchez.

Jean's close friend, dancer Metrica DeNucci, had been wanting to do a film with Jean for a while when he proposed recreating one of the dances mentioned in Spider and Jeanne Robinson's book *Stardance*. Metrica liked the idea and the two of them spent two days capturing her dancing against a green screen. The methods they used were surprisingly simple, mostly dancing and jumping with a bit of wire work done by throwing a green painted rope around the rafters in the warehouse and having it pulled up and down by Pablo.

Their work was initially ignored, since most of the workers did private projects when the cycles were available, but after a few weeks he showed his finished work to his friend and boss, Kyle Glass. Kyle, who had

studied animation himself, instantly recommended that he go to the higher-ups at SGI and ask for some funding.

"They were blown away," Glass said "he had people throwing money at him back in the days when there was SGI money to be thrown around."

There was a minor problem that Jean had not expected. Spider Robinson was not willing to give us the rights to the story for anything resembling a reasonable amount. Some early figures that folks quote tend to be about 80% of the figured budget and after a bit of tweaking from friends, it was down to only 65%. Beaumont then came up with an idea. He again approached Robinson with the idea of doing an All-Canadian film, with all of the actors, writers, musicians, effects technicians and crew being Canadian. He even went so far as to say that not one dollar would be spent in America. Robinson, who was born in the US but has been a proud Canadian for many years, agreed to a lower much figure and gave Beaumont the rights for a price that was lower than even the production expected. The National Film Board of Canada also agreed to pitch in funds and equipment, lowering the prices even more.

"The Canada angle worked perfectly." Said Glass.

Over the following six months, Beaumont quit SGI and founded

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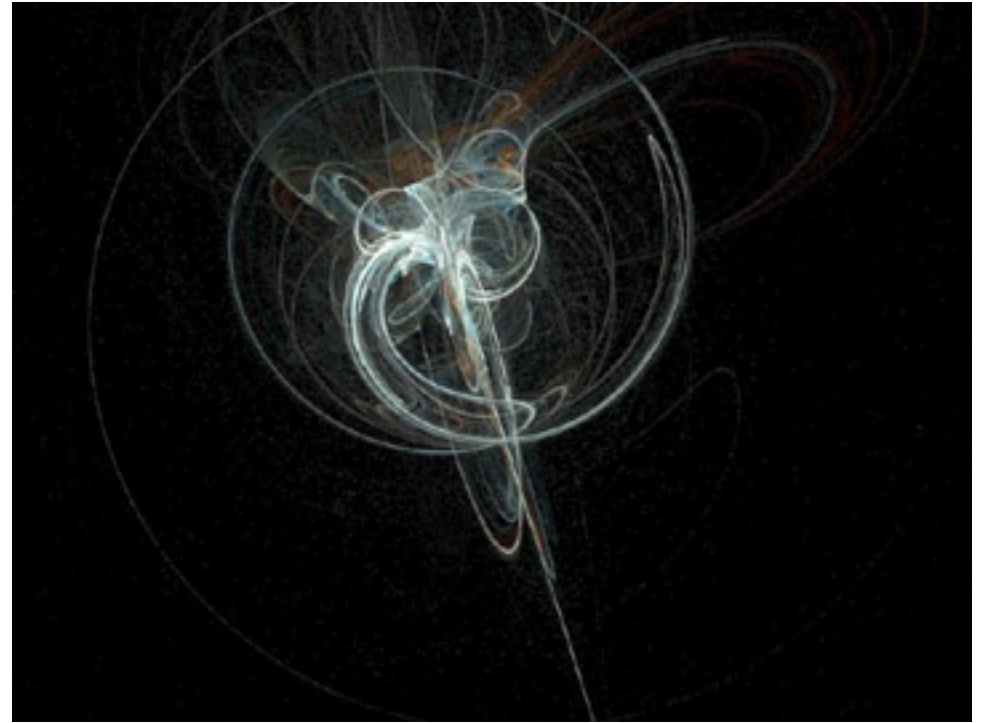
his own graphics company called Northern Image. He found a small company based in Toronto that made workstations that could supply him with enough high-res graphics stations to start his own renderfarm. He hired sixteen recent graduates of U of T and Calgary and began the process of casting the film. Glass left SGI and signed on as the producer of Stardance. Metrica also came on not only as the lead dancer and actress in the film, but also as a producer, raising thousands of dollars for the film through her dance company connections. Beaumont went to respected filmmaker Norman Jewison and managed to convince him to contribute a goodly sum to the project. In the end, the group had raised nearly 6 million dollars for the film and Beaumont had acquired nearly the same amount for Northern Image.

Filming began on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, 1988. Beaumont started out with the scenes that required no effects, practical or otherwise. Shooting in and around Vancouver and Toronto, Beaumont's work was covered with great interest in all the large papers across Canada. The production worked its way up into a froth over the amount of footage that was being shot. Variety estimated that Beaumont was shooting 10-to-1 in shot to used footage, figuring that it would be a 2 hour film. Other said that was an

under-estimate. Beaumont managed to get all his footage over 58 shooting days spread over 3 and a half months. The projected run-time was nearly 4 hours, but Glass and others figured that could be trimmed to two and a half hours with the right editor.

After shooting, Beaumont took his stars, producers and four of his closest friends on vacation to Havana for the weekend. It was in Havana that he first received word of troubles with some of the shots, mostly simple problems of focus and framing, but some serious that would require significant re-shoots. The one player who was unavailable was Alan Thicke, who had started shooting the latest season of Growing Pains since they'd wrapped his portion of shooting.

Returning to the office, Beaumont discovered that he had been over-ambitious in his plans. The first round of graphic work was progressing at the rate of roughly three seconds of finished product a day, far slower than he had expected. At that rate, the film



with its 39 planned minutes of effects, wouldn't be finished for more than three years. He sent out more pieces to groups throughout Canada, but wasn't able to meet his expectations within his budget using all the major, and many of the minor digital effects firms. The investors group had said that he must be able to show them a rough cut within 6 months, and that was in serious danger of not happening. That was when Beaumont called his old friend.

Cyril Haynes had moved on to work at a smaller graphics company called Not Practical at This Time Productions, better known as NotPrac. The group was quite small, surviving on one or two projects a year and

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simply working on their own projects in the down time using the monies that came in from the big Hollywood projects. Beaumont called Haynes and

arranged to drive down for a weekend. Beaumont flew to Vancouver, then drove to the Oakland offices of NotPrac. In the car were several canisters of film that he had secretly sent to Vancouver via FedEx. It was that weekend when Beaumont made the arrangements to have Haynes use the NotPrac equipment to finish several minutes. Beaumont paid for Haynes' time with cash, then offered him a slice of the action on his next film, which was scheduled to be an adaptation of Robert Silverberg's *Lord Valentine's Castle*. Beaumont drove back and within a week, the footage he had asked Haynes to work with was complete. The total time it took to complete the six and a minutes was less than thirty-six hours due to the number of machines Haynes had access to.

Returning to Toronto, Beaumont went quickly to work on the project

and delivered a rough cut with three days to spare. The investors, Robinson and the rest of the Crew were overwhelmed by the film. The only request was a slightly shorter cut, from the 195 minutes of the first cut to a 125 or so. Beaumont reluctantly agreed and asked Spider for some advice on how best to accomplish the cut without damaging the story. After a couple of weeks, he had another cut which ran 130 minutes and that everyone was happy with.

#### The SIGGRAPH Screening

The finalization of the graphics meant that Beaumont had to send out his materials to Haynes again. This time he did not travel himself, but instead simply shipped the reels FedEx. The package arrived, but Haynes and NotPrac were working on another project, so it had to sit for a few days. Haynes left the office for a couple of days due to his girlfriend coming to town and the reels were left in an office. One of the Interns, Gloria Ryma, found it and noted the markings. Not sure what the work was, she called the Northern Image offices and inquired as to what they were supposed to do with them. The number that had been placed on the canisters was the private office line of Kyle Glass.

"I got the call, and I wondered what was going on." Glass noted. "I

had never heard of NotPrac, so I didn't know what to tell them, so I went looking for the finishing sheets that Jean had been using. After about 30 minutes,

I had figured out what cans she had and I had Fritz fax over the appropriate notes."

This was the beginning of the end. The following afternoon, Glass had finalized the screening for SIGGRAPH, but he had also arranged for a tour of Northern Image's facilities for many of the investors and friends. Beaumont, who was working with the music supervisor on the final score, was not in attendance. As they walked around, one of the investors got a call on their pager and excused themselves to the office area.

"I never should have let her go off." Noted Glass.

The investor was Christina Mornau, a Vancouver Lawyer and a former Miss Canada. The call was from a client who needed her to look over a contract immediately. Looking around, she found the fax machine and



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had the client send over the 12 page contract. While waiting for the pages to finish, she found the fax coversheet that Fritz had sent to NotPrac, though she didn't know what to make of it. She took it with her along with the faxed pages from her client.

"She's a lawyer. She knew there was blood on the coversheet

so she started a feeding frenzy." Beaumont said in a rare 1995 interview.

As soon as the tour concluded, Mornau returned to Vancouver and started looking over her financial reports from the film. She didn't come across the name in any of the official expenditures that Glass had listed, and when she called NotPrac, she noticed that the number she dialed was a California area code. She made a few calls to others in the investor groups and spread the word. This started a minor froth that reached the ears of a number of people at the National Film Board of Canada. They made a number of calls and went over the detailed expenditure sheet and concluded that no money had been spent on non-Canadian work and that they were probably acting as unpaid consultants on the project. That was deemed acceptable and the NFBC said nothing further.

Christina Mornau was a different story. She started by contacting other investors and telling them of what she thought had been happening. Her theory was that Beaumont had found a way to get NotPrac money without it showing up on the expense sheets and that NotPrac had done nearly all the graphics. She contacted Beaumont,

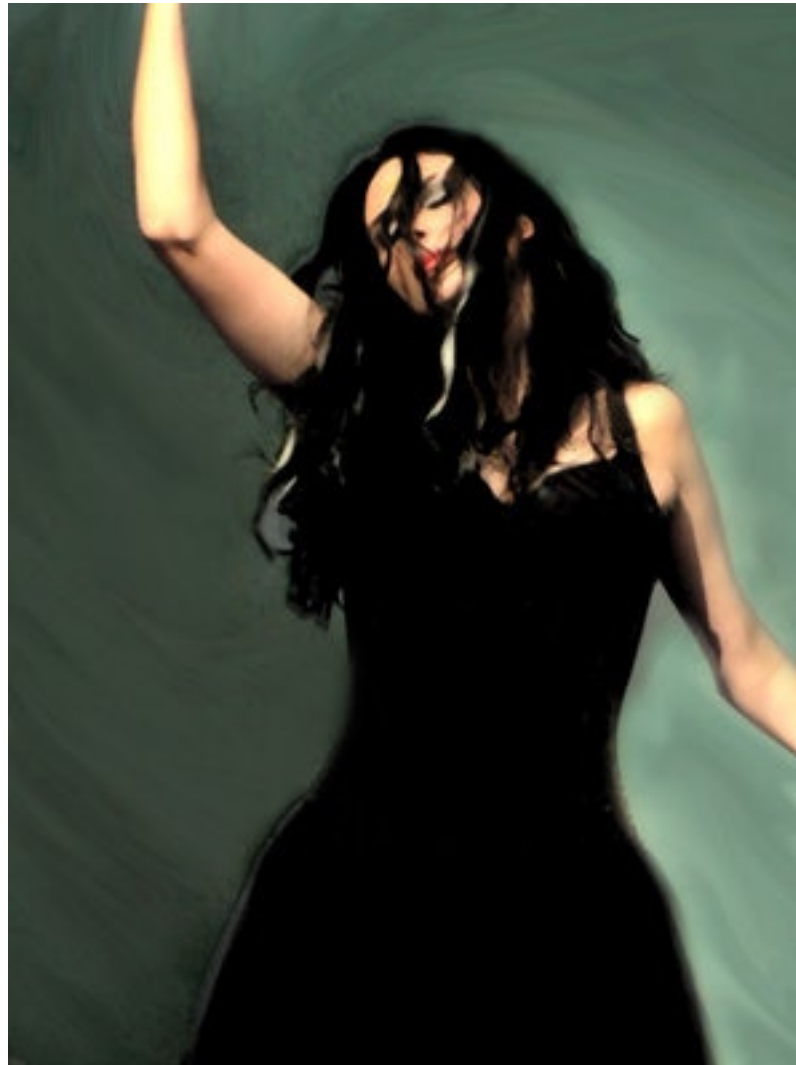
but he had already heard what the NFBC had decided and simply claimed that he was asking an old friend for advice. When asked about the film canisters that were shipped, he said that they were for his viewing to see if he had taken his suggestions right.

The most damaging problem was still to come. Much of the work that had been done was physically handled by Intern Ryma and her supervisor, Ted Liang. The two had handled so much of the finalized effects that they would normally have been given credit in the film. Since they had been told that it wasn't possible in this case by Haynes, they simply arranged for an extra invoice to be sent to Beaumont for 'extra handling fees', which would be turned over directly to Ryma and Liang as bonuses.

"That's what we'd done for a lot of other films" Ryma said in a recent interview.

"We had done so much work on Stardance that we deserved some more direct pay" claimed Liang a few months before his untimely passing.

The invoice was sent to Beaumont's office on July 1<sup>st</sup>, Canada Day. The FAX sat on the machine until the following morning when John Julius, an intern that had been working for Beaumont for a few weeks, picked it up and settled it on the desk of



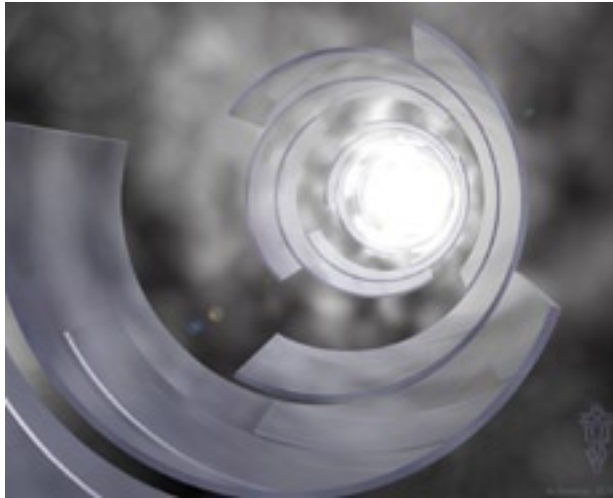
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Lloyd Adcop, the accountant for the project. He read the invoice and noting that they wanted financials for the production side completed before any additional prints or promotion costs came in, he paid it immediately.

Mornau, who had asked that she be notified when any spending over five thousand dollars came through, received a notice almost three weeks later. The total amount was only 2,700, but Accountant Adcop thought he should let her know. The date was July 21<sup>st</sup>. There were less than 24 hours before the screening. She began calling everyone she could think of and faxed the copy of the invoice she had been sent. Seventeen 35mm prints had been struck as well as four 16mm and several VHS copies. These last were done through a small firm in Toronto and Beaumont thought he wouldn't need them until after the film's release date came nearer, so he hadn't arranged to pick-up or pay for those yet. The word went 'round to Spider Robinson who was furious.

"We would have asked Beaumont to forfeit his fee after he personally paid for the work done in California. That would have made us happy and even Miss Mornau seemed pleased with that outcome." Said National Film Board of Canada over-seer John McGill. "Mr. Robinson called me directly and ordered that we halt all production of the film. When I



explained that the film was completed and that there was to be a screening in a few hours, He demanded that he be paid the original sum he had requested or that all the prints were to become his personal property. We couldn't make the decision to pay him that figure, so we agreed to give him the prints."

The screening started fifteen minutes after the decision to give Robinson the prints took place. The screening was incredibly well-received. The graphics were considered to be cutting edge, and one person who saw it years later claimed that no film until Jurassic Park came close to approaching the level of reality that they achieved with Stardance. Metricia's performance was noted as well, particularly by those in the audience who were a part of the larger film critics circle. DeNucci received several nominations for Best Actress in

the Toronto and LA Critics awards that year, thought the nominators had only seen her performance that one night in July. Don Cargo of the magazine Tinker wrote that "Stardance might make Alan Thicke in to an actor who people take seriously instead of the fatherly baffoon he seems to play."

The prints were seized save for the one that Beaumont had brought to SIGGRAPH. He considered running with it, but he returned it the next morning. Beaumont went to Montreal and was preparing for his next project when he found out that his funding had been cut and that on his projected budget, he could not complete the project he wanted to make. He discovered three other smaller projects had to be similarly scrapped. Jean left Montreal and returned to California where he started working for NotPrac full-time, eventually rising to the position of Head of Development. The group worked on several small films that would play the festival circuit until they were purchased by LucasFilm in 1996. Beaumont would then go on to head up his own production company called Callahan Films, a reference to Spider Robinson's other series of comedic novel.

Metricia DeNucci would star in several small films and go on to be one of the principal dancers on the CBC series Unfit for Stage. She would later develop serious joint problems and

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be confined to a wheelchair. She is currently the creative director of Ballet San Antonio.

Gloria Ryma would graduate from San Jose State in 1991 and go on to make commercials for local car dealerships. Her first big break was writing the screenplay for the film version of Gimme A Break. She would be hired as a punch-up script doctor for many television programs and currently writes for Film Threat magazine.

Cyril Haynes would stay with NotPrac until the buy-out, but would go on to become a professor at CalArts. He would sadly pass away in early 2000.

Christina Mornau would eventually ask Spider Robinson to sell her the prints so she could release them. Robinson has so far refused.

The film itself is one of the most traded underground films ever made. The copies that Beaumont dropped off for transfer to VHS (as well as UMatic) were made several weeks later. Beaumont received a call asking him to pick them up. He had not been asked about the missing 35mm print and asked that the print be sent to the NFBC and the tapes be sent to him in California. Beaumont held several private screenings and then made dubs which began to circulate around the world. In 1998, Beaumont secretly had the UMatics that still had turned

into DVDs and those have been in circulation ever since. Harry Shearer of The Simpsons claims that along with the footage from The Clown the Cried and the Rolling Stones documentary Cocksucker Blues, Stardance is one of the most important films never released.



**Letter Graded Mail  
Sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org  
by John Purcell!**

Your latest issue sports a cover that is reminiscent of the style of Jim Barker, a wonderful British fan artist whose work adorned many a Britzine from the late 1970s and onward. Barker's artwork was the perfect

complement to Dave Langford's TAFF report, The Trans-Atlantic Hearing Aid, and many other zine articles. He is still knocking about, too. And I see from your credits on the last page that the cover was by Jack Moreau; Ian Taos and Chris Hunter need more exposure, too. Addresses, please; I am always on the lookout for other artists to grace the pages of Askance.

***I've seen his work, not nearly enough of it though. Good point. I've gotta do more of that!***

Being an English geek, I really don't understand a lot about scientific theory or topics, but I do understand the basics of a fair number of things. Once upon a time I, too, subscribed to Science News, and I still save/print articles I find on the Internet that pertain to astronomy, physics, linguistics, or what-ever that strikes me as particularly of scientific interest that could be helpful in my endeavours to write publishable stories. Thus it is with a wee bit of trepidation that I approached Frank Wu's article about "Killer Germs in Space," which is one article I have read and saved from the last week or so. It is actually a rather interesting subject, and Frank does a good job explaining it for non-scientific thinking people like me. He even gave a couple good SF "what if" repercussion possibilities here. Good job, Frank! Now I have a better idea of how this microgravity and bacteria relationship

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works. Would you ever have thought, Chris, that Drink Tank could ever be considered educational? Neither did I. ***I'm scared at the very concept!***

Then again, that may not be so surprising considering how much emphasis has been spent in these pages scrutinizing the anatomy of the female form. You little mad scientist, you...

***I do what I can.***

Like many other fans who watched Star Trek and marveled at the concept of the transporter, teleportation is a long-term dream that fascinates us. In fact, I just read *The Galaxy Primes* by E.E. "Doc" Smith in which the spaceship Pleiades pops here and there in the universe by the directed mind-power of its pilot. It is a fun concept that is not well-executed nor explained, but the book wouldn't work without it. I think Doc Smith could have done well to read David Darling's book before writing this novel. That would have been a neat trick considering he died many years before this book was published in 2005. Them's the breaks. Time-travel obviously would have solved this problem.

***I read a few things of Doc Smith when I first started at the museum and was shocked by what he said about computers. Teleportation is one of those things that's really easy to write about because you can***



***make up any little bit of science and no one will question it because of Star Trek.***

I also remember that on the History Channel program "How William Shatner Changed the World," there was a segment about the physics of making the Transporter work. All I can recall is that the scientist trying to figure it out said that it would require generating an ungodly amount of heat and energy in order to make it work. However, even the rules of physics don't stop people from trying to dope it out. Ah, me. It can be fun to play with the physics of a show like Star Trek and see how feasible its scientific and technological assumptions can be. ***There was a book in the 1980s called Making Star Trek Happen (I think) that talked about real scientists working on projects like teleportation or phasers and hand-***

***communicators.***

And then there's SaBean Morel's, er, um, \*ahem\* "experience" with that scientific experiment. That certainly sounded like a rather stimulating study. \*rim shot!\* (Insert sound of a quarter clinking on glass as it bounces off the party jar at a BArea SF club meeting.) But seriously folks, SaBean failed to provide one vital aspect of this study: were pictures/videos taken? All in the name of modern science, don'tcha know...

***I asked her that when we talked a few days ago. Sadly, she said that she didn't think so. I was bummed, but at that point, she was really just skin and bones. What's interesting is that I recently discovered a study that had the researcher listed! It had nothing to do with the AI tests she ran, but it was good to find.***

Like you, I am no scientist, but I do enjoy watching old science fiction and fantasy films for the goofy mad scientist lairs filled with all sorts of gadgetry and electromagnetic doo-dads that fitzed and popped and zipped and zapped, filling the air with the smell of ozone and burning bedsheets. Egad, but it would be a lot of fun to have one of those old movie lab sets. Mel Brooks must have paid a nice amount to get that original lab set for Young Frankenstein, but it was perfect for that movie, and thank Ghu he did it, too. Young Frankenstein is one of my

top five all-time favorite movies.

***I showed it to Evelyn not that long ago and she loved it. She likes to recreate the roll in the hay thing from Terri Garr. I think she'll find that very funny when she's older.***

Steve Green's column reminds me that there is nothing like a pub-meeting here in College Station for local science fiction fans who are not a part of the TAMU student club, Cepheid Variable. Some day I would like to organize such a meeting. I do believe that it would be a fun and fannish thing to do.

***I believe it is your DUTY to make that happen!***

Hey! Lloyd Penney is back, and now has a full-time job, too. Good for him! Between the two of us - you for producing zines he has to loc, and me for pubbing his fanzine review column - we could keep him behind schedule on loccing other zines for a good number of years. I'm up for it, how about you, Chris?

***No doubt!***

Lloyd is dead-on about knowing how to deal with winter's nasty cold. My many years of growing up and living in Minneapolis taught me many a thing about how to handle it, both in keeping your body warm and maintaining the operation of your car. It really gets nasty cold up there. Plus, I also have been a long-time fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs,

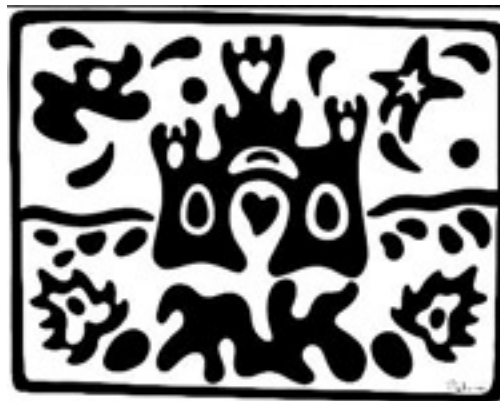
but the Minnesota Wild are having a great season so far this year. As of last night - when they beat the St. Louis Blues (great team nickname, by the way) - the Wild are 6-0-1, and in first place in the very competitive Northwest Division: the other teams are Colorado, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. Tough teams, all.

***Gotta love the Leafs! I'm proud to say that the Sharks are atop the Pacific division, though it's not nearly as tough a road. I'm thinking play-offs already!***

And that's a wrap, I do declare. Now to get back onto a little work on Askance #5. Take care, laddie, and remember the immortal words of a classic t-shirt: "Beam me up, Scotty. There's no intelligent life down here."

All the best,  
John Purcell

***And in the words of the T-Shirt I'm wearing today: Christopher Walken for President!***



***And that's all for today (Steve Green would normally be my closer, but he had to finish up the Novacon Program Book and the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the me) and he'll be back next time, I promise!***

***Next issue will be normal and the one after that will be the big 1-5-0.***

***That's looking like it's gonna be the Corset issue with stuff from Chris Garcia (that's me!), Jean Martin (in her Drink Tank debut), James Bacon (one of my strongest TAFF supporters and an all-around nice guy) and art from folks like Joe Olivos and Espana Sheriff. It should be a fun one!***

***And after that...I'm not sure. I'm already working a little on the Third Annual Giant-Sized Annual (which will focus on Comics, movies, TV and more!) which will feature Derek McCaw as my co-editor for te issue.***

***Art this issue was from Selina Phanara (that's her stuff over there <-), Kurt Erichsen, Dag Spicer (the cover photo of me), Dana Luong (the Purple Lady), Misty Myers (Stardancer), Kathe Morel, Jame Litt, Allen Something (His artist name, he does mostly fractal stuff that's in the collection of the museum) and Gary Bright (the little red things).***