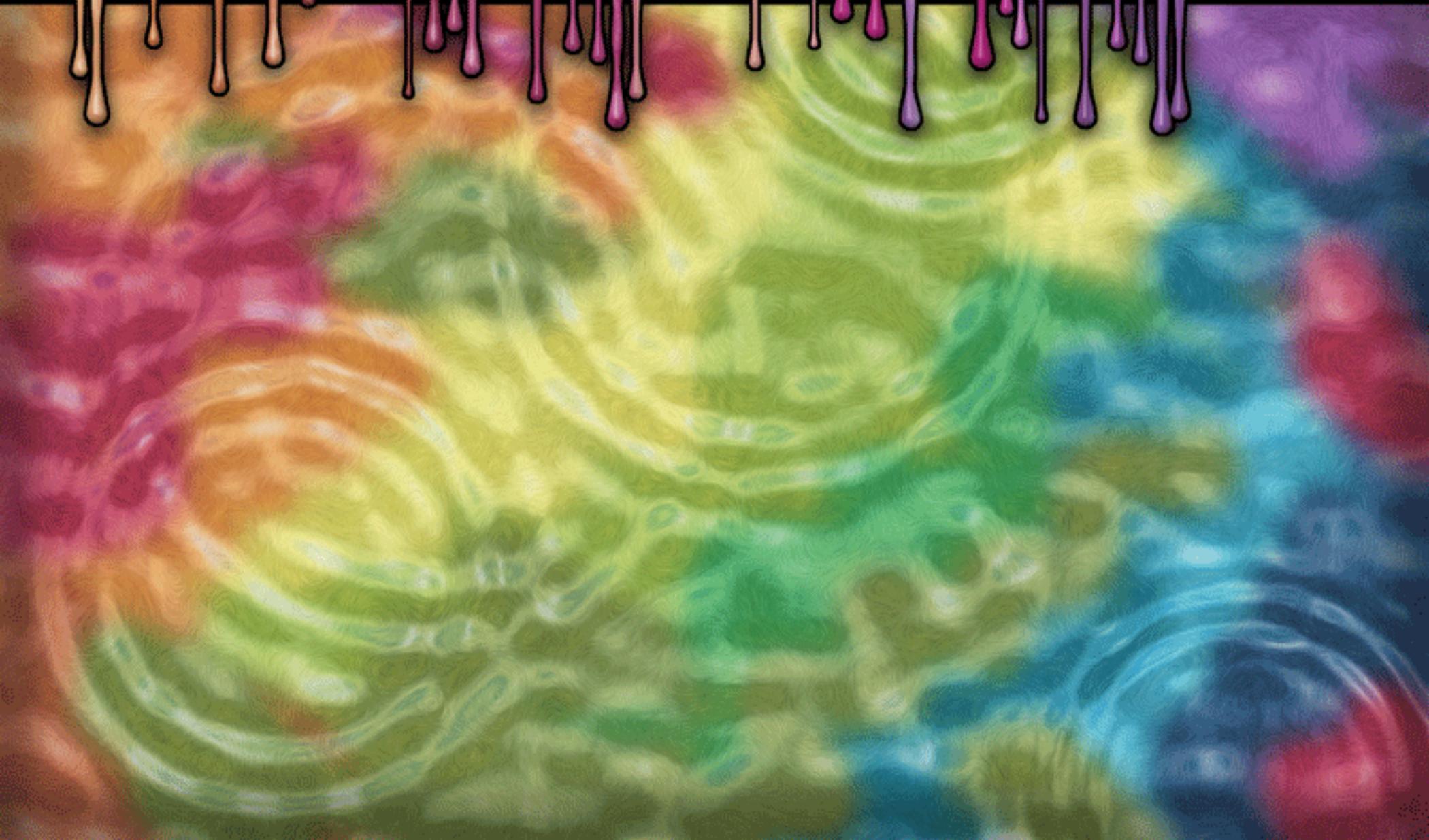


DRINK TANK

# 154



Cover by Mo Starkey

## **Letter Graded Mail**

**sent to [garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:garcia@computerhistory.org)  
by my loyal readers**

**Let us start with the BArea's  
newest Fanzinista...Kristina  
Kopnisky!**

Hi Chris,

Wow this will be the first time I have written a LOC. Here goes.

**They say you never forget your first. I remember my first LoC. It was to Jan Stinson in the heady days of 2004, when I was a complete unknown in fandom. Now, I'm only a mostly unknown in fandom!**

What?! No boys in corsets? Not even one for those of us that prefer that eye candy? Ah well. Perhaps I should stop whining. If I wanted to see stuff about guys in corsets I should have offered to write you a piece for this issue.

**Exactly! I did have a dude in a corset image picked out, but I couldn't get permission to run it. The same fate happened to several other pieces including the original cover. Whatever, I still think it turned out pretty well.**

It was nice to see a short story thrown in amongst articles and opinion pieces. To me it was fun to go into



the story not knowing the gender of the narrator. I don't know if that was intentional but it made for a more interesting read.

**That's SaBean. She likes to do stuff like that. I'm a big fan of her writing. There's a wonderful ambiguity to it. She sent in two pieces, and this one was the one that caught me.**

Loved the mix of photos with illustrations. It is so easy to select images from one era or sub culture when working on a project like this. Kudos for staying clear of that. The broad range of styles really helped underscore how varied corsets have been. The scope also helped highlight how

pervasive corset incarnations have been over time.

**I tried to get as much different stuff as I could. I always like mixing photos and drawings. One thing was I had several good folks who were willing to make good stuff for me. Espana,**

On that note. Thank you so much for not just putting out a modern fetish zine. I really liked reading "To the Extreme". Contemporary corseting history is often overlooked by fen when talking about corsets. It is all Elizabethan this and Victorian that. This article helped bridge from Victorian to modern. Folks like Ethel Granger and Fakir Musafar are the pioneers of our current corseting culture and are not, in my opinion, given nearly enough credit for it.

**Absolutely true. Musafar is so underappreciated that no mention appeared in the Corset issue. Just another reason for me to do a follow-up! I'm a big fan of the later era of corseting. The extreme stuff is interesting, and I just found a girl who can do a 13.5 inch waist and she's a contortionist. It was kinda disturbing that I discovered her photos on MySpace Videos.**

In the name of keeping this more of NOC than a LOC I am going to keep from commenting individually on the various opinion pieces in DT #150. As a whole they managed to represent a

good breadth of fannish corseting culture. Jumping from piece to piece kept your ish from feeling too one sided.

**Yeah, I do the random thing. Believe it or not, I usually only put articles in according to the order in which they arrive. This one I actually shifted things around a bit.**

Thank you for putting out a great issue on a subject I am very passionate about. Zines that cause me to think further about the foundation of things are wonderful.

;) )

Kristina

**Well, I've done what I set out to do. Thanks much! Let me remind everyone that you should read Consonant Enigma on eFanzines.com!**

**Let's keep things rolling with my man Mr. Kevin Standlee!**

Frank Wu writes regarding Taral Wayne's design for a Hugo Award trophy that "It is a beautiful design, but, alas, not allowable under the World Science Fiction Society's Constitution, which demands the traditional metal rocket ship design." What I wonder is where either Frank or Taral ever got the idea that WSFS requires the rocket to be made of metal. It doesn't. The word "metal" does not appear in Section 3.5 of the WSFS Constitution, which regulates the design of the trophy. Yes, the rocket -- which is a required design



element -- is usually made of chrome- (sometimes gold-) plated zinc, and since the mid-1980s has stuck with the design based on the Peter Weston foundry design. However, WSFS doesn't require that it be made of metal.

Chicon IV and V made their rockets from clear plastic. A photo of the 1991 trophy showing that metal isn't required is at [http://www.thehugoawards.org/?page\\_id=83](http://www.thehugoawards.org/?page_id=83).

**We can always count on Kevin to point out the finest points of the WSFS Constitution!**

However, Taral's design does have a flaw in that his rocket shape is too far away from the *shape* of the Hugo Award rocket. His rocket could be made of glass, but would still have to maintain the same shape as the other rockets, so it couldn't be round at the bottom, but would have to have space to accommodate the fins. Also, Worldcons have gotten pretty used to

ordering the rockets from the same foundry every year, and sometimes do group orders with other Worldcons, although the costs on the things are such that there is no bulk discount. So any Worldcon he could convince to execute his design would have to be persuaded before ordering another 20-plus chrome rockets.

**Hmmmm...I'd have thought that the bottom could be round so long as the fins were there. Then again, executing fins in glas wouldn't be easy.**

I do somewhat question trying to execute the design in glass -- I reckon that plastic, as Chicons IV/V did, would be a better idea -- due to fragility issues, but there's certainly no WSFS rule prohibiting it as long as the design retains the rocket *shape*.

Kevin Standlee

**Well, lots of awards get executed in glass, though various types of plastic are becoming more popular. There's a form of plexy which is quite like glass, right down to the brittle fragility, though folks only tend to use it in scientific applications. I still think that Taral's design is a good one, very clean with a sort of 1939 World's Fair futurism to it, but I'd still rather see his Astroboy Hugo Statue adopted!**

**Thanks, Kevin!**

# In Twiltone Yet Green, Part the Second

## An Interview of Taral Wayne by Frank Wu

In the first part of this interview, Taral and I covered the birth of furry fandom, his mockery of the 2007 Hugo Award design and Bill Rotsler's fanart, and Taral being selected to be Fan Guest of Honor at the 2009 Worldcon.

In this second and final part, I start with a short question with a long answer.

**FW:** *Taral, could you please pick some of your favorite pieces and tell us about them?*

**TW:** Contrary to some opinion, not every work an artist does has a funny story, or any interesting explanation behind it. But I would have to be a pretty poor raconteur if I had nothing amusing or instructive to say about anything I had drawn. It should be no problem to come up with four or five examples. Or ten or twenty.

Let's start with the item below, a piece of juvenilia I did in 1969, and one of the earliest surviving.

### Wheelie

When I was so young that there were no Beatles yet, I fell in

love with cars. Why this is odd is that I hadn't demonstrated any mechanical aptitude up to that time. My family had not always had a car. Those times when we did, my father never encouraged me to putter with him over the carbs. I don't think he was interested in his car himself, apart from transportation, and whether or not it looked sharp. (Making the vain beast he was look sharp.) But the 60's seemed to be a time saturated in auto lore in a way that was quite alien to the gas thirsty 70's to follow, and the economies of the decade reigned over by Ronald Reagan. Every kid knew about rails, t-buckets, funny cars, chopped and channeled bodies, injector stacks... and let us not forget to mention ratfinks. It was part of kid culture along with Saturday morning cartoons and skateboards, even though in a relative backwater like Toronto at the time, I doubt one kid in a thousand had ever seen a drag race. As it would happen, I never came to own a car. I learned to drive at least, but can't blow a mill or stoke a bore to save my life.



It was probably as well I didn't know that in 1964. In full expectation of one day driving my own chrome enhanced Detroit land barge, I spent Saturday mornings drawing hot rods to the background noise of *The Jetsons* and *Fireball XL-5*. Not a lot of those drawings survive, as you might expect. A handful do, and this is likely the finest of the lot. It shows a rail style dragster a moment after popping a wheelie, hitting the ground again with front wheels and shaking the whole

caboodle to pieces. The original was drawn in blue with an ordinary *Bic* ballpoint pen. I didn't know at the time that professional artists didn't use such mundane tools. I didn't then know about ink washes, bendays, and half-tone printing processes, and tried to imitate the shiny chrome effect by shading with the pen. Though not easy, if you drew softly enough, it left a faint tone just like a photo. I had the absurd idea I might become a regular artist to magazines like *CarToons* and *Hot Rod Cartoons* someday. Well... that didn't happen.

I did however get started on a technique of creating smooth full tones with a b&w instrument that became something of a trademark for my work for many years.

There was only one other artist I ever knew who had perfected the same technique. That was George Barr, who had boasted that he knew of *no* other artist who could do what he did. He had no reason to have heard of me, I suppose, but I'd heard of him after I'd been in fandom a little while. This would have been around 1973, and Barr's art was on all the *cool* fanzines, like *Energumen* and *Outworlds* and *Granfalloon*. As luck would have it, I didn't run into the artist until some time later, at the '78 Worldcon in Phoenix. Barr was talking with some other Big Name Fanartist, so I

hung around waiting as patiently as I could until I could introduce myself. The great man looked down at me as I spoke my name and didn't actually say "so?", so I went on. "Did you know that I draw with a ballpoint pen too, and shade like you with it?" I can't say I remember what he actually said then. Maybe I've blotted it out of my memory. But I do recall him gone a few moments later and feeling profoundly... brushed off. I came away feeling that despite his words, George Barr had not in fact looked forward to meeting another artist sharing his technique. Live and learn – people don't always mean what they say, at least not that day. Since then, it's likely that without meaning to I've turned off a budding junior artist or two myself.

**FW:** *I really like this piece, with the wires and small engine parts flying everywhere. What really makes it for me, though, is the goggles getting air. They focus the attention of the driver's flustered eyes.*

### **Colour by Number**

I've always been very fond of this piece. I drew it during the denouement of the sorry Bergeron affair, in which most of hip fandom was lined up against the fabled editor of *Warhoon* over basically whether or not it was nice to call him gay. It blew up into



something much nastier than that glib descriptor suggests. The very pages of a legion of fanzines shook with the frenzy of the feud. Fan history was revised to portray old friends as depraved fiends, the signs of their degeneration overlooked all those years only by an effort of goodwill. Among those not involved, eyes rolled in despair.

What exactly inspired me to draw a picture of Avedon Carol, one of the principal actors in the Bergeron affair, in Bergeron's own style, I can't say. I guess I'm fiendish too. As well as

editing one of fandom's great fanzines from the 60's to the early 70's, Richard Bergeron was an artist. He was a professional decorator or some such, and lavished his wealth and talent on colourful silk-screened covers. The colour silk screening sometimes spilled over into the impeccably mimeo'd interior, giving them an extra touch of class. Unlike most fan artists, who grew up on comic books and pulp magazines, Bergeron brought New York sophistication to his pages. He preferred abstracted patterns with bold solid blacks or colour. Nobody so far as I knew, had ever tried to imitate him. It was the perfect target for my growing ability to mimic.

What I hadn't expected was how difficult it would be to get published. The feud was still a bad taste in too many mouths I guess. Or else publishers took sides too seriously to poke fun at both. I don't recall anyone giving me reasons. Ironically, I had Bergeron's own blessing to seek publication. He seemed to be the only one to find my pastiche funny, though I look back now, a wiser and more cynical fan, and suspect he may have been currying favour for some inscrutable purpose of his own. "Colour by Number" did eventually find a cover to grace. It appeared finally on Marty Cantor's *No Award*, fifteen years later!

**FW:** *I really dig this piece. I use the word "dig" purposefully, because it really celebrates the sixties. The amoeboid shapes speak of the light shining through oil-and-colored-water used to create groovy backdrops for rock concerts. The converging lines in the upper right remind me of Op Art and guide the viewer's eye toward the head. The lines vary considerably in thickness, with the thickest around the face for emphasis. Numbers indicate the hair, the face, the fingers, the shoulders - all the human parts of the visual puzzle. A groovy, groovy piece.*



## Polychrome

How many of you remember that I invented Ditto? The idea came to me in 1987 mainly because I was unable to get to *Corflu*, the still new fanzine-fans' convention. I reasoned that if there was a antipodal con, six months apart and held roughly on the other side of the continent from the original, I'd have a better chance of attending one or the other. A number of other Toronto fans were agreeable to running a small, relaxed con that wasn't a media circus or a financial risk, and so *Ditto* was born. The first concom consisted of me, as benevolent dictator, Alan Rosenthal, Catherine Crockett, and Mike Glicksohn. Later on Bob Webber was added to the Ditto Masters.

One thing I'd always wanted to do, and took my opportunity to impose on Ditto 1, was a t-shirt. Not some ordinary t-shirt, but one in glorious colour. However, photographic separations were too expensive, in that pre-digital age, for a convention expected to be no larger than 40 or 50 people to fund. I hit upon a novel way to make my own separations. Once I decided I wanted no fewer than five colours (red, black, two shades of blue, and *white*), I made six xeroxes of the art. Holding them to a light

and comparing them one on top of the other, I was able to white out those parts of each separation I didn't want printed in each of the five colours. A lot of work, you bet. And the risk of making a mistake ever present. But I did it, and the shirt came out magnificently if I do say so myself. And I just did, didn't I?

Many years later, when it came time to pick some examples for this interview, I only had a very poor scan of the art ready. I could have dug up the original artwork, but for some reason I decided that it might be easier to just make a few touch-ups using Photoshop. That's what digital files are for, no? There must be something about this particular piece of art that compels me to do things in the extremely hard way... There is not one pixel of the original work showing in this image. I completely re-drew and re-coloured it, added new highlights, dropped shadows in the background, and hoped to have done everything short of breathe life into the piece. Regardless of the time and effort, I feel entirely justified by the result.

Oh, and Polly is not her name. That's another plot line entirely.

**FW:** *I like that this piece is almost a Dali-esque visual pun. We see the girl dripping in paint wrapped around a paint tube - but from a distance it*

*almost looks like a melting ice cream cone to me.*

### **Fin de Millenaire**

What's the most I was ever paid for a single work of art? People should ask this question more often, so that I can complain about how underpaid I am. But the answer is \$340 in cash and a used photocopier worth \$250 more, for this 22 by 14 colour original. I won't go into the particulars of why it was commissioned by Phil Paine, but it was and likely still is the most complicated single drawing I've done.

Apart from a variety of architectural styles there are a number of different real languages used in store signs. (I think that sign in Urdu says "Help Wanted.") It's just unfortunate that it isn't practical to include a larger file than this, so that you can see details, but I don't want this word doc to be 60 Meg. It may surprise you to learn that the colouring was done entirely by colour pencils. By this time I had just about given up using ballpoints for anything but a black line. Not that coloured art was any more likely to be published in most fanzines than gray tone art. I believe in making life hard



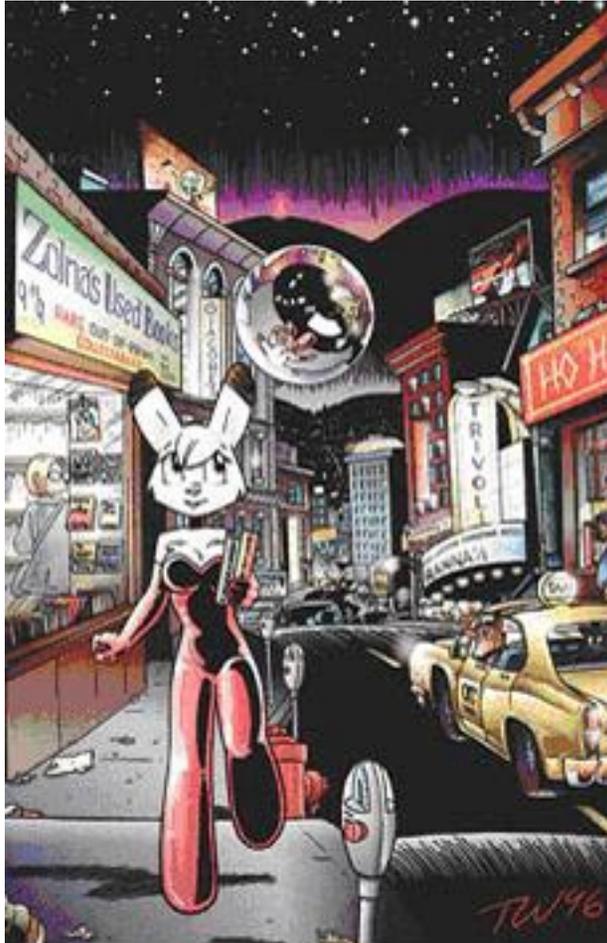
for myself. In this I was eminently successful since not even the b&w of this was ever published before now.

Still, as well as being the most highly paid work of art I've ever done, this piece is special for another reason. I arranged to finish it so that it would also be the 1,000<sup>th</sup>, drawing in my record. By way of celebrating I made an important change in my work, starting with "Fin de Mil". It was the first time I used the new TW signature, and finally retired the old "WM". For years the "WM" piqued people to ask what it meant, when the initials I used were "TW". And for years I patiently and unwillingly answered. And if you ask now, *I won't answer.*

**FW:** *Cityscapes and crowd scenes can easily get out of hand, the details lost in an uncontrolled sea of complexity. But this piece works for me, mostly because the legs and arms of the central figure - and especially her tail - are really strong, almost graphic, visual elements that draw your attention to her. Personally, though, I should note that I would have colored her hair black, too, to complete the graphic quality of the girl and define her head more.*

### **Night Life**

If "Fin de Mil" is the most complicated single thing I've drawn, this could be a candidate for runner-up. "Night Life" is the cover of my



second comic book, *Beatrix*. Comic books? Did I do comic books? I had to do something in the late 80's and through the 90's when it seemed none of the fashionable snappy little fanmags or too-cool Britzines wanted anything but Gillilands or Wests. While that may have had more than a little to do with my adopting a somewhat more distant stance from fandom then, there were other factors. Some involved personal dissatisfaction,

others my mother's poor health and finally her death in 1991, which signaled an urgent need to find another direction from the dead end I seemed to be in at the time.

One promising lead; I had begun doing a little magazine illustration from 1987 on. I had a very productive relationship with one magazine on the west coast that lasted years. Why illustrating didn't develop into a full time career, and why I was able to find no SF work, are separate stories for another time.

But the late 80's were also the years when anthropomorphic comics were hitting the stands in greater and greater numbers. Furry fandom emerged from the fringes of mainstream SF, anime, and gamer fandom to buy them. Being in the right place at the right time has its perks, and for me it was getting to know a lot of the early artists and publishers, such as Steve Gallacci, Joshua Quagmire, Mike Kazaleh, Donna Barr, E.T. Bryan, Edd Vick, Mike and Carol Curtis, Paul Kidd, and to one degree or another numerous others. The connection with Steve Gallacci was particularly fruitful. It led to an arrangement to collaborate on a full-length comic that Steve would write and I would illustrate from beginning to end.

Steve's idea began with an ordinary, rather nondescript working girl named Beatrix, and her roommate Dorothy. Ordinary, that is, until she becomes an innocent by-stander in a drive-by shooting and is killed. Not a promising beginning for a story, you say? In this case it is, because Bea is rescued by passing highly intelligent, hyper-dimensional aliens. Deciding she may be prone to future accidents they won't be around to save her from, they endow her with a garish maroon jump suit that makes her invulnerable. The catch is it doesn't come off. It eliminates the need for food, drink, sleep, or shelter in its zeal to protect her. But the worst of it is that without hunger or thirst, she can't taste food and drink. No sex drive either, complicating affairs with her boyfriend. With no need for sleep, she must find things to do 24 hours a day, including those hours in the dead of night when everyone else is asleep and everything closed. What do you do? Anyone else would become a superhero naturally, but publicity and a crime-fighting career are the last things Bea ever wanted.

Steve had most of the first half of the comic written, and delivered pages sporadically after that. Eventually I began filling in some of the blanks and tweaking more and more of the incomplete pages coming in the mail. The short explanation I

give people is that we co-wrote it. The second issue wasn't full length. It was two short stories, one that I wrote entirely myself, and the second one I co-wrote with a third party. *Bea* switched publishers and we reprinted the first issue in full colour with an added short story. Later still, I wrote and drew another story about *Bea* for an anthology.

The trouble was that b&w comics simply never sold well, with two or three highly publicized exceptions like *TMNT* or *Hate*. For most titles the formula was that the retailer took 40%, the distributor about 40%, and the publisher had to pay his staff and the printer from the remaining fifty cents on a three-dollar book. If they're lucky, the writers and illustrators get paid a pittance. I was paid two or three hundred dollars for *Beatrix 1*, which I'd have had to share with Steve if he hadn't generously declined. For issue two, which I drew entirely and mostly wrote, I was awarded a bonus over the advance that amounted to a total of \$500. Had I only put a week or two into each issue, the tiny return would have been supportable, but the first issue took something like a year to do (due to delays waiting for new material from Steve), and the second six months.

I pretty much gave up the idea of my own book after that. I kept my hand in; doing short pieces, cover art,

and collaborating on the odd thing for petty cash. But that was pretty much that for comics as a living.

Still, I'm proud of the work. I jumped right in with almost nil comics experience and think I did a first rate job from the start. There's some beautiful, imaginative work in those pages, though they'd look conservative to anyone used to fractured, shattered, randomly arranged panels, and speed lines everywhere, mandatory in Japanese manga. But anyone can imitate *Dragon Ball Z* – I wanted to do my own thing.

I regret I didn't colour the cover of this issue myself. But this was before I knew Photoshop and had a computer worthy of installing it on. How different it might have been if I had, I don't know, except that I probably wouldn't have used anywhere nearly this much purple. The colourist used by Vision Comics loved purple for reasons I never fathomed.

Never mind the colour, the b&w drawing has a number of interesting points on its own. For instance, the story takes place in Rain City, an analog of Seattle. At that time I'd never been to Seattle and maps didn't give me much idea of what it looked like on the ground. This was my exaggerated impression of what Rain City should look like. Another point of interest; the hundred or so private

jokes incorporated into the signs and windows. The Ho Ho is the name of a Chinese restaurant that would have been opened by the father of an old friend of mine. I had the honour of doing the menu art. Unfortunately, the father's partner ran off with all the money and the restaurant never opened. The menu was never used. The billboard at the top right advertises a comic called Gremlin Trouble that I did many back covers for. Zolna's Used Books is named after a comic dealer who did much to support early anthropomorphic comics and furry zines. The books displayed in his show window are all in-jokes. Unfortunately I don't think you'll be able to read them from this image. These examples only scratch the surface.

**FW:** *This is such a happy piece. There are no shadows under the girl's feet, so we interpret her motion as skipping - which is consistent with her upbeat little smile. In the middle of a dark city, with cab drivers and shoppers staring at her, our plucky, fearless heroine skips and whistles through the dark city...*

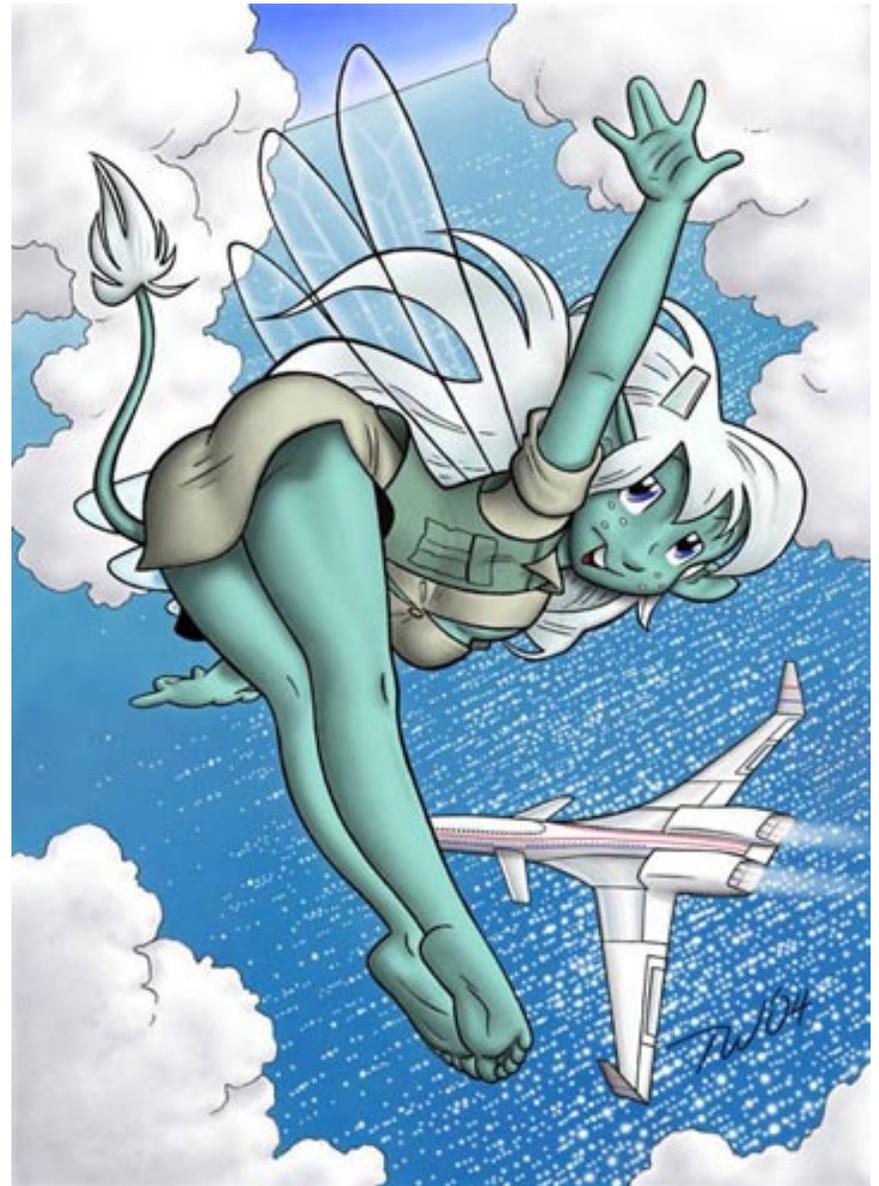
### **Aloft Again**

"Aloft Again" refers to a storm fairy who lost her power of flight when she was changed into a gremlin by accident. At the end of the series she is finally changed back, and so she is "Aloft

Again." I did several back covers for E.T. Bryan's comic, *Gremlin Trouble*. GT wasn't the most professional looking comic on the shelves but it was a very personal production for E.T. who wrote and drew every page, and it was fun. He liked to commission back covers from other artists though, and paid well for the field. This is the most satisfying I did for him, successfully melding his design for the character and my style. By this time I knew quite a bit about Photoshop, enough at least to paint this in several layers. What I didn't know how to do was create millions of tiny glittering patches of sunlight on the ocean surface. I settled for airbrushing a couple of thousand by hand.

Appearing as the back cover of the very last issue of *Gremlin Trouble*, this was the very last page and very last word of the story.

**FW:** *The green-blue color of the fairy really pops her forward from the*



*textured blue background. She is almost but not quite bulging out of her blouse and tiny skirt, lending the piece a delightfully playful, innocent, sprite-like sexuality.*



### Tank Out of Time

One must be careful of stereotypes. For a number of years I went to furry cons as a dealer and artist. I discovered I liked sitting behind a table in dealers rooms – everyone comes by once a day, and everyone knows just where to find you. I never did like program and hated it when people I wanted to talk with were wasting their time listening to

Jerry Pournelle explain why NASA had to be privatized so Ted Turner could vacation in orbit. If I had my druthers I'd rent two tables' worth of space, get rid of them, put several comfortable chairs in a circle, add a table with coffee and donuts, then spend the whole con there. The hell with selling anything. I digress...

The heart of the matter is that everyone came to me, sooner or later. One lost soul that finally came to me at one con was a fan everyone knew as "Bondage Bob". I'd met him in passing once or twice and knew he was more than ordinarily, fannishly peculiar. Everyone said he was a jerk, a loser, and obsessed with bondage art. Hence "Bondage Bob". I wasn't known for especially risqué art in furry

fandom. I had a smidgeon of taste, I suppose, left over from staid science fiction fandom. But there was Bob standing in front of my table, asking if I did commissions. I steeled myself for a request involving rubber, fetters, menacing hooded figures, and the instruments of torture for the showing.

"Can you draw tanks?" he asked. "Bondage Bob" also liked "mecha" it seemed. His request for a laser armed

Abrams M1A2 tank engaging a WWII vintage King Tiger was right up my alley, in fact, and we quickly struck a bargain. So much for stereotypes. And I had a great anecdote to tell about jumping to conclusions.

Later I duplicated the piece, as above, eliminating the laser turrets mounted on the Abrams forward tread guards and adding some characters of mine to the scene.

***FW:** Every rivet, every radiator slot is carefully delineated in the tanks - you rarely see such precision in art. And the girls are cute, too, yet tough. Not like Michael Dukakis at all.*



## Romance of Flight

The picture below is the third version. The first was a figure study, no more. In the second version I added the hex background and the paired space ship & biplane. It was hand coloured with colour pencils and not strikingly different from this. As you see it, the piece has been completely painted over with Photoshop, giving the colour a luscious quality it hadn't before. I also repainted the background so that, instead of simple silhouettes of rocks and trees, there are brand new colour features.

The piece has come to be more or less the official model for Saara Mar. Saara is the signature character I've been using in much of my art since the earliest days. She actually predates my entry in fandom by a few years, though she was almost unrecognizable in those days. The space ship is hers, and placing it in the image where I did she seems to be weighing up the beginnings and ending of the history of flight. The title is a word play I needn't explain.

Some years ago I selected this image as my professional logo. It's on my business card. It's been on a t-shirt (in the b&w second version). The pose is the basis of a clay sculpture that was done for me by Rubin Avilla. I suppose I'd have it tattooed on my

butt if I thought it would look any good there. (What would?)

**FW:** *I love the blue on her hands, feet and hair. It really makes the character design work. I've long thought that any character which is immediately recognizable, even if crudely done by, say, a ten-year-old trying to make a Hallowe'en costume, then it's a good design. This character definitely passes that test.*



Photo by Todd Sutherland

**FW:** *I also see recurring characters in your work. Like cute girls with kitten-*

*and squirrel-like faces. Do they have names? Backstories? They're endlessly adorable, and I just want to know more about them.*

**TW:** Of course they do. The question is more than I can answer properly in fewer than tens of thousands of words. I've had enough practice to give inadequate but much more compact answers to this question, but truth be told I'm a little reluctant to really go into it. SF fandom seems a bit too tight assed about this sort of thing, though maybe I'm applying out of date standards. Back when I was a neo and didn't know any better, I blurted everything right out. Names, storylines, and naive over-estimations of their importance in the general scheme of things. After a few years I got the distinct impression that I'd been embarrassing not so much myself as everyone else. Here was this guy... Seems reasonably intelligent and articulate, has friends in some circles, fanacs heavily, not a half bad artist though not to everyone's taste... but he goes on like some sort of... well... some sort of Trekkie about these imaginary characters in that space opera setting of his. One day hopefully he'll grow out of all that, along with the cuddly characters. (D. West called them "twee"). Then he'd be as normal as your or me. Until then we just won't talk about Taral's imaginary friends and other uncool personal stuff.

I never did grow out of it, but I did play along by becoming a lot more reserved about that stuff in fandom.

Likely that was one of the attractions of furry fandom in fact, where such mind games were encouraged, even normal.

Ironically, of late I find *myself* too stuffy for a lot of furry fandom. After listening to the umpteenth fur describe his Ninja Vixen Force universe, or all about his winged pink bunny alter ego, I began to see myself as a guy humouring inadequately socialized 37-year-old adolescents. I wonder -- have I finally become a Boring Old Fart?

Putting that aside to answer the first question, I've invented a lot of stories and characters over the years. Some that have interested me consistently over the years are:

Lady Fenn, nee McLaws, who through a mixed marriage a couple of generations back, is the sole heir to Toad Hall after its namesake finally breaks his fool neck in a flying accident. She and her family of skunks leave Canada to take up residence around the turn of the century.

Dixie LaPin, a southern belle from the Civil War era. To follow her beau into the army she cut her hair and "jined up" herself. (I wrote

the entire comic script in almost unintelligible southern dialects.) Unfortunately she finds herself in a different regiment, fighting Yankees in a different state. In the course of the war she distinguishes herself with inadvertent heroism, discovers her boyfriend is alas a yellow-belly, and decides to go out west to seek her fortune.

Wendy O'Connell is a human child who lives in the imaginary town of Willow Run in an imaginary history. She has a fascination with House Gamins. Most people won't even admit the pesky things exist, but they do, and they're contagious... Eventually Wendy's too close encounters with the five or six inch high critters living in her attic force her to make a painful choice about her life.

Lately I've been fooling around with bogus Scrooge McDuck adventures with an additional character of my own. I've drawn up the outlines of "*The Constantine Donative*" and "*The Lost Kingdom of Prester John*". Talk about hopeless goals, this has to be right up there with those fans with great ideas for another *Star Wars* trilogy. (*If only* they could get the manuscript to Steven Spielberg.) Disney is never going to let me do it, but I like to sketch out scenes anyway.

First of all the characters I've made up and have drawn over the years is Saara Mar, who discovered Earth in 1970. Her earliest sketches in fact pre-date her arrival, though it was a little while before she took on her modern form. Saara isn't a very *stfnal* alien, I'm afraid. She doesn't breathe methane or have trilateral symmetry, and I can't justify her very well. Apart from her white fur and blue hair she appears quite human. But under the plush there's a metal-like gravitational anomaly instead of an organism as-we-know-it. Her kind are the supposed product of thousands of years of technological advance beyond our wildest imagination. Arthur C. Clarke said that technology sufficiently advanced seems like magic. Saara might quip that science even beyond that would look more like a cartoon...

Saara has a few friends other than myself. There is Tangelwedsibel for instance. Some of her people emigrated to Earth in the 1980's, in the wake of Saara and other Kjola. Tangel' is built a little like a dinosaur with a humanoid head, but is furry and has a marvelously fluffy tail. Her colour is black and white rather like a skunk, leading to unfortunate comparisons. "The Langgi are no skunk!" complains Tangel' in her broken English. "I are not smell bad!" Among Saara's other friends are the somewhat interchangeable

Uluriaminsi, who are not so humanoid as her, and have a head for business and mathematics. They owned about 10% of Wall Street within only a few years of their arrival. For them, however, it's only a game played for its own sake, and they are as likely as not to give Microsoft away to charity as soon as they've acquired most of the stock.

For most of the years I drew Saara in one scene or another, I thought of her as a divergence from "our" world. Now I'm not so sure. Perhaps it was the Earth of Willow Run's history that she discovered in 1970.

**FW:** *What's your proudest achievement in all the years you've been doing this?*

**TW:** I'm almost certain it's *Beatrix 1* (preferably the b/w edition and not the second printing I had nothing to do with colouring). I worked longer on it than anything else I can think of, and it was mainly very hard work -- laying out Steve's rough sketches, later just working from scripted lines, rewriting dialog, working in scores of inside jokes, penciling the whole thing, inking it all myself, and even lettering. I don't know how people could do this monthly for mainstream titles like *Spiderman*... I guess that's why they don't. A small army of people do.



At one time I had hoped to do one issue a year, but that simply wasn't how the comics business worked. Publishers wanted frequent issues, no fewer than quarterly, and that necessitated collaborators I wasn't prepared to put up with. I wanted it to be *all* my work, from beginning to end, because there was simply *no* substitute for my touch in every department. If that was how novels were created, I didn't see why comics couldn't be the same.

Unfortunately no publisher saw it my way. Then following the shakeup of the industry after the Marvel bankruptcy, the sole distributor of any importance refused to handle comics that didn't *pre-sell* a minimum number of copies. This in effect made it impossible to publish a title that wasn't going to meet that number. There was no way for me to continue and the two issues (and one colour reprint) were all there were.

And then there was the lousy \$500 that was the best I was ever paid for an issue of *Bea*.

I like to imagine that when I'm 65 and can retire on the Canada Pension Plan's guaranteed minimum I'll be more affluent than I've ever been as a working artist, and might pick *Beatrix* up again from where it left off, even if it isn't publishable. I have a folder full of ideas, and a first rate ending for the last issue.

**FW:** *You've been doing fan art since 1971. Since then, a lot of big fanartists have come and gone, but you're still going strong. What keeps you motivated? What else are you interested in accomplishing?*

**TW:** I'd like to say it was due to daily bathing in apple butter, or eating a peck of garlic a day, or some other folksy prescription. The fact is I don't

really know. I suspect, with some reluctance, that it wasn't *because* of anything I did, but rather a *lack* of anything better to do. I do like old fanzines and having things published, but if I were illustrating children's books or writing urban fantasies for Tor, I probably wouldn't feel the need so much. In spite of having gotten a lot of starts at one thing or another, it doesn't seem as though I've been a big success in any of them. As much as I hate to say it, I guess my failings were fandom's good fortune.

It's not game, set, and match yet though. In the short term I want to further explore publishing on CD-Rom. I released the collection of Mike Glicksohn's zines earlier this year. Early in 2008 I expect to produce a second CD of Francis Towner Laney's *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* scanned from an original copy of the Fapa edition. I'll certainly collect some of my own zines on CD, and if all goes well I've ideas for several more. My only reservation is that so far sales of the *Energumen* collection have been really slow. I can burn them myself, in small batches, so I'm not out of pocket. But is it worth the effort if only ten or a dozen souls are interested?

Still, that's just talking about fanac. I do have goals somewhat grander. There are one or two ideas for children's books I'd like to write

and illustrate myself. One is a simple story to start with, about a dinosaur kid. In time I might work up to "Wendy and the House Gamins" if I find I'm capable of the sustained effort of novel writing at an adult level. And there's *Beatrix*, waiting for me to reveal how her problems all work out in the end. Saara would no doubt want me to speak a few words for her, though I scarcely know even now what it is exactly I want to say.

For the moment, perhaps the best thing is

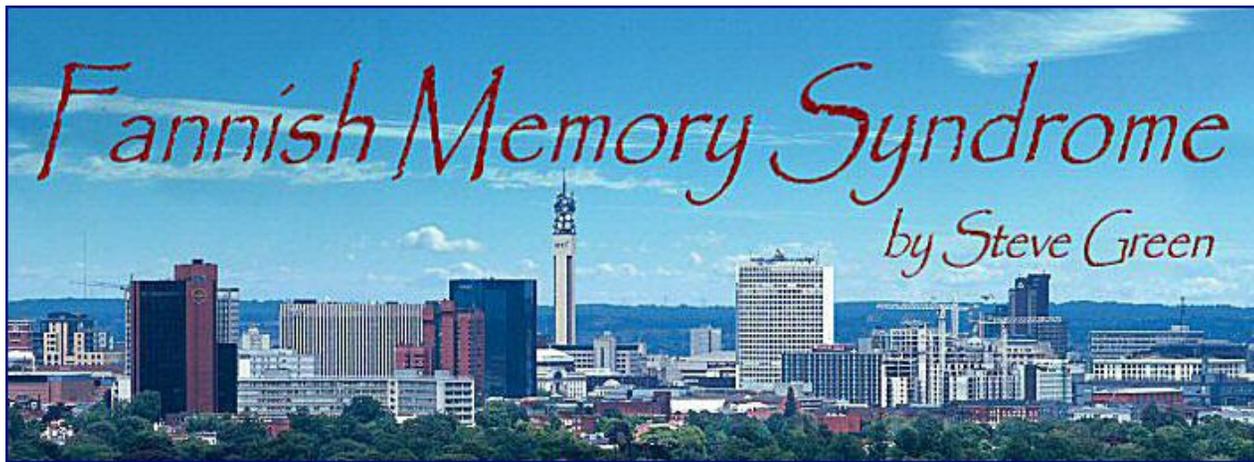
**"The End."**



**So, I got an interesting eMail on Wednesday morning. It was from Eleanor Rose of some agency in New York. They represent this fellow name of Spider Robinson. Shockingly, they had become aware of my issue 148. That was the one where I did the mock article about Stardance which a lot of people seemed to have falled hook, line and sinker for. I admit, the humor was dry as the Sahara, but the fact is that it was a hoax and if you knew anything about making movies, everything was far too over the top.**

**His agent didn't think so. She pretty much demanded that I take down the issue and never speak of it again. I'm not a huge fan of bending to demands from lawyerly/agency types, but I had to admit that it was confusing and I went back and I changed the issue, adding Warning: Satire Ahead to every page. I heard back and it was OK with them and it cleared it all up. Thank Ghod! I was worried there for a minute.**

**There is an actual Stardance movie in production. You can find out more information at [www.stardancemovie.com](http://www.stardancemovie.com). It looks pretty darn interesting with a dancer who looks almost exactly like what I imagine the main character would look like.**



## Fannish Memory Syndrome Steve Green

**To Birmingham's Victoria Square,** for the city's annual Frankfurt Christmas Market. It's a captivating landscape of craft stalls, food outlets and temporary bierkellers, the last ironically stationed immediately next to a selection of signs warning that the entire area has a blanket ban on alcohol.

Ann is in fully festive mood, on the hunt for additions to her ever-growing collection of xmas tree decorations (she has to find some way of balancing the 500+ lights on our humble five-footer). As well as a pack of candy canes, this year's horde includes a charming musical snowglobe with a tinkling rendition of "Jingle Bells", leaving me to wander off to one of the neighbouring stalls and magpie an imported Japanese clockwork robot.

Even when it's not hosting events such as this, Victoria Square showcases

some true architectural oddities. Lying in the shadow of Birmingham's justly-famous art gallery (with a collection of pre-Raphaelite paintings approached in world reputation only by those in Paris and New York), its statue of the eponymous monarch has been joined in recent years by a massive fountain dominated by a huge female figure (locally dubbed "The Floozie in the Jacuzzi"), Anthony Gormley's "Iron: Man" (an equally striking representation of the artist's own body) and "The Guardians", two sphinx-like statues designed by Dhruva Mistry which never



fail to remind me of the entrance to the Morlocks' lair in Wells' *The Time Machine*.

Her thirst for yuletide whimsy sated for another year, Ann joins me at the Briar Rose, a nearby freehouse offering an excellent range of real ales at surprisingly low prices. I confess that by the time our taxi arrives, I've downed nearly enough pints of the Captain John Smith (5.3% ABV) to re-float the Titanic.

**The 2008 Delta Film Award** has meanwhile opened for business. Announced each autumn at Manchester's Festival of Fantastic Films [see *The Drink Tank* #144], entry forms are now available to download at <http://fantastic-films.com/festival/filmcompappA.htm>. If you're involved in genre moviemaking, please check it out.