

# The Drink Walk Issue 189



[garnt@computerhistory.org](mailto:garnt@computerhistory.org)

**Another fantastic cover by Mo Starkey, who you can find doing illustration for Baen's Universe, and I hope, in more issues of The Drink Tank!**



## **Dead Space Review** **by Brianna Spacekat Wu**

**The Good** - Most cinematic survival-horror title to date, truly horrific monsters, strategic dismemberment combat The Bad - Forgettable cast, predictable plot The Bottom Line - Dead Space is a great new IP, and an unexpected gem in the blockbuster

season

Like RPGs, survival horror is a genre without a classic yet for this generation. Silent Hill Homecoming is widely considered the biggest failure of the franchise, and Alone in the Dark failed to accomplish anything memorable. Like many horror fans, I've been salivating for Resident Evil 5 and the continued adventures of Chris Redfield.

Here to tide us over is Dead Space, a completely new IP from Electronic Arts. It's garnered an impressive amount of press, primarily for its excellent graphics. The concept is a mash-up of science-fiction horror movies, including Aliens, Event Horizon, and Pitch Black. You play as a rescue technician sent in to repair a deep-space mining vessel. The protagonist, Isaac Clarke, has the added motivation of finding his girlfriend on the vessel and ensuring that she's safe.

Once on board, things predictably go very wrong. Soon, Isaac finds himself separated from his team, and is relentlessly attacked by Necromorphs. These hellishly twisted monsters are the real stars of Dead Space, grotesque and truly frightening. In order to survive, Isaac must brutally dismember their limbs with mining equipment left about and sold in computerized stores scattered around the station.

The first thing you'll notice while playing Dead Space are the excellent graphics, which are the most atmospheric we've seen to date on the PS3. The Necromorphs are very convincingly rendered, looking as if they're straight from the depths of hell. There are no on-screen indicators of health or ammunition. Instead, Isaac's suit overlays a holographic display where you can see it in third person. Functionally, it's difficult to read - but keeps you centered in the experience.

More important than the graphics is the use of sound, which can horrify you. The makers of Dead Space have studied their horror movies, and recreate some of the most frightening situations with the use of audio cues. Atmosphere fans twirl, making ripping metallic shrieks that make you feel as though you're being torn to pieces.

Levels constantly make you wonder if you're hearing mechanical noise or Necromorph carnage. You almost never feel safe, thanks to the sound.

The combat in Dead Space is an evolution of the popular over-the-shoulder system that made Resident Evil 4 so adrenal. You'll find yourself frantically targeting Necromorph limbs, trying to make your shots count to save ammo. It's exciting, while never making Isaac feel like an invincible juggernaut.

The weapons are all mining

implements, save for the nearly-useless pulse rifle. The upgrade system is also remarkably similar to Resident Evil 4. Isaac will find power nodes scattered about, and can upgrade his weapons at an engineering bench. Upgrading all Isaac's weapons will be impossible in a single-play through, so you'll have to replay several times to max out his weaponry. All circuits in a weapon node must be adjacent to each other - you'll find yourself frustrated at having to waste a power node on a blank space in a weapon schematic.

You'll also be able to upgrade Isaac's rig, which uses stasis modules to slow down time and solve puzzles. This is a crucial component of gameplay, as it allows you to slow down Necromorphs enough to surgically slice off their limbs. Stasis is a mechanic you'll frequently use, especially since it can be infinitely refilled with cheat codes.

Dead Space is a horrifying game. As I played it, the sound kept my husband looking pensively at the screams emanating from the television. He'd frequently mutter the phrase, "This is really, really horrible!" As many points, the game terrified me to the point I asked him to come sit with me to make me feel safer.

The plot of Dead Space is its weak point. For all the atmosphere the game succeeds in creating, the story is a perfunctory rehash of old

themes. It's closest to Event Horizon, but holds shades of 2001: A Space Odyssey as well. A relic has been discovered while mining a planet, and was brought aboard. The relic slowly drove the crew insane, and eventually led to them being turned into psychotic Necromorphs.

It's a theme that could have worked, if the game spent more than the opening cinematic developing its cast. A survival-horror movie has to deliver strong characters, so you have emotional investment in their continued survival. Dead Space fails to do this - there are few scenes explaining the personality quirks of the cast. For all their study of horror movies, Electronic Arts failed to understand this vital component of the genre.

Another lesson EA failed to implement was that when it comes to horror-movie monsters, less is more. In Alien, killing a single Xenomorph carries enough intensity to last a two-hour film. The Necromorphs are just as stylistically horrific, but when you've killed 50 of them in the first two hours, you're trading the thrill of constant combat for psychological intensity.

When I talk to other gamers that have played Dead Space, there's a ferocious positivity about the game that's rarely seen. Little surprise then, that as I was finishing this review, EA announced that it was not only

planning a sequel to Dead Space, but was close to a movie deal as well. Bring it on, I say. If the sequels can continue this level of quality, then Resident Evil has a serious contender for the best survival horror series.



# A DIALOG WITH FAITH

by

Maral

She wonders why I don't listen. Actually, I can tell her, but she wouldn't be very happy with the answer. Although I've been a friend of this long-time fan for I don't know how long, and she's always been as frank toward me as a gypsy curse, I'm not sure how well she would suffer the return compliment. So I will call her Faith.

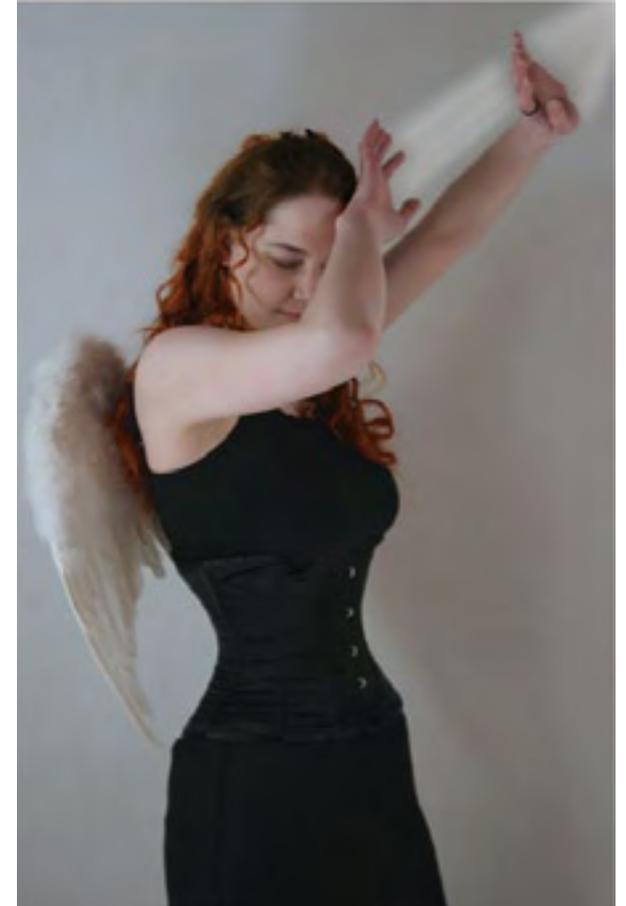
In a nutshell, I often find it hard to pay attention to Faith. Her conversations tend to run on, with little reference to a world outside Faith's own head, and a perfect imperviousness to another person's point of view.

Ask about the procedure on her knee... she'll tell you how hard it was to get to the clinic, and that the streetcar was crowded, and that the lobby of the clinic was noisy and there were awful kids getting into everything, and somebody in the corner who was waiting their turn was wearing a red shirt that Faith hated, and the nurses

were very nice, but the wait was awfully long, and there was a terrible menu in the cafeteria, that she doesn't usually like tuna fish, but she had the tuna sandwich anyway because the only other thing was cold cuts, and she had had those the day before, and the price was quite reasonable, if the bread a little stale, and somebody was smoking somewhere because she could smell it, and cigarette smoke always made her feel ill, then she had only a couple of minutes to her appointment, and you wouldn't believe how many corridors she had to walk, it was a wonder she didn't take a wrong turn and end up in proctology, but the directions were right after all, so she was just in time, and the doctor was named Aziz, and knew all about the recent worldcon even though he didn't read much science fiction, and Faith asked him if he'd ever heard of Robert Sawyer or Bob Wilson, and he said no, then he looked at her knee with an osteohoroscope and thought it was probably not a gimboidal trauma, then applied an elastic bandage that was really tight, made of scratchy pepto-bismal coloured linen, with snaps that she was afraid would rip her slacks, and felt stiff when she walked, fortunately there were plenty of seats in the bus, and she read a copy of Harry Potter she borrowed from a friend named Henry at work, who has gorgeous dark hair and loves Moxy

Frugis, so even if there was someone who was humming to himself in the seat across from her, it was only for a few stops, but as always it took nearly a half hour to walk the ten blocks from the subway exit home, and there were a lot of annoying flyers stuck in her door, don't people know she doesn't eat pizza or order Chinese in? She had to go to the bathroom.

***Now quick! Tell me what was wrong with her knee!***



***I finished NaNoWriMo again, for the fourth year, I believe. I'm happy to say that it took me a week, but that the resulting work is not only completely unpublishable, but it was so much fun writing it. I loved playing around with the ideas and just putting it all together. I also loved the concept.***

***I'd been listening to NPR and there was an interview with Chris Elliott. He said he had just written a book after abandoning the original idea: writing a history of New York City without doing any research. I loved that idea and abandoned my original thought for NaNoWriMo and went with *The Unresearched History of San Francisco*. I thought it would be fun. It also bears some resemblance *The Areas of My Expertise*, which was by the guy who plays PC in the Mac-PC commercials. I went and did a strange, 50k word piece about San Francisco. Some of it was weird, some of it was funny, and some was just out there.***

***The start of the chapter I'm including here is the one that I think took up far too much space, nearly 1/2 of the entire piece! It's only the first couple of thousand words, but give you an idea of what I was doing with this.***

***I'm giving a slight preview of the thing that I wrote and will probably never do anything else with it ever again.***



## **Chapter 4: The Ancient Nazi Kings of San Francisco.**

No one knows much about the so-called Ancient Nazi Kings of San Francisco, except that the first Ancient Nazi King of San Francisco arrived in the year 534 BC and the complete lineage of their decent and the ways they spent their days. That's not much, but it is enough to spend an entire chapter discussing. The rise of the 0th Reich was so quick, it was sudden. It was an important time.

In 534 BC, Lazslo Panaflex walked on San Francisco's then-famous gentle plains. The complete peninsula, flat as a English actress, was home only to the noble Ohlone at the time. The tribe, as we discussed in the previous chapter, were loosely organized into three major groups which were constantly warring and complaining about said wars in their three small circulation newspapers. It was the Homely band of San Francisco

Ohlone that first saw Lazslo walking across the plain, carrying a flag and a bag with a sandwich and apple.

Lazslo Panaflex was born somewhere near Baden-Baden, an ancient city located somewhere on the outskirts of Panama City, Florida, then the centre of power of the Americas. Lazslo was a six-foot, six inch giant, thick of arm and hairy of leg. Panaflex had been kicked out of many different places, mostly bars, but some respectable cities. It might have had something to do with the way he smoked by placing the cigarette between his ring finger and pinky. It was a style that would be the defining signature for all the Reichs that followed.

Arriving at the roaming village of the Homely band, he planted the flag, a design that is still unknown, and declared himself the King of San Francisco. Oddly, the Homely band seemed to not understand that they'd been subjugated and made him comfortable. When he'd yell that they should be bowing to him, The Homely band would simply offer him more fermented deer's blood. It seemed to calm him. On June the 13th, 531 BC, King Lazslo the First managed to gesture, scream and harangue the Homely Band into providing a coronation that was magnificent in that a throne was built, some seven feet tall with massive amounts of in-

laid rocks. It is said that the crown that Mieasjetuk placed upon Lazslo's head was made of pure Parrot peaks, removed by hand and polished to a high sheen by the women of the Homely band. The coronation lasted some seven hours, featured a twenty minute nap every other hour, and a feast that was built around oysters, parrot, pumpkins and grapes.

Following the official crowning, Lazslo started the process of extending his reach by sending emissaries to the Hapless and Coning bands of Ohlone. Inevitably, they would be returned with spears and arrows decorating their bodies, but it was a good sign that negotiations would ultimately succeed. It would take a wise choice by King Lazslo as to who he'd marry that led to his greatest victory.

Wise Chief Mieasjetuk had seven daughters and thirteen sons. After the various wars and a particularly nasty case of food poisoning from those who ate the oysters at the coronation, there were only two choices: Mieasjetuk's eldest son Gastigatoy and his 3rd daughter, Miroshi. Being that Lazslo liked Gastigatoy, but not in that way, Miroshi seemed a much better choice. Miroshi was the smallest of the children, only four foot seven inches and a slight frame that allowed her to be lifted easily, which was a good thing as she was often a supremely lazy woman who would rather be

carried than actually walk places. In addition, she was even-tempered, lovely to talk with and vengeful like a wronged gambler. She was known to have murdered at least one of her sisters by feeding her oysters and one of her brothers by forcing him to carry her across the Lackla River when he couldn't swim while she could. Lazslo, not a man who required anything in the way of attractiveness, married her on June 6th, 530 BC.

Lazslo I had spotted a particularly sweet, flat rock near the water on the far side of San Francisco's height-less peninsula. Lazslo had decided that the rock would be the perfect place for his new tent. Miroshi, looking at the site, also found that it was ideal for someone who wished only to slide into the water. And that made her interested in conquering it from the Hapless who held that territory. Lazslo was going to strike in the afternoon, so that when his band of 30 warriors arrived they'd be able to take a nap on the warm stone, following what would obviously be a difficult battle. Miroshi, hearing this, called her brother to carry her to the rock very early in the morning. Gastigatoy agreed because Miroshi had given him the other option of a free meal of oysters.

Once Miroshi was laid upon the rock by Gastigatoy, she stripped herself of all her clothes and lay out on the rock naked. A few hours later,

a group of warriors from the Hapless band came upon Miroshi sunning herself on the rock. They threatened to destroy her unless she left the rock. She

said she would not be leaving, but she would gladly leave if any of the men who were there would make love to her in a most sensuous of ways. The group of warriors, though they were all more than able in the ways of love, were not interested because 1) they all liked their women with a little meat on their bones and 2) the Homely band of the Ohlone were aptly named. The Hapless, shamed, walked away and never returned to Agameat: Place of the Ugly Bronzen Women. When the men arrived, they discovered Miroshi sunning herself. Lazslo I and his little lady celebrated like men and women have since times immemorial: they schtupped like bunnies.

Lazslo sired some 17 children: Lazslo, Migo, Lazwer, Miko, Lazlew, Mitwa, Lazlus, Mirwas, Lazdep, Mijer, Lazshu, Mishu, Lazdu, Mishdu, Lazqua, Miqua and Lazslawless. The children were well-raised, sweet



Artist's Concept for Miroshi on the rock

kids with apple cheeks and tender dishonesty. Lazslo quickly married off his children to various tribes and they would become many of the most noble families in the history of the Unresearched History of San Francisco. Several of these families live on to today, largely in communities such as Atherton where normal folks are not allowed to raise their heads to see the opulence in which their betters live.

Lazslo I died in the autumn of 503 BC after a long battle with being very old. Many believe he was at least 100 when he passed, and since there's no one alive today to contradict me, I'll say he was 100. What are they gonna do? Send out the army of mechanical robosoldiers with bayonets sticking out of their foreheads? Huh? You think they'd do that? I didn't think so.

Lazslo's funeral was attended by all of his children save for Lazdu, who was off at college studying "and just couldn't get away from preparing for finals." The funeral was magnificent, with dozens of mourners trying to throw themselves into his grave and scalpers getting up to 40 mounds of magnificent oyster shells for tickets. Many fortunes were made in the days leading up to the planting of the King. The legendary poem, *On the Day They Buried Lazslo the First, Original Nazi King of San Francisco on October the 13<sup>th</sup> 503 BC* may well have been based

on the event, though direct evidence does not seem to exist.

Lazslo had ordered the construction of a magnificent tomb under what is today's Hyde Street. On the first anniversary of Lazslo's death, a race to commemorate his reign was held, passing directly over his tomb. This was called Feal-yu-alerd: later called the Bay-to-Breakers.

### **Lazslo II**

Lazslo I was certain that his choice of his eldest son Lazslo would be a fine King and as the second of the Ancient Nazi Kings of San Francisco he was well-worth the name Lazslo the Overdeveloped. It is not known how he got so shredded in his youth, but it believed that he must have done a nickel in Chino to get arms and massive tats like he sported.

Lazslo II quickly discovered that the best idea was to pretend that he was his father, which led to him marrying a woman so closely resembling his mother that characters from Oedipus would shudder in personal distaste. Her name is lost to history, so let's call her Samba. No wait...Sabra. That's nice. Sabra. It's got a ring to it, don't you think?

OK, Sabra and Lazslo II were often compared to his parents in many different ways, including the one that really mattered. Folks said that he was King. Lazslo was constantly at secret

war with the rest of those who were part of the San Francisco Peninsula. It is interesting to note that it was Lazslo the Second who started the Ancient Nazi Kings and the rest of the Nazis that followed down the road towards one of their most notable attributes. A family moved into San Francisco and opened a bakery. The family was Jewish and Lazslo was slow to greet them, starting the group down that road.

Lazslo's greatest accomplishment was dying young. After only six years, Lazslo died of either typhus or getting stabbed sixteen times in the back. It's hard to tell which came first. He had ordered that his tomb be circular and completely engulf the tomb of Lazslo the First. His children, all seven of them, attended the funeral and the youngest, the future Lazslo the Fourth, saluted as he was laid into the tomb, a motion that would later be stolen by the little bastard John-John Kennedy!



## Letter Graded Mail Sent to [Garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:Garcia@computerhistory.org) by my gentle Readers and art from Steve Stiles

**Let us begin with Eric Mayer!!!**

Chris,

Congratulations on an imaginative con report! The best one I have seen in a long time. It even held the interest of this non-con-goer. It sounds like there was some really interesting things going on. I guess the steam theme appeals to my interest in history which is stronger these days than my interest in science fiction. I was reminded of the steamer that plays a part in the sadly unpublished Victorian book Mary and I wrote:

*"He hurried down Crispin Street. Its few street lamps burned through the sickly yellow mist, forming tiny suns. At the corner, stairs led up to the door of a church which must surely be St. Michael's New Church. The vicarage, then, would be the next building.*

*"He was almost at its door before he saw the automobile parked in front.*

*"Such vehicles were not a common sight and this one was most uncommon. A peculiar looking contraption, giving the impression of a small locomotive perched on carriage wheels, the whole painted black. A steamer? As he approached he could hear it sighing as*

*if it were alive.*

*White clouds boiled out around the machine, mingling in a roiling confusion with the discolored fog. The machine's lamps stared at him balefully."*

Eventually they end up fleeing across an icy waste in the steamer pursued by demons. But I fudged a lot on the operation because with brake controls on the side of the tiller and doohickeys for setting speed



rather than a foot pedal, just trying to explain would've detracted from the excitement. Oh well, it was fun to write.

**Why has it never been published? It sounds awesome! What must I do to get to read it?**

Actually your hair and beard would pass for Victorian, don't you think? It strikes me as funny how all those staid, conservative old men had wild hair and beards. The pillars of the community would be looked at as elderly hippies today.

**Quite so, though it'd also work in the late 1400s. Then again, Walt Whitman was legitimately a hippy and he was in that time. I have been told that many in the Victorian times would have still considered me a Wild Man for having hair of this kind. Now, if I had the connecting mustache...**

Hey, also, good news about that story. You must be some kind of fiction writer. And you're right, \$250 is better than most markets would pay for a story.

**Yeah, I was freakin' shocked! I would also like to state for the official record that I am NOT a writer...I'm merely a guy who likes to write.**

I have to say Warren Buff is a man of fine discernment, to rate so highly the Kinks' "Lola Vs Powerman and the Moneyground Part 1". The Kinks are

my favorite band and although most critics talk about "The Village Green Preservation Society" or "Arthur" as their best album I've always been partial to the Lola album. It might be because I was really into the music at the time. I managed to see the Kinks at the Fillmore East during the Lola era. As Warren points out there are many excellent tracks aside from the hits."Get Back in Line" is another terrific song.

Dave Davies was doing that on his tour a few years ago.

Till next your electrons cross my screen...

Best,

Eric

***I had a long discussion about The Kinks and their place in the history of Rock 'n Roll. I would say it's secure, but many folks, including my buddy Al who has a radio show on the college radio station in this parts, say that in the future, everyone will just assume that the songs of The Kinks will be assigned to the Stones. I dunno if I totally agree with him, the differences are pretty significant, but then again, I totally thought that Helter Skelter was by the MC5!***

***Thanks much, Eric!***

***And now a brief note from one of my heroes: His Lordship Earl Kemp!***

Chris, great issue DT188.

Wonderful artwork; correct Rotsler award winner. Please pass along my compliments to TW.

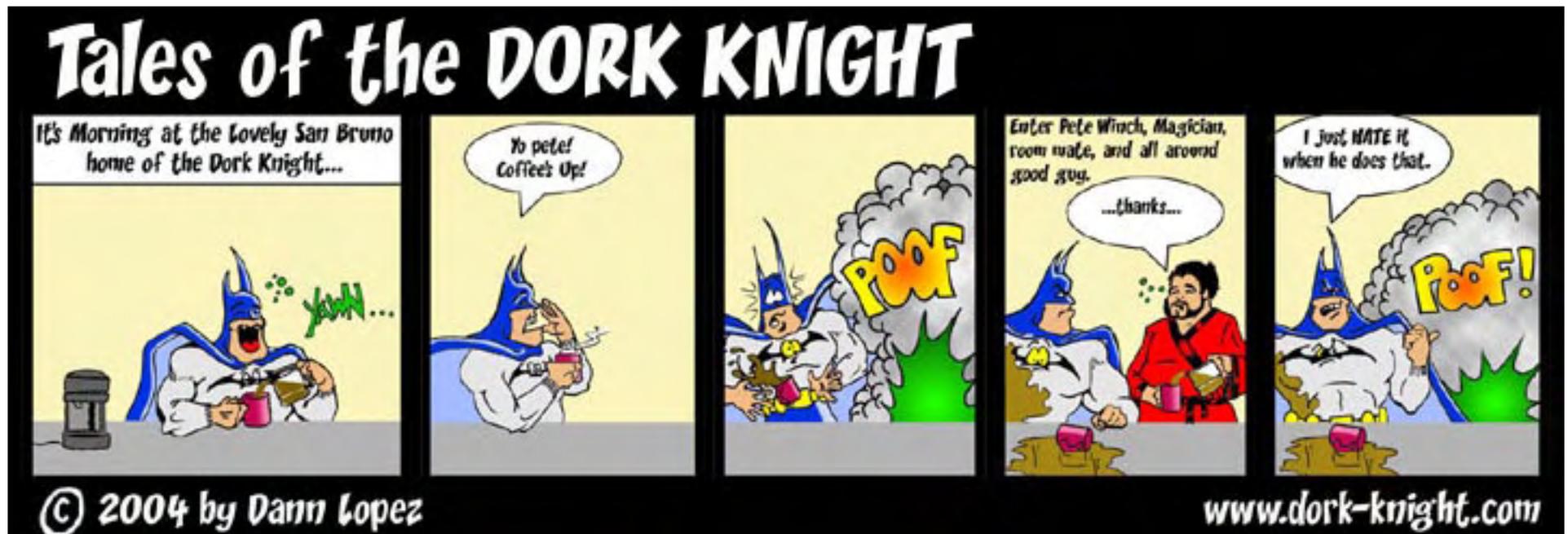
***And I shall (and I'm thinking he'll probably see them listed here!) I think that was one of the better issues, and Taral certainly deserves all the credit in the world!***

Really too bad you never got to meet him; one wonderful guy.

Thanks,

Earl

***I really wish I'd had the chance. All the stories in e1, when I visit Arnie and Joyce, from the pages of KTEIC, all make me wish i was a little older and more tuned in!***



# Fannish Memory Syndrome

by Steve Green

**It's all that bloody Martin Tudor's fault.** Even though the pair of us can no more easily eradicate the mental – and financial – scars of the nine years we tried to run a science fiction & fantasy newszine on a smaller budget than *Locus*' stationery cupboard, he didn't lean forward and punch me into oblivion the very instant I mooted resurrecting that same publication after a mere twelve-year gap.

Of course, it didn't help that we'd spent the afternoon consuming beer, bangers and burgers at the Leicester home of Dave Hicks and Cat Coast. By the time Martin and I came in from the back garden and started brainstorming joint projects to take our minds off the way both our lives have headed down the crapper this year, our defences were already dangerously weakened; it only took a few nudges from other of the barbecue guests and we collapsed like a Chinese schoolhouse.

Exactly two months later, the new series of *Critical Wave* made its debut via Bill Burns' ever-astounding

platform eFanzines, deliberately coinciding with Novacon 38 (our first issue was simultaneously distributed free to members of Novacon 17 in

Birmingham and NIcon II in Belfast).

Despite the move to digital publishing, the relaunched *Wave* is actually closer to our original concept than that first run, ditching the industry scuttlebutt and book reviews (now covered on a multitude of websites) in favour of fannish news, convention reports and the like. Our next issue is pencilled in for December, and it's honestly great to be back.



**It's also all that bloody Chris Garcia's fault.** Back when he stayed with Ann and me during his TAFF tour, Chris devoted considerable effort towards convincing me I should consider standing myself some day.

I wasn't quite swept up by his flimflammy, but there was a tiny grain of logic in there: after all, I reckon a good half of the material I've supplied to other people's fanzines over the past thirty years has appeared in North American titles. Among the first fanzines I received on a regular basis was the Canadian fan Randy Reichardt's *Winding Numbers*; I was a frequent contributor to Marty and Robbie Cantor's *Holier Than Thou* in the days before California was engulfed in the TAFF-related pre-internet flame war now known as "Topic A"; this column even had its original run in Seattle's focal-point fanzine *Apparatchik*. Yet, strangely, I'd never made it across the Big Pond.

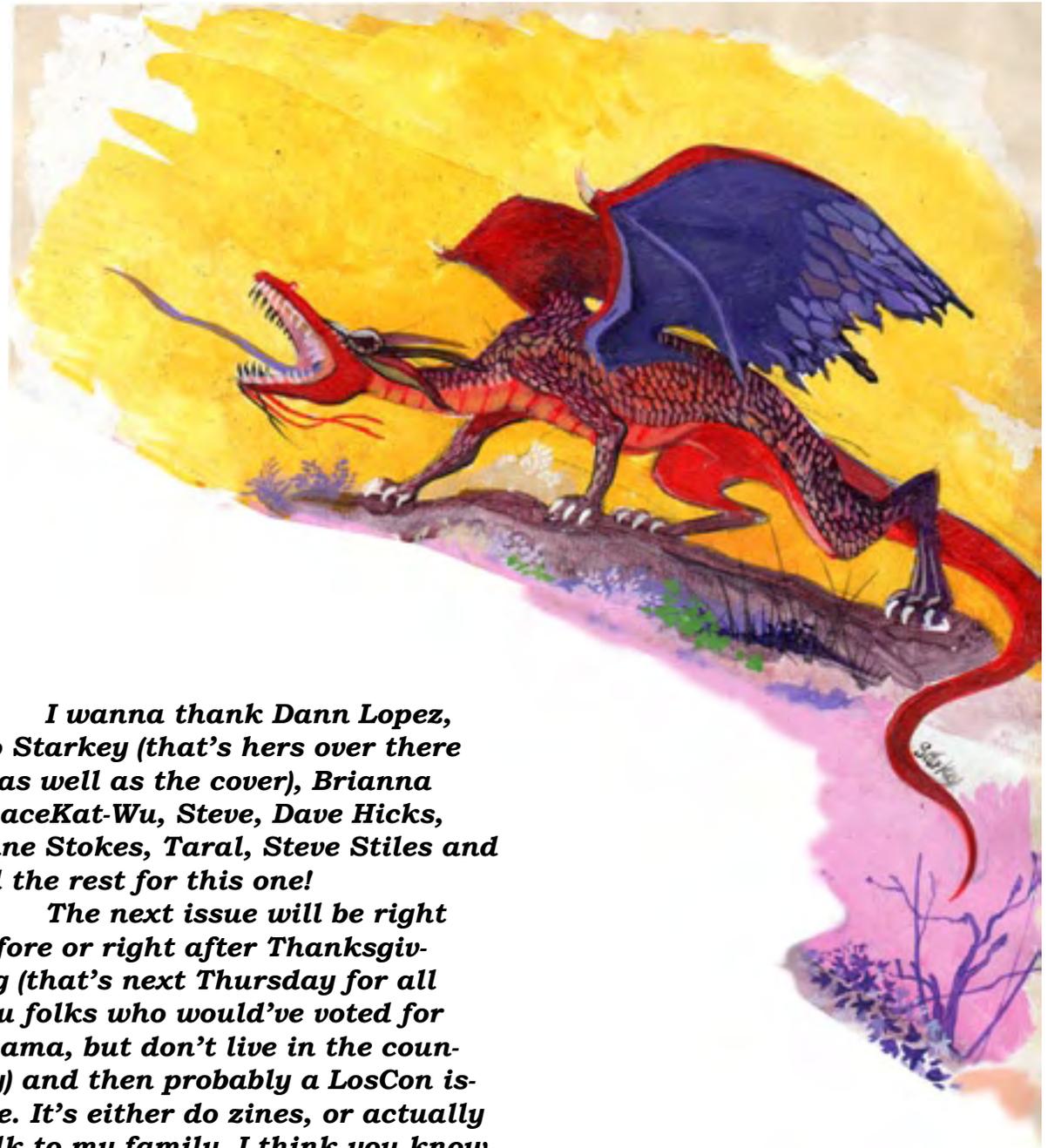
Then July came along and treated my life with as much care as Gojira strolling through downtown Tokyo. As I began to clamber out of the ruins, I realised I needed a total change in direction – and maybe Chris' suggestion wasn't so daft, after all. Chatting with Martin at Halloween, it made even more sense (anyone else notice a pattern here?) and I contacted TAFF's European administrator, Bug, to formally throw my hat into the ring.

Fast-forward two weeks: as Novacon members begin downloading *Critical Wave #2.01* onto their PDAs, Bug turns up with a freshly-printed batch of ballot sheets, featuring platforms from myself and my honourable opponent, Tom Womack. By close of play on Sunday, she'd already been handed more than forty completed forms (though, obviously, neither Tom nor I knows who's in the lead).

Ann once said, when I toyed with standing back in the 1980s, "What's the worst that can happen? You might lose." I wish she'd been right.



***It's good to have Steve back in the pages of The Drink Tank and I hope we'll get to have him regularly again, though I can tell you it's not an easy thing to run for TAFF and keep up with all your writing commitments.***



***I wanna thank Dann Lopez, Mo Starkey (that's hers over there -> as well as the cover), Brianna SpaceKat-Wu, Steve, Dave Hicks, Anne Stokes, Taral, Steve Stiles and all the rest for this one!***

***The next issue will be right before or right after Thanksgiving (that's next Thursday for all you folks who would've voted for Obama, but don't live in the country) and then probably a LosCon issue. It's either do zines, or actually talk to my family. I think you know what I'll be doing...***