



**[Ohue Drink Dank Issue 2012  
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# DRINK TANK

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*Brad Foster's header looms! I loves me some Brad Foster. I'd officially like to apologize to him for not-getting his stuff until I was in my 30s!*

*I got the first piece for my Searchers issue. It'll be an interesting one, that's for sure. I'm trying to find a particle physicist who has the time to wrote up a search for theoretical particles article.*

*I got an eMail about Video Game Preservation a couple of days ago. It's an interesting topic, and one which is highly under-researched and prepared. I started thinking about the nature of preservation and museums and that got me thinking about another issue of Claims Department. Claims is where my long-range/detailed/overly-long articles go, and this is going to turn into one long, overly-long, and strange article on video game history and museums. It's perfect for Claims Department because it can be completely over-looked and you'd miss nothing!*

*And now, stuff!*



***This is one of those articles I love writing. It's the first one of these I've done in a while.***

## Tales From The Wall

If the Smithsonian is America's Attic, the National Archives is America's Filing Cabinet. Technically, the name is The National Archive and Records Administration and it's got more than 30 facilities holding every significant record produced by the US Government, from Presidential Orders, to Mess Hall Menus. It's an amazing collection, one that grows faster than any single group should ever have to deal with.

While everyone has heard of the National Archives, few know the name of the department called the US Information Agency. It's a group that is really responsible for spreading the idea of American values and 'The Free World' to the rest of the world. In other words, it's a propaganda instrument. Most folks have heard of the Voice of America radio network, which is a part of the USIA, but the Film Production division is almost unknown because Americans aren't allowed to see any of the US Information Agency films until 12 years after they're made because the US can't be seen to be propagandizing its own citizens. It's a weird thing. Russians could see all those old propaganda films, they



loved them. They even saw them as entertainment.

In the National Archives, among millions of linear feet of proclamations, presentations and policies is a comic book. Well, there are hundreds of comic books which were produced by various agencies to explain aspects of policy to children, but there's a special one, the only-known surviving copy of the only-known project of the only-known government agency that was solely responsible for producing comic books.

In July of 1961, a gaffer named Miles Brannan was working on the films being produced by the USIA, was idly doodling while waiting for the Lighting Director to give him direction. An Army major at the English airfield was walking through as they were producing a film on the quality of American Airplanes. The Major, who had been working with the USIA, sat down next to Brannan.

"You're good, airman." he said.

"Not an airman." Brannan said.  
"Just a guy who had to pay his way



through Film School."

The Major, who was in charge of a small unit, had been a fan of comic books when he was a kid. He had grown up in the same neighborhood with a young fellow named Stan Lee. The two had shared comics as kids, passing them between each other since they could only afford a certain number of comics a week. They were close enough that they'd stayed in touch through all the years. He had often seen many soldiers in his unit during WWII carrying comics in their packs. With his years having hung around with Lee and various other

creative types, the Major (whose name can still not be released as his work as the world's greatest propagandist only ended in the late 1990s) was inserted into the Film Production corps as a producer, which also allowed him to be promoted up to major for having done such a fine job on films such as "America's Navy- Not Just Ships" and "Fighting Famine". He had been known for finding young talent in American Film Schools and also having exceptional titles, designed by many graduates of fine arts schools. This eye for talent certainly became activated when noticing Brannan's drawing.

The Major returned to Washington, hoping to scope out the cream of the George Washington University crop. While there, his superiors informed him that they wanted to institute a new department. They wanted to produce Fine Art Graphics as a part of the general propagandization. These graphics would be of such a quality that they could be hung in Modern Art museums. This was considered to be an area where the United States Information Agency could branch out into. The Major said that he had several names in mind and within a week, he had authorization to employ 3 staff members in the Graphic Presentation Agency, the second smallest unit in the USIA (after a 2 man team who were charged with promoting Cable Car Bell Ringing).

The Major called Brannan on the set of USA- We're Great! and arranged for a transfer. He was officially named the penciller. While in Washington, he found a fine line artist named Lincoln McCarthy. He was considered to be the best of his class at Georgetown. Oddly, he was the top of his Law class, but he had been very active in local science fiction fandom, producing many fine pieces for local fanzines. His cover for AntHoloGy was considered to be one of the best of 1960. The final hire the Major made was to call an old friend, a painter who had been in

his unit during Korea. Martin Arkle was a popular painter who had hung around with many of the Abstract Expressionists in New York and Los Angeles. He wasn't considered to be a fine artist, but he was certainly popular as he was well-connected with many galleries around the world. While he was well-connected, he was also frequently broke. The Major, knowing that, offered him the job as the colorist, though he was a fine letterer, which was how he had become known in galleries since he was in demand to produce captions and write out the labels for paintings.

In early August, 1961, the team was assembled in Berlin, Germany. The group was assembled on the 4th, though The Major would not arrive until the 12th. The arrangements had been made and an office had been rented and money had been wired to allow for the three men to buy art supplies. The team was expected to find their own lodging, but the fact that they had money to spend and an office with sturdy walls and comfy chairs, the boys purchased a large amount of liquor, several boxes of cigars and they'd ordered food from every restaurant that would deliver to them. The place was lively, especially since Arkle was known to be able to convince women to allow him to paint on them, typically with them fully naked.

The Major arrived on the 12th,

and fortunately for the three artists, had called ahead, giving them time to clean the office up and create false receipts to cover up their illicit spending. They managed to make all the required changes and The Major was most happy with the way they'd been working. They explained that they'd needed to stay at the office because the room they'd rented was being painted. The Major understood and actually authorized the purchase of a cot for each of them. The Major called an evening meeting, asking for the team to join him. The group discussed plans for works in the future, but The Major had not mentioned the USIA's plan for a Fine Arts project, instead saying that they'd be producing comic books. They were interested, and while The Major was pitching ideas late into the evening, a phone call came.

The Berlin Wall was being built.

The Major and his staff spent the next several days actually watching the

building of the Wall. There were many German families who were split up by the Wall who would gather as close as they could get to signal to one another. Quite a few people jumped from windows in apartments that were next to the Wall, landing in West Berlin. Brannan, who spoke no German, drew the scenes, while Arkle spoke with many of the families (and managing to score dates with several lovely frauleins). McCarthy was involved in helping catch those who would leap from the windows. McCarthy, a tall and muscular guy who had been Georgetown's star wrestler until injuring his back sophomore year,



became a widely recognized figure among Berliners. By August 21st, McCarthy was responsible for catching more than 100 people who leapt from windows.

The Major had helped with various aspects of the American Response to the building of the Wall, so it wasn't until the 22nd that he gathered the team for a specific task. The meeting he called was the first to directly target The Wall. While his superiors had continued requesting an art show focusing on The Wall, The Major had seen several German kids reading graphic novelizations of German folk tales and thought that a comic book would be much more effective. At the meeting, he outlined his plan, asking that they focus on true stories and have a first draft in 2 weeks.

The group decided to call their comic Tales from The Wall, and the cover, painted by Arkle, was an open nod to Tales of the Crypt. This would have been quite controversial if anyone in the US had been able to see it, but knowing that it was technically a USIA production, it would never make it out there. The stories featured in the comic was written by Arkle, based on those stories he'd gotten from the various people he'd spoken with during the previous week and a half. Brannan did the pencils in less than 3 days, though



McCarthy was somewhat slower in inking the thing. Arkle's coloring of the comic took him a few days, but Tales from the Wall was completed on August 30th. The Major, who was preparing to leave for another trip to Washing, approved of the piece and had arranged for printing through a private Berlin printing company because the American presses were all busy printing communiqués dealing with the Wall. He had arranged for 5,000 copies to be printed. The cost was slightly higher than he should have agreed to, but it was not overly

pricey and The Major knew that Congress would never look into such a medium-sized expense.

The troubles started there. The printers were not able to handle the volume The Major had ordered, and they knew it, but at the prices they were charging, they could not afford to pass it up. They called every printer in Berlin and found that they could not afford to farm it out either. So a plan was hatched. They'd print 1,000 copies, and load them into boxes. They'd send the boxes over, marked '100 inside'. Five of these would be

sent first , all full of 100, and then another 10 boxes with 40 each, and blank forms on the bottom which they would claim was an error due to using new "filling" machines. They would then send some with only 10 and many more with one blank forms. This was a gambit that would play out to be a huge success.

The first five boxes arrived on September 9th, 1961. The Major was called and told that the printing was magnificent. The Major asked that a single copy be sent to him in

Washington so he could show it to his superiors. The men took the boxes and started handing out copies to the crowds that gathered at The Wall. Many of those who got copies could not read English, and so many made their way to the garbage, while other were read and then discarded. Of those first 500, it is estimated that 490 made their way to garbage cans. So many were discarded that locals were

complaining that they were choking the city's garbage cans. They'd managed to give away all the copies that had arrived. The men, knowing that The Major would be gone for at least two weeks, so they called the printers saying that they didn't want the next shipment for at least ten days. That would give them time to enjoy themselves, throw more painting parties with the lovely young ladies who Arkle had met and wooed. This gave the printers time to print more, but they only printed a few to fill out

the last wave, making it appear that there were at least some actual comics in every box. The party was almost never ending, and since Arkle could pick a good lock, they'd expanded into private parties in the adjoining offices during their off-hours.

The Major received his copy of Tales From The Wall on September 13th, less than an hour before his meeting with his superiors. He was most pleased, since he had always enjoyed the Tales from the Crypt style, and he thought that the stories

were moving. He especially liked the lettering that Arkle had done. He was truly the greatest letter in the history of the USIA. He brought it with him to a meeting of his superiors where he was to present the plans for the Graphic Presentation Agency. He arrived at the meeting and was greeted with a barrage of questions about what they were doing in regards to The Wall. The Major presented



the comic book for all to see.

This started a tempest. The goal of the project, stated those in the room, was to turn the Intelligentsia towards the 'Ways of Freedom'. The Major attempted to explain that turning the young towards America would be much more effective. Various members of the committee said that this was an outrage that that there were other groups that were working more successfully in that area. The Major argued that this would be a significant step towards American acceptance in Germany, but his arguments fell on deaf ears. The Graphic Presentation Agency was disbanded on September 15th, 1962, but the Major made a critical move on the 14th, while the committee was still finalizing the situation. He placed a copy of Tales from the Wall with a Librarian in the Archives. It was a significant move, because it was required since it had been produced with Taxpayers' money, but it was also the only record of the Graphic Presentation Agency arm of the United States Information Agency. To this day the only records of the GPA's existence are the founding and disbanding notices, the hire slips for Brannan, McCarthy and Arkle, their transfer slips and the single issue of Tales From The Wall, slightly mustard-stained from a hot dog the Major had enjoyed while rereading it.

Brannan, McCarthy and

Arkle were all transferred to the film production units of the USIA. Brannan returned to lighting, though made more money doing caricatures at public festivals and events. He would leave the USIA in 1969, returning to the US to work at DC comics as a touch-up man. McCarthy stayed in Germany, ostensibly as a cameraman for the USIA, but realistically he was assisting East Germans in making their way across the wall. He was responsible for almost a thousand escapes over the following ten years. He married a German woman, had a couple of kids, and only returned to the US after being injured in assisting in a tunneling operation that allowed several dozen people to escape. Little is known about what Arkle did after leaving the USIA in 1966. Some say that he's the same man as Klaus Van Arsenal, an art dealer who would be caught up in a major forgery scandal of Pollack paintings in the early 1970s. Others say he was caught by a jealous husband in flagrante and that was the end of the story.

The printers sent the rest of the boxes as had been agreed upon, not knowing that the group had been forced to leave their office. The boxes sat there for several days until a cleaning crew threw them away. The other tenants complained that the comics were again cluttering up the garbage.



**Here's Part Three of Bobby Schattle's Article about the evolution of his musics and more!**

Before I go any farther, I'd like to digress once more and talk about an aspect of music trading that is often overlooked: the mix tape. The reason I bring it up is that, while not everyone may look upon music evangelism with the same sentimentality that I do, I believe everyone has, at some point in their lives, experienced the sheer humanity embodied by the mix tape. I'll spare you the banal reference to the closing lines of High Fidelity, except to say that what I appreciate about that particular monologue is the recognition that making a mix tape requires a person to exercise all aspects of their personality: both thinking and feeling, judging and perceiving, all that shit... The other night at the bar, a friend offered up a fond remembrance of a onetime love interest that had played music to her over the phone. Being the hater that I am, I denounced this gesture as being painfully lame because...well...it is. I mean, really...who on earth would ever want to listen to a piece of music through the handset of a telephone? That said, even though the guy picked a terrible transport agent for the gift of song, I will admit that there is virtue in the sentiment. Thomas Edison (and to a lesser extent, the recording industry)



gave the men of this world a wonderful gift: the means to serenade a girl without the need for any kind of musical ability whatsoever. I can't predict what coming technologies will do for the language of music, but I can guarantee you that, in whatever form it takes, the mix tape will never go out of style. The Pietasters have this album called "Awesome Mix Tape #6," and while it's not their best work, it is one of the cooler names for an album I've ever heard. I can't think of any other album title that's been as effective at evoking thoughts of cherished music from my past. So given the romanticism that I impute to the making of a great mix tape, it's ironic to me that an act so universally pure as giving someone

a bunch of music that you think they'd like also happens to brazenly violate U.S. copyright law.

Digression over. Back to the subject at hand...

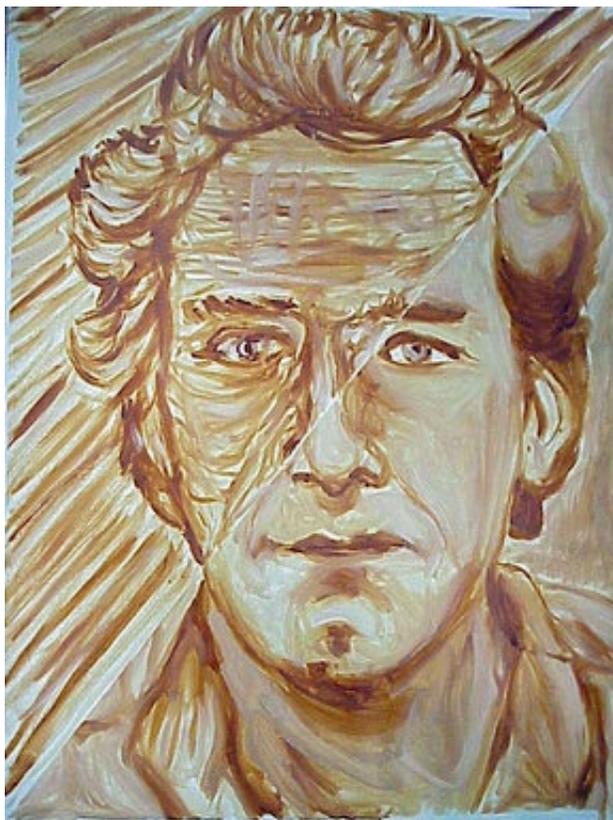
As the mp3 format started to go mainstream, I actually stopped using the peer-to-peer networks as much. There just wasn't any need, because I could get more than enough new music to keep me happy from people within my own social circle. My problem now wasn't the frequency with which I was getting new music, but rather with the kind of new music that I was getting. Confession time. If the FBI were to raid my home computer right now, they would inevitably find a fairly large hard drive half-full of music for which I would be unable to provide proof-of-purchase. So far, I've tried to write about the topic of music piracy without blatantly admitting to any specific criminal acts, just because this is the Internet and you never know who the hell might be reading. [Still, it's 2008, and at this point confessing to downloading music illegally is like confessing to jaywalking.] Instead, I'm going to tell you the real dirty little secret about my music collection: most of the music that I own is music that I

don't even listen to. That's why I started going to shows.

I never went to much live music when I was younger. I've always really liked seeing bands perform, but going to some huge venue like Shoreline or Oakland Coliseum, to me, never seemed worth the expense. Sitting 100 feet away from the stage wasn't much different than just watching a concert on TV, and trying to get up close meant dealing with superfans who seemed intent on proving to the world that they're the ones having the most fun. Soured by those early observations, it wasn't until after college that I discovered the joy of small clubs. I'm glad I did, because going to shows has introduced me to some wonderful music that I probably wouldn't have found otherwise. Plus the people are pretty cool. If I see a rockabilly show on a Saturday night at the Blank Club, there are almost always familiar faces in the crowd. And, while every night out has its exceptions, usually these people have a nice middle-of-the-road attitude. They aren't there because the headliner is their FAVORITE-BAND-EVER, nor are they there just for the scene. The best small clubs attract people with a genuine interest in the music, provide modest offerings behind the bar, and allow their customers to check their ironic detachment at the door.

The first time I bought a new CD

that I really liked at a show was about five summers ago; Tim, Sarah and I went to see Huey Lewis at the Mountain Winery. With the recent influx of mp3s, it had been a while since I'd actually paid real money for a new album. In fact, I don't think I'd bought a new CD since seeing Huey the year before, when I purchased a copy of *Four Chords and Several Years Ago*. That one didn't even really count either, because buying it had less to do with the actual music and more to do with filling out my collection (don't take this the wrong way, it's a fantastic album...I had just never cared enough to get it



because it's all cover songs). Anyway, the opener was Paul Thorn and I liked him immediately. Even though it was just a solo acoustic set and more than half the seats were still empty, his music and lyrics stuck in my head the whole time Huey was playing. Apparently I wasn't the only one, because as we wandered past the merch tables after the show let out, there were an impressive number of people buying his stuff. The problem with buying music at the merch table is this: if the person has multiple albums (Paul Thorn had 3), you just have to take a quick glance at the cd cases, try to figure out the names of the songs you liked from the set, and make a best guess about which one you want to buy. As I stood there mulling my selection over in my head, a smarter gentleman than myself simply asked the man behind the table, "Which one should I get?" Without any lengthy explanation or sales pitch, the man behind the table pointed to *Ain't Love Strange* and said, "This one." These next few words run the risk of sounding a little cliché, but a great album doesn't need to be sold...the music will sell itself. I pulled my wallet out of my back pocket and interjected, "I'll have what he's having." Within a year, I bought 3 more of Paul Thorn's albums...two at Summerfest in Milwaukee and one from Amazon. He writes a sorta southern-rock-gospel-blues kinda music about the extraor-

dinary passion that can lurk behind even the most ordinary actions, and he manages to blend elements of sex and religion and love and fear without sounding the least bit contrived. Needless to say, I like his stuff a lot, and I don't think I would have ever found



him just by wandering through the aisles of Tower Records.

Up to and including that Paul Thorn cd that I bought from Amazon, every time I'd used the Internet to buy new music, it had always been in compact disc form. What's silly is that anytime I got a new CD, the first thing I would do is rip it to my PC and toss the disc in a closet somewhere. The first time I ever paid money for actual mp3s was after seeing Circe Link at Johnny V's. I went to her show with absolutely zero expectations; I was just looking for something to do on a Saturday night. Actually, I had been wanting an excuse to check out Johnny V's for a few months; some friends had gone there for New Years Eve, and their account of the parts of the evening they could actually remember gave the impression that it was a pretty decent club. When I saw the show listing on metroactive.com, I had no idea if Circe Link was a band or a person or what. I checked out a few tracks on her MySpace page, which were all tolerable enough to put her show on the short list of things I could go do that night. I ended up calling Jen Garcia that night and pitching her the idea; she was on board, and so to the show we went.

I've only gotten to see Circe Link the one time because she hasn't come back up to the Bay Area since that night, but the show was fantastic. She calls her music "cowboy jazz" but don't

let the pretentious label fool you...it's quality stuff. I would have bought one of her albums that very night, but they'd already cleaned up the merch table by the time we were making our way out of the club. In the end, that didn't really matter. She has this one track called "Lost and Sinking" -- it's about about the despair of abating faith and it's got all this rad fiddle work in the back. I had only heard it the once, but the next day I could not get that song out of my head. The album was available for purchase on Amazon, but that wasn't going to be good enough. Even with rush delivery, that's still like two days that I'd be stuck with this tune in my head, playing on repeat like the telltale heart. The only way to make it stop would be to get my hands on a copy right away.

Several months earlier, I had purchased an iPod, which also meant that I now had iTunes installed on my computer. I'll say at the outset that I'm not a big fan of iTunes; the interface is geared towards people managing their music collections by song, and I primarily want to manage my collection by album. Other than using it just to get music on and off my iPod, I hadn't really touched the app since I got it. [I don't want to be too hard on Apple here, the alternatives that exist aren't much better.] You can probably already figure out where this story is headed with the mention of iTunes, but

I'm going to take the scenic route anyway.

The first thing I had to do was figure out which song it was that I had heard. I actually have a really poor memory for song lyrics; I can usually remember the imagery that the language conjures, but if you ask me to recall the actual words, it's a crapshoot as to what I'll be able to remember. After hitting up Google, I found a site with a bunch of poorly sampled recordings of her albums. I pulled them all down, threw them into a playlist, and listened from the kitchen as I did the dishes. Not only did I find the song I was looking for, but I also found myself wanting to listen to higher quality recordings of several others. When I finally fired up iTunes to make a purchase, I didn't just buy Lost and Sinking, but rather the entire album. It's called Moody Girl and it's good...so good, in fact, that I bought another one of her albums called Let's Go Together a couple weeks later. Like I said before, good music sells itself.



**Letter Graded Mail  
sent to [garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:garcia@computerhistory.org)  
by my Gentle Readers**

**And let us begin with Askance editor John Purcell!**

Christopher, you are one amazing, fan-pubbing dude. Know that? I would have thought you'd slow down a bit after you hit #200 - which I haven't read all of yet - but that does not appear to be the case. Less than a week after that mill-stone issue hit the electronic newsstands came Drink Tank #201. What the hell...? I mean, seriously, son; stop and take a breath sometime! Even so, here are a handful of comments on these issues.

**That's the thing, I feel like I am taking a breather. It's much more leisurely.**

In reverse order, #201 first.

Bob Hole's little article is a good reminder piece that works equally well for fanzines. A little common sense can go a long way in avoiding stupid mistakes when submitting work. Good job, Robert.

**I'm always happy to get words from Bob! And I hear he's in town and will be at the BASFA meeting this week, which is most awesome.**

Alas, James Bacon got snowed upon. The photos he sent along were cool - can't avoid a pun, can I? - and made me pine just a wee bit for my

days growing up in the Great White North. But not too much. I much prefer not shoveling the weather, as Randy Byers said to me in an LJ posting. At least the snow made Croydon look like a winter wonderland of sorts; I liked that photo of the guy cross-country skiing down the middle of the street. That's the sort of thing I used to see back in Minnesota and Iowa. Ah, those were the days...

**I wish I could see London in snow. It's odd, because I was watching the BBC news and they were talking like the snow was the apocalypse. It was much like the week when we had a big storm and the tiger mauled those kids in the San Francisco Zoo. The news here is 60 minutes, and forty-five minutes of it those days were either Tiger or Rain.**

I don't really shop for music nowadays. Instead I will usually just keep my ears open when my kids are playing their radios or listening to tunes on the Internet. Myspace is a good source for listening to all sorts of music being produced nowadays, and there's a lot of variety. Once in a while I peruse the music therein - 75% of my friends on my page are musicians of various genres - and manage my playlists, adding new stuff, deleting old, creating a new list, etcetera. There are a lot of really interesting songs out there. A recent friend add

of mine was the Pubcrawlers, who describe themselves as a New England Celtic Rock Band. Good stuff, and I also recommend the Pushmonkeys and Flogging Molly, of course. Bobby Schaezle did a good job in getting the info out on what he does, but everybody has different sources for their tunes. There's a lot of good music being made, no doubt.

***I love Flogging Molly! Bobby's one of my favourite people and I've been wanting to run some of his writing, and this long piece is a good starting point. Hopefully, I can get him to set down his thoughts on The Three Amigos and Clue someday.***

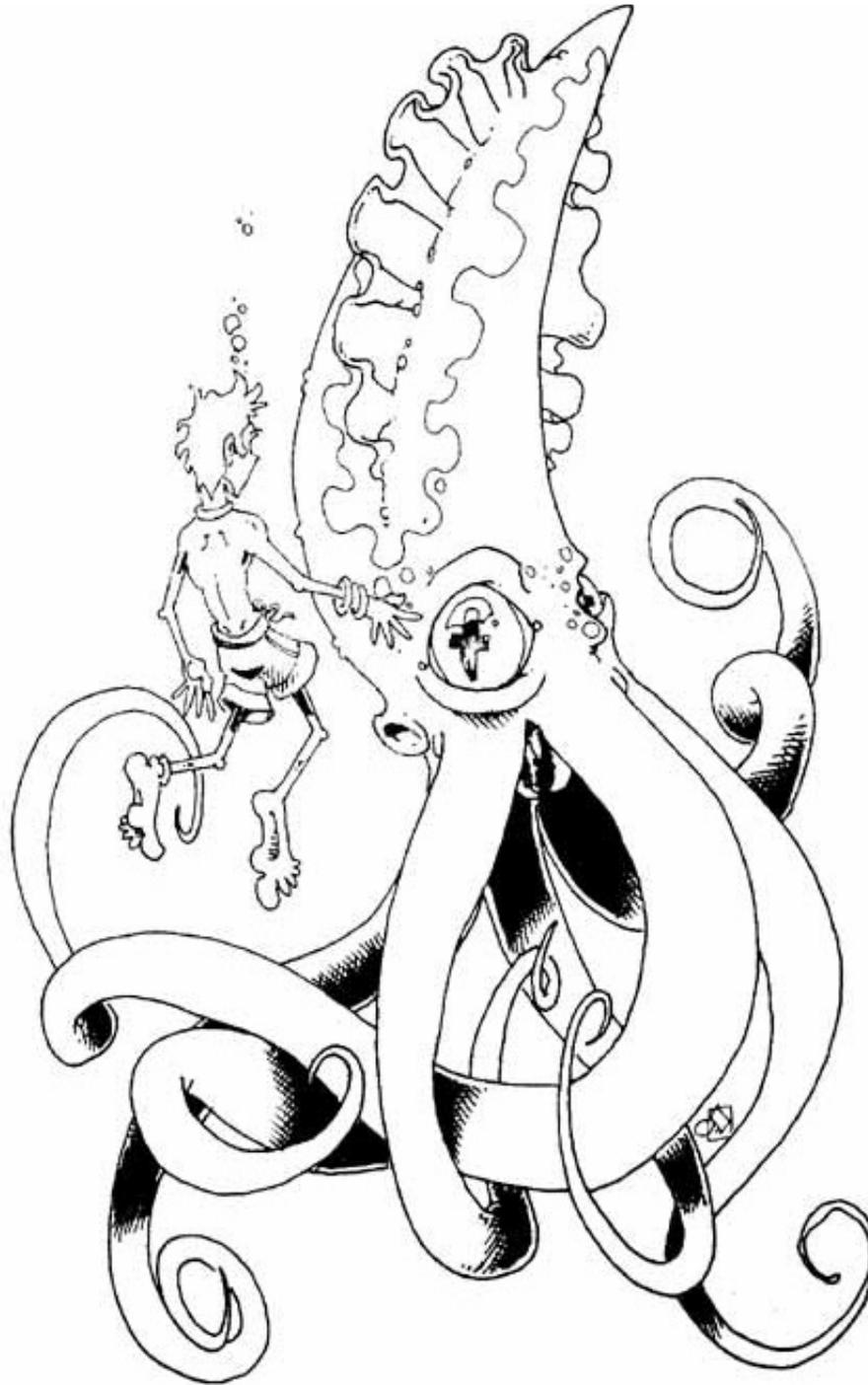
As for that massive 200th issue of yours, Chris, what I have read so far is really, really good. Congratulations on a fannish milestone that not many folks have reached. Dare I say it again? Yeah, I do: you astonish me.

***I do what I can!***

Have fun at Corflu Zed and say hi to all of the unusual suspects up there for me!

All the best,  
John Purcell

***I'll be running around this weekend, but until after CorFlu, that's always going to be true. I'm looking forward to Seattle and seeing folks, finally getting to meet Nic Farey and seeing the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame!***



***That's another issue of The Drink Tank! Next week? Who knows? I'm hoping for a couple of reports of this weekend's cons (Boskone and Gallifrey 1) and I've got another Fictional Non-Fiction piece I'm thinking about.***

***I'll also be working on sending out the next Claims Department which should be 20 pages of strange fun! I haven't decided whether to send out the Further Confusion issue or save it for the CorFlu issue. You gotta have an ish to pass out at CorFlu. Either that or an issue called The Sickness where I deal with a fever the only way I know how...with movies and C!***