

Chris Garcia's



Drink Tank



I love Mo Starkey. She does some great covers for me. This one makes me happy. It's a little tribute to my people.

So, what's all this then?

Well, there's the last edition of Taral's fanzine introductions, and another edition of Ma Vie en Reno, an on-going series that'll be running in various zines between now and the 2011 WorldCon.

And I've got to mention that my team, the Geelong Cats, have won the 2009 Premiership in Aussie Rules and my favorite player, Gary Ablett, Jr. won the Brownlow Medal. It's like being a 49ers fan in the 1980s and early 90s. They're a dynasty.



Ma Vie En Reno 2

Ann Calvello is, without question, the single most important figure in the history of Bay Area sports. Yes, I know, Joe Montana, Will Clark, Kristi Yamaguchi, Barry Bonds, John Brodie, Brian Boitano, Rick Berry, Wilt Chamberlin, all of these folks were hugely important and you've never heard of Ann Calvello, have you? Well, she was the driving force, the lead villain as it were, for Roller Derby, the biggest sport ever on BArea television, playing weekly on KTVU in primetime for more than a decade.

Now, if you know about Roller Derby, you'll know that its heyday was in the 1970s, a decade that the wildly pre-punk Calvello fit incredibly perfectly. She was punk before punk was punk. Wild hair, gruff attitude, general awesomeness. It was all there. While there's always been derby, it left the television screen for the most part in 1973. Ann competed all over the place after that, and was a part of every wave of Derby that's come since then (and we're in the middle of a general revival now, though back in the 60s and 70s, it was worked and Derby today tends to be the real deal).

I met her, several times, because my Dad was a fan of hers and he knew how to meet the folks he was a fan of. I can not tell you how many times Pops introduced me to this signer or that writer or the like. I remember meeting her when I was a mere 5 years old and thinking she was very creepy. She was nice to me when I saw her at a signing in 1984 and again in 1990 or so. She was a marvel and was always around Roller Derby up until her death in 2006.

I was back home from college and saw that there was a major Pop Culture signing in

Reno just one day hence. The names that were a part of the thing were astounding. Gil Gerard, Buck Rogers himself! There were wrestlers like Nick Bockwinkel, Chavo Guerrero, Ted DiBiase, Ricky Steamboat and a half-dozen others. There were boxers like Joe Frazier, actors like Margot Kidder, singers like Fabian, and a few no name sports figures like William "The Refridgerator" Perry, Stan Musial and even legendary ukelele-ister Tiny Tim. It was a good line-up.

I got in my car and started driving at about 4 in the morning. I figured getting there around 9 was the right way to go, and I'd never driven to Reno by myself before. It was one of those rights of passage. You get in a car and you drive until you get somewhere far enough away that you can declare yourself an adult. It was one of those moments. I made my way through Sacramento, stopping only once to buy a new tape at Tower Records. I seem to remember it being Bela Fleck & the Flecktones, but I can't be certain. I made it to Tahoe, and down into the Tahoe Basin using that road that always scared the hell out of me when my Pops would drive us. I made a stop to buy a disposable camera and get a little bit of water. I also think I bought



a package of Hostess donuts. I only remember that because there was a fine white powder on the passenger seat and I don't think I spilled any coke that weekend.

At least not that I remember.

I made it into Reno and it was barely 10 am. There was still about an hour until they opened up the doors, but as any good signing attendee will know, the folks who were signing were showing up early, making sure they got into the building and get everything set. I would later discover that the real reason these folks show up so early is so that they're assured they get their money. Many of these folks



will have been to shows where the promoters will promise so much, then after the signing say that they didn't do as well at the door as they expected, so they'll stiff the signers. This happens a lot, so the early bird can afford the early bird special the next morning.

Another thing folks who frequent these signings will realize is that there's the official list of signers and the actual people who are there to sign. No-shows are very frequent. You're lucky if two-thirds of the folks advertised show up at most of these things, but there's also a group of folks who will just show up and say 'Hey, let me sign' and mostly the promoters will do it by simply giving them a piece of real estate that they'll pay for and then letting them charge. The most famous guy in the wrestling world who does that is Mike Norris, aka Virgil. He's never advertised, but he's always there.

I got Sgt. Slaughter to sign before he got

inside. He wasn't on the bill, but was brought in after Ted DiBiase backed out. I managed to get to chat with Ricky Steamboat for a minute, which was nice. We chatted about his former partner Jay Youngblood, who my Dad always loved, and of course, about Ric Flair. I might have been the only one who recognized Tiny Tim, but I walked up, shook his hand and said that I loved his lesser-known works.

If you're ever at a loss of what to say to a second-tier celebrity, make mention of something they did that wasn't their brief moment in the sun. Example? You run into Norman Spinrad and talk about Tag Team, his episode of Land of the Lost, or Deus X or any other non-Bug Jack Baron novel. Trust me, it works. I used this same technique with TC Boyle and Christopher Buckley. Like gangbusters!

They let us in to the lobby of the gym about ten minutes early. Now, you'd think with

all those hotels in town and with the level of talent they were advertising that the promoters would have been able to get something more up-scale than a middle school gymnasium, but truth be told, these events are seen as fleas on the back of legitimate eventery. They trade on names made years before, are run by scoundrels and don't bring in the best element. On the other hand, this was also one of the nicer middle school gyms I've ever been to! Large and bright with a lobby full of trophies and photos of years gone by. Apparently, a portion of the proceeds were going to the school. 0 is a portion, right?

They let us in after we paid our money. There were a bunch of different packages and I went with the one that got me 5 autographs, 5 posed pictures and admission to the evening's show. All the participants, with the exception of a couple of the sports stars, would be answering questions and the like. That sounded like fun and I had a bunch of Qs ready to be Aed. I paid my 50 bucks and walked in.

The set-up was so typical it was almost hilarious. There were long lines of tables in front of each wall. Behind these tables were a pipe-and-drape where the star names and a few photos of them in their better days hanging. I made a B-line for Ricky Steamboat, exhausting both a photo and an autograph on him. I then went looking for Stan Musial. He'd cancelled and was replaced by Rollie Fingers! My all-time favorite pitcher! I did the photo and autograph with him as well. Here I was, less than an hour

into the signing and I'd used up almost ½ of my allotted autographs and photos. Of course, I was snapping candid photos of everyone I could I got a great shot of Margot Kidder and an extremely busty girl of maybe 19 hugging and mugging for the official camera that managed to show a little bit more of the young lady's tickets than would be appropriate. I'm always on the scene right when I should be!

I made the rounds and saved 1 photo and 2 autographs. I had almost filled up my little disposable too. I walked around and saw that there was an arrow pointing towards an exit that said 'More stars!' I also noticed that no one else seemed to be noticing this sign. As always, I went ever on-ward to see what I could see. There, in a small room that was obviously used as a prep room when they did pancake breakfasts or what have you, were five or six tables, each with two people sitting at them with a folded tent card in front of them. No pipe and drape, just bare walls that a couple of people had taped old headshots to. There was the original television Lois Lane, a character actor who I recognized from Innerspace, and the one table that had only one woman sitting at it was an older woman who I knew instantly.

Ann Calvello.

She had a bunch of 8 by 10s in front of her, a few other trinkets and a pair of skates. She was leathery. It's hard to describe Ann without noting that she had been worshiping at the Temple of the Sun every day for some 60 years. She was tanned in a way that would make George Hamilton jealous. She kept herself in shape, and I guess vitamin D was a big part of that. She also wore this light orange-y lipstick

that stood out from the deep tan of her face. I hadn't seen her in several years, so I walked up and was about to give her my signing ticket when she looked up at me.

"You're Johnny's kid, right?" she said.

"Yeah." I answered, rather taken aback.

"I saw him a few days ago, out for lunch." She said, smiling. "He's proud of you, young man. Showed off all your photos."

This was not the Ann Calvello that you hear stories about; the loud and brash woman who would call her breasts 'tickets' since she knew they brought in the men to the show. This was an older lady who had nothing to do (there were maybe 5 people who had found their way into this backroom) and she was talking to the son of a friend.

Which weirded me out since I didn't know my Dad that well, though I knew he worked around the areas where she'd hang out. It made sense that he'd see her and then chat her up. Dad was like that. A good guy who was always talking about stuff and could beguile just about anyone. He also liked Reno, but that's another article.

I stood at the table and we talked for about an hour. It was an awesome time. She told stories about the old days, about her rivalries and about the various figures she was 'connected with' to put it mildly. She was really nice, and as the room started to fill as folks somehow managed to recognize that an arrow has a meaning, she kept chatting. It was rather awesome. At one point, a woman who used to skate with her came by and the two went into character mode. Ann was the heel and the other lady was obviously the good girl. It was really fun

to watch, like in the old days.

I needed to eat, as I was getting a bit lightheaded and the prices for their crappy hot dogs were way out of my league. I did one last pass through the main room, then headed out to a local coffee shop. Reno: a city of coffee shops. I took a seat, ordered a burger and slowly ate while reading a discarded newspaper. It was a dull day, but it was the way I feel you should end a good day. As I was leaving, I noticed that walking in was the character actor from the signing. I walked right past him on the way out.

"Hey, kid," he called, "How'd you know Ann Calvello?"

"She knows my Dad, apparently."

"Lucky guy. She's a fireball, that one."

And indeed she was.



A Vick-tory of Sorts

A Few Words About Scanning

Shelby Vick's Confusion

Taral Wayne

At first I had no thought, actually, of scanning the five issues of Shelby Vick's 1950's fanzine, *Confusion*. What happened is I mentioned in e-mail to Shelby that I had them. He surprised me by admitting he had no copies himself. It had been no plan of mine to scan them, having a short list of zines with priority that was long enough already.

Chivalrously, I said it would be no bother for me to scan the five issues.

Hoo boy! Was I wrong. To begin, Shelby's zines are incredibly fragile. He says the twiltone substitute he used was robust enough, but the samples I had were as thin as Soviet era toilet paper, and crackled with age. A couple of my issues had been water damaged as well, but despite Shelby's assurances, this was still awfully thin paper.

Worse, whatever the source of it, the paper apparently came in mixed colours. I e-mailed to ask why he printed each sheet on orange, lime, sand, or ivory paper, instead of one colour for the whole issue. His answer floored me – the reams came that way. I'm still not sure whether to believe this, or doubt his memory. What this meant to me was that I couldn't find a single setting to scan *all* the pages. Every time I scanned a new sheet, I had to adjust the brightness and contrast. Otherwise the scan was apt to be either virtually blank, or nearly solid black.



There were other peculiarities. In issue 1 there is the first of Shelby's famous "Up Our Sleeve" paste-in features. When you "open" the mandarin's sleeve it revealed an elaborately folded, and delicately coloured fan. I decided to scan this page alone in colour. Alas, this wasn't to be... When I finished the job, I had a file that was about the size of the U.S. debt. Reluctantly I reduced the beautiful page to black & white. The resulting file was a much more reasonable 2.62 meg.

Issue 3 had a blank page on the back of the cover sheet. This was no problem. I had a ready-made file of a blank page that I dropped in.

Easy-peasy. But then there was page 8. It reads "Is My Face Red" in large letters, printed in red. Apparently the next page had been printed on the next sheet instead. A new stencil had been typed on the spur of the moment to fill the blank page. The problem with this is that a blank page appears later on page 24 anyway. (That's page 24 of the Adobe document, by the way. It follows page 18 by Shelby's own page numbering.) There was a faint trace of hand writing on it that referred the reader to page 8 for explanation. I dropped in a second ready-made blank page.

There was another "Up Our Sleeve" in issue 3. I scanned it as I did the first issue, with the sleeve open and closed. Keep this in mind if you plan to print a hard copy. If you don't remove one or the other page, it will automatically throw the rest of the pages out of order. Ain't authenticity keen?

Issue 7 introduces odd coloured ink which didn't always show up well in scanning. There's also interesting signs of trouble with the repro. Page 14, for instance, has a couple of irregular lines running side to side. From experience I can say that these were caused by too much ink on the screen, which will bleed out the bottom of the stencil and get printed on the rollers, which then print on other parts of the stencil, ultimately printing on the paper. While perhaps not all copies of page 14 were marred this way, one can confidently predict that most copies probably had this problem on some page. Fans publishing on a shoestring didn't just throw away paper for minor imperfections like this. At the end of issue 7 is the familiar "Up Our Sleeve" feature.

Issue 11. More colour. More evidence of

set-off from over-inking, which is odd since most pages are actually under-inked. Then I came to page 20 and my heart sank. It was a double spread, with an ambitious pop-up hand! How was I to scan *this*? In the end I had to remove the hand. It was just as well, as apparently it had fallen out at some earlier time, and the previous owner then taped it in... *wrong!* Eventually I figured out how it was supposed to go in, to work properly, and could begin scanning the left and right pages separately. Next, I had to be creative. I merged both pages together in Photoshop, then scanned the loose hand. Using the Place function, I maneuvered the image to where it belonged when the pages were open, and the hand was properly folded out. Perfect. Except a lot of the stylus work wasn't really legible. Oh well... I was in Photoshop anyway, so I carefully redrew some of the lettering.

Remember though – remove this double spread page before you attempt to print a copy! If you don't, worse will happen than just pages being out of order. The two page spread will be printed wrong way around and run off the sides of the paper.

And yes, there was an "Up Our Sleeve" in this issue too. Remember to remove the redundant page from that pair too.

Incidentally, this copy is addressed to Gregg Calkins, who was of course the original recipient.

Issue 16. Some epic set-off on some pages, but on page 15 we see a near-disaster. A broad, ragged, U-shaped line graces the upper part of the sheet, and is instantly recognizable to a veteran mimeographer as a tear in the stencil. Fortunately Shelby was able to carefully pull

the ripped tongue of waxed paper back into place, and tape it down. Unfortunately, this is never good enough to prevent ink from seeping under the tape, and printing an outline of the tear. In no few cases, rips of this sort are too severe to be repaired at all, and the stencil utterly ruined. Pages 18 and 19 are another double spread, but to my relief there was no pop-up. It was a simple matter of scanning each side, and pasting them together in Photoshop. Once again, remember to remove the redundant page if you print a hard copy. Finally, a last "Up Our Sleeve".

There was one more issue – not a regular number but a one-shot published after the 10th. Worldcon held in Chicago (Tasfic). It consists mainly of doodles by Lee Hoffman and DavEnglish on the subject of the con. It has the supreme merit of being very short.

It was addressed to a Doug Mitchell of Winnipeg, whose name Shelby doesn't recall. None of the other zines were addressed.

There are two other issues of Confusion you can download from eFanzines. Issues 10 and 12. I didn't know who scanned them at first, but there are interesting differences in our method. It appears as though whoever scanned those two issues did so in low rez – under 300



dpi – or at a smaller size. The files aren't large, but seem to be in partial or full colour. While this does preserve something of the original appearance of the zine, I don't think anyone would go to the trouble of printing in colour. The attempt would overlook one other thing – the twiltone. There are traces of a pale yellow on some pages of issue 10 and 12, and a bluish look to other places that seem to be a residual of high contrast setting.

Later, I discovered that issue 12 has an afterword written by Shelby, tacked on near the end. He credits Robert Lichtman for scanning and printing both issues for him. It's not clear, but Shelby implies he scanned them again, using some automatic settings to improve the appearance, achieving mixed results. He thought it necessary to paint away bleed-through and set-off, and to reconstruct faded text. "Takes time!" he said. No duh. While I went to no such extremes with the five issues I scanned, I've done such things before, and while miracles are possible, "takes time"!

Both these issues were addressed to G.M. Carr. (Yes, that's her real name – Gertrude Carr.)

You might wonder why so many words spent on just the process of scanning. Have I nothing to say about the contents? I did notice the names of some Big Name Fans – chiefly Walt Willis, Lee Hoffman, Bob Shaw, Bob Silverberg, Gregg Calkins, and Shelby himself. There is an *appalling* amount of doggerel! The fact is, I was so busy with the work of archiving the zines that I hadn't time to read them!

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It never ceases to amaze me just how many people read *Askance* and where they are when they do access the zine on efanzines.com. A few years ago I asked Bill Burns to place a counter on my zines, and in the three years (est. August 17, 2006) since it was slapped on, over 3,755 people have viewed/read my fanzines. Now, a couple years ago David Burton wrote a brief editorial piece about the demographics of the e-zine readers of his fine e-zine, *Pixel*. Along those same lines, here are some observations I have made of the *Askance* readership by looking at the data at my disposal. All it takes is my clicking on the links provided, and *voilà!* percentages, pie charts, and tables (oh, my!) present themselves. Such fun.

Typically, there is a huge bump in views the first week after an ish is posted then the numbers taper off. The vast majority are American viewers (66%) with the next biggest batch in the United Kingdom (13%). Canada clocks in with (6%) of my viewership, matching the same percentage of unknown ISP's, and the rest is from literally all over the map. This last bit of data is what amazes me the most.

Case in point. On the evening of September 22, 2009, *Askance* #16 was posted, and by Thursday afternoon (September 24, 2009), 64 people had viewed the ish. That's not bad. Even taking into account multiple accessions by the same people (like myself

(checking out the numbers), Joe Majors in Louisville, Kentucky, and Arnie Katz out in Las Vegas), there are still many, many people who are at least checking the zine out. This is cool. In fact, it is so cool it's neat. By clicking on the "details" link, I can get information like domain name, ISP and IP address, the location, and the time and length of each site visit. Sitemeter can even tell me how many pages were viewed. In a way, this gives me an idea of who's probably ego-scanning the zine online. To me, this is really spiffy, and I enjoy the game of guessing who's reading it where.

Now, that is part of Sitemeter that I really enjoy. Besides scrolling through the details listing, I can click on the world map link on the left menu and get a graphic representation of where in the world these fans are located. It is definitely interesting. Not surprisingly, the vast majority is clustered in North America, but another big blotch of dots covers up England, and the southeastern corner of Australia. However, it is the other dots scattered around the globe that I find *really* nifty-spiffy.

On Thursday, September 24, 2009,
Percentage of Chart Which Resembles Pac-man



on-line readers/viewers were from anywhere from St. Louis, Missouri, to Scunthorpe, United Kingdom, to Tehran, Iran, to Vittorio Veneto, Italy, to the State Library of Louisiana in Baton Rouge (two visits: get back to work!), and Venus.

Okay, that last one was really Venus, Pennsylvania, but how friggin' cool is that for a listing?

So what I just did was give the 5-page, last 100 visitors listing a quick run-through, and discovered some interesting locations where fans are located. It also gives me a guessing game as to who is who.

From overseas, *Askance* has recently been viewed by readers in Australia, Germany (2), Norway, Italy (2), Bulgaria (Hello, Venecian!), Peru, and France. There have so far been three fans in Canada: one in Surrey, British Columbia, and two in Ontario (Toronto (Hi, Lloyd!) and Petersborough (Taral?!)). Gina Teh in Singapore sometimes clicks on, as do a couple of fans in Japan and Taiwan. That is quite a spread, and it is very interesting.

This is indeed fun stuff, but then I took a closer look at some of the ISP's of the American readers. What that investigation revealed was a bit, er, revealing.

Most of the United States accessions are rather nondescript: lots of .coms and .edus ending their URL's, which doesn't surprise me. I know quite a few fans work at colleges and universities in assorted degrees (*rim-shot*). So to the gentlemen in Vermont who reads my zine I say, "Howdy, Fred!" (That is, if it really is Fred Lerner up there checking out *Askance*. And the person at UC-Irvine is probably Dr. Gregory Benford, although it

is possible that Melissa Conway, curator of the Eaton Collection, is reading it, too, but I suspect Greg is the culprit reading online fanzines on his office computer. Get back to work, Benford! Slacker!

It distresses me that a health professional at the Bristol Regional Health Center in Kingsport, Tennessee is reading my zine while at work. Sheesh, you're on duty, doc! Someone's life may be hanging in the balance and there you are in your office reading fanzines online. Granted, that sounds like much more fun, but still: dammit, you're a doctor, not a fane! (Then again, maybe you are...)

Then there's someone who works for the federal government in Washington, DC who's been reading *Askance* starting back in February of this year. I know this is so because the ISP says "State Department" and the URL ends with the .gov tag. Somehow it doesn't surprise me that my zine is seen as some sort of subversive, radical publication that's trying to foment popular discord, so my zine is thus being monitored by someone in Washington as part of Homeland Security. Or – could it be that there is a science fiction fan in the US government who enjoys reading sf fanzines from time to time? Could my mystery government reader be...?!? Naaaaww....

There is one ISP address that really bothers me: who in the hell at Fermilab is reading my zine?? Good God, man! Turn around. Get back to work! Don't be distracted by a fanzine. Keep your eyes on all those dials and gauges and blinking lights! The safety of this country depends on you. Stop reading my fanzine and **GET BACK TO WORK!**



That's Lloyd Penney in his Steampunk gear. I think he makes a great conductor. This image will serve as a reminder that the Train issue is coming up! I've got some good stuff so it should be fun. I love trains and the one I'm writing about will be awesome.

Sadly, it's gotta be pushed back a bit since I have one more regular issue I need to do before and I've got a couple of other zines to work on as well. It's the curse of productivity.

Silicon is coming up and I'll be there. Exhibition Hall will be out right before and I'll probably have a few copies to hand out, plus I'm doing the newsletter. It'll be a fun time, I promise.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Henry Gibson. I'll miss ya.