



The Drink Tank Issue 231
TAFF In Action

That cover? That's one of mine. I had a lot of fun with Photoshop on it. I've always been a big abstraction fan and I fiddled with all sorts of things and stopped here which felt like a forest of Venusian flowers. I might do more of these some days.

This one is almost entirely about TAFF. Frank Wu sent in a piece and Anne and Brian sent in a piece to run. I'm excited to say that this race is on and strong and down to get the friction on. Well, maybe not that last one, but the race is going. While I'm behind in getting out the TAFF ballots, some folks have taken it upon themselves to print and send them in. I thank you for saving the Fund a little money.

As I've said previously, The Lovely & Talented Linda and I will be at EasterCon. It's at the Radisson Edwardian at Heathrow, and there's no way I'll miss a con there. it's just such a great site for a convention. I even bought my membership, which is something I don't always do!

And so, here are the candidates! And after that, there's some Taral, because in 2009, if you ain't got Taral, you've got nothing!



Hi. I'm Anne.
And I'm Brian.
And we are Europe-deficient.

It's sad to say, but our doctors have confirmed it. We have not had sufficient exposure to the UK and the EU to build strong bones, broad minds, and a halfway decent collection of accents. We are asking for your help.

Anne was born and raised in the Midwest (Ann Arbor, MI), while Brian (born in East L.A.) grew up outside Seattle, WA. Between us, we have been to all of the United States except Alaska, Alabama, and Arkansas (we have no idea why they all begin with A – it just turned out that way), to various points in Mexico, and to about half of the provinces of Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec). We fancy ourselves pretty well exposed to North America (most municipalities have promised to drop charges). Anne has also been to Russia, and Brian once even dallied in Hong Kong.

But we've never been to London. Not once. Nor Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany or Wales. (We are resolutely not counting stopovers on the way to some other place.)

Yes, it's true. Brian's dad's stamp



collection is better traveled than we.

In the hope of making it to the European side of the small pelagic body known as the Atlantic Ocean, we have tossed our hats in the ring for the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. And not just for the beer and the cheese.

What qualifications have we for seeking thy fannish support in our hopefully epic expedition to complete our journey to Odyssey? Well, when you put it that way (and we do)... between us we have chaired four cons, helped run too many others to count, have edited a fanzine about how to run said cons, have been invited to speak at SMOFcon (a con about how to run cons), have edited wikis about running cons (and about sf in general), and of course have blogged about it. Like you do. Er, like we do, at least. And, in fact, we have,

on rare occasion, been known to attend cons without actually doing anything for the con. At least, let's see... 3, maybe 4 times in almost 20 years of con-going. Less than we planned due to our tendency to graduate from attendee to volunteer to staff over the course of a weekend, or even a day.

But that's how we like it, since helping make the Mad Science (or Magic) happen is, after all, where the Magic (or Mad Science) is.

Take Chilicon, for instance. Not quite a convention, Chilicon is a casual gathering of 60-some fen at the home of Guy Allen and Becca Levin in the Cincinnati area, just south of where Anne currently lives in Yellow Springs, OH. The basic plan is to get together to prep and then eat prodigiously silly amounts of food, especially chili. Most of the masses gather on Saturday

night, but we were invited to show up for the cooking evening the night before. Since we were going to stay over to morning, we logically offered to bring our Belgian Waffle-maker and help provide breakfast for our fellow cooks on Saturday morning. We were almost instantly declared a tradition and summarily ordered to return with our pumpkin walnut waffle recipe next year.

It was also noted that we both almost unthinkingly broke the gender divide Friday night – Brian joined the ladies prepping herbs in the dining room while Anne stepped in to join the gents in frying up the meat, chilies, and onions. Since Anne is an engineer and mostly works with men, and Brian is a biologist in a primarily female lab, we would not have noticed our deviation from the norm if it

hadn't been, er, loudly declaimed about by the traditionalists. During the day Saturday we moved into more traditional roles for the outdoor party prep, with Anne sawing firewood barefoot and Brian supervising. ...That is the tradition, right?

We would not be half so involved in these sorts of activities if we were not inspired by dear, imaginative friends and the prospects of further friendship.

Well, that and we get a kick out of seeing many, many people smiling, laughing, crying madly, and occasionally dancing very sprightly jigs because of our efforts. (We've even been known to kick up our heels, ourselves. Anne will actually be helping teach swing dancing at ConFusion in January, and taught a Dancing for Geeks workshop at Penguicon the same two years she starred as Buffy in a shadow play of the musical episode "Once More with Feeling.")

But we've not yet mentioned that Brian is an accomplished costumer, and game-master, and, and... there just isn't enough space to say everything here now! You'll just have to select us for TAFF so we can go talk about ourselves in the third person some more. And about our friends and the clever interesting things THEY do here in the States. And write a nice long trip report or three. And string together lots of fragmentary sentences starting with "and" (and not too much of that, we promise).

So please, help us get our recommended annual dose of Europe. We have so many deficient years to make up for!

I'm Anne.

And I'm Brian.

We thank you for your support.

{If you would like to learn more about Anne and Brian you can find them on the web at <http://netmouse.livejournal.com> and <http://flinx.livejournal.com> although Brian does apologize for graduate school's getting in the way of his saying interesting things online right now}



TAFF: This is all Chris Garcia's Fault

I first heard about TAFF as a kid in 1977. I'd picked up a book of science fiction trivia questions, most of which I couldn't answer. What does TANSTAAFL stand for? What were HP Lovecraft's first and middle names? What is TAFF?

For the last, the book informed me: "The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund." Like so much computer lingo, this defined the term without explaining it. Yes, but, what does "Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund" mean?

Over the years, as I delved deeper into SF and SF fandom, I pieced it together. Ah, TAFF was a way for fans to send one fan from Europe to North America, or vice versa, in alternating years, to attend a convention.

That made sense – but who were these people who won TAFF? Pete Weston? Lee Hoffman? Ken Bulmer? Never heard of them. But I started to piece together a composite portrait of the TAFF winner. A con-goer, a con-runner. Someone who wrote and drew for fanzines. Lee Hoffman, it turns out, is the only person, as far as I can tell, who's ever been nominated for ALL the fannish Hugo Awards – best fanzine, best fan writer AND best fan artist.

These were the behind-the-scenes people. Yes, thousands of folks showed up to hear what Asimov and Heinlein had to say, but these were the folks who organized the conventions.

As a kid, it seemed that I would never build up the street cred (a term that didn't exist at the time) to be a worthy TAFF candidate.

Just like I thought I'd never win a Hugo Award.

Over the years, I slowly picked up street cred, without even realizing it. The first

science fiction convention I ever attended was URCON, at the University of Rochester, as a freshman in 1982. The guests of honor were Phil Foglio and Hal Clement. It was also the first con I was a gofer at – and I got to handle Mr. Clement. I had just read "Cycle of Fire" and "Mission of Gravity" was next on my list. As I led him from room to room, I got private conversation time. What advice did he have for the wannabe writer? I asked. Just keep writing, he said. Obvious but solid advice I'll keep 'til the day I die. He also had wonderful insights into the peculiarities of light flashes and a possible remnant atmosphere on the moon, the technical details of which I forget, but I'll always remember his writing advice. Yes, Mr. Clement, I'll keep writing.

Over the years, I attended more cons, particularly "Star Trek" cons. Then, in 1998, I made a concerted effort to establish myself as an artist. So I started attending "real" conventions in the bay area where I lived. Small ones like StarQuest (which, like URCON, no longer exists), and bigger ones like BayCon and regional and national cons like Westercon and Worldcon. And I started helping out more. I gofered more, helped in various art shows, and even wound up in a little room with Ian Stockdale



and Jim Mann moving little Post-It notes around organizing programming for a Worldcon.

Meanwhile, I started writing for fanzines. That's where Chris first enters the picture, as he asked me to write something for his little fanzine called "The Drink Tank." The first article I ever wrote for him I'm still proud of. It was an examination of alternative history and asked the question: "What if Hitler had become an artist instead of megalomaniacal dictator and world class fiend?" The answer was: he would have become Frank R. Paul, who was born at nearly the same time, and shared his interest in watercolor, architecture and big machines and inability to draw people. When World War I broke out, their paths diverged – Paul ran away from the war, fleeing to America and painted covers for "Amazing Stories." Hitler ran toward the war, to the Western Front, and we know where he went from there. But perhaps if Hitler had gone to America, perhaps he instead of Paul would have become the first person to ever make a living drawing spaceships. That article appeared in issue 26 of Chris' Drink Tank. Over the years, I've written a bunch of stuff for Chris, and we've both been nominated for Hugos, and shared a GOH gig at Baycon – we grew up together.

Over the years, I wound up doing a lot of art, and writing a lot of articles for fanzines. I drew a city wherein the buildings were spaceships, for Cheryl Morgan's "Emerald City" fanzine. I painted the Red Baron attacking a giant fire-breathing dragon for Guy Lillian's "Challenger" fanzine. And I kept writing. (My fanzine writing has trailed off in the last couple years as I've run out of things to say, and don't

want to repeat myself.)

Then Chris Garcia ran for TAFF. That campaign seemed to go FOREVER. Partially this was because he'd announced his campaign early, and then the election (for 2007) was cancelled, because the UK national convention was cancelled due to hotel problems. So the CHRIS FOR TAFF bandwagon rolled on for another year, and I did lots of artwork for that. I drew weird aliens and robots holding up "CHRIS FOR TAFF" signs. I drew Martian war machines burning the phrase into destroyed cities. I did up a parody of the classic poster for "Metropolis" declaring CHRIS FOR TAFF in a 1925 typefont.

And then Chris finally won and Brianna and I got to hang out with him in Britain.

And I thought my whole connection with TAFF was over.

Until...

Chris out of the blue contacted me and asked me to run for TAFF. Did I think I was qualified? I dunno. Maybe. In addition to helping Chris run his TAFF campaign, I'd helped over fan funds. I organized the one-off MiNoFF, the Middle of Nowhere Fan Fund, which was designed to get a fan from nowheresville to a con of their

choice. It wound up sending Terry Hickman to Baycon.

I thought about it more, and I read up more on the folks who'd won TAFF (some of whom I'd recently met). Pete Weston – among many other talents – is the guy who actually casts, trims and polishes the rockets that go into the Hugo trophies every year. Ken Bulmer had written 160 novels, including the Dray Prescott planetary romances. These TAFF winners, even the ones I'd never heard of, were GIANTS.

Was I? Not really. But if Chris thought I was worthy of running, then, well, ok.

Suddenly I was running for TAFF.

It's an honor just to run. Part of the responsibility of running is spreading the good name of TAFF. Every year the winning candidate writes a trip report, and they're all available at <http://taff.org.uk/taffhist.html>.



Reading through them is like falling into a time machine. For Ken Bulmer's TAFF trip from Ireland to the U.S. in 1955, he and his wife Pam crossed the Atlantic in a cargo boat (!). But because of a dock strike (!), their departure was advanced three weeks. Because they had no money and no one to meet them, as they sailed across the ocean, fans on their side of the pond mimeographed (!) a help letter and airmailed (!) it to fans in America. The letter worked, and fans put them up at their house for the extra three weeks before the world con. But think of that: Traveling in a cargo boat! Saved by a mimeograph! Sent by airmail! My how times have changed.

And that's all part of the glorious history of TAFF.

So now... much of my freetime is consumed by TAFF. Thinking about TAFF. Writing about it. Doing TAFF art. Organizing auctions of toys and Tuckerizations to raise TAFF funds.

My goal isn't so much to win – our opponents, Anne KG Murphy and Brian Gray, are worthy of winning. Rather, my goal is to not embarrass myself, not to besmirch the honorable name of TAFF. Of all the fannish institutions, TAFF is one of the oldest. Worldcons are older, but TAFF pre-dates the Nebulas and Hugo Awards. TAFF is an honorable tradition, and I hope to carry the flag, win or lose, with honor and reverence.

And, by the way, TANSTAAFL is short for "There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch," as in Heinlein's "The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress." And HP Lovecraft's first two names were Howard Phillips.



Words & Pictures

Tara Wayne

Part 1 – Words, Words, Words

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. At that rate, I should have drawn about 169 pictures this year. I never got around to it because I was so busy with words instead.

In case you find the arithmetic a little perplexing, that's 169,000 words. 169,399 to be exact, and it's only mid-November.

In a fit of the sort of obsessive activity I'm prone to, I opened all the word documents I wrote this year and added up the word counts. In one column I counted only articles for publication in the fan press. There are 41 at the moment (some have appeared as lengthy journals here, most have not). Their lengths have gone from the extremes of 28,107 words, my Worldcon report, to a brief 526. The total of publishable essays and articles ran to 102,664 words.

The next column included pieces I had written for only my eyes, or for a few other people whose confidentiality I could trust. Examples would include essays on people I knew, who would probably not welcome their character being scrutinized this way, and imaginary love letters from my adoring fans. That added up to another 26,527 words.

The last column was for articles that had been published in fanzines long ago. For some time I've wanted to convert my old fanwriting to digital format, and I began doing it last year. It meant retyping every last one

of many thousands of words, though, either from old manuscripts, full of strikeouts and handwritten corrections, or from the printed pages of old fanzines. That's a lot of work, Meyer. All the more so since I found myself often wincing as I read the typed sheets and mimeographed pages. Some of it was pretty good, I'm not loath to admit. But it all required a bit of tweaking. In general, spelling and punctuation badly needed adjustment. Other articles I tackled were nearly *painful* to read. They required so much re-writing that, had I let myself do any more than was absolutely necessary, they would have ended up as brand new articles. Many of these old pieces hadn't been read by anyone in twenty years or more. Editors of modern fanzines who would reprint them were easily found. But it didn't seem fair to count old fanwriting as original material, however much revised.

Together the retyped and revised material came to another 40,208 words.

Total 169,399 – if my calculator didn't screw up the addition. (I have a very innumerate calculator.)

169,399. It's worth repeating. A novel is defined as 60,000 words.

Had all that writing been for professional publication, I might have gotten paid as much as fifteen or twenty thousand dollars.

At that rate, I can't afford to draw anymore.

Part 2 – Picture This

The point of emphasizing how much writing I've done over the last year is to explain why I've done so little drawing. It isn't as though I haven't tried to keep up. But there are only so many hours in the day after I've had my eleven hours of necessary sleep and spent six hours on the internet. Still, I look at the unfinished drawings scattered around my work space, and think What Might Have Been. Some had been sitting in a folder in a desk tray for so long that I had forgotten I ever started them!

For example, the Christmas card I meant to do for 2007 – or was it 2006 – showing a number of children who look rather surprised to be morphing into Santa's reindeer,



already in harness. Another unfinished drawing is off the Looking Glass Cave in Fraggles Rock, where you see your secret self... but you might only see what others think of you. It never tells which.

There is a half done drawing of Saara Mar looking down at one of the Mars Rovers, stalled in Endeavor Crater. The subject alone tells you how old it is. Opportunity left Endeavor two years ago I think. While still on the subject of the Red Planet, I have yet to finish a picture of me, Tangel, and Saara in a chaotic Martian landscape. Another drawing shows Saara and Tangel on the road with a Japanese motorcycle. A much older one - - maybe as much as a decade old -- shows Saara in a wicker chair on the porch of her house in Willow Run. Yet another shows her on a hillside above the town of Willow Run in Autumn.

There is a drawing from an imaginary Tin Tin adventure, which their jeep has broken down in a fantastic desert landscape. Something to do with Area 51, I dimly recall.

More recent are a small number of drawings of Terra, distant kin of Saara you might say, in an Uncle Scrooge adventure called "Two Flags Over Barsoom." They all show her during different parts of her trek on Mars. And Terra again in another Uncle Scrooge Adventure called "The Lost Kingdom of Prester John."

I have a couple of political cartoons I never completed, that would probably only piss people off. It might be best they are left the way they are, then. One is about the invasion of Iraq and the other Hurricane Katrina.

I have a luscious skunk girl in dishabille, who is in no shape to be shown to anyone, and another drawing I meant to lend to Ken Fletcher (Heywulf!) for his Spontoon Island site.

Last, but not least, I owe some commission work to people.

Sometimes it all seems so pointless. You draw 'em, you post 'em on-line, you get a few comments and some numbers on your home page go up. If you do happen to be paid, it covers your rent and a few of your bills for *last* month, and you have two weeks to meet next month's demands. But I am no wiser, and certainly no richer for it. And as I grow older,



“richer” becomes every more important. I like food that doesn't come out of a can and isn't labeled “no name.” I want to see movies on DVD, and listen to music I haven't heard before. I'd like to have cable TV again. I'd like to go out and do things, and not worry about the \$5 I'd have to spend on bus fare. Drawing doesn't make much inroad on what I need.

The problem is that there are just too damn many artists, and too damn many of them are really good. Unless your art can be lent to some other purpose – selling a new feminine hygiene product, perhaps, or animating a video game – it really isn't worth much to anyone. Few people will spend good money when so much *spectacular* art is available on-line for no cost at all.

My solution... a virus. Not the computer kind, but the sort that causes an artist's finger to swell up, turn black, and fall off. I'd spread around the world, and only give the antidote to a few selected artists I call friends, or that I particularly admire. There aren't too many of either, to tell the truth. The rest can go get honest jobs, while we survivors have our pick of prime artistic opportunities and name our price!

If you are an artist, you may get an un-addressed envelope in the mail soon. By all means open it. It's from me and its *perfectly* safe. Yes. Trust me. And don't tell the FBI that I said so.

By the way, with the completion of this bit of fluff, that's 170,664 words.

Letter Graded Mail
sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org
by my Gentle Readers!

Let us start with Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

Hey, welcome back from Chicago, saw your LJ, sounds like Windycon was the best time ever. Hope you got my Exhibition Hall loc, and there's an SF/SF waiting for me, but for right now, I have issues 229 and 230 of The Drink Tank.

WindyCon was pretty much the definition of Too Many Awesome.

229...I've always loved trains, too. When you grow up in a small town as I did, the train was the deluxe way to the big city, or at least out of the small town. One day, literally a few days after I graduated from high school, the family hopped the train, and off we went. We didn't just go to the big city, we took the train to the west coast and a new life. After that, the train has meant freedom. When I returned to central Canada to go to university, I took the train again. Yvonne and I have gone to conventions on the train, to Ottawa, Montréal, Rochester and central Michigan. We've been able to compare between VIA Rail and Amtrak, and I think you may know who wins...

I've rarely done Amtrak, and never for long. I hear it can be a hassle, but a good one.

I've had the top bunk and the bottom, plus a roomette to myself. I'd had bad sandwiches in the dining car, and a prime steak. There's nothing like travelling in a train, especially if it's a long trip. One memory that will always stay with me was when the family was

heading for the west coast, to Vancouver and eventually Victoria, and I had that top bunk. The gentle sway of the train, the white noise from the engine, they put me into probably the deepest and best sleep I ever had in my life. I awoke by myself around 5am local time, I rang for the poor night porter to bring me a ladder, I washed up and dressed, and strolled back to the observation car where I watched the sun rise over the Saskatchewan prairie.

There are a number of hobby and historical railways around southern Ontario, and one local fan, Chris Ellis, spends his weekend working the tracks at the South Simcoe Railway. The steampunk railway photos I sent to you were taken at the South Simcoe in the small town of Tottenham. Further west is the Halton Radial Railway Museum, based on a long-ago commuter train. They specialize mostly in streetcars, buses and subways. It is always strange to drive past there and see a Toronto subway car in a field in the Halton County countryside.

I've heard that there's a place in Canada that has the largest collection of old street cars in the world. I wanna see it someday!

Wish I had more train stories to tell, but I am fresh out. So, off I go to...

230...An upcoming death issue? Just today, there's so many cartoons in the local papers with The Grim Reaper in them. Is today a special day? Not sure, maybe just coincidence. **Yeah, I finally figured out a way to do a Non-Depressing Death Issue. It'll be interested.**

I doubt I'd ever even attempt to do

what Taral's tried, to write a huge article for a fanzine. It would have to be pretty good, given how even fannish attention spans are shortening, but I would look forward to it. He is right, few fanzines these days are about the fans, but then we don't have the same continent-wide or world-wide community we once did. No one can afford that kind of travel any more, and because the average age of the average fan is much higher than it used to be, we aren't willing to travel too far or too often.

My TAFF report was exactly 50k words. I think that's the longest things I've written outside of NaNoWriMo.

Movies...the last movie I saw was The Time Traveller's Wife with Eric Bana. Neat little film, one science fictional idea at the top, and relative logic after that. It was fun to see, and it must have been a real challenge to the continuity editor. I guess I can say I saw two Eric Bana films this year, the other being Star Trek, which came out on DVD today. I must get it, along with Up, which came out last week.

I really liked Star Trek, and there have been so many decent movies this year that it made me happy. it was very much like 1999, which was a really great movie year.

All done I am...check to see on io9.com where ILM snuck in an R2 unit into the Star Trek movie. Rest up from the big trip, and write it up even bigger. Looking forward to it.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

