

The Drink Tank

Issue Two Bits

“WOW, YOU REALLY DO A FANZINE. HOW QUAIN.T.” NEIL ZAWACKI

So, this is the first big post BayCon issue. I'm excited. I've got my 3.5K words review this time, plus Frank Wu weighs in, and a bunch of great stuff overall from the best damn BayCon ever! This issue will pretty much be all BayCon, so if you have no interest, you might want to skip it. Next week will be other folks' view of the event. If you're still with me, sally forth, gentle readers, sally forth. Photos are by Danny Low in the review.



Kevin Roche, Andy Trembley and ME!

morning ready to work (Toastmaster is a real working job) and got into my room where it instantly hit me: I'm terrified.

I've done dozens of events where I have to talk in front of a great many people (sometimes up to a few thousand) and it rarely frightens me. I realized that the folks who would be seeing me perform at BayCon were far more important to me than any other audience I've worked in front of, and so I was terrified beyond belief. Arriving and getting checked in, there were a few things I needed to do, like put out issues of Nth Degree and special low-rent versions of Claims Department. We then headed for food at the centrally located Coffee Garden.

Anyone who hasn't been to the DoubleTree San Jose might not know that it's just about the perfect hotel for a convention. The small programming rooms are on the South side, all on the same level right where the Fan Tables are. There's ample bathroomage right there, too. As to head towards the Dealer Room and Art Show, there's the

BayCon: What's With The Purple Fez?

I'm exhausted. To the depth of my bones, I am far more tired than I've ever been, and I've played in last man standing poker games. Usually, I'm tired and it's an exhaustion that lasts until the beginning of July, when it's time for WesterCon.

BayCon, the convention that I've always identified as my home convention, chose to have me as their Toastmaster this year. I've never felt anywhere near this honoured in my life.

I showed up on Friday morning ready to work (Toastmaster is a real working job) and got into my room where it



Kitty (BayCon 06 Chair), Jay Lake and Frank Wu



The Very Table We Ate At

were the folks I see every year, like Schwa and Ralph Lacy, and there was a nice surprise. In 1990, my pal Scott Moore was working the Green Room at Timecon, a fifteen-years dead con that focused on SF media. He had recruited my pal Andy to work with him, but Andy ended up being unable to come. I, without permission from my Mom, agreed to take his place and work the Green Room. This was the only time I ever served on staff of a con, but it was also the first con I had attended since my Pops had stopped taking me with the 1984 WorldCon. Scott and I had a little time to catch up (we hadn't spoken for at least twelve years) and he was working the Green Room again, which was a nice recall to the olde days.

At that point, I met up with Jay Lake, who was wearing a purple fez, and Ruth Nestvold, who was also wearing a purple fez. Frank Wu showed up, complete with Purple Fez, as did Andy Trembley and Kevin Roche, the fan guests, wearing a pair of purple fezzes. I was presented with a purple fez and told that it was Jay's idea and a few of his local friends had actually gone about making them from purple carpet material. My head was much bigger than most, but they had made an extra just in case a giant of some form had become a GoH. I began wearing my fez all over and everyone kept asking "what's up with the fez?" I always deflected the question.

After dinner, I headed upstairs and got changed. The theme of the BayCon was The Con You Can't Refuse, which was a Godfather theme. I decided that I'd go with a classic Mob look: Black Suit, Black shirt and white tie. I headed to the Meet The Guests. Meet

The Guests is very different on the West Coast than the Meet the Pros events are Back East. Basically, a lot (500 or so) of the attendees gather in a room where there is a light buffet of fruit and the like, followed by the Chairman giving a few words and then the Guests of Honour introducing themselves and having a bit of fun. I got to be the head guy in charge of the event, and I



The Whacking of Don Michael Saladi, led by Godfather Wu

did a pretty good job. I cracked a few jokes, which actually managed to get over with the crowd. I got a few good laughs for a Sonny Corleone at the tollbooth gag. I said that the folks on the dais were the members of the Loyal Order of the Blinking Purple Fez and then introed Andy and Kevin with their large martini glasses. The pair had been “married” in a wedding-like event on Thursday and the entire con was more or less a giant reception for the two of them.

Prior to the con, there had been a lot of discussion of BayCon having a lack of star power. None of the guests were overly well-known to fandom at large. Jay, my twin brother from a different



Chase Belts A Keely Smith Tune

mother (who I met and she’s a lovely woman), won the Campbell last year but is still kinda a rookie at the Con GoH thing. Andy and Kevin have been all over the place and are probably the best-known costumers in these parts. They also throw the Evil Geniuses Parties, which are ever growing in popularity around the country.

Frank is easily the most popular guy out of the five of us. Me? Well, I’m fairly certain that I was invited because they thought I would do a halfway decent job. Still, previous years had folks like Rudy Rucker, John Shirley, Karen Anderson, and many more, but this year a lot of that was missing. Meet the Guests served a very important purpose: to prove that we were going to provide a good time for everyone.

And we were damn entertaining.

Kevin and Andy got some laughs. Jay did one of his ‘Gimme a word and I’ll give you a story’ bits to the words Aardvark and Heartburn. Frank, ever the schemer, handed out a toy gun to each of us and we ‘whacked’ chairman, and Con Don, Michael Saladi. That got a good reaction and was followed up by a performance from the lovely Chase Masterson of DS9. The entire thing went great and led into the Swing Dancing and Charity Casino. Jason Schachat and I have a long standing tradition of playing Blackjack with our favourite dealer Vikki. Jay and Frank ended up joining us and we were rocking. When we heard that we only had a few more hands, Jay started doubling up his winnings, letting it ride five hands in a row. That, combined with me and Jason playing big amounts, ended up breaking the bank for the third year in a row. For every 25 fake dollars, you got a ticket. Jason got 58, I had 93 and Jay had 348. We got to enter these in various drawings and Jay ended up with a Frank Lurz painting while Jason got one of Jay’s books and another painting and I got bupkiss. This year’s casino was better attended than last

I asked Frank Wu for a Special Message and Here is His Response...

A Message about the con?

Hmmm....

Baycon was a blast. The staff treated us all like royalty, kudos especially to Michael Siladi, Elisa Sheets, Tycho, Gary Bell, and everybody else. Kelly Beuhler and Daniel Spector made fezzes for the GOHs to wear, and then the next day people went home and got their own fezzes, eliciting the question from puzzled congoers, “What’s up with all the fezzes?” Maybe they felt like the scientists who forgot to bring their ducks in that Farside cartoon.

Another highlight for me was the masquerade, starring two Toho giant monsters. One was a weird cyborg-rat-thing and one was Gezora, the giant squid from “Yog, Monster from Space” (a monster movie that features several giant monsters, none of which are named Yog). They started their presentation howling and stomping like giant monsters, and suddenly went into the “Spongebob Squarepants” theme and started dancing around. It was hilarious, funniest thing I’ve seen in a long time.

All in all, a fabulous, fabulous time!

year's, but still not as wonderful as the year before that when my crew ended up pulling in tons of (fake) money and making a general fool of ourselves.

Saturday came around and, since I wasn't on any panels until 2:30, I worked around the various events. The first panel I went to was one that I usually moderate called "Five Dollars, A Time Machine, and a Dead Fish." The panelists were writers Berry Kercheval and Madeleine Robins, philosophy prof and wanna-be writer Martin Young, and gadfly/Comic Book expert Tom Galloway. I've done this one with Martin and Tom before, so it was a seasoned panel. I spoke up a fair bit, with strange bits and pieces of concepts for how one might use a Dead Fish and five bucks to change history. The audience threw great questions of comedy at the panel and they answered in kind. Martin Young uttered the phrase "Do dinosaurs have vomit reflexes?" He also introduced us to a lovely young blonde physics professor who asked the question, "What about five dollars, a time machine and vous? Who would you want to take with you through time?" to which Tom said "Well, for that question, I'm willing to answer you." To which she



Masquerade Best In Show

responded "If you have a time machine, it's a date." Tom then took off his watch and said "Here it is, it puts us forward at the rate of one hour per hour." This brought huge laughs and the two did end up having lunch together. It ended with someone pointing out that Hitler should have gone into fashion design (Welcome to Hitler's of Berlin, coming soon to Paris, London, Prague, Warsaw and Vienna) and the possibility that Hitler would have gone to be a star and that Pablo Picasso might have been the one to become the maniac, which led to declare "The Spanish Reich will reign for a thousand years!" That's what closed the panel.

I spent the next hour and a half watching the in-room TV network. They showed fan films (including The Chick Magnet, various Dr. Who fan films, and Mystery Science Theatres by my pals in Berkley) and various old movies (Invasion of the Flying Saucers, The Day The Earth Stood Still and Starcrash) plus interviews with the guests and the masquerade and other BayCon events. I got prepared for the strangest panel of all, The

Remembrances of MonkeyCons Past.

Jay had the idea for Frank, Me, Nick Mamatas and himself to do a panel talking about a con that didn't exist. With my years of ComdeySportz training, I was completely ready to do this one. We got a little randy (Nick made some great references to 'piggy-back rides' which were kinda darque) and I even made Jay sing the MonkeyCon National Anthem. This was a strange panel, but we got the room laughing. At times, it seemed that we were more interested in making each other laugh than the audience, which actually made the audience laugh harder than if we were playing to them. I also got to do the one joke I had been holding on to for a while which referred to my pal Jason as "Six time MonkeyCon Mini-Golf Masters Champion, Jennifer...I mean Jason Schachat. You look great and I'm glad to see that the surgery was a complete success." Jay kept calling Jason Jennifer for the entire con.

I spent the rest of the day getting ready for MCing the Masquerade. I was terrified on this one, because I had been told that there were lot's of Gaelic names to pronounce. Why bother having a written language if you only pronounce half the letters? I got things ready, met with the people with the great costumes and made sure I had everything right. Once things started, I went into my 'Hey, I'm announcing' voice and everything went just about perfect...save for my announcing Entrant 11 as Ave (rhymes with gave) instead of Ave (rhymes with Agave, the stuff you make tequila with). I made a few jokes, and introed Chase Masterson, who sang some standards



Maya: The Unbelievably Cute Mermaid



and then she came and sat on my lap for a moment during one of her songs. I was speechless, and did the ‘hummana-hummana’ thing. The end of the night was hitting the parties, which were great. BASFA, the club that Frank Wu officially paid my membership into, had a great party with amazing food.

Sunday started with Gen and The Little One coming and picking up my car. I had an 11:30 panel that I was excited to see. My long-time pal Neil Zawacki, the author of *How To Be A Villain*, was there with my friend Deirdre and writer Edward Muller did a panel on Villainy for Fun and Profit. This was slow starting, as this was only Neil’s third panel and he was moderating. Things got rolling once someone asked for the panel to discuss the pros and cons of a mechanical exoskeleton to allow you to roll over the masses on the way to conquering the world. Discussions ran from the need for a great lair to the reasons to blow-up the Earth (mineral rights, since all the good stuff is in the centre of the Earth, much like a Twinkie) and who folks would like to have as evil minions. It was a funny little panel and Neil did a good job.

I then did a panel on the History of Computing with Steve Savitsky, Phillip Gust, Brett Glass, Barry Kercheval and Brit Justin Lloyd. This was basically us going over our experiences and talking about weird moments. We basically decided that the old days were fun with all the required tinkering, but now you can actually get things done. It was sparsely attended, mostly due to two other science panels (one on Spintronics with Kevin Roche), plus the Art Show tour with Frank Wu and Jay Lake doing a reading with Ruth. Not an easy time slot.

For my second lightly attended panel, Kathryn Daugherty and I did *Fanzine in an Hour*. The top opposing programme items were the Charity Auction, Sex Toys of the Future (which Alison Lonsdale filled me in on at the Conjecture fan table afterwards), plus there aren’t a lot of fanzine fans around BayCon because there’s not a lot of fanzine programming. We had four people other than me and Kathryn. I’ve decided that I’m going to try and run a fanzine lounge at BayCon next year and try and wrangle up some fanzine programming. Basically, Kathryn did a lot of work on inDesign while I basically held court talking with folks about the history of fanzines, the basics that you had to know about fanzine fandom and other fun little topics. We introduced concepts like Carl Brandon, explained the Fan Funds, talked about zines that everyone should try and get a hold of and so on. We ended up putting out BLT: The BayCon Literaryish Thingie. It’s a brief little read and it’s a bit of fun and I’d love to try this again, but this time get a few more people and a couple of more computers.

I needed a break and headed up to the room to shower and rest. I was originally asked to be on Frank Wu’s Art Slide Show, but they had taken me off and not told Frank. I felt bad about missing his slide show, but I needed the break. At 5:30, I had a panel on making The Chick Magnet, but we didn’t have a projector, so me and Jason just talked about making it and about fan films in general. Spike Parsons and Tom Becker attended, which was a surprise. We basically went through the motions and ended after forty or so minutes.

That night was a light one. Gen and Evelyn came by and we did a pass through the Dealers Room and then up to the room to get some room service and watch my interview on the TV network. Evelyn was having a rough time getting to sleep, but we got her down eventually. After she nodded off, we headed down to the party floor and walked around a bit. I had a good time chatting folks up about this and that and deflecting more and more questions about the purple fez. When we got back, Gen was watching *Death on the Nile*. We settled in and dozed as we watched it. I fell all the way asleep before I found out who the murderer was, though since it’s Agatha Christy, I assume it was everybody.

Monday is always a day when I have a lot of panels. I was on from 11:30 until the closing ceremony. Kathryn Daugherty and I did the Food Panel that we do every year. We basically talked about food and the future of food. I had read a lot of research into generation ships and the food requirements before we did the same type of panel with Richard Foss at Con Jose in 2002. The requirements are roughly 2 sqkm per 1000

people. I've always believed that fish would be the most important protein source, especially since fish like tilapia can be raised in small spaces and can be used to provide fertilizer for growing other food. We talked about the globalization of cuisine and had a generally good chat. This led into the video game panel with Squall, a Con Staff member who was maybe 15, Justin Lloyd again, and a Tim Crowley. Justin brought his machine with the MAME emulator installed and projected it to show some of the most classic games. We told stories and talked about wasting quarters and the like on various games. Folks in the audience had their favourites and shared them. This was a fun little panel and was very well-attended. Sadly, I had to miss Randy Smith and Dick Lupoff talking on The History of Fanzines, which I heard wasn't wildly attended, but they were interesting.

The final regular panel for me was Tiki. I've been a fan of the lounge lifestyle ever since I discovered music like Martin Denny and Esquivel and the tiki lifestyle is a part of that. James Stanley Daugherty and Deirdre were there along with Adrian Gromley. James is next year's BayCon Toastmaster so the two of us had a lot of material to work with. We talked about a few SF stories that dealt with tiki and about places like Don The Beachcomber's and Trader Vic's and places like The Tonga Room and Coconut Willie's. I've decided that the next time there's a big con in the Bay Area, I'm taking out of town guests to Trader Vic's and we're drinking Blue Hawaiis and Mai Tais 'til the cows come home. This was fun.

The closing ceremony was the last time I was in charge of things. We basically said thank you to the committee, thank you to all fen out in the audience, and we called for calm while we explained the significance of the purple fezzes. They were there to distract from our faces. This didn't satisfy many, but it was good enough. Michael then took over and said we had raised about two grand for the charity: Modest Needs. I then took off my Fez and tossed a twenty in it. Frank and Jay and Andy and Kevin added a twenty each. We then passed the Fez around and raised a lot more money, probably around 250 bucks. It was a good way to end things, and using the empty pitcher of power, I banged the table and pronounced the 2005 BayCon to be well and truly closed.

This was the youngest Con I've been to in ages. All the guests were young (as the average age of guests over the previous 5 years went to 50), this year it was closer to 38 (Jay and Frank are both 40, I believe that Kev is in his middle 40s and Andy is in his middle thirties). It turns out I'm the youngest BayCon Guest of Honour ever (that isn't to say that there haven't been guests who were guests at younger than 30, but there is no other GoH born before 1974) and the whole thing had far less of a feeling of Old Guard, despite Michael being the chair. It felt as if this was the year where the next



Me having just yelled "BayCon 2005, Can You DIG IT!!!"



Jay Lake and Our Paper Dolls



The Regal Toastmaster

generation finally stepped up to participate fully. I'm glad to see it happen, as the graying of fandom has been spoken of everywhere and I'm hoping that this is the start of something new and shiny. Next year's con will certainly be an older set of guests (Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, Craig Miller, and someone else as Artist Guest of Honour), but the folks who are stepping up to the plate to work seem to be younger than ever.

I've heard the Dealer Room did OK business, and I thought that the Art Show was stronger than last year. The fans I ran into were great, as always. Kevin Standlee was there, as were Dave Clark, Dave Gallaher, The Haddads and Mikey Miyake of BASFA and a tonne of folks whose names I may or may not remember who I see every year. There were some great additions to the programme and panels, especially Neil, Justin Lloyd, and others. Jason Schachat will make a fine addition to the world of panels, as he did Making the Chick Magnet with me unofficially and did a great job. It took me three years to get Neil on the roster, so I'm not rushing with Jason.

So, BayCon was great, being Toastmaster was great and even if I never get to do it again (What does one have to do to become a BNF?), it's made all my FANAC worthwhile. And more important than anything else, I made it through the entire weekend without saying 'Fuck' in a live microphone.

PHOTOS FROM CHRISTINE DOYLE AND DANNY LOW

Brothers in Fez: Me with James Stanley Daugherty, Next Year's Toastmaster



Top Right: Andy and Kevin: The Newlyweds, Bottom Right, Jay and Fellow SC High Grad Mark Egusa, And the man in the suit is Frank Wu



The Drink Tank Issue Two Bits is dedicated to all those who came and saw a good time at BayCon, and to Jay, Andy, Kevin, Frank and Chase for being such great guests. If you were at BayCon and would like to add a little to the next issue, drop a line to garcia@computerhistory.org. This will be posted by Bill Burns to eFanzines.com. Heil Picasso!