

THE DRINK TANK ISSUE THIRTY THREE

LOST AND FOUND

I ONCE WAS LOST,
BUT NOW AM
FOUND

By

Frank Wu

Recently many historical objects that had gone missing have been turning up, at an astonishing clip. I am no longer surprised to find out that yet another ancient hidden treasure has reappeared. Here's a partial list of recent finds:

-A lost unpublished Jack Kerouac play, "Beat Generation" (1957). One scene in this work, which Kerouac unsuccessfully shopped around to Marlon Brando, features Jack and Neal Cassady at a racetrack, partying, gambling and talking about reincarnation. The text was found in a bunch of files from a New Jersey warehouse sent to Jack Kerouac's agent, Sterling Lord.

-A manuscript by Sir Isaac Newton discussing alchemists' efforts to turn lead and other base metals into silver and gold. Along with his own efforts along these lines. The papers were originally uncovered after Newton died in 1727, but never properly studied before they were sold at auction for 15 pounds in July 1936. Then they were lost. But now the papers have been found, during a cataloguing of the Royal Society's miscellaneous manuscripts.



-The unfinished Leonardo da Vinci mural of "The Battle of Anghiari" (begun June 1505). Working in the council hall of Florence's Palazzo Vecchio, with rival Michelangelo painting on the opposite wall, Leonardo built up yet another masterpiece, "The Battle of Anghiari," a riot of fighting men and horses. Da Vinci's experimental painting technique eventually proved to be somewhat unstable and rapidly degraded. How rapidly is a question, though, as decades later scholars and artists were still streaming in from miles away to behold the unfinished marvel, now known only through their reproductions and reminisces. Later the artist Giorgio Vasari was commissioned to renovate the hall and cover the walls with his own paintings. Instead of painting directly over the da Vinci, Vasari may instead have built a false wall with a cavity over the da Vinci, saving the masterpiece from total destruction. Intriguingly, a clue - the words "Cerca trova," or seek and ye shall find - were painted by Vasari on a flag, at the location that should hold da Vinci's work

- a painting also known as "The Fight for the Flag." Researchers are now awaiting a permit from the local officials to send a small probe through the Vasari mural to see

if the da Vinci still exists in the gap behind it.

-A more complete copy of a poem by the Greek poetess Sappho (7th century BC) was recently found wrapped around a mummy (a surprisingly common occurrence). Sappho was considered the female Socrates or Homer, and Plato called her the Tenth Muse. Despite her ancient repute, this is only the fourth poem of hers known to have survived. It reads, in part: "You for the fragrant-bosomed Muses' lovely gifts,/ Be zealous, girls, and the clear melodious lyre:/ But my once-tender body old age now/ Has seized; my hair's turned white instead of dark."

-A 30-line fragment from Archilochus (ca. 660 BC) was recently found in the Oxyrhynchus papyri. Archilochus was an early ancient Greek satirist and one of my favorites, as he

wrote the delightfully cryptic line, "The fox knows many small things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." What does that mean? I'm not sure, but I like it. And now we have a little more from him. The new (old) piece describes a stop the Greeks made on their way to fighting the Trojan War.

The Oxyrhynchus is one of the famous papyrus deposits (actually then a garbage dump), along with the library of Julius Caesar's father-in-law at Herculaneum, which was buried in the same volcanic explosion that took out Pompeii. New technology exists to read rolled, charcoaled papyri without even unrolling them. Who

knows what will appear next?

This is an exciting time, filled with blasts from the past. So here's my Want List of stuff that should be found (and, no, I have no interest whatsoever in anything related to the JFK assassination):

-The hatch to Gus Grissom's Mercury capsule (1961). Gus flew the second Mercury mission, and after a successful spaceflight and splashdown, the escape hatch (recently installed at the astronauts' request) blew prematurely. Gus almost drowned, and the capsule sank to



the bottom of the ocean. Gus says he didn't do anything wrong, that "The hatch just blew" and that he wasn't a "squirring hatch-blower." Some NASA engineers believed it was his fault, though he was allowed to fly on subsequent missions. That

was 1961, and the capsule wasn't recovered until 1999. The capsule was found, but not the hatch, and until that's found, we'll never know what happened.

-The cover paintings for the first few years of *Amazing Stories*. These works, published from April 1926 to June 1929, were done by Frank R. Paul and were some of the best covers of all time. The *War of the Worlds* cover. The *Land that Time Forgot* cover. The *Skylark of Space* cover (sometimes mistakenly thought to be a Buck Rogers cover). And historically important, too, as they were the first sci-fi images seen by Ray Bradbury, Forry Ackerman, Arthur

C. Clarke and many others. And they're all lost. Supposedly they were just thrown away. But things in landfills go anaerobic and don't decay quickly. So they could still be somewhere with the rest of the garbage from New York from the 1920s. Waiting, waiting...

-The killer spider scene from "King Kong" (1933). A preview of this film in 1933 included an extended scene wherein sailors running from King Kong cross a gorge spanned by a fallen log. Kong picks up the log and shakes the men off, and they fall into the gorge. In the missing sequence, they survive the drop, but then are eaten by giant spiders and other nasties. It was reportedly so horrific that it stopped the movie cold, and the audience completely forgot about Fay Wray and King Kong; so it was deleted from subsequent prints. We do still have a couple pre-production sketches (one reproduced on page 224 of "The Making of King Kong" by Goldner and Turner), along with some fotos, and the one of the models was recycled and used by animator Willis O'Brien in "The Black Scorpion" (1957). However, the animated footage itself is long gone. The book "The Making of King Kong" on page 133 also describes some other animation sequences that were shot and then not used in the final film, and later lost. These include two versions of scenes of sailors being chased onto the log bridge by a styracosaurus (a dino like a Triceratops with more horns) or an Arsinoitherium (an extinct rhinoceros-like mammal). In addition, there may have been lost animated dinosaur sequences shot for "Creation", which the



makers of Kong worked on but abandoned before moving onto Kong.

-More Archilochus, please (ca 660 BC). I can't get enough of this guy. According to legend, he was in love with the young maiden Neobule, and her father, Lycambes, promised her in marriage. Later he withdrew his consent (probably because Archilochus was a penniless writer and a bastard, literally and figuratively). In his anger Archilochus wrote a satirical play (now lost) savaging the family and calling Lycambes a liar. They were so shocked and humiliated that they committed suicide, and Archilochus had to leave town. To hold the very lightning of life and death in your words! Wow. If only he had used his power for good...

-The play the ancient Greeks liked more than "Oedipus Rex" (ca. 430-425 BC). Sophocles entered this, the most famous of all ancient Greek plays, in a contest against two other playwrights at the annual spring Dionysian festival. The rules were each writer presented three tragedies, along with a comedic satyr play. Sophocles often won the contest, but that year, "Oedipus Rex" and his other plays came in second. The plays that beat his - written by Philocles, a nephew of his great rival Aeschylus - are now lost. And while you're finding that, could you also please look for Sophocles' other lost plays? He wrote around 120, of which only seven survive.

-The missing episodes of Dr. Who (1960s). Dr. Who premiered in 1963, but the early episodes, on videotape and film, were later destroyed or taped over. BBC had neither the space nor the inclination for saving these shows. Some episodes have been found in the archives of foreign television stations ("The Tomb of the Cybermen" was thus retrieved from Hong Kong). Other copies exist from an Australian fan, who recorded 8 mm cine film of some shows directly from his TV screen. For all the lost episodes, audio tracks exist,



also from fans at home, using home cassette tape recorders.

The most sought-after of all missing episodes is Part Four of the last William Hartnell serial, "The Tenth Planet," wherein Hartnell, the first doctor, regenerates into the Patrick Troughton version. A small fragment of this exists, and in 1992 a fan falsely claimed to have a copy of the whole episode, but this turned out to be a shameless hoax. Recently found was the episode "Day of Armageddon" (episode two of the serial "The Dalek's Masterplan", starring Hartnell, from 1965). The episode had been "borrowed" by former engineer Francis Watson, who worked for the BBC in the 1970s and secretly kept it for three decades before meekly returning it. 108 Dr. Who episodes remaining MIA. Did you happen to take any others? One of my life goals before I die is to find a lost episode of Dr. Who. I'm thinking that the archives of South African TV stations might be a good place to start.

-Boccioni's destroyed sculptures (1912-1913). Of all the things on this list, these may hold the greatest chance for being recreated, if not actually found. Umberto Boccioni was a great Italian Futurist artist, possibly most famous for the sculpture "Unique Forms of Continuity in Space." If you don't know this sculpture, it's a mass of swirling points and jagged shapes, rendering not just a man running, but the contortions and distortions of the air around him. Leading up to this masterpiece, Boccioni built several increasingly abstract sculptures, as a recognizable human figure

is gradually subsumed by abstract masses. Those pieces had intriguing titles like "Synthesis of Human Dynamism" (1912) and "Speeding Muscles" (1913) and "Spiral Expansion of Speeding Muscles" (1913). These things are important marker stones in terms of 20th century art history: you can draw a straight line from Rodin's headless "Walking Man" through Boccioni's work and Picasso's "Head" (1909) to more abstract figurative work like Dubuffet and Giacometti. If I were Paul Allen (Mr. Allen, are you reading this?), I would recreate these statues, and this is how I'd do it. Photographs from many angles of these pieces exist; these can be fed into a computer and with CAD-CAM magic, a three-dimensional image can be recreated digitally and then laser-cut. Voila! The Boccioni returns. Maybe in time for the 100th anniversary of his death (1916). Mr. Allen, are you there?

So your assignment, gentle reader, is to hunt the garbage dumps, the old TV stations, the yard sales of the world! Ancient coolness abounds, waiting to be rediscovered! Seek and ye shall find!

Those Gems The We'd Also Like to Have Found ***Chris Garcia's List of Computing Artefacts That Are Missing***

In 1974, everyone knew that computers were going to start coming home. I've heard people say that it was so obvious that no one wanted to make the first step because they knew they would be trampled. Popular Electronics had done articles before with a company called Micro-Instrumentation and Telemetry Systems (MITS) and they had been developing a personal computer that had been called the Altair (named after a planet that owner Ed Roberts' daughter had seen the night before on Star Trek). Popular Electronics made arrangements to feature the Altair on the cover of the magazine, with a shoot in October 1974, the same month I was born. The prototype machine was then sent out

via over-night mail, ready to have the glamour shot for the cover taken and be launched into the big time.

It never made it.

This predictably caused panic and the folks from MITS had to mock up an Altair using plywood and lights and switches. The one that actually made the cover is just a wood box and couldn't do any actual computing. There were some shots of the interior of the original Altair, but that's all that we know of the original.

No one has seen the original Altair since

HOW TO "READ" FM TUNER SPECIFICATIONS

Popular Electronics

WORLD'S LARGEST-SELLING ELECTRONICS MAGAZINE JANUARY 1975/75A

PROJECT BREAKTHROUGH!
World's First Minicomputer Kit to Rival Commercial Models...
"ALTAIR 8800" SAVE OVER \$1000

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- An Under-\$90 Scientific Calculator Project
- CCD's-TV Camera Tube Successor?
- Thyristor-Controlled Photoflashers

TEST REPORTS:

- Technics 200 Speaker System
- Pioneer RT-1011 Open-Reel Recorder
- Tram Diamond-40 CB AM Transceiver
- Edmund Scientific "Kirlian" Photo Kit
- Hewlett-Packard 5381 Frequency Counter

they sent it out. I keep hoping that someone will call up and offer to donate a 'weird, alternate model' Altair and that will turn out to be the one that Ed and folks sent out to Popular Electronics.

Other than that, there's not a lot 'Lost' in computer history. There were a lot of machines that were destroyed (Maniac being my favourite of the lost machines), but very little has gone missing.

I guess I'd most like to find those hard drives from Los Alamos.

The Lost Films We'd Like to see Found A List by M Lloyd

Lost films get a lot of play. There are many people who love to think about what might be hiding in basements or obscure film archives, or in the case of The Passion of Joan of Arc, closets at insane asylums. When Chris asked me to write this list, I said OK, but I'd need him to help. He sent me a list of 128 films with various descriptions. I chose 3 films that I wanted to see. When I gave the list to Chris he said that I had chosen poorly, then promptly had me expand the list to five. When I sent them to him, the same three with a pair of films added, he said 'Much better.'

London After Midnight 1927 with Lon Chaney

This is the Holy Grail for vampire and horror fans. It's the single greatest loss to the history of horror films, it was last known from an MGM print that was destroyed

in a vault fire. There are people alive who remember seeing it (the best known are Forrest J. Ackerman and Ray Bradbury) and all of them agree it was a fantastic film and that it was most likely Lon Chaney Sr.'s finest performance.

There are hundreds of stills that were used to make a static version shown on Turner Classics. There is also believed to be several feet in a few archives.





Theda Bara's Cleopatra 1917

Theda Bara was the original Vamp. She had eyes that could seduce at twenty paces. When she was asked to do Cleopatra, the story had already been tackled at least twice, but she added her own womanly charms to make it the most unforgettable portrayal of Cleo ever. The film lived just about as long as Bara herself, burning in another vault fire around 1955. There are 45 known seconds and many stills. No one living has said they've seen it that I was able to find.

The Magnificent Ambersons: The Original Cut

This may be the saddest loss of all. The Magnificent Ambersons as it stands today is a beautiful and lyrical film that still manages to creep nicely up to Welles' other classic, Citizen Kane. The original version was longer. MUCH LONGER. Some say that Welles intended it to be 200+ minutes, and there was a 131 minute version that showed. The extra footage was destroyed when the vaults needed more storage space. The only person known to have seen all the footage who is still alive is editor Ray Wise.



Frank Gotch vs. George Hackenschmidt Match from Chicago, 1911

This is one of Chris' obsessions, but I've been a wrestling fan for nearly two decades or ever since I found out that guys like girls who can wrestle. This is the classic match that Chris made me research when he was working on a book about old-time wrestling.

The only reason this is on the list is that I know it existed at one point. Both men were paid handsomely for the rights to the match film, which showed in theatres. The earliest wrestling footage is more than 10 years younger than the Gotch match footage. No last known whereabouts. Might still pop up



Erich Von Stroheim's Greed: The Full Version

I understand that it's hard to cut when you have great source material. Erich was the greatest director working at the time, as Griffith was great, but more popular in the later years. He took McTeague, an 1899 novel that had been a sensation, and shot every single thing that happened in the book, and he shot it on location in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and San Francisco. The Story is magnificent and there was a 42 Reel Version screened. It was said to be the greatest, most complex, most exhausting film up to that point.

The studio, in particular Louis B. Mayer, insisted it get edited down, originally to a four hour version that Von Stroheim wanted to release as two parts, but Mayer insisted it be pruned to two hours. That is what has survived to this day.

This is the one that folks have some hope for. They did a Turner Classics using production still to recreate a longer version, and there have been a few second here and there found in archives. Some say that there may be a copy of a reel or two lying around in old, unopened vaults. I hope so, since the great title card in the history of film is contained in Greed.

“Such was McTeague.”

Lost TV and Video: A Remembered Discussion (since Jay didn't send me his article!!!)

by

Jay Crasdan, M Lloyd, and Christopher J. Garcia

From a Conversation over the Phone

Chris: OK, so y'all know that I'm trying to find lost stuff for the next issue, right?

Jay + M (in unison): Yeah.

Chris: OK, so M's doin' Films and Jay is doin' the random stuff and I'm doin' computer stuff. Who wants to do TV?

M: There's no lost TV.

Jay: Yeah, there is. Lot's of it.

Chris: Like what?

Jay: First Superbowl is lost. So is most of Don Larsen's perfect game.

M: Really? Why's that?

Jay: I guess it's because no one thought anyone would want to watch them later.

Chris: Actually, I thought that the first SuperBowl was on two different networks and they both thought the other one had preserved it.

M: Who'd want to watch an old football game?

Chris: There's always someone looking for stuff like that.

Jay: I'm looking up lost TV shows, the AFI has a list of lost TV and movies.

Chris: Anything good?

M: Can't be much.

Jay: Well, there's the first Commercial TV Broadcast from the World's Faire.

Chris: No one recorded that, obviously.

Jay: All in the Family Pilots.

M: I hated that show.

Chris: That's positively UnAmerican!

M: I'm not an American anymore.

Jay: Gotta agree with the furry bastard, M. Let's see, a bunch of James Dean on TV in various drama anthology shows, the first Johnny Carson Tonight Show.

Chris: I thought they showed some of

that when Carson kicked it a while back?

Jay: Nope, all they got is audio.

Groucho Marx was the announcer for it.

M: Really? He must have been ancient by that point.

Chris: You Bet Your Life was only a few years old by that point.

Jay: The Marx boys did their best work in the 1940s, too.

M: Wow, I always assumed they'd been around since the days of Jesus.

Jay: Nah, he was only in his 60s, I think.

Chris: Actually, early 70s. He died a few days after Elvis, you know.

M: Sounds like a bad week for you.

Chris: Yeah, it would have been had I been more than two years old.

Jay: I think some of the old Ed Sullivan Shows are missing.

Chris: Nah, the films are still around, they use them all the time in stuff. They even released a Best Of series not too long ago.

Jay: Hey, you know what else is missing? Chris' wrestling matches.

Chris: That's true. I haven't seen any of 'em in years.

M: I thought Tom O had some of them.

Jay: Not that he remembers.

Chris: I was good. I was really good. I could have gone far as Mr. Fabulous.

M: I saw you wrestle, Chris. You weren't great. Not bad, but you don't sell right.

Jay: Hey, there's missing Dr. Who's too, and the camera original of the Star Trek pilot.

Chris: Well, a camera original isn't required anymore. All you need is a raw tape.

M: Now that I think of it, Chris' wrestling matches are far too important for us to forget about.

Jay: True. That'll be my closer.

Chris: Great, all serious cred is now gone.

Jay: I'll have the article to you in a few days, maybe on Tuesday.

Chris: You'd better.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON DOUBLE FEATURE

Once in a while, I need to be reminded that film is good, film is great, movies have the power to move and movies have the power to remove. I have been to a lot of movies recently, including the excellent *Batman Begins*, the surprisingly good *Bewitched*, and a couple of other duds. Those duds start to gather on you, though and I wanted to get a good solid reminder of why I've always thought of the movie theatres as my home away from home.

Showing at the Camera 7, around the corner from my Darling Girlfriend's house, was *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*. I had always wanted to see it after missing it at the 2004 Sonoma Valley Film Festival. It's been at the 7 for more than 6 months, and I'd been afraid they would pull it before I got a chance to see it. I finally pulled up enough time to make my way down and see it.

But I was more than two hours early.

Getting to the window, and having already had lunch, I figured I'd catch another film right before *Wild Parrots*. There were a couple of art house things and a couple of Hollywood films, none of which I had been excited to see. Starting just five minutes after I'd arrived at the window was a French film called *Apres Vous*. I hadn't heard of it, I had no idea what it was about, and I hate French films. That's right, I hate French film, and especially French Comedy, which I often find is falsely named as Comedy. I bought a ticket for both movies, discovering that they were both in the same theatre. I walked in, took a seat and enjoyed the previews (*Lila Says* looks sexy, and the documentary *Murderball*, about



quadraplegic Wheelchair Rugby Players looks fantastic) while munching on popcorn that may have been left-over from an original screening of the *Apres Vous* back in 2003.

As soon as the movie started, I noticed that the cinematography was meant to evoke a sense of both frenzy and comfort. It was the type of frantic movement that comes when you are volunteering for a film festival or a con: one that is exhausting and refreshing. Our main character, Antoine, is an uber-waiter at

a fancy restaurant in Paris. He is stretched to the limit and seems all too willing to work without thought to his girlfriend who is waiting for him. He leaves work late and while taking a short-cut to meet his lady friend for dinner, he comes across Louis. Louis happens to be trying to hang himself.

After Antoine saves Louis, the fun begins. Louis is near-catatonic and Antoine is willing to do anything to help him. After discovering that the source of his depression is a flower shopgirl named Blache. Antoine sets up his plan to get her to return to Louis, which means getting her to break her engagement to another man and forget that Louis was a wreck throughout their relationship.

And he also manages to fall in love with her while he's doing it. *Apres Vous* has a huge likability



factor. When I say I hate French comedy, I mean it, and this one had a few moments where you were wondering, but all in all, there was great comedy, sweet romance, and very strong acting. Danieal Auteuil is a French master-class actor, even though he starred in one of my least favourite movies ever (*A Heart in Winter*). He has a comedic style that is equal parts pathos and paranoia. He has a style that is very much classic comedy, but he has a dramatic side that still exists and punctuates the set-ups, making the comedy that much funnier.

Jose Garcia is strange. He is something of an Andy Kaufman character, able to play comedy out of nothing. Even when he doesn't speak and is in that near catatonic state, he's very good at wringing out laughs. He even looks like Kaufman with a little meat on his bones. He plays off of Auteuil so well that the French think they're the modern Laurel and Hardy (I still say that's Stiller and Owen Wilson). I wouldn't go that far, but they are the team that shows that comedy can still be played close to the vest.

The real shining star is the lovely Sandrine Kiberlain. She's not at all funny, not a single laugh comes from her being in the movie, but the way she plays her situation is so perfect that it makes the rest funnier. Blanche as a character is wonderful and it's easy to see why Louis is so caught up in her.

The cinematography is excellent. There's a lot of attention to profile silhouettes and that adds some silent era wonder to the mix. There's a strong sense

of beauty to the film, with flowers and restaurant scenes shot to give us a comfort level that makes Antoine's discomfort even funnier. The pacing was smart, if slightly too French, and everything that unfolded happened in such a way that you had pure fire ready to drop at any second.



After the brief break, the reason I came out started. *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill* has been a slight sensation. It's been at the Camera 7 since late 2004 and has gotten rave reviews from folks like Roger Ebert. I love San Francisco movies, even if I'm not that fond of the City herself. The story here isn't exactly the Parrots, but a man.

Mark Bittner is the St. Francis of San Francisco (which is named after St. Francis in a fit of Self-Referentialism). He used to feed the birds every day from the steps near his Telegraph Hill home. Despite not having a job for nearly 25 years, he has found ways to live and from 1993 to 1999, he kept close eyes on the flock of parrots that live near the Ferry Building in SF.

The film by Judy Irving is a solid reminder that nature is everywhere, even where the streets have been paved and houses clustered into every nook and





crannie. The parrots aren't the only wildlife either, as they show hawks, the natural enemy of the parrots...well, in SF they are.

The story focuses on Bittner's dedication to the flock and those that help him continue his care for them. He needs a place to stay, a couple allows him to live there without paying rent. He needs to start tracking the flock more thoroughly, someone gives him a computer. It's like Ghandi said: Find a Bigger Problem and the Smaller Ones Will be Fixed.

Bittner is a strange, at times sad, man. A failed musician, he discovered the flock and became their 'keeper' more or less. The film takes place mostly on the edge of Mark making a move when the owners of the cottage he's staying at decide to remodel and he has to move. It's almost heartbreaking to watch him separate himself, but at the same time, there's no question that the flock will go on, so to speak.

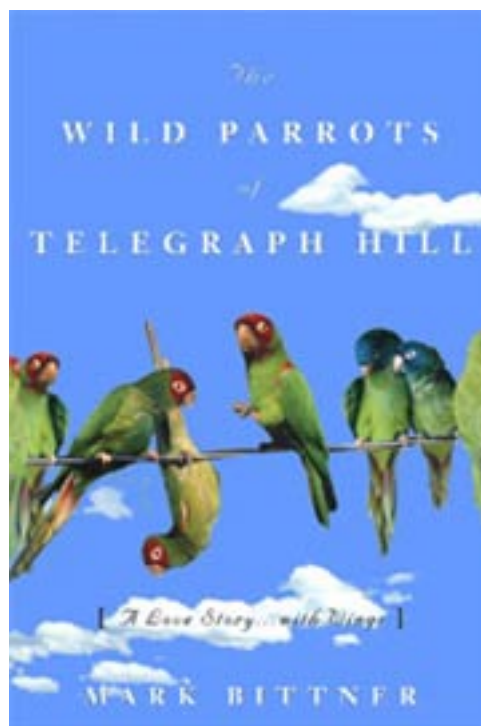
What Irving does better than most is make the story of a guy really about a series of birds and vice-versa. The parrots are introduced to us via names and afflictions. The life of a wild parrot in the city is rough and the film focuses on many that have issues, such as Mingus, the parrot that would much

rather be a pet than be a wild parrot, or the Blue-Headed Conyer who is living with all the Red-headed Conyers. There are moments where we see birds that are sick or hurt and we feel for them. There are also times when we see people that are callous and stupid and want to destroy the flocks or use them for their own financial gain. There's a story told where Mark, who has to make every dollar count, has to ransom a parrot that was sick from a homeless woman on the street for the sum of twenty dollars. An equally annoying idea is floated that the city should have feeders where people can buy seed and feed the birds. This is shown just after Mark explains it took him almost a year to get the birds to eat from him.

There are great successes such as the birth of a hybrid-bird population and the pairing of several birds. There are great failures, such as one of the birds most prominently featured rejecting Mark and then disappearing, perhaps to be eaten by a hawk. The life story of this flock is at times moving, at times funny, and at times ponderous. I found myself rooting for certain birds and for Mark himself. Which is what a film like *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill* should do.

The only complaints I have are small. There's another flock in SF and it's not really covered beyond a slight mention. There are other flocks around the US that are older than the SF flock that we didn't get to see. It also would have been nice to see a review of what's known about the birds that were profiled and to see where they've gone and how they're doing. By looking at the website, many have passed or are in new mating situations.

I highly recommend both these movies as a feel good afternoon. It's not one you want to go to if you need a good downer, but if you haven't smiled in days, go!



Emailed Words of Comment
Sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org
by
My Gentle Readers

Open Up and Say Eric Mayer!

Hi Chris,

How many issues has it been? I've been in a bit of a time warp. Finishing up a legal volume from Hell, for one thing. It's amazing, with freelance stuff, the smaller the pay the bigger the pain in the butt. Also we were playing with sample chapters and an outline for a supernatural Victorian novel. Kind of George Gissing meets H.P.

Lovecraft. It was great fun researching 1895 London, unfortunately the project went belly up. Sometimes it seems like it's -- wow...this is great...yeah this is going swell...oh boy...oh...crap....

It turns out that almost all of my projects are like that. I actually enjoy Research far more than writing. I really should find a job where I can just research all day.

Interesting article by Frank Wu. I highly recommend to anyone involved in the arts, Michael Allen's "On the Survival of Rats in the Slushpile":

<http://www.kingsfieldpublications.co.uk/rats.html>

in which he argues, convincingly to me, for the huge role of sheer randomness in writing success. The trouble is, most writers (or artists, or businessmen for that matter) who happen to be successful perceive that success to be entirely of their own making, despite the amount of luck involved, and the "losers" -- many of whom were just as good, talented, hard working as the "winners" -- are simply never heard from by way of refutation.

I really do love awards, and someday I hope that I can snowball enough people to win myself one or another. I've heard of that from various panels I've been on over the years.

What really caught my attention was the Winchester Mystery Mansion. Did you come across the text game devoted to it? Winchester's Nightmare:

<http://baf.wurb.com/if/game/438> I haven't played the game as it seemed a bit long and difficult and literary for me but quite a few folks thought very highly of it and Nick Montfort has gone on to write a book about If.

It's one of those places that has a strong following. Oddly, I'd heard of the game, but never played it.

When I lived in Rochester, NY I used to visit Eastman House built by George Eastman of Kodak fame. What amused me most was the story of how Eastman widened the conservatory that's in the middle of the house. When he decided the room was too narrow he did what any of us would've done, naturally, he had the mansion cut in half and pulled apart on tracks, creating enough space to make the desired addition.

It's always the simplest solutions that are the ones that work the best.

Also enjoyed going to Sonnenberg Gardens: <http://www.sonnenberg.org/> Wonderful grounds with streams, waterfalls, a Japanese reflecting pond, a faux Roman bath house etc. Specially positioned outside one window was a moon garden with white flowers meant to reflect the moonlight. The inside had plenty of neat features too, like a small elevator and a kind of round bathroom opening onto a second floor terrace. I wouldn't mind living in such a place. Not particularly because of the luxury, although it was luxurious, but because it had a lot of fun features.

Sounds lovely! Just my kind of place. I really do need to travel more!

The Drink Tank Issue 33 was written by Frank Wu, Christopher J. Garcia, Jay Crasdan, M Lloyd, Eric Mayer and others. It's posted to eFanzines.com by the Master of Fear: Bill Burns. The Drink Tank will be back next week with more of the same. Anything written by Christopher J Garcia is free to reuse in any form. Fight the Power!