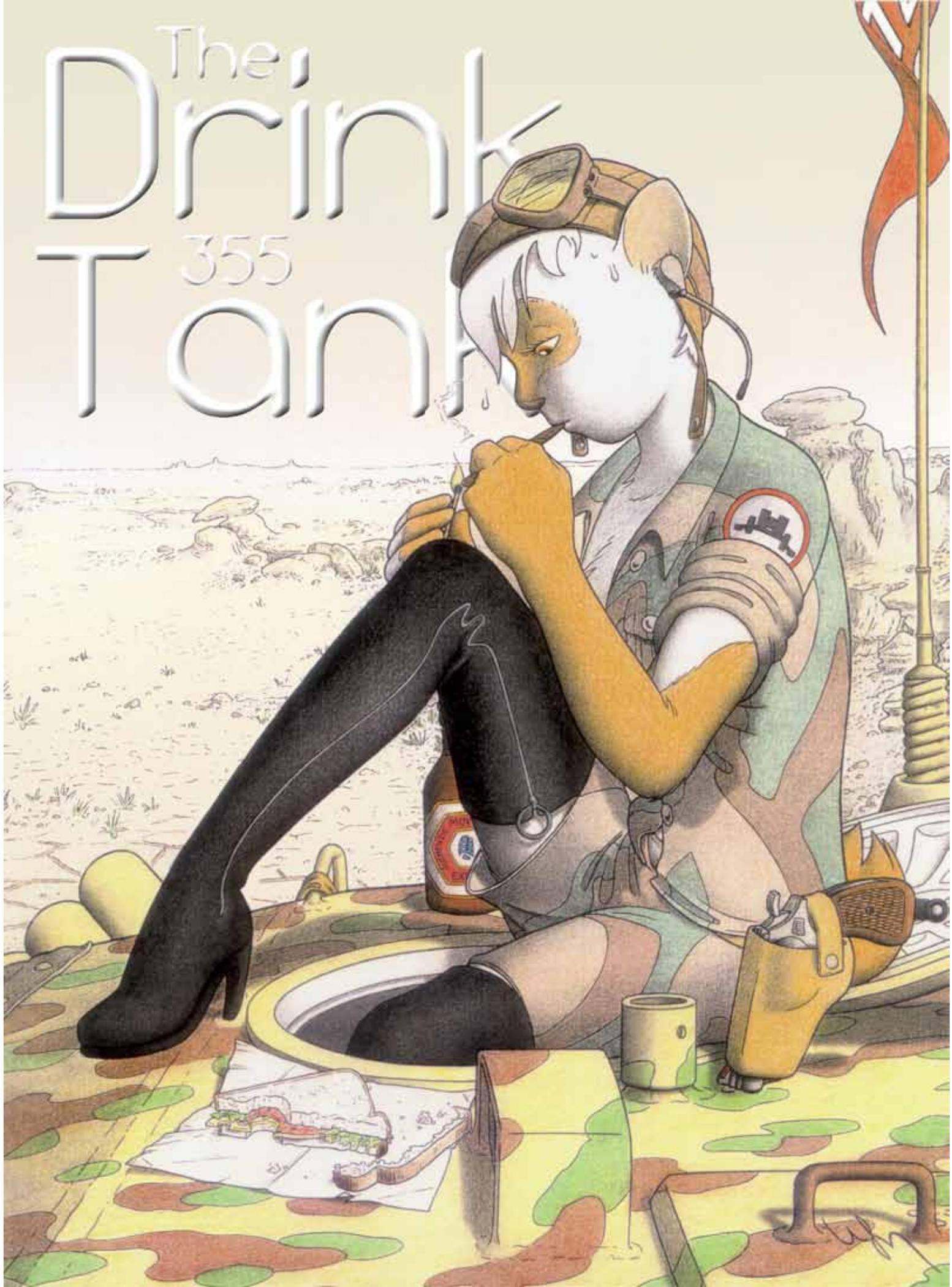
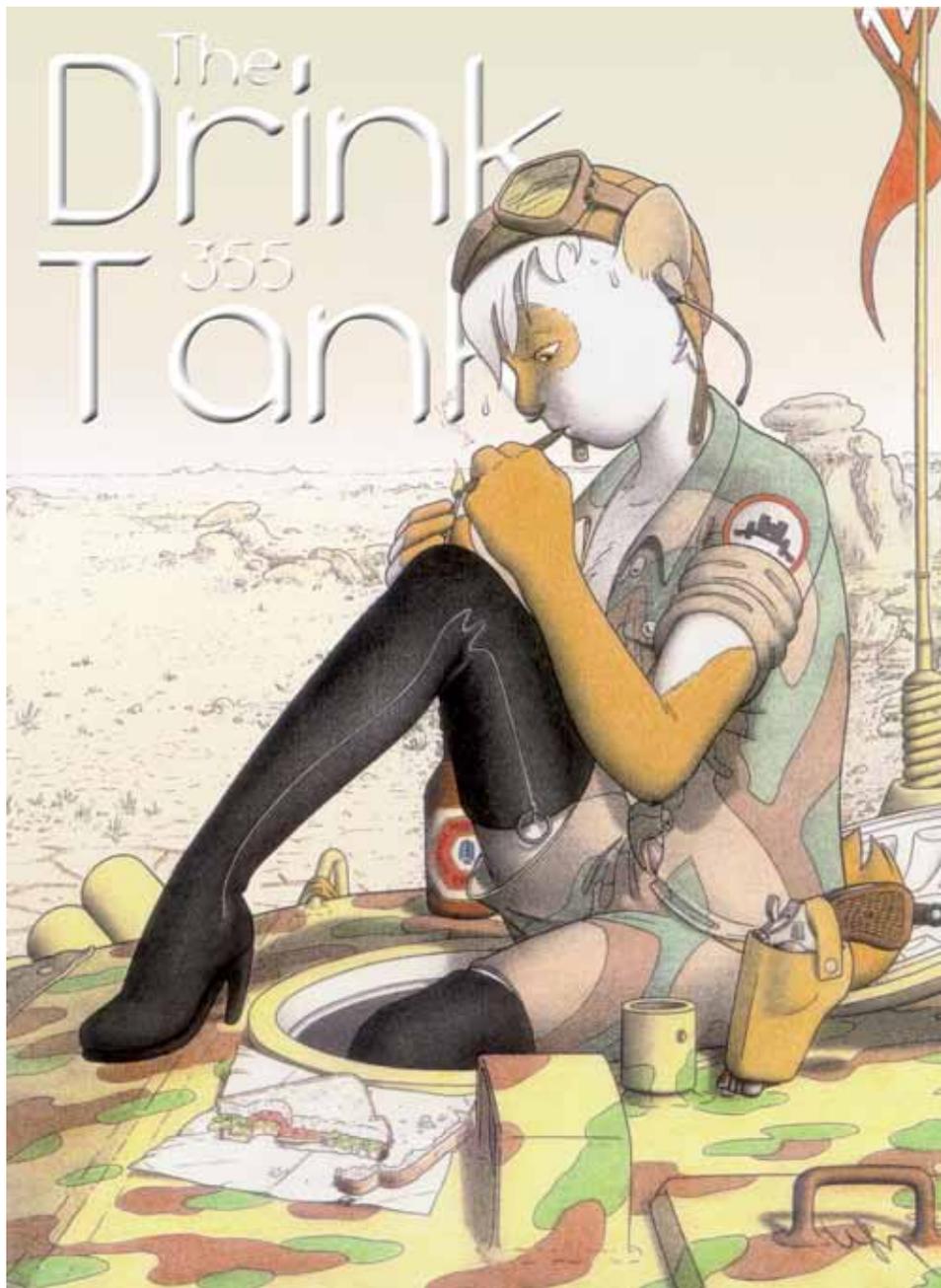


# The Drink Tank

355





## Never Scene in Colour 3 by Taral Wayne

**Crew Mate:** If I'm not mistaken, and it was a long time ago, I drew this in 1985 to submit to Pat Virzi for a cover to her fanzine, *Pirate Jenny*. It isn't a pirate, I know. But the military subject seemed appropriate to me. Perhaps not to Pat, though. For reasons never explained, it was never used – perhaps Pat simply stopped publishing before getting around to it. At some point later I coloured the art with pencil crayons, believing it would sell well as a print. Which, to my delight, it did. As somebody said, “times of money will get you through times of no egoboo better than times of egoboo will get you through times of no money.” The vehicle is the WWII classic, the Tiger I tank, in desert cammie, with smoke grenade projectors near the young lady's boot. The pistol is a Smith & Wesson snub nose .38 cal. for which I used a detailed plastic replica with real working parts as a model. I did not use a real bottle of Molson's Export beer in the famous Canadian “stubby” though. Nor did I bother to make a pepperoni & cheese sandwich, having eaten enough of similar things to draw it from memory. For some reason she didn't eat the crust though ... I always do.

So much to do over the next few weeks! There's the trip to the UK that I have to prep for, sleep I lost during WorldCon to catch up on, time to spend with my Lovely & Talented Girlfriend, and most importantly, I've got writing to do! I've started writing for SF Signal, and I've got blog posts to do for work, and issues here that need my words too! So much to do!

In November, I'll be going to Blizzcon. Blizzcon is Blizzard Entertainment's big convention. Blizzard, of course, makes World of Warcraft. I'm curating the Warcraft section of our new Make Software exhibit. I'm very excited about going, not only because a lot of people I know will be there, but because I love seeing the costumes. Warcrafters are HUGE into the costuming, and one of the things we'll be doing is shooting a lot of footage of people in their costumes! I love my job!

This issue has a lot about the Hugos from Aurora Celeste (making her Fanzine debut, as I understand it!) and David B. Williams, and Me. I am betting we'll have a few more pieces on the Hugos for the next few issues. The awarding of the Hugos always brings up issues and points.

And I'd like to dedicate this issue to two amazing women, both now passed. Bobbie DeFault. Bobbie was going to be one of the chairs for the 2015 WorldCon in Spokane. She was so happy that Spokane had won, and we came in on the same flight from Las Vegas. The last time I saw her was in front of the Exhibit Hall. She was on her scooter and we chatted.

"I've had a good time at con this year," I said.

"Hey, it's always a good time," she responded.

That was the last I spoke to her.

And then I heard about the passing of Delphine, Joan Hanke-woods.

Man, this is tough. I had been a great admirer of her work dating back to the days when I'd read Pops' zines, but I never met her until 2011 at Renovation. I ran into Mo Starkey in the lobby of The Peppermill and she said "Oh, I was just talking with Delphine."

I said "is she here?"

"Yeah, she's just heading for the elevators." Mo responded.

And I took off and caught up with her and gushed a little and then Mo joined us and it was wonderful.

She gave me a bunch of art, and she had the most pieces of art in issue 300. I lost the scans she sent when I had my computer stolen, but I did find one batch a little bit ago and am using them in this and the next issue.



# Aurora Celeste On Cosplay, Fan Art, and The Hugos

At LoneStarCon there was a questionable amendment to the WSFS Constitution that I'd like to discuss. No, not the YA Hugo, although I think that discussion needs to be had. I'm talking Kronengold and Padol's 4.1.8, Expand Best Fan Artist to Include All Types of Fannish Art, Not Just Static and Visual. First off, I have to say I support the feelings behind this motion. It's nice to know that art is appreciated, and is recognized in forms other than the traditional visual mediums. As a costumer this amendment, and especially the ensuing debate, brought up a lot of feelings for me, and I'd like to discuss them a little bit more.

I think my biggest conflict comes in with the "costuming is a craft, not an art" statement that came out of the business meeting. I'd agree that costuming is a craft. It has to be technically sound in order to hang together. However, I'm not sure that I could argue that an art cannot be a craft. We don't knock drawings for being proportional and say that perspective and color use are why they can't be art. I think any good artist develops the craft as tools and uses those tools for effect. In fact, in looking up various definitions of art on the internet I think that skill, or craft, is integral to most definitions I found. In fact, the commonalities between all definitions are the application of skill and imagination to creating something. What that something is can be the nebulous part, but the requirement of skill was universal.

So, as a following question, do I consider my costuming art? Yes, I think I do, but it's taken a long time for me to get to that point. For the longest time I considered myself strictly a craftsperson, and the people who found art in my work were flattering me by discovering an unintended part of what I did. Years of looking at definitions of art and textile arts in general have changed that opinion. Even if I've never called what I do art I've always gone for an intended emotional result. I create a costume to be beautiful and inspire awe, or to evoke the feelings I got when looking at a sunset over Lake Ontario, or to intimidate and terrify. I think this application of skill toward evoking an emotional response is art. Yes, performance is part of this emotional response, but not all of it. I'd like to think that some of my works are provocative on a dress dummy. Yes, the presentation adds to it, but it's not the sum of the whole.

Which leads to my final point: I appreciate this amendment's creators most for trying to separate out fan effort from professional and artist from work. Although it was argued that costuming belongs in dramatic presentation I don't think anyone can expect any masquerade entry to be competitive with Dr. Who or Game of Thrones. From my relatively short time following the Hugos every time something fan-created has been nominated for a Dramatic Performance Hugo it has been met with tons of derision and criticism. I don't expect that to change any time soon.

So do I think there should be a "Best Costumer" Hugo, or a "Fan Dramatic Performance" Hugo? Maybe. For "Best Costumer" definitely not. However, I can see many benefits to having a fan category in Dramatic Performance, and not just for costumers. I'd love to see vids (fan-made music video tributes to a show) and filk performances get an outlet alongside masquerade entries. Do I think that's double dipping, especially since WorldCon has a Masquerade already? Not at all. I don't think a WorldCon Best in Show is equal to a Hugo. I don't think the prestige of a Masquerade Best in Show matches a Hugo, and that is reflected in the Hugo award, which costs a committee hundreds of dollars, versus a Masquerade ribbon that cost maybe twenty. The Masquerade is also a contained item. Best in Show is the best choice of the night, not of the year. Opening up the Hugo would mean entries at regional conventions and even costume get-togethers filmed and put on You-Tube would be eligible, making the category more inclusive to people who don't have the time and/or money to travel to compete at WorldCon with the stage and presentation limitations set there. Additionally I think a performance that wins a Hugo would have to stand the test of time and appeal to a much wider audience than the three to five judges that decide the Masquerade results. It's great to know your entry appealed to experts, but it's just as gratifying to know it appealed to the audience.



# The Fan Hugos: Threat or Menace?

## By David B. Williams

Chris has done it again – produced a new issue before I could muster the energy required to comment on the previous one. But he got my engine revving with his remarks in TDT 352 about a movement to abolish the Fan Hugos. I am compelled to erupt in righteous indignation.

I heartily share his sentimental attachment to the Fan Hugos. But if there's a problem, it has to be solved on the basis of reasoned analysis and calm deliberation. So let me give you some of that.

You may well ask, What's the problem? Are the Fan Hugos bankrupting Worldcon? Are rivalries among the nominees plunging all fandom into war? Are the wrong people voting? Are the wrong people winning? Are the Fan Hugos simply irrelevant in this glorious new age of Mass Fandom?

I perceive two meta-problems: (I) the nature of the awards and (II) the nature of the voting cohort. All subsidiary issues stem from these overriding factors. And by the way, while I am mostly concerned with the Fan Hugos here, many of my remarks apply equally well to the Pro Hugos.

As to the nature of the awards, both pro and fan, there's no getting around it: The Hugo Awards are chosen by popular vote. Inevitably, they are popularity contests. The highest editorial, literary, and artistic achievements don't necessarily win. Simply being good isn't always good enough (but it does help).

Just who votes for the awards? It's not true that the Hugo voters receive a ballot without any concern for their qualifications. In fact, they are all selected for one pretty lame qualification – disposable income.

Anyone who buys an attending or supporting Worldcon membership before the voting deadline receives a ballot; no one else can vote. Many fans who would like to vote for the Hugo Awards, even just the Fan Hugos, have better things to do with \$60, or their spouses think they do.

Today, several thousand Worldcon members receive ballots who don't read fanzines. They don't know who writes for fanzines or who contributes artwork. Hopefully, they voluntarily choose not to vote in the fan categories, but there's nothing to stop them from checking random boxes on the ballot or voting No Award.

I am encouraged by the vote totals. This year, 1,848 ballots were returned – only 42 percent of the total membership, so everyone with a pulse isn't voting. More than 1,100 fans voted for Best Novel, but only 787 voted for Best Dramatic Presentation – Long Form (movies). This tells me that most Hugo voters are still readers, not media fans.

The voting totals drop dramatically in the fan categories: 370 for Best Fanzine, 485 for Best Fan Writer, a mere 293 for Best Fan Artist, 404 for Best Semi-Prozine, and 346 for Best Fancast. These low returns might seem alarming, but they can also be considered encouraging. The thousands who could vote in these categories are not voting. It seems the Fan Hugos are being picked by the wise and the knowledgeable.

Another source of Hugo problems is the passage of time; this is 2013, and the fandom that awarded the first Fanzine Hugo in 1955 was vastly different from the Mass Fandom we have today. Maybe 300-400 fans registered for the 1955 Worldcon, and they were almost all tenured and well-informed. They were familiar with the nominees because in those days fandom was small and the leading fanzines reached almost everyone.

Things changed around 1970, when Worldcon memberships began to be counted in the thousands rather than the hundreds. Fandom was growing, and the Era of the Big Fanzines had also arrived. Science Fiction Review, Locus, Algol, and one or two other zines with circulations of more than a thousand began to monopolize the Best Fanzine trophies. Their editors and regular contributors got all the Best Fan Writer nominations.

There's no mystery here. Fans tend to vote for the fanzines they've seen and the writers they've read, and the big fanzines reached the most fans – and the big fanzines were also pretty good, or they wouldn't have achieved such big circulations. In 1984, after years of debate, the Semi-Prozine category was created. Rules were designed to herd the big-circulation zines into their own corral, so trufans could once again lasso a Hugo.

We recently suffered another clash in this Hundred Years War when Web sites began winning Best Fanzine Hugos. The trufans were aroused again, and rightly so. A Web site is not a fanzine. Web sites are moving targets, constantly adding and sometimes deleting content. They don't appear in discrete editions with numbered pages. It's difficult to compare the two.

Impressive Web sites now exist and deserve to be recognized. Creating a Best Fancast Hugo category was a good move, and it might be even better to add more categories for different kinds of Web content.

I know, I know, there are already too many Hugo Awards. But wait! Are there? What most Negative Neds are really saying is that the Hugo ceremonies at Worldcon are too long. Even the winners don't like sitting through the whole ordeal.

Are there too many Oscars? Sure, the broadcasts run too long, but that's because the producers believe they have to inject some entertainment and the recipients think they are required to thank everyone who helped make it all possible. Then there are the (yawn) technical Oscars. The problem is with the ceremony, not the number of awards.

So let's not argue about Too Many Hugos. Let's have exactly as many Hugos as we need. Then let's have a Pro Hugo ceremony and a Fan Hugo presentation. Let the pros have their night and the fans have theirs. Since there are only three Fan Hugo categories, a separate ceremony will allow time for additional awards to recognize a broader range of fan achievement. Or the parties can start earlier.

We can learn something else from the Academy Awards. They are not popularity contests in the strict sense. The general public doesn't get to vote, only industry professionals who have been inducted into the Academy. Of course, the big studios game the system and spend millions to promote their own nominees but, in the end, only members of the Academy can vote for the Oscars.

Even better, the Academy is divided into branches for actors, directors, and the various cinematic crafts. Actors nominate actors, directors nominate directors, film editors nominate film editors.

If the wrong people are voting, maybe the Fan Hugos also need a tighter voting cohort. I am not a big fan of jury awards, mostly because the juries are too small. When there are only a few judges, one or two with personal agendas can distort the whole process. But at least the judges are chosen for their knowledge and critical acumen.



I don't want Hugos, even Fan Hugos, awarded by juries of five, or ten, or even twenty members. However, instead of the whole Worldcon membership, how about hiving off a separate Hugo Academy of Fannish Arts and Super-Sciences to choose the winners? Well . . . OK, I agree, that might be unsustainable and represent more solution than the problem needs. But I hate to discard that acronym.

Nonetheless, the Worldcon supporting membership fee is too high for those of us who just want to vote for the Hugos and don't care about the Progress Reports, Program Book, and all that stuff. I stopped buying supporting memberships years ago, because I didn't want to pay \$20 then, or \$60 now, for the privilege of voting. But I would be happy to pay a modest fee to gain a ballot.

So, why not expand Hugo voting beyond Worldcon membership? I can foresee a future Worldcon fee schedule: Attending Membership – \$\$\$; Supporting Membership – \$\$; Hugo voting membership – \$. Continue to provide the Hugo ballot as part of attending and supporting Worldcon memberships, but add the third option of just the Hugo ballot, with a small fee to cover costs, and open up the voting to the rest of fandom.

If democracy can't be trusted to pick the right Fan Hugo winners, i.e. if you don't like the popular choices, another option is to appoint a panel of judges – but a big one, say with 99 members chosen from known and accomplished fans. Make appointments for three years, and replace 33 members each year, so there would always be turnover and a variety of views.

But, you might argue, the awards will lose some of their sizzle if the winners are chosen by a select jury rather than "all of fandom." Maybe, but the Hugos aren't awarded by all of fandom now, they are awarded by an indiscriminately chosen jury, the members of Worldcon. The rest of fandom is left out.

If the gripes and groans about Fan Hugos are coming from fans who just don't care about fanzines, I say, "So what?" Fanzines were fandom's primary means of communication and main recruiting tool for forty years. Fandom would not have outlived its first decades without fanzines. But more fans now devote their time and energies to attending conventions. There are still lots of fanzines, but the Fanzine Age is over, the Convention Age has arrived. So what?

The Fan Hugos are no burden to the hordes of fans who entered fandom in recent decades via other interests such as movies or TV shows, or gaming, or costuming; many of these fans went straight to their local conventions and never connected with fanzines. That's their loss. I'm not interested in the Art Show or the Masquerade, but I don't think they should be abolished. Let those fans pursue their interests and I'll pursue mine.

A simple rule change would solve one Fan Hugo problem, that of interminable repeats. David Langford won the Best Fan Writer Hugo 21 years in a row. Locus won 22 Hugos with three brief interruptions. I won't argue that these winners weren't the best in each year they won, but their dominating eminence did keep a lot of other superb writers and fanzines from being honored.

This year's Best Fanzine winner, John De Nardo of SF Signal, has set a noble example by announcing that he is removing SF Signal from future consideration. SF Signal has won two consecutive Hugos; John is fulfilled, and he wants to let others have a turn.

Why not disqualify every Fan Hugo winner from future consideration? Each fanzine, writer, and artist who snags a Hugo can proudly claim the status of "Hugo winner" forevermore; they don't need more trophies to sustain that title. Make the Hugo a one-time thing. Or drop the hammer on anyone who wins three times; call the third Hugo a Life Award Hugo, add a standing ovation, and retire that recipient from future consideration.

Abolishing the Fan Hugos to solve problems, if they really are problems, is like choosing murder to solve marital difficulties. It's better to work things out. Unfortunately, the annual Worldcon business session is a poor arena in which to define problems or find solutions. Only a minority of serious fans attend these sessions. The parliamentary procedures and the debates on amendments to the amendments are just deadly.

What I'd like to propose is a series of workshops where interested fans can explore problems and solutions. If necessary, let the discussions continue for several years at these workshops, in fanzines, and online, until there's a general consensus. Then a well worked-out proposal can be submitted to the WSFS business session and passed with broad support.

I concede I'm from an older generation. I cut my fannish teeth chewing on fanzines. I have admired many fan writers and artists over the years and garnered a little egoboo by writing for fanzines myself.

I would therefore grieve to see the Fan Hugos abolished. Abolition was the appropriate solution for slavery, but it's not the solution for this problem. We don't need to abolish the Fan Hugos; if they are broken, we should fix them.

# The Matter of the Missing Novelette

## by Christopher J Garcia

So, I haven't been a big fan of the Hugo Administrators this year. They failed to incorporate changes made last year at the Business Meeting, as an example, and then they made a decision which is not altogether popular. The Administrators determined that Mary Robinette Kowal's story *The Lady Astronaut of Mars* was not eligible. It got the third most nominations for the Best Novelette category, but it was denied. It's a great story, but this time, it's also an Administrative decision I totally agree with.

OK, I should explain my position, no?

You see, Mary first released the story on Audible.com as an audiobook. Now, there are those who would argue that it doesn't matter the form that something comes in, but I completely disagree. The story was first presented on Audible.com, but it wasn't published text until 2013 on Mary's website. The two things, at least in my eyes, are completely separate. One is a presentation, the other is a publication. That distinction is vital to the way the Hugos have to operate, and it's a part of the reason why there should be real definitions for every category that tell you exactly what is and isn't eligible for a particular category.

You see, if something is read, it's a Dramatic Presentation. There are folks who argue that unless an audiobook has sound effects and vocal interpretation, it should be considered as a story (and apparently a previous administrator interpreted things that way the year *METARopolis* was released). Now, I understand why folks would want that, but how much constitutes enough? If we start having to argue percentages, we're doomed. Just flat out. For the Oscars, which I still think is the gold standard every awards should be held against, you've got tight and tough definitions. One frame over or under the category time-limits, and you're OUT! No arguments, no matter how many people nominated it or voted for it. Definitions are clear and iron-clad. If it's an audio presentation, then it belongs in Dramatic Presentation (or many Related Work...) because while you can always argue how much is enough, you can not argue the form something takes. There is a clear delineation and you can make an easy ruling. To me, even having a Talking Clock voice reciting the text is a performance. Maybe not a good one, but a performance nonetheless.

Now, since Mary put it on her website in 2013, the text version is eligible for the 2014 Hugos. I'll be nominating it, it's a great story, and now it's written and eligible as Best Novelette. I have heard folks say things like "so they should be competing with *Dr. Who*?" and I say, yeah. It sucks, but you can say the exact same thing about Short Films (or Hugo Acceptances...). Why should they be competing with *Dr. Who* (or maybe we should change that to *Game of Thrones*?) when they are different things?

And there is a good point, and a problem with all awards. You either have to lump things together, some of which may be far more popular and impossible to beat, or you have to create more and more awards. The Oscars have done the smart thing and basically wisely lumped things at some places, and made the awards they continue to give significant and well-bounded. The Emmys decided that they'd create categories to deal with problems and avoid lumping. This has led to the Emmys being less significant than the Oscars. Think about it: if an actor has won both an Oscar and an Emmy, do you ever hear them referred to as "Emmy winner"? Hell, even an Emmy winner who has just been nominated for an Oscar will be called Oscar nominee over Emmy winner.

Defining things by any other means than form is a certain path to failure. Administrators have to be able to easily (and preferably quickly) determine what goes where. Doing so based on form is the easiest, and fastest, way. You know a fiction story is eligible in a particular category because it was written and went on for x-number of words. We have a strong definition for Best Semi-Prozine, but we haven't gone so far for other categories. I get it, we demand flexibility, but that's how we get into these messes. *Vox Popli* is, to me, the worst way to run an awards system, and you won't find any other major award that goes that route.

DO I think the Administrators made a mistake? Well, they certainly should have contacted Mary and told her what was happening and that they'd made a ruling, which they didn't do, but as far as the ruling itself, I completely agree with it.

# Photos from San Antonio

Top - Hillary Pearlman and Linda with Popcorn McR.

Mid - The Chocolate Brownie from Charlie Wants A Burger on Riverwalk

Bottom - 3 Legends: Dave Kyle, Roger Simms, and Bob Madle



# Review - The Wolverine

## by JC Arkham

**\*\*Not Spoiler Free\*\*** We were a little late in getting out to see it but thank the maker we didn't miss it. A lot of people poo-pooed the "Origins" film and it seemed this one was getting the same rap. Honestly, I liked "Origins" and this latest film too. I'm starting to notice that many people who are putting these films down are those who consider themselves "experts" of X-Men. I'm thinking it's kind of an ego thing when you're known to be an expert on the subject. "Well he must know something we don't because he's an expert in that comic." Ego stroked. As Koothrappali said, "When you put it down you think you sound cultured but you're really just look bitter."

The Wolverine was a really good film. The plot is very well written with a couple of really clever twists in it. As Logan's ability to self heal slips away, I started feeling uneasy but in a way that drew me into the story. It was like, 'oh crap, is he really going to die?' Then the clever twist with the med-bot. Duh, they showed that earlier in the film, but redirected my focus so well I forgot about it till they showed the empty jar. Brilliant! And don't give me this 'Oh I figured it out a long time ago' kind of crap. Admit it, it was a cool little surprise to find out and it was very fixable. But before you knew, you had an 'oh, crap' moment. It's ok, that's what good movies are supposed to do. Draw you in. Misdirect you. Give you an "OH!" moment and feel entertained.

Now I had also heard the movie was surprisingly blood free. I saw more blood in this movie than all the others combined and it's about time. You can only get away from not showing blood for so long before you get tired of filmmakers intent to be sterile, in order to not make it an R-rated film, potentially lessening your box office receipts. Blood on claws! Blood on claws! The action in the film was very entertaining to me. Some thought they went on too long. I disagree. There was a period from start to finish where it went about 20 minutes, but there were lulls in the action, breaking it up enough to catch your breath.

Speaking of claws. People, get over it. He can't be completely invulnerable. Just like Superman, every hero has his Kryptonite. If you don't, it makes the character and story predictable and uninteresting. And again, another, 'oh crap'...scratch that, 'HOLY SHIT!' moment.

Of course the actors in this were superbly chosen. When I first saw Rila Fukushima as Yukio it was hard not to notice her unusual facial features but I found myself drawn to her character and very sexy if I may say so. Hugh Jackman is living the dream. Let's be honest. This is his sixth appearance as Wolverine and he's killing it (in the cool way, not as in killing the franchise). He's been doing his career right. He's getting plenty of other awesome roles and isn't getting stereotyped or locked in. Plus, he's got the physique of a demigod. I should hate him, but I don't. He entertains me. This was his best performance of the Wolverine yet.

One more thing. I have to mention the delicious cookie they gave us at the end. I'm not questioning a damn thing. I'm taking it for what it is and loving it. Like Sam Beckett would say after every leap, "Oh boy!" Except this time he's fist pumping...with bone-claws. Note: Of course Magneto will fix his claws.

This is a definite theater revisit movie worth full price.



# Letter Graded Mail sent to garcia@computerhistory.org

**To start - JOHN PURCELL!!!**

I see you're back to your old frenetic zine-pubbing rate, roomie. For some reason that makes me smile. Kind of like old time's sake and all that rot.

***I'm tryin'...***

Say, we missed out on doing that 5 Conventions interview at LoneStarCon 3! What the hey? Early on during the con you mentioned doing it, and I agreed, but the danged interview never happened. Is there any way this can still happen, such as via Skype? I have a camera and microphone rigged to my office computer, and it would be a piece of cake to download Skype to my new Samsung Tablet 2 (4G, no less) which likewise has microphone and camera, so this could be done. What say you? Do a post-mortem 5-Con interview on LSC3? What do you think? It's your project, after all.

***WorldCon was way more hectic than expected! We'll have to do it, tablet might work well!***

Your musings about the Fan Hugos got me to thinking, and I have to agree with you that the Fan Hugo categories will not go away. I think they're too ingrained into the system now as traditional categories, but as communication technology continues to evolve and advance, I can see the time when paper fanzines may be virtually non-existent. Right now there are a lot of paper-only zines and sometimes-paper-copy zines - like what you and I did at WorldCon by handing out current issues of Drink Tank and Askance in the fanzine lounge - that indicates these critters are not yet extinct. However, I can see the day when the Best Fanzine Hugo Award is re-named something like Best Fan-Webzine, and fannish blog writers will be eligible along with fannish webzine writers for the Best Fan Writer Award, to say nothing of fan artists who will always be in demand for producing



amateur artwork (webdesign award?) for these webzines. This is well down the road, to be sure, but it wouldn't surprise me if this was the eventual end of the matter. To me, the crux of the Fan Hugo Award debate is still that amorphous "amateur status" definition. Seems to me that Hugo administrators need to be much more vigilant in determining whether or not a fan writer is a true amateur or a professional writer whose work sometimes appears in fanzines. Case in point, guys like Gregory Benford and Michael Resnick. They write for fanzines (articles and locs) all the time, so their names could be on the fan ballots every year. Then look what happens: bloggers whom I have never heard of - Mark Oshiro and Tansy Rayner Roberts (she won) - are on the Best Fan Writer short list, and the winner of the Fan Artist award I had never heard of either - Galen Dara - let alone ever seen any of that person's work. Suffice to say that there is much, MUCH more work that needs to be done to refine/define the eligibility criteria and then diligently enforce them. Sadly, this issue will never die. Oh, well. Debating this in fanzines and at cons will keep fans busy for years, much as they've done so for many years already. Decades, even. Some issues are immortal. And that, my friend, is Fandom.

***I think we should look at the current year's winners - None of them are Fanzine regulars (Galen's gonna do a cover for me! I loved the piece on the Campbell that Tansy did!) and SF Signal's a blog. Last year we had Mo winning. In 2011, all three awards were given to traditional-ish Fanzine folks. Taht day ain't long in comin'...***

WSFS Business Meetings are deadly dull, aren't they? Someone needs to spice them up with a song and dance, or they can only discuss issues expressed solely in limerick format, as a game of charades, or have the WSFS by-laws debate rendered as nude performance art. That would liven things up, I would think.

***I still say Thunderdome! Two Fen Enter, One Fan Leaves!***

Man, I sure wish I had seen you ride that mechanical bull. How long did you last, or did it throw you? Pictures, please!

***I managed a fair bit! You can see the video on my Tumblr ([johnnyeponymous.tumblr.com](http://johnnyeponymous.tumblr.com))***

Finally, thank you for all the wonderful pictures of those museums. The MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) is one that Valerie and I would love to spend a full week roaming through, and that National Museum of the American Indian would be cool, too. Down in Houston, Texas is the Buffalo Soldiers Museum, which I had the pleasure of visiting seven years ago on a field trip for a doctoral Sociology class, and it was highly informative and eye-opening. If you're ever in Houston - say, for Apollocon or should Houston win the NASFiC bid some year - Valerie and I will take you and the Lovely Linda over there. You'd like it, I'm positive.

***I've heard nothing but good things about the Buffalo Soldier Museum! I hope we'll get out there in the next few years.***

Before I wrap this missive, allow me to mention the upcoming Texas Renaissance Festival, which runs for eight consecutive weekends starting in October and ending with the three-day Thanksgiving weekend. Val and I are going on the first weekend of November as part of a Steampunk Invasion of the RenFest: Valerie hooked up with a large contingent of Texas Steampunk folks at the WorldCon (I got introduced to them, too) and they're a great bunch of folks, and they're the ones planning this Steampunk Invasion (we're all time travellers, you see). Should be a blast. We'll take pictures, naturally, which also reminds me that you missed us on Sunday night (post Hugo Awards ceremony) in our Steampunk outfits. We then went to the Steampunk Ball that night, and enjoyed the music. Wonderful band, great music, but not well-attended: maybe only three dozen people there at the most. Still, it was fun to schmooze with folks there, such as old friends Jeanne Mealy and John Stanley from Minneapolis, and Richard and Nicki Lynch from Maryland. I promise to have Val send photos of us to you. Or at least post them on Facebook.

***This is the second mention of the Texas Renaissance festival I've heard today! It came up at BASFA! I was really happy to see so many familiar faces, and to get to meet a couple of folks I'd only known as names on websites!***

With that, I be done. Take care, Christopher, and I hope to see you and the Lovely Linda again sometime soon.

All the best,  
John Purcell