

Take Care, Gentle Readers. There are Strange Things Afoot!

This issue is not for the weak of constitution nor the faint of heart!

The Drink Tank The Thirty Eighth Issue

Looking at the Hugos

I got most of my predictions right, with a couple of notable (i.e., GIANT) mistakes. This year's crop of Hugo winners was one thing above all else.

English.

That's right, the hometown crowd won almost everything. It's not surprising, I fully expect Mike Glycer and folks to do better than he has in recent years when WorldCon comes to you live from LA, but this was even surprising by those standards. The All-Brit best novel was won by Susanna Clarke and her fine work *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*. I liked it a lot, but I really thought that China Mieville's *Iron Council* was gonna take it, instead, it ended up running fifth! What the hell? *Iron Sunrise* even topped it! *Iron Freakin' Sunrise!*

I can't argue much with the short stuff, though there are choices that would have more suited my tastes. Charlie Stross won one, which I think was my favourite of his stuff. I was sad to see Ben Rosenbaum not take it for the original story that appeared in Wheatland's *Zeppelin Adventure* anthology.

The big win in my eyes was Ellen Datlow. Long and well-deserved her win was, that's for sure. She's had such a great run that I hope we get to see her name on a couple of more rockets (and if the split happens, I'm sure we will).

World Con

I was hoping that this would be the year of my man Donato Giancola, but no, Jim Burns took the Best Pro Artist instead. Donato's been deserving of one for years, and he's a Chesley fave, but he's never won himself a Hugo. He really needs one.

The big winner had to be Dave Langford. He won the Best Fan Writer, beating BASFan and fellow producer of *The Pork Authority* Cheryl Morgan. This was expected. *Ansible* beat another former fanzine turned Semi-Prozine *Locus* to win its first best Semi-Pro Hugo. That shocked me. Frankly, there were better choices, including the *New York Review of Science Fiction*, and I even preferred the *IRoSF* last year to either *Locus* or *Ansible*.

The Best Fan Writer held no surprises either. Cheryl Morgan took second, Claire Brialey third.

The Best Fan Artist went as I've been saying for a while now: Sue Mason won, Frank took second. Frank Wu was close again, running second to Sue for the second time in three years. Steve Stiles was third, which I think was his best finish in a while.

No way anything other than Plokta was going to win the Best Fanzine award. Still, it was closer than I thought with Cheryl's *Emerald City* grabbing second before she heads over to the Semi-Pro category with Charlie Browne and Dave Langford.

The shocker for me came from a little award called Best Dramatic Presenta-

The Drink Tank Issue 38 was written by Christopher J. Garcia, M Lloyd, Frank Wu, Liz Batty, and a few others whose names all appear where they were used. Got a comment? garcia@computerhistory.org. Wanna write something, I'm looking for an article on 1960s fandom. That is all.

tion. The long form was a given to The Incredibles, which shocked no one, though I still wanted Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind. The Short Form was given to the Battlestar Galactica episode 33. I'm not really a fan, but I certainly think that Angel should have won for Smile Time, but the votes were split with Not Fade Away, the series closer.

I really don't much care for BSG, especially since it doesn't have Dirk Benedict or Lorne Green.

All in all, this was the year of the Brits and good on them. They put out great stuff every year and a lot of it gets over-looked by US voting World-cons.



Frank Wu's Random Observation About the UK #17:

Here in Europe you can buy, if so inclined, an ugly little car with a big posterior called the Renault Megane. To celebrate the vehicle's anatomical distinctiveness are TV ads which show various nubile females waving their derrieres like flags, while the song "I See You, Baby, Shakin' That Ass" plays over and over and over again. One quick shot even shows peaches bouncing around, displaying their butt cracks. Oh my. I understand that standards vary from country to country, but, um...

When I went across the river Clyde to the science museum, I was amused to see a strange little puppet show - apparently inspired by "The Thunderbirds" and other programmes from Gerry Anderson. This puppet show told us about Dolly the cloned sheep, organ transplants, and Laika, the dog the Russkies shot into space. The organ recipient was wearing a hospital gown with a breezeway in the back, and you could see all his posterior wares. Again, oh my. And the Barbie doll used as the heart donor was

topless. This would never fly in a children's museum in the U.S.

Not only that, but there was a TV ad for a Mazda 5, wherein mannequins taken for a ride are so excited by this bit of machinery that their nipples become tumescent.

Yet again, oh my.

I asked some UK fans about all this, and they said that folks here simply laugh about these things and then move on, without getting their knickers in a wad. But the question remains: Are Americans simply too prudish, or do the British have too much of a childish,

Benny Hill-like fascination with bums? How much butt is too much butt is in the eye of the beholder. Yet, I shudder to wonder what someone might think who's coming from a country where women are covered from head to toe. No wonder we hate and misunderstand each other.

Feeling crappy about not winning a Hugo this past weekend? Think about this. Approximately 210 people have won Hugos (not counting Dramatic Presentations). A total of about 538 Hugos have been given (counting Dramatic Presentations and ties, but counting Hugos split between multiple authors only once).

The total world's population is now about 6,450,000,000, with about 1/5 of everyone born in the last 6,000 years being alive today.

Thus, the average number of Hugo awards won per person who has ever lived is: 0.00000002.

You Want Candy by Jay Lake



Art by J. Andrew World

Taking a brief break from the WorldCon stuff, I used to run a Semi-Pro called As Of Yet Untitled. Sadly, I sold the company that owned the rights to As Of Yet Untitled before the first issue came out and realised that I was no longer allowed to use the stories I had bought. One of them was by an up-and-comer name of Jay Lake.

This year at BayCon, I paid him his kill fee for the story and then asked him if it would be OK if I were to use it in The Drink Tank. He said Yes and now, I am proud to present, Jay Lake's You Want Candy!

***You Want Candy
By
Jay Lake***

What does candy really mean? A treat, right? That rush of fats, maybe starches, flooding across your tongue, the brief high from the sugar, the sense of satisfaction from scoring one off old Mother Nature. Back when we first dropped out of the trees to pick lice off each other's scalps, joy like that was scarce as dog feathers. Now we got it, all the damned time.

Me? Oh, friend, I'm the candyman. I can get anything you want, tell you exactly how it will kill you, give you the day of your death, and you'll still turn out your pockets to find that last dime nesting down among the lint and the fingernail parings. There's a reason "crave" rhymes with "grave."

So what does candy mean to you? Hiding under your covers, listening to your mom shriek and your dad break beer bottles, scarfing juju beans until

your spit runs red across the pillowcase. Or maybe sneaking a bag of M&Ms into church and slipping them into your mouth through folded hands as the cripples toss their crutches across the floor only to collapse once the cameras turn away.

Well, the candyman's got the real deal now. The goodie train stops at my loading dock first. This here blows every sugar rush or caffeine buzz or raw, nerve-jangling smack high right off the tracks. Knock your dad's block off, make momma sorry for everything she didn't do, stake that sophomore bitch Sue Anne Rawlins over a slow fire -- ain't none of that going to make you half so happy as this shit.

Here it is. See for yourself. The biggest blue pill ever made. This, my friend, is happiness in a gelcap. You can't do any better. Hell, it's even sweet. All it costs is everything. Every last thin dime -- your car title, your kids' college fund, grandma's silver service. Just load it all on the truck for me, won't you?

Tell you what, I'll even throw in a money-back guarantee. If you're not a hundred percent satisfied, I'll unload the truck for you. All you have to do is ask.

Here you go. Enjoy.

#

Honest, officer, he just took off his clothes and ran off howling. No, I didn't try to catch up to him. Last thing I saw, he was jumping from tree to tree in the park over there, hooting and pounding his chest.

I don't know, but he sure had a big smile on his face.

Say...I'll bet you have a sweet tooth, don't you?



Frank Wu's Random Observation about the UK #35

Did you know that Scotland has its own currency? I didn't. It comes in the same denominations as British notes, and can be used 1:1 for them, but really only in Scotland. Unlike regular UK money, you can forget about changing it in the U.S. Some Americans thus likened it to Monopoly money.

Except that instead of Mr. Moneybags, some of the Scottish money features the face of golfer Jack Nicklaus, who is not Scottish.



I am not making this up.

Nicklaus, who is American of course, is beloved here, partly because he won the British Open twice here in Scotland at St. Andrews - the most ancient golf course in the world. And also because Glaswegians - who still have a reputation for roughness - consider him "a nice guy."

And, no, in Scotland, you don't have to be dead to be on the money. In addition to the Queen, her mum was also on their bills.

Some of the other Scottish money features Robert the Bruce, who kicked British arse at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. This to me was the most bizarre thing I'd found here in Scotland - other than potato chips (called crisps) flavored like roasted chicken or beef and onion. A foreign golfer and a national hero greatly responsible for Scottish independence, both on their bills.

Nope, we're not in America anymore.



Why I'm Bummed That I Missed WorldCon: A Stream of Consciousness **By M Lloyd**

There are books and they smell like antique rooms of antique houses in antique neighbourhoods and they are for sale and they tell stories that I am desperate to hear brush against me as I stand in the stall looking at the pages flip by for as long as the vendor will let me stand there and read and there are people talking about fanzines and feuds and fiery rhetoric about fiery topics that add up to nothing and there are friends who complain and I love them.

There are people in costumes and yelling loud phrases and playing games and being silly and I realise that I'm happier at home with my shelves of books and my telephone and cigarettes and large glasses of wine well at hand.

And Now: Ghoultown

I'm on a quest to document the greatest gimmick bands out there and another one has come back into my view and made me go out and spend too much money on their CDs. This time, it's not SpookySurf, instead it's Gothabilly.

Gothabilly? You ask.

Yes, Gothabilly, the unholy marriage of Goth Rock and Rockabilly.

I'll let that settle in for a moment.

OK, let me start by saying that I am a country fan. Not a New Country, Faith Hill, Electric Guitars and Top 40 Country fan, but a Johnny Cash, Midnight Fishing trips long haul trucker Merle and Charlie and Waylon and Hanks I, II and III Country fan. I also enjoy what the kids call Alt Country, or Y'allternative. It tends to be more of the classic feel than the stuff that clutters up Country Radio. Plus, they do some pretty daring stuff in their songs, stuff that Shania would never think of. If you go even further down that road, you hit Gothabilly.

Goth music is easy to define: it's darque, moody, typically droning and sad. It's what those depressed kids with heavy eyeliner listen to. Rockabilly is the Rock-'n'-roll roots. It's rock with an old-timey country swing to it. There's a segment of the rockabilly world called psychobilly. This is fast, sweaty, and guitar-driven music. The Reverend Horton Heat is probably the best example, though there are a bunch of them out there. The Gothabilly genre is kinda limited, that is to say there are a few out there, but they often get relumped. It's ar-

guable that Ghoultown is America's Number 1 Gothabilly act, and they are certainly the ones that I am in for.

Ghoultown's gimmick is very solid: They are a bunch of Texas musicians who are really into horror and westerns. It's just that simple. The leader is a fellow called



Count Lyle. The original line-up featured an incredibly dark and amazing attractive model/bassist known as Queeno deVamps. She was wicked smokin'! The others in the band include new bassist Santi, guitarist Lizard Lizario, Jake Middlefinger, and my personal favourite, a gent

called X-Ray Charles.

The group's sound is impressive, combining the rockabilly sensibility of Jerry Lee Lewis with a metal guitar drive like Megadeth and a bit of country swing from Bob Willis and his Texas Playboys. One obvious influence is the classic 1960s country tune Ghost Riders in the Sky, which they do an evil-esque cover of and it curls your toes. They aren't just a gimmick, which may explain why they sent Queeno out of



the band. While she was certainly competent on their early recordings, she was not quite as good as Santi who came along after. In actuality, she was first trained as a drummer with the band the Killcreeps, which also featured Count Lyle.

The songs themselves are also fantastic. They range from Doors-like slow songs of the desert to hard fast rockin' meant for the bottom of a tequila glass. The songs that they became known for were two songs that rocked and raged. The first was called A Killer in Texas. It's one of those songs that combines the West with the heavy bass and drum and trumpet. It's a sound that you're not likely to find anywhere else. It's the tale of a generic 'Out to get ya!' killer roaming the Lone Star State. It's a fun song.

The other is perhaps their best song. It's a retelling of The Death of Jonah Hex. The DC comic series is one of my all-time faves and the song captures all of it in spades. It's a song that I can honestly say sounds dusty and amped. It's a great tune.

That's not to say there aren't other great songs. Running from the Sun has a Doors quality to it that's hard to beat. Pale Skinned Diva is what 1976 Punk Rock would have been if it was invented by Patsy Cline and Jimmy Rodgers. They do a fun double entendre song called Dirty Sanchez about a gunslinger and lady lover who 'leaves his mark up his lover's face'. I wonder what would happen if he faced off with Filthy Pierre? There are other great tunes that go from nearly straight country to almost straight punk to blends that defy categorization.

And, of course, there are ladies.



Queeno was just the first of the Ghoultown Ladies (Doo-Dah, Doo-Dah), and there are a couple now that are lovely and talented. The First is Anna Oakley (which I'm told is her actual name, though I tend to doubt that). She's a backing singer and she's a lovely redhead. I hear she has also done some solo stuff, but I have no proof. The other young lady is Sandy the Temptress. She's got Texas written all over her and she also does back-up. I enjoy her voice. They show up at many of Ghoultown's shows in their chaps and sing and move around and be generally hot on stage. That's all I ask.

They're a great group who make music that is entertaining and overcomes a strong gimmick with quality. You must check out Ghoultown.com for more.

Discography (all from Angry Planet Records)

- Boots of Hell (2000) Somewhat Raw, but Pale Skinned Diva alone is worth the price.
- Tales From The Dead West (2000) Ten full songs with Killer in Texas, RotoRidiculous and The Death of Jonah Hex
- Give 'em More Rope (2002) 14 Great songs including Dirty Sanchez
- Live from Texas (2004) Two-Discs of great live stuff.

Frank Wu's Random Observation about the UK #46

I asked my Scottish taxi driver what he thought of Scotty from "Star Trek" and he said he liked James Doohan, but his accent was "krrahhpp."

He also said that Mel Gibson's accent for William Wallace in "Braveheart" was also "krrahhpp". Americans - even those like Gibson who were raised in Australia - just can't do Scottish accents, he said.

At least - considering his own accent - that's what I think he said.

Liz Batty's Look at the Panels of Interaction

In many ways, LiveJournal is the new fanzine. One of the better things I've come across was Liz Batty's (despotliz on LiveJournal) look at many of the panels they had at Interaction. Here's a few of her views on a bunch of the fine panels presented at Glasgow.

Thursday

Fandom 101: Enjoying a British Worldcon - Completely biased report because I was on it. Man, those chairs on the stage in Argyll-1 were comfy. I didn't say a lot in this panel, mainly because the other panel members covered everything so well I didn't need to bother, and I just pointed out anything they were saying that might confuse a con virgin. I think this was a necessary panel, but not one I would have bothered going to if I weren't on it.

Into the Navel of Fandom - An interest-

ing panel that I remember almost nothing about, except that my brief notes say it was interesting. Greg Pickersgill bemoaned the horrible tendency of fans to have fun, e.g. on bouncy castles, and [LJ user]dmw turned this into a wonderful bouncy castle metaphor. I missed the end of this, due to:

The Alge-bread-ist - Clearly the best panel of the whole Worldcon, although once again I may be biased. Part philosophical debate, part performance art, partly what we shout about in the pub anyway, we spent an hour debating the eternal sandwich question: if you make two slices of bread into a sandwich and cut it in half, how many sandwiches do you get? To my great surprise, there were people there who were not personally known to any of the panellists, and many of them actually stayed for the panel. Best bits were Tom's attempt to eat Greg Pickersgill's name plate between two slices of bread, (LJ user) grahamsleight's sterling efforts to bring SF critical theory into it, and the audience members who shall remain nameless who kept coming up to nick the jam sandwiches.

I'm Sorry I Haven't an SF-ing Clue- This was pretty funny, although there was a clear difference between panel members who were making it up on the spot (Ken McLeod) and panel members who had a great big list of terrible puns to inflict upon us (Chris Priest). [LJ User]swisstone was very funny.

Friday

The Pros and Cons of Blogging Science

- One of the best panels I went to, I think, because the panellists were very well chosen. Oliver Morton, while somewhat surprised to be moderating, was very good and is an active science blogger, [LJ User]daveon



Folks including Ben Rosenbaum on a Blogging Panel
By Annafd on Flickr

had interesting insights from the technology side, and Renee Sieber is a professor who actually uses her blog as part of the course she teaches. A lot of the discussion centered around creationism and climate change, two areas where there is lots of blogging taking place, and some interesting points about internet publication of results were raised.

At 12pm Friday I tried to go to **Clones, Children or Countless Lives**, but a panel with Cory Doctorow and Richard Morgan had cleverly been put into Orkney, the tiny room of large chairs, so it was full. Consoled myself with the real ale bar.

Growing Old by Accident: How do we end up as the establishment? - I'll be honest and say I mostly went to this out of [LJ User]snowking-solidarity, although that's not to say it was bad, but I think I would have preferred a couple of the other panels that were going at the same time. Panel was cunningly arranged in order of hairiness. Some interesting things were said, but it did manage to descend into another round of why Eastercons are rubbish nowadays, and that if you hang around fandom long enough you'll end up being the establishment.

Saturday

International Battle of the Biscuits Tim-Tams beat Hob Nobs. A travesty! Not a riveting panel for the spectators, but the opportunities for audience participation were great.

The Magazines are Dead: Long Live the Magazines- I had to force my way into this panel (again in the tiny room) and sit squished in the aisle for an hour, but it was worth it. A great discussion of the short story market, including magazines and zines and online publishing, and where it's going. And it had a reader who liked straightforward stories of the type published by Analog, which I knew must exist (see also: Hugo short story nominations) but I had never met one.

Fannish Currency: Whuffie, Egoboo and Chocolate - By now I was well into my Saturday evening panel marathon, and this was disappointing. Cory Doctorow was Cory Doctorow, and talked about whuffie and Napster and Creative Commons, and the rest of the panel floundered in his wake and tried to talk about fannish things. No great revelations.

Is Blogging Helping or Hurting Your Career? - Featuring Eileen Gunn, John Scalzi, Benjamin Rosenbaum and Michael Cobley, with Cory Doctorow in the audience, this might have been the funniest panel I saw all weekend. John Scalzi sold a novel by serialising it on his blog, then had to stop blogging for a month to finish his next novel. How close to the deadline did he stop blogging? On the day it was due in... Ben Rosenbaum only has dialup at home so he can't blog when he should be writing. Cory Doctorow: "Dialup? But you're not even British!" I asked a question about the Dark Cabal anonymous blogging which sent Ben Rosenbaum into a state of extreme enthusiasm. I'm told this is a common occurrence. Conclusions were that you should blog about your cats a lot, don't blog yourself but get Bruce Sterling to blog on your site, and BoingBoing links help your sales.

Then I went for chips.

Sunday

Sunday morning was lost to post-anonymousclaire party recovery, although more to



the late night than a hangover. First panel I got to was

Fannish Etiquette: A Primer - I really enjoyed this, as it had some discussion of why some fans Just Don't Get It, as well as horror stories about socially inept fans. The story about the fan who left one of the panellists love notes via the voodoo board and kept offering to rub her feet was scary. Left early to go to panel of doom, i.e.:

The British Boffin: An SF Stereotype Dissected - A proper science and SF panel featuring Ken McLeod, Stephen Baxter, Francis Spufford, and me. Saying I was a bit nervous would be understating it. I hadn't discussed the panel by email with anyone, and by the time we assembled in the green room there was no time to discuss anything, so I walked into a very full room in a state of terror. I remember thinking that I was sat next to STEPHEN BAXTER (Stephen Baxter! Stephen Baxter!) and that he was talking to KEN MCLEOD and in a minute he was going to ask me a QUESTION and I would have to be INTELLIGENT and WITTY or at the very least not look like a complete idiot.

Luckily about ten minutes and half a pint of Irn Bru later the nerves wore off, I stopped fidgeting compulsively under the table, and I quite enjoyed myself. Stephen Baxter is a rather good moderator, even when the audience threaten to go off into mad tangents about Neville Shute books, and all three pros on the panel were terribly nice people. I had several people I didn't know come up to me in the bar later and tell me they'd enjoyed the panel, which is even better.

Monday

The Future of Fandom

- I feel like a grumpy old curmudgeon for even typing this, but I wasn't

that impressed with this panel. For those of you not present, about half an hour into the panel the young people of YAFA invaded the panel and hit them with foam things, and the panel got out their hidden water pistols and returned fire. Now, I think the YAFA invasion was very funny and a pretty good way to end the panel. It's true also that the panel was going over the same discussions which have been done to death in previous panels and in LJ discussions, with only a few minor tangents about how we're not welcoming makes of SF computer demo art or some such thing. But just because I've heard the arguments before, doesn't mean the audience at a Worldcon isn't genuinely interested in talking about it. Some of them clearly were, as they tried to continue the panel and got attacked by YAFA again. And it's a good job that I don't mind being whacked with foam swords or shot with water pistols, because I was sat too close to the panel to escape. I think ending the panel with a single attack by the young people would have been great. Having three attacks, and stopping proceedings after half an hour worked less well, and had I known I'd only get half an hour of a panel I would've gone to something else.

So as not to end on a grumpy note: overall the panels were fab. Looking back I'm surprised at some of my choices, as I would have liked to go to more of the literary track, but spending my social time in the fan lounge meant I often didn't get further than

the fan programme. The moderators were never less than good. In general panels were in rooms that accommodated them, with the exception of the Orkney room in the Moat House which was too small for anything, except maybe a book group. I experienced none of the problems of over-zealous security guards that others have reported.



The YAFA Invasion: Frank Wu's Favourite Part of Interaction

