

The Drink Tank 45
Another of Christopher Garcia's Favourite Places
Half Moon Bay

Here it is, another Drink Tank dealing with my favourite places in the world. This time, it's a whole city, a city where I've spent a good deal of time and that I fell in love with one long evening. It's Half Moon Bay, California, and it's one of those cities you've always wanted to visit.



For those of us Bay Area types, it's as far away as you can get from home without being too far away to pick-up your dry-cleaning. It's about 1/2 an hour from the heart of the Bay Area (San Francisco) and 45 minutes from the liver (San Jose). You have to drive Highway 35, which seems to have been blasted out of the rock in anticipation of some grand purpose. Half Moon Bay is the oldest town in San Mateo County. It was them Spaniards that founded it in the 1800s and it was called Spanishtown until the 1870s. It was a popular place for ships to land in the old days that there's talk that the pirates of the Pacific liked the sheltered coves of the Coast near Half Moon Bay. At that point, the Ohlone Tribe (of which I am, in fact, a member of by virtue of my 1/8 blood) were very active by that point. It's hard to say how long they had been there (at least ten thousand years if you are to believe their story versions of history). Half Moon Bay is a sort of a spit which is ideal for fishing and all sorts of sea-going activities. The Ohlone of Half Moon Bay and the Spaniards

(and later the Mexicans) intermarried and produced a large number of mixed-blood Ohlone. I'm one of those types, in fact, a few generations out.

Back at the turn of the 20th Century, there were two roads in and out of town: one that is roughly highway 1 to-

day, and the other that was a part of the vast stagecoach network that went all over the Santa Cruz Mountains. This became San Mateo Rd. and Skyline Blvd. In 1906, a steamtrain line was built between San Francisco and Santa Cruz, with Half Moon Bay being on the line and an important stop. This gave a big rise to Half Moon Bay as a place to live (since you could get to SF anytime you wanted, really) and helped the town grow up around becoming a stop for folks on the weekends. Spas and marinas became a big deal to the town, as did nice eatin' and hotels that overlooked the waters. This made Half Moon Bay and the nearby cities of Montera and Moss Beach very popular during Prohibition. The restaurants and hotels that were built on the ends of fingers that pointed out into the water were perfect for giving folks time to clear the place out if a raid was seen to be on the way. Saloons like The Moss Beach Distillery were very popular and really cemented Half Moon Bay forever as a place to go to relax, unwind and get good ole fashioned stinko. This remained true when I was in High School and



Back when I was in High School, it was a very typical thing to bring a date over to Half Moon Bay. You'd never eat there since it was far too expensive, and you'd never say that you were going to HMB beforehand, but if things went well, you'd head over and stake out a place on one of the beaches.

Once you were there, you had lots of options. There was a liquor store that was known as UnderAged Liquors because they never carded and places that sold in and around San Jose, you didn't have to slip an extra twenty in to get what you wanted. The smoking of weed was popular, though among my friends the preferred smoking was of Cigars, the bigger and most vile smelling the better. Of course, there were more than a few children conceived on those beaches, including one that belongs to a couple that I went to school with. They still celebrate every anniversary with a trip to the same beach.

The best thing about HMB beaches was they'd never come by unless they first shown a light down, basically giving away that they'd be there soon, but they'd always give you at least five minutes to scurry off. We once had a huge bonfire with twenty people and they spotted us. Everyone scrambled except me and my buddy who were the only two not drinking and the ones who hadn't driven. The guys came and we said that we had hiked here and the guys bought it. A, hour later, the party was back and lasted until morning.

folks would make the drive over the hills to HMB to get their drink on.

As the years went by, Half Moon Bay got a little more hippy. The 1950s had brought Beatniks into town, some of which are still there. The 1960s brought those flower-wielding Peace-niks that changed much of the town. As the going got weird, the weird turned pro and these hippies started to open small shoppes and boutiques. This led to HMB becoming a place where you would go for artsy-crafty things. Every Saturday you can see them, those who come to buy beaded bags and unicorn items. They flood the sidewalks and eat over-priced lunches on Main Street.

But sadly, those Over-Priced Lunches are damn good.

There are some fine restaurants in Half Moon Bay, so good, in fact, that I know of people who will drive the drive just for lunch. Main Street is the home of the best known places. Cetrella is the best known of them, probably. It's pricey, and for some things very pricey, but everything is at least good. The first time I ate there, I had a grilled Lamb chop that nearly kilt me it was so damn good. Perfectly seared and medium rare as you could make it. I ordered it again the next day.

After I stuff my face, I usually discover that I'm more interested in staying around for the night. There's always the first option, which is giving a call to one of the few Bed & Breakfasts that I really enjoy. The Zaballa House is the oldest standing structure in Half Moon Bay. It's also one of the best of the quaint Victorian Guest House-type B&Bs on the West Coast. The rooms range from quite large and well-appointed (and expensive) to intimate and fun (and less expensive). I got hooked on this place when I visited with an ex-girlfriend of mine in 1997. The two of us got the smallest room and brought a CD player, an Al Green CD, a bottle of good wine and a book apiece. I loved that book, and the rest of the night with her wasn't bad either, but reading Dhalgren in that setting was wonderful. Sometimes I wonder if I've got my priorities straight.

There are times when the Zaballa House is full, or my money is tight, and then I head up the road a bit. There's an Ramada Limited on Highway One, about 2/3 of the way North to Moss Beach. It's a simple little joint with clean rooms that all have views of an empty lot, though beyond that is the blue Pacific. The prices tend to be pretty cheap, 79 Bucks most of the time, and driving there takes you right by one of

Half Moon Bay's Most important spots.

In the 1970s, there was a guy by the name of Jeff Clark came out and discovered that there were big waves right off of Half Moon Bay. The prevailing theory was that California just didn't have huge waves. For fifteen years,



Clark and his buddies surfed Mavericks in relative peace and quiet. The place was great and everyone who surfed it, less than 20 or so people total, loved it.

Then a dude named Steve Tadin published a shot in Surfer show Clark in a big wave. That got everyone interested and people started coming to Mavericks to surf the big ones. In 1994, there was a Big Wave Riders gathering called The Men Who Ride Mountains that drew all the big names in Big Wave riding. Mark Foo was a legend in that field, having grown up riding the biggest ones in Hawaii for years. At the gathering, on a wave he should have easily been able to handle, Mark caught a corner and fell. Hard. Mark was the first known fatality at Mavericks. Mark was highly popular in the surfing community, so his death hit hard and led to the formation of the Mavericks Water Patrol.

From that point on, Mavericks was legendary, and starting in 1999, there's been a big wave riding contest there every year. They even made a documentary about it in 2004 called Riding Giants, directed by skateboarding legend and documentarian Stacey Peralta.

The closest land to Mavericks (which is 1/2 mile out) is Pillar Point Harbor. It's a lovely little harbor and a great place to people watch. I've spent afternoons there, having

a nice snack and watch the sun go down. With Binocs you can see the surfers nice and clear.

Half Moon Bay has a tonne of beaches, and it's not at all rare to find yourself sitting on one of them, getting near to sunset, and have someone you don't sit down next to

ya and start chatting. The first time it happened to me I thought the guy must have thought I was holding and was trying to score some dope, and in that case I'm the wrong guy to hit up. Instead, he just chatted away for about half-an-hour and that was that. It's happened to me several times. The city is not only filled with hippies and surfers, but with burn-outs and folks who are just plain nice. I like that, sometimes. And other times...well, let's just move on.

A trip to Half Moon Bay has to include some Hawaiian Food. The best Kaluah Pig I've ever found, and please don't remind me exactly how non-Kosher it is, has to be at a place that is right next to the Ramada Express. Ono Hawaiian Grill is a great place and it's really authentic-ish...or as authentic-ish as you're going to find on the Mainland. There's a great macaroni salad, which is saying a lot because I hate macaroni salad, and they do a mean teriyaki anything, but the highlight is the Kaluah Pork. Just eat it and you'll know the joy that is the flavour of the island.

As with everywhere I really love, there is a ghostly component to Half Moon Bay, and one that I have done a lot of research on over the years. The first place is my beloved Zaballa House.

I've never seen anything myself, though I've had a lot of weird feelings in that

Half Moon Bay has always been massively racially diverse. The largest groups seem to be Mexicans, many of whom work the various fields around HMB, and Portuguese. There are various Asian communities as well. Philipinos are another large group, which isn't surprising considering there are nearly 1 million folks of Phillipine decent living in California. Strangely, there's no Asian market in HMB, but there is an excellent Bodega which caters to both Mexicans and Asians. They sell lots of carps.

place. There've been sightings in two rooms: Room 6 and Room 7 (and I think the hall between them). The story goes that one of the original owners died in the place, and so they haunt it. I've heard a couple of different stories, with one standing out.

A Family had checked into room 6 and were settling down for the night. There was a knock on the door next door to them. No one paid any attention, since hearing sounds from the next room in the old place isn't unusual. A few seconds later, a person walked through the wall and after taking a few steps into the room, they disappeared. That story happened in the early to mid-1990s, but there are stories that go back to the 1950s. No one is really sure who or what the ghost is, but they're always trying to find out.

The other haunted place in the area is the World Famous Moss Beach Distillery. Trust me, the food there is enough to gain it a large following, especially the Sunday brunches they do and the Crab Scramble. There's also the fact that there's a ghost in the place and my freakiest experience happened there one morning in 1998 or so.

Me and my girlfriend of the day, Melissa, had journeyed to HMB for a bit of fun. We stayed at Zaballa



Top: The Zaballa House from Main Street. Bottom: The Room where I've stayed in the Zaballa House which is claimed to be haunted. Middle: The Moss Beach Distillery overlooking the Pacific Ocean on a rare day when there is no fog rolling in.



and then headed over to the Distillery for an early lunch. So early, in fact, that we were easily the first ones there. I went down to the restroom and when I got there, no one was around. I went to do my business and the tap started running. I was concerned, but not overly so. As I finished the tap stopped. I went to wash my hands (as I am not a heathen) and before I got to the tap, it turned itself on. It wasn't a sensor tap either. I saw the handle move. I high-tailed it out of there and have always made sure I've gone before I get to the MBD ever since.

The story behind the ghosts is a good one. The Ghost is called the Blue Lady and she dates from the 1920s. She was having an affair with a piano player and she went over the cliff on the old Bayshore and died. A good reason to haunt, I'd imagine.

Half Moon Bay is accessible all year

and is best in Early Fall and Late Spring. If you've never been to the Pumpkin Festival, you should try and rectify that matter ASAP. There are also more Christmas Tree Lots than they know what to do with and it's a good place around the holidays for Tree buying and gifty-craft shopping. Get lunch while you're there and you've got all the required makings for a good holiday time

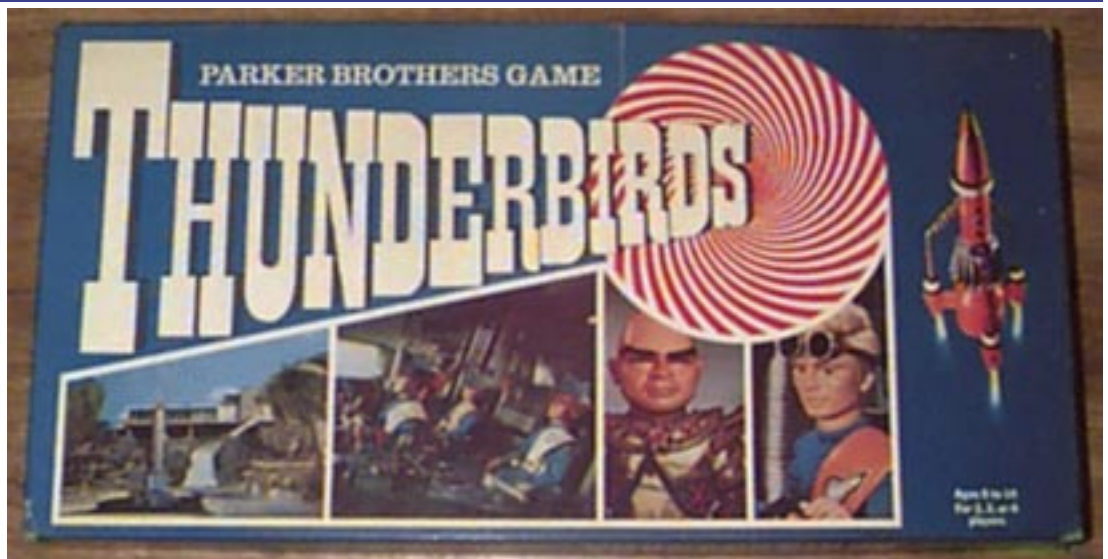
Happy birthday, Thunderbird 2!

by Frank Wu

On September 30, “The Thunderbirds” will be 40 years old, same age as me. We are talkin’ here not of the nifty Ford sportscars, nor the acrobatic airplane pilots, but the uber-cool geek-fest British TV show from the sixties. This was the fullest flowering of the mind of producer Gerry Anderson, who had earlier brought us “Supercar” and “Fireball XL-5” and later “UFO” and “Space: 1999.” While “Dr. Who” was huge in the UK, it was unseen in the U.S. until the mid-seventies, and until then Gerry Anderson was the main Brit competitor to “Star Trek” and other American sci-fi TV.

What made the Gerry Anderson shows so cool was that stuff zipped around and very often blew up. Really cool stuff. Like a car that could fly through the air or plow through oceanic depths. Or a submarine with a jet engine attached to its nose. Or a giant mole that could burrow you into the ground. Or a super-fast rocketplane. Or a spaceship with all these different modules that you could switch out depending on the adventure at hand. And if it got wrecked by alien madness, the command module could detach and be flown independently. (For completeness, I should note that the vehicles did not travel by themselves but were piloted by either grotesque puppets or bland-faced live actors, who were mostly interchangeable and forgettable. Better parts were written for the spaceships than for the actors.)

“The Thunderbirds” - which featured five vehicles, plus accessories, used to rescue people around the world - quietly had a big influence on a generation of kids



on both sides of the ocean - not as much as “Star Trek,” but nonetheless huge.

I spent a significant amount of energy, time and money about a decade ago buying and selling Thunderbirds toys, but what amazed me was that half of the folks trading were engineers.

This makes sense if you view Gerry Anderson shows not as “science” fiction, but as “engineering” fiction. The puppets were - let’s face it - stupid and painful to watch, but the episodes were mechanical and aeronautical engineers’ wet dreams. (This parallels a remark made about the seminal rock band The Velvet Underground: Few people bought their original albums, but every one of them started their own band.)

When I was ten I discovered that some TV shows featured big boobs and some, big-ass laser tanks. I preferred the latter. I was



mesmerized by the way the camera would linger lovingly on landing gear and tank treads. (Everything I know about landing gear I learned from the T-birds, which actually came in handy recently when my pals were trying to figure out exactly what had gone wrong on with that JetBlue flight.) These shows did not simply “tell” us how the heroes’ problems were fixed by some brand-new subatomic particle or by fooling a computer, but they “showed” us how you could fix any situation with a toolkit of grappling hooks, winches, wire, wrenches and jet engines.

For a ten-year-old, building plastic models was cool, and the geniuses (like Brian Johnson and Reg Hill and Martin Bowers) who built the machinery in all the Gerry Anderson shows were the greatest heroes of all. Their models were the real stars of the shows - did you notice that the series (“Stingray”, “Fireball XL-5,” “Supercar,” etc.) were mostly named after the vehicles, not the “human” characters? Their models zoomed or clanked around,

telescoped their arms, shot out jets of water or lasers, held out suckers or magnetic plates as necessary, lifted things into the air, plucked puppets from the bottom of the ocean, held up collapsing walls... all in the midst of explosions and fire. What could be cooler?

The one who had blazed the trail for us was Martin Bower. He had started out as a teenager building models in his garage, perfecting his craft in anonymity. When he finally showed his work to Gerry Anderson, the producer was so impressed that the models were immediately bought up for use in “Space: 1999.”

When we were ten, we weren’t cute; we knew we would never be actors or supermodels. But maybe, if we honed our skills like Martin Bower, one day our plastic creations would become “supermodels.”

Thus, a whole generation of children became artists and crafty engineers instead of chartered accountants - all because of “The Thunderbirds.”

-Frank Wu-



Emailed Words of Comment

Sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org

By My Gentle Readers

Let's Open with Ed Meskys!

Yesterday I got the notice from Bill Burns that DT44 was up, so I went to the site this morning. It automatically updated adobe reader, and then I started reading the ish. I was mildly interested in the movie and DVD of the old puppet series, and then got into the lettercol. Right after someone asked about trufen.net and was replied with "I don't know what to do" it cut off in the middle of the sentence. Up to there everything read fine. After that there was a whole bunch of "buttons" in Adobe. I tried several like "continuous" and "next page" but nothing happened. I could go no further in the fanzine. I do not really understand pdf and adobe so don't know what went wrong.

You know, I work with Adobe products enough that I should know, but this one has me stymied. Not sure what to do. I've tried retexting it and it doesn't seem to want to work.

I also had read the forwarded and opened DT43 with my LoC but have no comments this time, except that I forgot to mention in discussing the review of the Glasgow worldcon that I saw in the huck room the Teddy Bear with two heads and three arms.

At the 2003 Conjecture, one of the events was a Mad Science Faire and someone did dozens of bizarre animal combinations like Dogs with wings and manatee tails. Truly weird.

I had forgotten about Hitch-Hiker since it is many years since I listened to the audio tapes of the broadcast or read the books and forgot about the character. I just thought of the Teddy Bear as a mutant Bear and was tempted to buy it as a curiosity. Unfortunately its £35 price was way out of my reach. I am not objecting to the price as it was well made and had involved much hand-work.

35 Quid is a bit excessive. Us Yanks seem to get scared off by British prices, which seem awful high, even when you just consider them as dollars.

Incidentally, I am curious as to how he was handled in the BBC/PBS TV series as that was very low budget. I am not much of a TV fan and had not tried to watch it, and the bits I did experience I did not have anyone sighted to describe things to me. I wonder if an actor had a simple puppet's head attached to one shoulder. Also, how actively did "he" use his extra arm? I understand the new movie was high budget so they could do realistic special effects, but I think I would prefer to find my audio tapes and re-listen to that. ***I think they did away with the extra arm, but it was just a guy with a bad mannequin head on his left shoulder. Still, they did get a little articulation out of it somehow.***

Best,
Edmund R. Meskys

The Newest Superfan, Peter Sullivan!

Good to hear that SFSF is not dead, simply resting. And the switch to once every two weeks probably makes sense, in that it's still frequent enough for the calendar to be useful and pick up late-announcing events (or even late-

announcing cancellations). But it gets away from the grind of always having to chase the next week's issue, which is what apparently drove Jack into the ground. Because of the subject matter, I guess it's not as easy to pre-produce material as you could for something like The Drink Tank.

There are some things that we can pre-do, like getting articles from former and current BArea fen and pros, which we'll be starting soon. It'll be a fun zine, trust me!

I like the idea of referring to puppets as "Fabricated Americans." And, speaking of Tartar Sauce, have you ever heard the old, old joke about Sauce Tartare being French for "Goodbye, cheeky"?

I have not heard it. I try not to hear too many French jokes because I'll try to turn them around and use them on my friends from Quebec, and if you know any Quebecers, they have no sense of humour!

I've seen the "woman is just a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke" quote attributed to both Kipling and Hemmingway. But in the latter case I gather it's more likely that someone thought that he *should* have said it. On that basis, you might as well attribute the quote to Groucho Marx, who *definitely* should have said it.

That's true. There are a lot of sayings like that. My favourites are the great misquotes, like "play it again, Sam" and "Kiss Me, You Fool!"

It never occurred to me until Eric Mayer mentioned it that Trufen has blogs. But, since it's based on the slashcode from Slashdot, I guess it must have. They are just not very visible from the front page (he says, hoping that there's not a "Click here, bozo" link he's missed). I know that livejournal has a certain 'reputation' amongst the online community. When the whole site went down earlier in the year for a few days, there was pretty much a whole thread on Slashdot slagging off of the typical LJ user. Probably the funniest was "A great disturbance in the Force... as if millions of teenage girls suddenly cried out in terror

and were suddenly silenced." But then if, as SF fen, we bothered about reputation, we would probably have never gotten involved in "that crazy Buck Rodgers stuff" in the first place.

I think I agree with M Lloyd about a Chris Garcia Anthology - at least, if I've understood her right. The most remarkable thing about a typical Chris Garcia article is not the article itself - most are above average, but so is 49% of everything. Normally what's remarkable is the fact that the article is only seven days (or less) after the last article. Having said that, there will be stuff worth anthologising as well.

I'm at 1% of good writing, which at my current rate means there's 10,000 good words a year!

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Peter Sullivan

And finally, a brief note from Eric Mayer!

Hi,

You're going to get me in trouble. Reading your comment about how The Drink Tank is a sort of blog reminded me I'd written a bit on the topic of zines vs. blogs for Truefen.net and never posted it. So I updated and went ahead. So now the topic becomes blogs as locs!

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Eric

Don't count on me to jog your memory everytime, Eric! I'm not a reliable device for that sorta thing.

The Drink Tank Issue 45 was written by Christopher J. Garcia and Frank Wu, with appearances by Ed Meskys, Peter Sullivan and Eric Mayer! The next issue will be out either late next week, or early the following depending on SF/SF and how that goes. Thanks to Bill Burns again. This year, let's get him a Best Website Hugo!

I also bought a copy of a 1990 Niekas at BASFA this week. Still one of the truly great fanzines of all-time.

Remember: Tip your waitstaff!