

THE DRINK TANK ISSUE 57

Far Too Much Action for Once a Week!!!

Ghosts, Beasts, Strange
Dancers, Photos and More



Art By VoodooBiatch!

From Christopher J. Garcia
And his Band of Friends

I'd wanted to do a Ghost and Ghouls issue for Halloween, but I didn't. Instead, here's an issue with ghosts and other weirdness at its heart of hearts.

Let's start with the words of SaBean MoreL on why our conversations drive her insane!

The Way These People Talk

by

SaBean MoreL

I used to hate going to eat with M and Chris and Jay and Mike and even Lisa. They were fine company, among the best conversationalists you'll ever meet, but they were also the most superstitious peopel you'd ever meet. I wasn't a believer in any of this stuff, *No Such Thing as Fucking Ghosts!* I'd think, but when you're around these people, you start to wonder if either you're going stupid or if all your friends are just insane.

Chris was the worst of them and he easily won that award. A believer, but not just a guy who happened to believe in ghosts, no, a guy who would study ghosts. And Big-foot. And Nessie. And La Chupacabra. And The Skunk Ape. And on and on and on and on. It's not that he's a bad guy or gullible or stupid, in fact he's none of those things (Momma told me to never kiss a fool...) but he's just so damn smart about this stuff that I question his whole intelligence.

M's not much better. She once went a week skipping class so she could watch the Halloween specials on A+E and suck the marrow out of all the ghost specials. The girl fucked up her entire semester's grades for ghost documentaries! She's almost as well-versed in the stuff as Chris, but she's much louder when she talks.

Jay is almost a skeptic. He believes that people believe they're telling the truth, but he also believes that half of everything that makes it out is shit. Smart man, but when he's stumped, he chooses faith over dismissal, which is flat wrong.

Mike is interesting. He looks at everything like it's a story, a long, sad, draining story which he later writes down and tries to sell. He's never managed money for them, but a few have seen the light of day in various places. He's a Travel Channel Friday Night watcher too, but he knows he knows better.

When we were in college, or pretending we were in college as the case may be, we all hung out, and if there was nothing else to talk about, you know normal stuff like buying records or who M was schtupping at the moment, then those bastards would start telling ghost stories and analyzing what they meant and who told them. How do you tell your friends that you'd rather not discuss the time the urinal flushed on its own in the days before that was done? I chose the method where you slam



Art by Sy Noir

your hand down and say 'Can't you fuckers talk about anything else for a Goddamn change!' That seldom worked for me, but it usually at least gave me a pause from the theories and stupidities for a few seconds at least...if they heard me at all.

For the four years that we were all hanging out regularly, I had to endure everything from stories of ghosts on Chris' floor to the story of M having a moment where she knew something she couldn't have known. What loads of unadulterated uncut 100% pure shit those conversations were!

But I learned. I could actually talk



Ghost by Super_Sheep

about the Brown Lady of Raynham Hall or the Hangman on the Altar or the Grandmother in the reflection of the door when the kid posed with Mom. I knew all about Sasquatch and Champie in Lake Champlain and the rediscovery of the Coelocanth! I still know it and it makes me sick what those bastards did to my brain over long dinners at IHOPs and Lions.



Art By VoodooBlatch!

The Little Dancing Girl That Lives in My
Strangest Dreams
Some Sort of Poem
by
M Lloyd

I've often had dreams of a dark strangeness that peeks around the corner then tip-toes into sight when I'd rather be dreaming of some fine young gentleman nibbling on my

ear.

And that darkness is a dancing girl in black tutu who is always on-point.

There are nights when I will be dreaming of winning wonderful awards, of tasting victory beyond my human capabilities, but in dances that girl in the black tutu, on-point, twirling towards me, wiping away whatever it was that I thought I might be celebrating.

One morning, cold and dark as if the night had decided to stay a little longer, I awoke to find on my dresser that little dancing girl in the black tutu dancing on-point. The little dancing girl said nothing, just turned and did a pirouette and bowed a little turn at me. I did nothing follow her with my eyes from the bed where I dreamt so frequently of that little dancing girl in the black tutu who always dances on-point

That morning, I stayed in bed and watched the little dancing girl in the black tutu do her turns along my wardrobe, nearly knocking over the book I had been reading the night before. She didn't seem to look at me, she simply danced on-point, turning and merrily jumping when she could.



Art by Voodoowitch

I fell asleep in bed that morning, and there she was as I was trying to get my thing on Mr. Perfect Hair and Face. She was dancing on-point through my dream again. But this time, I knew I was dreaming and I put myself in front of her.

“Who the hell do you think you are?” I asked as I stood there.

She did not answer.

I moved closer and took her arm, took her into a dip and we danced.

But I had control. I ran my hand inside her clothes, violated her skin with a hand that did not care about its placement. I boldly did things to her while we flowed as one, a pair making love for the joy of the audience.

Now, there is no longer a strange dancing girl in my dreams, simply another nameless lover who I take in my non-waking life.

Christopher J. Garcia's Guide to the Most Important Ghost Photos of All-Time

I've been looking at Ghost photos since I was too young to know that they were controversial. I've seen thousands of them, including all of the most famous ones. I've even got to do some up-close & personal time with a few of the originals.

I put together a large collection on my harddrive when I had my first computer, mostly the classics, a few others that seemed to be very important, but they were the ones that even made me go ‘Whoa, that's weird.

The Brown Lady of Raynham Hall

In the early days of photography, there were lots of ghost photos. Most were obviously fakes or accidental fakes, like a photo of a room with a long (10 to 20 minute)

exposure and a guy comes and sits in a chair and then leaves, leaving a ghost-like image in that chair. In the 1930s, Raynham Hall was one of the best known Haunted Houses in all of Britain. In 1936, a group of people



brought a camera and waited. Eventually they saw the Brown Lady, the main ghost of the house, walk down the stairs. They took her photo and it's what you see above.

This is one of the few times where the Ghost Hunters saw a ghost and then took the photo. The photo has been reproduced over and over and there's no consensus on whether or not it's the real deal. I tend to think that it's either the most realistic fake or the best real photo ever taken.

Newbury Church Altar

In the 1960s, Rev. KF Lord was taking a photo of the Altar at Newbury Church. It's a beautiful altar, so it made sense that the new guy who happened to be an amateur photographer would want a picture. It turned out that when he developed it, there



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was something in the photo.

There are arguments about what it is that was captured. Some say it was a monk, probably from the 15th Century or before. Others, and I'm in this camp, say that it's a hangman who worked in the area who has taken up in the church looking for forgiveness. It's also debated about whether the picture is real, as it's so clear an image it wouldn't be hard to do, but attempts to refake it have failed. It remains one of the best known examples.

The Girl in the Doorway

Another amazing photo that has been debated since it showed up is of the floating girl in the doorway. This is the ghost of a girl...or is it? Some claims it's just smoke, but most say that it's the ghost of the girl who started the fire. Either way, it's a great and creepy photo.



A Couple of Questionable Cemetery photos

Every Ghosthunter and their mother try and stake out a cemetery to find that ghost that everyone has seen over the years. Typically, they get a couple of orbs, which are usually over-blown, and maybe an Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP) that helps to establish nothing.

Then there are photos that show someone that wasn't there when they took the picture. I have a problem with the most famous ones because though Bachelor's



Grove Cemetery is well-known as being haunted, why would anyone take the photos that are shown here if it weren't for the ghost. There's literally nothing else in the shot of any interest.

The Hampton Court Surveillance Photo

You'd think that the increasing number of cameras would lead to more ghost photos. There was one very famous one of a car dealership, but the best is a series from the UK's Hampton Court.

The security guards had noticed that doors were being unlocked and left open, so they set up a camera from a high window in the fall of 2003. What they caught was probably the best ghost photo of the last two decades.

The ghost is in the doorway and appears to have just opened the door. I've never seen the full video, but I'm told that it suddenly appears AFTER the doors have



been flung open.

This photo went through lots of vigorous analysis and it was inconclusive.

Those are my faves. Someday, maybe I'll write up a few more that I know are fakes and give good explanations, but until then, you gotta deal with the reality!

All This Talk of Ghosts Has Made Me Thirsty: Haunted Bars and Restaurants
by
Mike Swan

I used to live in San Mateo. For years I spent every weekend in Half Moon Bay taking photos of surfers or watching videos with friends of mine who lived on the beach. It was about 12 years after I'd first been there that I returned to the Moss Beach Distillery and sat at a table and had my empty coffee cup pulled away from me and then twist 2/3 of the way around when I reached for it. The girl I was eating with saw it too and she loves ghosts. So we headed out on a trip to find haunted places to eat and drink.

First, I looked on-line and there were hundreds of them listed, but not a lot around my place. There was a B+B, but I'd only been going out with the girl a few weeks, so I wasn't about to drop 3 bills on a night for a possible ghost sighting. There was a place in Tracy, the heart of that part of California that I want nothing to do with, and they'd been featured on a bunch of

programmes. The joint was called the Banta Inn and the former owner died of a heart attack behind the bar one night and has been around ever since.

We talked to the girl who served us and she showed us the trick that the ghost likes to play. She piled a ton of coins so that they were all messy with no order and she gently closed the register. A few seconds later, she opened it and the coins were all stacked in neat rows. It was weird. Nothing else cool happen, so had a few drinks and left.

The next weekend I said roadtrip to my favourite place in the Mountains: the Brookdale Lodge. Now, the place is mostly a hotel, but they've got a good restaurant with a stream running through it and a nice bar. We went and had dinner, Prime Rib it turns out, and half-way through the meal Lisa looks at the water and sees a little girl playing, I turn and see her head, but she disappears just a second later. We called over the waiter and he says it happens all the time.

Lisa said we should spend the night at the hotel to see if it was haunted. We were a little too busy to notice if anything weird happened.

I then realised that this was fun and I took her to a joint in Ventura. Landmark 78 is said to be haunted, and they also are said to have great steaks. We drove down and got a table at the last possible minute and they served us a great dinner. We asked the waitress about the haunting and she told us that a woman named Rosa hanged herself at the place and that's why she sticks around. Lisa went off to the bathroom and came back white as a...well as a ghost. I was still chatting with the waitress when Lisa came and said that she had seen a woman on the stairs that just looked sad until she stepped up onto the stairs and she disappeared.

"Yeah, that happens." the waitress said.

Lisa and I didn't go on anymore Ghost Dinners, though we, like Chris and Gennie, try and watch Most Haunted every week. I think I'll find some place creepy in Chicago this weekend and eat, eat, eat.

Some Thoughts From Your Editor

There'll probably be one or two more issue of The Drink Tank this year. I'll make no promises either way because whenever I say I'm going to take some time off, I always end up with busy typing fingers. This one was a lot of fun, and there are a few more things.;

As I've mentioned, I'm a part of The Everlasting Club, an APA out of the UK that deals with Ghost stories. It's a great group, though it is kinda difficult being a Tank who has to send his mailings two weeks early and then wait an extra ten days to get it. It's a good group and the stuff they do is pretty remarkable. I'd say it's my fave of the three APAs that I'm in.

There'll be no real Christmas issue, though I'll talk about Christmas some. I'll be doing a lot of talking about King Kong in the next issue, which I'll make no attempt to predict when it will come out.

Here are a couple of things that I should point out. First, I've just set up my first six months of...mostly. I'll be doing nothing in January, but I'll be stopping by Vegas (most likely) and doing WonderCon in February. March features my annual CineQuest film festival, and April the Sonoma Valley Fest as well as The APE. May is World Horror in SF and BayCon and TorFlu. Busy, Busy, Busy!!!

Love ya, Chris

Letter Graded Mail
EMailed Words of Comment
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my Loyal Readers

This will probably end up being the most controversial LoC I'll ever print, but still, I think it's wonderful. Eric Mayer comes at ya with talk of Bergeron...

Hi Chris,

You're really ending the year on a roll. One terrific issue after another, just when you ought to be worn out. A peculiar aspect of fanzines is that sometimes (or so it seems to me) the better a zine is, the more difficult it is to comment on. Articles that fascinate me by illuminating experiences beyond my own leave me with little to say since I typically call on my own experiences by way of comment. Then too, when a zine has a wealth of material, I find myself rather overwhelmed, wanting to respond but not having time or inclination to comment on everything that merits comment, and so end up writing nothing at all.

I've felt pretty good about the last few issues. When I release my Illustrated Index (should be early Jan) it has comments on each issue, and basically these last few were better than the ten or so before them.

OK Let's face it, I'm approaching the end of my brief faanish comeback. I really don't want to become more involved because I've got a lot of other things on my plate. So maybe, while I still have the chance, I ought to use the opening and talk about your piece on how fans will be remembered. Feel free to pretend I said nothing if you want. And it might be best, because printing the opinions expressed below would quite likely bring on a real shit storm which would not be a very good end of the year for an amazing project like The Drink Tank. Then I would forever be that maniac who destroyed The Drink Tank.

Plus, I know I'm repeating myself to an extent, but I'm in a bad mood. There's a snow storm on the way!

I was happy to see you citing Richard Bergeron for his contributions to fandom. One of the things that has surprised and dismayed me during the past few months, when I've paid more attention to fandom than I have for maybe twenty years, is how Richard has been demonized and how intent some are on making their own prejudiced viewpoints an indisputable part of faanish history. Even after all this time! Usually, when Richard is mentioned it is as the Great Satan who threatened to destroy all fandom in the TAFF wars. And it's done so casually. As if of course everyone knows this to be true. I can't say it doesn't bother me. It strikes me as more than a little unfair to impugn and caricature someone who isn't around to defend himself, but perhaps I lack the cosmic mind necessary to understand.

I suspect, as the years go on that that unfair caricature will have less and less traction with the general fan population. Those entering fandom are not going to care about whatever personal animosities lay behind the TAFF feud. (I don't even know what was really involved, though it seems like there was something more going on than met the eye. I just got fanzines. I never went to conventions and didn't know the participants personally. And in retrospect it seems to me the level of nastiness must have arisen from something personal.) Newcomers who take an interest in fan history will mainly see Richard's fanzine, Warhoon. In a few years the handful of whinging old geezers still carrying on about their ancient grudges will be of interest only to themselves.(Oh, you say that's

already the case...) Their version of the TAFF imbroglio (whichever version it is) will be looked at as an overblown tempest in a teacup, like all the other great wars to end all fandom (whatever they were) recounted by Moskowitz in *The Immortal Storm*.

I can't remember if it was Moskowitz or Warner who said 'The only thing worse than a fresh feud is one that's had time to simmer.'

One thing newer students of fan history might realize, in light of subsequent events, is that Richard's demand for a TAFF accounting -- even if unfair, insulting, and motivated by personal animosity in the specific case as some think (and, hey, I would not enjoy being unjustly accused of wrongdoing) -- it was not by any means unjustified in general terms. Despite all the blather about fans being above cooking the books, it has happened on the financial side. Consider Abi Frost (I think. Don't sue!) who diddled the accounts and absconded with the funds. Would it have been monstrous for someone to have asked her for an accounting? Well, I'll bet, before the truth came out, it would've been considered so by some. However, that's speculation on my part. I wasn't around at the time but got a grim chuckle when I read about it afterwards.

The plain fact is that the reaction of the other side to Richard's request contributed just as much as Richard to any harm done to fandom.

That's a very good point. If more questions had been regularly raised, the whole Frost thing would never have happened. Now true, there's something not positive about having every step watched like a hawk, but still, it's a better solution.

It takes two to feud. (And, believe me -- I know whereof I speak. I got correspondence you wouldn't believe. I had to explain to my then wife, who was dumbfounded by the vitriol, that this was just a little fan argument, of no great import. I hadn't murdered anyone.) If his opponents thought he was going overboard they

could have chosen not to respond in kind. Unfortunately not enough of those involved (including myself -- I admit -- to the very small extent I was involved) had enough sense to restrain themselves.

However, the allegations of all the harm done to fandom is, I think, nothing more than a stick useful for beating Richard's memory and, of course, it makes the feud and all those involved sound more important.

Except that some folks got their noses out of joint, I fail to see how there was any effect on fandom. The hobby doesn't look any different to me than it did twenty years ago. The same people are here. Richard left, and that was a loss, but I don't recall that even he stated he was actually leaving due to the feud. Perhaps someone could name a single fan who left fandom, a zine that ceased publication, a fan fund that ended, a club that disbanded, a convention that ceased due to this cataclysmic faanish storm? How is fandom any different than it would have been, except that we don't have the benefit of whatever Richard might have done? Well, except that now right thinkers get to make jokes at his expense. It's all a lot of grandiose self-serving nonsense.

Now this I don't know if I agree with. There were a few fanzines that seem to have gone away due, at least partly, to the TAFF Wars. Some also took long hiatuses. Now, I'm not saying they all dropped out directly because of the TAFF sitch, but more likely being in the environment at the time just made it less fun for them. Certainly though, it was far less damaging than the whole Breendoggle twenty years earlier where the effects are much more pronounced.

I have also noticed that people don't want to discuss the whole affair. Bringing the subject up appears to be frowned upon. Which might seem like a good attitude -- not to rehash old stuff and stir up bad feelings again -- except that it is considered perfectly fine to refer to the subject, in passing, repeatedly, and denigrate Richard as if his culpability and black heart are settled facts

that don't warrant discussion.

And this is what bothers me. I want a full discussion of the matters involved. I want to have a better knowledge of what happened and I'd love for there to be a full timeline. It's sounding more and more like there's no chance we'll ever get Richard's side, but I've never heard of anyone saying that they've tried to get Avedon's side either, which would be very important, or Hansen's for that matter. It would be a great matter of fannish history to set down the facts. Maybe that will be my life's fannish goal: to finally settle what's left to know about the TAFF Wars.

To me the event looms large because I was beginning to pursue other interests at the time -- Mini-comics, small press, writing nonfiction for magazines -- so it happened that the TAFF affair marked the last time I was really active and aware of Fandom, although I wrote locs and some articles and published 9 or 10 issues of fanzines on into the 90s, that was the peak of my involvement. Unfortunately, as last impressions will, my impression of that time lingers.

Mark Twain wrote a wonderful essay once ripping into various powers that be and the world at large and at the end, he said, in effect, "I can say all this because I'm a dead man." And when I read it, he was. I guess, I feel like I can write this loc because I've been dead to fandom for so long. The opinions of those who think it is up to them to form faanish opinion (and to some extent get away with it) don't impress me. They can't trash my writing in Publishers Weekly or talk people out of buying my books (although I guess they could post nasty reviews on Amazon.com! I have had a couple instances -- I know about -- where people who don't like me have done so.)

That's the inherent weakness of Public Reviewing systems and why the Germans insisted that all remarks be screened.

Anyway, as I remarked to you in private correspondence, Warhoon 28 -
- Richard Bergeron's 600 page hardbound

collection of Walt Willis' work -- is what he should be remembered for. Walt was arguably our best and most influential writer and, strange as it may seem (if you believe everything you hear) it was Richard Bergeron who collected Walt's writings. Not any of his opponents in the TAFF wars, exemplars though they may be.. He (not they) undertook this Herculean labor without benefit of OCR software, and long before the internet was around to put such stuff up electronically.

This impresses me further today than it did before I started doing zines. My Dad, lover of zines that he is, told me that Willis was the second best, in his eyes, following Warner, which might be my opinion too, but that's more due to the fact that I've read a lot of HW's writing and not nearly enough Willis.

This massive work was *not* a collection of Richard's own writings, or even the writings of a close friend, *not* a compilation of Richard's own highly regarded zine, *not* Richard's personal reminiscences, *not* a history in which Richard loomed large. It wasn't about Richard Bergeron at all. It was all about Walt Willis. Fandom's best writer. Talk about a selfless contribution to fandom, and by a highly talented man who could've been devoting the time and effort to his own creative endeavors. Some monster.

But how often do we hear about this brilliant collection? How often are newcomers directed to it as an example of both great fanwriting and great fanpublishing? I guess fandom (or a part of fandom) has got to ignore arguably the best single issue of a fanzine ever produced because...well...according to all right thinking fans, Richard Bergeron is a demonic villain.

I hope new fans will pick up a copy of Warhoon 28 and then make their own judgment on Richard's proper place in fanhistory.

What's funny is that I've heard of it more recently than I have in years. James Taylor and I talked about trying to get the scanned copy of it that I know

I saw ages ago (and have yet to refind) so that we can get it PDFed and OCRed so that Teresa Cochran can give it a gander. I brought it up with Arnie when I was down in Vegas. I talked about it in an article I wrote a few weeks ago. It's an important piece of the history of fandom (and one that I don't have a copy of, so if anyone's got a copy they're willing to sell...) and it's a great thing that should be celebrated. It might make things better to think that it was published a full 6 years before Topic A hit the Mimeos around both sides of the Atlantic.

See, Chris, this is what got me in trouble before. I get irritated when I keep hearing opinions set forth as truth and finally I feel compelled not so much to present the other side, because I have no desire to discuss TAFF again, as to just point out that there is another side. The usual depictions of Richard are nothing more than the opinions of the writers (just as this is) and not facts. Anyone paying attention to the world today can see the danger of accepting as your fact someone else's opinion. I'd probably re-return in twenty years and do it all over again! Except by then it won't be necessary as Warhoon will have outlasted all the pettiness.

I'm very seldom controversial, and I imagine if I had been around during the whole thing, I'd have kept my mouth shut but been rapt in attention to the proceedings. I've met several people who have said they stayed out of it to the point that they had no idea what was going on, and a few who said that they were in the line of fire and that it was a rough time to be a fan. I've heard the same thing from folks who were around in 1963. And folks who were around when the Frost Situation arose. I really do think that we're mostly beyond those times, though I'm not sure if we'll ever be in a world where personal conflicts don't escalate into violent printed battles and wars fought in fanzines and on LJs.

It would be interesting if someone

were to try and put together the best of Warhoon and any other of Richard's works. That might go a long way towards clearing things up a bit and basically documenting that figure as being more than the guy who caused the TAFF Wars.

And Now, a Brief Message from Peter Sullivan!

55... Kudos for resisting the temptation to use the phrase "Not to be confused with Lubov who IS a little Russian" as a lead-in for yet another re-telling of the apocryphal Harlan Ellison story.

I won't deny that I didn't think about it.

56... The Bob Newhart IBM Punch Card piece sounds a similar riff to his more famous "INTRODUCING TOBACCO TO CIVILISATION" piece. "You take a pinch of tobacco... and you shove it up your nose... and it makes you sneeze?... Yeh, I imagine it would."

I've never heard that one.

Your favourite Brit TV show, Most Haunted, was actually in the news this week.

Someone complained about the show to the TV regulator, Ofcom, that the show was guilty of deception. Ofcom's official response was a slightly more officialese version of "Come on, no-one takes it seriously, do they?" See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/4500322.stm> for more details.

I need to take a look at that. There was a similar claim made against wrestling here in the States in the 1980s which got the filing groups a great big 'Duh!' when it came before them.

Lloyd Penney's got it wrong - it's the *1960s* that no-one is supposed to be able to remember (as in "If you can remember the Sixties, you weren't really there"), not the 1970s.

Very good point, Peter!

The Drink Tank Issue 57 was written by Chris Garcia, M Lloyd, Mike Swan, SaBean MoreL and others!