

*The Drink Tank's Final Resting Place...
Or is it?*

THE
DRINK
TANK
ISSUE 72
1798 — 1887
BELOVED BY
SOME

No, it's Not!

The Drink Tank Issue Seventy-Two



This issue happened because Mike Swan and some other guy sent in two different and completely unrelated stories about Tombstones. I figured this was a sign for a theme and sent an email. I got responses from Finnish legends like Arnie Katz, good friends like Judith Morel and Andy Trembley, Pro writers like Jay Lake and Eric Mayer, and so many more.

I hope you will enjoy.

We Mark Where We Place Our Dead
So We Will Never Walk There
by
Mike Swan

I grew up across the street from a graveyard. It was beautiful, all the

flowers and the marble and the grass perfectly maintained. It was a place I'd go to run around, to play with my ball. Even as a kid, I knew enough to stop running and walk gently by when I saw a family member anywhere near a grave. That was the way it went.

When I was 11, I went there at night. At 12, I went at night alone. At 13, before I left for the love that was Chicago, I took a date there and we kissed. How Goth.

That graveyard was a part of my vision as an adult. I went back to my neighborhood and always to that graveyard. The two visits I made were both at night, both after climbing over a low fence that they must not have meant to keep real people out. I walked along and found names I remembered from the old days. James Hathouser. Lucas Sweet. Miles Milo. Louisa Lusitana. I could remember where they were, how I would bounce my ball and pass by them. Lusitana's grave had a horizontal slab of granite that I would lay on in the heat of summer. It stayed cool in the shade all day.

The death of my Uncle meant that I had to go there on official business. It was also the first time I'd been to a funeral. I arrived early, he was being buried at ten and I was there by seven. I walked around the sprawling grounds and looked at the tombstones.

For the first time ever I wondered why we put them in the ground, why we bothered putting a stone and saying it was in memoriam. I never knew until that day.

The Neanderthals buried their dead. They also may have left flowers and tools and such with them. They'd place rocks on top, presumably to keep wild animals from digging them up. Early Chinese burials used stones to mark the site of bodies. Same with most Middle American tribes. Stone was a way of keeping the bodies down, the animals off of them. The stones were practical once where now they are merely symbolic.

I used to run around that graveyard, every inch of it, playing like a kid would play on a playground, but now, standing next to the casket that was lowered into the Earth, I realised that I had been doing it all wrong. I should have been avoiding it, should have been staying on the paths, making every effort to avoid stepping on the patches of beautiful, perfect green grass that rose above the bodies of the fallen. Those stones, those intricately carved pieces of granite and marble, they told you where the bodies were buried, where you could walk.

On the way out, I went to see James Hathouser's grave: I took one

path to the next, then I stepped carefully in the rows and paid my respects for a moment, secretly apologizing for the foot falls that hit him in my youth.



A Walk to the Graveyard by Eric Mayer

Fifty years ago I considered it a treat to walk with my grandmother to the cemetery a block from where our family lived. When you're six the end of the street is a long way and the cemetery on the far side of a road you can't cross by yourself seems even further.

The small cemetery might have been another world, enclosed by a painted, wrought iron fence with a gate that creaked as we entered. Inside was quiet. The sounds of passing traffic did not penetrate the shadows

under the old, overgrown yew trees. There we heard only bird calls and the buzzing of the honeybees in the luxuriant clover which half concealed flat grave markers. I'd be thrilled and horrified to find I had set my sneaker, unknowingly, on a slab of polished granite.

At the oldest end of the place, lichened stones leaned against the fence and sat in neat piles, inscriptions too eroded to identify. I was awed by their age. What inconceivable vastness of time would it take to wear away the names and memories of the living?

The family plot was at the edge of the newer end, in the sunlight, just beyond the yews. In early summer there were sweet, wild strawberries to be found in the grass.

The night after I watched my grandfather's coffin lowered from view I lay in bed and thought about him out there in the dark, in the cold, alone, so close I could have heard him shout for me.

Then it was different when my grandmother and I walked to the cemetery. Then I was old enough to read the dates on the gravestones. I helped my grandmother tend the geraniums by the grave. When she fussed with the flower bed I saw her straightening my grandfather's tie.

A few years later I watched an aunt buried and in twenty years I returned again -- this time not from

the end of the street but from another state -- to see my grandmother join them. Most recently it was my father.

I noticed that the cemetery had expanded but the rusting fence hadn't been extended to replace the vanished trees which had edged the yards beyond. There was no longer any demarcation between house and cemetery lawns. The graves simply petered out a few feet from a childrens' swing set.

There is room in the family plot still.

My instructions, though, are firm. I will be cremated and my ashes scattered far away, perhaps over water,



Clean by Jay Lake

Dad sits on the curb each morning and duct tapes fresh plastic grocery bags over his shoes. "Can't be too careful about them germs," he mutters to the mossy pavement as the Oregon wind cuts damp capers around his weathered flesh, blousing his four shirts for a moment to goosepimple his

street-grimed chest. With his iron hair and his piercing gray eyes, Dad could be any age at all, any age of man over thirty and not yet under the ground. "Got to stay clean," he tells an orange tabby sauntering by. The cat pays him no mind.

Dad's shopping cart stands guard behind him, a tutelary spirit of rusted steel encaging the many mansions of Dad's world. Dad has carefully wrapped the cart's handle with leather salvaged from the steering wheel of a stripped Datsun 260Z. When he can find oil, he greases the wheels -- sometimes it's sewing machine oil, sometimes it's axle grease, once it was a half pint of gray grease he found in a bus stop trashcan, labeled "Bear Fat" in spidery handwriting. Those thin, cold weeks when he's too hungry to remember his own name, Dad licks the grease off the shopping cart's axles with a q-tip, just enough to calm his angry belly.

But he's always clean.

#

Second Nordstrom's Bag

- Hairbrush with no bristles
- Six Barbie doll heads, shaved bald, strung together on a bent coat hanger poked through the tops of their stubby pink scalps
- Portland Trailblazers ticket stub from two seasons past
- Squirrel tail
- Reproduction Confederate

- army brass button
- Empty Nivea cold cream container with a cracked lid
- Little girl's left shoe, size ten, black patent-leather pump with scarred finish

#

The shopping cart leads him on journeys different and strange. For Dad, even the sidewalk outside Goodwill on Grand Avenue can be an afternoon's distraction. His eye is caught by the natural history of gum receding into the concrete like those evolving ape pictures in reverse. A hypodermic needle lodged in a crack glints its hard story of lank young women lost to themselves and their worried mothers back in Springfield or Wenatchie or Hood River. A broken bootlace requires careful consideration as to its salvage value, which of Dad's many mansions it might service.

"You never know," he says to the blur of passing metal on the busy street. "A man could need to tie something tight one day, hold it close."

On occasion the shopping cart leads Dad down peculiar avenues dark with terror or overflowing with history. The simple confusion he finds on the sidewalk just west of Goodwill multiplies like locusts.

#

Fourth True Value Bag

- Baseball with raveled thread and loose cover

- Three-pack white athletic socks, new in bag
- Aviator sunglasses with one lens missing, prescription
- Eight ball, genuine ivory antique
- Marine Band harmonica, key of F
- Photograph of young Chinese girl in stroller, torn and taped back together
- Deflated soccer ball

#

Dad doesn't tell people his shopping cart talks to him, because he doesn't want them to think he is strange. It doesn't have a voice like a person, or even one of those electronic toys -- Dad had a Furby for a while, but the batteries finally died. Rather, the shopping cart has a special code of squeals and squeaks and clanks. When it wants to tell Dad something very important or complicated, it uses sign language.

One day not long after they first met, the shopping cart led Dad to a billboard that read, "You're Not Fully Clean Unless You're Zestfully Clean." Dad had stared at the giant couple in their matching green towels with their perfect white teeth and perfect pale skin until the sun went down.

Now the shopping cart helps him find fresh grocery bags for his feet almost every day. Whenever he begs a little money, Dad stocks up on duct

tape, even before essentials like malt liquor and Listerine. The cart likes the heavy thump of a new roll of duct tape landing in its wire-bound body. "Here you go, old friend," he says, then kisses the leather-wrapped handle, which is worn smooth as a child's hand.

#

First Safeway Bag

- Man's wedding ring, 18 karat gold
- Thirty-eight mismatched Kwikset keys
- Seven gray pebbles
- Gideon Bible
- Wooden rosary, fire-blackened
- Small rubber monkey
- "Porn Star" belt buckle, cracked
- Empty Pepto-Bismol bottle
- Gravestone rubbing, tightly folded, "Ellen Mei Yuan Ewell, Beloved Daughter, 1997-2001"

#

Dad is always clean because bad things happen to dirty people. Dad rubs Listerine on his hands every morning and gargles with it and drinks a little to purge his stomach. He'd duct tape plastic bags to his entire body to keep the bugs out, but then people would ask too many questions.

His shopping cart keeps his life separated for him, a different piece of Dad in every plastic mansion. It leads him where each of those different pieces needs to go, even when he

doesn't want to. The hardest journey it leads Dad on ends among Douglas firs and tightly mown grass, surrounded by plastic vases with wilted flowers, stumbling over little rocks with memories hammered into their faces in the name of the unforgiving dead.

Dad unwraps his plastic bags, picks off days' worth of duct tape, tugs at his mismatched shoes, removes three socks from his left foot and two socks from his right, and stands on the sprinkler-damp lawn. The shopping cart sighs contentment in the summer breeze as Dad braves the unclean world to bring his love closer to me.



Tombstone Territory: The Unveiling by *Arnie Katz*

When I was very young, my understand of death's rituals wasn't very comprehensive. I got the concept that I wouldn't be seeing the deceased next Thanksgiving, but the steps by which a living person took up

residence under a tombstone were mostly a mystery.

My immediate family and the few relatives that survived the Nazis did discuss such things. They loved to discuss the medical condition of everyone they knew – and everyone who knew everyone they knew – but the mechanics of the thing were part of the adult world into which kids were not invited.

I knew at least a little about Death as far back as grade school. Although I didn't experience the deaths of my grandparents, all of whom died before I was born, one of my closest friends developed leukemia in 4th grade and I went to the gut-wrenching funeral about a year later.

Even then, though, I only went to the service. It was felt that my friend's mom would not be able to stand the sight of us at graveside, so we returned to school in deference to her feelings.

So it was perhaps not surprising that I had some serious gaps in my knowledge of this subject. I recall being especially perturbed when my parents announced that we would be attending the Unveiling of my late Uncle Joe.

His funeral, which had occurred about a year before my folks gave me this news, was the first I fully attended, from service to interment. I hadn't forgotten, and would never forget, the sight of my Aunt Ida trying to leap into

the grave after the coffin. I had no idea what else they could be doing with him a year after his demise.

I had no idea, but embryonic fan that I was in my early teens, I had an imagination with which to address this mystery. I conjured up a vision of an Unveiling that would've done credit to Stephen King or Clive Barker. In my mind, I saw them digging up Uncle Joe with the same diligence and solemnity with which they planted him in the rich earth of the Jewish cemetery. Then they'd pry off the coffin lid and make everyone bend down and peer into the coffin to see how beloved Uncle Joe had done underground for the previous 12 months.

My knees shook involuntarily as I scrunched in the backseat of my father's Chrysler New Yorker as we made the 10-mile drive to the cemetery. His sister, my mom, was agitated and weepy and her emotionalism fed my own. With every passing minute, I was more and more sure that I didn't want to witness the ghastly rite they would perform on dear, dead Uncle Joe.

Soon, all too soon as far I was concerned, we joined a group mostly composed of relatives that already huddled around the spot where they had buried Uncle Joe a year earlier. It was a cold, windswept day in New York, atmospheric as all get-out for a

trip to a grace, but also an ambience not likely to instill tranquility in the mind of a pubescent boy like me.

A rabbi signaled for everyone to draw closer.

It was time for the Unveiling.

Suddenly, without warning, the rabbi reached out to the tombstone and ripped away the piece of gauze that had unobtrusively covered the name on the tombstone. My mom and my Aunt Ida wailed, my dad looked uncomfortable – and I felt a rush of relief. It was the Tombstone, I finally understood, not the body that was being unveiled.



Checking Out by Andrew Trembley

Life is good in the SF Bay Area, particularly if you've got a comfortable income.

Death is good in the SF Bay Area, particularly if you were a wealthy Mason.

Not following me? I'm not surprised.

Back in the 1800's, "wealthy Mason" was kind of redundant. They lived well and they most definitely died well.

So death was good, but then it all went wrong.

The Masonic Cemetery used to lie where the University of San Francisco stands now. Sound a bit "Stephen King?" It's not even "South Park." Not in San Francisco. You won't be seeing stories of USF co-eds possessed by ravening hordes of Masonic ghosts, because the mortal remains (and presumably any attached spirits) aren't there anymore. In a strange and complicated series of legal and legislative maneuvers, the city of San Francisco, property owners concerned about the effect of nearby cemeteries on land values and public health advocates concerned about all those bodies in an area as densely populated as SF got new burials banned within the city limits and forced the dead to be disinterred and removed to new cemeteries in Colma.

Sure, when the Legion of Honor museum was being expanded in the early 90's, they found paupers' graves that hadn't been removed, and the city golf course there is likely covering more. The Masonic Cemetery (one of the Big Four centered around Lone Mountain) got more attention and

was removed to Colma's Woodlawn Cemetery.

If there was no family to care and pay for the removal, it was a no-frills affair, with new simple headstones just being carved and put up in Colma and moved bodies being placed in mass graves. Many fancy headstones from Masonic Cemetery were broken up and used to fill in the approaches to the new Golden Gate Bridge.

If you were a person of some stature, like Emperor Joshua A Norton I, you got a lot of ceremony, but not necessarily anything more. Norton also got a simple no-frills replacement headstone only recently "upgraded" by friends of Empress José I, the Widow Norton.

But if you had family...

Wealth begets wealth, and many illustrious "residents" of the Masonic Cemetery got a bit more perpetual care (paid for by their descendents) as they made their way from their final resting place to their final resting place.

Woodlawn Cemetery is a place of contrasts. A non-denominational cemetery, it's home to many modern granite headstones beautifully lettered in Chinese with porcelain portraits of the dear departed. It's also home to some really fabulous Victorian and early 20th century Masonic headstones. While obelisks are most common amongst the large monuments, Masonic symbols such as the *compass*

and square and the all-seeing eye can be found on nearly every early stone moved from the Masonic Cemetery.

Still, not even that makes Woodlawn truly interesting. It's the columbarium that's over the top in ways only San Francisco can be over the top.

As part of the process of banning burials in San Francisco and eventually removing the cemeteries, cremation became the only option to grieving family members who wanted their beloveds' mortal remains interred nearby, and the Masonic Cemetery saw to that market. A wealthy clientele paid for a beautiful and heavily used columbarium, and one that was for the most part trucked to Woodlawn and reassembled in the new site.

Art nouveau bas-reliefs decorate the staircase landing leading down to the gents' restroom (lined with nearly as much marble as the rest of the facility). Family niches featuring amazing stonework and beautiful wrought iron gates branch of grand hallways.

You haven't seen anything, though, until you've seen the library.

Or rather "The Sanctuary of Love."

The Sanctuary of Love is a library, much like one would find in a late Victorian gentlemen's club. Its dark shelves speak of wealth and age. Behind the barrister-style glass doors,

though, the books are a bit different. Each book is a relatively uniform size, perhaps 10" high, 7" wide and just under 2" thick. The spines are a bit too smooth for dark brown leather binding, and the printing a bit too sharp and white. The pages haven't yellowed at all, and are way too evenly cut for a book of the period.

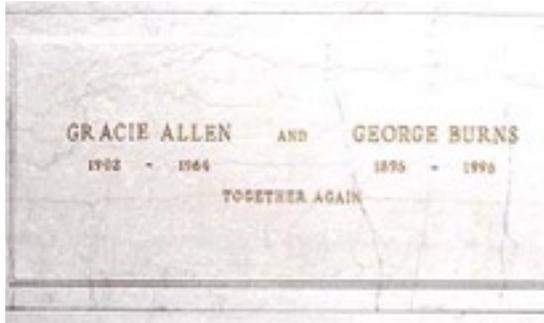
That might be because they're all marble. Little marble boxes. Thin slabs of dark brown marble make up the covers. Thin slabs of white marble on the remaining 3 sides make up the "pages." The spine is shaped with a nice gentle arch. Inset into that spine are white marble letters stating the name of the departed, with engraved and white-filled numerals indicating their birth and death. Nearly every spine is also engraved with Masonic symbols, presumably indicating rank or honors received.

That's not all, though. It wouldn't be an old club library without bookends, figures and statues scattered amongst the books, and there are plenty to satisfy. Like the books, though, they're not quite what they seem. Most are hollow bronzes that (not surprisingly) also house mortal remains.

It's a uniquely obsessive shared memorial. I can't imagine the pitch made when someone came up with the idea. I can only assume that this was wild excess created by the

demand for cremation and the desire to memorialize loved ones in a special fashion. Looking at the number of books, it was obviously popular with the Masons of the day.

I can think of worse places than a library to spend the rest of eternity.



We kissed at some graves, those where husband and wife had been buried together in love and devotion. Burns & Allen was one. She kissed me deeply and said 'That is how we'll spend eternity.'

When she left me, I sat in a graveyard for hours crying. It's the place you should do such things, no one will care why you're crying; it's perfectly expected. I walked home and I got in my car. We were going to drive to see Poe's grave. I made the trip myself. My car was broken into around Tulsa. I didn't care. I took the photo of the grave and I emailed it to her. She never responded.



The Tombstone is The Final Marker by Jonathan Mills

When I was a boy, I worried that the gravestones would come to life, those stones like teeth on a giant rasp. I was affraid of them, the stones that seemed to sprout from the lawn of the cemetary that we walked by almost every day. I never took the dare to walk through it: I'd be eaten.

I met a girl once who loved graveyards and tombstones and laying on top of the site of bones and coffins. Cammie wore black cloth, heavy eye-liner, pale skin like bone in the face. She brought me with her to Forest Lawn, then Hollywood Forever, and we even went to Colma and took photos.

You Know, Tombstone Design would seem to be a serious matter, but Hilary Ayer sent this submission which proves otherwise.

Do It Yourself Tombstone
Generation Kit
Here lies
_____ (#1)
In life he/she/heshe/it/they
_____ (#2)
As you walk by this grave,
_____ (#3)
But never
_____ (#4)

Multiple Choice:

- #1- Marvin the Martian, Old Paint, A Sad Song Written in the Key of Q, Days of Whine and Roses, 000101, The Last Romantic, Badeye Bill
- #2- Never missed a race day, tugged at many a heartstring, 10101, failed to take over the galaxy, disintegrated self many times, was faithful till the end, never saw a bottle xe didn't like, never sat still, (censored),
- #3- Shed a tear for me, modulate to a new harmonic, leave my saddle for a stone, 1111101, not a penny shall you have, kiss her for me - you twit - if you won't kiss her for yourself, look out - they may be gaining on you, dye your hair and dance a tune (#4). say I told you not to love,

fail to pay your grave taxes, wait for the moon to change, 0001000, leave a parking ticket, spill whiskey, pay the butcher's bill.



Slightly Short Sighted: The COBOL Tombstone
by
Christopher J. Garcia

There aren't many artifacts at the Computer History Museum that regularly elicit laughs, but there's one that does so very often. It's also the



only real artifact in the collection that fits the theme of this issue. To fully understand it, we have to take you back to the 1950s.

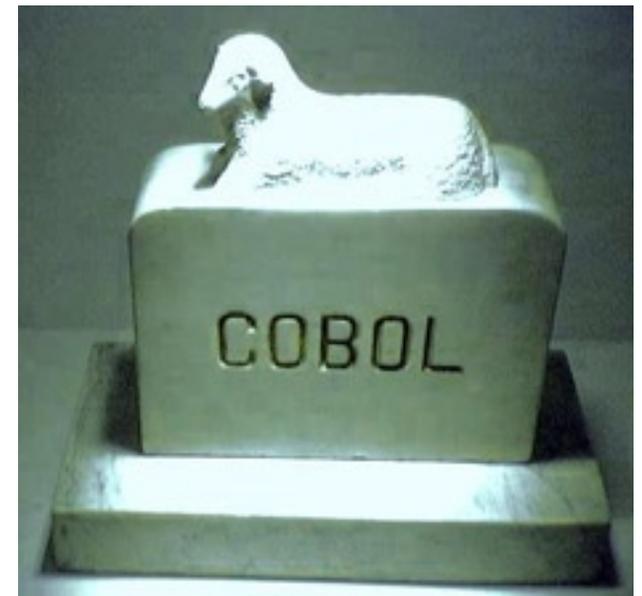
COBOL was one of those three big languages that popped up on just about every computer in the 1950s. The Common Business Oriented Language, COBOL was the choice of business (and, ironically the CIA and FBI) while FORTRAN was for science and ALGOL was for the filthy foreigners. COBOL was created by a committee, like all good things.

The committee that led to COBOL was originally called the Short Range Committee. The purpose of the group was to design a business language, and oddly enough, it was the Government that started the whole thing. The Pentagon was where the group began, but it was the National Bureau of Standards that put everything together. They pulled people from six companies and various government agencies to put together the specifications in 1959.

In many ways, Grace Murray Hopper gets a lot of credit for being the inventor of COBOL, which isn't actually true since she wasn't even on the committee. She is responsible for FLO-MATIC, which in many ways influenced the design of COBOL, along with Bob Bemer who wrote a programme called COMTRAN.

The Short Range Committee spun off a six person sub-committee to design the specs. They were William Selden and Gertrude Tierney of IBM, Howard Bromberg and Howard Discount of RCA and Vernon Reeves and Jean E. Sammet of Sylvania Electric Products. Sammet would become very important in the future as the cataloger of Computer Languages.

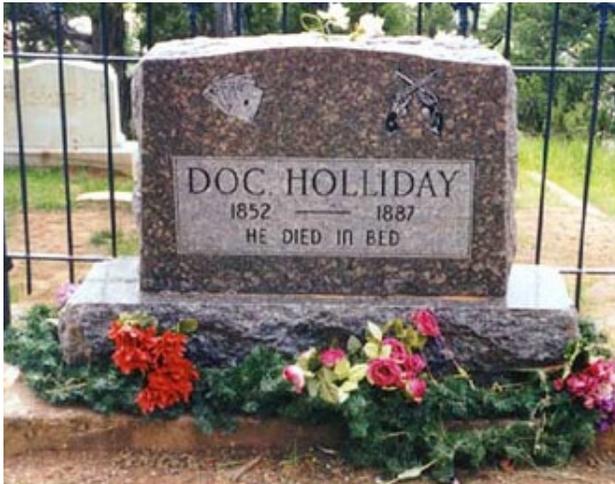
By late 1959, the sub-committee had published the specifications, and



a lot of folks thought they were pure crap. There were many arguments about it and the Short Range committee fought greatly, saying that changes needed to be made. They were probably right too. Some joker decided to play a prank and went out and bought a tombstone.

That's right, a literal tombstone.

The stone had COBOL on it and a little sheep to guide thee to thy rest. It's a funny little tombstone, and with the sheep it was probably meant for a child, but no one has ever claimed responsibility for sending it to the office. If I'd done it, I certainly would have wanted my stamp there alongside.



I ¹² YoziR Huckleberry: The Film Tombstone
by SaBean MoreLand Christopher J. Garcia

The Western film grew out of the Western novel and play, both of which came from the Western newspaper

report. Starting with the 1840s, many major Newspapers sent men to the frontier to send back articles on what was going on during the Westward Expansion. Many of these reporters never got any further West than St. Louis, and many not even half that far. Still, these articles gave birth to the Western novel, the earliest ones done by the same reporters who were writing up their 'Western' experiences. The Western play was big business, especially as a part of Wild West shows and the like. William S. Hart and Tom Mix both worked the Theatre and Wild West Show circuit.

Broncho Billy, along with Hart and Mix, became the first generation of Western film stars. Their films were rough and tumble, especially the films like Hart's Hells Hinges. They were far grittier than anyone remembers, mostly because they were before the Hayes Code and could do fun stuff like that. Once the code was over, when they really could have done some groundbreaking stuff, the Western was already starting to fade away. True, you had the Eastwood/Leone stuff, but mostly US Westerns with John Wayne and the company were growing stale. The Wild Bunch made everyone excited, as Peckinpah doing a Western is brilliant indeed, but it wasn't until the 1990s that they did the Western that would snap everything up.

That Western was Tombstone.

The idea for this version of the story of The Cowboys vs. The Earps and Doc Holiday was around for a long time, some say ten years before they finally got it made. It was influenced by The Wild Bunch as well as the works of directors like Sam Fuller. It was a raw script that called for a director who understood who to manage the material.

They made an odd choice.

George P. Cosmatos was a director of some reknown for his work on action films. He was known prior to Tombstone for the films Leviathan and the Sly Stallone vehicle Cobra. He was a good actioner, so they must have figured that he'd do OK with a Western that behaved like an action-revenge thriller.

The story starts with Wyatt Earp's arrival in Tombstone...well, that's not true, it begins with some voice-over that really sets the stage read by Robert Mitchum. It's actually wonderful set-up for the film. The film sets everything up beautifully, with



Wyatt coming to Tombstone after his stint as Sheriff in the Dakotas and Morgan and Virgil already there. On his first day, he runs across Josephine, the future Mrs Earp, who is in town as an actress. This may have been true, but she was also something of a call girl. Truth and cinema have little in common. Shortly after coming to Tombstone and opening their bar/casino, the Earps run afoul of the Cowboys, a gang of rough-riding ne'er-do-wells.

After a while, the Earps run into an old friend: Doc Holliday. Doc is played by a gent name of Val Kilmer. It's almost undeniable that Kilmer was at the top of his game here. He was intense and funny and perfect for the role of the most intense and funny man in the Old West. Kilmer plays the TB victim as having an itchy trigger finger and a strained body. His delivery reminds me of Dusty Rhodes from the 1980s. He's sly and he's fast and he's smart. It's a performance that is inches from chewing the scenery, but never really goes that far.

The rest of the cast is amply brilliant. Wyatt, played by the dependable Kurt (the Computer Wore Tennis Shoes) Russel, is tough and with



that 'stache you can't go wrong. Bill Pullman is equally great in his role, though it's Sam Elliot who was born to star in Westerns. Dana Delaney, no relation to Chip, is breathtaking as Josie. The love story is slightly tacked-on, but it's true, at least to a degree. There's Billy Zane in a role playing a traveling Shakespearean actor and Jason Priestley playing a supposedly gay guy who runs with the Cowboys. That's subtext, but it's well-implied. There's my man Michael Biehn as one of the Cowboys. You've also got future Oscar nominee Thomas Hayden Church and the guy who was Lucky, John Corbett, in smaller Cowboy roles. And there's Michael Rooker and Charleston Heston too!

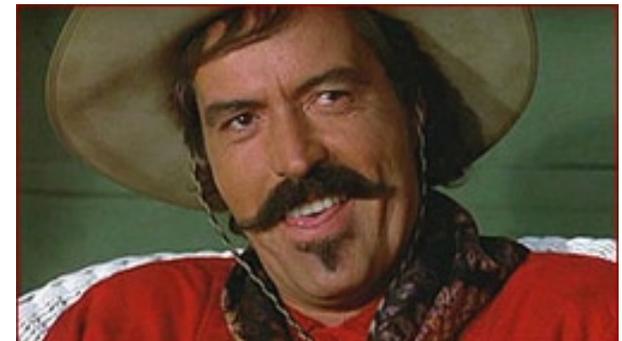
Possibly the best performance aside from Kilmer goes to Powers Booth. You may know him from the show Deadwood, where he's equally brilliant. Here he played Curly Bill, the leader of the Cowboys. Now, while the Cowboys were a loose group without any real 'leadership', it is true that Curly Bill was considered the roughest and toughest and had a group of cronies that ran with him. Booth is one of the most underrated film/tv actors of our times. He's so good here, in many



ways calling to mind another guy who was over-looked for many years, Mr. Lance Hendriksen.

There's a lot to like. The way they present the Gunfight at the OK Corral is interesting, and probably slightly better than the one in the film Gunfight at the O.K. Corral. It's beautifully shot and so well-edited that you just have to love it.

If the violence in Tombstone is troubling, it's because movies weren't where they are now. Yes, there were many violent films before, in fact the Rambo films were six years prior to Tombstone, but Tarantino and Singer and even the Cohens hadn't made violence a required part of storytelling yet. The film is just this side of The Wild



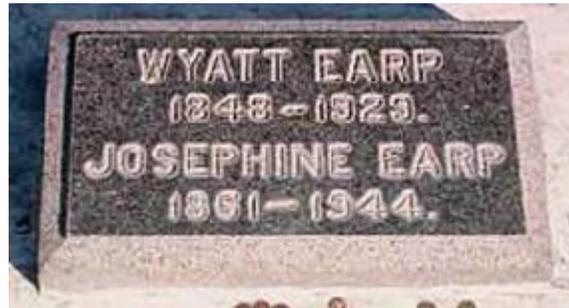


Bunch for violent expression and it's easily the most intense film of the early 1990s. In a year that gave us Schindler's List, the performance of Ralph Fiennes is nothing compared to that of Kilmer as Doc. Tom Hanks in Philadelphia pales to Kilmer or Booth for that matter. Liam Neeson would have measured up well to Russel, but no way he competes with Val. It was that good a performance.

The way the film is made, even with a lot of inaccuracies, is still powerful and entertaining. It wasn't until Ocean's 11 in 2001 that any film came close to being this cool again. It's probably the best performances of Russel, Kilmer, Elliott, Delaney, and Priestley. The cinematography is Oscar-caliber and the editing is magical. The music is solid and everything swings together amazingly well.

The two other modern Westerns that compare most favourably, Unforgiven and The Quick & The Dead, lack the slickness that Tombstone managed. None of the acting in Unforgiven is on the level of Kilmer (Hackman comes closest) and though TQ&TD has

amazing cinematography and brilliant pacing (not to mention turns by Leo DiCaprio and Sharon Stone that are notable), neither combines everything together to form such a powerful film as Tombstone. Sadly, the director passed away in 2005 and Mitchum is also left and gone-away. ValMer has never managed to hit the same note again, and neither has Russel (Poseidon may change that). It's a great film, one of the true legends of the West.



A Short Piece of Trivia from Andy Trembley

Wyatt Earp's tombstone isn't in Tombstone.

It's in Colma.

At the Little Hills of Eternity Jewish Cemetery.

So is he, or at least what's left of him.

And that leads nicely into...

Colma: The City of the Dead

*by
Christopher J. Garcia with help from
Johnny Garcia*

There Are More Tombstones than Dinner Plates in That City: John Paul Garcia

Colma really came to life, so to speak, when the City Fathers of San Francisco decided to stop allowing burials in city limits. That was 1900 and things in SF were looking really golden (and for six more years they were). The city of Colma, previously only a stop on a railway with maybe ten inhabitants, was picked as the site for more cemeteries to deal with the dead of San Francisco. For more than a decade, people who passed in SF were buried in Colma.

Then, in 1912, the City of San Francisco, now flush with investment monies from folks sweeping in after the '06 Quake, decided that it was time to evict the existing graveyards. This led to most of the graves in the several SF cemeteries being transported off to Colma as well. Several significant graves were sent over, including Emperor Norton's grave, which was moved in 1934.

Since then, the city of Colma has grown to around a thousand living people and nearly a million dead ones.

There are numerous people of note buried in Colma, including William Randolph Hearst (though not his loving Marion Davies, who was an San Franciscan originally), Former SF Mayor Joseph Alioto, The Yankee Clipper Joe DiMaggio (SF Born and Raised) and of course, Wyatt Earp,

whose third 'wife' was a Jewish lass who wanted to be buried with him so they ended up in the Jewish cemetery in Colma.

Colma's a lovely city, and quite, not surprisingly. They have one tradition that I enjoy more than any other, though I've never actually witnessed it.

On January 8th of every year, the group known as E Clampus Vitus



(or The Clampers) have a Doin' at Emperor Norton's grave in Colma's Heartland Cemetery. They have a guy dress as Norton and they are all drunk and most smoke cigars and a minor ceremony is held.

Since I was a kid, I've always loved Emperor Norton's story, and since I first heard of the Clampers (during college I encountered the Mountain Charlie Chapter in a Newspaper article) I've wanted to be a member (which is offered by invitation only). This event sounds perfect.

If you're interested in seeing Colma, go up 280 from San Jose and there's an exit right before you enter SF. If you're coming from the North, go south until you're in San Jose and then follow the directions from there.



Cheryl Morgan, at BASEA after I had announced the Tombstone issue, mentioned that there was a Procol Harum song that would fit the theme. She was kind enough to forward the lyrics to me.

Something Following Me
by
Procol Harum

While standing at the junction on 42nd Street
I idly kick a pebble lying near my feet
I hear a weird noise, take a look up
and down
The cause of the commotion is right
there on the ground
Imagine my surprise, thought I'd left it
at home
but there's no doubt about it, it's my
own tombstone

I went into a shop, and bought a loaf of
bread
I sank my teeth into it, thought I'd
bust my head
I dashed to the dentist, said, 'I've got
an awful pain!'
The man looks in my mouth and
screams, 'This boy is insane!'
Imagine my surprise, thought I'd left it
at home
but there's a lump in my mouth of my
own tombstone

I went to see a movie, got the only
empty seat

I tried to stretch out in it, something blocking my feet
Finally the lights came up, and I could clearly see
a slab of engraved marble, just staring up at me
Imagine my surprise, thought I'd left it at home
but there's no doubt I'm sitting on my own tombstone



Çanked from Wikipedia

Tombstone ads are most often used in the financial industry, where a particular transaction (such as an offering or placement of stock of a company) is formally announced, in a form that discloses the participants in a specified order according to their role in underwriting or brokering the transaction. (See bulge bracket.) In the United States, securities regulations require that most such advertising be in tombstone form, in order to prevent the advertisement to be perceived as promotion of the particular stock issue involved.

In The Same Vein...

We recently got a bunch of items that I thought were kinda cool and just recently found out what they were called.

In the days of joy called the 1980s, it became popular to mark your IPO or Merger or just about any other major business event by getting a lucite (or sometimes steel or marble or even wood) thingee made. These had been done since the 1950s, but there were so many of these done in the 1980s that it became almost comical. With the HUGE explosion in Tech companies in the 1990s, there were hundreds and hundreds of these things made and given out. Like everything



in the field of Computers, the Museum started getting dozens of these things. I always called them paperweights, but just yesterday I had a visit from someone who had donated about two dozen of them from MicroSoft, Borland, Aldus, and a bunch of other companies. She was a former investment banker and she was cleaning out her office since she was going on towards a career as a historical researcher for a large university's alumni committee.

“Yeah, I was with a company that specialized in Early Graves.”

“Early graves?”

“Yeah, we would couple with a company and then find a way to conquer their competition and then we'd give our client a Tombstone like the ones in this box as a sign that we'd managed to send the company to an Early Grave. MicroSoft used us for years and years. I still have about ten of the ones we did for them. We'd spend twenty grand on these things,

even sending them to the Presidents of the companies we bought out. Lots of fun those were.”

Most of the ones she gave us were from IPOs, but there were a few that announced ‘Completed Take-Overs’ and a few that celebrated ‘Glorious Mergers’.

So, when I said we only had one artefact that would qualify for this issue, I was just plain wrong.



The LoCer From Texas That Y'all Must Appreciate: John Purcell

Hey,

It seems like you're back on track, cranking out the fmz with your old rapid-fire delivery time again. Another good issue with a fun cover of a doctored photo. It almost looks real, which would be funny.

Sooner or Later there'll be a Drink Tank State Park. That's the next step!

Your recap of the ghost-hunting television shows is really well-written. I think the development of Reality TV made this kind of show a natural - or is that “a supernatural”? As long as I can remember, I have always loved a good ghost story. Never had an encounter, but that doesn't mean

that I don't believe in ghosts. There have been enough unexplainable phenomena over the years to indicate that there's something to this supernatural realm and all that make me at least keep an open mind about the subject. Underneath it all, maybe I don't believe in the afterlife, evil spirits, and all that rot, but it still makes for a fun story.

Being born into the belief in ghosts is tricky, because you want to rebel and not believe, but I've discovered that there's way too much stuff goin' on to ignore.

Thinking about it a bit more, I think we corporeal beings like having the ka-ka scared out of us at times. Kind of like living on the edge, as it were. Maybe this is because we need to feel the adrenaline rush of the hunt and chase we had in our primitive stage of existence, or something like that. There is definitely something primeval about being scared, though. The shows you mention, especially Most Haunted, don't scare me, but I do find them amusing. Personally, I think Yvette Fielding is a foxy lady who would believe just about anything you said along the lines of “here there be spirits.” Derek Acorah is, in my estimation, either a con artist, a very bad over-actor, or possibly a real medium. So much of what he says can be interpreted in multiple ways, and when he shifts into different voices,

throws himself on the floor, and wigs out screaming like a girlie-man, I just start laughing, gagging on my popcorn. I think Most Haunted is one of the funniest shows on television, but that's just my opinion.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: I'd almost prefer it to be a fake because that way would make things much more entertaining. Derek plays his role so well.

I used to own a copy of Walter Carlos' LP “The Well-Tempered Synthesizer” on which he recorded a whole mess of Bach's compositions. It was a great record, and I also liked his work on “A Clockwork Orange”, which is one of the most disturbing movies ever made. The book was really good, too, but I really liked the way Kubrick envisioned and realized it as a movie. Definitely great movie-making.

I've heard a lot of Switched-On Bach, though I've never owned a copy. Clockwork Orange is a great flick. It's hard for me to watch at times because of the way they depict the violence, but the way Kubrick directed it has had a serious effect on my ideas about filmmaking.

Good luck with the NFFF and linking it more positively with Fandom At Large. It was formed for a reason, and that was to provide a common ground in which sf fans can correspond and do things together.

Over the years various personages have misused their positions in the N3F, giving the organization an undeserving black eye. I think that your energy will rub off on it and its membership, and hopefully help the group to grow. It still has relevance in fandom today. I doubt if I'll ever join it, but knowing that it's out there will give me another site to visit and things to read. Definitely good luck to you, kind sir.

I'm already getting a little bit of traction with The Directorate and they've been into the ideas I've thrown their way, which has only been a couple of things, but they were into them and I'm currently working on the first of them.

Hey, I wrote that fanzine review column about you in my zine for a reason: Good Press. I felt that you have produced a body of work that deserved a proper mention and that you should be commended for your energy, enthusiasm, and devotion to the cause. The zines and writings that you have produced in the past year or so are fun to read, and this was my way of saying thank you.

I was quite surprised, and happily so. I tend to get a little bit of press from folks for all the stuff I do (mentions in various fanzines and on a few blogs). I was so happy. You and Peter Sullivan seem to be singing my praises louder than

anyone else!

Besides, I had two pages to fill.

Nothing fills pages better than my curly-haired head

You and Lloyd Penney talk about Zeppelins. Ken Fletcher used to draw the best fannish zeppelins back in the day; one would be up there, floating over Minneapolis, with a long banner waving behind it saying "Mpls in '73." Fun stuff.

Must get Zeppelin Art! I am, in fact, a supporter of Mpls in '73'!

Well, not much else to comment on, so I think I'll sign off and get ready for class. Take it easy, and. . .

Well, don't let me hold you up...

Whoops!

My cell-phone just vibrated on my hip. I have it on silent mode so other folks here won't be disturbed by the Monty Python theme ringtone.

All the best,

John Purcell

I don't have a custom ringtone, but if I did, it would be Monty Python's Theme (or Sunshine & Lollipops). It was the recessional at my Emerson Graduation.



Chris Asked Me To Write About Tombstones
by
Judith Morel

I'm not a Goth girl like I was in High School, when I nearly ODED on eyeliner and face powder. I don't have long stories of going to graveyards or coming across an Indian burial ground in the middle of the night. I've never been to Tombstone, AZ. I've never had a Tombstone Pizza. I've almost no connection with Tombstones.

But they're everywhere.

My job involves getting things for people that they don't know how to find. Even with eBay, there are items of desire that are not easy to locate. Ever tried to find a Minolta Minolcom? It's not easy, but it's also what's required to make an exact replica of the Ghostbusters costumes. Ever seen a Luke Provescya bubble gum card? I have. Took me nearly six weeks to get one of them out from Russia and it required me to learn how to read the Cyrillic alphabet.

Almost all the items I'm asked to get are tombstones. Not just of dead people, though I always get two or three requests for items after someone famous dies (Ask me about how I got a dozen Johnny Cash guitar picks), but they're all tombstones of moments in people's lives.

I once had to find a 1969 edition

of the Neiman-Marcus catalog. It took me forever, I went to N-M and they weren't helpful at all. There are a few private collectors, but they're not the nicest of people to deal with and it finally took me traveling out to Sparta, NY, to finally talk one of the guys out of one of his spares. I brought it to my client, an eighty year old millionaire in the gallery business, and he told me how his son had worked on the lay-out of the issue. It was his first job after he came back from 'nam. He told me the story and he flipped through the pages. I didn't press, but I got the feeling that he didn't talk to his son much, and since he mentioned his Grandkids, I figured his son was still around. He wanted the catalog to serve as a reminder, a tombstone for that moment in history when his son came home and started real life again.

Another memorable one was my search for a 1920s movie. He wanted a 16mm reduction, which are usually easier to find. The movie was a comedy from Mr. Chaplin called The Circus. While Chris loves Harold Lloyd (and please SHUT UP about him, Chris) and SaBean is a giant Buster Keaton fan, I like Chaplin. I spent a lot of time digging around old shoppes in Hollywood and combing the on-line desert until I finally found one for a price slightly below rubies. I bought it and I gave it to the guy. He sat me down and we watched it together. Good

stuff from one of the funniest men who ever lived. He said that he had first seen it on a date at the Silent Movie Theatre in 1980 or so. He actually got a little misty eyed talking about the time and the way they had wonderful date and a long relationship that ended badly. Chaplin made for a good tombstone to that moment.

I've even done it in my personal life with a gent whose initials are CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA. We once went to a baseball card show. I love collectors shows (so much money to made bringing things out of there to the richer people who want the stuff without the interaction with dealers) and Chris is almost as big a fan. He saw a beautiful Willie McCovey card and he debated for almost an hour over whether he should buy it or not. In the end, he passed it up. Later that day, when I was flush with cash from having sold an old tobacco card, I bought Chris a Yaz baseball card where he had the giant sideburns. Chris kissed me. Later, I contacted that first dealer and bought Chris his card, after talking him down to nearly 60% of the price. I gave it to him the next time he came down to see me (and SaBean...grumble) and it was a nice experience. I think he knew that it was a tombstone for the moment he kissed me (**Well, I do now!-CG**) and I've seen it at his place in a location of honour, so I'm OK with that.

I think there's too much meaning in some objects. That catalog, that film, the baseball card, all of them are markers for the distant past when we could be doing everything it'd take to bring those moments back or at least build them into truths we can deal with. The old guy could have reconciled with his son, the producer could have stopped his bitching and made the relationship work. I could have held on and tried to make things work with Chris via long hard talks with the sister I was so busy hating. Instead, we chose to bury those moments and plant a stone at their heads. It's a shame.



My Tombstone
by
James Mient Willis

I've thought a lot about it and I know what I want on my Tombstone. I want it to express my time here on Earth, the ways in which I've lived and the ways in which I've changed because of those around me. I want to tell everyone that I love them, that they mean everything to me, that I am grateful for having them. It's a deep thought to convey in such a way... but with that in mind, I'd like Pepperoni and Sausage.



The Fate of The Drink Tank and SF in SF

Not on the Theme, but it needs to be said. Warren Harris, the founder of SF/SF and the current lay-out master, is leaving for greener pastures. I'm sad to see him go because he's one of the best Lay-out dudes I've ever seen. I'll miss having his clean, clear design as a part of SF/SF. I've been given the task of lay-out from here on out and it's going to affect The Drink Tank.

No, I'm not going to stop doing it. That would be crazy of me. But I will probably not be getting to one every week, but I'll try. SF/SF is a big zine and lay-out will probably take a lot of time, so we'll see how it goes.

In the mean time, I've been forced (by myself) to drop out of eAPA, which is sad because I really enjoyed it, and will be dropping The Everlasting Club when my membership is up. Bummers both, they are, but for my sanity, it's probably for the best. I'll stick with FAPA because Claims De-

partment is just too much fun and it gives me an excuse to take a trip and read and watch movies. That and I just love being a part of FAPA.

And fear not, fellow Neffers, I'll still be doin' my duty to the Club.



Tombstone: The History of The Undertaker

“The Phenom, the Undertaker!”

There's little to say about a man who's near seven feet tall and tougher than nails, but you always gotta try at times like these. The Undertaker is one of, if not THE biggest star the WWE has on their roster. He's been around since the end of the Hogan era, has been the champion a few times and is one of the symbols of modern wrestling.

The Undertaker's real name is Mark Calaway. That's the correct spelling, don't worry though everyone, including people who should know better, gets it wrong at least half the time. He was born in Texas, Houston to be precise, and he wanted to be a basketball player. In high school, he played



ball and was pretty good, by no means great, but he could move better than a lot of guys who were his size. This led him to the eyes of promoter Fritz Von Erich (aka Jack Adkisson) who thought he'd make a good wrestler. He was half-right. He brought him into his World Class Championship Wrestling promotion in the mid-1980s, but he was green and a weak wrestler, so he didn't really go far for a number of years. I believe he was also working as a bouncer at the time as well, which isn't hard to believe. He used various names, including Texas Red and, my personal favourite that he used in Japan, Punisher Dice Morgan.

By 1989, he had caught the eye of the good people in World Championship Wrestling. They were fight a losing fight against the World Wrestling Federation and needed bigger guys to get the attention of the fans. At least that was the thought at the time. Calaway could move, he was a strong guy and had a big Flying Clothesline that looked pretty awesome, so they signed him up. They put him in a team called The Skyscrapers with Dan Spivey. He went by the name Mean Mark Callous. He eventually went to being a singles wrestler and even had a title match

against Lex Luger, who was really good at the time. The stint there wasn't a big deal. He never gained that big a following, and despite being kinda impressive at his size, he was let go in October of 1990. That was the worst decision that WCW would ever make.

The WWF's main brain is Vince McMahon, but there are always others who are there to talk to him and make good recommendations to him. It's been said that Pat Patterson was the one who said that Vince should sign Mr. Calaway to a deal and try and give him a killer gimmick. The gimmick is pure genius. The Undertaker is a supernatural being with all sorts of powers. He can teleport (which explains why he's always disappearing and escaping locked coffins), and he can cause lighting to strike and can take command of video feeds. It was a gimmick that had never been tried on the level that they were using it with him.

His first match was at Survivor Series 1990 where he teamed with Ted DiBiase. They called him Kane, The Undertaker, but eventually dropped the Kane and reused it when Kane, his supposed brother, came and joined the Fed. He was managed by Brother Love, who was also given some of the credit for helping create the gimmick. They were together for a while, but another Texas legend was called in and given a role.

Percy Pringle was a manager



for years and years. He was a big name manager and a great talker in the World Class promotion. He was in many ways a low-rent Bobby Heenan. I always loved Percy, even though he was a bad guy. They brought him in, dyed his hair black, his face powdered white and they called him Paul Bearer. They had him do the promos and with that pairing, everything fell into place.

The Undertaker took off, beating Hogan for the belt, though they stripped it from him due to controversy, and then he did a job to Hogan to give the belt back to him. He feuded with Jake Roberts, the Undertaker and various others.

He turned face with the feud against Jake and ended up feuding with guys like Giant Gonzalez, who is among the worst wrestlers of all-time, and Kamala. These feuds did OK, but the big one came later.

While Undertaker was turning, the title had been given to The Nature Boy Ric Flair, and then to Macho Man Randy Savage, and then back to Flair and then Bret Hitman Hart. Then it ended up on the waist of Yokozuna.

Calaway had a serious back injury, so in a terrible match, they had a dozen bad guys come and put him in the casket and then did some weird wire work to say that UT had died. He was away for six months.

After that, they had a fake Undertaker come in and they feuded. This was the worst period of the UT age.

When Mick Foley came in, he feuded with The Undertaker in matches that were violent and smart brawls. These helped bring the WWE back into the spotlight and make people understand that wrestling was changing. Foley would do the stunts and Taker would win the matches. This was a feud of the year.

After that, UT went through changes, becoming less about the Supernatural and more about being an American Badass. He won the title from Sycho Sid at WrestleMania and then held it until Bret Hart beat him, leading to the famous Montreal finish that ended up with Shawn Michaels and Vince McMahon screwing Bret out of the title.

In October 1997, Shawn Michaels and The Undertaker had the first Hell in a Cell match. It was a steel cage with a lid on it and it was violent and bloody and wonderful. Easily the best match the big man ever had. The finish introduced his brother Kane.

Undertaker went through his real slack period in 1998-2000. He

wasn't a major player, and even took time off to recover from years of injuries. He mostly feuded with, and then teamed with, Kane.

By 2001, he was back in the game and feuding with HHH, the biggest star and the greatest heel at the time. He was a tough guy and would throw lots of punches and work really hard. He had some fine matches with Kurt Angle starting in 2002. Kurt, a legendary Amateur and a great pro too, brought out the best in the big man and they had matches that would make you think that both of them were Hall of Fame caliber workers. Really, only Kurt was, but he had enough left over to lend some to UT. They had a couple of great matches earlier this year too.

I wouldn't expect Mark to get another run with the Championship anytime soon. He's about 40, he's had injuries and he's sorta a better attraction without the belt.

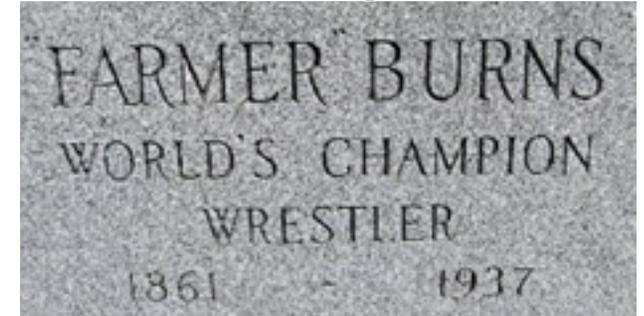
Watching an Undertaker match can be tedious, he's sometimes a methodical worker and can really slow down a match's flow, but he usually punctuates it with his athleticism. He's known for that Flying Clothesline and a spot where he gets an arm-wringer on and then climbs up the ropes, walks half-way across and jumps off with a clubbing forearm. They call that old school. He's added a triangle choke to his move list recently. Of

course, he'll always be remembered for his Tombstone, the inverted piledriver. The Piledriver is one of the most spectacular moves in wrestling. In Mexico it's an automatic disqualification, same with Memphis. It's a move where you turn the guy upside-down, then fall back or to your knees making it look like you've just driven his head into the mat. In reality, the guy shrugs his shoulders, lifting his head and preventing serious damage, though there have been many cases of that failing, including the famous Steve Austin version from Owen Hart. Undertaker's is the best known version, but he's not the first to have done it.

The Undertaker just had his biggest moneymaking moment this year. They released a three-disc set of Undertaker's best matches. The great ones were almost all there, including a lot of the Foley matches, the famous Hell in the Cell, a Hart match, and at least one HHH and Angle match. Can't argue that they made some good choices. It's the best DVD that the WWE has put out since the ECW history DVD and I'd say it's even better than the big selling and well-loved Bret Hart DVD that came out at almost the same time. The name of the Undertaker's DVD: Tombstone: The History of The Undertaker

So, that's the tie-in. I'm a fan, though not as big as many people are, and I hope he spends a few more

years in the business so that I can see him work a few more great ones. Hi smatches with Angle lately have proven that he can still go if he has to. I just hope they don't keep him around too long and he ends up like some of the other broken-down superstars.



OK, that's all. I really wanna thank Jay Lake for his fiction, Eric Mayer and Andy Trembley and Mike Swan and John Mills and Cheryl Morgan and Arnie Katz and My Pops and SaBean Morel and Judith Morel and John Purcell and of course Me. Y'all did a great job in providing wonderful content. I'd also like to say thanks to Victor Banis and to M Lloyd for sending stories that I really enjoyed, but at twenty pages already, there's just not enough room for 'em and still being able to print some for BASFA. Got comments: garcia@computerhisory.org.

