

The Drink Tank Issue 81: Back to the Normal Grind



(and Loving It!)

It's good to be back...sort of. Most folks wouldn't even notice that I'd gone, but I was in fact absent. The last issue, pretty much all I did was lay-out (and polish an article or two, including cutting M's down a fair bit) and the issue before that was a wash since I really didn't have time to do an issue but I put out that little thing to make myself feel like I'd managed to keep the once a week thing.

This issue is full of Frank Wu, Judith Morel, LoCs and Me. That's right, me baby, ME! While the last couple of weeks have been rougher than Hell (and thanks to Earl Kemp, Graham Charnock, Dave Burton, John Purcell, Eric Mayer, Lloyd Penney, Helen Spiral, Joyce Katz, and all the others who were kind enough to sent notes over the last few days) but I'm ready to give you another real issue.

Chris

*MORE THOUGHTS ON MICROMANAGING AND
MACROLEADING, or:
SO, UM, WHAT'S YOUR LONG-TERM, BIG-SCALE
PLAN?*

by Frank Wu

A book's popularity comes and goes. I've missed out on a lot of "books everyone's talking about", so now I'm playing catch-up with audiobooks. After years of hearing about it, I finally got "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" (the self-help book, not the similarly-titled Dilbert book, which I can't imagine working as an audio). Stephen R. Covey makes an interesting distinction between managing

and leading.

Example: If a team of machete-wielding workers is picking their way through a jungle, the manager keeps them from chopping each other's arms and legs off. The leader says: We're in the wrong forest.

I've been managing "Guidolon," but I really want to be leading. I've been dealing with small issues when I want to be dealing with big ones. Small - but desperately important things like: How many pixels wide is the line around Guidolon's nose? What exact shade of purple is perfect for Lyta's sleeves? Do we hold the establishing shot for 4 seconds or 6? These questions force me to make decisions outside my strengths. I'm a painter by training and experience, not an animator.

This can be bad, because I don't notice certain things.

Example: A character as he moves "squashes" and "stretches," but he needs to maintain constant volume to keep the illusion of life.

Duh.

I didn't know that.

But it can be good, and I learn on the fly.

Todd Tennant designed a slew of wonderful, complex, shaded, multi-colored monsters. An experienced animator would say, they're too complicated to animate. But, me, being a painter, thought they looked great and we used them essentially as they were, without simplifying. It created an enormous amount of extra work, but the look is distinctive and fabulous. And in animation it's all about the look.

But these are small-scale decisions - like most of the others I need to make. How many postcards do we order for the show? Ten thousand, or will five thousand do? How many T-shirts do we give away? And black (cooler looking) or white (cheaper)? Right now everything goes through me. If we sell this thing, the first thing I'm going to do is hire a production manager (I've got someone in mind).





Then I can pull back and think about the bigger issues.

Like:

What is this TV show trying to tell the world?

What kinds of stories do we want to show?

What are the characters all about?

How do we expand into children's books and videogames? How do we market this in Mexico?

The core issue here is integrity. Integrity of the artistic vision. And integrity of marketing

the artistic vision. As for integrity of the vision... Recently I found an old comic book version of 2001: A Space Odyssey. That movie being ponderous, thought-provoking, heavy. But the comic book is... an action adventure comic. The caveman fights a sabre-tooth tiger! The astronaut fights a giant space squid! (I'm not making this up.) The next issue promises a She-Demon! Oh my. Somewhere between 1968 when the movie came out and 1976 when the comic came out, someone (Clarke or Kubrick)

turned away for a moment... and integrity was lost.

In the original script for the old Star Trek episode "Whom Gods Destroy," Spock was knocked out by a blow to the head. Nimoy said no, and it was changed - and thus Spock maintained his record of never getting knocked out in a fight. The episode "The Enterprise Incident" originally had a scene where Spock plants kisses all over the female Romulan Commander. Again, Nimoy said no.

Indeed, it's painful to watch the earliest Trek episodes from before they decided that Spock would never smile, never laugh (unless under the influence of weird alien space spores).

As for commercial integrity... I think of Matt Groening's "The Simpsons" and his comic book "Life in Hell." The former displays shameless, unrestrained profiteering. Bookbags, wallets, coasters, games, watches, toys - you name it, The Simpsons are on it. In stark contrast, the Life in Hell characters have, to date, never been marketed. Groening's kept that as his own personal vision (originally a fall-back in case "The Simpsons" failed).

Which path will "Guidolon" follow (if it comes to that)? How will I feel if a pot dealer wants to put Guido on his nickel bags? How big will the dumptruck full of money have to be before I say yes? (Uh, infinitely large.)

I do have some ideas for marketing. I like the idea of every kid in Mexico having a Guidolon doll. Then Daniel Spector pointed out that they already have their own chickens. What they might really want is dress-up kits so they can make their real chickens look like Guidolon. I also like the idea of bandages and

skin-burn ointment that show pictures of Guido shooting out his fire breath.

But what is the long-term plan for the Guidolon franchise?

“The Simpsons have been around since 1989. A third of Americans can’t even remember a time before they existed. Can I imagine being tied to a single artistic endeavour that long?

No way, Jose.

Right now, I own Guidolon (though I share a lot of rights with Todd Tennant, who designed most of the characters, other than Lyta, Capn Takao and Trisuron and the Spaceship XK-Omega-9, plus I wrote the thing), but the the only thing I really own is My Life (which I actually co-own with God). I think after three or four or five years of Guidolon, I will be artistically exhausted, ready to hand the reins over to someone else (but I still get a nickel from every Guidolon dress-up kit).

I see the Guidolon TV show as a platform for people cleverer than me to tell stories I’d never think of. In the way that Roddenberry created “Star Trek,” but there’s no way he would have ever written episodes as brilliant as “Mirror, Mirror” or “City on the Edge of Forever.” That took outside people, and that’s what I want to do with Guidolon (so if you have any clever story ideas, lemme know. Remember that Guidolon and his friends make movies - so their stories can take place in any place or time, past, present or future - giving the franchise incredible flexibility.)

So, ideally, after our first five year mission, either “Guidolon” dies quietly (if not

before), or I hand it over to people who are far more brilliant than me. (I’ve only gotten this far by collecting unto myself people who know more, or are more clever, or more technically proficient, than me - and then letting them do their thing.)

I like the idea of Guidolon doing a “reboot” like “Battlestar Galactica,” where it goes quiescent for a few years, and then re-emerges completely differently. Maybe at that point someone who’s a better writer than me can re-form Guidolon the Giant Space Chicken as a serious domestic drama that tackles the heavy issues of the day.

That’d be fun.

And, so after killing myself by putting every ounce of creative energy I have into the Guidolon thing, after five years, I move on. (When the Beatles hit America, John Lennon was asked how long he thought they’d last. About 5 years, he said, which was about right.) 5 years is about right. I mean, The Six Million Dollar Man/Bionic Woman/Bionic Boy/Max the Bionic dog and all that lasted about 5 years, and aren’t we glad? So did the original Planet of the Apes, what with all the Escaping from, Battling for, and Returning to that place. After 5 years, yeah, we were all pretty sick of ape masks. (And Trek used up all its cool ideas years and years ago.)

After I jump off the Guidolon franchise and allow Guidolon to be free, free! to have a life of his own - after either running it into the ground or handing the reigns off to someone else who’s cleverer than me - after

that,

I’ll be free too.

I’ll be able to guiltlessly lounge around watching TV or floating in water. And maybe I’ll go get another Ph.D., this time in something fun like hunting for dinosaurs, or maybe looking for a new species or even a new phylum. I like the idea of spending a couple years traveling around the world on missions trips, digging water wells for people who don’t have water - to pay back some of the Goodness and Love given to me. You and I, if we eat well and exercise more than I do now, will live a really long time. Perhaps long enough to see tech that will allow our brains to be transferred into immortal robot bodies with the strength of five gorillas. In which case, I want to be the first person to walk across the bottom of the Pacific Ocean - the long way. Who knows what marvels I will find?

And that is my long-term plan.





*These Mechanical Devices and the Men
Who Turn Them into Devils!
The Mysterious Geographic Expeditions of
Jasper Morello*

There was only one theft at this year's Oscars. It was a victory by a short animated film called *The Moon & The Son: An Imagined Conversation*. I'm not saying it wasn't a good little film, in fact it was a fair bit better than many recent winners from groups like Pixar, but there was one of the truly great animated shorts ever on the ballot and it should have easily won.

That film was the *Mysterious Geographic Expeditions of Jasper Morello*.

The story is one of utter beauty: a young navigator of Iron Dirigibles, Mr. Jasper Morello, failed by one degree and caused an accident where at least one person died. That's haunted him and has kept him from flying for

a while. In the meantime, Jasper got himself married to a woman who works as a nurse, which is a rough job as there is a serious pandemic sweeping through the land, which happens to a *Jetsons* world meets my greatest SteamPunk fantasy. The beauty of the piece is that world, but the true impact comes from the story.

The men set off with a scientist to try and find a cure.

That's a classic SF-theme, a scientist who wants to find a cure at any cost, but here it's played out in a brilliant series of explorations. The Doctor is straight and to the point, including taking the ship to find a Spider monster that turns out might be the actual

cure for the epidemic that's working through the city. On one hand, it proves to be the cure, on the other, it also kills people.

The entire story is strong enough without the amazing visuals, and even at twenty minutes, when most animated shorts are starting to drag, it

had me riveted to my seat.

Wow, that was cliched even for me.

Anyhow, the visuals are done much in the way that Victorian cut-out shows were done. They are almost a shadow play, which feels so appropriate with the SteamPunky goodness that is the story. I'm a huge fan, as you all know, but here, the story is great and the visuals are superb. There's nothing I can say that hurts this short.

And yet, it lost.

Here's my theory: *The Moon & The Son* is a goody-goody short and with a Pixar short in there to split the vote, it just couldn't win.

But you really must see it!





***Letter-Graded Mail
sent by my Loyal Readers
to garcia@computerhistory.org
Let's start off with the e-mail I
don't have to dig around my stuffed
EMail programme for- John Purcell
on Issue 80!***

Chris,

In actuality, this loc is for the fine folks who put out the 80th issue of *Drink Tank*. Allow me to begin by saying that you are a very fortunate person to be surrounded by such wonderful, caring people who are willing to pick up the slack while you're dealing with your recent loss and all of the business that accompanies it. So,

when you get this, pass along the word to Judith, M, and Frank that I most certainly appreciate their efforts here, and that I think they are all fantastic people who love you dearly. Count yourself blessed, young man.

M and Judith started it by sending in little articles adn saying to run them. I got Frank's article about twenty minutes after M's. I cobbled them together and made it into an issue. M's original was a bit longer, but I had wanted to keep it to one page.

Onward to the loc before I make myself too *verklemp*t mess up my typing.

Judith gives us all an interesting glimpse into the make-up of one Christopher J. Garcia. Based on what little I've learned about Chris from his writings, he most certainly is what I would label a successful person: he holds down a job he enjoys immensely, has friends, partakes of interesting outside interests and hobbies, and is well-educated. It is an eye-opener for me to think of Chris as a "half-breed"; while Cherokee-Armenian is quite a combination, but I would think that the dominant prejudice he faces in America of being labeled "Mexican" is probably the most damaging. Personally, I could care less, but I think you will find that

the more educated a person is, the more liberal-minded and accepting of differences that person will be. It is the generally barely educated masses in America (read: those with only a high school education or less) and those geographically-attitude-challenged masses (read: southern conservatives) who are the ones with the biggest problems in America.

I can see that, but on the other hand, I can see the other side. The more educated someone is the more likely they are to disregard anything that doesn't fit the norm (ie. the uneducated). I have a huge problem with folks like David Cross who have an anti-stupid person belief.

But Chris is definitely not a fuck-up in my book. It's too bad such success separates him from his family. I am glad to read that his brother David is successful, too. It kind of makes me sad to think of how his cousins look at Chris and how they react. I'm sure he's heard it and thought of it before, but chances are there's a solid streak of jealousy running through them. Too bad. It's all about making the effort, which Chris has done. Too bad they can't see Chris as a winning example of what *they* could accomplish if they put their minds to it.

David's become the measuring stick for the family in everything but education, where I'm the guy. It's kind weird to be the positive example.

One final thought here: I like that song "Half-Breed" by Cher, too. She's done some pretty decent stuff over the years, and still looks fantastic!

We went down to American Girl Place in LA this weekend and on the way we listened to a Live Cher CD and it had Half-Breed and Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves on it. We kept singing 'I was born in a wagon of a travelin' show' all weekend.

M's thoughts on slutty American college girls compared to slutty European college girls are well-taken. Speaking from the male side of things as a college teacher, there are certainly girls who are out there displaying their wares and trolling for a catch. I sure as hell can't touch - lose my job and reputation in less than a heart-beat - but from a distance I can certainly enjoy the show. It is very entertaining at times. Some year I would like to teach in Europe, though; my personal choices would be the Czech Republic and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), or even Ukraine. St. Petersburg still has a huge draw on me, too, a hanger-on from my years of Russian Studies at the University of

Minnesota and Iowa State University.

I've thought of doing the Russia thing a few times, and M and Jay's time in Moscow made me wanna more. Still, I'd much rather do the Scandahoovian countries.

Frank's continuing saga of Guidolon is more thoughtful fodder to consider about his chances of getting that sucker aired. I admit that I have seen a few episodes of *Sealab 2021* and some of the other odd-ball stuff on Adult Swim, so Frank probably does have a real shot of getting his show on the air. Good luck to you, Frank! All my best wishes go with you, no matter how berserk I think your show is. Sometimes the most over-the-top stuff is what works the best. Go for it!

It's a big project and Judith told me that she's writing a big ole story about the reality of selling shows to tv and how they rip you at every turn.

All for now, and I look forward to reading about Baycon in future issues. Take care of yourself, Chris, and tell your contributors/friends that I enjoyed the issue.

All the best,

John Purcell

Delicious! And now, on the matter of the memorial issue I put out, Mr.

Eric Mayer!

Chris,

Nice tribute. Don't know how you managed to get anything done under the circumstances. Sounds like your Pops at least had a good and interesting run and it wasn't just all the same old same old as everybody else which is the real horror. And, of course, he turned you on to Fandom which substantially increases your chances of not ever being among the most useful members of society, and I mean that as a compliment. What you said elsewhere though, about inheriting your Pop's porn collection. How cool is that!!

Yeah, Pops was a nut and he packed a lot of living into those fifty years he got. Even when things were really hard (like when he was hit by a car leading to a week-long coma and multiple pins in his leg) he still did everything he could to be weird/helpful/fun. It's a bit strange to have been given a porn collection, especially since this one's nowhere near as cool as the one from the 1980s that I got, but it'll do!

And now, with LoCs on issues in the distant past: Mr. Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

I'm just going to use the same excuses,

they seem to work, way behind with Drink Tank, issues 75 to 78, gotta catch up, yadda, yadda, yadda...dog ate my homework, by the way...

75...I have never been to Las Vegas, but if there's a cheap flight coming up some time, well, you never know. Yvonne goes to a lot of space conferences these days, and the perfect place for aerospace companies is SoCal and the desert. You might see her before you see me. But then, we are now definitely going to LAcon IV, so you'll see us both. (Man, you love that camera, dontcha?)

Yeah! I'm psyched to finally get to meet one of my regulars in person. I'll probably get to meet John Purcell in the coming year (if we can't manage to make a simultaneous Vegas trip, it'll be at CorFlu) and I'm hoping that I'll get around to meeting that Mr. Peter Sullivan in due time.

Dear SaBean...I wish the arts could be the arts, too. Instead, it breaks down into a business, and perhaps the only way to loosen some corporate purse strings is to perform to demand, and perhaps a little T&A for the execs. The arts should not have to worry about money, but that's the situation just about everywhere. They can't rely on government handouts, as too many of them see money for the

arts as just thrown away.

Too true. Still, sounds like her company is a bit looser than some (I'll have to tell y'all about my days working with the Boston Ballet)

I like paying low prices, too, who doesn't?, but I will not willingly go into a WalMart. There's the Bay, Sears, Zellers, and lots of other large stores here, so WalMart can go stuff themselves. Chris, I just can't see you as a Goth. Your wardrobe would have to get totally black, your complexion would have to get totally white, and you'd probably have to shave and lose about 50 pounds. Definitely not for me, either. Goths just don't dress in tacky Hawaiians. Just too happy.

It's true, I did a little Goth time, but believe it or not, there are Goth Hawaiian shirts. I used to have one that was block with these vampires in Hula skirts. I kid you not!

Coffee...at LAcon IV, we're staying at the Hilton, and there's a Starbucks inside it. Yvonne says she'll drink it because she needs the caffeine, but one good thing about Starbucks is that they serve a fast lunch, and if we're going to jam as much good times as we can into five days of Worldcon, fast lunches will be a good thing.

Frank, Jim and I are across the street at a cheap Motor Lodge.

We've got a free breakfast every morning and a Denny's next door to swing through between events. MMMMMMM...Moons Over My-Hammy

76...Haven't started with the Bastards of Kirk project yet, as it's been difficult to get all the players together for rehearsals. Initial shooting is done, and I need to come in for a day or rehearsal and shooting, and then I should be done. The sponsoring comics studio got a big contract from Hasbro, so production was stopped for a few days while they did toy designs. Guidolon should watch his back, or he'll keep a KFC going for years. Frank, you'd better watch about those images of Olivier, because his estate might come up and sue your ass. Lots of estates are suing for unlicensed use of the images of their famous and dead departed. Being an LLC may protect you, but be wary, just the same.

There is nothing I hate more than scheduling. It never seems to work out (just ask Frank about trying to get time to record voices) You know, I never thought of that. Frank, listen up!

The Jiggle/Dream Team just shows that the best way to a client's wallet is through his gonads. It also proves that talent is not necessarily stored in a brassiere. Devon may have

been the exception, but eye candy evidently beats out a logical plot for a successful film.

It should hae worked, but alas, it didn't. The girls were certainly healthy though. I'd love to remake it because I think today it would fly on SpikeTV or maybe even Comedy Central,

The American Kingdom? Isn't that what the US has today, suffering through the madness of King George III? Quick, someone overthrow him! Anyone!

I like to refer to him as George the Lesser (mostly because I liked Bush Sr. quite a bit and he's turned into a great X-President like Carter)

77...That Clint Eastwood movie about the female boxer seems to have let loose an assortment of female muscle fetishes onto the airwaves, and not just on the Internet. But then, it's scary all the things that can be found there. I'm almost afraid to look for some of those fetishes, and I'm sure that if I did, I'd find tons of guys already there, and enjoying their fetish lusts.

I've watched Boxing all my life, and I've seen a fair bit of women's boxing and I've gotta say that it can be very entertaining (Leila Ali for example) or very poor (Christy Martin) I don't get Boxing Fetishists,

but I will say that Mia St. John is freakin' hot as is that female ring announcer who had a spread in Playboy.

The Scientologists are here, too, and their head office is on Yonge St. If you'd been able to make to Corflu, you'd have found those offices not far away from the con hotel. All they seem to do is offer personality tests. I'm sure theirs came back negative...

I used to hang out on the steps of their place in Boston. I was tempting fate.

M Lloyd's article on having perhaps too much of a good thing makes me wonder if she's going to be able to keep her recent developments once she has her kid. She might get to keep them, or they might reduce down to a manageable or clothe-able size.

I'm sure she'll drop a bit, and I'm sure Jay will be disappointed by that fact.

Great punk! Has the CPU had their revenge on you yet? I might have told you that many years ago, I punked one of the managers in our area when I worked at Sears Canada. This guy was loud and obnoxious, and how he got to be a manager was beyond me...anyway, while he was on holiday, I found he had a special chair at his desk, full of foam and in a dish shape.

I tried soaking it with water, and found that it would hold whatever I poured into it, so I filled it. There must have been close to a gallon of water in it when he returned from holidays and sat down...squishsplash! I never revealed who did it, but he looked ridiculous, especially soaked from the waist down...

I love that! I'm filling one of the girl's car with beach balls later this week and then building a stack of bad paperbacks around my buddy Billiam's chair. Victory shall be mine!

78...At Corflu, we never did get around to producing the one-shot, especially when it was to start on an Underwood typer using a Gestetner stencil. In fact, we never did get the Corflu programme book, which has been rechristened the Memory Book.

I hope I get the Memory Book soon. I'm itchin' for it! I even sent Colin somethin' for the one-shot, but alas, it was not meant to be. I love Mimeo.

And then your Dad. John sank so quickly. I was looking forward to his first new fanzine, and I think we was looking forward to it, too. And then, this all happened. Again, Chris, our condolences. I'm sure he thought he had a second chance, and then it was taken away. Very cruel. At least he had fun with life, just like his son, and I'm

sure he was pleased with that. You can't have regrets with that.

Chris, I can see you on one of those dates..."Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't recognize you with your clothes on." Old line, but with the Web, I can see it happening.

Take care, man, see you at the big con in August.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Believe me, I'm so excited for WorldCon already...almost as excited as I am for the Match Game at BayCon where I'll be a panelist!



Damn You Erno Rubik!!!!
The Story of the Community Rubik's Cube
by
Judith Morel

The Concept of a Wiki is pretty simple: a type of website that allows users to easily add, update or change info on the fly. It is a community-based

theory where all the info comes from users and they self-regulate to a degree. Before the Wiki concept came about (***Well, John Brunner certainly had it in his mind back in the 1970s-CG***) we did an experiment around the apartment that turned out to be the same concept.

Chris had brought an old Rubik's Cube with him one afternoon. He must have had it for years because it was beat-up. The thing had been turned and pulled so much that it moved with no friction, allowing for fast turning and less stress on the hands. One night, Chris left it at our place in a state of shambles, I don't think any side was even 1/3 complete. The next morning, I woke up and saw it and started working on it. I only managed to get one side complete before I had to run away to class, so I left it on the counter.

When I came back, there were two sides solved. I don't know who did it, but it was probably SaBean or M, both of whom would have had a little time to play around with it. I spent a little time that evening and it ended up almost halfway solved. I left it on the table by the TV.

The next few days saw more progress. I think we got it to the four sides state briefly, but then someone messed it up. Sure, they managed to solve those two sides, but the rest of it was fouled. I started on it the next



morning, but I made things worse.

The cube became a thing of joy around the apartment. Someone would come over, find the cube in the kitchen or the bathroom or on top of the TV and they'd start playing with it. For more than a month we had people taking turns and spending hours on it, but it never came close to completion. Too often we'd get to the point where it should be a breeze to finish, and then someone would come along and destroy everything. It was frustration itself to try and solve the damn thing.

Chris had a friend named Tom who he brought over one afternoon. He was a nice guy and that night we all got to drinking. Instead of what I know you think happened, Tom found the cube under the coffee table. After a minute or so, he set it on the table top completely solved. We all looked at each other and Chris grabbed it held it up for all to see and a cheer went up. Then he messed it up and set it back down.

There's a Seymour Cray saying that Chris used to have on his answering machine at work: If you were plowing a field, which would you rather use: Two strong oxen or 1024 chickens? That's exactly what we proved. Even though we were a bunch of sharp minds (Jay's a genius, M's got a mind on her to match those breasts and Chris, as much as I hate to admit it, is probably the best pure thought

guy I've ever met) and we couldn't get it together. One person with a strong affinity towards numbers and spacial relationships comes and blows it out of the water. If that doesn't prove that the Wiki concept is flawed, what does? So no, we shouldn't be having users figuring out the value of pi to millions of places in a user-supported world, we should just let that one smart guy do it for all of us!



And That's All for This Week!

Next Time, I'll have more of the regular fun stuff. Remember, if you've got a Family Story you'd like to share, I could use them for the big Family-themed issue.

Next Time: More Frank, More Judith, More Me, and I'm fairly certain there'll be a lot of BayCon to go around!

Peace!