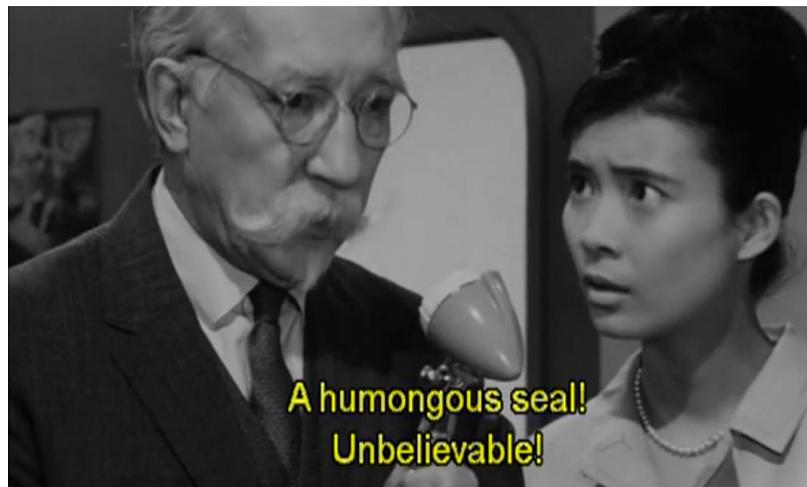
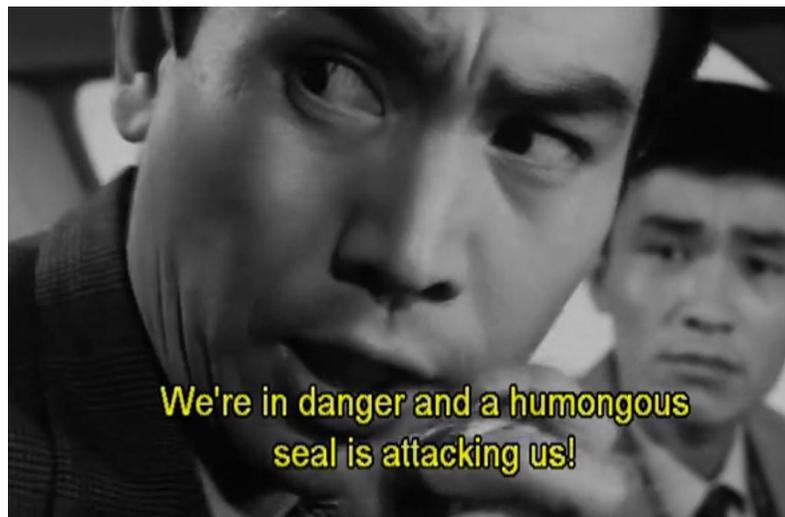


Ray X *X-Rayer* #131

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<http://x-rayer.com>



Ultra Q – Episode 27: The Disappearance of Flight 206

TAFFy Pull: Nominee John Purcell Draws In the Votes



Back when he was a high school teacher one of John's students transformed a bowling pin into cartoon art. The image depicts an angry ET who hates the Earth obstructing the view from his home planet.

Welcome to SF fan alphabet soup.

TAFF. CUFF. DUFF. GUFF.

All three organizations raise funds so that science fiction fans can travel to conventions in other parts of the world. Three candidates are vying to win TAFF, Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund.*

The [TAFF 2017 Ballot](#) explains: "TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. It exists solely through the support of fandom."

This year it's North America to Europe.

Fanzine editor and 2017 TAFF nominee John Purcell took the time to explain how TAFF works. John is a Minnesotan transplanted to Texas. His day job: instructor at Blinn Community College. Hobbies: Besides SF fandom there's music, playing guitar. He publishes two fanzines with easily confused titles, [Askew and Askance](#). (I know after writing a letter of comment to the wrong zine.)

He explained a fan declares the intention to run for TAFF and then needs to line up other fans to nominate that fan.

John: "TAFF requires a total of five nominators (two from the destination continent, three from the sending continent) to send in their nominating statements to the current TAFF Administrators."

"Once the requirements are met," he continued, "the administrators then announce that the race is on and open it for any fan to vote until the deadline [this year March 4.]"

A TAFF nominee can campaign through fanzines.

John: "[T]hat's the way I like to do it: through not only my fanzines, but through other zines by mentioning TAFF in locs I send out. Of course, it's very nice when other fan editors mention the race in their fanzines, and some even have come out in support of my candidacy."

As a sign of changing times he said social media provides another promotional venue.

Part of the winner's duties is to act like a goodwill ambassador, spending time meeting fans in the host country or continent. The winner will attend the 2017 WorldCon in Helsinki, Finland.

John: "At the WorldCon the fan fund winners participate on panels and the Hugo award presentation, in addition to being a Goodwill Ambassador, as you put it. These duties sound like a lot of fun to me, and I am really looking forward to it."

He added each TAFF winner becomes the fund administrator for two years.

Next year the Worldcon location flips back to the US. It will be held in San Jose, California. If John wins TAFF this year he will assume the duties of the North American administrator, helping fans in Europe to travel here.

I forgot to ask John one question about the other fan funding organizations. If it gives you GUFF do you CUFF DUFF?

*NOTE: You can learn more about the other two candidates, Sarah Gulde and Alissa McKersie , at <http://taff.org.uk/ballots/taff2017.pdf> . And don't get this TAFF confused with the Turku Animated Film Festival.

* * *

Recycled Godzilla: The Frill Is Gone

(Apologies to B.B. King.)

Godzilla, is that you?

For someone unfamiliar with the Ultraman TV episode *The Mysterious Dinosaur Base* (1966) it's disconcerting to see Godzilla in a modified form with a large cartilaginous frill flaring out the back of his neck. Actually it's two old Godzilla costumes thrown together to create a "new" monster named Jirass.

With a tight shooting schedule the producers were able to borrow a couple of Godzilla suits for recycling, assembling a new giant monster of the week.



Ultraman is set in the future. As in every episode the hero shows up at the last minute to battle a colossal menace, using his power to grow to the right fighting size, going eyeball to eyeball with his opponent.

Ultraman is really a regular human, Shin Hayata, who works for the Science Patrol. SP agents are nattily dressed in orange suits with a white bib and necktie, all topped off with a goofy crash helmet. These sartorial mutants are armed with oversized but ineffective ray guns. Of course their weapons have to be useless against giant creatures, necessitating the need to Ultraman to save the day. When trouble looms large Shin Hayata uses his power rod to encircle himself with a band of light, transforming himself into Ultraman.

Or in this episode Ultrabully. As the titans engage in fight Ultraman doesn't act like a noble superhero. He waves his hand in front of his face indicating that Jirass smells bad. Then Ultraman waves the monster towards him.

Now dealing with a monster doesn't mean a superhero has to fight nice but this time Ultraman takes sadistic glee in trouncing his enemy. He reaches out and rips off the frill from Jirass's neck, leaving a nasty red wound behind. Then acting like a proud matador Ultraman waves the frill like a cape, causing Jirass to charge but miss.



Then Ultraman kills off his foe, dropping the detached frill on Jariss as a final petty insult. Since Ultraman is a marital artist one would think he would have been trained to show more decorum.

Good entertainment for the kids. They learn a hero doesn't need to be noble, he can act like a egotistical prick.

* * *

MailboX Send comments to raypalmx@gmail.com

wintering over tyrbolo@comcast.net

1/12/17

Hi Ray,

Few things have the impact of weather seasons on us.

I recall a Marine veteran saying that the Asian monsoons put a dead stop to WW2 in the Pacific. It's hard to fight while being drowned by a wall of water.

Winter also curbs enthusiasms. I recall working outside for 15 minutes and then spending an hour next to stove inside trying to get some feeling back into my legs below the knee. Then out into it again for 15 minutes. I was too young to use the Rus trick of Vodka as antifreeze in crappy weather.

Those with a sufficient love for the Goddess are stocking up on popcorn for the coming season as the punditry of the fake news industry fall for the latest 4Chan scam replete with has been M16 spooks running for their life from Donnys evil minions. All spun by the talking heads as being of great significance to the poor benighted masses huddled around their 50 inch plasma screens.

If you're interested in memes, you might take a look at Woolsey, Clapper, and Max Shrecks facade as Nosferatu in the B/W epic.

Fortunately we have troops massed on the border ready to bring Putin to heel if he personally hacks into any server using p@assword as its secret code to prevent such occurrences.

If you are not entertained it isn't because the beltway circus and the infotainment crowd are not trying hard enough yet.

Soon spring will arrive and Panglossians will be moved to exclaim this is the best of all possible worlds (by default). So be of good cheer.

Dave

RX: Dave, you write the most unusual LOCs around. Outre but interesting.

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loc on X-Rayer #130

John Purcell

1/15/17

Once again I am in the throes of a loc-writing binge: yesterday I cranked out three letters-of-comment, and it looks like today's result will be at least two. Five locs in two days? That's not too many.

"The Marching Morons" by Cyril Kornbluth is one of my all-time favorite satirical science fiction stories - actually a novelette by current SFWA standards (the story is less than 15,000 words long) - and I love the basic concept. Yes, the plot is extremely reminiscent of the current political state in America and the original occupation of John Barlow, the story's protagonist. I feel like making this story one of the additional readings for my literature class this semester. Many thanks for mentioning this story. It will make a great example of sf as satire alongside Vonnegut's classic "Harrison Bergeron." You know, I think I will. Consider this done.

Winter here in SouthCentralEastern Texas is quite bearable; in fact, using the word "winter" seems totally unacceptable to my Minnesota-bred mind and body. As you can see by the address below, I live a bit more than an hour outside the Houston metropolitan area. Geographically speaking this region is described as sub-tropical, and the humidity and temperature this morning attest to that: at 9:45 AM it is 64 degrees F with 98% humidity, going up to 74. It's January 15th, for gawd sakes! At this time of the year I'm used to 17F - and that's the normal high for Minneapolis in January. So I don't feel sorry for native-born Texans bitching about how "cold" it is outside. They haven't a clue. I feel for you, Ray. Hang in there: Spring is, what, 4 months away now?

Enough of that. End of the loc, and it's time to get onto another one. Take care and I look forward to your next issue.

All the best,

John Purcell
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USA

RX: Another favorite for me in the SF satire genre is The Space Merchants by Pohl and Kornbluth. It also points out some truths in the real world by using an imaginative setting (in the future advertising companies control the world.)

Excuse my prejudice but I thought Texas was a 99.99 % red state. Are you going to be monitored while using The Marching Morons in your class? Here in the NYS hinterlands most people are conservative: they don't tolerate those commie suckular hoomanists. One of my high school teachers stirred up some controversy when he used a John Birch Society book as a doorstep.

* * *



Satorial mutation.

-- END XR #131 --