

# SAM#18

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**Sam #18**, another fanzine for Corflu, is edited by Steve Stiles, at 8631 Lucerne Road, Randallstown Md. 21133. [stevecartoon2001@gmail.com](mailto:stevecartoon2001@gmail.com) (5/2016)

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Glad to be at yet another Corflu, and thanks go to Nigel! I haven't kept track of all the ones we've been at, but each and every one of them has been uniquely enjoyable in their own way. Tynecon was especially so, although a combination of being jet-lagged and having masochistically read Jean-Paul Sartre on the long plane trip had slipped the meat to my delicate personality for a while --fanac; what does it all *mean*, anyway? Sixth Fandom can be more easily understood when considering it in relation to the temporal dimension of past experience: one's past is what one is, in the sense that it co-constitutes oneself. Clear now? And what the hell do I *mean*?

Maybe I should've read some Spike Milligan for a UK Corflu.

We took British Airways both ways; no terrorists, but there *was* one pain in the ass. We arrived sleepless at Paddington Station on Thursday morning, March 26<sup>th</sup>, from there taking the train to Newcastle on the Tyne; on this very train we encountered our first fan, Corflu Fund winner Geri Sullivan. Coincidentally, Geri was also the last fan we came across as we prepared to catch the train to Heathrow and our flight home. Love that synchronicity.

After a day and a half I had recovered enough to be socially fit but, as usual, I never did talk to all the people I had wanted to. My personality balances on the razor's edge between being an introvert and being an extrovert and sometimes I switch modes without any prior warning: it's sort of like being a werewolf, but phases of the moon have nothing to do with it. Also: I never howl or lift my leg to urinate when I'm in the introvert phase.

Newcastle upon Tyne was an interesting city architecturally, an attractive mixture of old and very new, and we went on a walking tour on Friday morning, guided by Harry Bell, who is not only a fine fan artist but a fine fine artist as well (Elaine bought four prints of his compositions). Just off the Tyne, accessible by the tilting Gateshead Millennium Bridge (it rotates back to allow tall masted ships to pass under it), was an impressive if severe building called The Baltic that we checked out the next day, an art museum with a disappointing exhibit headed by the late Jason Rhoades, whose forte seemed to be arranging piles of junk in uninteresting displays; anyone who knows me knows I appreciate much of abstract art, even the nuttier and more eccentric stuff, but this was a pile of solid waste matter, plain and simple. I believe that Harry had an exhibit there some time later, which would've been a magnificent step upwards in museum quality inasmuch as he obviously doesn't do crap when it comes to art.

But while we were with Harry, we explored Grainger Town, the historic heart of Newcastle, an area that was designed by a Richard Grainger in the mid 1830s with the aid of several architects, including one John Dobson, who turned out to be no relation to Michael of *Random Jottings* fame. The whole area, as well as Newcastle itself, was pretty hilly, as was the Highgate section of Northern London, where we stayed with our friend, former Baltimore fan Sylvia Starshine, after Corflu. This was kind of a drag (especially when dragging heavy luggage), particularly since one of the most common phrases heard during our stay was "This may be a bit of a walk," and, by George, it always *was* "a bit of a walk"! I have had problems with calf muscle pain and, after being cooped up during a rough Maryland winter with a minimum of exercise, we found ourselves pretty tired at the end of most days.

The con itself was worth it, and it was great to see people we hadn't seen in years. Spent Sunday afternoon taking a train to the city of Sunderland with Ian Sorenson, Spike Parsons, and Tom Becker – until the train broke down and, finally giving up on waiting for the bus on a blustery cold day, we had to take a taxi the rest of the way. Main purpose of the visit was to meet up with Bryan Talbot, author and comic book artist. I had never heard of Bryan (he had, however, heard of me!), but a quick check of his website reveals an impressive output of achievements ("The Adventures Of Luthor Arkwright," "Brainstorm!" "Alice In Sunderland") I can only envy. A second reason for the Sunderland visit was to check out the seaside walkway art (very large nuts and bolts, and screws—yawn!) that a friend of Spike and Tom's, Chaz Benchley, had written pr for.

People had recommended visiting Highgate Cemetary while we stayed with Sylvia, which turned out to be far more interesting than I had supposed; aside from the Marx monument, which Greg Benford had once pissed on, my vote for best tombstone went to the modernistic one that looked like a staircase and had "DEAD" in large letters cut into it: my hat's off to the deceased for stating the obvious; an artist, of course! Took lots of photos in case I ever do any work for horror comics again. On our second day in London we visit the Tate Modern, far better time spent than at the Baltic, lunched at the same riverside Greek restaurant we had enjoyed in 2010, and in the evening I had my first martini ever, which was presented to me with much humorous fanfare by our waitress.

Evenings were spent watching funky movies from Sylvia's extensive DVD collection, including *"This Is The End"* with Seth Rogen, and Tod Slaughter's *"Sweeney Todd."* Loved the first flick (Hollywood idiots experience the Apocalypse) and want to check out other Slaughter films --evidently he was Britain's Bela Lugosi; very campy in the "Aha, me proud beauty" tradition.

As vacations go, this was one of the most tiring, thanks to jockeying up and down all those hills, but we were glad we went and wish we had been able to stay on for Eastercon. It's always amazing how quickly vacations seem to pass.

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“I don’t know if any of your readers have ever had this kind of unfortunate experience, a plunge into contratumescence right down into micromolecular level where even unicellular organisms shrivel with outrage, but my delicate post-sex sensibilities were fed through a cheese grater when my airhead bimbo lover of years past dreamily leaned back on our sweat drenched sheets to wonder just what Harlan Ellison might be like! I’d say that on a scale of personal outrage this would be many levels above of having to sleep on the wet spot and just a wee bit below the STD confession. It’s a tribute to Ellison the writer and a testament to my zen-like equilibrium that I still continue to read his books, but usually with gritted teeth and one eye closed.” –*Me in NUTZ #7, Pam Wells, October 1988.*

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So we’re making up for the speed that vacations go by with maxing out with more convention going this year. Aside from Corflu, we usually only go to two other conventions, local ones in our area; WSFA’s Capclave and BSFS’ Balticon, but later this year we’ll be going to Bubicon in Albuquerque, to better check out the fandom in the city we want to move to, and then on to MidAmericon, our first worldcon since Renovation in 2011, where I did not win a Hugo.

I don’t expect to win a Hugo this time around either, for the reasons we’re all aware of, but, unlike Taral, this really doesn’t fill my soul with bitter angst; what I *do* like is being nominated because it indicates that “our” fandom judges my output worthy and that I also get good seats at the Hugo ceremony and get to go to the swell Hugo Losers party, or that friends get to attend if Elaine and I can’t make it.

But the main reason I like getting nominated is that losing presents me with a theme I can have fun around with by thumbing my nose at the situation –if you’ve seen, for example, my *Screwball Slumbers* you know what I mean. This is making gag lemonade from lemons.

For this year, I’ve done this cartoon on the right here. I’ve also done a second one, this time in full color, that’s the most egotistical and arrogant cartoon I’ve ever produced, one that holds the Hugo award in haughty contempt. I also want to do another *Screwball Slumbers*. I’d like to get these latter two of published in a zine in 2016, so if you’re interested and can do that, please let me know. The reason I stress 2016 is that each year the Hugo committee issues a pdf voting ballot with three samples of the nominated artists’ work. If, in 2017, I can get three samples of my cartoons on the ballot, cartoons *that makes fun of Hugo awards*, it would be a total bwahahaha –type hoot! (I wonder if they’ll let me get away with it!)



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Meaningless line I can’t get rid of:

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In 1966 one of my comic book art heroes, Wallace Wood, set up a semi prozine/underground comic called WITZEND. It was intended to be an alternative to the regular comic book biz, which Wood was coming to despise, and a showcase for Wood and his other cartoonist friends –a real Who’s Who in the field.

But it never really made any money and Wood eventually turned over the editorship to Bill Pearson, a former s.f. fan who coedited SATA ILLUSTRATED, one of the fanzines that got me into fandom (CRY OF THE NAMELESS was the other one).

Anyway, I was supposed to have an eight-page story in #14, and actually got paid for it, but before it went to press Bill’s house burned down, taking much of Wood’s original artwork with it, as well as my story, and everything else intended for WITZEND.

That issue never got published, but I did have copies of my art, which were print worthy, and I sent those on to Bill. In the summer of 2014 a snazzy two-volume slip cased set of Witzend was published and I’m happy to say that my story is in it: even having that slight association with Wood feels prestigious, like I’m slightly exalted. I also smoked a joint with him once.

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**2013:** “Still no anticipated Big Money Project. Is it really for real? I’m beginning to wonder. It would be richly ironic, if not unusual, that, after stalling around for this long, my clients would demand a finished job the day before yesterday.” **2016:** *Guess what!*

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**From November, 2015:** I continue to post art on Facebook, mainly for those nonfan friends and others who probably haven’t seen my output, and every once in awhile I’ll get a favorable comment from some favorite cartoonist of mine, which always delights me. FB is addictive and chews up too much of my time but, hey, I’m retired! Looking over today’s FB pages, I see that old time N.Y. fan Marty Jukovsky has just retired from “the best job of my life.” I first met Marty when I was a teenager and he was this older beatnik type and a layover from a previous generation of N.Y. fandom. **Other FB bits:** News that a Pizza Hut manager is fired for giving his workers the day off for Thanksgiving. /Bobbie M Smith notes that today, Nov. 6, would be L. Sprague de Camp’s 106<sup>th</sup> birthday. Always enjoyed his novels when I was a kid; I wonder if they still hold up./Cute picture of chipmunks dressed as pilgrims./Photo of lady in fantastic 1930s s.f. costume./Photo of giant turkey destroying Gold Gate Bridge./Rant against Ted Cruz./Cute kitten playing with passive dog./ And I posted of a video of a pretty lady keeping perfect time with Beethoven’s 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony with her bare left and right buttocks –I thought the concept and audacity was hilarious and “a jaw-dropping feat” (I can’t even wiggle my ears), but I did get tsk-tsked for being the male chauvinist pig that I am....

Right now I’m looking at an apa mailing, forty years back in time, and the first page I read was by John D. Berry who mentions that my first meeting with Dan Steffan was January 1, 1974, and that Dan was a little nervous to be in my presence, poor man, and that I had made some pretty good soup –a “lifesaver,” which was probably my black bean soup.

Looking at my own pages, “Invisible Stories,” in that apa, I see that I had dinner with very pleasant George Takei at a Star Trek convention in the New Year, and that Isaac Asimov had goosed my girl friend at the time, Rene Bodner, at that same convention –“*This is getting my goat as this makes the forth time the old bastard has done this in my presence with a woman I’ve been tight with. Yet when I offer to caress the buttocks of some pretty stranger I am almost always turned away with a haughty rebuff, or even worse!*” Life has never been fair! (Moreover, Asimov once called me a bastard.)

Other particular things that happened that month was that while I was in process of buying a Phillip Jose Farmer book at a Manhattan shop on 57<sup>th</sup> street (just a block away from the hotel where I had lost my virginity), the man standing next to me pulled out a sawed off shotgun and robbed the cashier, fortunately ignoring me. Less fortunate was reading in Locus that a friend of mine, Fanoclast member Frank Willimczyk, had suffered a severe stroke. Probably hardly anybody today remembers Frank, but he was a very talented artist. The stroke hit him in his late forties; semi-paralyzed, he had to leave New York to live with his parents. He died in his mere mid fifties. Frank had a severe drinking problem, which probably contributed to that. I remember when we were at a party in Queens, the going away party for Mike McInerney, and Frank was falling down drunk. I, on the other hand, despite having consumed vast quantities of liquor, plus a variety of Other Stuff, was oddly cold-stone sober: I just couldn't get high. That being the case, I volunteered to take Frank back to his place. I remember wrestling Frank down the stairs and I remember standing on the sidewalk, getting my bearings for the walk to the subway. The next thing I remember, however, was me being propped up against the hallway wall of my Brooklyn apartment building while Frank went through my pockets looking for my keys: I can only dimly imagine what that subway ride back to Brooklyn must've been like.

Going through my old apa mailings is sometimes a memory-wise revelation: for example, I note that in 1962 comics artist Larry Ivie phoned me to let me know that a woman called Esther Stanton Davis was spreading a rumor that Ted White and I were having a homosexual love affair. (This information needs no punch line, but you can always pause and imagine all that. No snickering, please.)



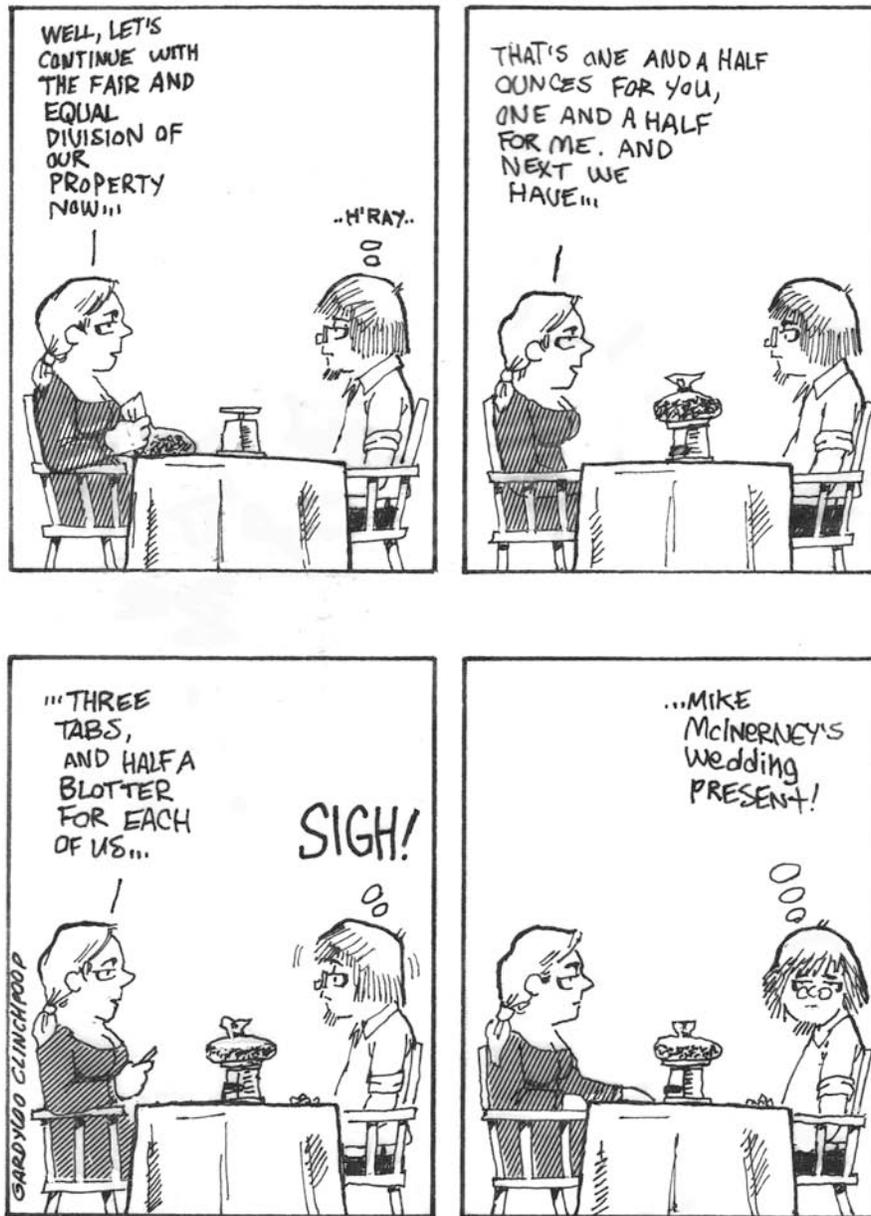
The above was done (in color) when I read the news on CNN online the morning I heard about The United States' latest massacre. I did it because I was pissed off at the insanity that's overtaken our country, I had never tried to do a straight political cartoon before, and I was curious as to how long it would take me to do it from start to finish (about 90 minutes).

I certainly wasn't precog in this instance (I've had my moments): wouldn't you know it, somebody on Fox came out with the above line of "reasoning" (pistol-packing pastors, anyone?). What I hadn't expected, though, is that some Republicans are describing the massacre as an Attack on Christianity (by a atheistic liberal Muslim Democrat, no doubt).

Aside from nut and terrorist violence, I'm pleased to report that Baltimore saw only 14 homicides, as opposed to 25 in 2015, this January. Non-fatal shootings were higher, though.

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