

SPACE CADET

#17

(OR: THE AGING OLD FHART NOSTALGIC TIME WASTER GAZETTE)



TRUMPETS OF JERICHO?

Acting on the suggestion of Ed Beauregard I went to one of the monthly meetings of the Trumpeter Wargaming Society at the Bonzo Community Centre in Burnaby.... Wait a mo... Bonsor Recreation Centre... Yeah, that's it.

Groups of tables filled a huge room plus a stage. Must have been 19-20 games going on and easily 60-70 people present. I was amazed.

Even more amazed to see numerous people I know or have met before: Francis Munroe & staff from Imperial Hobbies (sponsoring door prizes), Author Lisa Smedman riding herd on her Game Design students, old-time BCSFAn & VCONite Chris Bell commanding the most miniature tabletop tank battle I've ever seen, current VCON con members Rick Arino and Naomi Ben-Yehuda playing some sort of board game, local graphic novel artist Colin Upton, and of course, Ed Beauregard, Admiral of the Seven Seas.

First thing I did was greet and talk to the people I knew. Then I toured the room, marveling at the different games and their accouterments. For example, the diverse 'playing fields' underlying the games. There were table cloths imprinted with hexes or squares, coloured blue for water or various shades of brown and green representing assorted terrain. Some miniature games employed painted hex-shaped plastic plates fitted together to form a battlefield. Plastic trees and buildings abounded. Chris Bell's miniature tank battle (with tanks so tiny I could barely make out details) used incredibly miniature buildings and various pieces of cloth flung down on top of each other representing hills. In short, all sorts of solutions to the task of creating playing environments.

Many games took up an entire table, several two or more tables. Largest was the 1/2400 scale WWI sea battle hosted by Ed. Its blue cloth covered four tables joined together, maybe six.

"How do you reach the ships in the middle?" I asked.

"You climb up on the table," replied Ed. Hence the sight of middle-aged and older men shuffling

about on all fours atop tables. You don't see that every day.

As for the types of games, apart from Ed's oceanic conflict & Chris' tank battle, there were four of five Warhammer games (with meticulously painted figures and machines, some quite striking), a Napoleonic era confrontation with large miniatures, an infantry/tank battle with figures and vehicles slightly bigger than the HO scale I used to play as a kid, a railroad-building board game, an air war game utilizing tiny metal aircraft atop vertical wire stands (looked like a Battle of Britain scenario), and much else besides that I don't remember.

Though I did listen in to an explanation of the game designed by Lisa's students. Seemed to be some sort of resource acquiring, building, and protecting game involving cardboard hexes and small generic plastic figures. Not quite my cup of tea so I declined her invite to join in and help playtest the game. I confess I was most drawn to the 1/2400 scale sea battle. However, having made up my mind to join the club and attend every meet, I may join in if future proposed games are more along the lines of the types I'm interested in.

Ah yes, the sea battle. WW1 German Dreadnaughts vs British Dreadnaughts. Most were unpainted, but I noted the ones owned by Ed were beautifully painted.

"You painted them?" I asked/stated. I mean, such tiny warships! Averaging three inches in length.

"Of course I painted them!" Ed replied, as if offended I'd even asked. Definitely worth the effort. Dark coloured turrets really stand out against light-painted decks, even from a distance. Made it easier to distinguish which ship was which. The Pommern? Or the Ostfriesland? Takes a trained, knowledgeable eye to tell.

Though invited to participate, I didn't want to slow them down by asking too many questions, so I just sat at the end of the tables observing the 'action'. Both sides had three participants controlling five ships each. The battleships travelled in columns with cruisers scouting ahead. Once contact was made the columns turned in an effort to 'cross the T' and bring maximum firepower to bear.

I can't say that I readily grasped the complex rules. In general, there seemed to be a movement phase followed by a simultaneous firing phase with fall of shot marked by splashes of cotton tufts. Then much consultation with graphs and charts as dice were repeatedly rolled to determine effect of broadsides. Heck of a lot of measurements of distance and angle going on. Every now and then Ed would grimace with pain (his nickname in the group seems to be 'poker face') as engine rooms began flooding or a turret was knocked out.

To an outsider the game is slow and boring. But if, like me, you have a fair knowledge of naval history, and enough imagination to visualize the scene as if you are actually serving on board one of the ships, the battle is exciting, even tragic.

Mind you, my knowledge is amateurish compared to Ed's (and no doubt the other guys). When the 'Blücher' began sinking, I asked "*Is that the same Blücher that was torpedoed in the Oslo Fiord in WWII?*"

Ed rolled his eyes. "*Of course not! It's the Blücher that capsized at the Battle of Dogger Bank January 25th, 1915.*"

"*Oh, right... silly me.*"

I've always been fascinated by warships, especially the older 'steampunk'-looking predreadnaught ironclads and such. Methinks I will get involved with Ed's monthly ocean conflicts. I am sorely tempted.

What's this to do with SF? All kinds of alternate history possibilities. For instance, the Battle of Jutland was a draw. Could it have been a decisive victory for either side? And what would have happened if the Battle of Jutland had involved the German and Russian fleets? For that matter, could the Hood have sunk the Bismark instead of the other way around? Likewise, would it have been possible for the Russians to beat the Japanese in 1905? Therein lies much of the interest of these games.

Gaming with other people is something I've never really done. Always played my games solo, taking both sides, sometimes multiple sides.

Which reminds me, while talking to two people hosting a Warhammer game, I mentioned that now that I was retired I was getting interested in solo wargaming again, whereupon they both abruptly turned away and seemed to ignore me.

I'm not familiar with gaming culture. Is 'solo wargaming' a no-no? A euphemism for something naughty? What did I say?

There is so much to learn....

NOT LOIN RIPPING TIME

December 8th I was in for my long delayed hernia operation. Arrive at St. Paul's hospital an hour early. Kill time sitting in a small waiting area beside the gift shop in the main concourse thinking calming thoughts. Routine operation. Home in time for supper. Chap I met a year ago had the same operation, got infected, had his leg taken off at the thigh and was suing St. Pauls. Hmm, not so calming. Still, statistically, a routine, safe minor operation.

Half an hour before the official check-in I head off to the daycare operations theatre located on the third floor of the 'new' building (circa 1980s). Back then I worked for Northern Construction, the company constructing the 'new' building. On completion they gave us a tour of the facilities. I remember trying out a stainless steel table in the hospital morgue, knowing full well I could wind up on the same table someday, but surely not this year.

Good thing I give myself half an hour. The elevators are full and notoriously slow. Arrive exactly on time. They check my ID, have me sit in a jam-packed waiting room for five minutes (some people already kitted up for their op), then direct me to a small curtained cubicle. Here I am to change out of my clothes into a half gown (backside exposed), full gown (backside covered), paper booties and a paper hat. I pull said items out of their bag and begin to unbutton my shirt. A nurse peeks past the curtain.

"*Bad news Mr. Cameron. Your operation has been cancelled. You can go home now.*"

Seems the poor guy my surgeon is operating on ahead of me has developed complications and they don't know how many hours (!) of further surgery will be required. The nurse expects me to be angry, but I am bemused at worst. After all, the bad luck isn't mine, but is hovering like a cloud above the other guy. Sad. Hope he pulls though.

Go home, lie down for a nap, and wake up with severe back pain. Pain killers and muscle relaxants don't seem to do any good. I am now convinced simply moving about jars my hernia and causes the muscle spasms (which is how I first discovered I had a hernia). Most days I hobble around, even indoors, with a cane. Some days are better than others. I really, really want my operation over and done with. But they haven't rescheduled me yet. Sigh.

MINIATURES FROM HELL

Otherwise, a good month, a good Christmas. As part of my Christmas gift receiving I've been mail-ordering 1/2400 scale pewter ship models manufactured by GHQ in the States. To give you an idea, the Tzarist Predreadnaught 'Potemkin' is just under two inches long, the Kriegsmarine Battleship 'Bismarck' 4 inches. They're very cute.

Haven't been to any gamers meets because of my back/hernia this month, but have spent a great deal of time fussing with glue and teeny, tiny turrets, as well as painting said turrets & lifeboats & other mind-bogglingly small accoutrements. I sit at the desk in my den working up the models as long as it's fun. As soon as I feel the temptation to tear out my hair in rage and frustration I move on to something else.

To complicate matters further, I have distinctive colour schemes for each nationality (bearing NO relationship whatsoever to the real thing). For example, the hulls of my Tzarist fleet are painted cream and the decks tan, whereas my Turkish fleet has scarlet hulls and orange decks. Needless to say, in a battle at sea (tabletop) you can't confuse ships of one side for the other! Purists will scream but hey, these aren't Ship Builders models, they're token approximations of the real thing; my approximations being somewhat more approximate than most. I make no apologies.

But I have got to get a set of fine tweezers. My fingers might as well be sausages, or even footballs, for all the good they do me handling incredibly small secondary turrets. I tend to push them toward their socket as close as I can get and then conduct the final manoeuvre with the point of a pin. As for lifeboat davits and small cranes. Forget it. That way lies insanity.

At least I have a gooseneck lamp with a large magnifier built into it, plus a pair of glasses equipped with magnifying lenses. If it were not for these I couldn't build or paint the models at all, my eyes not being good enough by themselves without magnification aid.

Overall I enjoy working on these miniatures, even if the act is perilously close to some bizarre form of masochism.

INFAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND?

I have bored many people with my nostalgic reminiscences of Forrest J. Ackerman's FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND magazine. But recently, namely this Christmas, I learned more about said mag past and present. So I dare inflict more boredom! Prepare to suffer!

Always wanted a copy of FM#1 and finally got one this Christmas. Mind you, it's a reprint. Originals are too damned expensive.

FM#1 was a test longshot which quickly sold out, convincing publisher James Warren to begin regular publication and pay Ackerman \$1,000 an issue to edit (a pay rate Warren apparently never increased – one reason for 4e's growing lack of enthusiasm over the years).

The first issue is pretty darn good, with decent articles on Boris Karloff, on Mary Shelly writing Frankenstein, on Paul Blaisdell "Monster Maker", aliens in SF movies, Lon Chaney Sr. and the rise of TV horror hosts. Forry's tendency to pun is low key: "*We monsters have just begun to fright!*" and the issue is informative and interesting, With every photo properly captioned. Ahh, the photos! The strength of FM! Wonderful photos!

I also acquired several other early issues (both reprints and originals) and it's obvious Ackerman took Warren's injunction to aim at fourteen year olds too much to heart. Too many puns! (I hate puns!) Sometimes a photo caption consisted entirely of puns and neglected to identify the movie or actor depicted. And some articles were hardly more than stream-of-consciousness punnery. Forry was out of control!

However, to be fair, Ackerman was feeling his way toward a winning formula and soon settled down to a combination of superb photos illustrating informative articles which, for the most part, presented material absolutely unavailable anywhere else. In fact, the films themselves were often unavailable! FM was a treasure trove of hidden lore. (Still inflicted with Forry's trademark painful humour mind you, but confined to a dull ache level.) Plus Forry was always trying out new concepts for articles (some good, many bad) which added to the fun for young readers. For what it was, FM was very good, and very influential, very seminal, in terms of its impact on young minds like mine.

So, what's up with FAMOUS MONSTERS today? To explain:

FM's run of 191 issues ran from February 1958 to March 1983, with all but the last edited by Ackerman. (I guess Warren decided it was no longer viable without 4e who had resigned.)

In May of 1993 issue #200 hit the stands (What about issues 192-199? Never published.) with Ackerman as Editor -in-chief and Ray Ferry as publisher. FM was back, and pretty much in the same vein as before (see? I can pun too, though poorly). Same winning combo of rare photos and informative articles, with a less juvenile approach than the old FM. Looking good!

Then, disaster. FM #210 was Forry's last as editor. From then on it was as if Forry never existed and Ray Ferry was Forry. People wrote in and explained how much they enjoyed "your" magazine when they were kids, and got a reply from 'FM' thanking them as if the editor was Ackerman, which is quite bizarre as Forry was no longer involved with FM at all.

Astonishingly, such Ackermanisms as "*Horrorwood*", "*Karloifornia*", "*Dr. Acula*", "*Fearbook*", "*Graveyard Examiner*", "*Fang Mail*", "*You Axed For It*", "*Horror Hall of Flame*", "*Mystery Photo*", "*The Magazine Monsters Believe In*", "*Headlines From Horrorsville*" and "*Imagi-Movie*" were copyrighted by Ferry's Dynacomm Publications. Ackerman was no longer legally allowed to employ the very terms he invented.

Sadder still, it was apparent (to me at least) that much of Ackerman's fantastic collection of rare stills now belonged to Ferry as well.

When I was a kid I was so inspired by Forrest J. Ackerman I wanted desperately to be Forrest J. Ackerman. I never managed to pull that off. But Ray Ferry did. Incredible.

Ray Ferry wrote an entire book about the breakup representing his side of the story, a book I have not yet read. Nevertheless I am left with the suspicion that Ferry is more to blame than Ackerman. I may be wrong (Ray today refers to his critics as 'fanboys' who don't know what they're talking about, who don't know what really happened) but I believe I am correct in my impression that Ackerman was devastated.

At any rate there was a lengthy, torturous lawsuit which I seem to recall Forry won, but somehow without regaining control of his legacy (bearing in mind, of course, that James Warren was the original owner of FM, which Forry never was. I'm talking 'artistic' legacy, so to speak).

Hence my awarding Ray Ferry two Elrons, including the infamous "Elron of Doom" inspired by the hobby of Vlad the Impaler.

I stopped buying FM as a matter of principle.

Ray's run of FAMOUS MONSTERS ran from #200 May 1993 to #248 in 2008. (#249 never published.) As far as I can guess the zine had maintained its level of quality but succumbed to the steady drop in demand for magazines in general. Financial problems no doubt.

Then FAMOUS MONSTERS reappeared in June of 2010 with #250!

Apparently publisher Philip Kim purchased the 'rights' to FM (though not all the copyrighted material it seems). Forrest J. Ackerman was listed as "inspiration", and currently (as of #258) as "Honorary Editor-in-Chief." Brings a tear to my eye thinking about it.

Furthermore, the cover of #250 is marvelous. It features Forry on the big screen in an old-fashioned theatre with Frankenstein & his Bride happily watching from the back seats. Virtually the entire content is a series of reminiscences by assorted people concerning 4e's cameos in a surprisingly large number of films, 48 at least, which is more than many a professional actor!

Now here is the sad part. I don't like the new FAMOUS MONSTERS.

It has some good articles, but seems more like Starlog than FM. More emphasis on the actors than the films, and primarily contemporary actors at that. Above all a format that is hip and cool and trendy and modern to the nth degree. Financially viable? Probably. But I'm utterly indifferent (and even opposed to) all the flash and dazzle of modern print graphics. To me it is tarted-up window dressing obscuring and masking the written content. I want to like the current incarnation of FM, but I don't, I can't.

I also dislike their policy of issuing two covers, one for the newsstand copy and one for the 'Diamond Edition' which I guess is their subscription issue. Damned annoying for collectors. A cash grab in fact.

Pity, in that the contributor's obvious affection for Forry strikes a chord in my heart, but I can't stand the magazine. The old FM is dead. End of a personal era for me.

Now for something even worse. Ray Ferry has launched a new monster mag himself, FREAKY MONSTERS, with the first issue (I think) circa early 2011. I have issues #3 & 4 and they're well worth reading (even if the large print makes me feel like I'm being cheated of content somehow. Easier to read though). An excellent serialized article on Bela Lugosi's life as a stage actor in New York in the 1920's is particularly fascinating. Even better, there's no discussion of modern films

at all. The magazine is strictly focused on the past, from the silent era up to the early 1960s at the latest. The photos are clearly reproduced, and many of them I've never seen before. Great!

So why my long face? I don't like the current FAMOUS MONSTERS. I do like FREAKY MONSTERS, and am tempted to acquire more issues as they come out. FREAKY MONSTERS is far more like the original FAMOUS MONSTERS than the current FM, so it appeals to my nostalgia. But I feel guilty, very guilty, as if I'm insulting 4e. As if I'm betraying him. What happened to my principles? Sigh.

Then again, it is a matter of comparison. I prefer Ferry's version to Kim's version because the latter is thoroughly updated to modern times (I loathe modern times) whereas the former is most definitely a blast from the past (I'm a twentieth century kinda guy). But do I really want to collect FREAKY? Could there be other monster mags I could buy to satisfy my sensawonda nostalgia without inflicting guilt?

UNDYING MONSTERS #1 (successor to MONSTERS FROM THE VAULT?) by David Davey (?) could be a contender, with great stills and some good articles, though mostly 'filmbook' style. Mind you, I really enjoyed the article on 'Curse of the Faceless Man', one of the most obscure films imaginable. Good fun. No guilt.

More fun is SCARY MONSTERS by Dennis J. Druktenis, now in its twentieth year with issue #80, a great shambling mass of cheap paper and poor-to-adequate reproduced photos, but filling 125 pages with small print articles covering every topic from the quality of Bela Lugosi's acting to TV host Svengoolie to an in-depth look at the film 'The Brain that Wouldn't Die'. In short, a fannish mish mash of nostalgia past and present, well worth taking the time to wallow through. In terms of graphic presentation it's the exact opposite of the modern FM, quite primitive in fact, but all the more endearing for that very reason. I think this is the monster mag I most enjoy reading.

However, considering I have a closet full of monster mags and film zines, and the current crop average \$10 an issue, I'm probably more or less done collecting. Time to re-read what I've got.

A POCKET FULL OF HISTORIES: COIN NOTES

By Taral Wayne

(Editor's note: though I've decided to make SPACE CADET much more of a perzine, I continue to include Taral's articles on ancient coins cause I likes ancient coins.)

The coins illustrated in these short written pieces are all from my collection. I've scanned each one, and drawn on my own knowledge to describe the coin, the Kings, the Queens, the Emperors, and the times. Certain statements are my opinions only, even guesswork, but that's alright. After more than 2,000 years in some cases, there's nobody around to sue!



Hindu Shahi Kings of Kabul,
AG, 870-1008 AD, Samata Devi series.
Obv. horseback rider R. with standard.
Rev. Brahmi, "sari samanta dehvi",
bull reclining L. Mitchener Non-
Islamic series 116-120,

One of the things that makes managing a coin collection so delightful is that you constantly find that a coin you think is one thing, is really something else. Discovering more about it drags you into corners of the world, and times in history, you never considered.

Recently I decided to look into a coin I had bought cheaply some years ago, believing it was from the empire of Trebizond. I didn't doubt it, but was unsatisfied with the vagueness. It should be a particular coin from a particular time in the history of Trebizond. What I found was that, if it was the real thing, it was called an Asper, but while the similarity with photos on the internet was strong, my example was comparatively crude looking. I wondered if it was a barbaric imitation, which were commonplace throughout ancient times. Two

things bothered me though. No amount of searching turned up an exact match of the design on the reverse. It was abstract and might represent almost anything. Turn it the right way and it *might* resemble a head with a squarish Byzantine crown. It wasn't a very convincing match though. And the script looked uncannily like devanagari, though Armenian would have made far more sense (after Greek).

To my surprise I found someone who identified it as a coin from Eastern Afghanistan! Now that I've seen enough matching photos there's no doubt of it. It was struck sometimes between 870 and 1008 AD, making it a few hundred years older than I had believed. The original Shahi of Kabul had been variously identified by ancient writers as Turks or Kushans, another central Asian people. More likely they were local warlords who rose to royal status sometime in the 6th. or 7th. century BC. But because of the Brahmi inscription on this coin, it cannot be from that early time. It was struck by the succeeding Hindu dynasty. The kingdom of the Kabul Shahi would seem to have been more a part of the Indian world, altogether, stoutly resisting the encroachment of Islam. Even in that remote time they were described by Indian writers as fierce, warlike, and resentful of foreign domination.

Some things never change much, eh?

I found a lot more on Wikipedia, but it's not a part of the world that really captures my imagination, and I don't feel any need to commit to memory arguments about the identity of the original Shahi or details about the move from the first capital from Kapisa to Kabul, or the derivation of the title "Shahi".

Frankly, I would rather it had been an Asper from Trebizond, the last and final gasp of the Roman empire. Despite the complexity of the history, and its important place in central Asian trade, Afghanistan to me is about as interesting as the rancheros and empty tracts of New Mexico. Of all the details I came across while reading about the Shahi, those that intrigued me most were contemporary Chinese references. (Which appear to describe the early Shahi as Buddhists.) Evidently the Chinese reach went pretty far west -- which I knew -- but over a longer period than I had appreciated.

I suppose if they thought nobody would laugh, Beijing would claim Hungary and Austria as parts of True China that errantly "broke away", like Taiwan, and will always belong to China like Tibet.

LETTERS OF COMMENT:

OOK, OOK, SLOBBER DROOL!

From: RANDY BARNHART, Dec 5th, 2011

Graeme:

Thanks muchly for sending a copy of *Space Cadet #16*. It is certainly one of the better perzines currently in production (not a huge sample, I admit, but still...). Crisply written, snazzy formatted and smartly accoutered.

Thank you for saying.

I was pleased to see you're enjoying your retirement from the mundane work-a-day world, which I've always assumed is a conspiracy along the lines of Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, to keep the surplus population in check. Me, I was supposed to have retired about three years ago after 25 years in the public service, but I cashed in some of my pension to send our daughter to university, so I work on. I figure I'll be able to actually retire in September, 2016, if I'm not fired first as part of some cost-cutting measure or they force me to go on disability.

I recommend retiring as soon as it is financially feasible. It restores sanity, lightens the heart, enlivens the mind and otherwise lives up to the promotion of many a hack medicine. Don't waste your money on placebos. Want good health? Peace of mind? Don't buy pills. Retire!

Mind you, the good health bit hasn't quite worked out yet, but the peace of mind is doing pretty good.

At age 58, I share your difficulties with the gunboats, but nothing along the lines of a thirteen wide. I have been informed that one of my legs is a bit longer than the other and my toes (!) are out of alignment (!!). In real terms, this means that my left

foot is a nine wide and the other is nine and a half regular. As "nice" shoe stores are generally reluctant to breakup pairs to sell different size shoes, I usually end up buying crappy cheap shoes that I burn out quickly.

I have a bunion on my left foot, which is now considerably wider than my right foot. Ah well, asymmetry is all the rage these days.

Like you, I continue to read everything that is printed in the English language, the only recent change being my discovery of the joys of e-reading. Believe me, it's not due to any neurotic need on my part to buy the latest gadgetry available; rather, it is a great convenience. For me, reading a regular paper book necessitates a magnifier and a strong light, making reading anywhere outside my home a near impossibility. The Kobo reader (which I use and only swear by because I haven't tried any of the others on the market) allows me to blow the font up to 150%, which I find a lot easier to read. Of course, I haven't told the Author's Guild this yet for fear they would regard blown fonts as some violation of their copyright.

Haven't tried any of the e-book readers yet. The ones I've seen displayed in the stores don't seem all that legible to me, and don't 'feel' right. Still prefer a book in hand.

I am constantly amazed and amused at the attempts to make books available to the blind or low-visioned. Of course, there are large-print and Audio Books, but most of those are either public domain junk or "inspirational" balonious maximus (the disabled are always the first on the god-botherer's list). Books in Braille are available but in limited numbers and the availability of DAISY-capable readers is VERY limited (not to mention the cheapest model available is about \$500). And of course, text-to-speech formats are currently marred in legal mumbo-jumbo.

This is why I am now such a fan of Peter Watts. He has kindly (and given the number of new readers gained thereby, cannily) permitted free electronic versions of all of his books quite early in their copyright lives, and after filling my e-reader with his stuff. I now read his new material as soon as it is available. This is, of course, a hint to other writers.

Sorry to hear about your upcoming operation. I don't want to increase any stress you might be feeling, but recent stats are less than encouraging. I would suggest that, prior to the operation, you (or perhaps a loved one) use a grease pencil to mark the areas you want the surgeon to give a pass on; or alternatively, put a big X on the spot s/he should be working on.

St. Paul's hospital has a system where three separate individuals (including the surgeon) ask where you are to be operated on while they are prepping you, and then they draw black marker arrows pointing to the exact site. Or so I've been told. As you read above, I didn't get a chance to find out. Soon, I hope.

Your analysis of your book collection was most interesting, and it made me tremble a bit when I considered my own collection. My spouse, who is something of a biblioaddict herself, has started to make noises about the piles and boxes of my books throughout the house. She has even suggested I...gasp...get RID of some of them!

Nonsense. Just pile them up to the ceiling in a more efficient manner and you'll have plenty of room... to fill up with more books...

Still, a cleansing of my current collection of paper books would open a whole new opportunity to buy electronic replacements, so that ain't bad.

Your Zombie story was hilarious. As it happens, I'm from Prince Rupert, where there is still a huge old gun emplacement near the Coast Guard base ready to take on the invading Japanese (the cannon was only fired once, when an Alaskan fishing vessel tried to enter the harbour without the proper passwords; missed), and they still tell stories about the odd ducks who manned the battery during World War II. They apparently spoke a strange language no one had ever heard of called "French."

Many in Quebec were convinced that Germany's conquest of France was the fault of the British, and that Petain's Vichy France was the most perfect France imaginable (Quebec being VERY conservative at that time). There was not a lot of sympathy for fighting 'England's war'. Mind you, this didn't stop a good many Quebecers from volunteering to fight the Nazi's, and at least one

Quebec regimen quickly acquired multiple battle honours. What people objected to was the concept of forcing (i.e. conscripting) unwilling citizens to go to war. A not unreasonable viewpoint methinks, for I am of the same opinion.

As it happened, McKenzie King came up with a unique solution. He conscripted Quebecers to replace other Canadians at duties here in Canada, thus freeing up manpower to serve overseas. Only volunteers fought overseas. Everyone conscripted served in Canada and would see combat only if Canada were invaded. Hence the French speakers manning the guns at Prince Rupert. All in all a reasonable compromise taking into account the sensibilities of the "two solitudes".

But it reminded me of a march pass of a War of 1812 re-enactment unit I attended with my dad, who had been a career NCO with the United State Marine Corps (it's a family tradition). He pointed out the unit's sergeant, who always marched behind the main line armed with a halberd. His primary duty was to "gut" any man who stepped out of the line of attack, so I guess being strafed from the air is a bit of an improvement.

In some armies 'running away' is dealt with on the spot in a very severe manner. Better to attack the enemy. Your chance of survival is greater.

And I have to agree with you that the Crimean War can only be regarded as a criminal enterprise conducted by a special education class.

Anyway, take care and hope to see more soon.

Randy

**From: DAVE HAREN, December 6th, 2011
Aurora & Faned Awards-winning Loc Hack**

Dear Graeme,

Always a revelation of interest.

I have the same problem with shoes, I have found that the Caterpillar Walking Machines are quite comfy and have enough width to keep the toe circulation going. As a pup I was eager to get out of school so I could discard shoes and fry the soles of

my feet to leathery goodness again. Nothing like the first feel of hot sand on a foot which has been cooped up the rest of the year. The surface temperature in the Mojave used to hit 190 F with alarming regularity.

Methinks I would have grown up cocooned in an air conditioned room given the Mohave environment. I'm no fan of intense heat.

Nice Library indeed. I even spotted a few authors I don't recognize, and that is a cute trick. My first paperback of SF was Herbert "Dragon in the Sea" which led to an accumulation of Ace Doubles and collecting Astounding. Most of the early collecting dropped into the trash as we moved around. Then I was off to the promised adventures of a life at sea. I did notice later that the snazzy poster used to promote adventure on the sea looked a lot different after you had the experience of a wave breaking across the bridge.

Always had the vague impression serving at sea would be like being trapped in a machinists' garage capable of plunging into the abyss at any second. But I suppose life at sea can have its moments. In the Great War the British Battleship Agincourt was nicknamed 'the gin palace'. I gather her officers spent the war pleasantly soused, which strikes me as perfectly understandable.

Once I became a civilian and settled in one spot the books began to breed in dark corners and overran any shelf with alarming rapidity. As a maniacal advocate of the electronic library, I feel that any child with access to a comp should be introduced to gutenber.org and have their own copies of the CDs and DVDs.

I have a few classic SF novels by Serviss and other early writers I've downloaded, but have yet to read them because I don't like the format, or the strain of reading off a screen.

This allows me to collect a massive library without constantly building bookcases. Best of all, it is free. You can with a Net connection, grab a copy of Calibre. and do not need an ebook reader, but it will help if you later obtain one.

Maybe. I'm always decades behind trends.

Then all you need is the two sites archive.org and gutenber.org. If you can't satisfy your cravings for books then you are avaricious beyond help.

Been a while since I glanced at these two sites. I should check them out again I suspect.

I was still composing my LOC for SC15, when reality intruded with a new issue. One of the calculations for retiring is the savings involved in travel and food when you no longer have to go to work and eat something there, This shifts the numbers a bit in favour of the retiree.

I used to get an all-zone monthly bus & skytrain pass for \$150 (I think it was) which was quite cheap compared to car costs (gasoline, parking, insurance, etc.). Now I just buy books of tickets for various zones, which I use up slowly as I only travel by transit maybe twice a week if that. So I assume I'm saving money.

Looks like we're headed for an exciting 2012, It seems things are not going to be allowed to remain the same. I'm particularly enthused over the southern Americas deciding to exclude USA and Canada from meddling in their internal affairs. Maybe we'll stop teaching their military to club children like baby seals.

If that stops I'll be a lot happier.

Of course the punditry has always been full of doom and gloom, but these days they are just as confused as the leadership.

I have some very strong, troll-like opinions on current politics. I've decided to restrict them to the limited membership of e-APA. No sense in depressing too many people!

As Terry M. said, the truth is no one is in charge, no one has a plan for the future, and no one knows what will happen next.

Very true.

If you want to be betrayed find someone who preaches certainty and closure.

Also true.

GRIN I have some nice bridges for sale here in this area.

Excellent! I have wads of cash I can give you in exchange. It's very good quality cash. I know cause I printed it myself. I assume you have change for trillion dollar bills?

Warmest Regards, Dave Haren

**From: ERIC MAYER, November 29th, 2011
Famed Famed of 'Groggy' &**

Graeme,

Thanks for Space Cadet # 16.

Great cover by Brad. Terrific design. How he manages all that ornate detail is beyond me. Also beyond me is how you can take 13 1/2 size shoes. Dude, that's humungous! Unless Canadian sizes are different. I take 9 1/2. I used to take 8. My feet are getting bigger. They are supposed to get bigger as you age, not shrink. Don't despair, though. Starting with that size it'll be a long time before your feet get too small for you to stand up on them.

I took a quick look at my old shoes to see if Canadian sizes are different. Alas, it stated quite clearly, "US size 13." Hey, the shoes in question are only 13 inches long and 5 inches wide at the widest... I like a good sturdy base is all...

Running shoes are all I ever wear since I work at home. I can't run any more but when I was running I realized there were no shoes as comfortable. Plus, if you get a good pair, they last forever.

Your reflections on reading are spot on. For many years I got away from reading the vast quantities of fiction I read in my youth. But not too long ago I got back into the habit, to an extent. This year I read about 70 books, less than the 80 or so I read the two previous years. And it is a habit. As you say, it doe sn't really do me a bit of good practically speaking, and a week after I've read a novel I'll be hard pressed to give many details. Yes, I have sometimes asked myself why I should be happy to have more books when, in a way, it just means more wasted time. But reading

gives me great pleasure while I'm doing it, immersed in lives more interesting than my own. I see you've been reading mostly history, which, of course, is fascinating. At least, arguably, you are learning something about history!

I used to keep a list of all the books I'd read, sometimes as many as 130 a year. Used to browse through it reminiscing about how much I enjoyed this or that book. Must have maintained it for thirty years at least. But then I caught myself thinking I had better hurry up my reading or else I won't be listing as many as I did the year before. This struck me as so obsessive I threw the list out. I read for my own enjoyment, not to serve some stupid list.

But then it's easy to become obsessive in reading, especially if you have collector tendencies. For instance, as a teenager I started collecting every Penguin Classics translation of Greek and Roman works I could get my hands on. About ten years ago I realized, wait a minute, some of these 'classics' are damn boring. So I culled my collection, keeping only the ones there was a good possibility I would eventually re-read at some point. Down to about 84 volumes now. Much more manageable.

For example, I discarded all of Plato's books except his four amusing ones: "The Symposium", "Timaeus", "Critias" and "The Last Days of Socrates." All his other works were just too bloody boring to be worth rereading. Besides, he was something of an idiot. If you don't believe me, read his stuff. But at his best, he was quite entertaining.

I'm just realizing how long I have been in responding as your operation should have been almost two weeks ago. I hope it went well and you are recuperated. I haven't had a surgical procedure. I count myself lucky indeed. Although, when I was very young the family dentist used to knock us kids out to extract baby teeth when necessary, so I got put under, but I was too young to be terrified of the ideas as I would be today. They wouldn't think of doing that today.

I wish it had gone well and that I was now indeed fully recuperated. Alas, still in limbo....
Waiting...

The Wind in the Willows is my favorite childhood book. I have an essay about it buried

someplace on our website. I lost my book collection, which had grown very large, twenty years ago when I was divorced. The family court was under the misapprehension that all my books, not to mention everything else I'd worked half my life for, and a huge amount of income yet to be earned, belonged to my ex-wife who been sitting on her butt the whole of our marriage. Ah, justice...

Very sad to lose everthing. I still have most of the books I had as a child, including some given to me then by my uncle which had been presented to him when he was a kid. A 1926 edition of SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON for instance, and a contemporary with WWII 'Boys Own' type novel titled ACE CAREW – AIRMAN SPEED KING by Edward R. Home-Gall featuring lines like "*To Hades with you, English pig!*" he bellowed frenziedly. And ""Thanks for calling!" chortled Mike perkily. "*Nice day for an air raid, isn't it?*" They don't write like that anymore. Probably just as well.

I pretty much stopped reading sf back in the early to mid-seventies. Before that I'd consumed endless sf books, and my collection (although most were borrowed from the library when I was a kid) would look similar to yours. I started with Tom Swift Jr, loved Andre Norton, never got into Bradbury like some did. Loved some of Heinlein's stories, despised a lot of his books for the attitude. However, last year I reread The Puppet Masters, in the unexpurgated version, and thought it was brilliant. Truly perverse and creepy but brilliant. A couple days ago I read Murray Leinster's A Logic Named Joe which stunningly "predicted" the Internet way back in 1946. I need to read more Leinster, and Hal Clement, and probably see if my more mature self appreciates Bradbury more. When I do reread, or read for the first time, old classics, I almost always enjoy them even though my main reading now is mysteries. But when I try to read new sf I hardly ever like it. (Two exceptions" Mindscape by Peter Watts and The City and City by China Mieville) I never read Edgar Rice Burroughs. I guess the library didn't have his books. But a couple years ago I read A Princess of Mars for the first time and, damn, it was great! Heck, maybe I'll return to sf reading in my second childhood.

It is fun.

Thanks for another great issue. Keep 'em simple. Keep 'em coming. That's my motto.

Best, Eric

From: LLOYD PENNEY, December 23rd, 2011
Aurora & Faned Awards-winning Loc Hack
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2

Dear Graeme:

I've been hearing through the grapevine, which seems to have been renamed Facebook, that you've been unwell lately, but that you are recovering. With that in mind, I thought I should send you something to keep you busy once you are up to the challenge again, so here are comments on Space Cadet 16.

Pain is debilitating. Too much and I have a hard time thinking, a hard time concentrating on writing tasks. It's a distraction, like some invisible person constantly poking you for attention. I don't sit down at my computer until the pain has subsided into the background and I can ignore it a while. Any sudden movement can trigger it anew though, so I hardly dare move at all while I write.

Another problem I've noticed lately is that it's best for me to write on an empty stomach. If I eat more than a light snack it's as if all the blood rushes to my stomach and my brain is left dry and windy. Something to do with getting older I think. I used to be able to fuel my writing frenzies on the go, now it's a matter of avoiding fuel all together in order to keep going. Once Alyx calls me for supper that's it as far as writing goes. When I come back from my meal I start painting miniature warships. Doesn't require as much brain power and in fact ascends into a kind of contemplative Zen meditative state of mind, at least till I erupt in sheer frustration from the strain of working on such a microscopic scale. Then I fall back on my tried and true method of obtaining nirvana. I take a nap. Afterwards, if all matters subconscious and sub-stomach have been suitably digested, I may feel up to returning to the keyboard.

I've had to buy new shoes for the first time in some time because my Rockports suddenly... failed. They rubbed my feet raw, so I had to go and buy some new ones. After years of black shoes, I now

have brown/oxblood ones, and they feel good, and my feet now thank me. 8½ wide, in case you were wondering.

I'm beginning to feel like the only person on Earth wearing size 13... well, actually I'm currently wearing size 11&1/2 US. Occurs to me different manufacturers may not be as consistent as we would like. My new shoes don't seem all that much smaller than my old...

You enjoy reading...I say the same thing if I am asked, and there are times people look at me as if horns have sprouted from my temples. I would like to get an e-reader at some point, but not now...I still have lots of paper books yet to read. So many books, so little money and time. A personal library? What's its purpose? It's there to contain all you've read and would like to read, and also serve as a reminder of those heady days when reading was encouraged and we could escape into alternate surrealities and enjoy a mental vacation from the humdrum. Your SF library sounds wonderful, and very familiar. Yet, there are people who happily and proudly state that they do not read, and that they don't own a single book. That makes me sad, and a little angry.

I've had people accuse me of being a snob and showing off because I was sitting on the skytrain 'pretending' to read a book (obviously no one ever 'actually' reads a book). And one chap in particular has several times demanded to know what the book was about and why was I reading it? I have never been able to 'prove' to him the subject was worth reading about. Apparently nothing is worth reading about. It's almost getting to the point where reading is considered a vice best kept hidden.

One place I worked the boss would catch me reading during my lunch break. "Dare I ask what you're reading?"

"Ahh, 'THE HELLENISTIC AGE' by Peter Green" or some such.

"What on Earth for?"

"It's interesting."

And the boss would walk away, shaking his head. Obviously I was screwing up my chances for

promotion. If I'd been chattering brightly with co-workers about the latest sports stats, I'd prove myself one of the team, but sitting by myself reading? A loner. Possibly a psycho. You can't trust loners.

Fortunately I do most of my reading in private out of the public view. The decent thing to do.

Tara's loc...if OSFiC never had a policy of admitting members only by invitation, then some people found a great way of making sure I was never a member. I was told that by several people when I made inquiries. This all happened close to 35 years ago, so let the past lie in this case.

I have some comments in mind utilizing my own experience, but my events lie far in the past as well, so, yes, since the past can't be changed, it makes a great deal of sense to keep the dead decently buried, so to speak.

Seven fanzine titles...that's not too many. Never let it feel like you have taken on a job. Retired, remember? And you can't complain about the boss...

Well, actually I can, and sometimes have, but I find it singularly difficult to do so without his hearing about it....

My loc...I can't really say I know what a Tumblr page is, but I don't think it is a sequentially-read publication. I know what Twitter does, but I have enough social media, thank you. I didn't get that job at the advertising agency, and then I got a short-term position with another agency, which fizzled after five days. Sometimes, I think my odds of winning the lottery is better than me finding a decent job.

All I can do is wish you all the luck in the world. May you find a job as fun and exciting as your favourite hobby!

I'm done for now...I also have the newest issue of The Fanactical Fanactivist to comment on, but I may wait until after Christmas. I have one more week in the month to get a lot of writing done, and I even have some days off in which to do it. We wish you and Alyx the best of Christmases, and may 2012 give us what we want and need. Take care.

SPACE FILLER!

Of course, being an electronic zine, I could leave off at the end of page 13. But since my zines are written as if they were printed on paper, I must perforce produce one more page so that this can be printed out. And so:

A LOOK BACK AT SPACE CADET #1!

Published in December 1994, or 17 years ago! It featured an article on my earliest experiences with SF, the first part of my account of a trip to Mexico, the first chapter of my Grandfather's unpublished war memoirs, and a lengthy article proving the Flying Saucer in PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE was the Lindberg plastic model saucer.

It also included, rather unusually for a first issue, a small LoC column! For instance:

Karl Johanson wrote: *"This is, by the way, the first time I've locked a zine before the first issue was produced. Bummer that you're leaving the BCSFAzine editorship, but hurrays that you're on for another year and for your new zine."*

Joseph T. Major wrote: *"Well, I would like to get The Aging old Fart Nostalgic Time Waster Gazette and if you are not going to use that title I may keep it in mind. I may even slip you a commentary on that other Heinlein title."*

Lloyd Penney wrote: *"When you get the first issue of 'SPACE CADET' ready, please send me an issue. This country doesn't have enough independently operated fanzines. 'ZX,' 'UNDER THE OZONE HOLE,' 'OPUNTIA,' and 'THE FROZEN FROG' are about it right now. My finances will have to improve a bit before I can do the fanzines I want to do."*

To which **The Graeme** replied: *"Another couple of perzines I'm aware of are 'SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG' by Garth Spencer here in Vancouver, and – its first issue just recently published – 'THE ZERO G LAVATORY' by Scott Patri out of Cumberland, B.C."*

Andrew C. Murdoch wrote: *"Well, if it's any consolation, you're not the only one who's a little*

dejected after getting your hopes up for an Aurora Award. Personally, though, I'd have been surprised if ZX did so well as to get six votes as BCSFAzine once did."

"I'm also greatly interested in receiving SPACE CADET GAZETTE when it comes out. I'd love to take a look."

And **The Graeme** replied: *"I have shamelessly taken advantage of my editorship of BCSFAzine to run half page ads for SPACE CADET. In two months I have received 2 four-month subscriptions, 2 five-month subscriptions, and I single-month subscription, for a grand total of \$19 seed money for the first issue. This does not bode well for commercial success. But as you know, perzines are a labour of love, produced for the sheer fun of it, and I'm in the mood for some non-deadline writing fun. The example of ZX, along with OPUNTIA and UNDER THE OZONE HOLE, is what inspired me to launch SPACE CADET. In other words, you guys are to blame."*

And now, 17 years later, it is the 17th issue of SPACE CADET. So the 17th Anniversary issue, or it would have been had I published it last month. But what the heck, I declare this the 'official' 17th Anniversary issue anyway. Cheers! The Graeme

COLOPHON

THE SPACE CADET GAZETTE #17
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