



Broken Toys is a personalzine by Taral Wayne, and while I should be working on the next issue of New Toy, The Louche Knight or other projects, it's been damn near a month since the last issue and feels longer. As was the case with issue 15, I have a letter column only slightly shorter than the rest of the fanzine. Locs are always welcome anyway. As has been the case for the 22 years I've been here, I live in overcrowded chaos at 245 Dunn Ave., Apt. 2111, Toronto Ontario M6K 1S6. Alternately, contact or loc me at Taral@Teksavvy.com. The date is around May 1, 2013, my Mother's birthday, and this issue is ExtraTaraltoriality (or Kiddelidivee Books & Art) 266, © 2013 Taral Wayne

Quo Vadis, Fandom?

A while ago I hazarded an explanation of what I meant by "fandom." In his own eyes, the person I explained fandom to *was* a fan, and he wondered why I seemed to talk about him as though he *wasn't*. Disregarding that I've rewritten my explanation from start to finish, what I said was:

As a concept, fandom has been moving in the direction of including everyone on the planet who has the slightest interest in *anything whatsoever*. When someone like me brings up an admittedly prejudicial term like "Trufan," "Core Fan" or even *my* favourite "Old School Fan" – which seems to offend fewer people – the response is generally, "What do you mean, I'm *not* a fan? I am so! I love Thai food, watch every episode of 'Big Bang Theory' and wear funny T-shirts all the time!" For a great many people, "fandom" has basically become a conglomerate of all vaguely fantasy or futuristic genres -- vampires, UFOs, Wicca, old radio, superheroes, anime, video games, costuming & role-playing, high frontier, toy collecting, kiddy lit, filk singing, podcasting ... and even a little bit of written science fiction. Fandom is also a frame of mind to them. A way to unbend and have fun. Almost nothing is excluded, and young fans expect to find a little bit of everything at a convention.

Fandom was also a frame of mind to *us* at one time: a looser way of thinking that is more open to ideas, and even – dare I say it – a little bit *hip*. The trouble is, that the hip frame of mind that we once

prided ourselves on, because it was ahead of our time, is the *norm* today. In 2013, you can think a little like Bob Tucker or Terry Carr, but still only *be* Bill Clinton.

Of course, fandom did not really begin as a hip state of mind. The original fandom was about nothing more exciting than pulp fantasy and science fiction. There was a small amount of legacy genre work – such as H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, Edgar Allan Poe, H. Ryder Haggard and James Branch Cabell – but the “modern stuff” was only to be found in cheap pulp magazines. By the 1950s, small press outfits began to reprint the best of the old pulp material, particularly serials that had never appeared in complete form before. As the decade progressed, other fandoms developed around the mystery, horror and pulp adventure genres – just as, in later decades, there would be similar fandoms developing around comic books, Trek, Tolkien, Dr. Who and a hundred other things. These parallel fandoms always a certain degree of overlap with SF fandom, simply because the sort of individual who liked one was just as likely to be into one or more of the others. Traditional SF fans, however, tended to keep them as separate institutions in their minds.

These days, younger fans must be puzzled at the self-centeredness and arrogance of Old School Fans who seem to think they occupy a privileged position, and can tell other people who *is* and *isn't* a fan. I'm one of those Old School types, myself, and at one time also thought I had the power to anoint others with the spirit of Trufannishness. I've disabused myself of that delusion since ... though I'm embarrassed to say I came by that wisdom much later than I should have. But it hasn't made All Known Fandom into the community of like-minded people to which it had some passing resemblance back in the Long Ago, when I was a neo. Fandom is what it increasingly became as it grew. It is now a three-ring circus of amorphous character, open to so many interests and activities that it has become harder and harder to relate to all comers, a free-for-all from which I do not derive the pleasure I once did.

How can anyone resent *that* attitude? Well ... it's easy, actually. Modern fans grew up with fandom as it is, and like that way. And don't give a rat's ass what it once was.

When I say "fandom," I almost certainly mean what it meant to me in 1975 ... and until 1990 at latest, while the tail of fanzine fandom still wagged the dog of Worldcon. What fandom is in 2013 is only *fandom-like* ... the "Multi-dom" perhaps? Such ugly English, though, should be avoided at all cost. Let us use “All Known Fandom,” then. The Hugo Award was Old School Fandom's creation, and was once its exclusive property. But the Hugos appear to have changed hands, slowly, and now belong to "All Known Fandom.”

Or, to be practical about it, to all those who regard fifty bucks as a reasonable price to cast their vote. Whoever that is ... and whether it's the same as Fandom or not ... it sure as hell ain't me.

Faith Healing

Well, well, well... I have good news for a change. I'm officially crippled! Yeah, that's a heavily loaded, politically incorrect word these days, but – since I'm talking about myself – I'm not offended.

Today, I was supposed to meet with my lawyer to rehearse our song and dance for the Disability Board. The tribunal itself was scheduled for 9 a.m. on the 2nd. of May – a troublesome time of the morning for a night owl like me. Yesterday, I answered the phone and it was my lawyer, David, who

told me not to bother. He had just gotten a faxed letter from the board saying that they had done an about-face and *approved* my claim!

To put this into perspective, I first applied for a disability pension in December 2011. It was denied, so I appealed in May 2012. That was denied also, so I requested a full tribunal. It's been a long wait for this, in other words. But there is a good side. David wasn't certain, but he believes that I will have to be paid retroactively to May last year – that could be a moderately large lump sum. Hearsay tells me I *might* be owed arrears back to December of 2011, when I first made my application – a *less* modest lump sum. The fact is, I don't know what the bottom line will be. I assume that I'll be allowed more than I'm currently receiving from Ontario Works, i.e. welfare ... but, at the same time, the rent on my city-owned apartment is geared to my income so that will rise also. Until I see some hard numbers, though, I won't know how much better off I can expect to be. Maybe comfortable enough to have cable TV again? Gee, that would be nice. Instead of reading the news online, I could watch it in the old-fashioned way on TV.

I asked David why the Board's initial negative decision was reversed at such a late date. He believes that it was the letter we solicited from my doctor that turned the trick. The letter was more than a page long, very detailed, and positive – unlike the quack who was my old G.P., who told me "you no need a pension, Mr. Wayne." He had provided me with astonishingly inferior care, and would have done nothing until I was shoveled into the ground. For now, I'm still on OW – i.e. the "pogey." David says that the change from one to the other *ought* to go smoothly and automatically. I should know more later, when I've had an interview with the board's case worker.

As I write, I feel an unaccustomed sense of good will toward everyone, particularly my lawyer, David Warren; my current physician, Dr. Fung; my case worker at Ontario Works, "906;" and the social workers downstairs in the LOFT office, who got the ball rolling on all of this for me. You might say they've healed my faith in humanity. Without them, in particular, I'm certain I'd have been living on the street a couple of years ago ... and possibly *dead* today.

Of course, I'm well aware that no two steps forward are free of slipping backward one. I wouldn't be *me* if I wasn't skeptical of too much good luck.

Also In The News...

Some things appear in the news with monotonous regularity. Among them are stories about nutbars who bring their gun collection to Show and Tell at school and blow away a random lot of teachers and students. A slight variation on the theme is somebody who carelessly leaves a homemade bomb at a public event, such as the recent running of the Boston Marathon. There is almost no common thread among the perpetrators. Some are motivated by religion, some by race hatred, others by the conviction that the world is out to get them. The actual reason is sometimes never known, as the perp prefers to go down shooting rather than hang around to discuss the issue calmly ... before sentence is passed.

But there is one thing in common among them. The shooter or bomber is almost *never* some kind of Liberal or Progressive. When was the last time any bleeding-heart Liberal broke into a boardroom

with a Ruger .45 automatic and gunned down a dozen CEOs to protest downsizing the auto industry? Not since the 1940s, if not a decade earlier.

Someday, I'd kinda like to see the headline:

Knee-jerk Liberals break into NRA Meeting Armed With Shotguns and Assault Rifles

Mow Down 171 White Males in Orange Vests!

Followed by the story:

"Says police chief Clancy Wiggum of the massacre, 'Doggone, it looks like they planned this intelligently ... Who expected *that*? If they did, we'll never catch them!' President Obama, speaking to the press in Washington, declared that he may have been hasty in calling for stricter gun control. "Perhaps I have this all wrong," he said, scratching his head. "If we want to see progress in this country, perhaps we should register political Liberals and federally arm them?" Protestors outside Congress carried placards and banners demanding "Guns Now! Arm Us to Stop the Madness!"

Something as strange as that is bound to happen in American politics, sooner or later. We can only wait for it.

Chris Garcia -

cgarcia@computerhistory.org

Good stuff! A few quick notes I came to while reading so early in the morning that my coffee is still scalding the roof of my mouth with every sip!

I really think that your 100th Drink Tank piece is something incredibly special. I've reread it a bunch of times now and think it's one of the best pieces I've ever had the chance to run. I was incredibly moved by it on the first read, and have been with every reading since.



I just wish I had the cover for that issue finished so that you could publish the ish. ASAP is the word!

I love Norman Jewison's works. He's not only a great director, but he's started and progressed hundreds of careers. I've seen *The Love of Art*, but that was years ago when I was on a big New Cinema kick in the '90s. There's never a shortage of people willing to pay for good work. A number only eclipsed by the number of leeches like myself who are on the hunt for free art! The most interesting thing is that when an artist dies, or even just retires, not only does the value of their work increase, but the number of their works actually increases as everything they ever did, from scribbles

to doodles, becomes available and considered significant. The best example of that is a work of an Abstract Expressionist (maybe it was Hans Hoffman?) who had just had a 'major new piece' bought by the Museum of Modern Art in Dallas. We were talking about it in Art Post-1945 and my professor said 'I can say for 100% certain that this wasn't an actual painting: it was has brush preparation canvas to make sure he had an edge.' but since they were dead, it's become an art piece!

A lot of that stuff that passes as modern art is neither. For one thing, much of it was crap. For another, it wasn't "modern." It ceased to be "modern" sometime in the 1940s when it was 50 years old. Now it's more than a century old. I recall when the National Gallery in Ottawa bought a canvas called "Voice of Fire" by a New York painter named Barnett Newman. The taxpayers spent \$1.8 million on what looked like a military ribbon, blown up to the size of a barn door. There is no way that is anything but crap, but Barnett was regarded as an important abstract expressionist painter of the '50s and '60s. He apparently thought he was on the cutting edge of art, but I'll tell you what would have rocked the establishment boat – a painting of a basket of kittens! That would have gotten his union card revoked toot sweet! What Barnett was, was a 20th century conservative, traditionalist painter and as "significant" as a box of scuffed shoes.



Voice of Crap, by Alfred E. Barnett

Love the cookie piece! I've made pot cookies a few times, but oddly, don't really enjoy eating them. Just not my thing. The preparation of them, on the other hand, is a lot of fun! You have to make pot butter, which is a bit of fun. One time, we actually used a combination of weed and other herbs in the butter to make a scampi! It was pretty awesome. The one problem it, of course, your house will smell like a '68 VW van for the next week!

I've had sleep issues most of my life. I've never been able to sleep on my back, I've got Sleep Apnea and use a CPAP, and I rarely sleep all the way through the night. On the other hand, I used to sleep in weird places, like under the seats in airport waiting areas, behind couches at conventions, and perhaps strangest of all, on top of a stationary bike. That was a fun one. I also have massive fits of insomnia which are terrible at times. I've had a couple of stretches of 72 hours of no sleep that hurt for ages.

I hope Stiles wins himself one of the rockets, and this would be a good year for it. He's been doing top-notch stuff and has deserved it for the long period of straight awesomeness. Of course, Texas is

Brad's home state, so that could be where they go. On the other hand, I still think it's a crime that you're not on the Best Fan Writer ballot, not to mention the Fan Artist ballot! Just a crime.

Of the Old School fanartists, Brad has the best chance, I think. I have nothing against Brad, but I hope Steve gets the votes ... because Brad has had 8 Hugos, 3 of them recently, and Steve none.

Good issue, as always!

Eric Mayer - groggy.tales@gmail.com

Thanks for *Broken Toys 15*. Most of my few locs this year have been to you. Since I'm not publishing or going to conventions or participating in lists, am I even in fandom anymore? Maybe I am only involved in Taraldom.

There are worse things to dedicate a life of adoration to. Give me a moment ... I'll think of one.

Your loccol proves that you've had no trouble attracting an audience for an electronic-only zine. Which goes to show that even if the potential readership for ezines is small, faneds/writers who can give readers something that interests them can still thrive. Arnie Katz has also managed to maintain good response to his ezine.

It took persistence to grow a decent letter column, but I still worry that its not a very diverse one. If you and four other people were to all have fatal accidents or health crises, I'd have to start all over again building up regular loccers. It may not be possible without adding a lot of gossip about British fandom to my zine. And what do I know about British fan gossip?

Lloyd mentions that it might be a good idea for faneds to send their ezines out as attachments. I dunno. I'm not comfortable with that. In Internet terms it is Spam. It's fine when you send me an attachment because we are in more or less regular correspondence, but to send stuff out unasked to people you haven't been in touch with? Anyway, I would be afraid to do that because, really, I can't think of too many fans I could count on being happy to receive a zine from me. The vast majority would, I imagine, say either, "what the heck is he sending me this crap for" or "who the hell is this guy?"

Long before I began Broken Toys, it was my plan to distribute it actively, not just wait for people to download each issue from a website. I was pretty sure that was a guarantee that any zine I edited would have no more than a dozen readers. If Broken Toys is spam to anyone, they have my apology. Unlike real spam, it only takes telling me to remove your name from my mailing list to have it removed ... after a few more issues. (You might change your mind, after all.)

It's great that you're getting more commissions. Maybe you should keep raising your prices and work at a more leisurely pace but earn the same amount. If, of course, you could achieve that sort of balance. People expect to pay peanuts for art and writing. And not nicely roasted salted peanuts either, since they can be pricey.

It would be good if *** can keep you supplied with medicinal cookies. Too bad you can't simply buy

them at the bakery but of course, what are governments for if not to make sure that we remain sleepless or in pain? Hey, at least Canada does provide for citizens to get health care. Here in the USA we are more interested in the health of insurance companies. But then again, as you probably know, corporations are people here and entitled to their rights. Same for newly fertilized eggs. Actual human beings, not so much.

I hope you regain your Hugo nomination slot. Your absence might be due to you having concentrated on original writing rather than art the past few years. However, speaking cynically, it has always seemed to me that the best way to make the Hugo ballot is to have won the Hugo, or at least been on the ballot, the previous year. Consider Dave Langford. Once he finally lost, his name dropped right out of the nominations. Is his writing any worse than it was during his twenty-odd year run of Best Fanwriter Hugos? Or perhaps more to the point, was it any better during the run than it is now?

At this point, I'd be gratified to show up on the FAAn award ballot. If I don't, I may have a tantrum. What's a guy gotta do?

Well, start sticking more art in *Broken Toys* and see if you can get back on the Hugo nominations list. Have they released the totals yet to see how close you were?

Ned Brooks - nedbrooks@sprynet.com

I don't sleep that well now, but probably as well as can be expected at my age. I get to sleep easily enough, but wake up after a few hours even if I don't hear from one of the vile telepests. I may have discouraged the "home security system" lot ... I would get a more-or-less human on the line, and let go with a little chrome-plated whistle called "The Thunderer" that I got somewhere long ago. It was advertised as the loudest breath-powered whistle - and in fact will cause my ears to ring for a while unless I cover them when I use it.

I didn't know your art ever suffered the abomination of having to be traced by hand. I never tried to trace art. Quite early I got a ThermoFax in a thrift store and used thermal mimeo stencils to publish art. There were thermal spirit masters as well - and they would have worked on a hecto as well. I did just one 1-page legal-length fanzine on a Heyer Hecto and gave the thing away.

My work wasn't often traced on stencil - that would take actual skill. But someone without the requisite skill have now and again given it a try. Not even electrostencils did some of the work justice, though.

I get a crew-cut every summer, but I never understood the "flat-top" fad. Perhaps it was inspired by all those ads for perfectly smooth "putting-green" lawns.

I always thought that hair humanized us, but craniums all looked pretty much the same. Close-cropped cuts on some people just adds to the diversity, though, so that's alright.

My house is cluttered with objects - mostly from thrift stores - that I found interesting to look at. But I don't think of these as "fetish" objects. Originally the word "fetish/fetich" referred to an object of

devotion and/or magical power in someone else's religion, then came to mean an object connected with sexual excitement. But neither definition applies to my stuff ... it's more in the nature of "found art," with no purpose other than visual interest.

I think the word you're looking for is "obsessive," or perhaps "compulsive," as in "obsessive/compulsive disorder" – very common among fans and book collectors in general.

Janet Wilson - Janetw43@shaw.ca

Actually, I don't know if this is a loc. It looks exactly like every other e-mail message I send, and I send quite a few, whereas I haven't written a letter of comment since Ghu knows when. But I have just had a look at *Broken Toys 15*, and am overcome with fannish nostalgia, or something.

It's the cookies. I distinctly remember that sort of cookie; I even have a copy of a very privately published book of recipes for them. I used to have some such cookies around the place, and they are indeed good for relaxation and getting to sleep. And do I ever miss them! This is especially true since my COPD [*Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*] got to the point, a few years ago, where I couldn't smoke anything at all without having my lungs raise hell about it. If I ever get hold of the proper ingredients, I'll start baking.

Thanks for sending me [*a peek at*] that article, "*100 is Not Too Many*," as well as for *Broken Toys 15*. Another source of my fannish nostalgia is, of course, your remarks on having written about your relationships with art, Dalmirin, etc. over the years. Can it really be nearly 40 years since you and I stood in front of the Ontario College of Art's "open house" exhibit and marveled at its sheer bloody awfulness? (Yes, and I still recall how awful some of it was.)

I'll resist the temptation to insert another image of "The Voice of Fire" here.

E.T. Bryan, abpix.gremlin@verizon.net

Thanks for the ezine. Perhaps being "retired" with respect to commission price is not quite as good as being dead, but it does have some advantages. Pepperoni Pizza with extra cheese, for example. I think I can say with pride that at no time did I bring out my excellent and inspirational commissioned Taral art works and find myself in morbid wonderment what the market bump would be should you have the misfortune to step in front of a runaway maniacal Cuisinart. So it's high time I did. Such an unfortunate accident would likely require a closed casket ceremony but also bump the art prices another 25 percent over the normal artist terminal bonus from the publicity alone. Subsequent rapid sales of the Gremlin Trouble floppy covers that I had the foresight to commission would make quite the dent in reducing storage locker costs and underwriting my predilection for consuming delicious Hostess products while (entirely ironically, you understand) watching the latest white trash programming on the history channel.

In lieu of any likelihood of a quick killing in the event of my death, I'll just have to live forever.

Brad Foster, bwfoster@juno.com

This one has been in the in box for a while now, working hard to clean it all up today, so it's time has come!

The "I'm Not Dead Yet" article hit home with me, as I'm sure it did with every artist on your mail list who has actually fooled themselves into trying to make a living with their art. It does indeed seem the more you try, the harder it is. But once you pull back, suddenly – then – they want you. It's the same with pricing: I've had job requests in the past that I really had no interest in doing, and so quoted some over-inflated price, and I was shocked they agreed to it. It's like, if you don't ask enough, suddenly the art they wanted is not "that good" anymore. I've always threatened to do one of the art festivals we show at where I just jack up the price on everything by 100% ... I might not sell as much, but it would certainly take a lot fewer sales to make the same amount. Still, my main audience always seems to be the struggling fan with only a few bucks in their pocket, so I am loathe to attempt that experiment, and end up with nothing.

Maybe if we win a lottery, and I no longer need the money, *then* I can sell for obscene amounts?

Cookies? If chocolate chip were good enough for my parents, they're good enough for me. None of these new-fangled "floral" cookies you youngsters are going on about these days. Dang punk kids.... Mumble ...

I like the idea of a WWALTFH section in the letters column!

Then you'll love this ... I'm going to increase the number of hapless non-loccers I name to three!

tyrbolo@comcast.net tyrbolo@comcast.net

I have always appreciated your efforts. Never thought anything was worth passing by, it's pure laziness that has kept me silent 'til now.

I'm not sure of the spelling but the deccanic magic system used during the renaissance was supposed to be able to draw the deccans from the zodiac into statues to animate them. There are supposed to be adepts who cast horoscopes with this art today, but are high-priced and secretive about it. Wallace Wood did a scurrilous cartoon on the subject of statue love featuring Superman.

You'll be glad to know that pot doesn't cause tits on statues, but U.S. government had to check to see if it was true.

I do know that LSD causes psychotic behaviors in people who don't use it.

Lloyd Penny, 25 April 2013, penneys@bell.net

Many thanks for issue 15 of *Broken Toys*. I assure you that I have read all 100 articles you've written for *The Drink Tank*, even though I may not have commented on them all. I will certainly be commenting on the majority of what's here, so I will get started.

Getting the right idea for an article is damned difficult, which is why I tend to stay in the local. I am percolating in my mind an article about my changing interests, but it still needs to stew for a while yet.

I have heard so many times over the years about private parties at cons where a few joints are passed around, or there's tiny squares of hash brownies being served up. I think a lot of that is actually wishful thinking, or most likely wishing they could be invited to one of those parties. About all I remember at some of the parties I attended was mostly beer and some single-malt scotch.

Well, I don't loc with every issue, but every issue gets some comment, even if I have to respond to two issues in one letter. You may have sent Chris Garcia 100 articles, but I have sent him over 100 letters of comment over the years. Just recently, I was asked if I would send a letter of comment to a faned by Facebook, so I did. Not much different by e-mail, but there are more and more ways to communicate electronically. Not going the Twitter way, by the way...

Bruce, would you remember a song by American singer Gene Pitney called 'Trans-Canada Highway'? I heard it a while ago, it's a song unknown by most American Pitney fans, it obviously caught my ear, and I looked it up online, and what I read said the song was a hit in Australia. That may have been the only market in which it was released.

My father was also the type who thought that long hair was effeminate or associates with communism. I knew my hair was too long when my father bitched about it. It was short compared to many, but Dad would have preferred me in a permanent brushcut. Well, I don't have to worry too much about that any more, I keep it short, but it's falling out on its own. Soon, I won't have to worry about it at all.

My loc and weight loss...it's all come back and more. Added to my high blood pressure medication is medication for high cholesterol. I may need more for high uric acid levels in my blood, too. This getting old is a pain.

The Aurora ballot should be out within a few days...did you get a call for that from Cliff Samuels? I did, and I am on the ballot again. Your experiences with the Hugos resemble mine with the Auroras. I seem to appear on the ballot from time to time, but I haven't won one of those pointy trophies since 1998, fifteen years ago. Last year, Canadian pros won the majority of the fan categories, and I am assured that won't happen this year. We shall see.

Just made it onto page 2, and I can rest. A busy day with little accomplished, other than this letter. Many thanks for it, and I look forward to the next.

We also heard from:

“**Bruce**” Patterson – who says, “*BRUCE Patterson???*” *Could be I meant to type “Bill?”*”

Andrew Porter – “I have a Whole Bunch of these, unread, piled up in my downloads file, sigh ...”

This is just what every faned wants to hear.

Ron Kasman – who says, “Thanks for the mailing, Taral. It was an enjoyable read, as always though I have little to say in comment. One of your commenters said that fandom is awash with sickness. I am sure that it is true. At the Toronto World con in 2003 I told Jeff Boman that I was looking at a crowd of the same people who attended the 1973 convention, now older and uglier and with Jeff in a motorized chair and me with a pacemaker. Heck, that was ten years ago. Now time has really put the boots to us.”

We’d Also Like to Hear From –

Jacqueline Monahan, John Douglas, and the Philosophical Arnie Katz



Trinka's Lament

*Oh, bad little rock spider,
Why ever did you bite me?
What have I ever done to you?*

I no longer have a song to sing.
I cannot move, so never play.
Thinking back, it must have been
At least a hundred years ago today -
I really don't remember when -
Since you took my lovely life away.

*O, cruel little rock spider,
I was a happy Fragggle once.
Not now -- all because of you.*

I no longer have a song to sing.
I cannot move, so never play.
Thinking back, it must have been
At least a hundred years ago today -
I really don't remember when -
Since you took my lovely life away.

*Oh, damn little rock spider
Thanks to you, I think I'll always be
Just this old, forgotten statue!*

(Sings to self 50,000,000
times, then starts over.)

TARAL WAYNE 2013

Elephant in a Room Party

It seems surreal for me to be nominated for an Aurora at this late date. I was already an “Old Fan and Tired” when the first Canadian science fiction and fan awards were being discussed, nearly 30 years ago. I am one of the very few survivors of an era in Canadian fandom that ended four decades in the past ... and perhaps the *only* one who is still regularly publishing fanzines as well as creating material for other publishers. I was involved in club politics and helping to run conventions before anyone under the age of 25 was *born*. All in all, it may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that I’ve probably forgotten more of my fanac than most fans have actually done.

As a fanzine editor, my last issue of *Broken Toys* is numbered my 265th fan publication. The majority of those fanpubs were modest apazines and news-sheets, but there were 34 issues of *DNQ*, well known in its day. More recently there has been *New Toy*, *Lost Toys*, *The Great White North*, *The Slan of Baker Street* and *To Walk the Moon*, my report of Anticipation, the 2009 Montreal Worldcon. Last year I began a somewhat informal, semi-regular zine called *Broken Toys*, that I write and illustrate myself. I directly email the .pdf file to a list of about 100 people, and have also posted each of the 16 issues (so far) to <http://eFanzines.com> and <http://Fanc.org>

Along with publishing fanzines, I’ve helped to fill them, both as a fanwriter and a fanartist. Since about 2005, when I appear to have hit my stride, I’ve been writing more than drawing. My annual word output most likely peaked last year with something like 100 written articles ranging in length from a few hundred words to over 10,000. During the single year that I counted, I wrote nearly 200,000 words.

It is more as a fanartist that I’ve made my mark in fandom, though. Art bearing either my “WM” or “TW” signatures have appeared in a hundred fanzines ... and that’s probably not a loose estimate but a concrete fact. During the years I’ve been contributing art for fan publications, I’ve been nominated for a fan Hugo 11 times. Now and then, for this and for that, I’ve also been nominated for the FAAn award given by the annual fanzine convention, Corflu. In 2008 I was chosen by the panel of judges as that year’s recipient of the Rotsler Award. The most mind-blowing celebration of my forty-some-odd years in fandom, however, was the year that after, when I was made the Montreal Worldcon’s Fan Guest of Honour.

All of which is why I’m so stunned by this Aurora nomination. Canadian fandom has been noted for several eras of a vigorous and creative fanzine subculture – the last having ended sometime in the early 1990s. In the more-than-20 years since, zines have been the interest of a very small minority among this country’s fandom. I’ve sometimes felt like the elephant in the room party that nobody notices. Then, suddenly, after years, even *decades* of flattering attention and honours awarded by fandom around the world, it was not until *last year* that my efforts seem to have come to the attention of *Canadian* fans. And now a *second* nomination for an Aurora the year after. I guess I can’t be the *only* one who is surprised ... or who would have nominated me? Nevertheless, my sense of reality appears to need revision. I could get used to it.

Pay More and Save!

I bought a new reusable coffee filter. It doesn't work. It can't be "reused," because it can't be used in the first place.

My last new coffee machine didn't come with a filter of its own, and used the old-fashioned paper filters, that you use once and throw away. I had gotten used to the re-usable kind, not so much because I deplored the waste created by unrecyclable forestry products, nor because I was too cheap to buy them. The real advantage to using a plastic filter is that I wouldn't be up Shit's Creek without a coffee cup because I forgot to buy paper filters the last time I went grocery shopping.

In case you haven't encountered them before, reusable filters are basket-shaped cups with the bottom and sides made of fine plastic mesh. You dump the grounds in, put the filter in the coffee machine's basket, slide the basket under the drip ... and everything works just like a disposable paper filter, except you just rinse the reusable one out afterward. I like them. Less waste. Nothing more to buy. The old one reusable filter had developed a tear, however ... so I bought a new one for two bucks. Unfortunately, all that happens when I try to use it is that hot water rises in the filter and overflows, filling my coffee pot with a sludge that is about half-brew, half-grounds. I can't figure out what the problem is. Plain tap water drains through both filters at about the same rate. But, with grounds in the new filter, it plugs up solid. I've heard some coffee described "as thick as mud" but surely it isn't literally so?

I tried using that filter several times, on the theory that it was new and perhaps needed some sort of "breaking in." The problem only got worse, if anything. I tried using coffee that was already ground in the package, rather than grinding my own beans. No difference. In desperation, I poked about a thousand tiny holes in the bottom of the filter, using a clothes pin. Plain water nearly *poured* through it. I was actually afraid that my modification might now permit the fine grounds I prefer to pass directly through. But, no. With the filter loaded again, the hot water backed up in the basket and overflowed just like before. I have absolutely *no* fucking idea what's going on.

No doubt it was another one of *those* Chinese products: you know the ones. There must be a million small factories in that country that go through the motions of making cheap products – everything from toilet deodorizers to radar components – that only *look* as though they do the job, but don't actually do *anything*. How else do you think they keep costs down low enough to sell their crap in dollar stores and still make a profit? I remember buying two or three cheap can-openers last year, and *not one* of them would open a can. They barely penetrated the metal, and slipped out of the groove on the first turn of the key. Sick of using a 14" hacksaw to open my corned beef, I finally broke down and bought a real can-opener for something like \$5, and *it* does the job perfectly!

You'd think we'd learn not to buy crap from the Chinese ... but, we don't. The lure of "saving money" is irresistible, whether it is the consumer or the manufacturer who is tempted. We buy junk that doesn't work, fire unionized employees to ship their jobs to semi-slave labour overseas and destroy our own middle-class, and even imperil ourselves by depending on shoddily made products that may let us down in critical moments. We even install counterfeit military equipment into our stealth fighters, military communications net and ICBM guidance systems, apparently just hoping we never go to war and have to use the stuff ... at least not with the country that made it. No chance of war with the Chinese or a Chinese ally, like, say, North Korea ... nossir!

In spite of the obviously self-delusional and self-destructive mindset that leads us to save money by wasting it, we go on doing it. Then we curse when the ballcock in our toilet snaps because it was only made of plastic, our CD player jams and won't give us back the disk because it was assembled by an eight-year-old or a \$1.8 billion Mars Lander misses the planet altogether. But we never learn. We're *saving money*, aren't we?

Do yourself a favour next time you need a left-handed veeble frixit. Pay more and *really* save yourself money.



Drink Tank 340

So many issues of *The Drink Tank*, so little time to fill them. However, as of this issue, I've filled **100** of them! To commemorate the event, Chris Garcia and I collaborated on a Special Issue! I began my appearances in DT way back in 2007, with a two-part interview conducted by Frank Wu. I was a little slow reappearing, but once I got into the habit, it was a hard one to break. In the 187 issues since, I've added to the pages just about to every other issue. Most of the pieces I contributed were moderately short, but that's still a lot of writing any way you slice it. Somebody should have told me it was habit forming.

There has been a lot of careless talk about the zine's "golden touch," as though to be a regular contributor was a punched ticket to the Hugo Ceremonies, right up front where the other nominees sit. It has won Chris the Rocket for Best

Fanzine, along with his co-editor, James Bacon. It has also won DT's frequent cover artist, Mo Starkey, a Hugo for Best Fanartist. But I recommend caution before throwing around irresponsible theories like that. If it were so ... where's *my* Hugo? I am the living proof that Chris and Mo earned their Hugo some other way than by merely appearing in *Drink Tank*. *Bribery perhaps?*

Drink Tank 340 was finished a couple of days ago, and ought to be posted on eFanzines just before this issue of *Broken Toys*. Oh ... and by the way. As a Special Celebration of the Special Issue, I have ceased writing for *Drink Tank*.

It is said that the best way to create a demand is to limit supply, you see. Now that my writing in *Drink Tank* will be in very short supply, perhaps it will stimulate voter interest, so that I may someday, finally, have my very own silver Rocket to cradle in my arms!