

Lost Toys 5

There seems little to say: another mailing, another issue of **Taral Wayne's** *Lost Toys*. This one, begun around the **end of June**, may possibly be completed in the same month. As usual, I'm writing this from 245 Dunn Ave., Apartment 2111, Toronto, Ontario, M6K 1S6, Canada. That's a little north of Buffalo, turn left at Highway 401 and drive east for about 30 minutes. As usual, I can be reached at Taral@bell.net Kiddelidivee Books & Art 283.

Turning the Page? While my interest in fandom continues to plummet, other events seem to portend improvements in my living arrangements. I hardly know where to begin, so I'll just blurt out the first thing that comes to mind. That would be the hum in my left ear. It's caused by my *new air conditioner*. It's a Danby, 10,000 BTU unit and it's keeping me as cool as a cucumber in a crisper. The new unit has a remote control, three operating modes (including one energy-saver) and a digital read-out that displays temperatures instead of an arbitrary power setting. There had been some issue with how much of an electrical load the new unit would put on my living room circuit. That particular outlet supported my computer, monitor, wi-fi Internet connection and desk phone as well. The maintenance guy for the building said 5,000 BTUs was all the circuit would take. 5,000 BTU was far too little to air condition a room of that size, however, so I gambled on newer A/Cs being much more energy efficient. The gamble paid off. I left it on the energy-saving mode last night while I slept, and was delighted to learn that the new unit lowered the temperature in my bedroom all the way from the living room! Nor did the breakers ever trip. I'm looking forward to being comfortably cool all this summer.

Steven, my fix-it friend, helped me install the air conditioner. Did I say, "help." More accurately, he did 90% of the work. Steve bought it for me from Home Depot, he brought it over, he pulled the old unit out of the living room window, he did most of the hoisting to get the new unit in, and he moved the dead unit to the garbage chute for me. I lent my rubbery muscles here and there, and mopped up some dripping water, but that was about the limit of my ability. As soon as everything was ship-shape, I declared I wouldn't pay him *a penny more* and slipped the full amount on the bill of sale into his hand.

Steven will be helping with my *new computer*, as well. I shopped around on-line, and the system that best suited my needs appeared to be an Acer. It was priced around \$600, which was a step or two up from the cheapest new model. As I recall, it has an i5 processor, runs at 3.0 GHz, has 4 GB of RAM, and a .5 terabyte hard drive. It was advertised as coming with Windows 7 installed. Goodie. I have no desire to find out what pitfalls might await me if I tried to adapt my files and other software to an operating system as flashy and giddy as Windows 8 – which seems to have been designed more for use with tablets and smart phones than a for-real computer. The new system has already been bought as I write this, and Steven will bring it over in a week or two. I'm all goose bumps ... but, to be honest, some of that is stark fear. Getting it set up properly is going to take days of work, and no doubt much frustration.

But it was getting to the point where getting a new computer couldn't be put off any longer. A couple of months ago, Windows had left XP users like me dangling. Google Chrome had stopped sending me updates for my web browser, because my processor wouldn't run them. Web sites were downloading like molasses dripping out of a cold straw. Too often, ACDSsee would collapse before opening a file or folder I had clicked on. The web browser froze up for a minute at a time, and even crashed altogether. All this misbehavior boiled down to too much demand on a processor that was far too old and slow. I was heartily sick of it.

It's not every day I spend a thousand dollars. It's not even every *year*. I can't actually think of the last time I spent that much money in such short period of time, for so few separate things. Fortunately, my disability pension is far more generous than welfare ever was – never mind what I was actually able to learn while I was self-employed – so I can save a reasonable amount every month. Also, I received a back payment that got my dragon's hoard off to a roaring good start.

The good news isn't finished. A couple of days ago, a social worker and a company rep brought over a demonstration model of a power chair. I admit that I'm a bit embarrassed about this. I preferred an electric scooter. A scooter is only one step away from a Vespa in my mind. But a mobile chair makes a statement – “look out for the disabled guy.” I know I shouldn't think that way, but for a long time my robust nature has been part of my personal identity. Advertising the failure of my physique to live up to my self-image was not something I looked forward to. Despite that, I found the chair very comfortable, and it was extremely easy to control. A subtle twist of the wrist was all it took to steer, and it would literally turn 360 degrees on a dime! I was told it would drive 25 km on a full charge, and had a top speed of 6 kph. (That's about 4 mph.) It recharged from any ordinary electrical socket without first having to discharge the battery fully. In fact, running the battery down to zero was bad for it. So the chair sounds perfect. The clincher is that a scooter might not have *fit* in my small apartment.

Whether a scooter or a power chair, the only place I could think of parking it was in the hall, in front of the door. When I needed to get out, I'd have had to move the wheels, or edge sideways around them. The social worker flatly told me that wasn't good enough. I hate to admit it, but she was right. But that left me in a pickle ... in my cramped, well-organized apartment, how was I to find space for a vehicle half the size of the Mars Science Laboratory? Where there's a will, there is always a way, fortunately ... but only if you plan well in advance. I spent at least three days thinking about how I could move A to B, if I moved B to C, C to D and so on, shedding unnecessary junk along the way. Once I was firm in my mind as to how the move was to be done, I started in, carrying out the rearrangements, one step at a time, over a period of days. When I was finished, I was as pleased with myself as though I had freed the slaves or established World peace. Nor was I done a moment too soon. The social worker phoned me a day or two later, and asked if I had made satisfactory progress making space, yet. “I had,” I said, and she set a date to bring over the demo.

Even though such scooters and chairs may cost more than \$3,000, the most delightful part of this story is that it won't cost me a penny. The province of Ontario has a program that provides the disabled with mobile assistance. I know it's wicked. Some poor, deserving millionaire will have to wait an entire month before he is able to install stereo air conditioners in the back seat of his second stretch Mercedes. But, you know what? *I don't care*. I'm going to be able to go out and selfishly enjoy the fresh air and sunlight this summer, or go shopping for necessities, without the agony of dragging myself 50 feet at a time, from one uncomfortable sitting place to the next. Until you've sat on a low

curb or a step in the snow, breathing hard with an aching hip, and 25 pounds of groceries in a backpack, you don't know how much that matters.

Meanwhile, all around me I see people's lives are going to hell. But for once it isn't me. I see a glimmer of light ahead, and it's a good feeling.

As long as my life seems to be on the right track again, I think I'm good, too, if fandom goes its way while I go mine. We may meet again.

[Dinner Après The River](#) The River is a friendly little used bookstore near where I live. It opened merely four years ago, and it is already closing. Bummer. The books were rock bottom cheap and acquired with care. There were no shelves loaded with dog-eared Harlequin Romances or broken-backed copies of Dan Brown. I never spent as much at The River as I'd have liked. However, until recently, I haven't had much money for books. This year, I finally began to enjoy more disposable income, but *then* the problem was I didn't have the space for more books. With great difficulty, I shed large numbers of books that were no longer quite unthinkable to part with. Some of them I had to give to the Salvation Army down the street, some I was able to sell to The River. Ironically, I bought back about as many as I sold the store, and the net result was a negligible saving of shelf space. *Then* I brought even more books, movies and music home from The River. At this point, I may well be worse off than I was before. Maybe it's just as well that The River will shortly be closing its doors for the last time.

In it's early days, The River used to host readings, literary discussion groups and workshops. They gradually disappeared over the next year or so, for what reason I can't say. I wasn't a participant. Prices for the books began to creep upward, as well. Some of the homey feeling of the store grew more business-like. Nevertheless, I liked dropping in whenever I passed by, and chewing the fat with either David, or his sister Mary, whichever was minding the shop. David was a character. He had been a biker when a younger man. Unfortunately, rising prices reflected rising rents as Parkdale slowly gentrified. After four years, David decided that street trade was unable to keep up. His plan is to move the store to Hamilton, a smaller city about an hour's drive from Toronto. Because of the steel mills, nobody wants to live there, but rents are cheaper. It seems that Toronto is growing too big and too desirable a place to live for its own good ... small bookstores can no longer survive here. Even large bookstores are struggling against the rising tide of affluence and on-line shopping.

When I told Hope Liebowitz about The River's closing, and the 30% closing discount, she said she wanted to visit me in Parkdale, to see the bookstore one last time. Yet, despite having come all the way to Parkdale from North York, specifically to buy books, as far as I could see Hope bought very little –a collection on CD of Janis Joplin, and some cheap SF paperbacks. If I had come so far, I would have felt obliged to go home with a *shopping bag* full of purchases. Did I say Hope could be a little peculiar?

Unexpectedly, Hope was also interested in watching a movie on my big screen TV. Normally, Hope has no interest in animated films, so I was surprised when she said she wanted to see *How to Train Your Dragon*. This is a wonderful film, mind you, and I was happy to show it to her ... but why *this* film? Why not *Cars*, *Despicable Me* or *Up*? Still, the same question could be asked of any request she made, so I let it go. Since she would be here long enough to need dinner, we decided I'd cook something for the both of us.

If you haven't met Hope at a convention, I have to warn you that she lives by a logic of her own. For instance, at the butcher shop we visited she complained that the chicken breasts laid out on display were *too big*. We didn't need that much protein in a meal, which by natural law must be five parts green vegetable to one part lean meat. That was the first occasion on which I had heard of this law. Fat was bad; I knew that much. But what harm was there in fatless chicken breast? You could eat a bucket of it, and it would be all to the good as far as I knew. I promised Hope that I would swap the fresh chicken breast for one in my freezer – one that I knew was quite a bit smaller, as it was only a portion for one. Our next stop was in a small grocery, where we improvised the rest of the meal. At \$4 a head, the cauliflower was out, but the price of the broccoli was considerably less shocking. I suggested we add baby corn to it, and make a stir-fry. Hope carefully inspected the label of the can of corn and said there was too much salt, but it would be all right if we poured the liquid out. Next, Hope suggested we add tofu. It was more unneeded protein, but, seeing that our options were limited, she thought it would be all right this one time.

After thawing, I chopped the small chicken breast from my freezer into short strips, and threw them into a wok with a bit of oil. Next, I drained the baby corn and threw it in with the chicken. While they cooked in oil, I worked on the brocc, chopping away the stalk and dividing the head up into manageable bunches. That was when Hope stopped me. “You aren't going to throw away the best part,” she said. I looked at the cutting board ... what “best” part? It turned out that Hope *liked* the stalk. To be fair, I usually chopped the tenderest part of the stalk myself, since the head is usually small. But I was dumbfounded that someone actually admitted that she liked the *stalk in particular*. Once I threw the brocc into the wok with the corn and chicken, Hope opened the tofu. She chopped it into cubes and scrapped them off the cutting board into the wok, while I added a dash or two of soy sauce. Not before Hope carefully checked the label on the bottle for its salt content, of course. She tsked, but you simply cannot do a stir-fry without soy sauce or something much like it. Then I added the last of the peanut sauce from the fridge, ginger powder, ground chilies and garlic from my spice rack, and some sesame seeds for good measure. Since Hope had given me the peanut sauce, she didn't need to check the ingredients on the label. I was a bit uncertain about adding sesame seeds, though. On top of the other spices, wouldn't it just muddy the palette? Hope said it was fine, so I tossed in about a teaspoon. And, lo, dinner was just fine! Hope congratulated the chef as he wolfed down the meal with her. Into the bargain, I had doubled the size of the chicken breast in my freezer. I was very pleased with myself.

The movie, *How to Train Your Dragon*, is four years old. There is now a sequel hitting the theaters, and it might have been the publicity for it that put the notion of seeing *How to Train Your Dragon* in Hope's mind. Then again, I don't know of any time when Hope had been exposed to publicity and wanted to see any other animated feature. Perhaps we will never know why she wanted to see this particular one.

At the start of the film, the viewer is presented with a night attack of dragons on the Viking village of Berk. Dragons fill the sky, blotting out the moon. Fire swells as it engulfs village rooftops. Warriors rush every which way, swinging broadswords, and – when occasion demands it – mightily punch dragons full in the snoot. Watching all this well orchestrated mayhem, the viewer learns that there is a less than amicable state of relations between Viking and Dragon. We also learn that Hiccup, our protagonist, is weedy and unusually partial to book learning for a Viking. We are also introduced to Stoick the Vast, Hiccup's father – a brute even among warrior Vikings, but a fond *pater* nonetheless. Among other Vikings who we meet is Gobber the Belch, the blacksmith who was relieved of one arm and one leg in past battles with Berk's fire-breathing enemies. It wasn't long before Hope declared

that she didn't like the opening. It was too violent. Ten minutes later, she announced that she didn't realize Goober was missing limbs. Finally, she asked in a puzzled voice why everyone looked funny.

"It's a cartoon," I said.

"I know, but why don't they look like real people?" There didn't seem to be anyway to answer that.

But, you know, at the end of *How to Train Your Dragon*, Hope cried like the widow who just discovered that her late husband had willed his entire estate to his club, and left her penniless. That meant that, despite everything, Hope loved the movie!

Hope is a funny lady. I know I said that already. But she had a good time, and in retrospect I didn't have too shabby a time of it myself. At the end of the evening, I said we'd have to do it again sometime, and meant it. To my astonishment, Hope gave me a peck on the cheek, just the way Astrid kissed Hiccup in the movie, and said, "That's for the dinner." I gave her a swat on the shoulder and said, "That's for everything else" ... also just like Astrid. After that, the end credits rolled over the elevator door closing.

Of all things, I received a *letter of comment* on the previous issue of *Lost Toys*! It was from Lloyd Penney, naturally, who may have misunderstood why I e-mailed him a copy and zealously locced it. I felt obliged to put it to good use by printing it. Let's hope it doesn't happen again, or I could end up with an unintended letter column.

Lloyd Penny I'm going to make this quick, seeing I wrote up a loc some weeks ago on a past *Broken Toys*. Here's something fast for *Lost Toys 3*.

I remember seeing Crad Kilodney downtown hawking his books, but I never had the cash or the knowledge of what was inside to buy them. (A quick Google showed me his real name. I am afraid I didn't know him by that name, either.) I think he had a Facebook page, too, which might be continued by a fan of his work.

We are from that era where one of the best things you could find under the Christmas tree was a radio. For me, it was a short-wave radio, which opened up the world to me, and allowed me to find a local club called the Ontario DX Association. (This was my fandom before SF fandom.) In many ways, the ODXA trained me for fandom...they had their own SMOFS who looked down at the rest of us because they were able to afford the top-of-the-line SW radios, and we had crap radios, according to them. The top DXers heard more short-wave stations, and had better collections of the acknowledgement, or QSL cards. I was not a member for very long, and with the Internet, SW listening is pretty well dead, but I can look back and see how familiar the social hierarchy was.

For a while, Yvonne and I had agreed to give a TAFF run a shot, but even with some very discouraging words from a couple of fans who told me that this fan fund was not for Canadians, we decided not to run because Yvonne's stamina is not good. If we are ever able to go to England, we will go on our own schedule. (We sold our Loncon memberships, and cancelled our hotel room.)

I've always liked your cartoon about the Doctor explaining the Force to Mr. Spock. I've been in that position of trying to get across a point, but being ignored or even humoured...that's a reason I left con running, they simply wouldn't listen any more.

---MAILING COMMENTS---

Eric Mayer was reminded of his own mortality by E.B. White's remark about acquiring a new Scottie dog that would in all likelihood outlive him. Eric pondered on the significance of his new well pump outliving *him*. And now I am distressed that, if I obtain a new cat to keep me company in my declining years, I may well leave it orphaned when *my* time is up. Under the circumstances, is it selfish of me to want another cat? Can I count on either of my younger sisters adopting it, or will it be figuratively thrown onto my funeral pyre, a victim of indifference? Why am I even thinking this? I'm only 62 and have a good chance to outlive another cat...

As **Eric** points out, the two of us exchange a lot of gripes, and enjoy black humour together by e-mail. We go way back, to when Eric emerged inchoate from whatever exists before fandom. He published *Groggy*, a fanzine that was well liked back in the 1970s. I contributed to it at least a couple of times, and wrote letters of comment. When Eric became caught up in the small press/mini comics craze of the early 1980s, he encouraged me to put a booklet together using a fictional "interview" with Rocky the Flying Squirrel that I had written. Unfortunately, we had a misunderstanding over the booklet that afterward led to cooler relations. When Eric returned to fandom a few years ago, however, we readily put our differences aside, and I became a regular contributor to his fanzines again. We had somehow found a great deal in common in the interim ... among which were a healthy skepticism of fandom's institutions, personalities and politics.

Eric also asks whether the visualization of the Tucker Hotel isn't a sort of *religious* exercise. Maybe it is. The Tucker Hotel is an unrealizable ideal, no concrete expression of which can even approach our expectations. More prosaically, The Tucker Hotel was a handful of gags that exploited well-known personalities of the time. Some fans were well-known drinkers, so naturally there was a bar. Arthur C. Clarke didn't drink, so there was a milk bar. There was a band for writers and fans that played jazz. There were a handful of puns, such as a "Dais," and the seating in front of it called "the Dazed." Each APA has its own table in the "Knight" club. And, of course, there is a Room 770.

Many of the jokes are frankly incomprehensible today. Why is there separate parking for Henry Burwell's car, and why is it long and narrow? Who knows? I don't know of any cars built that way. Why does a flag that reads "Eat at Omar's" fly from the roof? What is the significance of the "S.N.F.L newsstand?" If you were under 75, you probably wouldn't know. I don't.

The execution of the Tucker Hotel falls far short of the conception, but could it be otherwise? The actual Tucker Hotel would be little different from any other hotel, after all. It would consist mostly of ordinary rooms, connected by halls and elevators. There would be assembly rooms for programs and exhibitions, just like any convention center. A restaurant is a given. A gym or sauna would be desirable. What else? Extra-large bathtubs for overweight fans? A

livery stable full of electric scooters and other mobility aids? A built-in print shop would be an obvious amenity not found in most hotels. How about one, large common room with plenty of floor space for fans without rooms to crash? Room service would take away the sleeping bags every afternoon, after the fans had woken, and lay out fresh sleeping bags for them when they returned in the wee hours. But, really, how much more can you come up with? Hotels are already designed for conventions. I did my best with the New Tucker, adding a observation tower in the shape of Irish Fandom's lighthouse, and a couple of other touches, but the real Tucker Hotel is *a state of mind* ... not a building.

Among **Eric's** mailing comments are a large number of possible comment hooks that I could easily respond to. For example, Eric's suggestion that Toronto's iconoclastic, self-published author, Crad Kilodney, would never have won a FAAn. I'm tempted to say "true," and then explain why I think so. Last issue, however, I said I was through with that. I'm tempted also to mention that I read all the way through Dahlgren, and while I never *regretted* it, I can't honestly say I *valued* the experience, either. A very small amusement was to be had from comparing the novel's fictional setting – the Middle American city of Bellona on the shore of an unspecified Great Lake – with the real Buffalo, where Delaney once lived. Other than that, I came away from Dahlgren with nothing but the feeling that the author found an attraction to dirt and grot that I found hard to empathize with. And, like Eric, I am wondering if I have nearly drawn the last dipper of inspiration from the Muse's well ... at least so far as fanwriting is concerned. I may yet turn to pornography or political speech writing – whichever I can stomach most easily. Another tempting target is Eric's comment to **Garth Spencer**, suggesting that Garth thinks too much. Having read many thousands of words written by Garth, I suspect that Eric is right. Thinking is usually good ... but it's best when there is something to think about. Garth may well be thinking hard about nothing, a lot of the time. One final observation. The emperor Napoleon owned candelabra made from aluminum, which, *in his time*, was more valuable than if it had been made of gold. I could pick more examples, but time is short, and I have many more pages to scrutinize for comments.

Slick bit of creative writing in "Night Terrors." It would easily make the best piece in an average issue of *Askance* or *Reluctant Famulus*. I bet nobody says a word about it ... except, perhaps, something like "I have crazy dreams too. Why, just the other night..."

In a comment I made to **Steve Green**, I mentioned the short story of mine being read by *Weird Tales*. I'm happy to add that they have replied to my query, and told me that the MS has graduated from the slush pile to their senior readers. If they like it, it will go to the editor next. Hopefully, I will hear from the editor in another two or three months. **sigh** My friend, Bob, makes a living writing science fiction. He tells me nobody makes a living with short stories anymore. I believe him. At this rate, who could sell more than one a year?

Another chance remark in my own contribution to the last mailing brings to mind something that **Mike Glycer** said. He thought I should write a short story around the idea of selling artificial gravity in orbital habitats. While I appreciate Mike's confidence in my literary capabilities, this sounds more like a background detail than a plot, and lacks such indispensable fictional devices as character development, theme, marketability and politically correct perspective. I'll pass.

"Gravity" is certainly a movie everyone should watch. But, as **Ross Chamberlain** points out, the pacing and plot stretch the informed viewer's ability to suspend disbelief a little too

far. The catastrophe develops all too quickly. In real life, once the first satellite had been destroyed, it was likely to have been as much as 90 minutes before it intersected with the Space Shuttle's orbit. Even then, the odds of the debris coming within 50 miles of the Shuttle would probably be slender to none. But let us assume that narrow odds paid off. How quickly would the space junk have been traveling? That depends on how different the orbits of the Shuttle and the cloud of debris were. The more nearly similar, the more nearly the same orbital velocity they would have. In fact, if they were identical orbits, the debris would never catch up with the Shuttle at all. They would orbit around Earth like two subway trains in a tunnel. To catch up with the Shuttle at all, the debris must occupy a *different* orbit. It is the sum of the velocities of the two orbits where they intersect that determines the speed of the collision. In theory, it could be quite small. Even 20 mph slow. Of course, that's fast enough that a large object could still do damage, but in zero-G a collision might do little more than brush an astronaut out of the way. The next problem was with the convenient return of the debris cloud at the most dramatic moments. At the Space Shuttle's altitude, one complete orbit takes about 90 minutes. Assuming somewhat similar orbits for the Shuttle and the debris, the shortest interval between one shower of space junk and the next would be about 90 minutes. Oh ... but, wait! Since they cannot be in exactly the same orbit, the intersection point would move forward or back a few minutes each time, wouldn't it? And the lack of synchronicity would get worse with each orbit. The Shuttle would not even be in the right place at the right time where the orbits crossed again. In other words, the shower of space junk that destroyed the Shuttle would only happen once ... and then not again for a very long time, possibly years! Of course, the debris was supposed to generate a growing cascade of other collisions and even more space junk. Still, it seems suspicious that space junk would arrive to trash the ISS or the Chinese space station at exactly the moment the heroine arrives each time. Also ... does anyone remember why the Chinese space station was *already* abandoned and re-entering the Earth's atmosphere almost immediately after the Chinese left? I missed it. Never mind all the Isaac Asimov bullshit, though. If you haven't seen "Gravity," you really must.

By the way, **Ross**. Thank you for remembering Thomas Dolby's "She Blinded Me With Science." How could such a great first album lead to such a forgettable, short career?

The message is a little ambiguous, but it sounds as though **Shelby Vick** was telling us he was gafiating. I wonder if he only meant he sought a temporary reprieve from fandom, or whether he is gone for good? Will Shelby remain a member of TePe?

When I was younger, I had a daydream about living in a rambling, rustic house in a beautiful natural setting such as **Diane Crayne** described. I imagined that when I baked bread, I would look out the window at the mist gathering on the lake, and the rising sun glistening off distant glaciers in the mountain tops across the water. The closest I ever got to that ideal was living in a cramped bungalow on a dirt road an hour's drive outside of Toronto, near the small town of Acton. There was nothing to see but the occasional beat-up sedan barreling down the dirt road in a cloud of dust, and a dark line of mixed scrub forest in all directions. It was as inspiring as living in a wood lot. Now that I'm older, living in the city grows ever more appealing. I can get a shawarma by walking down the street, browse dollar stores, Xerox my art, see a movie, visit my friends or order a pizza, all with a convenience not possible in rural BC or Kentucky. As I grow older, the appeal of looking after a house has also diminished. I have become a confirmed apartment dweller in my elder days. I can't blame Diane for her move.

Wolf von Witting quotes D.H. Lawrence – “I never saw a wild thing sorry for itself. A small bird will drop frozen dead from a bough without ever having felt sorry for itself.” How would that sheltered bastard know? Why would he say such a thing without knowing? I bet the sparrow felt every bit as miserable as any human being would in the same circumstances. That’s one author I’d strike off my reading list ... if he were on it.

Who would believe that the Prime Minister of Canada would stoop to repress science fiction fandom? Yet, according to **Graeme Cameron**, that’s exactly what the PM has done. Not that fandom was the main target of recent legislation that requires registered nonprofit organizations to hold their annual general meeting within 6 months of the end of their fiscal years. This wouldn’t matter worth jack-shit, but the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association general meeting is always held at that year’s Convention, in October. Unfortunately, holding it in October would fall outside the legally required six months, says Graeme. You know what? It still matters jack-shit. Why does the CSFFA have to be a registered nonprofit organization? What profits does it have to protect against taxation? This just seems to me to be the characteristic Canadian need to do everything by the book, crossing all the t’s and dotting the i’s for the sake of doing it the official way. I’ve always gotten the feeling that behind this national trait it is a fear that no one will take Canadian fandom seriously without official recognition ... and we *couldn’t* have that, oh no! We *do* want to be taken seriously!

Graeme goes on to say that the CSSFA is also forbidden to promote itself, or engage in recruiting activity ... such as Graeme publishing *Auroran Lights* on behalf of the organization. Sheesh. Good thing I believe Graeme is only half-serious about all this BS. He had me going for a minute there. Good joke, Graeme ... it is a joke, right?

By the way, Graeme, that’s **Bill Burns** ... not Bob Burns. The ol’ spellchecker goofed, eh?

I do not, however, understand what good it will do if Graeme reviews 20- , 30- and 40-year old fanzines for the general public, especially if he chooses them without respect for how well they will repay a modern reader ... even if he should ever find a copy to read. Unlike Graeme, not all of us are zealous fan historians. Even I have limited tolerance for old crudzines, and I *am* a fan historian. Why *not* present ourselves to the outside world with the “best” ... whatever that may be. Admittedly, reaching a consensus on what is “best” is not easily done. But indiscriminately showing *everything* is bad PR.

Arnie Katz’s explanation of why his editing style sometimes seems a little peculiar is nightmarish. I doubt I could learn to cope if my eyesight deteriorated to the point where it interfered with my writing and my art ... as well as preventing me from watching my collection of movies and television programs, and making it impossible to read. At my age, I don’t picture myself learning Braille well enough to use it recreationally ... assuming much of my reading is even available in that format. I would have no reason not to pitch myself off my 21st floor balcony, as far as I can see. It’s not like I would be succored in the bosom of my family, which is somewhat distant, and my close friends have lives of their own. I’d be by myself in the dark, and without purpose. So I read Arnie’s revelations with considerable discomfort. I hope he can hang in there. But I wonder if he might make life easier with more simple layouts. Spotting illos in his two-column format, and typing around them, cannot be the easiest task if his eyesight is failing.

The intentions behind Toner seem noble ... but I must admit I regret the launch of a new fanzine convention while Ditto has been allowed to fizzle out. When I came up with the idea of an anti-calendrical fanzine con, I had no idea whether it would fly or not, and was very pleased that, after the first in Toronto, it survived for many more years. But, somehow or other, Ditto has dwindled away, and it has been several years now since anyone has shown any interest in running another. I suspect it is a sign of a fan generation that is growing elderly, many of whose members are in ill health or are reduced to limited means. If so, fannish senescence may well cut the future of Toner short, before it is even begun.

There are some details about Toner that **Arnie** doesn't address, I notice. I'm certain that he implies that Toner should grow into a regular event. But does he intend Toner to be fixed in Las Vegas? That alone would likely determine that most of its attendance would be from the American southwest, rather than a true gathering place for fanzine fandom. It's also unclear whether or not Arnie and Joyce intend to run Toner themselves in future. Given how much Arnie (and Joyce) already do, can they take on the massive responsibility of running a con as well? Knowing one's limitations is difficult at any time, but I think, as we get older, it only gets harder. I know that I'm slowing down and simply cannot do everything that I'd like. For that matter, I tended to overreach even when I was much younger. Now I'm forced to focus more and more on less and less.

I share **Arnie's** thoughts on soccer. Soccer, *not* football. We already had a game of football before soccer came to Canada and America, thank you.

I'd like to add that soccer is what I call a "dirt sport." Soccer is the game with the *least* possible material requirements. All you need to play the game is empty space – it can be dirt, grass, concrete or a garbage dump ... it doesn't really matter. There are no helmets, special footwear or pads. You need no bats, sticks, rackets or clubs. To play soccer it isn't even really necessary to have a uniform – a coloured rag around your arm or head will do. All you really need is something to indicate the goals at either end – sticks in the ground or an old barrel used for burning trash will work as well as anything. The only essential piece of equipment is a ball ("bol" or "bul") to kick around. If you can't afford a leather ball, a bag stuffed with grass is just as good. Soccer is a game for the dirt-poor, who can play the game anywhere and with no properties to speak of. This is fine if you are from the Third World, or the wreckage of World War II is still a living memory.

But soccer's roots in poverty are what I dislike about the game. The rules are extremely basic, and playing requires almost no equipment. Consequently, there is absolutely *nothing eccentric about it*. Soccer is a simple game ... and boring. If there must be sports, they ought to be as individualistic as possible. All the best games are quite different from each other. Hockey, baseball, curling, golf, billiards, polo, even cricket ... they're all quite nuts. Soccer, however, is nothing but a form of American football, derived from English rugger, that has everything interesting stripped from it. American football (and the very similar Canadian variety) is already dull enough.

In answer to **Arnie's** remarks about cities with theme songs, Toronto has one too. It's called "Toronto, People City." It is a thoroughly early-1970s, and can only properly be rendered by male vocalists with names like Bumbledinck Fopplebert. He has to have a deep, fruity, romantic voice, curly hair, a mature face, and wear a black velvet tux, oversized bowtie and

lace cuffs. “People City” is deservedly forgotten, but I remember when City TV used to play it every night at sign-off. It was as good a reason to turn off the set as any.

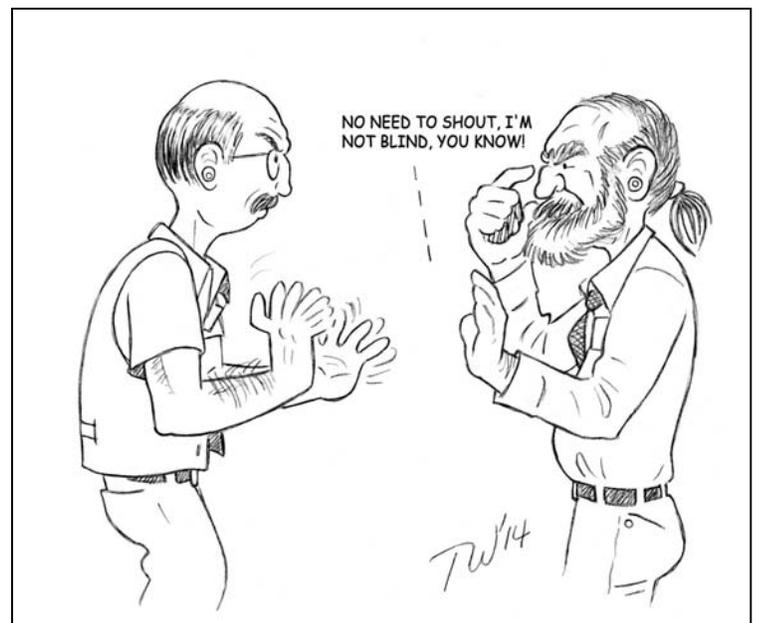
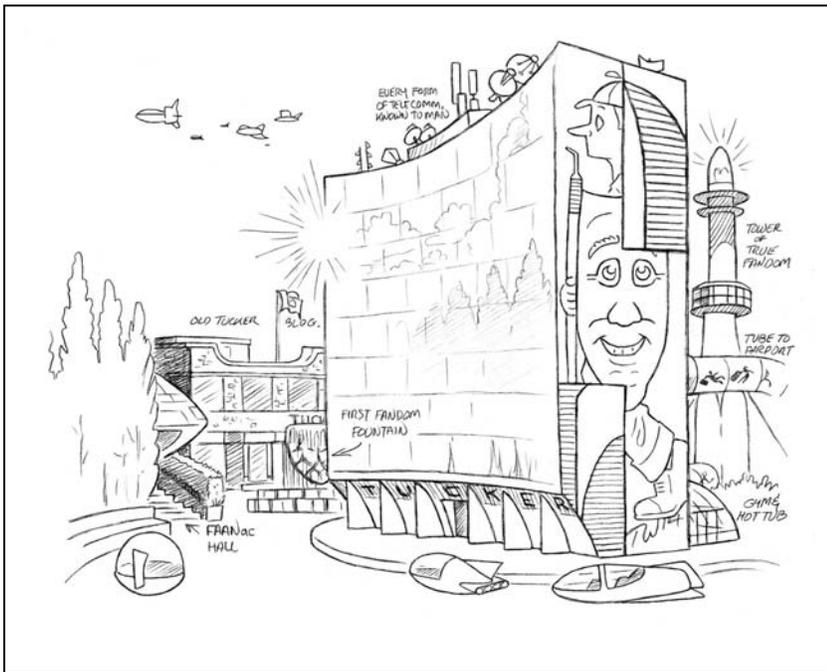
Andrew Hooper is a little unfair to Crad Kilodney, I think. Crad was not merely an untalented wanna-be who harassed busy editors. Although his stories weren’t my cup of tea, many people read and enjoyed them, and he became quite famous in his own way. But he didn’t fit into the image the Canadian literary community has of itself – mannered, high-toned, sensitive, politically correct, a hint of Britishness ... and more than a little smugness. Crad fit in about as well as Pee-wee Herman in a remake of an Ingmar Bergman film. He knew it, and reveled in it.

In fact, there are far more heinous crimes in fandom than winning too many awards. I can name a few off the top of my head. For instance, stocking a con suite entirely with supermarket-brand soft drinks. Writing a letter of comment in which the brilliant writing in the fanzine is overlooked to point out a half-dozen typos or trivial errors. Admitting that you think “Star Wars” was better than “Star Trek”. Making fun of hefty fans in scooters or mobile chairs. Being married to Walter Breen. *Being* Walter Breen. I am non-committal about most fannish *faux pas*, however ... having committed more than a few myself.

In **Andrew’s** comment to **Garth Spencer**, he grants that Garth has cause to be cynical about the 1960s space race, and then points out some of the material benefits that came from NASA. I think there’s little doubt that the major reason the United States invested heavily in the space program in the 1960s *was* to save face. Russia had put a man in space, first, and might well put the first man on the Moon before the US, if Something Wasn’t Done. There was also a military reason. A rocket that could launch a satellite into orbit or send a probe to the Moon could also explode a nuclear warhead over Washington, New York or Los Angeles. None of this changes the dedication and enthusiasm of the scientists, engineers and astronauts who participated in the manned space program, however. The technology developed has benefited us all, but – probably more important in the long run – it has also driven research in dozens of directions, extending our understanding of the universe. There would be no string theory, no hundreds of known exo-planets, no orbital surveys to study the Earth and search for archeological sites, no confirmation of relativity, and who knows how much else ... *unless* we had taken the first steps into the new frontier of space. When the crown of Spain gave Columbus money to outfit three rat-infested ships to discover a passage to the Orient, they weren’t thinking about expanding the sum of human knowledge – only about the profits to be made by buying cheap spices and silk at the source. No one dismisses the discovery of the New World, and the way it changed history, just because Ferdinand and Isabelle were grubby profiteers, and Columbus a crank with a theory.

That said, however, the philistines who control the public purse strings in America have shown they have as little interest in the abstract as did the Spanish Crown in 1492. NASA has struggled for the last 40 years to maintain its budget, at times clearly showing the pinch. With the Chinese now reaching into space, there is a dismaying possibility of Beijing’s secretive control closing over portions of the solar system. Plainly, India is also interested in gaining an independent foothold in space, perhaps in the hope that otherworld resources can propel their nation into the ranks of the First World. The presence of either country in space might well compromise America’s own interest in raping the solar system for profit, so I’m pretty sure the US will shortly begin showing more enthusiasm for its own space program. Regardless of motives, this will be a Good Thing.

A SMALL ASSORTMENT OF RECENT ART



Enough!