

The Drink Tank
The Third Annual Giant Sized Annual
Special Guest Editor: Derek McGaw



It was three years ago today, the Chris Garcia come to zines to play...

OK, that was lame, but it was 3 years ago when I first released an issue of The Drink Tank. Bill Burns posted it January 31st, 2005 and everything has been something of a blur since then. So far, I've published works from 5 different Hugo winners (Including Dave Langford), several different FAAn Award winners (Including Claire Brialey) and have had articles from folks who were old hats at this stuff and from those who had never even read a fanzine. I like that. I've been lucky enough to get some great stuff for this issue and I have a special Guest Co-Editor for the First Time. Mr. Derek McCaw has appeared in the pages of The Drink Tank and is the editor-in-chief of FanboyPlanet.com, where my column Falls Count Anywhere has run every week since 2003. He's brought some good stuff with him.

And there are some of the folks you've seen before in The Drink Tank. Eric Mayer and James Bacon, for instance, and Mr. Brad Foster who was kind enough to give us another cover!

And now, an article from the man who has published more of my words than any other, his Holiness, Derek McCaw



Grandma Fanboy
by
Derek McCaw

My grandmother wouldn't understand the word "fanboy" now. At 94, she has a hard time understanding the things I *do* in the 21st Century, let alone the term for what I supposedly am. Nevertheless, it's because of her.

Fanboys aren't born. They're made -- shaped by people that turn a blind eye in your youth, hoping that at least you'll grow up and become wealthy enough to be eccentric instead of weird. Nobody could have predicted how allcosuming our culture of imagination would become, but as any fanboy would tell you, it starts with love.

Actually, for me it starts at my

Grandma's house, about three feet away from the television.

Even when I learned how to change the channels with Grandma's large infrared remote, my great-grandmother still controlled the programming. So I was fed a lot of game shows until her nap, at which time Grandma would turn the TV to Channel 40 and Captain Mitch.

After Captain Mitch read some of the daily funnies, as Grandma would say, and show some cartoons, he'd prep us all for something a little different. We'd

go from Beetle Bailey to the Beta Capsule -- a live-action superhero beyond anything I'd ever seen in my three or four years of existence.

At Grandma's house, I discovered Ultraman.

I didn't know anything about Japan, or that the actors were actually dubbed. It would be years before I actually understood a danged thing about the show beyond the Science Police fought monsters, Hayata would hold up the Beta Capsule, and Ultraman got his energy from the sun.

(A couple of years later, you'd hear a couple of us future fanboys running around the San Antonio school kindergarten playground, making that "ba-woo, ba-woo" sound of his chest light

blinking. Even at 5, I understood that vulnerability is what makes a character interesting. Or I just thought the light was danged cool.)

The thing about Ultraman is that while I loved it, I was also scared out of my wits by it. Did I mention the monster part up above? So it started three feet away from the television, but as each episode went on and I knew, absolutely *knew* that we were getting closer to that time that the monster would appear, I'd get farther and farther away from the set.

It must have been an enormous 25" screen, so distance was somewhat of a protection. Occasionally, the show would throw me a curveball, so I wouldn't be far enough back in time. In one episode, the monster grew out of a mysterious large frond in front of an office building.

Ever notice landscaping in front of offices in California cities? *A lot of mysterious large fronds.*

Even worse, it infected some guy, and he turned away from the Science Police all normal looking, then turned back with this huge freakin' wall-eyed Gumby head.

Through all this, my Grandmother would stop whatever she was doing, and sit on the couch, where she knew I would end up. This 50-something had worked a farm all her life, but secretly loved science fiction and sat through my fears. At the end of every episode of Ultraman, I knew that even though his chest light blinked perilously long, he'd be back, I'd be comfortable on the couch being hugged by my grandmother and if I was really lucky and my parents weren't there, I'd get a cookie.

See? She encouraged it. She bought me comic books whenever we went



to the store. When I turned to Big Little Books, she picked one up whenever she found one, not knowing if I had it or not, but making sure that I wouldn't miss out.

My memories don't prove it, but I suspect that I probably watched *The Wild Wild West* with her for the first time, as well as *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* – another one that had a disturbing tendency toward plants turning people into monsters. It took me a long time to trust spinach, Popeye's recommendation notwithstanding.

Grandma will tell people now that I read funny books out loud to her when I was 3. It's a grand lie, but it wouldn't do any good to correct her. (The truth? I was 5 and she was the only one who would listen.) But she did read all the "comic books" I'd draw when I was 7. She did watch *Star Trek* with me. She even

once took me to see *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, except that I got too scared in line just thinking about the tunnel scene (I'd already seen it), and we went to TG&Y instead to buy comics. That's a regret now, because it's the only time I remember going to the movies with Grandma.

My grandfather would just shake his head. It's not like he could criticize, necessarily, as the old almond rancher was addicted to *All My Children* – no less fantastic a show. But I know it gave him pause one night when I visited post-college and we had to watch an episode of *Batman: The Animated Series* instead of *60 Minutes*.

I've never gone back and watched *Ultraman* as an adult. Part of me just doesn't want to know how bad it was, though part of me wonders what was legitimately the series' storytelling and what was my young mind trying to process it and filling in weird blanks. My Grandmother has gone back to Westerns, or at least that's what she tells me. I haven't seen her actually watch TV in well over a decade.

Now she tells ghost stories and warns me not to walk under a fig tree at midnight, or the spirits will get me. She told me she couldn't read the lettering on *Tony Loco* #1, though she was excited that I was part of the world she'd help usher me into. In her dotage, she has good days and bad days, but still seems to believe in a much larger, shinier and sometimes far darker world than the one normal people live in – I'll tell you some of her ghost stories sometime.

Thanks for sparking my imagination, Grandma, and making me a fanboy.

Yes, I'll have a cookie.



James (Bacon) and Jim (Lee)

**Dublin City Comic Con,
17th and 18th November 2007
Tara Towers Hotel, Booterstown,
Dublin, Ireland.
by James Bacon**

This event had the guest list that would have many a comic fanboy salivating at the gums. In attendance was a selection of the cream of European and American comic writers and artists. Dublin has had a variety of comic conventions and multi media events but this one felt like there was a real step forward being taken, it was a well run altruistic event and the guests complimented this. Dublin has seen a sudden and rapid increase in comic book activity, in the last few years, and this was clearly to be seen in The Tara Towers, and there was a nice feeling to this convention, at times intangible.

The event was run by John Hendrick, who also runs 3rd Place Comic shop in Temple Bar, this is his second

such convention, the first he used as a learning tool it seems, as he described to me what he wanted to improve upon, obviously a man happy to reflect upon his achievements and develop.

I got to the convention venue which is on the southern coast of Dublin bay early enough. The hotel has

a fantastic view and across the main coast road and bird sanctuary there is the bay. The nearest train station is Booterstown, and this is about two thirds between the city centre and Dun Laoghaire. It was a grey November day though as I joined friends in the queue outside. Immediately there was camaraderie among the hard core fans, who stood and waited, I reckoned a good fifty or so. IT was great to catch up.

The hotels function space is quite nice, two long rooms, one for dealers and one for talks, and a conservatory. Signings were due to take place in both the conservatory and the dealer's room. There was an ample bar, lounge space and a nice restaurant.



I again joined a queue, shorter this time as I had paid up online and then joined another queue for Jim Lee signings. Mr. Lee currently working on All Star Batamn and Robin, was in good form despite a reported exuberant night on Friday. He is a very slight man in build, very pleasant and I asked him about the times he has written stories. It was apparent that he sees writing as the harder task and another day job in its own right.

He was producing some very satisfying sketches of fine quality for fans as well as busily signing comics. It's hard to explain how wonderful it was to encounter such a famous artist in such a



warm and familiar environment. This is a man who at San Diego Comic con will start a queue hours before he is due to arrive and in the hundreds.

The dealer's room was peppered with both regular shops, individuals selling their own collections, and this is a good source of great bargains, one chap selling his collection from the last couple of years at a euro a comic. A large presence was the small press comic community, publishers, artists and writers selling their raw and sometimes quite excellent wares, from Ireland, and from the US.

A purchase could illicit a sketch and who is to know, where budding artists will end up.

Dublin has been on an upward spiral when it comes to comics. Another comic shop owner turned publisher now has comics listed through Diamond Distribution and a number of Dublin artists are now pro's. 3rd

Comic artist John McCrea who has been working on The 99, a comic produced for the Middle East market for a Muslim readership was in good form and set up a sketch table in the dealers room. On a high following the release of his JLA/Hitman cross over, and he was busy drawing sketches for about eight hours, both days, nonstop.

Marvel Editor C.B.Cebulski was on hand and accepting submissions to his ChesterQuest initiative. In his own words; 'ChesterQuest was conceived as a talent search for pencilers and painters, ChesterQuest is meant to be fun for us all. I'm out here looking for 12 artists who have the skills to illustrate comics

professionally for Marvel.' And so he was.

As one can imagine there were a number of budding artists along, leaving in portfolio's and C.B. Cebulski had a private call back session. I have no idea how successful this was, but the opportunity alone is desirable I imagine.

He also had an exclusive panel with news from the Marvel bullpen. I asked him afterwards about one aspect that interested me. Apparently Garth Ennis will be writing a new war comic series, called War is Hell. This will be a series of arcs, the first one is going to be called Phantom Eagle, starring a World War One Marvel hero, with artwork by Howard Chaykin. It was obvious the details C.B. had were hot off the printer and he was unsure if the first arc would be four or five issues, but knew that the series will star a variety of characters in various war settings of differing eras. I was very pleased with this news.

Panels were well attended, I reckoned about 300 people had turned up over the weekend and the discussions proved interesting. I heard from comic artist Jock that he will be working on a stand alone Hellblazer comic celebrating 20 years of the comic, written by Jamie Delano which will have an Iraq setting,



Danni, Mark Millar & Esther

which seemed topical.

Mark Millar was very entertaining and insightful; especially into the business and where he sees the business going and what he reckons the genre of comic superheroes going to, and he discussed other comic genres such as cowboy and war comics coming into popularity. He was also very patient and I saw him gladly sign a very tall stack of comics without hesitation and he was also kindly doing the odd sketch upon request.

On Saturday evening there was a pub quiz arranged in the restaurant of the hotel, a very comfortable venue, and I reckoned there were about 24 teams, with well over 100 participants. This was in aid of charity and a quick rough guestimate calculation means this raised a grand euro.

There was much craic and laughter during the evening and the drink flowed



The Quiz!

freely as competing team captains, Mark Milar and Paul Cornell seemed to take the game personally. Humorously, despite much pretend posturing and mock bravado neither team won, but they created an excitement in their own right. Drinks continued after the quiz finished at midnight.

Carlos Pacheco who has just finished a run on Superman with Kurt Busiek was using some wonderful markers, and presenting full colour sketches for fans. He was using colour letterset pro markers, these twin tipped markers allow a transparent effect and because they are alcohol-based can be layered to produce deeper colours and with his controlled and skilled hand, images were incredible.

He was pleased to mention that the second series of Arrowsmith, was on the cards, a story he created with Kurt Busiek, a beautiful First World War story,

where magic, mythical creatures and men flying with the aid of Dragonets exist, all to great effect.

I was impressed to hear Adi Granov's wife who was talking about Thought Bubble a recent Leeds Sequential art convention, that they were both involved with. Mr. Granov's artwork is so detailed, fine and in demand, he is currently on

design for the Iron Man suit for Jon Favreau's Iron Man film. Fantastically he recounted how he did not draw the concept piece for the trailer; rather a piece he had painted was used as the concept as it captured what the movie makers wanted. He loves cars and plane and trains and one can see this in his fantastic artwork which would impress any professional mechanical draughtsman.

Overall, there was a real relaxed and pleasant atmosphere for the whole weekend. Queues were well mannered and also patient and pleasant as spontaneous conversation broke out. The volunteers who were helping had the right balance of friendliness with empathy for those queuing as opposed to anal security minded management that I have encountered at some events which only added to the good feeling.

The simple schedule of panels were balanced with continual signings and I

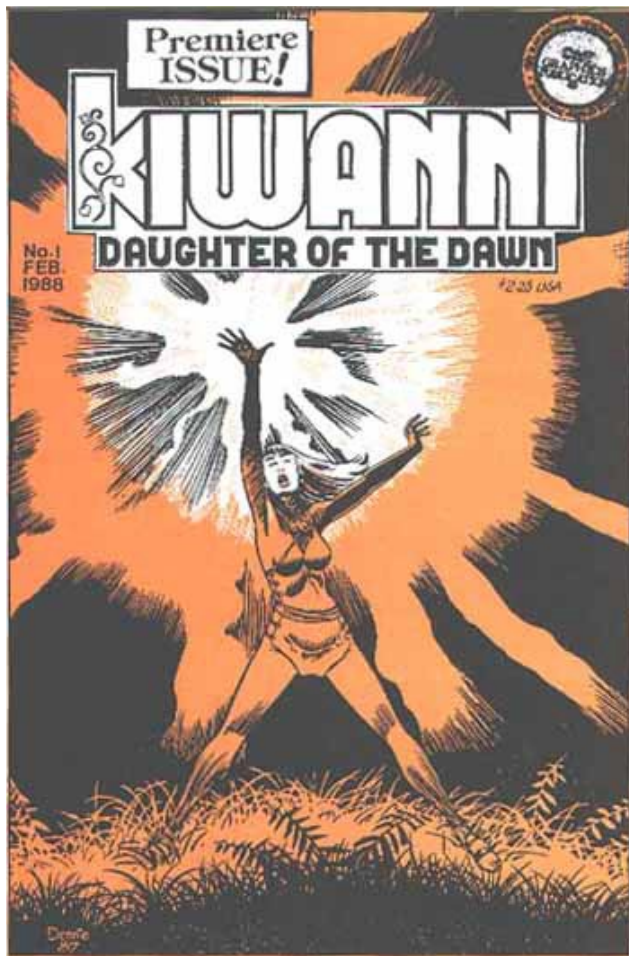
spent as much time chewing the fat in the dealers room as in the Bar. Personally I thought the event was comparable to a SF convention than any comic event I have been too, it was just too well run and relaxed.

The accessibility was the real key; one could speak and chat with the cream of comic creators, and ask questions without fear of annoyance to those around you and that added with bad weather outside, loads of Irish rain, it felt that no cloud cover could occlude the brightness of the convention.

<http://www.dublincitycomiccon.com/>
January closing date <http://chesterquest.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.letraset.com/craft/shopdisplaycategories.asp?id=2847&cat=ProMarkers>
<http://www.thoughtbubblefestival.com/>



Mick, James and Cat



In the Comics Woods with the Dinosaurs

By Eric Mayer

I can recall only vaguely the first time I set eyes on *Kiwanni*. The memory is muted like a hand-tinted postcard or a two color comic book cover. The cave girl wore orange and black. I neglected to fix the moment in my mind. How could I know I might want to examine it twenty years later?

Where did I get my initial glimpse

at issue one of *Kiwanni*, *Daughter of the Dawn*? It might as well have been at Tim Corrigan's place, out in the sparsely populated hinterlands near the New York/Pennsylvania border. I went there often enough to gab about small press ventures. We had certainly discussed my comic book script. The first issue was dated February 1988 so I would have left my car beside the dirt road next to the rural mail box for "C&T Graphics" and walked back along the frozen ditch at the side of cornfield to where the ground sloped down into woods.

There, on a patch of land that could neither be farmed nor developed, Tim had built a home for himself and his family out of plywood and tar paper. A single solar panel in the roof supplied power. The amenities consisted of a chemical toilet. It was the perfect dwelling for man squeezing a living out of self-published comics.

During the eighties small press comics, as they were called, had exploded. In fact Tim's focal point newspaper, *Small Press Comics Explosion* (or *SPCE*) regularly sold 6,000 or more copies. Shops specializing in comics along with the distributors serving them proliferated, due at least in part to a new distribution model under which unsold copies were no longer returnable by retailers.

I was attracted to offerings from a variety of small publishers scrambling around in the shadows of behemoths Marvel and D.C. Who needed Spider Man and Superman when there were alternative heroes waiting on the shelves of the specialty shops? Maybe *Morty the Dog*, *Neil the Horse*, and the *Flaming Carrot* weren't going to save the world, but they

were certainly saving comics.

In those heady days you could earn a living doing your own comics, if you printed enough titles every month, even if you only made \$50 or \$100 on each, provided you could live in a plywood box out in the woods and fetch water from town.

Having to drag myself in to a poisonous office every working day, I rather envied Tim but could never have endured what he did. Even waiting for the monthly orders to arrive, not knowing whether I'd sold sufficient copies of *Diggers*, *Mighty Guy*, and *SPCE*, to put food on the table would have been impossible.

So I didn't pay much attention to the business aspects of comic book publishing. I naturally gravitated to the "faanish" fringes of the explosion. Mini-comics.

Starting in 1986 I wrote and drew dozens of mini-comics -- small books formed by a printed sheet cut in half and folded to make 8 pages. Under the "Groggy Comics" imprint (a name for your press was de rigueur) I cranked out nine issues of *King Cotton*, at least a couple of *Bad Cat*, *Remarkable Rutabaga*, *American Splinter*, and *Stick Dick* as well as a mini-magazine called *Frazzle* along with assorted other titles.

My mini-comics, like most, were amateur undertakings, although typically they sold for a quarter to help defray costs. A few artists like Brad Foster, with his beautifully drawn and produced *Goodies* series nudged minis toward commercial

viability but I wasn't in Brad's drawing league and never looked at comics as anything I might dabble in professionally. Until Tim asked me to write the script for a book he had in mind.

He had decided the title would be "Kiwanni, Daughter of the Dawn." The story would feature a cave girl, sabre toothed tigers, mastodons and dinosaurs because the artist he had lined up excelled at rendering scantily clad women and animals. (Not scantily clad animals, I hasten to add. It wasn't a furry comic.)

Tim and I both realized that humans and dinosaurs had never co-existed, my own childhood favorite Alley Oop, notwithstanding. But with an artist who was so good at animals, it seemed a waste not to let him put a dinosaur or two into action. My solution was to have aliens invade from another dimension, opening up rifts in space time through which could wander whatever creatures the artist felt like turning his pencils to.

We had high hopes, or at least as high as possible for a black and white book with a two color cover. The sales ceilings for comics were determined pretty much by the way they were printed. Full color comics had unlimited sales potential but a publisher like Tim couldn't afford the steep printing costs. The next best thing was to put a full color cover on a black and white interior, but that was beyond the budget for C&T Graphics as well. There was generally a limit to how many copies of a cheaply produced comic you could sell, although Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird had hit the jackpot with their Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

In the end, the first issue of Kiwanni sold a couple thousand copies which wasn't bad. Once all the discounts and retailers' and distributor's cuts were accounted for and the printer was paid, the publisher, inker, penciller and writer each ended up with about \$75. Which wasn't that good.

Luckily I wasn't in it for the money. To me it was simply a new creative adventure, a journey into the uncharted territory of the comic book script. The format Tim used resembled a movie script. I was supposed to write dialog and any narrative. It was also up to the writer to describe what was to be shown in each panel and the general layout of the panels on the pages.

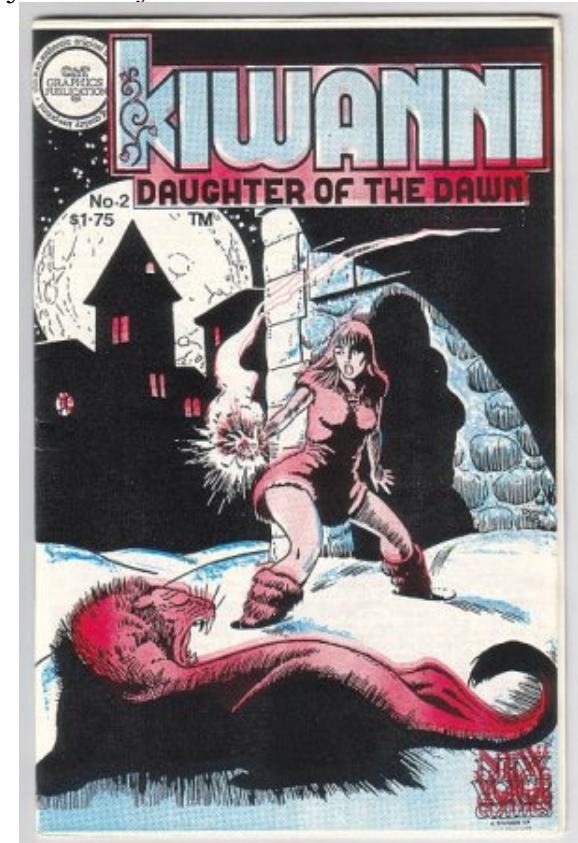
I was literally able to heed the admonition "show, don't tell." And it is amazing how much can be shown by a gesture or a fleeting expression, particularly if someone else -- someone with artistic talent -- is doing the drawing.

No doubt, I made a lot of decisions about visuals which properly belonged to the artist. I couldn't help myself. My prose has always been highly visual. I love scenery. I loved to conjure up images in my mind. Suddenly I had at my disposal someone with the ability to transfer those pictures to paper intact, without dropping and breaking them as I invariably did.

I had no idea, though, how well the transfer would turn out. I was startled when I saw the drawings made from my script. At the beginning of the comic Kiwanni is fighting a Tyrannosaurus on a glacier when aliens appear -- monstrous

air-borne sacs covered with tentacles. Cthullu's dirigibles. And when I slid the stiff drawing paper from the big manila mailing envelope that was exactly what I saw. Exactly. The artist had not drawn just any old glacier, or someone else's Kiwanni, or his personal notion of floating aliens, he had sketched out the very scene I had formed in my own imagination.

A psychologist might have a mundane explanation. Perhaps my mental picture had not been nearly as complete as I supposed and I mistook the artist's details for my own. Nevertheless, I was struck as I have never been by the mysterious power of words, these magical symbols by which we can transmit our



own thoughts, the images in our own minds, into the minds of others. We often assume we are doing so, but here was proof.

I had probably been just as startled a few weeks earlier when Tim told me about the artist. He said that he was a fellow from California, named Donnie Jupiter.

The name was familiar. But not from the comic book scene.

A decade before, during the punk rock era, while I was living in New York City, I had picked up a single by a band called the Twinkeyz. Aliens in Our Midst turned out to be one of my favorites. More new wave than punk. Psychedelic garage music. A weirdly infectious mixture of electronic noise and semi-recited science fictional lyrics. The lead singer and songwriter had been called Donnie Jupiter.

So when Tim mentioned that name my reaction was: What? Not the Donnie Jupiter?

Well, actually, how many Donnie Jupiters could there be?

The transformation from punk/new wave to small press comics made sense. Both shared a do-it-yourself attitude and often made up for technical crudity with energy and idiosyncrasy rarely matched by commercial products.

Still, what were the chances I'd end up working on a comic book with a stranger whose obscure record I'd admired ten years before?

Better than the chances of Kiwanni matching the success of the Ninja Turtles it turned out.

The first issue did well enough but then...something happened. The small press explosion was about to become an implosion. There were too many comics being published and too many distributors and specialty shops. Bigger distributors began to gobble up the smaller ones. Small press publishers couldn't get their efforts into the shops as easily as before. Precisely how C&T Graphics was hit I can't say, but hit it was. The second issue limped out into the world as a stunted digest sized book (less expensive to print even than a regular black and white) and died.

The remaining three scripts for the planned five book series were never drawn, except for a few pages, quite possibly to the great relief of Donnie Jupiter who must have been making five cents an hour

considering the outrageously intricate scenes I wanted.

I had enjoyed my venture into scripting and subsequently tried to sell some new ones, based on my own ideas, to other small press publishers. One proposal was a superhero historical. Not long after the fall of Rome, when the surviving Eastern Empire has become a bastion of Christianity, a slave comes across a magic ring, once the property of Julian the last pagan emperor. The ring allows its owner to summon the old, deposed Gods. This gives the bearer super powers, of a sort, depending on which God happens to show up, and what kind of mood he or she is in, and taking into account that the Roman Gods were an unreliable and unpredictable bunch to begin with, given to bizarre behavior, and almost certainly not very happy with or interested in a world that has rejected them for a fellow who died on a cross.



The Last Halloween by Donnie Jupiter

I thought the idea had possibilities but publishers didn't agree, not surprisingly since I didn't have a very good grasp on what I was doing. Thus ended my career in comics. I drifted away from small press entirely and into assorted other interests, serial hobbyist that I am.

Then one day, in the early nineties, Mike Ashley contacted my wife Mary and wondered if we could produce a historical mystery for an anthology he was editing? He needed the story quickly.

“Historical” and “quickly” are words that tend not to go together, considering how much research is necessary before writing can even begin. I immediately thought of placing a mystery in the early Byzantine era because I already knew something about sixth century Constantinople. I had done enough research for the abortive comic book to prop up a 2,000 word story, which was the length desired.

And so we hurriedly co-wrote the first tale featuring as detective, John, Lord chamberlain to Emperor Justinian using the background I'd amassed for the comic. “A Byzantine Mystery” appeared in 1993 in *The Mammoth Book of Historical Whodunnits*. These co-authored mysteries turned out to be considerably more successful than my comic book efforts. The first Byzantine mystery was followed by six more short stories in anthologies and *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* and six books from Poisoned Pen Press. In April, a little more than twenty years after *Kiwanni*, *Daughter of the Dawn* was published, our seventh Byzantine novel will be out. It's called *Seven for a Secret*.

One secret I have never revealed, until now, is that John's mother is a comic book cave girl.



Guitar Ghods of my Youth

by

John Purcell

A funny thing is happening on the way to my 54th birthday: I've been playing old-fashioned rock-and-roll and blues much more often on the guitar. I still do the jazz thing occasionally, and once in a while I practice classical pieces: Mozart's “Turkish Rondo” is a favorite, a little Bach here and there, and some music by this old fart from England named Purcell. Henry is his first name. He must have done something decent since he was

knighted and a society was named after him. Go figure.

But I was talking about the guitar. That was the first instrument I played. In fact, it was Christmas of 1963 when I was nine years old that my folks gave me that all-important first guitar. Good gravy, I thought it was a thing of beauty. The first time I tried holding it I could barely wrap my arms around it correctly, let alone press the strings down. It was a Kingston nylon string guitar, and to me it was the bee's knees. It had no truss rod in the neck, so by the time I was a sophomore in college ten years later the neck had bowed so much you could shoot arrows off the strings. That old Kingston served me well for the thirteen years that I owned it. Chances are my folks bought it for a mere \$20 at the local music store, but none of that mattered to me. This was *my* guitar, dammittohell, and I loved it!

Eventually I would acquire other guitars – a Guild semi-acoustic with a special Johnny Smith neck attached, a Samick Stratocaster-styled electric, a Fender Avalon acoustic, a Delta banjo, and another Stratocaster knock-off guitar (el cheapo, but it has great sound) – over the years, but nothing ever beats out that first guitar. It was a sad day when it came time to permanently retire that Kingston since it was basically unplayable by the time I turned 22.

There were many wonderful years in between, though. By playing along with the radio, LP's and 45's, I picked up all sorts of great songs and copied the playing styles of folks like George Harrison (who was my favorite player of the mid-to-late

60s), Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton, and Pete Townsend. Another huge influence on my playing was Charlie Byrd, especially that delightful album he recorded with Stan Getz, *Jazz Samba*. Loved that record. However, before all of these great players there were three pre-Beatles guitar heroes that I had: in order of exposure they were Ricky Nelson, Roy Orbison, and Scotty Moore. Once the Beatles hit America, I basically ignored these guys (silly me) and Harrison replaced them as my favorite guitar player. (Stupid me; Moore could play rings around Harrison in the dark.) And so lately as I recall those formative years, I have been returning to the music of Nelson, Orbison, and Elvis Presley (for whom Scotty Moore played for many years).

Okay. I know Ricky – later simply Rick – Nelson was not much of an accomplished guitar player, but then again, neither was Elvis. They were simply strummers. But the thing that I loved about Ricky Nelson was that he looked so cool up there on stage, singing and strumming, and the girls ate it up. His back-up band had some crackerjack musicians: James Burton, Joe Maphis, The Jordanaires, and Johnny and Dorsey Burnette. The rockabilly lead-fills from Burton caught my ear, as did the work of the Burnette boys, but my focus was on becoming the next Ricky Nelson. So that's what inspired me to start writing my own songs. Well, him and the Beatles, but that goes without saying. I used to watch *Ozzie and Harriet* just to see Ricky doing a song at the end of each episode. That's when I heard "Traveling Man", "Believe What You Say," "Poor Little Fool," and other classics for the first time. Oh, I

loved them all.

Then I heard "Pretty Woman" by Roy Orbison, and just *had* to learn it! Great guitar hook, solid melody with a beat, and I loved the transition in the bridge of the song. Easily one of the best songs of those years. The fact that Orbison wore shades and looked absolutely awesome while playing and singing was another huge influence on me. Most of Orbison's songs followed the same formula of Ricky's songs in that both fellows performed songs that told stories with which listeners could identify. I loved these songs, and thought that there was nothing better.

Meanwhile, Elvis came back from serving in the Army and started making gawd-awful movies. Fortunately, he started recording again. The thing was I never really cared for Elvis Presley's music. It never really grabbed me. The fact that I was a boy might have something to do with it, but then I started paying attention to the guitar work behind the lyrics and melody. Yup. Scotty Moore got me hooked. I used to try to imitate Moore's licks to no avail. My fingers were too short and my skills weren't up to the task. Still, if you're going to try to learn from imitation, one cannot do much worse than trying to recreate Scotty Moore's guitar work. In my estimation, he was one of the reasons why Elvis took off. Sure, Presley had charisma and good looks and the voice for the music of that time, but Scotty Moore and the rest of Presley's backing musicians are what really made the music work.

Then that fateful Sunday night in February of 1964 came along. While

America was mesmerized with the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, I was trying to hear the music past the screaming girls. It was a lot easier when my brother and I got their first American LP, *Meet the Beatles*, it was much easier to listen to their music. The influences of Carl Perkins, Scotty Moore and other rockabilly guitarists were apparent in George Harrison's playing, so it was no surprise that I was drawn to Harrison as an influence.

A couple other guitar heroes of my youth were The Ventures and Dickie Dale. I wasn't much drawn to surf guitar music, but I most certainly appreciated what they were doing, and again, if you're going to try to emulate someone, there is definitely nothing wrong with trying to copy those guys, either. No wonder I find myself listening to the music of all these people again. They produced classic, formative work during the early years of rock and roll that is still influential today. Good music cannot be confined to just one era. Long live rock and roll!

Gee. I think there's a song in those words...





Victory for the Trigans!

by Mark Plummer!

In a letter to *Banana Wings* #32, E B Frohvet wrote that the superhero comic of his youth pretty much put him off the

whole graphic novel concept. I can actually relate to this, although for me it was mainly that the superhero comics I saw as a kid tended to come to me piecemeal, odd issues part way through story arcs where it wasn't entirely clear what Thor or whoever was doing and why, and as if that wasn't enough you were left on some kind of cliff-hanger without any sense of completion. To this day, I don't really like serial publications.

There was however one exception to this. My school library took a comic called *Look and Learn*. Comic isn't really the right word for it, though. Wikipedia favours 'weekly educational children's magazine' and I suppose that is more accurate, and explains why it was deemed suitable fare for a school library. *Look and Learn* was the sort of comic your parents would want you to read, the *Blue Peter* -- if that's not too anglocentric -- of children's periodicals. It was launched in 1962 and carried articles on a wide range of topics - history, science, nature, geography -- but I'm afraid it was none of these things that drew me to my school library in the mid-1970s. Rather it was that *Look and Learn*

also featured a comic strip called 'The Trigan Empire'.

My memory tells me that this featured across the centre-page spread of each issue, two pages of otherworldly wondrousness written -- I later learned -- by Mike Butterworth and drawn by Don Lawrence. Like those superhero comics, I came to the tales of Emperor Trigo in a kind of ad-hoc fashion. *Look and Learn* was a weekly publication yet for some reason the school's collection was patchy and so I didn't manage to read every instalment, and those I did get to see weren't always in the right order. Also, I don't know whether the various sub-stories cycled around during the seventeen-year history of the series, but even if they did it wasn't until many years later when I found a second-hand copy of the 1978 Hamlyn collection *The Trigan Empire* that I got to read the 'origins' story, and thus to truly understand what it was all about.

A flying saucer crashes in a Florida swamp. Its humanoid crew are all dead, and earth scientists can learn little of their origins from the various books and charts on board as they all defy translation. Eventually everybody loses interest aside from one dogged linguist who devotes his life to the problem of translating the enigmatic books, a problem that he eventually cracks -- with the aid of a remarkably primitive-looking computer - - after many decades of work. Thus we are able to read all about the Planet Elektron, and the wandering tribes of Vorg who eventually founded The Trigan Empire.

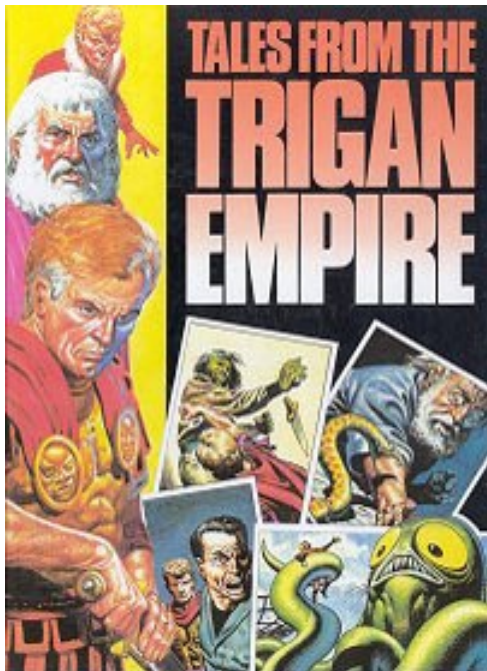
The influence here is clearly ancient

Rome, for all that the city of Trigan is built on five hills rather than seven, and is founded by triplet brothers rather than twins. In truth, though, the civilisations of Elektron are a real cultural mash-up: swords and armour, but also hover-tanks and jet-fighters. There's a frame on page 25 of the Hamlyn collection, in the story 'Victory for the Trigans', that pretty much epitomises this ancient-and-modern cultural fusion. It portrays the last stand of the elite guard of Tharv -- you may have noticed that Butterworth seems to have a tin ear for names -- who are under attack from the nasty Lokans. These Tharvian soldiery look like ancient Greeks in crested helmets and muscled breastplates, but they are armed with what seem to be ray guns.

The alien aspects of Elekton life are simplistic and more than a little Barsoomian. The Trigans ride horse-like animals, but they're called kreds and are pale blue, and indeed there are blue- and green-skinned humanoid races kicking around too. And the stories are a product of the time so some of the racial stereotyping seems blatant to say the least: those evil Lokans are rather obviously oriental in aspect; the jungle-dwelling natives are straight out of a boy's own tale; and, while none of the locals seem to have mastered this, it's surprisingly easy to tell who the bad guys are because to a man they always manage to *look* evil. The plots are pretty simplistic too, erratically paced and given to abrupt endings, although I gather they've not been well-served in the 1978 and 1989 collections which often omit frames and

whole pages from stories.

But for all their faults I was fascinated by those Trigan tales in my pre-teen years, although I then pretty much forgot about them until Lawrence was announced as a guest of the 1989 Eastercon. I didn't initially connect the name to those old strips, probably because I'd neither known nor really cared who'd created the world of Elektron, but something -- probably a PR for the convention -- explained who Lawrence was and I was reminded of that personally seminal SF reading experience. Later I acquired the 1978 and 1989 collections and found that, for all those weaknesses I mentioned earlier, that otherworldly wondrousness hasn't really gone away. Looking through those books again while writing this, I can't help wondering whether it was the early influence of Trigo and his cohorts that made me an sf fan...



My Start with Comics
by
Christopher J. Garcia

I was young. I can't think of the exact year, maybe 1982, but I was young, not yet ten years old. I knew about comics, my Dad favoured War Comics like Haunted Tank and Sgt. Rock, but I wasn't too interested. Dad would take me to the comic shop once in a while and I'd look through the quarter bin, but very rarely buy anything. Then one day, when the sun

was high and the air sweet, I happened to notice something on the new release rack. It was the cover you see over on that side there <-- and I was amazed. I picked it up and looked at it. It was amazing. I brought it over to my Dad, who promptly said that I would have to buy it with my allowance. I bought it and that started me down the dark path.

Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew were the greatest thing I'd ever read. I insisted on buying every issue, went back and bought the issue of The New Teen Titans where they had briefly appeared, and became a fanatic. These were characters who were fun and funny. There was Yankee Poodle, basically Wonder Woman but with a talk show that was number one. There was Fastback, a hyper-speed turtle. There was Rubber Duck (who was about to go a-huntin' bear) who could stretch. There was the amazing Alley-Cat Abra, the mystic, and Pig Iron, the big metal dude. Add to all of that Captain Carrot, who would become an anthropomorphic Superman once he ate his radioactive carrots. That's the kind of team that I like.

Now, when I first read the Cap, I didn't really get a lot of what was going on. I knew that they were reliving the classic Justice League of America/Fantastic Four/X-Men/Justice Society of America feuds, such as the one with Starro which was the villain of the first issue. Frogzilla was one, and the cover for his issue was almost exactly like the Fantastic Four vs. Mole Man. There was the issue where Pig Iron turned on the Captain. There was one where they had to face Bowzar the Barbarian. They were great stories, really fun old-fashioned comic books.

But they were also the smartest comics you'll ever read.

I didn't get 90% of the references back then, but rereading them in the 1990s, I found them and they were hilarious. There were puns everywhere. Byrd Reynolds. Owlizabeth Taylor. Gnu York, Gnu York. So many animal themed gags that you couldn't swing a comic artist by the foot without hitting two or three (and taking out three or four X-Men titles along with it!). The art was often full of comedic little gems, and that's always a good thing. There was a lot to love about this wonderful comic, and for twenty issues it was the best thing that I ever bought.

Sadly, that all ended.

The series was cancelled in late 1983 (according to Wikipedia) because it was being retooled and the Zoo Crew would appear in miniseries from there on out. That's an OK thing, different scenarios and different characters, making full use of the multi-verse that the DC World encompassed at the time. The first of them was Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew in *The Oz/Wonderland War*.

This wasn't anywhere near as good as the original series. It had some of the comedy, but the art of Scott Shaw was missed and it wasn't that funny. Now, the story they told about Oz vs. Wonderland was pretty good, but they didn't need the Cap and Crew for this one. Apparently it didn't sell that well, which in the 1980s meant things were dark for the Crew. They disappeared from that point onwards with only occasional peaks in the art of other comics, including some stuff in *The Teen Titans* run of a couple of years ago.

The Teen Titans gave a few pages



over to the Crew in a storyline that was supposedly from a comic in the Titans universe. The story was that of the murder of Little Cheese. He was a version of Changeling of the New Teen Titans, that appeared in the later issues of the original series. With DC reinventing their entire universe again, just like they did with *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, they could bring back these kooky characters. The new Captain Carrot was much darker, in reference to the *Dark Knight Returns* kinda of

reimagining that all the comics seem to go in for these days. Those issues got some great responses from fans and that led to DC giving the Cap another run.

The three issue *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew in The Final Ark* is one of the most entertaining, and ultimately disappointing, comic miniseries of recent years. It was so good to see the Captain Carrot kind of humour back in the pages of DC comics. The story was about Ra's Al Ghul trying to flood the world, which is bad. The comedy was there and the series started at the Sandy Goat Comic-Con with all sorts of comic-related puns (my faves being Quail Simone and Neil Caiman). The comics were funny and brought back a couple of the villains from the original run of *Captain Carrot*. The thing even sold pretty well, which isn't a surprise as DC readers tend to be older and *Captain Carrot* would have been around right at the time a lot of them started reading comics. The series ended poorly. Very poorly. Too poorly for words. While I'd still say it was worth reading, I wouldn't say it made me happy.

So, that's what pulled me in. *Captain Carrot* led me to *The Flash*, *Green Lantern*, *The JLA*, and finally to *Swamp Thing* and *The Doom Patrol*. It's why I've always been a DC guy instead of the Marvel dude that was so popular. I only hope that they bring the Captain back in the form that I love him since there's no way I can enjoy where they've put him now. When they bring back the Captain in his true form, I'll be there to buy his book.

And no...reading *Captain Carrot* does NOT make me a Furry!

5 X 5

From Frank Wu!

TOP 5 GREATEST MOVIES WITH EXCLAMATION POINTS IN THEIR TITLES

1. *Airplane!*
2. *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*
3. *SuperGals!*
4. *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*
5. *Them!*

TOP 5 GREATEST MOVIES FEATURING THE CONCRETE-WALLED LOS ANGELES RIVER

1. *Terminator 2*
2. *Repo Man*
3. *Grease*
4. *Blue Thunder*
5. *Them!*

TOP 5 GREATEST MOVIES FEATURING THE "WILHELM SCREAM" (THE SAME SOUND EFFECT USED OVER AND OVER WHEN SOMEONE DIES HORRIBLY)

1. *Star Wars* trilogy (episodes IV-VI)
2. *The Two Towers/Return of the King*
3. *Raiders of the Lost Ark*
4. *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*
5. *Them!*

TOP 5 GREATEST FILMS WITH SINGLE-WORD PRONOUN TITLES

1. *She*
2. *Him*
3. *Us*

4. *We*

5. *Them!*

TOP 5 MOVIES INVOLVING KILLER BUGS

1. *The Naked Jungle*
2. *Arachnophobia*
3. *The Hellstrom Chronicle*
4. *Starship Troopers*
5. *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*



I have trouble with Frank's lists. So many troubles. In fact, here are my own lists.

TOP 5 GREATEST MOVIES WITH EXCLAMATION POINTS IN THEIR TITLES

- 1) *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!*
- 2) *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes!*
- 3) *Tarantula!*
- 4) *Cannibal! The Musical!*
- 5) *Zapped!*

TOP 5 GREATEST MOVIES FEATURING THE CONCRETE-WALLED LOS ANGELES RIVER

1) *The Core*

2) *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension*

3) *To Live and Die in LA*

4) *The Italian Job*

5) *Chinatown*

TOP 5 GREATEST MOVIES FEATURING THE "WILHELM SCREAM"

1) *The Wild Bunch*

2) *A Star is Born*

3) *Spaceballs*

4) *Reservoir Dogs*

5) *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgandy*

TOP 5 GREATEST FILMS WITH SINGLE-WORD PRONOUN TITLES

1. *It* (1927)

2. *We*

3. *Us*

4. *It* (1966)

5. *They*

TOP 5 MOVIES INVOLVING KILLER BUGS

1) *Eight-Legged Freaks*

2) *King Kong* (2006)

3) *Beginning of the End*

4) *The Deadly Mantis*

5) *Them!*



MAN NOT MAN

by Frank Wu

My pal Jim Terman has noted that the central dilemma for makers of Superman movies is whether to emphasize the “Super” or the “Man.” Do we focus on his impossible strength, or his impossible love for Lois Lane? Similarly, in Jesus movies, do we focus on the divine or the human aspect of the God who took on human form?

This duality - part man, part not man - is key to understanding both Superman and Jesus. Can Superman take the hand of the mortal woman, knowing it will cost him his powers and his calling to save the world? Can Jesus take the hand

of Mary Magdalene, knowing it will block him from his destiny: dying on the cross as a sacrifice to wash away the sins of all mankind? Because of their split natures, these heroes must choose between love for an individual, and love for all the world.

The greatest of movie monsters - again, part human and part not human - also struggle for Love. All Frankenstein’s monster wants is a “friend.” All Dracula wants is a girl with whom to stride through the ages. The Wolfman must push away his love, lest he destroy her during a transformation. A monster movie is really a love story.

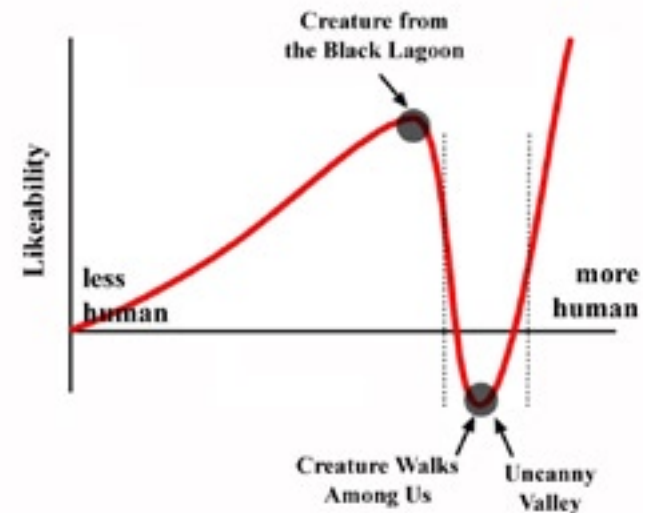
In this essay, I’d like to focus on one being in particular: The Creature from the Black Lagoon, aka The Gill-man, part man, part fish. His story - told in the eponymous 1954 film - is, again, a love story. All the Creature wants is to take the girl to his little hideaway beneath the waves.

The moviemakers understood that the Creature’s (partial) humanity set him apart from other aquatic monsters, the giant octopi and lobsters and crabs. Producer William Alland said, “It would still frighten you, but because how human it was, not the other way around.”

The Creature occupies a felicitous spot in the Uncanny Valley curve. The Uncanny Valley is a hypothesis developed by roboticist Masahiro Mori, following earlier work by Freud and Ernst Jentsch. The hypothesis tracks the relationship between the likeability of an object and its resemblance to a human face. Cartoons of faces (such as smiley faces) are very

likeable, as are accurate portraits (such as da Vinci’s Mona Lisa). However, images very similar to human, but not quite human - such as zombies and corpses or diseased or badly drawn faces - are disturbing and repellent.

The Gill-man occupies a spot on the Uncanny Valley curve that maximizes both his inhumanity and his likeability. The inhumanity is clear from the hideous lips and mouth and eyes as cold and expressionless as those of a dead fish. As for its likeability, consider that the film yielded two sequels and innumerable model kits, marking him the most popular of fifties movie monsters.



Yet despite the ugliness in the features, there is a rhythmic exuberance to the shape of the scales and external gills. But most of all, it is his elegant movements underwater (while played by Ricou Browning) which lend humanity to the beast. Particularly, there is a scene wherein the Gill-man performs a



synchronized swim with an unwary Julia Adams, thus endowing the creature with a charm and sophistication alien to any other fifties monster. Thus, despite his horrid visage, the Creature is made human-like by

his intelligence, his mastery over his underwater domain and, most of all, his unrequited love.

The first sequel to the eponymous film - "Revenge of the Creature" is unremarkable. Retelling the same story in a different locale with a different girl, this film merits no further discussion.

The third and final Gill-man film - 1956's "The Creature Walks Among Us" - is, however, fascinating. Some critics consider it the least of the trilogy, the runt that killed off the series, the only one not shot in 3-D.

For me, however, the third is the most interesting; it is the one most heavily laden with science and philosophy.

In this film, we are introduced to a transformed version of the Gill-man. He becomes more human, and thus more

repugnant, as he occupies the deepest level in the Uncanny Valley.

The Creature in this movie is shot at, wounded, hit twice with spears tipped with "sleeping juice," and set on fire. (It's impressive that it took that much effort to bring him down.) His gills and scaly outer skin are burned away, revealing human skin underneath. We also find out that - like the African lungfish - the Creature has both lungs and gills. An emergency tracheotomy fills his lungs with air, switching him to an air-breathing metabolism. This change coincides with a softening of the flesh, a shrinking of the finger webbing and a humanizing of the eyes. (I'm not judging the film's science, just reporting it, folks.)

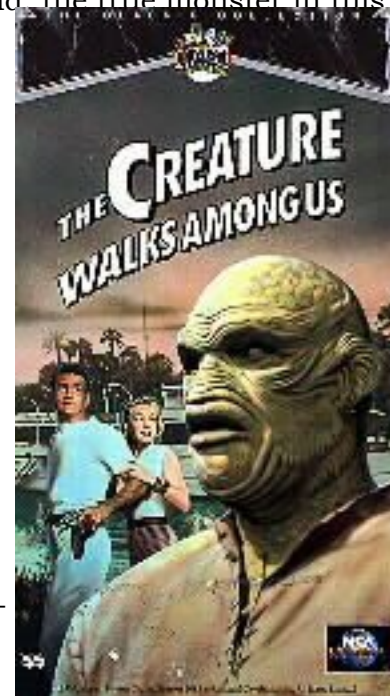
"We are changing a sea creature into a land creature," announces the (handsome but evil) Dr. Barton in the film. Barton's purpose is, in a way, somewhat noble. In a convoluted way, making the Creature more human will teach scientists how to modify people to make them suitable for space travel. (Sputnik would be launched the year after this film premiered.) "We can create an entirely new form of life," Barton notes. "Modern man is limited, Earth-bound to this planet. He's bound to it because he's physically incapable of making the next giant step... into outer space. Well, we can make him physically capable." (Dr. Barton had apparently been reading James Blish.)

In contrast to the evil Dr. Barton, the good Dr. Morgan cautions thus: "It's the interaction of heredity and environment for millions of years that makes a new species... We only changed

the skin, doctor, not the animal. But we can bring out the best or worst in any living thing. The environment does that. If we threaten him, if he's afraid of us, he'll revert to the wanton killer... We all stand between the jungle and the stars, at the crossroads. I think we'd better discover what brings out the best in humankind and what brings out the worst, 'cause it's the jungle or the stars."

The Gill-man teeters on an apex, balanced between man and monster. We see the monster's humanity in a newly disclosed talent: He is a brilliant strategist, luring the pursuing ship into shallow, narrow waters, forcing his pursuers to continue in a small, vulnerable motorboat. We also see his vulnerability, as the good Dr. Morgan actually saves the monster's life. Twice.

In the end, the true monster in this film is not the Creature, but rather the evil Dr. Barton - a drunkard, a self-important windbag who's mean to his wife. The creature kills, becoming an amphibious Mike Tyson, but only when provoked. He kills a mountain lion, but only in self-defense and in his finally



rampage, he kills Dr. Barton, but only after Barton has killed a man who was hitting on his wife. The monster's ultimate fate is tragic. Its gills destroyed, it can no longer breathe under the water. Nor can he live on land with man. In the end, with no home or hideaway left in this world, he walks out to the sad, beautiful ocean to drown himself.

As the credits roll, we understand the ugliness in beauty, and the beauty in ugliness. We shed a tear for the monster, and we glimpse the human and inhuman at war within ourselves, as we struggle to find love and peace in a cruel, misunderstanding world.



As a pregnant woman, I watch a lot of movies. It helps that I'm being pampered by the best lovers ever, but I've been spending hours and hours at the AMC in town, watching movies and crying like a bitch whenever there's the slightest love story. The crazy girl who once pierced her eyelid with a safety pin crying at the latest piece of shit from Katherine Hygel isn't right. No, not at all.

In Finland, we watched almost all our movies on video. The theaters there were crap, the movies subtitled in Finnish. Jay liked to go once in a while, but I'd rather watch movies we'd buy off of Amazon or the ones that Judith brought when she came to visit. When we moved back to Santa Barbara, I started going to the movies again.

The best thing out there is Walk Hard. Chris loved it and I thought he was just making another one of his terrible suggestions again. It's funny and it shows a life led the way it should be- hard and fast and it keeps going until the moment you start taking things seriously which is when you keel over. That's how life works.

That's a lot like me getting pregnant. I wasn't supposed to be able to anymore. About a decade ago, after one of my many stints in the hospital for trying to buy a permanent ticket away, I was told that I'd never be able to have kids. It was OK with me, I didn't really want to be around here no less have a kid. I did my shit for years, got clean and then it all changed when I got back in with M and Jay. They had the kids and I was acting as a side-mom, taking them around, feeding them and carrying them when M couldn't.

It was tough at first, but as M got healthy again and I got used to it, I started to want my own. While Jameson calls me 'Mom' and M 'Lady' (which is what M prefers), I wanted one of my own to call me Mom.

Now, Jay and I hadn't talked about it, but it happened out of left field about 2 months before we declared we would start with visits to the doctor and seeing what we could do. M was behind us all the way and she said she thought it would happen sooner. Being around kids + huge amounts of sex + a loving environment = baby. She was right.

I go to the movies, not only to get out of the house, but because there's something about other people's lives that you see. I want to know what it's like to be the bridesmaid who never finds her own. I want to experience the dude who participated in orgies of magnificent proportions. I want to watch Johnny Depp slit some throats and the incredible Helena Bonham Carter cook 'em up. In short, I want to live the lives I might never get to be a part of again.



Five Annish Things
by Leigh Ann Hildebrand

1. Chris Garcia's Swingin' Fanzine Lounge. Bringin' it since 2007.
2. Big shout out to that candid shot in your Little Thing. I hate pictures of myself, but I like that one.
3. The upcoming Drink Tank cookbook, *Cooking with Panda*. That chapter on hand fed Kobe-style panda veal (aka peal) is really shaping up.
4. Have I mentioned the great folks I met through you and the Lounge? Especially Espana and the charming Mr. Schachat. They both know how to work a Little Thing, if you know what I mean.
5. Just a thought: LoungeCon.
Leigh Ann



Letter Graded Mail
Sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my gentle readers

Let's start with the powerful Mr. Eric Mayer!

Chris,
You're not supposed to be out of your hidey hole until February 2nd! Oh wait, that's the Punxutawny groundhog....
I woke up that morning, walked outside, saw my shadow and got the hell back into my house!

I don't know how you're going to manage all that convention work. All I could think reading about your MC gig was, man, I'd be a lousy MC. Do they sell tux at the thrift store?
I got a tux for doing a reality show, so if you ever need one, I recommend that as the preferred method!

Perceptive thoughts on the laundry. Yes, of course, doesn't everyone take off their pants and underwear at the same time? Much more efficient. But throwing them into a bin? What? Don't you have a floor?

Still, your idea for taking advantage of scientific principles to maximize clothes drying seems sound. (Although anyone who caught you throwing your wash around might mistake it for fury) . Yes, gravity-dried clothes. I like it.
All great science is misunderstood by the masses...

Enjoyed Steve Green on the Panto, although all I know about panto is Mary keeps trying to explain it to me and I guess it's a "you had to be there" kind of thing. Also found James Bacon's slice interesting

since Mythago Wood is one of the few sf/fantasy books I've enjoyed in the past several decades. Also, John Brosnan is a fan whose work I admired.

You know, I've never read any Brosnan, but maybe I should.

Looking at the locs...well there I go again....I really thought that article replying to Cheryl's article was an overreaction and I see in my loc I went and...uh...overreacted. Hey, you know what they say, it's easier to write long than short.

For me, it's much easier to write short than long. I mean I can stop at any point and feel finished. It's why I'll never be a writer.

Lloyd, mentions liking early Heinlein. I read and enjoyed some of his early work when I was a kid but he just totally lost me with Stranger in a Strange Land which I thought pure rubbish and, like much of his later work, kind of creepy. I got a foreboding of that at the end of the Puppet Masters which is disturbing. Police state prurience. Ugh. Now I can't even read his old stuff.

I have said some bad things about RAH, so I'll say something nice. He had a nice pencil moustache for a while...

You say "Sometimes you eat the bear, sometimes the bear eats you." But, let's be realistic here. When you eat the bear you might have a stomach ache but you're still around but once the bear eats you...I mean, where do you go from there?
I will spare my readers the specifics of the digestive process of our Ursine Brothers...

Glad to see Drink Tank is attracting some new people to fandom. I'm not

surprised. You are not judgmental. You're obviously having fun. When I got into Fandom in the early seventies it was the friendly, unpretentious, sometimes sloppy zines that drew me in. The zines that felt they had to be perfect all the time and focal points and meet some sort of preconceived standard were just intimidating to me. I value the artistic part of zines but the communication part is more important.

I love doing the King of the Crudzines!

Ah, Frank Wu beat me to it. I was gonna comment on one of Lloyd's locs to Drink Tank as soon as he posted it to LiveJournal but before the issue! Oh well, all the more reason to vote for him for the Faan awards. Yeah, not artist, but I already had him down for something else already.

I don't care what he says, he was on my ballot for both!

I'm happy to hear M is doing better. I had two friends die of cancer within a short time of one another a few years ago. It's a scourge. As for SaBean...I hope this is considered good news?

Good luck with your trip.

Eric

You can see from SaBean's article where she stands! Thanks, Eric!

And now...John Purcell!!!

Well, young feller, you should be preparing to head on over to England right soon now. I hope your journey is a safe one, and that you have a great time. Say hi to Graham, Eminent Peter, Harry, and the rest of the lot for me. I look forward to seeing them again in April at Corflu. Plus, I can't wait for the trip report you'll be

providing for *Askance*. It will naturally be a highlight of the issue. Heck, any of your TAFF writings will be a highlight for any zine. Enjoy thyself, roomie.

I will get you your piece, I promise!

Convention organizational meetings can be interesting. I remember attending many Minicon organizational meetings very well. At most of them we had a good time, but when we had to, work was accomplished and gradually we saw the con pull together. It is truly amazing how well these things can work when the folks working on the committee all know each other and can play nicely together. Years of experience help, too, and it sounds like the CostumeCon folks have that. I bet you have fun there. We'll miss you in Vegas, but remember: *you're* the one missing out on the REAL fun convention at the end of April.

I dunno. The plans for CostumeCon make it sound pretty damn exciting.

Seriously, though, have a great time.

That won't be a problem!

Your theories about the washing and drying of clothes are interesting and do, in fact, prove one significant fact: you have *way* too much time on your hands. You really do. Something must be done about this. I suggest you get a girlfriend. Oh, wait. You did and do. Hmm... In that case, take a long vacation somewhere far away from your usual daily habits, your job, and... Oh! You are. *grumph* Then I guess I don't have any real suggestions for you.

Imagine what 'd be thinking about if there was no Lovely and Talented Linda around!

Wait a minute! Yes I do. And it is really quite simple: Slow down. Stop every so often to smell the hecto jelly or sniff freshly-printed dittoed zines; pub less frequently, read more, watch television, movies, go to concerts, babysit other people's children...

You do all that, too? Fuck it all, Garcia, how *DO* you do it???

Have a great trip.

All the (jealousy-laden) best,

John Purcell

I would tell you the secret of how I do it all, but that would break at least three different treaties!



This issue features a Brad Foster cover, art from Frank Wu, Bill Rotsler, James Judah, James Bacon, Michelle Elleal, DC Comics and Scott Shaw, Eric Picollu, Donnie Jupiter, the University of Utah Graphics Lab and Steve Green.



by Steve Green

Once upon a time in the early 1990s, I freelanced for a British horror magazine which – to momentarily blind the all-seeing eyes of Google – I shall refer to as *The Dark Tide*. Thanks to my work on *Critical Wave* (coming soon to a website archive near you, apparently), I was hired to produce a regular column covering the wave of horrorzines fueled in part by the Thatcher regime’s draconian attempt to blame every crime north of apple scrumping on so-called “video nasties” (most examples of which can now be bought in dvd boxsets from highstreet retailers).

It was a great gig, even if Ann did wince at some of the material which landed on our doormat, especially as the column began attracting the interest of publishers outside these shores (she took particular exception to a Latin American compilation of “fatal incident”

and autopsy photographs, possibly because her own profession stresses actual respect for the dead). It did get slightly insane at times – I’d originally had to cover a half-dozen titles within my allotted 2000 words, but it was soon up to at least twenty or thirty – yet I felt vindicated when many of the editors pointed out this was pretty much their only platform (this was all long before widespread internet access, of course).

By the close, I’d written fifty columns, totalling more than 110,000 words, and would most likely have continued had I not wearied of chasing my editor for errant cheques. The subsequent collapse of the UK horrorzine scene might well have its roots in the combination of increasingly liberal censorship and the availability of movies on imported discs (a sizeable percentage of the fanzines I reviewed had been ridden with lines such as “I watched this on a third-generation tape lent me by a guy I met

at school”), but I’d be lying if I said I didn’t wonder if my decision to quit the column was the first death knell.

Nearly a decade later, I receive an e-mail from an old friend and fellow *Dark Tide* veteran, who mentions a self-styled journalist based in New York was alleging our former employer was guilty of repeated and voluminous plagiarism, swiping tens of thousands of words from independent websites and passing them off as his own work.

To say I was stunned is akin to describing Mrs Lincoln as mildly distracted from by the finale of “Our American Cousin”. What I hadn’t realised is what a twisted path this news was about to sent me down.

To be continued...