

BROKEN TOYS 2

Broken Toys is a personalzine, more informal than New Toy, and happily this time has a very satisfactory letter column. As has been the case for more than 20 years now, I live at 245 Dunn Ave., Apt. 2111, Toronto Ontario M6K 1S6. Or loc me at – Taral@Teksavvy.com
The date is April 2012, and this is ExtraTaraltorality 150! Or Kiddelidivee Books & Art 150.

Forgotten glory

I've been keeping a secret for quite some time now. The beans could have been spilled a couple of days ago. However, it's April 8th and I'm seeing the news all over the internet before it even occurred to me that I was free to speak up. Strange to say, I forgot all about it!

I've *hinted* every year around this time that I was up for a Hugo again. Nominees always got the news a few weeks ahead of the official public announcements, and are asked to keep it under wraps until then. About a month ago, I received the news that I was on the Hugo ballot for Best Fanartist for the 11th time, and solemnly swore the oath of secrecy. Then, as soon as the e-mail was off, I phoned up friends and told them.

Not everyone who is a friend, mind you. Just those I really like. Bob always told me about his *Hugo* nominations, and how could I keep a secret from Steven, whose stories I steal for my fan articles? Then there's Schirm, a fellow fanartist and confidant who I've known for 35 years. Steve Stiles and I usually blow our covers too, since it's an easy guess that if one of us is nominated, so is the other. One or two people who weren't even in fandom would hear about it. And my sister. The word usually didn't go much farther than that.

As well, I played mind games on-line. I belong to a couple of forums where I'd drop a heavy-handed hint that I'd have important news in a few weeks or a month, and refuse to answer anyone who guessed correctly. Although a total breach of trust, nobody in fandom ever set foot in these forums, so what did it matter? I needed someplace to let a little steam out or else burst...

In the past, I've always been fairly excited about the whole Hugo business. For reasons I probably can't justify, I thought there was a fair chance of actually winning the Hugo. This is not to say I was necessarily optimistic. From year to year, there were noticeable differences in my mood. I began moderately hopeful. Next year I was sarcastic. The year after that, indignant. This year, however, I realized I wasn't excited at all. I won't go so far as to say I was *indifferent* to the nomination... but I felt little need to tell anyone about it. I dropped no hints and kept the news pretty much to myself.

Worse... the date for the official announcement of the ballot came and went. I didn't even realize until I started to see comments about the Hugo ballot on-line that I had actually forgotten all about it!

Okay, so here it is. I've been nominated again. 11th time. Yada yada...

I won't win – I'm resigned to that. If I was ever going to, it would have been at the 2009 Worldcon, where I was the Fan Guest of Honour, right? If I couldn't win with *that* advantage, what are the odds that I can win at all? But, people told me not to give up, that perhaps the voters will realize "he ought to have won last year." It wasn't likely to at the 2010 Worldcon, though, because that was held in Australia. The local fanartist of note – "Ditmar" – would be the logical winner. You think? Perversely enough, he wasn't even on the ballot. Then there was the 2011 Worldcon in Reno, the first worldcon back in North America, and the *last* conceivable chance that voter's remorse might come to my aid. It didn't, so I suppose the odds from now on will only grow slimmer.

Especially as I don't seem to be drawing all that much, lately.

The internet guy is on the ballot again... for the second time. I'm thinking this is the beginning of the end for fanzine artists of the old school, and that sooner or later it's inevitable that strangers in Hong Kong or Mexico, who post popular internet comics, will push traditional fanzine art off the ballot entirely.

Until that day, I'll have to be content with collecting the little pins that come with a nomination. I've had worse deals. A few more, and I'll have enough to melt down and cast my own Hugo.



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The following is a fictional radio address that could have been made by Henry J. Ford in 1934, on the occasion of receiving a letter from a satisfied owner of a Ford automobile. In actual fact, the letter was never used in promotion, though it is displayed prominently in the company's museum. Its authenticity is disputed.

"A while ago, my secretary placed on my desk a letter. While it is hardly unusual for me to receive testimonials from one of our many satisfied customers, this one will always hold a special place in my memory. It was not written by a doctor, law enforcement agent, professional race driver or cabbie, although – in his own way – the author of this letter depended as much on making his living through the dependability of the Ford automobile as those who stand higher than he on the social ladder.

"In the letter, the writer tells me that I make a 'dandy' car. He drives a Ford *exclusively* whenever circumstances permit, and he praises the new V-8 model introduced last year for its 'sustained speed and freedom from trouble.' In his colloquial words, 'it has got every other car skinned.'

“Indeed, the Ford V8 does have every other automobile on the road ‘skinned.’ America’s most popular car packs a stupendous 65 hp – greater than any other mass produced model – and at a low \$495 is a bargain no other manufacturer can offer.

“It is true that the author of this letter confesses to an usual line of work. Mr. C. Barrow is apparently in the business of withdrawing large amounts of cash from small establishments such as gas stations, groceries and general stores and speedily transporting it to other locations. It is my hope, Mr. Barrows, that Fords may speed you on your way for many years to come.”

Clyde Barrows and his life partner Bonnie Parker were gunned down in a police ambush in Louisiana only six weeks later.

Not to be outdone, the Ford Motor Company supposedly received another commendation a month later from no less than John Dillinger.

Actual letters: <http://texashideout.tripod.com/fordletter.html>



Late last year D. West stirred up the latest tempest in fandom’s teapot by declining to accept the Rotsler Award for being one of the all-time top art dudes. Admittedly, 18 comments on the posting on *File 770’s* blogsite, one Jeremiad in my new personalzine and a comment in this or that fanzine hasn’t been much of a “tempest” – we must make allowance for the graying of fandom, though, and its inability to become very worked-up about much of anything in its old age.

Still, D.’s posturing self-denial was a masterful act of one-upmanship, and deserves to be rewarded in its own right.

I propose we introduce an award for *non-minimalist fanart* and name it after D. – the *Best of the West*, so to speak

Make no mistake, I mean no simple measure of how many lines or dots used in creating a picture. A far more exacting standard would be applied, making full use of the panel of judge’s public school art classes. Are there triangles used in the composition? Are black and white spaces in balance? Is there hidden symbolism? Remember that a picture’s meaning is unlikely to be adequately profound unless a Greek Philosopher or Renaissance master hadn’t already given the matter some thought. Or, at the very least, the artist’s style should somewhat resemble that of Ronald Searle.

There’s no reason why the same technical sophistication cannot be expected of fanart.

To award the *Best of the West* there could be no better judge than D. himself, inasmuch as the rest of us already look to him for direction.

We will have to act quickly, though... I fear that that the idea of fanart itself is dissolving into the mainstream as we watch.

In the old days, if a fanzine editor had a contribution for his next issue, he contacted a fanartist and said, "Steve, I've got a fabulous piece about that time Harlan got so furious at *Discon II* that he trashed *himself* before it sank in... Do you think you could do something?" Or perhaps, "Ted wrote a great article on the influence of his reviews on the Riverside recordings of Thelonious Monk – would you like to illustrate it?" This led to a lot of hard work on the part of the artist and a unique visual treat for the readers.

Jump forward to the present, when there is access to the internet for almost everyone. It's become extremely simple to find and "borrow" just about any image you need on *Google Images*. A burning toilet seat? No problem. Mao Zedong in a zoot suit? Easy. A pink 1959 Cadillac convertible parked on the deck of an aircraft carrier? If you look long enough, you'll find it!

Even if you cannot find what you need tailor-made for your article, you can make it with Photoshop. Take a photo of the Taj Mahal, layer over it another photo of McDonald's golden arches, apply a filter and use the Type tool to letter the new image with a font that looks like neon lighting, if you like. It can be done in fifteen minutes.

A camera is all most fans need, if you want to know the truth. Just point and the digital marvel in your hand focuses, adjusts to the light and stores an impressive number of pictures on a chip no larger than some postage stamps. Why illustrate your trip report when you can show actual photos of the places you've been and people you've visited?

Really, who needs artists?

What with even the artists themselves increasingly adapting to Photoshop techniques and using raw materials from the internet, the idea of art drawn *by* and *for* fans has become rather outdated. Fanzines are full of full colour photographs, lavish graphics effects and clip art that could just as easily be found in a similar publication about prosthetic dentistry, home cooking or fly fishing. When old fossils such as myself, Steve Stiles, Brad Foster and Marc Schirmeister are finally put out to pasture, there may be no such thing as art *by* fans and *for* fans. There will still be artists in fandom, to be sure... but they will be no different from artists *not* in fandom. We from the old school are likely the *last* generation of *true* fanartists.

No one will have any reason to award the *Rotslers* or the *West*s by then.





I met Philip Kidder at one of the last furry cons I attended. He's a fantasy & SF writer I know who lives in Australia, but like most Aussies seems to travel half the year. At least, he did before his conviction...

* * *

We were the only two fans in a dimly lit lounge area, at that very late hour that you can just as accurately describe as very early. We were pretty groggy from lack of sleep, but at that hour of the a.m. it was far easier to remain in our seats and fight drowsiness than to actually get up and go to our rooms for bed. My friend was from Perth, as I well knew. But with my neurons firing at low efficiency, odd cross-connections were being made in my brain. I recalled that I knew someone else from Perth, and brought it up.

"I know one of your countrymen," I began, "The story is long and maybe not very enlightening, but my friend Steven is Italian-Canadian, and has a sister who's been married now for eight or nine years. She lived all her life not *just* in Toronto but in *Little Italy* in particular. For her, a six-block journey was a venture into the unknown. So, naturally, she married an Australian man.

"Shows good taste in men, anyway" muttered Philip, wiping beer froth from his mouth with a handy cuff.

"Just as naturally," I continued, "she wanted her new husband to live on the *same block* where she was brought up. She couldn't bear the thought of being more than a few minutes' walk from mother and home.

"That was out of the question, of course. For one thing, at that time houses in that area of the city were listed for around \$850,000. The family's own home is probably worth well over a million now, even though we're only talking about a two story duplex, with three bedrooms and an dormer room in the attic. Unfortunately, Little Italy has gentrified way beyond a stodgy, middle class, ethnic neighborhood in the last 20 years. It's a great place to have property, assuming you bought in two generations ago.

"So, for the time being, they remained in Toronto, living with his new in-laws."

"Kra-ayst!"

"After the first year and one full Toronto winter, there was little sign the new bride would *ever* leave the nest. Her husband, Andrew, put his foot down, and they moved to his home town in Perth, Australia.

"Unfortunately, she *hated* living in Perth. For one thing, she said none of the neighbors were friendly. For another, as an Italian-Canadian, she felt like an outsider and not even entirely white enough for them. For yet another, she and her husband Andrew were out in the sticks. Not the sort of suburbs we have in Toronto, but suburbs where land is almost more common than dirt. The houses on the street were widely spaced and the nearest neighbor was *a hundred feet* away – maybe more! It felt as though she were living in the Prairies, where the nearest visible farmhouse is half below the horizon. Finally, she was expected to learn to drive if she wanted to go any farther than the end of her own driveway. But Italian women *don't* drive, they are driven by their husbands. She resisted every attempt to make her see reason, until she became a recluse.

"After a couple of years, *she* put *her* foot down, and they moved *back* to Canada."

"Not back in with her folks, I should bloody well hope!"

"No. At least, they didn't have to live with her family this time! They found a house in a commuter suburb north of Toronto, where prices were a little less insane, and brought up a small family over the next few years.

"Incidentally, this was much to the delight of my friend Steven, who hasn't married, and enjoys having a niece and nephew to spoil.

"But time as well as distance gradually wore his sister's ties to her family thinner. She has even learned to drive, I'm told. So the shoe is on the other foot yet again – they're moving *back to Australia*. Perhaps, too, she's remembering the warmer winters there...

"I met Andrew once. We didn't speak long, but from what I saw, he seemed a decent sort, if a bit square. I told *him* about *you*, in fact, just as I'm telling *you* about *him*. I told him the whole story of the perverted furry writer I knew in Perth, and how I'd inadvertently helped convict him with my pornographic art. Andrew looked at me in a very peculiar way, after that.

"Steven, who was present, had broken out into a fine sweat.

"Perhaps someday you'll bump into a stranger in a mall back home, and introduce yourself to him. If he gives you an extremely dirty look, just possibly I mentioned your name... "

But Philip didn't hear that last. Just as well ... he had fallen into the peaceful sleep of the mildly inebriated.

Left Over Pieces* — A Letter Column*

Eric Mayer – groggy.tales@gmail.com 18 Jan 2012

Ah yes, D West vs. the Rotsler award....

My feelings about Rotsler's art are similar to yours. I like his cartoons. They are generally perfect for fanzines, witty and clever. But I don't get the adulation part. I'm not sure we need all of them—good, bad and indifferent—endlessly recycled. I like spontaneity in fanzines, so a cartoon dashed off and stuck into a fanzine being cranked out for immediate consumption is great. But it is hard for an artist to be spontaneous when he's been dead for years.

But then there's D West. You say: "So, why has he surprised everyone with this act of gratuitous grandstanding? I suspect because it was gratuitous grandstanding, and D. ought to have known it would be seen as such."

Right. One hundred percent correct. Thank you for saying it.

Look, D West may be a mediocre artist and an execrable writer but he has few peers when it comes to ego. Consider that article you mention, purportedly an overview of fan artists, illustrated with West's own counterfeited versions of their work.

How did West's undisclosed mimicry benefit the article? It didn't. The actual purpose of the piece was not to talk about art but to allow West to show up the supposed artistic ignorance of fans. The poor fools will never guess that it was I...I...the Great D West who did all those brilliant illos. Bwhahahahaha!!!!

Of course West had no right to pass off his pastiches as the work of others, even temporarily. That was sheer dishonesty. Would you want someone to think you actually had drawn that grotesque creature meant to represent your work? It shows how little understanding and sensitivity West really has to art if he truly thought that his crabbed draftsmanship looked anything like your far more skilled drawing.

I imagine it must enrage West that Rotsler's quickly rendered, floppy nosed little characters, have gained more accolades than his own stiff, unimaginative, technical exercises. However, now he's had his little tantrum and drawn attention to himself, perhaps he feels better.

* * *

One thing, I did put out the first issue of Revenant on January 1. It is supposed to be a less frequent (so as not to overburden those who are still good enough to loc) and slightly more elaborate perszine. My idea is write about some things and use some material that wouldn't have fit into E-Ditto's faux ditto format. So it is kind of the E-Ditto appendix. Next year I'll probably try something new.

Actually I had planned for E-Ditto to be very short and simple and frequent but you and Brad Foster changed my mind about that when you started sending contributions.

Like you, I write for an audience, not for myself.(I already know what I think!) Art is all about communication. As a writer or artist of any sort, you are trying to make a connection with other people, and hope that they enjoy your efforts. I enjoy reading fanzines. If I didn't, I wouldn't be trying to foist a fanzine

off on anyone else. I had enough response to E-Ditto to make me feel like someone was reading. Frankly, these days I couldn't handle a flood of letters. Would it be better if there was more response to ezines? Of course.

I always thought that fandom's willingness to pay for zines with "the usual" indicated a praiseworthy ethic. Alas, when you see how today fans mostly Loc only print zines, that they won't get otherwise, while ignoring ezines that they get whether they Loc or not, you see that there wasn't much of an ethic involved.

So I am even more impressed with those few who are willing to send responses to ezines! Eric

Brad Foster – bwfoster@juno.com

You say the zine is in "desperate need" for a loc column. This should test just how desperate it is, if any of the natterings below should make it beyond a WAHF listing!

First, I do understand that this is a zine that you began with the intent of a simpler and cleaner approach to putting something together. But, seriously... a Taral zine with no Taral art? That's just so wrong! As a personalzine, I assume you are not looking for submissions from other fan artists. And I also know, again, the whole idea is to go simpler. Still, I'd like to vote (voting is allowed?) that there be some more art to break up those expanses of text. Please?

I certainly understand your appeal for more art in Broken Toys, and at some point I may comply. For now, I'm more concerned with making it easy for me to put out. After a few issues, I may revert to usual practice and at least have a cover. One thing I must not be tempted into doing is make a chore of publishing! – TW

Regarding your note on the number of articles you've written, it did seem like you were pretty much omnipresent in zines this past year. Fact, if you put all that material in one place, you might have done your own 300 page zine to rival the big *Drink Tank*. (The Taral Omnibus!)

In all liklihood? Someday, something like that. – TW

I agree, a zine posted online will get less of a response from me. Often I don't even get any kind of notice from the editor when it is up, just stumble across it when I happen to check in to *eFanzines*. And that makes even less of a personal connection to the zine for me. When someone takes time to produce, print, get my address, pay for a stamp and mail it to me, I feel the very least I owe them is to send some sort of response. There is less of a feeling of that when something can be viewed quickly on line. If there is something in it that *really* calls out to me for a response, I might do so. But the old fannish impulse to at send at least some kind of comment in response is no longer there.

Now, here you are sending me the internet version of a hard copy, in that, rather than just pointing to a web page, you've done an actual attachment and picked my email to add to the list. Granted, it's not the same effort as the print/mail version, but is still more than the "put on web and hope they find it" type. And, 'cause you're also The Taral and I almost always enjoy whatever you draw or write, I'd like to keep you doing it. So I do feel a fannish duty to send you a loc! (Pitiful though my locs usually are, as you are plainly seeing here.) Regarding [the news that] you are no longer contributing to *Drink Tank* because of the focus moving more and more to movies – as a Taral reader, I would look forward to reading some pieces there of your opinions on films, old and new. Maybe some things that could be run in juxtaposition or response to the films Chris is running on this 52 best sf movies series? I really can't believe you wouldn't have some strong opinions of your own on any number of those.

I haven't actually stopped writing for Drink Tank, it's only something I'm thinking of when I hit my 100th contrib. I have 13 more to go. – TW

Sorry to read of your disenchantment with the present state of Furry Fandom in your area, since that seemed like something that brought you great joy. I was curious enough to look up the *Furnal Equinox* convention you mentioned. Looks like something fun, big crowds, even has an Artist Alley. If you've got stuff to sell, old prints and things, it could still be worth trying. I've found that what is old to you and me can be brand new to those who've not seen it. I was convinced a couple of years ago to set up at a local anime convention, even though I had –zero- connection to that fandom. And I ended up doing well selling work, plus having a really fun time watching the costumes, and interacting with kids (“kids up to their late 20’s, I am getting so old!”), really getting my creative energies recharged from all the craziness.

Was curious to see your expanded reaction to West turning down the *Rotsler Award*. I was surprised when I first heard about it, as it seemed to turn what was a group of people saying “Hey, we like what you do” into some sort of insult that he couldn’t stand. sigh. Artists are just so sensitive, you know? I appreciate that they’ve dropped in a bookmark of sorts on the site, saying the award was offered to him and turned down, so those who think he has been overlooked for the award will know he was at least offered it.

My own take on Rotsler’s work is that he was an unstoppable doodler, and very generous in giving or creating cartoons for any fan editor that asked. (That last quality being why I think naming the award after him was a nice idea.) I get the impression from a lot of what I’ve read that he didn’t consider most of the stuff he did as any more than that: fun doodles, knocked out here and there. I’ve even read articles about his being at parties, and people coming behind him and gathering up some scribbles, later to print them in zines. And that has carried on to this day. I’ve heard that after Bill died, Marty Cantor put out the word that he now had several boxes of these things, and would send them out to any fanzine that asked. So we keep seeing this stuff again and again, stuff that maybe even Rotsler would not have cared to send out, and it cheapens the memory of what he did contribute so generously to fandom.

I don’t know about you, but I’ve got piles of doodles, sketches and half-done ideas and quick toss ups sitting around. All the kind of stuff every artist does in just trying to get their first idea or impulse down, or simply something scribbled out when bored, but that holds some promise for more . Some of those might turn into something of interest some day if I have the time. I’d hate to think, when I pass, that anyone would consider that every scratch of ink I’ve made on paper is not only worth preserving, but should be published as an example of what I did.

Every time I see a fanzine come out these days with yet another Rotsler “Alien Coin”, I cringe for Bill’s memory. I’m not bothered that he drew it, but that someone has used it, yet again. Brad

Dave Locke – davelocke@ymail.com

Eighty-five items pubbed in *Drink Tank* alone, eh? (*87 at present.*) That’s pretty good, and Chris might even mention your name at Thanksgiving like he did when accepting his Hugo. I *might* have that number beat with what I had pubbed in *Yandro*, but that was over a much longer period of time than *Drink Tank* has been around, and I really wouldn’t want to bet money on it. Plus, of course, I’d hate to start counting. Although I fully understand a dissatisfaction with the otherwise welcomed advent of digital fanzines – because LoCs didn’t seem to survive the zines being ported from deadtree to digital – I’ve a slightly different take on it. As a fanwriter and fanpubber for fifty years, I’m aware that some items rarely got much coverage in LoCs even back in the old days. Humor and art being the primary two instances. But with digital fanzines the lack of comment extends to almost everything.

”The prediction has certainly been made before, but I’m going to make it again - when the last paper fanzine page comes out of the printer and only downloads are left, I predict the end of fanzine fandom – as we’ve known it - will shortly follow... finally. Irrevocably.” Mike Glicksohn in January of 2007 wrote: “I think that despite the vastly increased interest in science fiction in the general public since 1966, fanzine fandom is

probably going the way of the dodo. I hope I'm wrong." Unless something transpires to goose LoCs being ported into the digital realm, in a volume far closer to what we saw in the deadtree days than what we see now, I'm fairly certain you're both right.

"I seem to recall seeing stats over at eFanzines.com that indicate that *DT* is downloaded about ten times more often than its nearest rival." I could be wrong, but I don't think so. *eI*, I believe, which has been around just two years less than *eFanzines* itself, has a separate counter which shows more than half of the numbers on the main *eFanzines* counter (which includes *eI*). I've not seen any separate numbers on *Drink Tank*, though I do imagine they're large. Dave

After some reflection, I believe that you're right, and that I got the stats from eFanzines wrong. eI or some other sercon tome was leading the figures. Not that I understand that, either. eI is a fine example of a fanzine about science fiction, but I haven't any interest in reading fanzines about science fiction. I have a hard time coming to grips with the evident fact that many fans have. Obviously, Drink Tanks numbers on eFanzines must be favourable enough that it won a Hugo and is up again for another – TW

Jerry Kaufman – JAKaufman@aol.com

So thanks for sending me the new zine - I've read it, but don't find a lot of comment hooks. I'll spin out the few that caught me. The logo is very good - I like the color and the feeling you give of a glimpse into someone's childhood - are the toys ones you actually own or owned in the past? Or are they random and generic?

They were all scanned out of the Jupiter Toy Co. 2002 Catalog. The company sells antique toys with futuristic prices. A handmade wooden model of a Lufthansa trans-Atlantic airliner from the 1940s was listed at \$76,500! Jupiter Toy was asking only \$1,200 for a 1960s pressed tin cargo plane, not unlike one I had as a child, and a roller skating clown from the same era is marked to an almost reasonable \$395. The toys in this issue's logo are entirely from Google Images – TW

Here's some useless advice – though not unasked for – write less for fandom, find some paying markets, and write for them. You might find more readers – though they won't respond as much as John Purcell or Lloyd Penney – and might be able to afford a few minor luxuries. Have you perhaps written for a coin collector magazine or sites? If I recall correctly, you have some knowledge in this field. I'm sure you've given this lots of thought already, but just needed the nudge only my wisdom can give.

Indeed, it has been suggested before. But I've been hesitant to try. Partly its because I have no idea what I would do with the MS when finished. Partly because some attempts to write fiction before have gone nowhere – either stonewalled by fandom or because I was at a loss how to sell it. Most of what I know about the small press – including online publishers – suggests it's similar to fandom. No pay and no locs either. My writer friends paint a discouraging picture of unavailable agents and shrinking midlists. You'd almost think they didn't want me to add to a field that's too crowded already. – TW

I have read a bit here and there about the *Rotsler Award* and D. West's comments about it. I'm not overly excited about his rejection of it, either for or against his opinions. He does like to shake things up. I remember when I first encountered *Rotsler's* work - I didn't like it at all. Over time, I saw other fan art and as my opinion of the general run of fanzine illustration, and especially of cartooning, descended, my opinion of *Rotsler* rose. His lines are simple but look smooth and intentional to me. He can convey emotion economically and his best stuff is funny. The problem with it is that there is a huge amount of it and after seeing several hundred - several thousand - they all look alike, and follow a limited number of patterns. D. West can be funny in his cartoons, and is just as economical, but here are a few differences: he can do caricatures of actual people, and he can do much more complex work - both in cartooning and in art that's

deeper and more detailed than cartoons. (Can't think of exactly the terms I want. Am I making my point?) Your work is similar to Don's in a way - simple and expressive when you want it to be simple, but much more than that when that's your aim. I know that I read the article in *Lagoon* and D.'s artwork with it. I think I guessed that the pieces were all by him, but this could be 20/20 hindsight. It's been a while, hasn't it? I'll watch for your next issue. Jerry

Andrew Hooper - fanmailaph@aol.com

I wanted to send a few lines in response to *Broken Toys 1*, a fanzine so sleek and swift that I actually printed out a copy and pumped a pair of staples into it. Being able to do this is certainly refreshing. I'm becoming far more comfortable with the reality that most fanzines exist primarily online, but I still like it more when it would be *possible* for them to appear on paper. The red headings didn't work as well on paper as they do on the screen, but otherwise, this is a sharp-looking effort.

They didn't? Pity... I wanted to experiment with other colours. -TW

You had to half expect that I would LoC your fanzine, when you gave me a virtual shout-out in your consideration of the dwindling number of fanzines open to your work. Who is that fan-editor, correspondents must wonder, who pissed you off one time too many? I'll out myself for what its worth; but honestly, you seem to have gotten along quite well without appearing in *Chunga*. I'd feel comfortable saying that you've been the most prolific writer in fandom without a perzine or a blog of your own in which to publish your work. Putting out your own fanzine is one way of exercising the editorial control that you prefer in regard to your writing, so here's hoping you'll publish again in 2012, as you aspire.

Consider the hatchet buried. And as you can see, I'm publishing again in 2012. I hope to be a multiple offender, in fact, with still more issues throughout the year. - TW

Your studied lack of observation of New Year's Eve seems particularly reasonable to me at the moment, as I'm composing this on the first evening of *Potlatch 21*, our regional book-intensive SF convention, and have no intention of attending one minute of the entire weekend. I'm working on copy-editing for *Chunga* #19, recording ballots for the 2012 *FAAn* awards, and possibly working on another performance piece for *Corflu* 29. Carrie and I are scheduled to host the monthly Seattle Vanguard group party next Saturday evening, so we'll get to see at least some of the same people then. I can muster just a small twinge of regret at this decision, but what really is the point of going to a convention when you can barely stay awake until 11 pm? Being Old and Tired is far more than a rhetorical device.

In regard to your comments on Chris Garcia and *The Drink Tank*, one does wonder if Chris requires interaction with anyone to keep producing new material. Reading his posts on *Facebook* makes it clear that he cracks himself up pretty consistently, and probably prefers responses that consume no more than 140 characters. As a casual contributor, one might get more response by sealing an article in a bottle and sending it out on the Japanese current. I appreciate that publishing material on that schedule creates a standard of paid reply, but does anyone really have time to read all the stuff that appears in *DT*, let alone compose a reply to it? I'm reminded - as I always am - of a classic *Star Trek* episode, in which the *Enterprise* was commandeered by aliens who lived at such a rapid pace that they could not even be seen by human eyes, and registered only as a high-pitched whine like the wings of a flying insect. The crew living in "normal time" appeared to be motionless statues, and surely that's how fandom must look to Chris Garcia.

I feel as if I have been channeling you over the past ten days, as I have been unusually prolific, and finished three fanzine articles, and a six-page apazine covering parallels between the Baltic pirates of the late Medieval era and the Barbary Corsairs of the 16th Century. I've turned to letter-writing now, as I'm all spooled up, but don't have another idea to work on at the moment. I think about doing the volume of fanwriting I've just done

every two weeks for the rest of the year, and I still don't think it would approach the volume of material you've done for Chris and other editors for the past two years.

I would not go so far as to say that you are "an egotistical monster whose appetite for flattery is infinite," but you have been spinning your wheels at a blur, and it might be worth asking what you intended to accomplish with it all. I'll say this much, people have noticed, perhaps more than you think; as the standing *FAAn* award administrator, I find that your name comes up just about daily.

To be less than modest, I've found it odd how little impression I've left on the FAAns in the past. I often feel between two stools – not popular enough with the huge numbers who vote for the Hugos, but not close enough to the inner circle who votes for FAAns. As for the Auroras, it's as though Canadians never heard of me. That may well be the case, though, since most Canadian fans don't seem to read fanzines. – TW

Moving on to your riposte to D. West, I can say that this is far from the first time that Don has taken issue with an award given to him. Back in the 1990s, when Corflu went to Britain for the first time, D. won the *FAAn* award for Best Fan Artist. He stopped short of actually refusing the award, but abandoned the certificate in the bar, and later wrote to me and explained that he had no confidence that the people voting for the award had any idea what they were talking about. My response is that absolutely no one but fanzine editors and writers have any interest in the *FAAn* awards, and that the people who had voted for Don were in fact virtually the entire audience that his work reaches in any way.

Inevitably, Don's actions and remarks are sure to provoke a general plebescite on the relative merits of his and Rotsler's art. I'm obviously a reasonably avid consumer of West's work; we've published four covers by him in *Chunga's* 18 issues to date. But we have published far more work by Bill Rotsler, who hasn't quite appeared in every issue. I was never all that enamored of him as a gag writer – I've always preferred his tiny alien and desert landscapes, full of sinister watchtowers and mysterious obelisks. His more faanish cartoons, what we might call "lettercol funnies," are much less appealing, and ought to be restricted to one per issue at most. Don's wit has, as you suggest, an astringent quality, but I find him funnier than Rotsler.

Ultimately, the idea of refusing an award for art published in fanzines is fundamentally absurd, but then, so is the concept of *giving* an award for art published in SF fanzines. Perhaps this will contribute in some way to Don's sense of identity as a fan, but the pool of other potential listeners is dwindling rapidly, and it's not clear what they might do to please him.

You crammed a lot of comment hooks into just eight pages. *Broken Toys* certainly seems deserving of the letters of comment you asked for; I'll be interested to see who else is left out there to reply. Andrew

Greg Benford – xbenford@gmail.com

I wasn't surprised that D West disdains Rotsler; they're opposite spirits. I never met West but Bill R was a cordial pleasant guy with a true joy for life and that showed in his cartoons. Of course he over produced; expansive spirits do.

Dunno why West deliberately circumscribes his work, preferring stiff figures and little fluidity.

Yet, a Rotsler award doesn't require liking Rotsler's work either... Greg

Robert Runte – runte@uleth.ca

I only met Rotsler once, and he was busy knocking off about a hundred illos for Randy Reichardt's zine at the time, so I cannot claim to speak from any real knowledge here: but it is my strong impression that it was never Rotsler's intention to “do art”.

If I understood him correctly, he did illos because it kept him in the conversation. Back in the day when zines could be had for locs, articles or illos, sending a handful of quick cartoons to the editor got you the next issue. I don't think Rotsler ever intended his illos to be taken as high art any more than the average loccer intends one's commentary to be deathless prose. Am I “dumbing down zinedom” because I am writing this stream of consciousness rather than going through nine drafts? Ridiculous. This loc is what it is. Same, I think with Rotsler's illos.

I believe that at least half the charm of Rotsler's illos was their spontaneity. Yes, he would knock out 25 illos in 20 minutes, but that sense of capturing the moment — of pumping out illos on whatever topic the current conversation around him happened to be about — was bit like having a camera or a diarist to hand. People viewing the cartoons later reconnected to that moment. Or to the material in the previous issue that triggered them.

There was more thinking in there than Rotsler is often credited with. Your reference to Thurber is apropos. The cartoons that Rotsler handed Reichardt put Randy on the floor. They captured the essence of librarianship, as it would be manifest among Rotsler's usual cast of characters. Cartoons are only half about the art; let us not forget that at least some of his work was very funny or pointed.

A typical *New Yorker* cartoonist submits 20 cartoons for every one that makes it into print. (I have a couple of collections of rejected *New Yorker* cartoons that put me on the floor.) So is it Rotsler's fault that zine editors were not similarly selective in choosing his among his submissions? Yeah, a lot of his work...didn't — but maybe the editors have some responsibility for having printed his lesser offerings. If it is widely recognized that some of his work was facile, why did it get printed?

To answer my own question: this is fandom, folks, not the *New Yorker*. The great zines only published great Rotslers; lesser zines published every thing he sent because that's all they had, or better than what the guys down at the local club could produce. Dumbing down the artwork? Nonsense. Rotsler's art fit exactly where it belonged: Thurber-like in the great zines, space-filling doodles in the rest.

I don't buy that bad art drives out good. David Vereschagin was one of the great fan artists of his day, and he was driven out because he couldn't put up with the idiocy that greeted his art. (Remember "How to Drown a Cat?" The controversy surrounding that cover alone was nearly enough to put him off fandom.) He did some amazing work, really pushed the envelope, but the audience was not at all appreciative. He gafiated completely because it became obvious to him that he was talking to the wrong audience. So you explain to me, how is that Rotsler's fault exactly? Rotsler's fillos did not drive Vereschagin's art out of zines; unenlightened editors and loccers did that.

My nickel's worth. Rober4

From what I've read, Rotsler certainly did have a head full of high flown notions about art. I have a letter of his – about a history of fanart I never finished past a rough, first draft – in which I found his opinions not only pretentious but verging on pomposity. Yet, you may be right about Rotsler's attitude to fanart. He may have considered it spontaneous and meant it only to please fanzine editors who were in need of filler art. Without the man himself to ask, we may never know which it was.

I remember the Great Controversy over Vereschagin's hilarious cover. At a distance from the Edmonton club, the controversy seemed more like a tempest in a teapot. There was no great outcry against David from the general run of fanzine fans that I remember – the outrage was mostly if not entirely within ESFaCS. Which would put a rejection of David's artwork mostly in his own mind. I don't know to what extent he reached out to fandom elsewhere, but if he had made an effort I suspect he would have found widespread welcome. I certainly admired his crisp, clean, graphic style and biting humour. "How to Drown a Cat" was one of the funniest fanzine covers I had ever seen, and I said so at the time. David was certainly being oversensitive to criticism if that was his reason to leave fandom. My guess is he was just bored. – TW

John Nielsen Hall – johnsila32@gmail.com

Thanks for *Broken Toys 1* – I think e-mailing issues is a good halfway house between printed paper and a file for download from *eFanzines*. That said, I wish you had produced an ish that was not quite so much an ululation of despair.

I agree with just about all you say about the *Rotsler Award* and D.West. I think Bill Rotsler was a great guy and a great fan, but the Rotsler cartoon is by now a very old and hackneyed thing, and I wouldn't use any of the tons around that is still unpublished. But that doesn't mean that the award that bears his name is any the less prestigious to my mind. You make a very valid point in comparing the *Hugo* to the *Rotsler* and I think Don West just had an excess of his usual ornery awkward cussedness the day he got the official notification. For what its worth, I wouldn't run any of D's usual cartoons if I had any, either. I actually find a lot of his jokes a bit acid and his portrayal of fans, particularly women, a bit demeaning. But that's just *my* usual ornery awkward cussedness. Still, it got people talking about the award. John

Kim Huett - kim.huett@gmail.com

G'day Taral – nice to see your ambitions haven't run away with you. If you were aspiring to the millions of readers you alluded to I'd be doubtful, but surely an audience of one or two hundred is not beyond the appeal of your material? On the other hand the Internet is a graveyard for such ambitions. Somebody called Daniel O'Brien wrote a piece for [Cracked.com](http://www.cracked.com) about the problems inherent in writing for an online audience: <http://www.cracked.com/blog/the-4-worst-things-about-writing-internet/> Most of his points are quite reasonable and demonstrate that attracting even a modest audience can involve certain difficulties.

Of course if you choose wisely and have a little luck it's always possible you'll find the increased egoboo I assume you are desirous of. Don't fancy your chances though given the overall quality of response I've seen online. The thing is even where the response is positive it's rarely very interesting, if, like me, you're looking for a little more than a pat on the head. Being told by people that they like what you're written is always nice, but what is so much better is the sort of response that in some way extends the original work by providing new information or a different perspective.

I came to the conclusion some time ago that *e.Fanzines* is for the most part wasted effort, a pool into which pebbles once flung only to disappear with the slightest of ripples. However I don't think this is the inevitable end, if only because that assumes everybody producing a fanzine will be happy to distribute it in a manner which elicits little or no response. We already have a situation where some of the titles available at eFanzines.com are being distributed in a direct manner via the post or email before being made available for anonymous download. To me this proves there is an inevitable trend towards downloadable fanzines becoming the second stage of distribution for the majority of fanzines simply because nobody likes to work in a vacuum. In which case I can't see your dire prediction coming to pass, at least not in the way you predict.

Secondary distribution through e.Fanzines would certainly be the way I would go... if I had money to print hard copies at all. The next best thing is to e-mail the zine to as many people as I can find addresses for.

Surprisingly, I only have about 150 addresses for fans. Many of those are just multiple addresses for the same person. Quite a few addresses are for fans who, for one other reason, would be uninterested. That leaves maybe 75. I'd like twice that. – TW

Though maybe not everybody finds a vacuum abhorrent if you're right about Chris Garcia not caring if anybody writes to him about that thing he produces. But then I don't see Chris Garcia and his thing as being part of the fannish community, or any community in fact. Anybody with such little regard for the comparatively human response of the written word but who demonstrates hysterical delight in the anonymous, box ticking adulation of the *Hugo* Awards doesn't see himself as part of a community but above it. Magazine editors or film directors don't see themselves as sharing a community with those who consume their product and I imagine the same is true for Garcia.

Strong words. Are you sure you want this published? – TW

* * *

I've given this some thought and come to the conclusion that I don't see what I wrote as being so incendiary that you can't make it public. Not unless Chris Garcia and/or some readers of *The Drink Tank* are especially sensitive to criticism.

The losers in regards to a 'Don't bother writing.' policy by Garcia are of course the contributors to *The Drink Tank* who are being denied any sort of quality reaction to their efforts.

I do find Chris's indifference to feedback odd, but I doubt it has any sinister implications – such as regarding himself above the common run of fan. I don't think he ever imagined winning the Hugo. Ironically, he's all over this year's ballot. He was even nominated for last year's performance on-stage accepting the Hugo. I'm quite sure it's a nomination I wouldn't have accepted, myself. I'm guessing that Chris is unconcerned about locs mainly because he's so wrapped up in what Chris himself is doing to give thought to what anyone thinks of it. – TW

Not all perhaps, I wouldn't be surprised if some who have appeared in *The Drunk Tank* are aspiring or current professionals who consider letters of comment terribly amateurish and undue familiarity from an audience who should be worshipping from afar. For anybody who is simply writing to share their ideas however and would like some response *The Drunk Tank* must be an awful disappointment. As with e.Fanzines it must be like flinging pebbles into a deep and empty well. *Kim*

Chris Garcia – garcia@computerhistory.org

Great issue! I was especially impressed by your take on the D West declination. I personally enjoy Rotsler (illustrative) work, but part of it might be my rather odd belief that something doesn't have to be fine to be awesome. That is, you can do simple stuff, even rough-hewn works that show no targeted craftsmanship, and it can still appeal.

That said, I'm no fan of Rotsler's cartoons, but really love those SF images that often grace the covers of Bob Lichtman's *FAPA*zines. I Love them.

But really, it's not about Rotsler, is it? It's about D. I must find a copy of *Lagoon* to find those images because they sound like the kind of things that I love. Much like your works imitating Rostler and Bergeron's styles.

