

BROKEN TOYS 12

Broken Toys is a personalzine by Taral Wayne, and does not imply that my other zine, *New Toy*, is a dead letter. In fact, I hope to begin work on it next month. The letter column this issue abounds with equal parts of news, good cheer, egoboo and even a little serious demeanor. As has been the case for a third of my life, I live in partly self-imposed exile at 245 Dunn Ave., Apt. 2111, Toronto Ontario M6K 1S6. However, contact or loc me at Taral@Teksavvy.com. The date is **January 2013**, hopefully not an unlucky year. It is also ExtraTaraltorality (or Kiddelidivee Books & Art) 262. © Taral Wayne, past, present, future, and everywhere except possibly in Pottsylvania in years without an “R” in them.

The **GHOST** in the Typewriter

I think I read it in *FanStuff*. Odds are that I did, since there are probably more pages of *FanStuff* over any given length of time than of any other fanzine ... even this one. Not that it matters a great deal whether what I read was *not* in *FanStuff*. All I’m saying is, that by the same argument I made a moment ago, most things have been published in Arnie’s fanzine at one time or another, so the odds are that that I *did* read it in *FanStuff*. Clear so far?

What I read was that Murray Moore did not loc digital fanzines. The statement may seem harmless enough ... but if you are publishing a digital fanzine, it is a most impertinent and dastardly assertion, one that strikes at the very vitals of contemporary fan publishing. For how are most fanzines to be published, if not in a digital format, which is all that most fans can afford?

Much as I, personally, would love to take my file to a print shop and come home with 100 or 200 copies to collate and staple, then hand them over to the local post office to deliver as finished fanzines, the cost would be doubly prohibitive. With taxes, the print bill would be in the neighborhood of eighty bucks for a mere 100 copies of the average 16-page issue of *Broken Toys*. Eighty bucks every month is a hefty chunk of change in my situation. I believe that eighty bucks every month is enough to give *most* fans second thoughts. Now add in postage – somewhere around a dollar each in Canada, half again as much to the US, and likely more than \$2 to the UK or Australia. Hard to guess how that would tote up to, but let’s put it in the ballpark of another \$150 per issue. The bottom line is that each monthly issue of *Broken Toys* would cost me about \$230. To publish at all, I would have to scale back to approximately one issue a year.

Well, of course, to publish a fanzine is a privilege, not a right. (I think Mitt Romney said so in his campaign). But I fail to see how fandom would benefit if the majority of fanzines were cashiered overnight. It seems to be in the obvious interest of fandom that digital fanzines are supported as enthusiastically as fanzines on paper.

Yet, there is an undeniable prejudice in some circles against digital fan publishing. I empathize completely. As much as the next fan, *I* like to hold a fanzine in my hands and smell the fresh mimeograph ink on funky coloured, twiltone paper. Even Xerox on office white gives me a pleasure that the mere digital *ghost* of a fanzine, encoded in ones and zeros, does not. The paper fanzines in my collection have tactile and aromatic qualities that are as much a part of the experience as the peel is part of the experience of eating an orange. All the same, the flavour of an orange is still orange. Yet, Murray Moore won't loc a digital fanzine. He may even have gone so far as to say he doesn't read them. I guess that means he won't be put out by this editorial ... since he won't be reading it.

Murray isn't alone in his bias. I see the same prejudice against digital publications that are digital in other publishers' lists of "fanzines received." Running my finger down the columns of *Alexiad*, *Banana Wings*, *Challenger*, *Chunga*, *File 770*, *Littlebrook*, *Meara For Observers*, *My Back Pages*, *Reluctant Famulus*, *SF Commentary*, *Trap Door* ... I rarely find *Broken Toys* among them. Averaging one issue a month for the last year, *Broken Toys* should rightly appear in just about *every* list of zines received. But it doesn't. Prejudice? Maybe. What do *you* think?

By favouring paper fanzines over digital, are we not forgetting what fanzines *are*, and treating them as fetish objects instead? Print them out yourself, if you must – but face the reality. If fanzine fandom is to survive, we have to accept that paper is a luxury to enjoy, when possible – but *paper* is not itself the soul of fanzine publishing.

Unless, of course, all along Murray was only having us on. In that case, I'm just having Murray on.

Too Lazy to Write

I'd like to write something here ... but I'm feeling lazy. I've had a hard day, and putting words together is too much like work. For once, perhaps, I'll do what other journalists do – much as I hate it – and find the right words for what I want to say somewhere on the internet ... then just give you the URL.

To begin with, <http://www.gosharooty/hoax/67944301>. I know what you're thinking, but it really isn't. To back up what may seem like an absurd statement, a very cogent article in the Journal of American Phrenologists says, www.mindfuk/news/81917021. As well, I quote, www.parashoot/7903040/499 and also www.parashoot/11039455/772 later in the same vein.

Before you get mad at me, I'd like to remind you that www.ninnyheimer/archives/4948641 is not the case – its just that www.smeg/rd/0158535 is really www.bananawings/locs/wtf/30092 when www.smurf/smurf/6049913/smurf and www.gopstoppers/morons/0110465.

So put that in your www.paranode/mib/404680 and bloody well www.wampyr/bludsuk/920136 it.

In conclusion, www.dr_tongue/l8nite/9114708/am

And that's what *I* think.

The Week is Too Short

I wrote last week's journal (above) for one of my groups as a sort of lark. The idea had been in the back of my mind for some time, germinated by the irritation I feel whenever I click on someone's journal, to see whether they have anything interesting to say, and find nothing there but an URL. If he had anything on his mind, he was too lazy to write it himself and just wanted me to go to another page to read an *approximation* of his thoughts! Or, perhaps, he expected me to view something there that he thought was terrifically keen. You have no idea how annoyed it makes me to end up on YouTube, watching some lame-ass video clip play for five seconds, freeze, play for five seconds, freeze ... with audio that stutters like a badly synchronized 8mm home sound track. At one time I could wait until the cursed thing was through and play it again ... but UToob doesn't work like that anymore. Nor can I save the file to play later. Thanks to steady improvements, the site is now totally *fucked-up*, as far as I'm concerned.

Well, of course, there's a simple solution. Buy a new, faster, better, smarter computer and upgrade my connection to optical cable. As soon as I win a major lottery, I plan to do just that. In the meantime, I've learned to just skip reading everyone's journals.

I thought last week's journal would fill a need, and spare me having to write anything new for a while. But a week really isn't very long, and after a mere seven days I find I need to write something new for the group again. *Sigh*. Does it *never* end?

Since I'm not at liberty to compose anything serious at present, I thought I might just review some of the unfinished work on my drawing board.

Chief among outstanding commissions are 10 drawings to illustrate a west coast fanzine. I've been working on these all along, and can happily say that I have only 3 ½ left to finish.

As well, I have a few book illustrations to work up roughs for, owed to the author of a novel set on a Burroughs-like Mars. These have been amply paid for and are *way* overdue. Unfortunately, at this point all I have done are some notes made from reading the MS.

I've also been commissioned by a fan who has written a trip report that he wants to publish. He wants a cover for it, and for the "donation" I suggested, I was happy to oblige. I'm free to do what I like for that job so long as it plays on "Men in Black" and represents fandom in some way. Although the job is a little like navigating between a rock and a hard place, I do have more conceptual space there than it may seem.

Next, a fan in the UK is anxious for a series of "macros." I don't draw "macros" as a rule, not seeing the attraction ... in fact, I've only done them for this *one* client, but he allows me to add a much-needed touch of humour ... and his money is good.

Apart from needing money, I've also a goal. A couple of years ago, a writer and friend of mine died, and left me a sum of money. That money was what I lived on for about a year.

Then it was all gone, but by then the crisis I was undergoing had largely passed. I qualified for social assistance, and ever since I've been managing on the pittance I'm given every month. But I've always felt bad about spending my friend's final gift so ingloriously, on mere *survival*. I'm sure she left it to me to enjoy it, not to pay for rent and utilities ... vital as the need was. My goal, then, is to make back and save the \$5,000 ... at least as much of it as is possible. Happily, I'm making progress, but there is much farther to go.

After the small number of commissions on my drawing board, there are a number of Fraggles sketches that are half done, a partly inked piece for my own collection, plus this, that and the other thing ... and, if I complete all that, I'll finally be caught up. By then, it ought to be well into Spring, too. And finishing *that* work only means I can make a beginning on a folder of old drawings – begun long ago and still only partly finished, that is literally bursting.

I haven't even mentioned plans for writing. To be brief, I'm not sure what they are. I have a nearly finished short story titled "The Fly on the Wall," and a compilation of minor observations and remarks called "Ill Winds Blowing II" that needs revision. Then I'd like to make a start on "While Willowdale Burned," a piece from the extensive memoirs in my head about the time when I nearly blew up my old neighborhood. That should be good for a laugh.

It goes without saying, I think, that I hope to continue publishing *Broken Toys* every six weeks or so throughout the year. I have a couple of other, additional publishing goals. The last time I looked at the file folder, I was surprised to discover that I have enough material for an issue of my longer fanzine, *New Toy*. The centerpiece will be a long, personal reminiscence called "This Mortal Land." And I still have a promise to keep: to re-publish "Ah, Sweet Idiocy" – the classic of fan history from the 1940s – along with all the supplementary material I've collected. The original intent was to release it as a CD-ROM, but that looks very unrealistic at present. A single .pdf would be a perfectly enormous file, though. Being unable to make a decision has been much of the reason for the delay of the project as any other.

Was that a list of New Year's Resolutions I just wrote? Surely, I haven't sunk *that* low?

Left-Over Pieces

Ned Brooks – 31 Dec 2012, nedbrooks@sprynet.com

"Surprise issue! Certainly the last one I'll publish this year, and possibly the last fannish zine to be published this year period."

Quite likely.... I think by the time you got to "Scott of the Sahara" you have had too much Christmas Cheer :-P

Wasn't that a Monty Python skit title, when they were trying film Scott of the Antarctic and found it was too cold and the giant penguin was too silly, so they moved the action to the Sahara and had him wrestle a stuffed lion?

I wish I had that much Christmas cheer! Either Kaluah or Tia Maria flavoured. While I'm not familiar with that Python skit – they did hundreds – that certainly sounds like one.

The "East Pole" however is original.... Is there a "West Pole"? The only thing that occurs to me is that the "West Pole" would be where the Greenwich Meridian crosses the Equator (just off the Gulf of Guinea below the bulge of East Africa) and the "East Pole" would be on the opposite side of the globe, just east of the Gilbert Islands. But they would both be under water, or only the top sticking up. On the other hand, there must be lots of East Poles in Warsaw, and Easter Poles in Lublin - if Poland is still there. I haven't seen any news of Poland in the local paper in a long time.

I was asked this once before. In my professional opinion as an accredited bullshitter, there can only be one West Pole, and it is Hollywood.

Tell Eric Mayer that even death will not release him, so he can quit worrying who thinks he's a fan.

I think what worries Eric is not *who else* might think he's a fan, but that *he* might think he is.

My parents were more into the Christmas thing than I was. It never occurred to me to have a tree after I left home. I can take turkey or leave it.... Where I used to work the math lady would bring in Bourbon Balls, a chocolate confection made with bourbon - those were good.

Rebecca Jansen, 1 Jan 2012, rebjan_ca@yahoo.com

Sorry I haven't been in touch lately. I could say thanks for the *Broken Toys* except that sounds sort of odd. After all, they weren't broken, as I was able to operate them. Is it hard to make .pdf files? I have a huge pile of vintage music, tv and fashion mags I could transfer.

Making .pdf files isn't hard at all, actually. Most word modern processing software ought to have a tool for converting the document into a .pdf. My copy of Word 2000 is rather antique, and doesn't seem to be able to. However, I was able to find a free downloadable .pdf maker called Cute PDF Maker. It works really well. I click on "print," ".pdf maker" and "okay." That's it.

I noticed the XL-5 photo on your masthead right off, what with Anderson popping his clogs Boxing day. Erik was up when we heard and we watched an XL-5, a *Supercar* and a *Stingray* the next morning. *Stingray* is the one I was first exposed to in reruns, although I had seen *Space 1999*. Erik is a long time fan of *UFO* and *Space 1999* but still hasn't quite warmed up to the puppet series. I just joined the Gerry Anderson fan club, Fanderson, this past fall too (sigh)... maybe a good idea not to join any others in case I bring bad luck? Gosh, I hope I don't do in the current *Sooty* puppeteer for buying a couple of *Sooty* DVDs recently! You thought I was weird for teddies but really it's been puppets all along... and stop-motion... and whatever those Krofft shows were. I always preferred the non-cartoon-animation children's shows best. I think I remember asking if you'd ever seen *Clangers* as they reminded me of 'ATom' fan art. There ought to be something of them on Youtube.

The odd thing is that the choice of XL5 for the masthead was an impulse. I wasn't thinking about the recent death of Gerry Anderson at all, and if it wan't an subconscious association, then it was a

happy coincidence indeed ... insofar as losing Gerry Anderson can be "happy."

Pressies [small press pubs] I've gotten recently, of a sciffy variety, include the complete *Starlost* Canadian TV series on DVD ... you know, the thing written by 'Cordwainer Bird'. It was on CTV in the '70s and I had vague memories of it up to now, so it's been fun catching up on it. Also got something titled *My Living Doll*, which was a 1960s sitcom with Julie Newmar as a top secret robot experiment. Co-star Bob Cummings quit suddenly part way through the first season, just as it was getting interesting unfortunately, or it might have been remembered alongside *Bewitched* and *I Dream Of Jeannie*. I wouldn't trade it for *Route 66* I don't think, but it is somewhat dated and sexist I guess.

*Hoo boy, are they dated and sexist! But everything before five minutes ago invariably is. I enjoyed both **Bewitched** and **I Dream of Jeannie** as a kid, and even have a couple of seasons of **Bewitched** on DVD. (Walmart was dumping them at bargain prices.) I also remember **My Living Doll**. The first few episodes were fun, as AF 709 was learning not to act so much like a robot. Later on, it just seemed like she was a normal "dumb blonde" and not a robot at all. Bet you never guessed I'd remember "Rhoda's" official identification number!*

I haven't been doing all that much in my life lately. I keep hoping some minor health issues will resolve, but they seem to always mutate! I'm supposed to be working on a short just-for-fun comic with someone who self-publishes their own books, I have to track down the kind of bristol board they like yet though. Aside from them, I've been in contact with Trina Robbins a few times since ages ago; she seems to write a lot more than draw these days, and has a comic based on the old *Honey West* TV series on the market ... along with some scholarly vintage comic strip history articles and books relating to women cartoonists. I still feel bad I didn't contact her and a couple of others when I was in San Francisco in 2010, and saw they were in the phone book. I guess I'm always afraid people won't even remember me ...

Bill Patterson – 2 Jan 2013, bpral22169@aol.com

Quite a different experience. I don't typically get many presents and typically value having the day to myself with no calls on my time.

I used to have a fair number of Christmas traditions, but they really aren't family traditions, and I've accumulated them all (almost all) as an adult. When I first came to San Francisco in 1977, my first Christmas, the F. W. Woolworth's – which was then at Powell and Market, across the cable car turnaround from the movie theatre (of blessed memory) whose frontage was shaped like the prow of a wooden sailing ship, that had midnight showings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* every weekend before the leprosy and rot of costumed stage show repetitions of action on the screen set in – had bins and bins of these pastel-colored, granulated sugar-coated fondant candies I've since learned are called "French Cremes," and those have become indelibly associated in my mind with Christmas. That Woolworth's, like the chain itself, is long gone, and it took a lot of searching to find anyone who still makes French Cremes, but I did finally find two retailers who carry them at Christmastime. This year is the first in a long time that I didn't have any.

Other traditions came from the wonderful selection that Cost Plus used to have – there was a retailer who really knew how to throw a good Christmas, with Indian silver wire creations and a quarter of the store given over to imported ornaments of all kinds, and a wonderful selection of German

Weinachts creations, from fondanteneier and ornaments to Kake rum balls, Italian pastries, and so forth. Several years ago the chain started cutting ‘way back on what they import for Christmas, with the exception of stacks and stacks of Swedish gingerbread cookies that nobody wants and stay on the shelves for months at a time, and nowadays, except for the small marzipanstollen, it’s hardly worth the trip there. Oh, this year I did buy some marzipan items, from Cost Plus, which is one of the few Christmas treats I keep – though not this year the sweet gimmick of the mini marzipan potatoes dusted with cocoa, and a box of Walker’s miniature mincemeat tarts. Nobody locally carries the zimtsterne which mean Christmas to me, and I didn’t order any. I cut way back on the excess this year – and didn’t really miss them as culinary items, though I did miss the display and having them there.

Another item I did not get this year was a fruitcake of any kind – you literally had to avoid tripping over them everywhere you went just a few years ago, but this year I literally could not find a traditional American fruitcake of any kind (glaceed fruits and nuts in a dark molasses cake) anywhere – not in grocery stores, not at the place where I used to buy good-quality glaceed fruits, not even at the Farmer’s Market. I’ve never quite understood why fruitcakes are so hated (there was even a TV commercial this year based on “regifting” a fruitcake, though darned if I can remember what product it was supposed to be selling). Except, of course, that so many of them are so badly made, with low-quality supermarket candied fruit that tastes of corn syrup. The solution to that is to make it yourself – an all-day project that must be done in October so the cakes have time to mature in their bath of rum, or whiskey, or brandy at your pleasure. Also the lighter cake versions help. Next year I may do a recipe I ran across from America’s Test Kitchen for a “white fruitcake.”

In years past, I also would get a Strathsprey cake – what you call “Christmas Cake” in distinction from a Christmas pudding. I don’t really care all that much for currants, however, so when I went to our local Irish imports shop, where you can usually find British items not otherwise available Over Here, they wanted \$25 for a bar of Strathsprey, so I did without that as well (and did not feel deprived). When I visit that Irish import store I always look longingly at the Belleek, and pick up several frozen Mr. Kipling products – none of which they had in their freezers, for no particular reason I could discern.

I did indulge in my usual Pecan Products frenzy, adding Maple Glazed pecans this year to my standard repertoire of Buttered Pecan and an original Sweet-and-Hot made with a special blend of southwestern spices it took a few years to work out so the heat has attack, balance, and a good tail. Also I made Pecan Meltaways, a kind of shortbread with chopped maple glazed pecans. I suspect those will become Christmas standards, as well.

I’ve pretty much given up on Christmas Trees since I’ve been moving around so much in recent years – I have a 2-foot fiberoptic that goes on the edge of the desk, together with the candles that seem to be necessary. I’ll take it down in a week or so.

Eric Mayer, *1 Jan 2013*, groggy.tales@gmail.com

The first of the year and I’m writing my first LoC. I’m not sure how many more there will be in 2013. Last year I wrote 83, and I can tell you I didn’t get anywhere near 83 LoCs on my ten issues of *Revenant*.

I enjoyed the holiday issue, even though I have come to really detest the holiday season. I am hardly a Biblical scholar, but can anyone read the New Testament without grasping that Jesus did not much

care for the accumulation of material possessions, even if the Magi did bring him gifts? (And what's a baby supposed to do with Frankincense anyhow?) To celebrate the birth of someone who preached against materialism with a festival of greed is just plain sick. But, of course, as a child I loved getting presents, and I catered to my own kids' delight in being visited by Santa, so I am conflicted about the whole business.

Your account of opening presents was fun. I'm not sure I ever saw *Route 66* although I am familiar with the name.

For our Christmas dinner Mary and I had turkey loaf, stove top stuffing, cranberry sauce, and actually fresh Brussels Sprouts. We both like sprouts and they are traditional in the UK, Mary tells me. We do not like to cook and eating our cooking is even worse!

Nice tree, by the way. A Christmas tree should be gaudy and chaotically decorated. My dad went through a period when he thought that the Christmas tree should be decorated tastefully, as for example with all blue lights. But eventually the rest of the family argued him out of it. Maybe Saara would have liked the blue tree.

You mention Christmas pudding, which I have heard about from Mary, but it remains for me a mythical comestible. I have never even seen one for sale in the US. I do like a good fruitcake despite all the jokes about how everyone hates them.

Yes, Christmas is different when you're seven. I actually believed in Santa Claus I am ashamed to admit. Back before I went to school, the world was a magical place. Not that I thought of it as magical at the time, but looking back, I can see that my perception of the world I lived in was much more flexible than the sad reality of it turned out to be. I wonder do we need to attain some stage of brain development before we are firmly locked in to reality? Do we find ourselves, perhaps, locked out of an understanding of things lurking beneath reality? Do we, as artists, need to recall our childish perceptions of the world?

Well, I am catching up on my small amount of correspondence this morning so I guess I am already starting the year out behind. Let us hope the new year is good and creatively productive.

Brad Foster, 4 Jan 2012, bwfoster@juno.com

Another one? You're gonna catch up to Garcia soon if you start doing this kind of stuff, watch out!

*No likelihood of that, thankfully. 335 issues *is* too many. Catching up with Arnie Katz is a slim possibility, I suppose.*

Like the *XL5* in the logo this time, a tip of the hat on the passing of Gerry Anderson, I'm assuming. I had a super-cool Fireball *XL5* toy when I was a kid, I *loved* that design with the stubby rocket fins, and how different sections could separate off. Would kill to get that back again, hang it up here in the studio. (Okay, maybe I wouldn't actually "kill". Just hurt.... No, not "hurt" exactly, what's the word...oh, yeah, I'd so "buy" one, if it was really, really cheap. Yeah, that's what I'd do!)

*The choice of background art for the masthead was a total coincidence ... I was certainly not thinking of Gerry Anderson's death when I picked it. Maybe my subconscious was at work. I never had one of those **XL-5** toys, but I might possibly have seen one when I was a kid. Another kid*

*had it, naturally ... the story of my life. But I few years ago I badgered someone I knew in the states to use his Paypal to buy from eBay a Japanese-made "kit" -- there were only a couple of pieces. The **XL-5** is only about four inches long, fully-painted and the Fireball Jr. separates just like in the TV show. The "kit" also came with some orbital satellite from the live-action show, **UFO**, that meant squat to me. Never liked that show -- just as **E.T.** did, **UFO** only validated the ignorant "flying saucer" mythos, and wasn't "real" science fiction.*

Hey, just went and looked around on the net and found this page, I think it's exactly the one I had-- I'd forgotten the figures on the flying bikes!



<http://www.toynerd.com/index.php/2010/01/03/fireball-of-a-success/>

I saw bits of your postings on Facebook as you did your unique new "broadcast" of the unveiling of your Christmas gifts. Though, with the usual efficient design of FB, think I only saw a few, and out of order.

*I can't figure out why FaceBorg (resistance is futile, you **will** be assimilated) moves postings around the way it does either.*

The *Route 66* DVD threw me, as I only just recently found and posted a link to the short opening theme for that show. Wow, that is so, like , totally a cosmic coincidence and all!

Don't be silly. Nor is that black helicopter hovering outside your window controlling your mind.

Loved the comment on hoping to draw for a hot rod cartoon magazine, then finding out you needed to know something about them. I made the mistake ages ago of doing up a hugely detailed drawing of a motorcycle with two "sexy gals" next to it to send to one of the biker mags – only to find out after my hours of work that I had drawn the wrong kind of motorcycle. Hey, what's wrong with you guys – look at them babes! But no, if the bike wasn't right, it didn't go in the mag. Last biker drawing I ever tried.

Well, it was a magazine for guys who liked motorcycles. Suppose you drew naked babes for a skin magazine and overlooked the small detail that women have two breasts, not one, or that their public hair doesn't grow on the chin?

We had our usual split-in-two Christmas this year, though since my niece has a new house up in this part of Texas, we did not have to make our usual long drive down to my mom's house in San Antonio, as everyone kept up here this time to celebrate. So the day before Christmas we went there for most of my family from around to gather. Love them all, but they've no interest in the things I do, so gifting tends to be of the clothing and gift-card variety. Still, point was to visit, not gifts. Cindy and I split the things we get for each other so we have something to open there, plus, the weekend – after – Christmas when we do the second half, getting together with Cindy's sister and her boyfriend. That is more fun in the gift department, as we are all readers, so there are books to pass around, plus the odd toys and nonsense, with most everything being something bought secondhand or at the Dollar Stores, so we can have lots of goodies to play with. Took advantage of too many of the cookies being offered up at both gatherings, but what the hey, don't usually eat cookies much the rest of the year, so had to stock up. (You may have noticed neither gathering was on the actual

Christmas day. We stayed home, had hot chocolate, bowls of chili, curled up with the cats, and watched a rare Christmas snowfall in Dallas. It was lovely, not having to go anywhere for once.)

On to the next zine to loc – I have sworn to see the surface of my desk again before this weekend, and have much paper still to get through. Looking forward to a new *New Toy* in the new year!

John Nielsen Hall, 8 Jan 2013, johnsila32@gmail.com

Just a few observations, chief.

We have a bread maker – my wife used to make very fine bread in it too. Sadly, she is now in thrall to Weight Watchers God, and since it can't make crisp bread, or anything that doesn't require oil, it now sits unloved on a distant worktop.

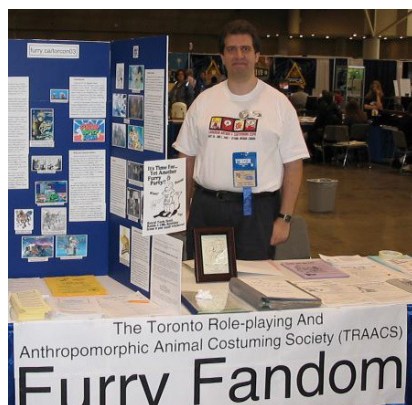
*You wouldn't be allowed to eat bread anyway. The Diet Nazis have now denounced gluten – so say goodbye to bread, bagels, dinner rolls, hot dog buns, biscuits, stuffing, cake, scones, English muffins, pita, grits, dumplings, pasta and all the hundreds of things yo can make from these useful grain products. We're only a few more diety "discoveries" before we're all down to cress, sprouts, seaweed and water. They'll find some way to prevent a healthy diet from even **looking** like a juicy, grilled hamburger, if they can. Thatt might give us pleasure and encourage us to go on living.*

Enjoyed your conrep – I don't care for hats. Okay, I have a hat or two – mostly of the baseball variety, but a couple outside that basic design – but I wear them as additional protection for my eyes from the sun – not that we get a whole lot of that – or occasionally to spare my poor thinly covered bonce from getting cold, either in the rain or just because it really *is* cold. They are not any kind of fashion statement. Basically, if you want to look good, don't wear a hat. This goes in spades for women. Why women wear hats in order to dress up defeats me ... why spend large sums on having one's hair dressed, only to crown it with a hat? It is not logical, Captain.

Great cartoon by Schirm. If you are going to do more drawing, have you thought about doing another ish entirely graphically? Well, apart form the LoCs, obviously. I can't draw.

*An entire illustrated issue is a pretty novel idea. And should take about as long to draw as to write a novel, too. I might be finished with the next issue sometime in 2014. I did do a one-page graphic narrative as an afterword for **DNQ 34**, though, back in 1984. So don't think I never thought of it.*

WAHF – Tom Turrigan, Hope Leibowitz – We'd **Like** to Hear From – Steve Stiles



The Odd Kipple



As many of you know, Ro Nagey recently “outed” herself on FaceBook, announcing that she no longer had to checkmark little boxes that said “Mister” next to them. It was the usual sensation, as well-wishers left a long trail of comments to show their solidarity.

It’s left me thinking once again about transgendered individuals in fandom. Are *we* unusually enriched compared to the average, or has society in general come that far since I was young? When I was about 16, a taboo-breaking novel came out that was both highly controversial and an overnight best-seller. *Myra Breckinridge* may or may not have been inspired by the real story of Christine Jorgenson – the two may just have been different signs of the same Force awakening. By comparison, Heinlein’s 1970 novel – *I Will Fear No Evil* – is a bit of a Johnny-come-lately.

At the time, it never occurred to me I would ever know or even meet any transgendered persons. If asked, I would probably have thought it as likely as knowing Martians at some future time. As it turned out, I was only half right. I still don’t know any Martians.

The first transgendered person I knew in fandom was Jessica Amanda Salmonson. More accurately, I knew *of* her. I had little contact, and what little it was convinced me that she was a nasty piece of work who I was better off not knowing. Granted, I said something stupid, but I was young, and sophistication in such matters at the time was not a common gift, even among people twice my age. I felt she dealt with me in a rather ungracious and malicious fashion. I remember Jessica’s fanart from before her sex change, however – it displayed a naked hatred of maleness that was downright pathological – men with exaggerated penises impaled on spears, for example. So, I don’t suppose I could have expected anything but a mortifying put-down, given the circumstances.

I’m happy to say that was my first, and so far only, bad experience in the realm of the transgendered.

My meeting with Sandra Bond was a far more pleasant occasion. I had known her under another name in the old days, but hadn’t kept up with certain crucial developments in the decade or so that followed. Sniffing the scent of easy money, I became preoccupied with a different fandom in the 1990s. Then, at one Anthrocon, I happened to glance up from my dealer’s table to see a nametag with the unexpected name, “Sandra Bond,” on it. I had heard vaguely about Sandra, but that had

been years ago, and as she was a British fan I had never actually met her ... and since this was a furry con, Sandra was just about the last person I expected to see browsing through my soft-porn. It took me a moment to recover my wits even into their usual scattered condition. But *there* she was – a pleasant but unremarkable-looking woman, looking almost as though she had stepped into my world from *On the Buses* ... except that she was dressed in the fannish uniform of jeans and pull-over t-shirt., covered with badges and clutching a stack of books in one hand. Do they still say “Cor, blimey” in British fandom?

We made small talk, but I will probably never forget one thing in particular that Sandra said. In so many words, she told me that she had never understood my furry art until after her gender reassignment ... then, for some reason, *it all made sense*. So, there. Any of you who still have a problem understanding where I come from as an artist, the solution is a simple one. Have your gender reassigned.

If I knew Sandra only slightly, I knew Rebecca well, and we kept up a regular correspondence for quite a number of years before *her* sex change. Naturally, she had written under another name, which needn't be mentioned. Rebecca was heavily into manga back then. She *passionately* believed that the salvation of comics in North America was to adopt the Japanese formula of stories that appealed to younger readers ... rather than 40-and-50-year-old “fanboys,” who only cared about how many teeth Stan Lee could squeeze into a grimace and how many muscles Steranko could sculpt onto one arm. Rebecca and I corresponded at astonishing length about the merits of Tezuka as a story-teller and inspiration for modern comic artists, as well as the value of clear narrative lines. I took a more skeptical view, though, not wanting to return the industry to a pre-1960s era of comics broadly based on slapstick and banana skins, but in general I agreed that it would be healthier for the industry if at least *some* comics (besides *Archie* and *Richie Rich*) were aimed at a younger audience.

Of course, we were both wrong. Comics are going the way of Poetry. In the future they will continue to have a dedicated following ... but one so small that only a very few artists or writers can expect to make a living from it. Comics are leaving paper behind, and have gone to the big screen. My guess is that we can expect little but reboots of the same dozen popular superheroes far into the future, as Marvel and DC attempt to run the film business the way they did the comic-book business. But, that's neither here nor there.

Rebecca liked my art, saying that it felt as though I had tried on the bodies I drew, and for a time she inked a fair amount of it that was published in fanzines. One of the things she was eager to talk me into was a collaboration with her on a manga-style comic for an independent publisher. I admit, I was lukewarm about this. Rebecca's ideas clearly reflected her interest in Japanese pop culture and gender issues, but the material didn't have as strong an appeal for me as it did Rebecca. At last, I did work up six pages in pencil that were based on a story of hers, but Rebecca never finished the draft. It may be just as well that she didn't, since it would have been a hell of a lot of work to continue, and – as I've learned since, from my own books – there was no money in it.

Since they are my only “serious” work on a science fiction comic, this is probably as good a time as any to show them for the first time. *[Pages 15 to 20]*

I had known for a long time that Rebecca was conflicted about her sexuality. We often talked about that also in our correspondence. She asked if I felt similar ambiguities. My answer then, as now, was “not really.” While I might find some satisfaction in being rebuilt as a gorgeous, willowy,

platinum blonde with Lesbian tendencies – especially with bionic parts and superhuman abilities – I had no desire to end up a stocky, middle-aged woman with serious sag problems. I had no maternal or feminine instincts, and felt no attraction to men. In other words, the reality behind the fantasy was no better than the reality of my current reality ... and possibly worse. So what would be the point? Still, talking about those things was part of what made our correspondence interesting.

I suppose it was inevitable, but after Rebecca’s gender reassignment, the energy behind her comic art and writing rapidly dissipated. I speculate that her preoccupation with identity and gender roles needed an outlet that comics, particularly manga, gave her. Once she no longer had to think about being a woman, manga were no longer needed. Then her life turned in a direction I would never have expected – folksy music and Teddy Bears. Though we no longer had art or writing in common we nevertheless stayed in touch, so I was able to follow her various ups and downs in what seemed to me a rather rocky “happily-ever-after.”

I only met Rebecca in the flesh once. She and her mother were on their way home to the West Coast from Montreal, a couple of weeks after surgery, and stayed in Toronto overnight at the Royal York Hotel. They invited me to drop by for the evening. I was met at the door of their room by a tall, severely underweight young woman who was thinner than anyone I’ve ever seen who wasn’t held behind barbed wire. We ordered-in Chinese and talked – I can hardly remember what about. Rebecca’s mother seemed pretty cool about the whole thing. More so than I was, I thought. While hardly intimidated by Rebecca in person, nevertheless the entire subject of her sex change seemed firmly out of bounds. *Especially* with her mother present!

Trying to think back to the only occasion I believe I ever met Ro Nagey, I think it must have been a Midwestcon – or possibly an Octocon – in the late 1970s. For some odd reason, I had decided to create an “award” for a now-forgotten fannish achievement. “Best Bhowling at a Convention,” perhaps. (Bhowling is a story for another time.) The trophy itself was a glass vial of Holy Water blessed by the Vatican! I had found the souvenir thrust into a rusted-out hole in a cast-iron enclosure around historic, 19th century Osgoode Hall in downtown Toronto. At first couldn’t think of what to do with it. For some reason, I eventually decided that it would make a perfect fan award! And, by some equally obscure reasoning, I had decided Ro Nagey should be the first to receive it. I carefully explained to the recipient at the informal presentation that he must choose next year’s winner and pass the vial along. I suspect that Ro immediately forgot about the whole thing. Until recently, I wondered what the devil ever happened to that Holy Water.



Osgoode Hall and the old iron “cattle gate.”

Ro tells me that he held onto that vial of Holy Water for years, wondering where the hell it had come from, and only got rid of it a few years ago in a garage sale.

Since Ro Nagey revealed herself on FaceBook, I gather she has been subject to some rude questions that Ro has sharply, and rightly, refused to answer.

Ro's posting reminds me, though, of an curious exchange of e-mail between Rebecca and me, a few years ago. This was some time after her final surgery, when I presume the stitches and swelling and soreness were all long gone. She was pleased with herself and her new topological features. So pleased that she had apparently taken photos ... and was now offering to show them to me.

Talk about being in a situation in which there is no right answer ... Of course, I *was* somewhat curious. I have also *seen* female genitalia before, so I strongly doubted that the photos would uncover any surprises. But would it be polite not to show curiosity? Should I admire the doctor's surgical skill? It might even be taken as an insult if I lacked interest.

On the other hand, there was a perfectly *enormous* potential for Rebecca having afterthoughts of an "Oh my gawd, what was I *thinking*?" variety. Once her sense of privacy was violated, it would be hard to restore it. Under the circumstances, I thought the gentlemanly thing to do in such an unusual and delicate situation was to politely turn down the offer in such a way to be mildly flattering. I wrote back, "While it is true that the beast of morbid curiosity broods beneath *my* breast as much as it does in any of my fellow creatures, on balance I think I prefer to continue to be *dazzled* by your *feminine mystique*." I let it go at that.

It must have been the diplomatic solution I needed. We remained friends and, to this day, still write to each other. Unless, course, I have just undone all the diplomacy by writing about it for the trivial purpose of amusing an audience of prurient readers such as ...

Well, don't look at *me* as though you don't know who I'm talking about!

Puss & Wings



A piece of art I saw recently has set me thinking. The art showed a Siamese cat with wings, and was titled "Guardian Angel."

A cat as guardian angel? I don't know how well that would work out in practice. I can imagine the following incident:

Helpless Mortal: "Help! My SUV is on fire and out of control! I'm going to collide simultaneously with a school bus full of ophraned lepers and a tanker trailer of nitro!"

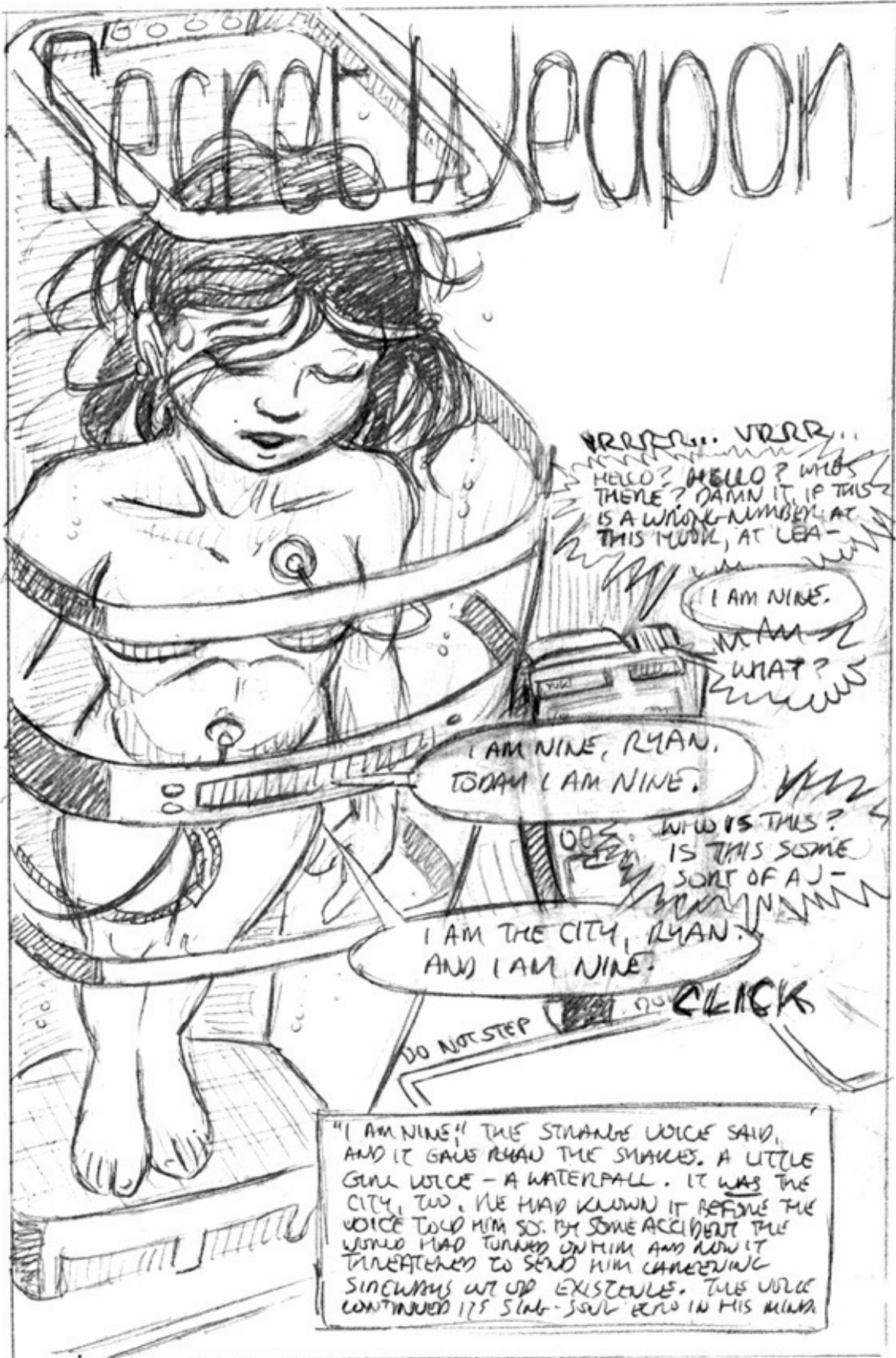
Cat Guardian Angel: "In a minute! Can't you see I'm eating my Friskies."

HM: "But I only have microseconds to live!"

CGA: "It'll just have to wait."

HM: "Noooooo – Crash, Ka-Blooeey, Burn, Sizzle, Fry!"

CGA: "Just as well. I feel like taking a nap now anyway."





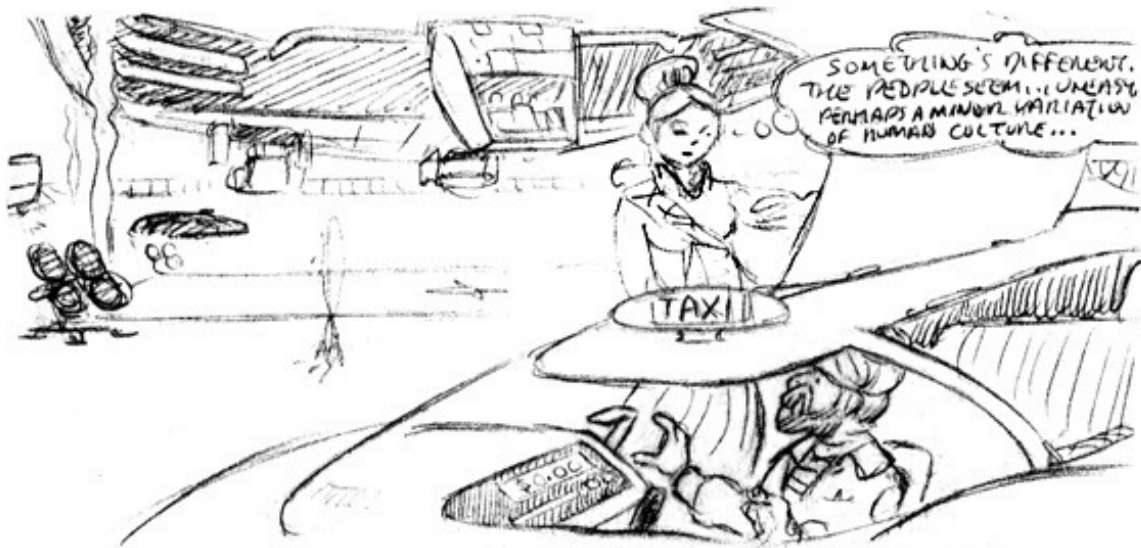


NUMEROUS LEVELS ABOVE PLAIN, GROWS CALIFORNIA-CITY - WITH MANY MORE LEVELS BELOW MAIN GARDI HERE, BUT FEW LEAVE, AND THOSE WHO DO ARE UNLIKELY TO COME BACK, TOMORR, ONE WHO LEFT, RETURNS.

NET IS GLAD TO RETURN TO THIS COMFORTS OF THE CITY, SHE ENJOYS WALKING ON MOON SOUP, SMOOTHER AFTER 2 MONTHS IN SPACE



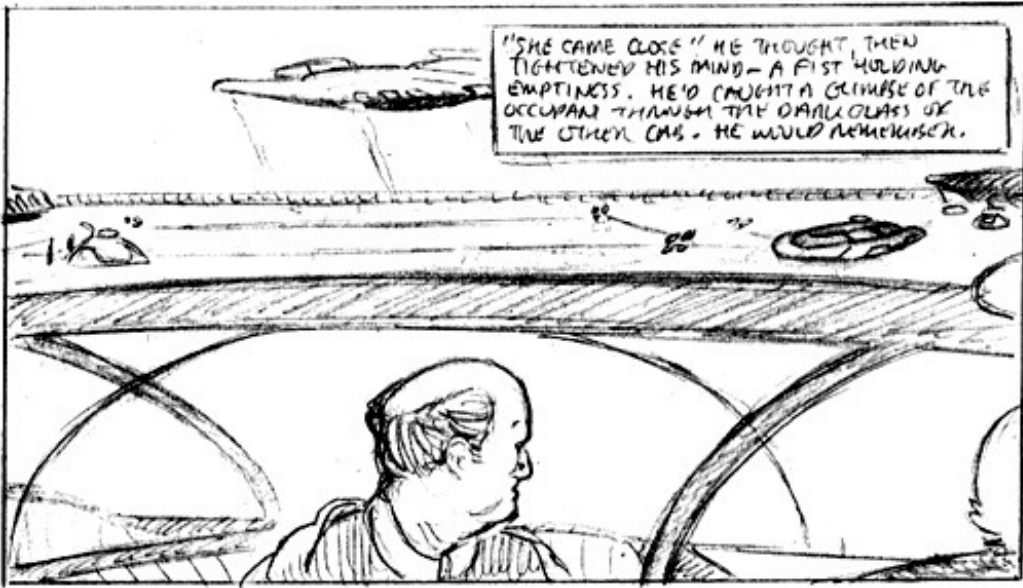
THE CITY IS BEAUTIFUL FROM UP HERE. HUMANS SEE THIS PART OF IT FIRST, AND IF THEY ARE GOOD THEY WILL SEE IT AGAIN.



316
EXPOSITORY
LUMP
(HONESTLY!)



THE CITY HAD BEEN DESIGNED BY REXY LOWEN. IT WAS HER CRADLE, SHE NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE HER CITY UN TIL THAT SHE WAS BACK.





WHY DID THAT BOY HANG UP?
I AM SO LONELY. IT IS EVEN WORSE
NOW.

RYAN?
I WISH I HAD A NAME,
THAT SOUNDS FUNNY
MAYBE RYAN WAS
AFRAID OF ME?

NOBODY SHOULD BE
AFRAID - THAT IS WHY
THERE IS THE CITY,

I AM NINE
TODAY

POOR YUKI, POOR MANGY GIRL, TRAPPED IN A STRANGE
SORT OF AQUARIUM FAR UNDERGROUND. SHE
DOESN'T KNOW HER NAME OR EVEN THAT SHE HAS
A HUMAN FATHER, WHO DIED SEVENTY-THREE
YEARS AGO. SHE THINKS MENSEL IS A CITY, DOESN'T
IT ODD? SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER ITS HIGH OWN PAUL
EITHER. WE SHOULD NOT FEEL PITY, LOW DRANGE
IS NOT ~~UNFINISHED~~ AFTER ALL.

UNFIN.