

BROKEN TOYS

Broken Toys is a personalzine by **Taral Wayne**, and in no way implies that my other zine, *New Toy*, is a dead letter, just more bite than I can chew at present. The letter column overfloweth with equal parts news, good cheer, egoboo and bile. I won't need to resort yet to publishing a list of names of readers, who have failed to ever write. 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. Contact or loc me at Taral@Teksavvy.com however. The date is early October 2012, and this is ExtraTarallorality (or Kiddelidivee Books & Art) 258. Copyrighted past, present, future & in all parallel Dimensions, except in Gormley Ontario on Friday.

AN OLD MUSE AND TIRED

It has been a record long time since I last uploaded art to either of my artists' sites, DeviantArt or FurAffinity.

Not that I haven't done a few rough doodles and started a thing or two. But I've finished nothing in a dog's age. The old spark is still there, but doesn't appear to kindle fire anymore. It isn't as though I didn't enjoy the egoboo (for those of you who don't know "fanspeak," the positive feedback from admiring multitudes) ... but egoboo just isn't enough anymore to motivate me to stick to the long hours at the drawing board that are required for actually *finishing* artwork.

Easier to fling a few loose lines around the paper to suggest what I have in mind, then call it a day.

Nor is it as though I cannot hear the inner voice calling me to work out a drawing in full – I hear it, faintly. There are half-finished works lying about that I would dearly love to finish. When I start up the engine again, the inspiration flows once more, and I see the grandeur of my original conception. Then the engine sputters, coughs, and stops – and the idea fades away to a mere outline of marks on paper that don't yet amount to anything recognizable ... and perhaps never will. It is so much easier to waste time with people on Facebook – who I never knew I *had* to be in intimate contact with, until I joined. Then of course there is always a burning need to read up on the evolutionary history of the sand dollar on Wikipedia. I can't believe I've only watched the "Three Stooges" movie *once*.

Clearly, years of drawing the same old nekkid cat and bunny girls on commission has taken its toll. It may not have occurred to you, but there fundamentally are only so many crotch-shots – in essence, two: frontal or rear view, position of legs optional. When you've cycled between the two of them 700

times each, the inner muse begins to scream insanely ... and then shuts down like a pancreas after far-too-many bottles of inexpensive, sugar-spiked wine-cooler.

Other frequent customers who call on my talents have been the fetishists. They come in all sorts, like those unpalatable, chewy candies with the coloured sugar beads that stick in your teeth. It isn't enough that they want nekked skunk girls (or guys), but they also ask for ... well, never mind what they ask for. It often isn't easy to explain. I have great sympathy for fetishists, really, having peculiar tastes of my own. But they, too, have contributed to the gradual dimming of the Inner Light – and hastened the emergency shut-down of my creative faculties.

Not helping in the least is the fact that I've been dragging at the rear of the pack among the Hugo nominees, for entirely too many years now. Seeing the Rocket go to this year's hot-new-discovery, Worldcon after Worldcon, has played its part in smothering the urge to create fanart. How many times should any artist have it proven to him that he's not even second-best, but third, fourth or fifth best in the opinion of the voters? Especially when "No Award" has once been voted more popular?

Yet, strangely, the requests to draw this-or-that for someone's next issue still arrive on a regular basis. Yes, Guy, I'll draw something with a medical theme. Of course, I'll contribute a page to the Chicon Sunday Funnies. I'd love to illustrate a hobbit being chased by an army of R2 D2s ... I'll be damned if I know *why*, but of course I'd love to. "The Slan of Baker Street" has to have a cover, doesn't it? And so it goes.

Much as I'd love to return to the Halcyon days of a half dozen new drawings posted online every week, and seeing my work on at least one new fanzine every time Bill Burns updates eFanzines.com, the odds of my making a complete comeback are of no consequence. I'm afraid that my public – whoever that may be – will have to be satisfied with what they get.

First star you see tonight, wish something fierce, and maybe I'll beat the odds and meet the next deadline. Fanzines won't illustrate themselves, after all.

I MAY NOT KNOW ART, BUT I KNOW WHAT TO BUY

In a recent "conversation" on Facebook with another Toronto artist I knew in the Way-Back-and-When, I remembered an incident that taught me a great deal about Art. The lesson had been limited to Comic Book art, or perhaps to the sort of people who buy it from Comics Conventions, but experience has shown me that the lesson can be applied to art of any sort – not just comics but science fiction art, children's book illustration, avant-garde canvases, paintings of the Old West, rock album covers ... at the bottom line, it's the same.

Years ago, I was invited to attend a small, local comics con. I don't remember where it was, except downtown Toronto, or even in what decade it was held. While I had no interest in comics cons to speak of, I was offered a free table to sit at and meet my many bazillions of fans and try to sell them something. Under the circumstances, I couldn't refuse.

I arrived on the first day and set out the work I had brought and waited. And waited. I waited quite a while, in fact. Now and then, one of my bazillions of admirers would come by, slow imperceptibly as they glanced in the direction of my table, then move on. Perhaps I should have kept count of how

many of my fans actually stopped to look at my work, but the number couldn't have exceeded six or eight all day. Only one bothered to actually speak to me as he thumbed through the page protectors.

"This is really nice stuff," he said.

"Thank you," I replied.

"Has it been published often?"

"Not in comics. Well ... not in books or magazines either. But I *do* have work appear fairly regularly in fanzines."

"Hmm. I guess that's why I haven't seen it before. I really like it, and I'd like to buy some."

"What drawings did you have in mind?" I replied, eagerly.

He pointed out a couple of pieces of interest.

"Unfortunately, I *can't* buy any," he said, making my heart sink. "I just don't think you'll make a name for yourself. My investment wouldn't increase in value."

"That's why you buy art?" I asked, incredulous.

"Is there any other reason? Why would anyone buy art that you don't make a profit from?"

Well, I sure fooled him. I went on to an enviable career in which I was the sole artist for three issues of a comic that never sold more than a thousand copies, and was nominated for an Eisner Award for its *colouring* (by someone else). I'm on record, too, as tracing some rough working sketches by Rudy Rucker for one of his novels. I was the principal illustrator of a free magazine for electrical customers in the rural Pacific Northwest. Last, but not least, I lost the Hugo 11 times, a record I share with only one other artist. And that short-sighted Philistine thought I'd *never* be famous! If he had spent the 25 bucks then, he'd be the proud owner today of an original Taral Wayne now worth at least twice that!

CONFEDERATION - WHY DID WE WASTE THE TIME?

Canada takes one more valiant step into the past, toward reuniting with the British Empire and becoming a colony once more. It wasn't enough that the PM, Steven Harper, ordered all the post offices and government premises to put portraits of the Queen back on the wall – not a very popular move in Quebec, where they are barely reconciled to being Canadians, let alone British – nor enough to tack "Royal" back onto the official nomenclature for the Army and Navy, as though our armed forces were mere barbarian auxiliaries of the British.

Now we are going to share our embassies with the United Kingdom! That's right ... we will no longer have independent representation abroad. This is supposed to be a cost-cutting measure, but unless we simply turn over our embassy staff's duties to the British, I don't see how it will cut the payroll. Do we actually trust the British to put Canadian interests before their own, or will we be backing the English in all matters from now on, as we used to before striking off on our own in 1918? What if the

British decide to accompany Israeli and American forces in a surprise attack on Iran, and the Middle East goes berserk? I guess our embassies get firebombed along with the British and Americans, and any Canadian citizens caught in the crossfire will have nowhere to go for protection. Same if the Brits withdraw their diplomatic missions from some country – ours closes too.

Since the initial hullabaloo over the government's announcement, Prime Minister Harper has clarified the situation somewhat. The new spin on Canada sharing embassies with the United Kingdom is that it will only be in "marginal" countries where there is little need to waste an entire embassy to represent a single country. Furthermore, Canada would gain representation in countries where we have no embassies at present, and where we have an embassy but the United Kingdom does not, *they* would gain. That mollified me somewhat ... until I had time to think. In how many cases does Canada have an embassy where the Brits don't, and vice versa? Could there be a dozen minor, obscure nations where that's so? Hard to imagine anywhere one nation thought it was worth having an embassy, but not the other. Be that as it may, if the change in policy is merely to establish a Canadian presence in Guinea-Bissau or Tonga that was previously lacking, all to the good.

Why didn't the Harper government make that clear from the beginning? Also, I notice that the newer statement does not actually say that Canada *won't* be doubling up its embassies in France, Egypt or South Africa with the Brits. It leaves the reader to assume the government doesn't mean that. After all, who would suspect Ottawa of making a boneheaded decision, and then to dissemble but not actually change its mind?

Anyone with half a brain, of course! Just keep repeating this mantra when you feel your credulity rising: *F-35, F-35, F-35 ...*

All of this has led me to further speculation. If we need no embassies of our own, why do we need a Parliament or our own? Why not shut down that redundant body in Ottawa and simply send Steven Harper to London? He could wear a wig and sit on the Tory side of the House of Commons, like any other representative of the British people – which it sometimes seems is all that our PM believes his constituents are.

From a broader perspective, though., Steven Harper's British loyalties are not the full story. He has amply demonstrated other loyalties that, on the surface, appear conflicting. I've given this a great deal of thought, and believe that I can finally sort out where his loyalties lie. For Steven Harper:

Canada is a loyal subject of the British Crown.

Canada is a staunch ally of the American military.

Canada is a business subsidiary of the People's Communist Party of China, in Beijing.

Canadians are employees of the national business venture, but not stockholders.

If you can keep that straight, then you have a clear, accurate guide to where this country is headed.

Left-Over Pieces

Rich Lynch, 7 Sept 2012, rw_lynch@yahoo.com

Thanks for *BT7*. I'm not much of a LoC writer, but I do read fanzines sent to me. In this issue, you ask a fair question: *"Since when did blogs become fanzines as well? I'm fairly certain that the Hugo's rules describe a fanzine as having distinct issues, but there are no issues of SF Signal – it just goes on and on as the contributors add to it, like a roll of ticker tape."*

Blogs became eligible a while back when the rules were changed to explicitly allow electronic media stuff to be eligible. When that happened, there was no effort to define what is a fanzine and what isn't. But now, after two years of effort, the wording for the Best Fanzine category in the WSFS Constitution has been amended to limit the eligibility to publications that are actually fanzines. Audio and video are now in their own category, and the new language defines a fanzine as a "non-professional periodical publication" which should exclude blogs like *SF Signal*. I plan on writing a friendly reminder email to next year's Hugo Awards administrators reminding them of the change and its implications.

As for the Fan Artist Hugo, you mention that: *"It is Mo [Starkey] who has the Hugo, not Steve Stiles, nor Marc Schirmeister, nor Kurt Erichsen, nor Alan White, ... nor Ditmar, nor me ... just to name the 'usual suspects'."* All Hugo worthy, absolutely.

Rich Lynch

Ned Brooks, 8 Sept 2012, nedbrooks@sprynet.com

"It doesn't cost you a stamp to write a loc anymore, folks."

But that was never the main obstacle to writing a loc. The real problem is putting perfectly cromulent words together in some reasonably coherent fashion....

I finally figured out that the "photo" you were talking about was the chopped up collage in the title. I don't remember any such complex photographic efforts from where I was a child. My parents had a Kodak, and there are snapshots, but mostly dull posed shots.

I agree with you about the media fits over massacres like the one in Aurora - to their victims such homicidal maniacs are just as random and inevitable as shark attacks, lightning, earthquakes. You can stay out of the water, put up lightning rods, try to ban guns etc. – but there is always the risk of catastrophe, and a witch-hunt reaction is seldom useful. We would have been a lot better off to treat the 9/11 atrocity as an "act of God" and work to improve airline security and skyscraper stability (note how little damage was done when a B-24 hit the Empire State Building) instead of going on a 10-year

vengeful rampage that has now killed more US citizens than were lost in the original catastrophe plus millions of people in Iraq and Afghanistan who had nothing to do with it at all.

The Net and the ubiquity of cell-phone cameras bring to our attention faster and more graphically any gruesome event anywhere, and of course the NRA seems to be aiming at a situation where every adult will have a gun at hand 24/7. Other than that I suspect that the level of personal violence depends on two factors - how stressed people are, and how densely packed. Some urban areas are close to critical mass - experiments with rats shows that even with no food shortage, higher population density leads to more fights.

Best, Ned

I wrote back, "What, no complaints about typos?" to which Ned added, "You should put one in just see if readers are paying attention..." So, next time you see a typo in Broken Toys, you should think about that.

E.T. Bryan, 8 Sept 2012, abpix.gremlin@verizon.net

Hey, it was a girl's turn to win the Hugo. Just as it's the girl's turn to win the Westinghouse science prize (now known as the Intel Science Talent Search) every other year. Passing out prizes based on merit, or long time contributions to the field is old fashioned.

I'm going to get into a certain amount of trouble publishing that remark ... however, I feel there's some truth in it. Regardless of how many women there are in fandom, they seem to have won more than a proportionate share of fanartist awards. Given low numbers of women in fandom until the 1980s, they have possibly won more than their numbers would suggest in all fan categories. In fact, it seems that every single one who was widely known at the time has won the Hugo – Alicia Austin, Joan Hanke Woods, Victoria Poyser, Peggy Ransom, Diane Gallagher Wu, and Sue Mason all have their rockets. Checking on some stats, I see that Jeanne Gomoll was nominated twice without a win, though. Merle Insinga was nominated several times without a win, but to be honest I'm not sure who she was. Way back, Wendy Fletcher was nominated once, no win. The only surprise, is that Bjo Trimble was once nominated but didn't win. Unlike the other non-winners, Bjo was very well known. Still, 6 out of 10 women who were ever nominated in this category have won at least once, which is a much better ratio than among all the men who have ever been nominated. I'm going to go out on a limb and say that one reason is that woman make an awfully big hit in male-oriented fandom, regardless of any other qualities they may possess. This ought be less so today than formerly.

Eric Mayer, 9 Sept. 2012, groggy.tales@gmail.com

I wonder how long email will remain free?

As long as they want to collect \$30 to \$50 a month for internet service, I should bloody well hope!

This loc will be short and sour, not that I don't enjoy reading Broken Toys but I've already said more than I really have to say about fan Hugos. In my last loc to Fanstuff I told Arnie I reckoned I might be repeating myself, and reading my letter in Broken Toys 7. I see I was right.

Unfortunately, these days there are too many people who look at the world through money-colored glasses. They see everything and everybody as little more than opportunities to cash in. The fan Hugos are no exception. The fan writer and fanzine categories are nothing more than advertising opportunities for pros and wannabe pros. If from time to time an actual fan has won, it is has been almost purely accidental (although welcome – thanks Chris!) and not likely to happen in the future as the pros tighten their grip. I'm sure they will figure out how to get control of the fan artist Hugos soon.

You a lawyer, and complaining about people corrupted by money. You may restore my faith in humanity, yet!

As for the fan Hugos, I view the nomination in two consecutive years of Randall Monroe as a good start at turning them into an unofficial pro award. There was a previous case of the next-best-thing, but he's a nice enough guy that I don't want to open up an old can of worms.

To the extent anyone realizes that these awards were founded to honour amateurs involved in fanzine fandom, they are insult to us in their present incarnation. We'd be better off if they were abolished altogether or if real fan nominees demanded to be removed from the ballot.

Who the hell is Jim Hines? A pro of some sort, right? What if all the other fanwriters had got together and wrote the Hugo committee and demanded their names be withdrawn because they refused to compete against a professional who was simply not engaged in the same sort of activity they were? And what if the subsequent fan nominees the committee sought to fill up the ballot also demurred? Not likely to happen of course.

If we did, the Worldcon's Hugo committee would just shrug and fill up the ballot with John Scalzis, Jim C. Hines and whatever other pros had nominations. It's doubtful they care, or they'd have found the will to prevent it already.

I liked your "reversed" title, although I would also have liked to see the full picture. Your description of Christmas toys brought back memories. My best friend lived a house away from me and his family was a lot better off than mine. Consequently, at Christmas, he got all the super cool motorized submarines and fighter jets, all the toys that lit up and looked so neat on the shelves. It worked out well for me because most of those things, once you oohed and ahhhed over them for a couple hours, turned out to be pretty flimsy and of limited play value. Tonka trucks were made out of metal, even when my own kids were small, and they had real, lasting play value.

If I have the space, I'll include the unadulterated photo in this ish. [I didn't.]

You got it right in the Meek Shall Inherit the Bill. The super wealthy get that way from robbing the rest of us. They then hoard the money or use it to buy up companies and put people out of work or play disastrous gambling games which destroy the world economy, or just buy up whole governments. Today's level of violence is appalling but what can you expect in the United States at least where protecting the rights of gun fetishists is more important than insuring health care for people?

Hey, I am enjoying these zines. Frequent and succinct. My kind of fanzine.

Best, 

Garth Spencer, 10 Sept. 2012, garthspencer@shaw.ca [check] ,

Although it isn't explicit, I think I can guess what you were feeling when you saw a remembrance of things past. Not every remembrance is either joyful, or sad. More and more I am approaching a state we don't have a word for, a detached sense of ... "this is how it is" ... neither glad nor sad, but somehow off to one side. Maybe Ecclesiastes expresses it, but the sentiment is a lot clearer in Taoism. I can't express it well.

Wow... "Ecclesiastes" and "Taoism!" I can't even spell "ecclesiastes" let alone tell you what's in it... but, then, I have always turned a blind eye to the bible per se and much of its content (well known to everyone else) is a mystery to me. I much prefer reading about the bible than reading the bible itself, if you know what I mean. As for "Taos," that's a small city in New Mexico.

Having also lost interest in awards, for my own part, I can sort of empathize with your position. It's disappointing when an award loses any discoverable meaning. It's peculiar, to say the least, to be nominated as often as you have, but never win one. I think the reason was that you were working in areas that got marginalized in fandom, almost from the day you entered. My own position was different, to the extent that I wanted a substitute family where I had acceptance, rather than an audience that gave me recognition, but maybe I'm misunderstanding what you wanted.

I think what rankles most is the annual statement that the voters prefer every option but me, year after year. I usually come in dead last and was once beaten by No Award, I think. How I get nominated, I'll never know.

Your observations on international financial kleptocracy remind me a lot of the alternative news I get, from Facebook and BrasscheckTV and Upworthy and I know not how many other sources. I am beginning to think it is not absurd to expect reports of flashcrowds of armed, costumed zombies descending on gatherings of the mighty and powerful and, with glad cries, consuming them on the spot.

I read and enjoyed "The Year of the Jackpot" and the "crazy years" expository lump in "Methusaleh's Children," but I'm never convinced by claims that The End Times are Now. The larger and denser our populations are, the more frequent – and the better-publicized – public craziness and violence will be. The end of our civilization, though not our species or world, will be simpler, sadder, and slower and more agonizingly drawn-out. But that is a subject for a whole fanzine.

I don't believe in the End of the World either... I've read enough history to realize that there is never an end to any story – short of the extinction of the Human Race, and so far we've had the tenacity to stick around like a bad fantasy series.



John Nielsen Hall, 17 Sept 2012, johnsila32@gmail.com

If you really think 32 trillion dollars is being hidden from the world's tax authorities- well, words fail me. It cannot be true, precisely for the reasons you identify in the following paragraph.

As the old saying goes, "I only know what I read in the paper," and surely that's better than "I only know what I hear on Fox News."

The emotive terms in which your article and many like it on websites and in newspapers appear helps nobody. There are very few people in the world who would admit that they are "wealthy" or "rich" without qualification. There is usually someone or somebody else that they can point to who has got more than they have, and so they can't be that rich. There is also absolutely no point in trying to tax anyone at 90% or anything like it in any one jurisdiction, since in this day and age, money and people can move around the planet more or less at will – all it takes is the very money that tax is being sought on.

*But at one time we **did** tax the very wealthy at 90%. Then came Reagan and Thatcher who reasoned that if the very rich were taxed less, they would spread the money around philanthropically, creating jobs, supporting charities and donating to worthy causes. In fact, they used the money to buy up everything and become richer than ever, and now they're frittering it away. It won't be easy to force taxes back to their 1970s levels, nor easy to enforce national jurisdictions again.*

Is there a solution? Not in terms of politics or society, no. You can keep personal and corporation taxes at around the 20-30 percent mark (which will still be too high for many), and in general terms seek to tax consumption rather than income sales taxes, VAT etc. – they work better and they are harder to avoid.) But the basic issue is greed. It's a personal thing – no one thinks they are greedy, though they may well think others are. But at some level we all have cravings for things that we don't actually need, which leads us to want money for those same things, and it's not actually about how rich or wealthy we are, it's about what we want. Politicians, courts and tax authorities cannot address problems like that.

***Much** easier to join the race to third-world levels of employment and pay, and allow tax-havens like The Barbados to set the rules. Meanwhile, we are being slowly marginalized by China and possibly Russia, who are dedicated to the proposition of firm government control and pursuing national goals.*

I agree with a lot of what you say about Aurora and other things too, but I would point out that it's the guns aspect of it is that really grabs our attention over here. From a British or European perspective, if the nutcase did not have such easy access to the firepower the 12 dead people might still be with us. That is what differentiates the incident from a Mexican bus crash, although, assuming we would notice a Mexican bus crash at all, we would also shake our collective heads about the state of Mexican roads and Mexican buses. We can be very superior, you know.

JOHN

Ron Kasman, 19 Sept 2012, ron.kasman@gmail.com

I finally got around to reading it. I enjoyed your comments about the Hugo and the Aurora. I am no expert on either of them, so it is nice to read your insights. My limited involvement with the Auroras leads me to think that it is very clubby and it is much harder to win if not a member of the club. The research done in nomination is very poor. The voting system that is used, whatever it may be, can turn the winner into a joke. I spoke to another artist about the winner of the 2003 Aurora and said that I drew better when I was in Grade Eleven. He commented that he was better when he was in Grade Nine. He probably was. He is a man of unusual abilities. One year they nominated a comic artist as best SF artist. This wasn't entirely unreasonable in itself but there were huge problems – they nominated an artist who was heavily inked and coloured by superior artists. The artist had never been nominated for a Shuster Award where, though imperfect, the research is done.

Dave Locke, 22 Sept 2012, davelocke@ymail.com

“It doesn't cost you a stamp to write a loc anymore, folks.” Nice marketing slogan. Let me know if it works, and I'll *steal it* use it myself.

Speaking of which, I'm quite taken with the way you do your cover logo and would probably do one in a similar vein if I had any idea how to go about it. What graphics program do you use?

There seems an awful lot of angst on the subject of who is winning awards based on whether or not they actually qualify to. Hopefully with the Hugo rule changes having been ratified we'll at least see some positive changes in how they'll be handled next year. On the other hand, Milt Stevens has seen and agreed with numerous comments that we should do away with the Fan Hugos, and will submit the motion at the San Antonio business meeting to delete sections 3.3.13, 3.3.14, and 3.3.15 from the WSFS Constitution. This might well not pass, but it will likely be the first time anyone has submitted a motion to get rid of a Hugo category and will indicate discontent with the current situation. This may ultimately be the best answer to folks swooping in to claim a Fan Hugo they really don't qualify for but can finagle because these awards generate so little voting that snatching them is relatively easy.

*Basically, use the Type tool in Photoshop to do the basic lettering. Pick a font that's bold and has some interior space -- like **THIS** or **THIS**, not This.*

Duplicate it by creating a higher layer. (It isn't needed, but has to be done anyway.)

Scan your photo or the illustration that you want to be visible inside the lettering. Create a .pdf copy of the file, and import it into Photoshop, between the two layers.

Working in the top layer, use the Select tool to indicate the inside of the lettering. Then erase the interiors. Now the photo should show through through the lettering, but nowhere else.

Now flatten the image.

If you wish to create outlines or shadows or other effects, or stretch the lettering, it can get way more complicated, but that's the basic technique.

I really think the concept of awards does more harm than good, especially as the pond they're awarded in gets smaller. If awards weren't around to be fretted about, life would be more mellow here in fandom.

I would really hate to see the Hugo abolished before I win one ... I mean, all the many fans who deserve one, win. But, it seems increasingly obvious that this will never happen. The Newest Kids on the Block will keep cutting in line, and the Has-Beens will never get their due. So, perhaps you're right and the best thing that can be done with the fan Hugos is to put them on the shelf. So to speak. In fact, I'd like to suggest retroactively canceling them all the way back to the first.

Lloyd Penney notes "I still hear of legal actions here and there based on what some see as slander, but I've never seen such a case go to court." In the fan community? I have. Was damn near part of one myself, but the heat came off the burn and eventually all became cool. Sooner or later, if something isn't constantly held up and waved around, that often happens.

You ask "Does watching a Batman movie really make a person one of us – a fan?" I've given up on movies made from comic books, and can't really figure out why it took me this long. I think it was around 1949 or 1950, somewhere around there, when I gave up on comic books. It shouldn't have taken me this long to stop occasionally sitting down to a comic book movie. Perhaps I'm just slow.

Some are better than others. What I protest is the clear intention of Marvel and DC to turn the film medium into comic book installments, with a never-ending series of movies about Spiderman, Batman, etc. Frankly, most superheroes are stupid. The few with some meat to them are usually worth one origin story, and that's that. Everything you need say about them can be said in one film.

"Everyone watches movies about guys in tights and capes who fight crime, as well as movies about space ships whizzing around the galaxy fighting hostile alien species, and movies about kids earning their degrees in wizardry who fight an evil sorcerer with a fixation on snakes." Perhaps I'm not quite so slow about fantasy movies, having given up on most of those ages ago. Harry Potter? Jeebus Cristo. The best I managed was to force myself through reading the first novel after it won a Hugo. That was as much of a dip in that pool as I care to take. Spaceships whizzing about the galaxy? Well, okay, I'll still watch some of those...

*There, you see... You've obviously read enough Harry Potter to use fluently bogus Latin! The first Harry Potter novel is a first novel, with all the usual first novel faults. The worst of it is that Harry is too perfect. The book is basically a 12-year-old's wet dream, that his strict parents aren't his real Mom & Dad, that he's really a wizard, that there's a bank vault full of gold that belongs to him, and he's going to a nobby school where everyone Knows He's Special ... particularly the elderly, permissive Father Figure. Who hasn't had that fantasy when he (or she) was 12? Subsequent books actually repair most of the flaws in the first – as time goes on, Harry becomes increasingly less special, not a particularly good student, and he doesn't do **all** the hero stuff. I thought it was rather clever of J.K. Rowling to improve as she went along. Dan Brown never did.*

Kurt Vonnegut wrote in 2007, and I agreed and still agree with him, "You stand outside a society and a culture and realize that it is an invention and that you can improve it. Well, I like the American culture, such as it is, but let's get rid of the fucking guns." "Well-regulated militia," my ass.

There has not been a genuine invasion of American territory since 1815, and the government has been kept in check so well that it has not once needed to be overthrown. See how well an armed citizenry works?

Nice issue, and thanx for sending it,

Dave

Lloyd Penney, penneys@bell.net

Many thanks for Broken Toys 7, and as always, there is something to comment on, and perhaps shed some light. Or, simply confuse the issue, but that seems to be what I do well, so I will go with my strengths.

I have some memories of family Christmases, although I have little memories of many gifts. The best gifts for me were bicycles. Somehow, the theft of a bicycle was my own fault, even when the bikes were supposedly secure at home, but a new bicycle I could wait for, given that I grew up in a fairly snowy part of the province, Orillia.

I would like to be nominated again for a Hugo, but I don't think it will be. I believe the numbers of fanzine fans who might nominate and vote for you and me are now outnumbered at the Worldcon by those who would vote a blog or website for Best Fanzine, or a professional writer for Best Fan Writer, or a pro cartoonist for Best Fan Artist. The odd word in all this is Fan, and so many newer-to-the-scene people I know around here actually do not like the word Fan, not sure why. It's quite possible that our day is done as far as silver rockets go, and they will now go to newer people whose candidacy may confuse us.

There does seem to be a growing sentiment among newer fans that if you aren't part of the digital scene, you don't belong here.

This goes directly into the Auroras essay starting with the quote from Lenny Bailes. Fandom is gradually becoming the contingent of passive consumers who feed the egos of actors and authors alike. We are in agreement about pros winning fan awards, but I think the convention hosting the Auroras this year, When Words Collide in Calgary, set the stage for this ... I think the attendance of this convention was mostly pros, with fans expected to keep their place. In fact, except for Best Filk, pros took all the fan Auroras this year. Next year's Convention will be CanCon in Ottawa, also a pro-heavy convention, so I expect that what happened this year is likely to happen next year. Are there so many pros who can overwhelm the fannish vote? No, I think Canadian fandom, such as it is, has become apathetic about the Auroras, and newer fans have either no idea those awards exist, or don't care to participate. I hope those in charge of the Auroras will increase distribution of the ballots, and I think there's lots of people who see no difference between a fan and a pro. Perhaps there's none, but still, there are pro and fan awards, and pros and fans, respectively, should win them.

I have learned to rethink my stereotyping of the majority of convention fans. Many may well be there as passive consumers – readers who come to conventions to bask in the glow of Real Live Pros. But I think most are actually “participatory” fans. They are there to join with other fans in highly social activities such as filking, costuming, or gaming. Ironically, they may look on Old School fans – loners

who sit by themselves with their keyboard – as the ones who are passive, and not interacting. You and Yvonne are yourselves heavy “participants” in fandom. I’ve grown more insular with time.

I am not that far away from needing a cane myself, seeing my knees haven’t liked me much for some years now. My doctors have called me near-obese, and one (but not the other) says I have high blood pressure. I am taking steps towards solving these problems, and I am about 10 pounds lighter. The trick is, of course, keeping it off. Yvonne is using a cane these days, but only if we are out walking somewhere.

When I see what the US Republicans are trying to do to get more money from the poorest Americans, and then call it patriotism ... well, I think most of us are disgusted by what they say and their so-called justifications, but we don’t have a vote, do we? We do, however, have a fairly close seat to see the election shenanigans, and it’s in a few short weeks, too.

If Canadians did have a vote in U.S. elections, no doubt the Republicans would be trying to strike us from the voters list on some pretext. “Previously residing in a foreign country,” perhaps.

The shootings in Aurora, Colorado ... in my long-ago journalism classes, I was taught that it is a poor sign of human nature that the farther away a catastrophe occurs, the less we care. (This was how we would gauge what news goes where in a newspaper, and how many column-inches each story might deserve.) If those people are not our nationality or our colour, we care even less. If 10,000 people were to die in some disaster in Thailand or Myanmar or Indonesia, we’d go tch tch tch, and say what a shame that was. However, 9/11 was literally at home, in our faces, and they were our colour, and those thousands were killed in spectacular fashion, which means that event will be a part of our history forever. We should care more about those thousands killed elsewhere, but we don’t.

It’s bad enough that shit happens we can’t change, without having to pretend we feel sorry about it.

I’m going to end this here before I get too depressed. All the deaths that have happened, especially around Toronto ... can I change species? I’m not too thrilled with the species I am now. The search for intelligent life must have started here, and as Monty Python and Eric Idle have sung, there’s bugger-all down here on Earth. Anyway, thanks for this issue, and I look forward to the next.

Yours, [Lloyd Penney](#)

WAHF

Eric Mayer, 19 Sept 2012, groggy.tales@gmail.com who added, I don't know how you write so many articles for fanzines. They might actually get more notice if you did less. Fans quickly take things for granted. Consider the FAAn awards ... I should have thought more of the faneds who were happy to print your articles would have voted for you. I certainly did. Obviously some didn't.

There’s food for thought here... Be warned, or I might drastically cut back my fanwriting – assuming that the strategy doesn’t have the opposite effect, because people will hope I’ll stop writing altogether.

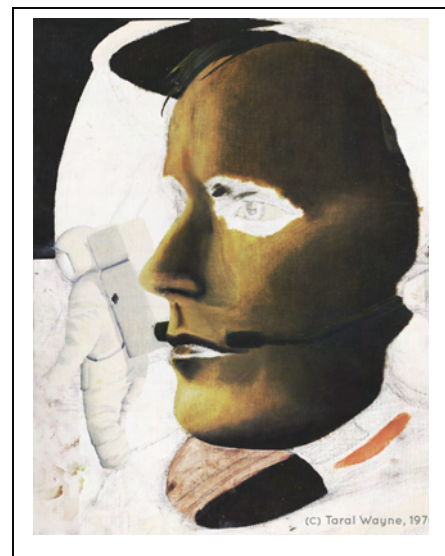
Bill Burns, 7 Sept 2012, billb@ftldesign.com, who said, “Looks good, and your thoughts on the fan Hugos match mine exactly.” Also, “Incidentally, the core fandom logo which Hope mentions, the apple core with propellor beanie, was my design, done *very* ironically. Arnie appropriated it without asking and used it in all seriousness (as far as I can tell).”

Leah A. Zeldes, 8 Sept 2012, leah@zeldes.com, who said, “Thanks! I'm looking forward to reading it.” *I think she means she received issue 7 but hadn't read it yet.*

Featured Non-Loccer -- **Eric Lindsay**, who I believe has been sent all issues but not locced a single one.

The Man on the Moon

Neil Armstrong
5 Aug 1930 – 25 Aug 2012



The future washes over us like a flood, carrying the past farther away with every moment. In 1969, I watched Man's first landing on the Moon on television, but took time from the live broadcast to go outdoors to look at the *real* moon in the *real* sky. As I gazed at the bright orb, real men walked on its surface ... and, although it was a silly thing to do, I took pictures. The present wasn't nurturing, but I knew the future would be better.

What I could not foresee was that the Americans would shortly abandon the Moon. Rather than spend an admittedly huge amount of money extending mankind's reach into the universe, the money would be saved for concerns more vital to the National Interest – such as the Vietnam War, lost almost immediately after the cancellation of the final 8 Apollo missions. And the War on Drugs, such a foregone failure that our surrender is now imminent. Eight Moon missions scrubbed! That was nearly half of the Apollo missions planned, and of those 10 that were launched, three were not manned landings and one was a near-disaster in which landing was never an option.

Still, at the euphoric moment of the first Moon Landing, It was also difficult to picture a time when the men who were on the Moon would grow old and die. That unforeseen future has finally arrived, and they have begun to go. I don't have a list of astronauts who have passed away –a number have died in the service of humanity, and others in unfortunate accidents – but of the three astronauts who went to

the Moon aboard Apollo 11, the first has finally succumbed to time, as all sooner or later must. Ironically, it was Neil Armstrong who was first to die – just as he was first Man on the Moon. Now he is just a figure in history books, like the First European Man to See the Pacific or the First Man to Visit the South Pole.

This painting was begun in 1970, but I have no record of when it was finished since, obviously, it never was. Finding a way to paint over Buzz Aldrin's figure in the background with the golden colour of Armstrong's helmet glass – without obliterating it – was more than I knew how to do ... among other difficulties. I had hardly any experience with painting at the time, and have gained very little since. The most sensible thing would have been to paint Aldrin right over, but I was too ambitious. The canvas is 14 inches by 18, and painted in oils. I soon learned that acrylics are much easier. Oil paints take weeks to dry enough to touch safely, and oils are said to never dry entirely, but “breathe” throughout centuries. It was never my intention to show the painting, but after the news of Neil Armstrong's death, I posted the unfinished work on FaceBook. It seemed only appropriate, since the dream of Apollo was itself left unfinished.

I look back on the reality of the years that followed and wonder if the dreams weren't better, after all.

NOT FANDOM AS I KNOW IT

I know that sometimes I talk as though there is no other fandom in Toronto except myself, but this is not, strictly speaking, true. Not because of the presence of Lloyd Penney – who as a matter of fact resides in the suburb of Mississauga, contiguous to Toronto but merely a part of the Greater Toronto Area and a legally constituted city of its own. No, I mean there is fandom in *Toronto*. It doesn't happen to be *fanzine* fandom, though. It is a large and busy-busy-busy bunch of people who are highly sociable, and who hold the view that running of the local conventions is what constitutes fandom. They get together once a month at a casual event called First Thursday, at a pub called the Fox's Den, where they BS each other until about 10-ish, when the work-a-day drudges among them begin trickling home.

Last night I did something a trifle unusual by attending a session of First Thursday. Most of the regulars have known each other for a number of years, but I know only a few of them well-to-somewhat well, but most of them not well at all. None of my closest friends attend First Thursdays, which leaves me at a serious disadvantage. Moreover, as a group, the attendees are more interested in talking about contemporary SF than I am, by a *large* margin ... or, since they're part of one of the local concons, they talk a great deal about *that*. I have only the most marginal interest in how the local cons are run ... so, if I only go to First Thursday about twice a year, then, I manage to say about all I have to say.

This month, it was about time for me to attend a First Thursday again. Specifically, I wanted to pick up some material brought to me from Chicon. Had I won the Hugo, it would have been accepted for me by Robert J. Sawyer – it looks good to have a Hugo-winning author represent you, and it was a fine excuse to sneak him and his wife Carolyn into the Hugo party in a year that he wasn't nominated. Still, I was abundantly confident that Rob would never have to mount the stage to accept the Rocket for me, so I didn't bother to write a speech – I suggested that he indicate to the audience that I would *presumably* be pleased to hear I'd won. The operative word is "presumably." In fact, I'm so jaded by now that I'd probably be unable to feel anything more than a sort of mean-spirited vindication in finally winning.

Nonetheless, I had a fairly good time at First Thursday ... picked up the Hugo loot, inquired into another item owed me by Chicon, dealt with some local business I had with the upcoming SFContario, and then talked to David, my lawyer, about the tribunal that will hear my disability case. Walking to and from the subway stop was arduous, but – taking it in small increments – it was doable. I was exhausted when I got home, though, and I was in bed before 2 a.m. – a rarity for me – and slept more than 12 hours! A quarter-mile walk takes more out of me these days than a 10 mile hike once did.

The first chance I get, I'll pile up all the Hugo pins I have accumulated through the years. Like Scrooge McDuck and his money that he swims in, and tosses into the air to bounce off his head, I have odd pleasures.

Speaking of which ...

CHICON SUNDAY FUNNIES

Since so few of old school fandom can afford to buy memberships in the World-con these days – with the cost being typically over \$200 and so many greying fans living on pensions, retirement savings or even welfare – I decided to fill space with the page I did for Chicon's "Sunday Funnies." *Tintin* had been taken, so I opted to do a tribute to another comics artist that I've admired since I was a boy – **Carl Barks**. Loona, however is a character of my own invention to tell new stories around. There's no more to this story than 1 page, but I have outlined 2 or 3 adventures of Scrooge McDuck, with Loona, Donald and the boys.

