

This has all the signs of **Moriarty's** work, my dear Watson...

Oh, I say Holmes, it's **elementary!**



The Slan of Baker Street

a one-shot published by Taral Wayne, September in the year **Anno Domini 2012**, from his modest abode in a less-fashionable quarter of the city of Toronto, in Her Majesty's Dominion of Canada. I may be reached by post at 245 Dunn Ave. Toronto Ontario, M6K 1S6, or contacted through the lately conceived miracle of communications known as the World Wide Web, at Taral@teksavvy.com For Royal Archival Purposes, this is Kiddelidivee Books & Art 256. Everyone please respectfully stand for "God Save the Queen!"

Foreword: For me, the news broke on the File 770 blog. It was June 14th and Stu Shiffman had had a stroke. Mike Glycer wrote, "He is being treated at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. He remains in intensive care. On Friday he was described as awake, though lethargic, and able to speak clearly. He subsequently had surgery to relieve swelling due to some bleeding in the brain. Stu's partner Andi Shecter is there with him. Stu is a highly popular fan artist, winner of the Hugo Award and the Rotsler Award."

The original post was 75 words long, but, in my opinion, 75 pages would not have been wasted. The questions in my mind were gradually answered over the next few days, as Mike updated the story. Friends of Stu were talking on FaceBook as well. If you would like to read the story as it unfolded, the index on File 770 is at <http://file770.com/?tag=stu-shiffman&paged=2>

I don't remember my first thoughts when I learned of Stu's stroke. I doubt it was until the second day, or even the third, that I decided Something Ought to be Done. Since I was unable to perform miracles, I decided that perhaps a one-shot, get-well zine would help cheer Stu up, and aid his convelescence. Next step was to contact as many of Stu's friends in fandom as I knew, and tell them my plans. Originally, I had something that more in the lines of a collection of cartoons drawn to wish Stu well. But projects such as this often have a life of their own – this one did. As it happened, I got some lovely pieces of writing almost right away. Gradually, more art trickled in. Still, the original idea seems to have evaporated. The Slan of Baker Street is somewhat more like a regular one-shot ... but is that a bad thing? Of course not. The point is to give Stu's morale a boost, and I think this will.

Thanks to everyone who participated.

The Slan of Baker Street

Taral Wayne

There was a time when I remembered such things. That's how long ago it was when I met my friends from New York fandom. Stu Shiffman was not the first – that honour probably goes to Moshe Feder – but he was one of those who I continued to count as a friend the longest.

It goes without saying, too, that Stu immediately caught my eye as an artist of great individuality, bringing a prodigious breadth of interests to his cartooning. He was as much a master of pen and ink as he was of stylus and stencil. There was no keeping up with him, either. Stu not only produced a bulging portfolio of fanart in an amazingly short time, he also stood in good stead as a fanwriter and editor of his own fanzines. For a number of years, he was, in fact, an *embarrassment!*

An embarrassment to *me*, that is. Stu was the very model of a major modern fanartist. While I was still floundering, still trying to work out what it was fan editors wanted from me and how to best provide it, Stu was already the Quintessential Fanartist of his time.

It was clear that Stu was also an embarrassment to *fandom*. Ten times, fans nominated Stu for the Hugo as Best Fanartist, but when push came to shove they dithered, lost their resolve and awarded the rocket to someone else – who, often as not, gaffed a year or two later. Fandom only got its act together and gave Stu his well-deserved rocket on the 11th nomination. Fandom went on to nominate Stu another 4 times, for a total of 15, but showed the grievous bad judgement not to follow up his one Hugo with another. Shame on fandom!

All the same, his is a record that Steve Stiles and I are still struggling to equal.

In its time, *Raffles* was one of the more fun fanzines on the scene. It was fun to read and fun to contribute to its unique blend of popular futurism and Victorian bric-a-brac. You might say that Stu was one of the pioneers of the steampunk esthetic, 30 years ahead of his time. And if the Long Island Worldcon bid wasn't one of the best remembered fan "hoaxes," it patently ought to be.

Time is limited, though, and Stu had many interests. Eventually, his involvement in Sherlockian activities and detective fiction edged out science fiction fandom. Stu was living in Seattle with Andi Schecter by then, and I saw little of him for many years. It was always a treat to see some example of his art that had escaped the orbit he was in and appeared in an orbit that I inhabited. Sometimes, I discovered Stu's presence in unlikely places ... such as *Captain Confederacy*, the black-and-white comic produced by Will Shetterly and Vince Stone, and published by Steeldragon Press. For a number of issues, Stu wrote and drew a backup feature, involving two steampunkish characters named Saks & Violet. A play on sex & violence, perchance? But there was nothing X-rated about it. I'm not sure if the story made sense, but I was too busy looking for fannish references anyway. There were even bunny rabbits who walked and talked like people.

Yes, Stu Shiffman was an early furry, well.

He had the good sense to be too busy with his Sherlockian interests, though. It is a measure of how out of touch we grew that there is little I can say about that side, or other sides of Stu.

Time will have its way with all of us, though, and, when Stu suffered a stroke just a week ago, I was shocked by this demonstration of just how increasingly fragile all the people I know in fandom are. I was reminded of an incident as far back as 1984.

That was the year I made my first pilgrimage to Los Angeles. I stayed seven weeks, spending most of the time with Marc Schirmeister. It was also the year that the Worldcon was in LA, but that was mere coincidence from my point of view. I was there to see mountains, deserts, the Bradbury Building, Termite Terrace, Tijuana, Disneyland and weird shit like that. One of the events Schirm organized was a drive up the peak of Mt. Wilson, to walk among the observatories and view greater Los Angeles from a lofty perspective of just about 6,000 feet. Schirm invited a number of people along, and, while I no longer remember all of those who were with us, my memory of Stu stands out.

He seemed to be having trouble with the altitude. Some people do, but when you're 30 or 35 it isn't usually such a big deal – you take it easy, walk as slowly as you must, sit whenever the opportunity presents itself. I had no problem with the altitude myself, indeed, would later on be climbing to about 11,000 feet on the Mt. Whitney trail with Schirm. But Stu was hanging back. I'd look around and he wasn't there, or was sitting in the shade somewhere.

When we finished with Mt. Whitney, we drove down the observatory road to the Angeles Crest Highway and turned north toward the Mojave Desert. Our next stop was a jagged, tilted rock formation called The Devil's Punchbowl, which also happened to be the visible manifestation of the San Andreas fault line. The Punchbowl lies at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains, on the north front, at a mere 4,750 feet of altitude. Schirm parked in the visitor center, thereupon we all exited his old green Honda. All except Stu, that is. I realized, this time, that something was wrong. He was hanging back in the car, sitting half in and half out, taking it easy in the shade. When asked if he would follow, he said no.

It was only much later that I really understood. Stu will have to forgive me if I relate this imperfectly, but he had an abnormal connection between the blood vessels of his brain that allowed venous blood to mingle with arterial blood. The intermixing robbed his bloodstream of oxygen, and he tired easily. As a native of New York, a coastal city at sea level, no doubt he was more troubled than the rest of us by the heights we trod.

Eventually, Stu had corrective surgery, and showed a marked improvement in his health all around.

Thirty years later, after hearing of Stu's stroke, my mind went right back to that incident. We are not only more fragile than we know, but we are more fragile than we know from the start. Perhaps it is never too early to learn to appreciate each other more than we do.

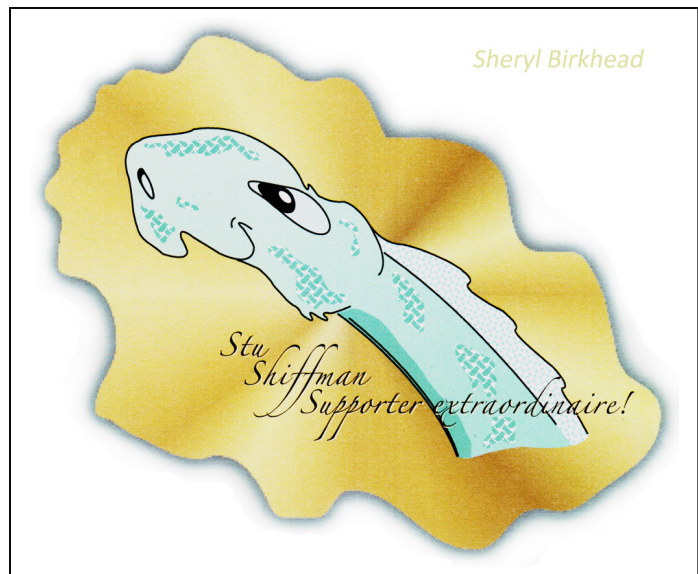
This one-shot is submitted in appreciation of Stu Shiffman; fan, artist, follower in the Great Detective's footsteps, good friend and gentleman.



Stu Shiffman and I at the Mt. Wilson Observatory during the Woldcon 1984

The Nonpareil

By Andy Hooper



It is the 25th of June, and what must pass for a fine day in Seattle, Washington. Broken and harmless clouds let the sun shine through the long hours of the afternoon, but the temperature lingers around 65 degrees F., and the air will never completely lose the clammy moisture of the morning. The last gasp of a Pacific hurricane passed through over the weekend, and weeds everywhere are having a party.

Between the Brothers Hildebrandt clouds that populate the sky, a deep voice is rolling down onto the ravines and ridges of the Emerald City, a familiar mechanical song that once filled the skies over Europe with majesty and suffering. A meticulously-restored and maintained Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress is swimming through the thick air above Seattle, where so many identical aircraft began their careers. The bass vibrato of its four huge Wright “Cyclone” radial engines can be felt as much as heard, as it wanders over Seattle, giving rides to a few venerable Air Corps veterans and their many friends and descendants.

This particular aircraft, known by the name “*Aluminum Overcast*,” was built under license at Lockheed Aircraft’s facility in Burbank, California, and completed on May 18th, 1945, too late to join the air forces operating over Europe. Now owned by the Experimental Aircraft Association, it is flying out of Seattle as a kind of “Bomber in Residence” through the early summer months, before returning to the EAA show at Oshkosh, Wisconsin in August.

The flights are as safe as one can make a ride in an antique airplane, but I feel just a little uneasy as I peer between the trees and clouds to see the tall tailfin float by again. Another flying B-17, *Liberty Belle*, made a forced landing in Illinois last year, and was totally destroyed by the fire that followed. *Aluminum Overcast* drifts overhead so slowly that it gives an impression of searching for something, like an aircraft lost in an old *Twilight Zone* episode, confronted with the 21st Century landscape below. These anxious fantasies come easily to mind this week, because I’m waiting for someone to get well, someone whose condition seems analogous to an aircraft trying to make its way home through a persistent fog. Stu Shiffman is one of my oldest friends in fandom, a longtime collaborator, correspondent and colleague. He suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on June 14th, and then a fall in its aftermath left him with a broken nose and knee. For the past 11 days, Seattle fandom has held its collective breath as we waited for him to recover from the effects of two life-saving surgeries; he is now well enough that doctors have been able to perform a third operation to repair his damaged knee, something which I take as an extremely hopeful development.

I think that you must know a person very, very well, if *their* life passes before your eyes when an illness or injury threatens them. My acquaintance with Stu goes back over 30 years; like so many great fanzine fans, I

knew him through his writing and art at least a year or three before meeting him face to face. Reading the “Celluloid Fantasia” articles he wrote for my “local” fanzine, the Madison, Wisconsin-based *Janus*, had a galvanic effect on me in my eofan stage. It was my first exposure to the playful, freaky “funny animal fandom” extant in the 1970s, and I became an avid consumer of work by artists like Stu, Ken Fletcher, Marc Schirmeister, Reed Waller and many others. Stu’s portrait of Donald Duck reimagined as the Consulting Detective looks down at my desk as I write this, under the title *Sherlock Dux*.

The sly “Flushing in 1980” Worldcon Hoax Bid of which he was a primary conspirator was another example of the invention that attracted me to Stu from afar. When I finally met him, at an early iteration of Wiscon, I was delighted to find he was even more entertaining than he was on paper. We cracked each other up; doing stupid voices and old jokes from Monty Python or Beyond the Fringe or the Goons, and sharing a love of the late Victorian British Empire to be found in the pages of adventure fiction and in movies starring Basil Rathbone and Errol Flynn. I had such a crush on him that I developed a foolish plan to make him Wiscon’s fan guest of honor, despite the convention’s legendary emphasis on feminism, women writers and female fans. He seemed to fit in well with the convention’s other guests, Chip Delany and Avedon Carol, but I was told there was no money in the budget to bring him to the event. I promised to raise the money needed myself, and was given permission to provisionally invite him on that basis. For the next three months, I greeted my fans with a demand for a \$1.00 donation toward this cause with the phrase, “Gimme a buck for Stu.” This activity no doubt led some casual observers to conclude that I was a panhandler using an oddly specific tactic to secure a free meal; but the impromptu fan fund met its goal neatly, and Stu created wonderful art for the program book’s cover to help justify the committee’s faith in his fitness.

Stu was also a remarkably patient guest of honor at a tiny convention in Racine, Wisconsin, organized by Chicago transplants Jim Rittenhouse and Rich Johnson. I think they *eventually* covered his expenses, but the small turnout made cash flow an issue on the weekend of the event. Stuck in a hotel in Racine for the weekend with relatively little going on, we spent most of the time trying to publish a one-shot fanzine with a mimeograph. This was already too late for the fans involved to possess the skills to compose on stencil, and we struggled to produce pasted-up dot matrix copy with an ozone-belching electro-stenciller, a machine that worked so slowly that we could have recited the contents to the con’s membership one by one in the time it took to finish cutting the stencils. Although the resultant fanzine was only intermittently legible, the highlight was the art that Stu had cut for it by hand. Being there while he created that was one of the more fannish moments of my life to date.

When Stu finally left New York, Carrie and I visited he and Andi in Massachusetts, and we drove to Corflu 7 in Manhattan together. Stu’s partnership with Andi was obviously an answer to so many things for him that it quickly became difficult to remember life before they were together. The time in Boston was only a relative interlude, however, and when they relocated to Seattle, it was a major incentive toward our own move here just a year or so later. Having Stu “in town” was a remarkable luxury; he has generously contributed to well over half of all the fanzines that I’ve published in the past 20 years. *Chunga* #19, which appeared in April of this year, had a cover illustration in which Stu merged references to the recent movie adaptation of *John Carter of Mars* with a character that Ross Chamberlain created for the Brooklyn Insurgents’ fanzine *Quip* a mere 3+ decades ago. It was a perfect salutation to that group’s latter-day survivors now living in Las Vegas, including Ross, and made the fanzine into a greeting card with several layers of reference to the discerning fan’s eye. When I put together my first genzine, *Take Your Fanac Everywhere* in the mid-1980s, the best part was Stu’s excellent “Leatherstocking Tales” cover illustration; so it’s understandable that I might have subconsciously anticipated that his art would eventually appear on my last fanzine as well, and the possibility that he might not be here to see it is disturbing to me.

Stu is best known for his cartoons and graphic art, which is particularly understandable given his 1991 Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist. But as I noted earlier, he first came to my attention as a writer, and it is my hope that much more writing will come from him in the future. After years of aspiration, he recently made several professional fiction sales, and I have every reason to believe that more are forthcoming. Of course. I am intimately acquainted with thousands of words of Stu’s professional output, as we worked together to generate

content for The Collecting Channel, the notorious Internet boondoggle that employed what seemed like half of fanzine fandom at the turn of the millennium. I became the site's Toys Editor in early 1999, and when I was asked to find several more writers to staff my "department," Stu's was the first name I thought of.

Madison fan Bill Bodden was my expert on action figures, and Seattle/Texas transplant A.P. McQuiddy took responsibility for die cast cars and models. Stu's formal job title was Editor for Antique and Vintage Toys, but in practice, he was my expert on toys inspired by characters of all kinds, from Bugs Bunny to Ming the Merciless. Paging through a series of Stu's articles was like reading the titles of a collection of Big Little Books: His stories were populated by Dick Tracy and Tarzan and Little Orphan Annie, all explicated by the licensed paraphernalia and playthings that they inspired. He was a diligent researcher, but his best asset was a native appreciation for the appeal of his subject matter. Stu really loved the lore of toys, the many American and International companies that made them, the artists and inventors who designed them, and the moments in history that they represent to modern memory.

Our generation has clung to childhood and adolescence more enthusiastically than any in cultural memory, and so it was easy for us to evoke the desire for all the toys that had eluded us as children, and to appreciate all the effort and art that had gone into making our childhood almost magically indulgent. All of us were good at reporting the salient facts around a toy franchise and its profile with collectors, the common and affordable models, the sought after short-packs and exclusives. But Stu was the best at explaining *why* something was cool and worth collecting, and awakening an interest in owning it in readers who had literally never heard of it before. I mean, he made *ant farms* sound cool.

Because the entire purpose of the Collecting Channel was to entice some large Internet portal into buying it, the entire endeavor had a very short shelf life. The four of us were together in the "Toy Department" for only a little over 9 months, but over that period we generated content at such a prolific pace that the experience seems to have taken far longer than that in my memory. Toward the end, we were sent to cover the 2000 New York Toy Fair, and that was a particularly vivid experience. We covered a gala celebration for a flamboyant fashion doll designer at an address on Central Park West, restlessly roamed the Javits center for three days, and even visited the old "Toy Center" buildings at 200 Fifth Avenue. And all of it was infinitely richer and more comfortable for the presence of a native New Yorker like Stu.

Since the demise of the Collecting Channel, we've both scrambled to find ways to make all that toy knowledge work for us, with limited success. Our subsequent collaborations have mostly been in the pages of fanzines, and seem to puzzle as much as they entertain. But even now, when I write something, anything, for fans or gamers or that elusive "general audience," I imagine Stu as being part of that audience. And the possibility that I might not be able to anticipate that any more, that he might not be around to read anything else I produce, is very disturbing indeed. So beyond the normal wishes that we hold for any other human being, I feel like I selfishly *need* Stu to get well, to recover from this experience and return to help me remember Baker Street and Peter Sellers and the Louis Marx Toy Company.

Aluminum Overcast is still out there in the afternoon glow, slowly chewing the air with its broad propellers. Sometime soon the ride will end, and the big silvery beast will settle onto the concrete at Boeing Field, and taxi up to the little terminal to unload its blinking, grinning passengers. Was that like the one you flew over Italy and Romania, Grampa? Tell me again, and I promise we'll remember it together.

Rob Hansen

STU SHIFFMAN,

TRAVELLING GIANT OF 1986



Stu stayed with Avedon and me when he visited London in September 1986, which is now more than a quarter of a century ago (jeez, we're all getting old). Back then, we still lived in our small flat on Greenleaf Road and, according to my diaries, we went out socializing pretty much every night he was with us. Here are a few reminiscences:

Saturday 27th Sept

Met Stu at Victoria station around 12.20, and we walked down to Joe Nicholas and Judith Hanna's flat in nearby Pimlico. Sitting around, we engaged in the usual fannish gossip and Judith fed us a rather peculiar cabbage soup. Afterwards we went for a walk, crossing the Thames and ending up in Battersea Park where we all admired the recently erected Peace Pagoda, which is an actual Chinese pagoda right there in the park. To our delight, a genuine Victorian fairground had also set up shop, one of whose rides was still steam-driven (it blew smoke rings through its stack). This was the same one Michael Jackson would later try to buy for his Neverland ranch. We all rode this and all almost lost our lunches, too. I said there was something peculiar about that cabbage soup.

Monday 29th Sept

Today Stu and I visited the 'Museum of the Jewish East End' on East End Road, which was in Finchley, oddly enough, London's Jewish community having long since moved from the East End to North London as they prospered. The museum was in a few rooms on the third floor of a Jewish school and was disappointingly sparse. Even so, according to a wall plaque the museum had two full-time workers paid for by the Greater London Council. In which case it may not have had them for too much longer, since Maggie Thatcher was in the process of abolishing the GLC.

Later, we took a bus-and-tube trip to Collingwood in order to visit the RAF Museum, which is one of the truly great London museums, IMO. It's a fair way from London's main tourist

areas so probably doesn't get as many foreign visitors as it deserves, but the sheer number and range of aircraft on display is breathtaking. The museum is split in two, with the Battle of Britain having its own separate hall, outside of which, and displayed on stands that are basically larger versions of those we mounted our model aircraft on as boys, were a Spitfire and a Hurricane. Since both are now valuable antiques it wouldn't be a good idea to leave such prized machines exposed to the elements, so these were actually fibreglass replicas. Sadly, by the time Stu and I had oohed and aahed our way through the main exhibition hall, there wasn't time to visit this.

That's all that my diary records for that particular day, which is surprising since it also appears to have included Stu's first meeting with Neil Gaiman. How I know this is that a couple of years ago, on "Making light," Neil mentioned that the first ever appearance in print of a cartoon by him was in one of Avedon's zines. That cartoon has been pinned to the wall over my desk for more than twenty years, and when he drew it Neil dated it: 29.9.86. Puzzled by this omission, I asked Neil about it:

"We used to see you pretty often back then so I suppose we could've all met up at a pub afterwards. Strange that my diary doesn't mention it if we did, though. The thing is, I was there when you drew that picture, and it was either in a pub or at a con. The nearest entry I can find that mentions you is a week earlier at UKCAC '86, the only comics con Avedon and I ever attended. Perhaps you drew it there and misdated it?"

Neil replied thus:

"Rob -- I remember meeting Stu with you, so my guess is that it was done in the pub that evening. I'm pretty sure I didn't do it at UKCAC. I interviewed Alan and Dave about Watchmen there, though. In a suit, as befitting the occasion."

In my defence I did see Neil pretty much every week back then. Also, he was still Neil Gaiman and not yet NEIL GAIMAN!!!

Right, just one more entry I think, since this is a reminiscence designed to bring back a few happy memories rather than an exhaustive trip account:

Thursday 2nd October

The first Thursday of the month and the day on which London fandom traditionally gathers in a central London pub during the evening. But before that Stu and I had another appointment. We'd arranged lunch with Len Talan, a cousin of Stu's who was in town doing some post-production work on a movie for children – "Hansel & Gretel" – that he had just directed in Israel for Cannon. Len turned out to be round, bearded and jovial, making up in girth what he lacked in height. We ate at a restaurant in Chinatown, and over a good hot'n'sour soup and a poor beef and bean sprouts, Len talked films. He told us what a nice guy David Warner is, how he and Morgan Fairchild had spent long hours playing cards at a hotel in Israel, and how Christopher Reeve had lost all his hair due to a nervous condition and would be filming the forthcoming SUPERMAN IV in a wig.

Afterwards Stu and I took in the Virgin Magastore (a huge record store now sadly no more) followed by lightning visits to Leadenhall Market (later to serve as the entrance to Diagon

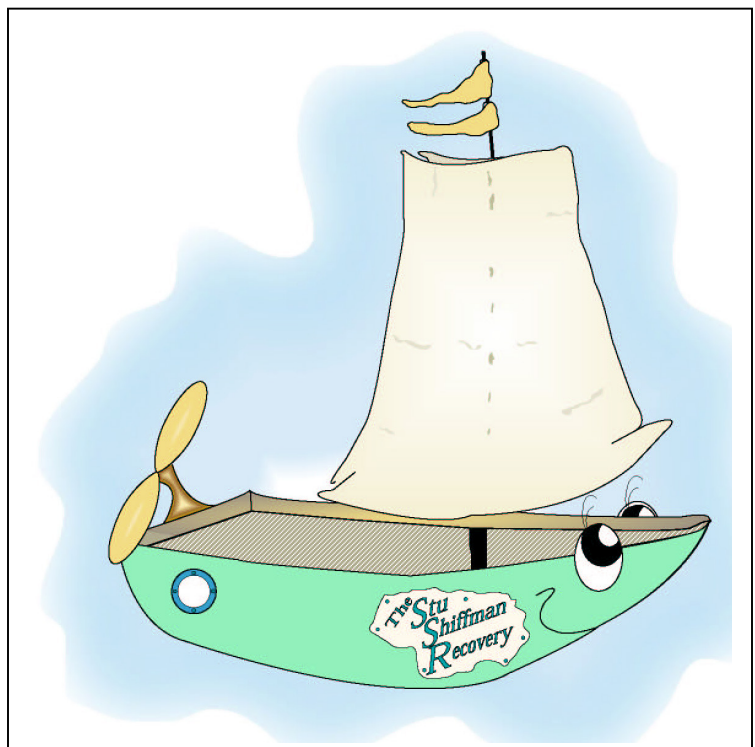
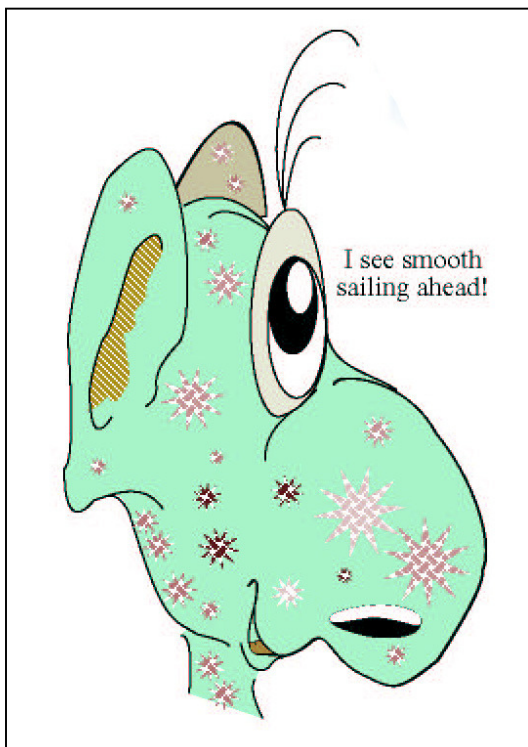
Alley in the Harry Potter movies), and the George - the only galleried pub left in London.

Following dinner with Avedon at an Indian Restaurant in Farringdon, we trooped over to the nearby One Tun pub, venue for the first Thursday meetings since 1974, though not to be for much longer. At one point meetings at the One Tun were the largest regular fannish meetings in the world with 300-400 people present, but not on this occasion. Lots of good company and great conversation followed, I'm sure, but all I noted in my diary was something that occurred in the street outside as people were leaving and someone was hit by a car. Here's that entry:

"The One Tun was less crowded than usual, the main item of note being that Paul Oldroyd ran over Arthur Cruttenden. At first, from the way he went over and his beer went all down Maureen Porter's back, I thought he'd been hit full on, but it turned out only his foot had been run over."

Never let it be said that London fan's don't know how to put on a show for for their visitors.

So anyway, get well soon, Stu, and be more careful getting out of bed, eh? We really don't want you to injure yourself any further.



The Baker Street Irregulars: a Peers' Portfolio

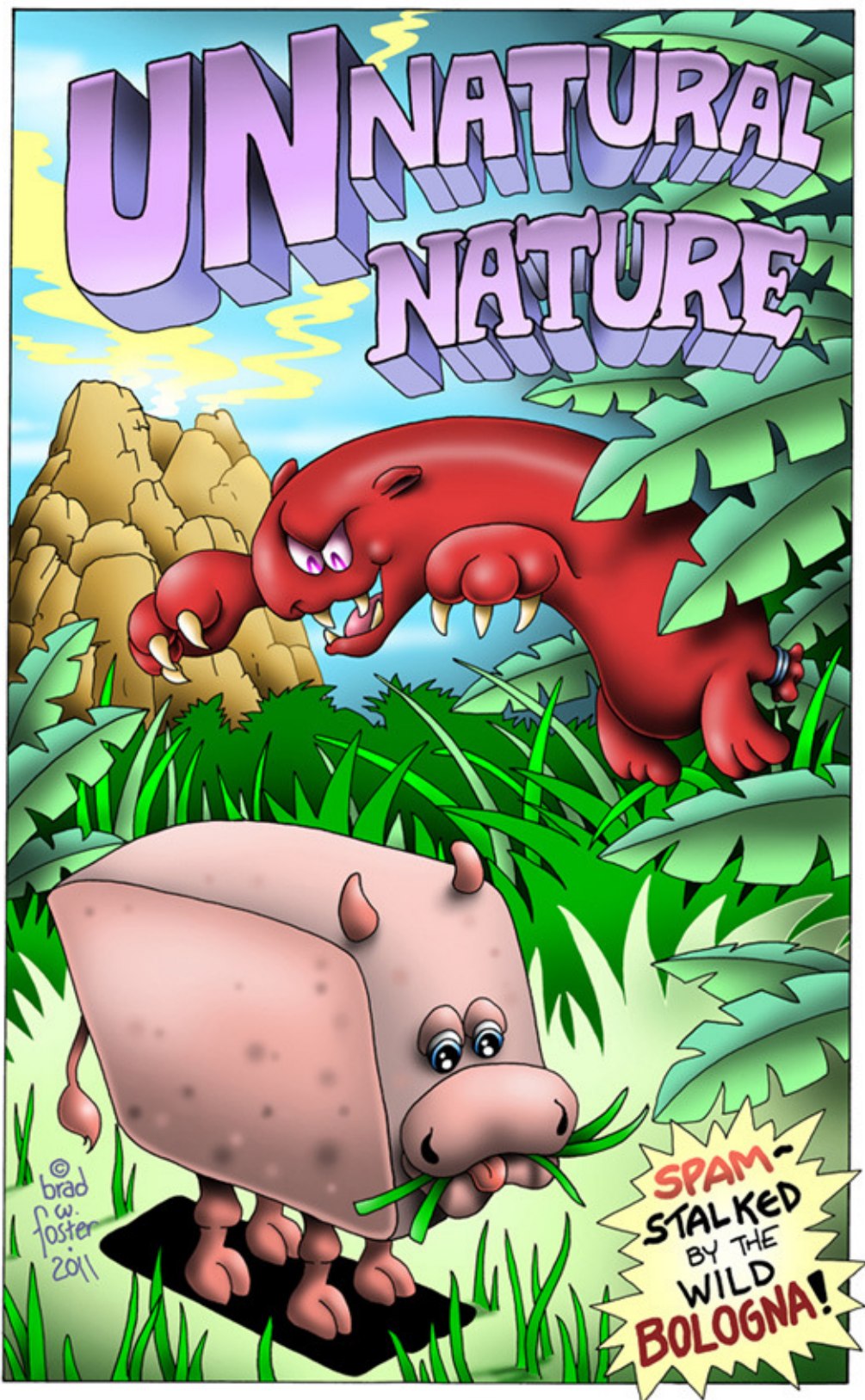


Suddenly Captain Lennox realized that someone had rearranged the rocks on the far side of the moon





The sense of wonder tends to evaporate when you realize that it's their version of McDonalds.



The Incomplete Whole Art of Detection: a Stu Shiffman Fanzine Gallery

