

THE DRINK TANK ISSUE 41 A SPECIAL LOOK AT MY UPCOMING NASPIC FURY!!!

**Friday:
Noon.
Computing
Science Fiction in
Mercer A.**

Basically, I'll be talking about how computers are always either over or underestimated by writers and filmmakers. I've spoken about this a lot before, but usually it's based on the movies so I'm studying a lot of books that feature computers.

So far, I've looked at a bunch of the classics. HAL is always talked about, and I'll be bringing him up because he's the legendary example in film and text. When Harley Was One, which I've never read before, is one that I'm certain to be talking about, though that means that I've got to finish it by the time I get off the plane. Of course, there's Grey Lensman with the computer that required a piece of the Antarctic to be cooled. There are a great many more on my bookshelf that I've never read (Computer War, Hardware, Software) and I'm probably going to have to break down and read some CyberPunk.

Oh, how I hate CyberPunk.

I'm on the panel with Jordin Kare who I've done at least one panel with in the past (possibly at Con Jose, but maybe at BayCon, though I haven't got any of my programme books to check). He works at Lawrence Livermore National Labs, which is a place I'm very familiar with.

Also on the panel are Ted Butler and Eve Gordon, neither of whom I know. I understand that Eve Gordon is 1/2 of the writer Gordon Gross, whose books sound pretty interesting. I hope this one goes well, but all I know is that I'm moderating, so it's got that going for it.

Saturday: Noon. Pseudonyms: A Rose By Another Name? in Elliot B.

I've been forced to use a pseudonym

or two in my day, so they put me on this panel. It's not a big secret that M, Jay and I have

shared various Johnny names over the years, so I've got a lot to say on this one. The most interesting thing is that I was pretty much forced to use a fake name for several years because work didn't want me to be publishing fiction along with historical stuff under the same name. I can't say I blame them.

On the panel with me are Mike Moscow (who writes as Mike Shepard). I've never read any of his stuff, but it sounds interesting. Grant C Carrington is also on the panel, though I can't find much info on him and since it's a pseudonym panel he may in fact be a she. The final panelist is Jane Johnson. There are far too many Jane Johnsons out there for me to figure out which one she is, but that would explain the fake name!

It should be interesting, and it's right at lunchtime, so I'll be twitchin' for some eatin'!

Saturday: 2. Technology Gone Bad in the Flight Room)

Everybody knows that I don't trust technology, so this panel is a good fit for me. There's a lot to say on this one, from Computers that kill (it's happened) to simple technologies like cars and guns.

With me will be James Killus (what a great name) who is an atmospheric scientist and writer. He'll have a lot of great stuff to say, I'm sure. Rhiannon Louve seems to be a fantasy author. Marc Laidlaw's on the panel too, and I know who he is. He's a writer (Dad's Nuke) and a game designer (Half-Life) and a nice guy from what I've heard. This one should be interesting, though these tend to turn into bitch sessions once the audience starts asking questions, so I'm glad I'm not moderating.

Sunday: Noon. Museum Earth in Room Emerald C.

This is one that has a lot of potential. The basic concept is that after the diaspora from Earth, what should we do with the Earth itself? Turn it into a museum or tourist destination? Perhaps polish it up nice and good and only bring it out for holidays and whenever the boss comes over? It's a weird topic, and being a museum curator, I know exactly why they put me on the panel, but I'm not quite sure what I'm going to do with it.

This panel has a line-up that I'm very impressed by. I always seem to be the weak link on panels like this. First off, it's got Larry Niven. I've done a few panels with Larry before, and he seems to have a problem staying awake on them. Still, he's always got something interesting to say and this sounds like it's right along his road. Alma Alexander seems to be another fantasy writer, but looks to have a background in microbiology. Donna McMahon seems to have written a lot about a future Vancouver, and from the looks of it, it goes right along with the topic. Once again, I'm the only non-author on a panel. Sigh.

Sunday: 7. Great SF/Horror Movies You Missed Last Year in the Chaps room.

I've got a lot to say. From all the shorts I've watched to features like Able Edwards and some of the strange horror films I've seen, it should be interesting. I usually get a couple of movie panels, but this year, it's just one.

With me are Daniel Kimmel, who is a Boston Film Reviewer (and a pretty good one), J. Steven York, who runs Multiplex of the Mind (sorta like FanboyPlanet) and Mimi Noyes, who is a Seattle-based artist. These are always fun because critics hate to agree with one another and love to fight about what was good

and bad.

Monday: Noon. The Battle for Fanzina in Satelite.

This is basically paper vs. eZine battle, with a lot more added, I imagine. I'm certainly on the eZine side, which is weird since I'll be passing out paper zines all weekend, but there's bound to be some brutal debate. I kinda hope that Victor Gonzalez is gonna be there since I know he'll have much to say.

TAFF Delegate Suzle Tompkins is also on the panel, and she's been doing fanzines since before I was born and damn good ones too. L. Pierce Ludke appears to be an artist, but I don't know much about him. Renee Brown also appears to be an author, though I think she may have had something to do with fanzines back in the day. This one could be really ugly or a lot of fun depending on how deeply the connection to paper/eZines is among the participants

Monday: 1. The Future of Future Studies in Mercer B.

This is a tough one to do. Futurism as a mode of study has been out of favor for a number of years. I've written a little in that area, but none of it really got any attention.

The panel also includes Andrew Nesbit III (whom I don't know, but I believe is an Oregon fan), James Killus again, and Anthony Pryor. Pryor is a writer and a human resources guy, so he'll have a take on the topic that I certainly would never think of.

So, as you can see, I'll be talking a lot and spending some time in the Fanzine Lounge, which will probably be the best place to find me if you're gonna be around CascadiaCon. Me and Evelyn and Gen will be in town a lot.

THE
PANELS I AM
ON AT THE SEATTLE
CASCADIACON THIS WEEKEND

My Seattle Trip

I've attended a total of two cons in Seattle for a total of 7 days in the same con hotel and surrounding food joints/casinos/campgrounds. That's all I know of the Emerald City. I could give you a great tour of the Doubletree Hotel right at the airport, I know that so well, but I've never even seen the most trap-like of tourist sites. Going with Gen and Evelyn I now must, and here's what I'm thinkin'.

On Friday, after my panel gets out at Noon, I'm thinking that it will be nice to have a bit of fun at the Aquarium. I love a good aquarium, and this one seems pretty cool.



The other location that I'm ga-ga for from the descriptions in the various travel books I've found is the Woodland Park Zoo. I used to go to the National Zoo all the time when I was living in Washington DC, but since then, I've maybe been to two zoos. It looks like one of those wonderful old-timey zoos that I've always loved.

There's also the Experience Music Project. I've been hearing about that place since 2003 and I've never made it over there. I love Frank Gehry, and his design is bizarre, and I've been told that as far as



museums go, it's pretty average. Still, it'd be fun to see all the cool guitars and such that they have and Evelyn would have fun in a couple of the sections. Gen is not thrilled.

Speaking of Gen not being thrilled, in that same ridiculous building is the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame. Paul Allen's love of SF is well-known and every time I've run into Greg Bear, I keep saying that I'll go to the museum the next time I'm in Seattle, and yet, I've never made it. There is a bit of a problem with loyalties (I'm on the Board of Advisors for the Science Fiction Museum that Ed Stiner runs) but still, if I can convince Gen to take Evelyn for some fun, I'll sneak a bit of a peek around the collection.

There's some fantastic movie memorabilia in their holdings.

There are a few things I know I won't be able to see. I'd love to do the Underground walk, but from what I've been told, it's a bit too scatalogical for younglings and a touch expensive. I've also come to realise that I probably

won't make it to the Space Needle. We'll almost certainly ride the monorail, and Gen and Evelyn will likely go up to the top, but I doubt I'll have the time to wait on the lines that I've heard form starting early in the day.

My Uncle Wayne will be coming up for a cruise on Friday and will take us out to dinner. I'm guessing that we'll go for seafood, since Gen and I love seafood and as long as there are fried shrimp Evelyn is quite happy. I'm figuring we'll combine it with a trip to Pike's Place Market with the low flying fish.

Other than that, I'll be living in the hotel. I'll sit a little fan table time for San Jose's 2007 Westercon and go to the fanzine lounge and just plain have a gay old time. I'm excited, as this is the first NASFiC I've ever been to since I was a nine-month old kid! (Though maybe I kinda think I may have been at one more)

EMAILED WORDS OF COMMENT SENT TO GARCIA@COMPUTERHISTORY.ORG BY MY GENTLE READERS

First Off, The Guy Who Keeps Insisting That He's Not That Active: Eric Mayer on Issue 39!

Hi,

I've been in a loccing slump. Due to the dog days of summer I suppose (we set records for heat five days running last week) -- that and the Worldcon season. Everyone, understandably, is printing con reports and how many times can I regale folks with the amazing story of how I've never been to an sf con?

Well that's not strictly true. One year, Dave Rowe and Carolyn Doyle drove me to Chambancon for an hour or so - - long enough to see Mary and walk into the dealer's room and say hello to Buck Coulson. I've always regretted that excursion because otherwise I could've challenged Harry Warner's record for consecutive years not attending a convention. I still argue I didn't have a membership, attended no events, and wasn't really "in attendance" but I guess my record would come with an asterisk.

You and Roger Maris, Eric with that strange asterisk haunting you. Just showing up at a con hotel and having one or more conversations counts as being there. That's the basis I use since it means that I was at a lot more cons than I actually officially attended.

Living on a cash basis can be difficult. I've done so for years. People will give you funny looks when you pull out a roll of twenties to pay for a computer. No retailer's ever refused to deal with me but it is sometimes obvious they'd rather not. Anyone without plastic is suspect. And maybe deranged. Credit cards are fine in their place but it's pitiful how many people live most of their adult lives enslaved by the things. People seem to look at them like

magic lamps. Swipe and your wish will be granted. Only the genie then proceeds to ride their backs for eternity. And it is frightening to think how much power over our lives this sort of thing gives to private concerns whose only interest is making money. Not much good to have political freedoms if, for example, you can be denied shelter (or food or clothing or medical care) by being barred from financial dealings.

All good points. I've never been denied housing for any reason. There are excellent laws about what California Landlords can and can't offer you a place for and they've always gone my way, it seems. One thing that I learned is that a negative credit report can not be the only thing that keeps you from getting a place. It can be a reason used to give someone else who is trying to get the place to be chosen, but it can't actually deny you the place. They can require a co-signer, though.

Of course it is a good thing I'm not a traveler. It'd be all but impossible to deal with hotels, rental car companies etc without credit cards. I couldn't manage the travel necessary to go to sf cons even if I wanted to, but it'd be disingenuous to use that as an excuse.

Eric

I've never had trouble with Cash getting hotels. I usually pay in cash up front and don't have them turn on the Pay-Per-View or phone. That's quite easy. Rental cars can be hard even if you have a debit card. The only group (as of Sept.1st) that accepts Debit Cards for rentals is Budget. I've been using them for a few years now and they are always happy to give my free upgrades. Sadly,

they may stop honouring them as well since the other one that did, Dollar, stops on Sept 1.

Thanks Eric!

And Now, Peter Sullivan Explodes across your screen!

Dear me, Chris - first of all Benny Hill, and now Most Haunted. I thought that the only bits of Brit TV that most Americans ever watched was Masterpiece Theatre and the like? I've never seen Most Haunted myself, but A. has seen bits of it several times and finds it quite funny. Especially their occasional "Most Haunted Live" programmes, where they spend the whole weekend waiting for a ghost to turn up, basically vamping in the meantime. It's shown over here on Living TV, a cable channel that does quite a bit of original programming - compared to most cable channels, anyhow. Of course, I've only just noticed the ironic potential of a TV programme about ghosts being on a channel called Living TV. If you liked Most Haunted, you should also seek out "I'm Famous and Frightened," which is, I gather, basically the same format but with some Z-list celebs thrown in as well.

I've watched a lot of Brit TV over the years. Monty Python, Are You Being Served, that weird BBC news programme, a few episodes of old UK wrestling (like Big Daddy Crabtree for example) and even some UK sports.

There is nothing I love more than Z-List Celebrities. What constitutes a Z-Lister in the UK? I know in the US it's Reality Stars, Pete Rose, Wrestlers (Except for The Rock, Stone Cold Steve Austin and maybe Chris Jericho and John Cena), Michael Ian Black (of The State and Stella) and Andy Dick.

The FedExFurniture story was covered on Slashdot. The Slashdotters were heavily against FedEx, as to be expected. I'm probably more like you - whilst it's clearly not intended as "passing off," there is the

potential for some misunderstanding. Still a cool concept, whatever.

I really wanna know how comfortable that bed is to sleep on. I've actually jumped into a giant pile of padded envelopes before and that was fun! You know, I don't read much of Slashdot. Once in a while I will pick up on something, but not that often. I'm a bad tech geek.

Can't really comment on Murderball, as I haven't seen it. But it's interesting how documentaries seem to be the hot new thing in cinema at the moment. It seems that you can like or loath Fahrenheit 9/11 (and most people seem to do one extreme or the other), but it certainly seems to have raised awareness of the documentary as a saleable format in Tinseltown.

I'm very happy documentaries are starting to get real notice. Michael Moore can take soem of the credit, but really, it's digital cameras that have done it. You see, it's now much cheaper to make a documentary, so more folks are going out and capturing interesting subjects. Distributors, especially the smaller ones, are seeing that they can buy them cheap and get them smallish releases that run for a long time, which can be especially long if you go targeted (like they did with The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill). The great docs that are making money right now (in the US) are Murderball, The Aristocrats, Mad Hot Ballroom, and Born in Brothels. They'll all be out on DVD soon. One that is out on DVD is Double Dare, which I'll write about sooner or later.

What LetterCol would be complete without the sage words of Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

Had a couple of days of daytime work, and a couple of interviews, so I haven't been at home much, which means issues 38, 39 and 40 of The Drink Tank have arrived, and I haven't been able to touch them. Time to

catch up!

I'm always glad to see an issue where you catch up on a few at a time because it means that I've got more pages!

38...At a Worldcon, there usually are weird things afoot. You usually don't find out about them until the select group decides to tell everyone about it. The British Worldcon had the home advantage, the LA Worldcon has the home advantage...too bad that didn't work too well in Toronto. Rob Sawyer did get a Hugo and an Aurora that weekend, but that's as far as the advantage went.

I love Bobby J, but I wouldn't have given him best novel that year. I can't remember what I had picked, but it wasn't my fave of his novels.

Dave Langford did well, as was expected. He must have close to 25 or so rockets...Hazel must get sick and tired of seeing them all over the house.

Some years ago, a local dealer brought in some of the original Thunderbirds marionettes for display. They were great to see, and I saw the packaging they came in, but only two actually went on display. Two more were heavily damaged by the transport company. The packages looked like they may have been dropped...from a height, several times.

We see things like that all the time when stuff is sent to the museum. Shippers, even bonded art shippers, are careless and cavalier and hard to pin down for repair costs.

Candy means anything you really want, but get told you shouldn't or can't have. In this story, it also might mean a little revenge for all that denial. And in the long run...what do you really, really, REALLY want? Hmm? Great little story...

When Jay sent it to me back in 2003, I wrote back that the story scared the hell out me. It still does because my

personality is one that would be easily taken by The Candyman.

Why do American tourists liken any foreign money with a colour in it to Monopoly money? Is this a comment on your own boring, beige-green bills? When the new Andrew Jackson \$20 was printed, did you laugh at the hints of pastel on it? Why is anything different bizarre? Okay, Frank, I want answers...

Actually, we did laugh at the new money when it came out. Still, I only recognise Emperor Norton money as my legal tender...

Yeah, I wanted to be at Worldcon, too. We didn't have much of one here, and we couldn't get to Boston and Glasgow. Yvonne and I have promised ourselves that we will try as hard as we can to get to LA. We figure we're going to need to save about Can\$2450 to overcome the exchange and get to Anaheim, stay on the cheap, and get home, probably via Buffalo. We really want to see the LA folks again, and finish up our agency.

I'll buy ya both dinner one night too...so long as you keep LoCing me!

Is blogging the new fanzine? The fanzines I'm used to foster a community. I would think it's tough to foster a community if everyone is using a pseudonym. I also think it's very difficult to break into blogging if you don't already know everyone there. Is there a fannish blog directory that would make this easier for people?

That's a really good point. There are plenty of fans who use pseudonyms (like me at times) but almost everyone whose blog I read is usually referred to by their real name, even if their blog name is different. There should be a directory. Maybe I'll mention that to Cheryl Morgan next time I see her.

I remember an interview with Cassandra Peterson, and how she gets into the Elvira costume. She said she uses a special

brassiere she said would “put cleavage on a dog”. Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet are indeed from the Ottawa area. It is very difficult for a Canadian actor to find work in California, and has been at any time, Governator Ah-nuld notwithstanding. One website I am always on is www.mandy.com, Mandy Steele’s website that advertises acting opportunities all over the world.

Kate Kelton has proven that very point about the difficulties of Canadian actors getting US gigs. It took her the better part of six months to get her stuff in order.

39...I didn’t get myself a credit card until I was 40 because that’s when I figured I would need one, and I was right. I didn’t even get a computer until I was convinced I needed one. I figured I was the nightmare of the manufacturer, namely the educated consumer. I have heard about stores that do not take cash, but debit or credit cards only.

My parents declared bankruptcy right around the time I was two or three and they finally got their affairs in order about five years later, so I’ve seen what you have to do to make wise financial decisions...but sadly I’m often over-drawn myself. Still, I think people, especially Americans, tend to live on plastic too often.

Worldcon report...I remember one of the greatest criticisms of the Worldcon in Glasgow in 1995 was that any decent hotels that North Americans would like were in the heart of town and a distance away from the SECC. Now there’s a Hilton close by, Well, that’s progress. Those Klingons with kilts have been at the local Trekcon in Toronto, and nice folks they are, too.

Yeah, I heard that, but I also understand that the big trouble this time was the outrageous price of WiFi access. A friend of mine wants to do a short film about the Altamont concert, but instead of Hell’s Angels, they hire Klingons.

The NASFiC...never been to one, although I supported an effort to bring NASFiC to Detroit in 1985. Two local fans, Alex von Thorn and Marah Searle-Kovacevic, are on the committee. They are also connected with the Chicago in 2008 bid. Might have to cough up some pre-sup money for that.

I haven’t heard much about the 08 bids, but I know Chicago had some issues with their last WorldCon.

There are actually several currencies in Canada (and only Canadians will get this)...besides the Canadian dollar, there’s Canadian Tire bills and TTC tokens. One national chain of automotive/sporting goods stores, Canadian Tire, issues their own scrip, usually 5% of whatever you purchase is given to you in Canadian Tire money. Also, TTC tokens, aluminum tokens usable on the buses and subway, are these days worth about \$2 each when purchased in multiples, and I’ve seen people use them as money.

40...The Drink Tank is having a mid-life crisis? Maybe it’s getting male-pattern baldness, too. I’ve seen the ads for Murderball...have you ever seen a cartoon called Quads!? Weird, sad, sexy and strange, all in one. By all means, send me the Steampunk edition. No NASFiC for me this year, too many conventions too far away.

Gonna fold up here, and get it to you. Guess CascadiaCon isn’t too far away on the calendar, so have a great time there, and tell us all about it when you get back.

I’ll have LOTS of coverage after I get back.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

The Drink Tank Seattle Pre-Flight Issue 40 was written by Christopher J. Garcia, Lloyd Penney, Eric Mayer and Peter Sullivan. I’ll have Issues of Claims Department (without the cover) and The SteamPunk Issue at NASFiC and will send the other SteamPunk issues in two weeks