

I am known as  
The Kicker  
Of  
Elves

THE  
**DRINK**  
**TANK**

I am also  
Known as  
the Angel  
Crusher

ISSUE THIRTY SIX  
*Garcia@computerhistory.org*



James  
'Scotty'  
Doohan,  
dead at  
85

There's  
a part of me  
which always  
knew this day  
would come,  
and another  
part which  
always de-

nied it. Scotty, the most lovable of the original Star Trek crew, dead. I've always loved Scotty, and I got a few chances to meet him over the years.

The first time I was about ten and my Pops took me to a Creation Con at Ricki's Hyatt. He was there and answering questions and I asked if he would recite the captain's opening from the original Trek series as Scotty. He did and the room went nuts. Then he did it in his imitation of Shatner and I've never heard a Trek crowd go more nuts.

When I was con-crashing, I made my way into one of the Creations in Boston and actually managed to get to the Green Room by posing as a Hotel employee looking into the catering needs. I only stayed for a few minutes, but I did get to talk to James for a bit, including getting his autograph on a

paper plate.

Despite being forever known as Scotty, Doohan was a fine Canadian actor whose TV credits were long even before Star Trek (Space Command, several of the old anthology shows) and a lot of TV after Star Trek. He did get pigeonholed into the SF genre for the most part after Trek, but he did have a few series that he managed to be a part of. He did some voice-over work, which was perfect for Doohan as he was a master of dialects. He played several computer voices over the years.

Often forgotten about Doohan is the fact that he was a WWII vet with the Royal Canadian Artillery Division. He lost part of his middle finger in the D-Day invasion. I know he was fairly well-decorated for his part. He was hit six times with machine gun fire, and the reason he lived to tell the tale was a silver cigarette case that he carried with him that stopped a bullet that would have pierced his chest.

And so, another legendary TV performer is gone. I'll always remember him as the reason I loved so much of Star Trek.





If Band Geeks, the folks all the cool kids mocked, had members that they thought of as Band Geeks, those would be Surf Rock musicians. So many Surf Rockers are only known for finger-shattering guitar work, but there is so much more to surf rock. Sadly, a lot of folks call the Beach Boys and Jan & Dean Surf, which I just don't get. When I hear the words Surf Rock, I think of The Ventures, Dick Dale and His Fabulous Deltones, The Phantom Surfers, and the finger-melting guitars of Los Straitjackets. The heavy reverb, mas-



sively wet sounds of those guys are my idea of what Surf Rock is, and it's also why I listen to far too much of

it.

Perhaps the reason so many Surf bands are branded as the nerds of the music scene is because there are so many genre surf acts. There are tons of science fiction acts, like Man or AstroMan or The Del Ninos, as there are a few that claim to be aliens (Far-Off Planet), Robots (Pursued by Robots, not to be confused with Captured by Robots), Universal Monsters (The Legen-



dary Invisible Men) and even politicians (the 1980s act Ron, Dick, Jimmy & Gerry). The love of science fiction and horror shows in so many of these bands, but the one that gets my vote for the best of them is The Ghastly Ones, those hard rockin' undertakers of the planet surf.

The Ghastly Ones are a band out of the mythical cauldron known as Southern California. Few would argue that SoCal was the hot bed for B-Horror and SF in the 1950s and 60s, with several TV hosts like Vampira, Jeepers Creepers, and Ghouлита running programmes with those legendary horror films and doing brief bits between the films and after commercials. Vampira was the first and best known of them, though she wasn't actually on the air for too long and she is better known for her time as one of Ed Wood's actors in Plan 9 From Outer Space and she also did a few other movies. This atmosphere certainly made LA a likely site for horror fans to be built.

Of course, Surf Rock originated in SoCal, in and around the beach communities. The music scene in the early 1960s

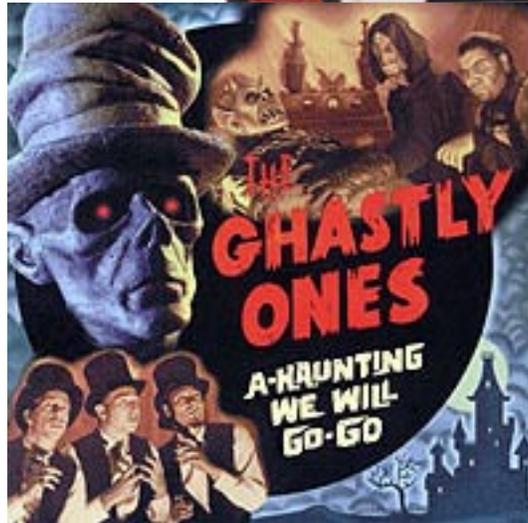
was an eclectic blend of styles, but surf was the most dominant, with guys like Dick Dale. Many claim that he invented Surf Rock with his tune "Let's Go Trippin'", though as is the case with all first, there are arguments. No one can deny that Dale really launched

the genre and made it the de facto sound of Southern California.

In the early 1980s, there was a resurgence of horror hosts led by Elvira: Mistress of The Dark. There was also a small return for Surf with Dick Dale returning after a several year retirement and several bands had formed around this time that brought some new found glory to the genre. I am firmly of the belief that these two things happening at the same time are responsible for the rise of Genre Surf bands and specifically for The Ghastly Ones.

I heard someone once describe these guys as the house band for 1313 Mockingbird Lane. I would not argue. The combo formed in the mid 1990s when a surge of great new surf bands rose from the Ocean like Purple Haze. They quickly grew a following among both the surf and the horror community. The guys adopted horror-themed names, which made me smile when I first heard them. There's Dr. Lehos on guitar, Sir Go-Go-Ghostly on the bass and Baron Shivers on Drums. The tradition of assuming different names goes back to those days when horror hosts would call themselves fun names that were typically puns.

And I think they fit the outfits better.



You see, the Ghastly Ones are the hard rocking undertakers of surf rock, which means that they dress like old school undertakers during their performances. To paraphrase the guitarist for BloodHag, They make up for their gimmick by not sucking.

With their highly entertaining stage show and their sweet tasty riffs, they caught the eye of White

Zombie front man and the director of films like *The Devil's Rejects*, Rob Zombie. Rob put out their first CD on his *Zombie-A-Go-Go* records. *A Haunting We Will Go-Go* was a great album with the amazing and instantly recognisable voice of Zacherley, NYC Horror host and star on the horror convention circuit. He narrates a bit, and there's a great bit about Dr. Diablo and his *Go-Go Ghouls* (more on them later) but the music is the highlight. The guys make spooky surf, with is influenced by everything from Link Wray to Disneyland's *Haunted Mansion* soundtrack. And, as if they were creating an album just for me, they have a track called *Campeones de Justicio* all about El Santo, Mil Mascaras and Blue Demon, three of the greatest Mexican Masked Heroes of All Time! Sweet touch. The entire album is perfectly listenable, especially is you're planning a beach party to be attacked by atomic robots or zombies controlled by a sinister mage of one sort or another.





The Ghastly Ones also have their own Go-Go-Ghoul in residence. Kate Carter is a lovely young lady...until she joins The Ghastly Ones on stage. She then becomes the undeniable Necrobella, the dark dancing fool

who shakes it like a bad martini at The Ghastly One's shows. She's one of those characters that inhabit a band, like the guy in The Mighty, Mighty Bosstones who just stood around and danced and was called, simply, the Bosstone. She adds a giant dollop of atmosphere and fun and really gets into the part.

Sadly, immediately after I first discovered them, they took an extended leave. While I played their album over and over, I thought long and hard about how to get them back. Thankfully, no goat sacrifice was needed and they recently returned and have been playing great shows. They've even released another album and a sweet t-shirt I have already ordered. Now if I could just get my own Go-Go-Ghoul...



## **MAKE ART NOT WAR**

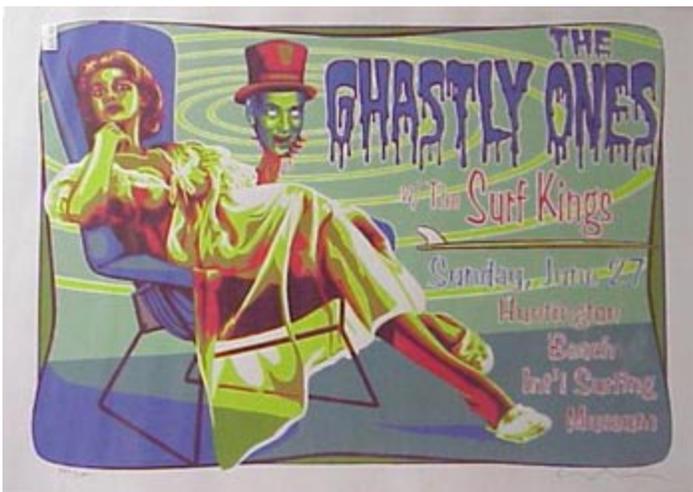
*by*  
**Frank Wu**

Artists and terrorists have a lot in common. We both see the world as it is, and say "Why not?" We long for transformation.

Politically, many artists lean left, far left (I'm more moderate, but I sympathize with my art friends' politics). We are troubled by the idea that the U.S. is the last world power standing, politically, militarily, economically and culturally. Though this may change in the next decade with the economic rise of China, the present situation is fundamentally unfair.

American corporations and culture spread like cancers, stamping out religions and traditions which have stood for centuries. The American military swaggers across the planet, toppling governments and setting one nation against another. In America sex is used to sell everything, and women are objectified.

Curiously, these left-wing positions are remarkably similar to those held by many terrorists. Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Masri, for example, grew up admiring the west. Later he fought the Soviets in Afghanistan, but felt betrayed by America when the U.S. disarmed and abandoned their Afghani friends after the war. Now he leads a radical mosque and says: "When a president stands up before the planet and says an American comes first, he is only preaching hatred. When a president stands up and says we don't honor our missile treaty



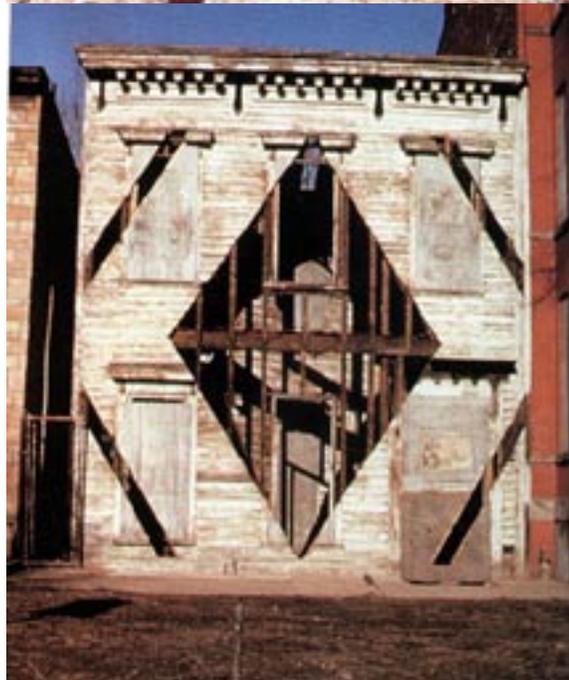
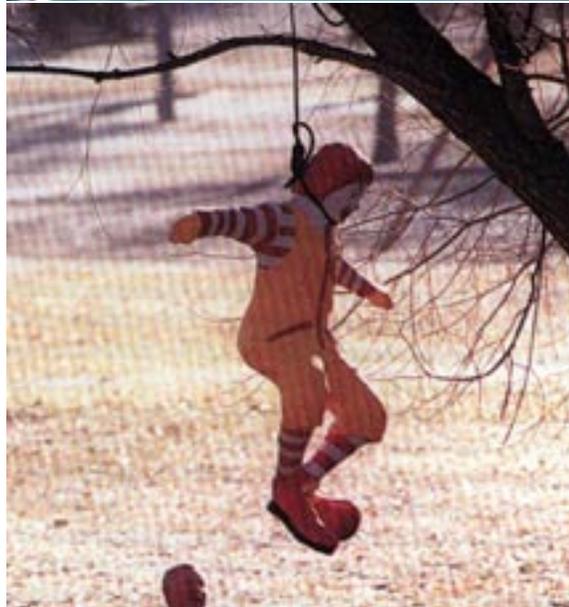
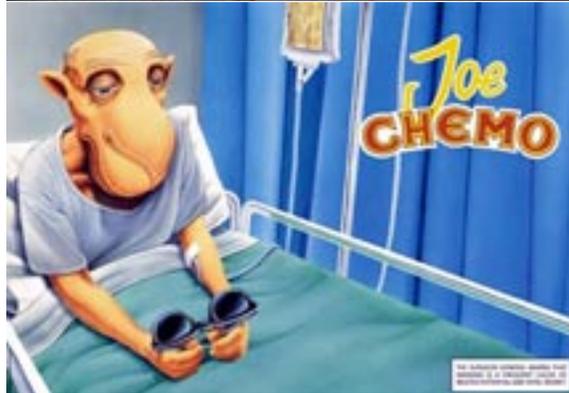
with the Russians, he is only preaching arrogance. When he refuses to condemn what's happening in Palestine, he is only preaching tyranny.”

(Christian Science Monitor, Sept. 27, 2001). As another example, it's been said that what finally pushed Osama bin Laden over the edge was the sight of a Coca-Cola billboard on his way to Mecca.

The key question for our times is: How do we respond to injustice? Do we repay evil with evil? Or do we repay evil with good? I have lived my life trying not to be judgmental, but it's hard to see the justification of blowing up innocents in subway cars, buses and skyscrapers. Yes, the terrorists have legitimate grievances. Yes, this world is messed up. Yes, I love America and think it is the best country in the world, but I also see its faults and the troubles we have stirred up across the planet. Most of all, I am troubled by the wasted potential - American power could be used to do great good across this planet, but isn't.

So what do we do? While artists and terrorists may agree on some principles, the methods are opposite. Artists seek to make the ugly beautiful, terrorists want to make the beautiful ugly.

By nature I am not a martyr, I am an artist. I have tried to express some of my political views in my



art, though I freely admit that most of the time people “don't get it.”

Oh well. At least I am not alone. There is a growing movement of artistic dissent in America. Call it what you will: Guerilla art, culture jamming, arty disobedience. Major targets are billboards and corporate symbols. [It's very disturbing that most Americans recognize fewer than 10 plants but more than 1000 corporate logos (Adbusters magazine, May/June 2001).] Primary weapons are paint, flowers and an anarchic Dadaist sense of humor.

In Billings, Montana, a Ronald McDonald statue was stolen from a Ronald McDonald house and lynched from a tree, later to be cut down by the police (Adbusters, May/June 2001). In 1996, after his father nearly died from smoking, psych professor Scott Plous of Wesleyan University invented the spoof character “Joe Chemo,” a camel dying of lung cancer (Adbusters, Winter 1996). In Oxford, England, a billboard declaring “Get a free minidish and digibox” was appended to say: “Or get a life. TV Turn Off Week, 23-29 April.” (Adbusters, July/Aug 2001). Another fellow was upset that the



woods by his house were being sold off for development, at \$1500 an acre. He added a zero to the price on a billboard and the landowner didn't notice. Thus, with a spray can he'd managed to hold off urbanization for years.

Are you getting any ideas?

An art group called Dispute Resolution dumped buckets of carnations on a Los Angeles cop car (Adbusters, Oct/Nov 2000). This particular act of creative resistance is a favorite, as it echoes the Vietnam-era incident wherein a peaceful protestor put flowers in the rifles of the National Guardsmen surrounding them. Also, Symantha V. of San Bruno, California, who regularly hears gunshots from her house, planted jasmine along the street. Now fathers with sons on their shoulders stop to say hello, joggers pause to note how pretty the flowers look, and the whole neighborhood is transformed by a few plants.

How about some more thoughts for you?

Too much traffic on your street? Kids in danger of getting run over? How about making dangerous-looking fake "speed bumps" from strips of old foam mattresses, cut up and painted with yellow and black stripes? Or making fake glass with corn syrup, sugar and cream of tartar (heat to 220 F, then boil for 45 min, reaching a final temp of 300 F as you reduce, then pour into cookie sheets to cool, and drop onto streets). It's harmless, but it looks just like glass shards. And who'd want to drive their BMW

at fifty mph through your neighborhood over broken glass? (Adbusters, Sept/Oct 2001).

Or how about...

In the 1970's, sculptor Charles Simonds would build miniature dwellings, styled after Pueblo Indian buildings, in holes and cracks in the crumbling walls of SoHo. Kids and neighbors were recruited to help, and later surprised and delighted passersby would stop and marvel. The group Art Attack used to don black night gear and literally hack into the decrepit urbanscape. They would carve geometric patterns into the faces of abandoned buildings (Artbyte magazine, Nov/Dec 2000). In both cases, the ugly made beautiful.

Of course, there are limits to the effects of guerilla art. Joseph Heath and Andrew Porter wrote that the marketplace doesn't thrive on corporate-sponsored conformity - as many culture-jammers believe - but rather on individuals' desperate needs to distinguish themselves, even in ridiculously trivial ways. New clothing shops will arise spontaneously to cater to those who want to be non-conformists like everyone else, or to those who (to paraphrase Sting) go around pretending to be hip and angry, but really aren't angry about anything.

One could also question the ultimate futility of these efforts in raising consciousness. A bomb in a backpack is front-page news for weeks or months; painting a clever slogan across the face of a Britney Spears poster is unlikely to even get you a mention in an unread blog. Yet

the fight must go on. Do not be dismayed, for this is war and sometime you win, sometimes you lose.

Vandalizing stop signs is a time-honored tradition. In the seventies one by house used to say "Stop Disco! Disco Sucks!" Now they say "Stop the War!"

Thousands of people will see them, and maybe those signs will make people think about what's happening in this world. Maybe. It only takes a spark to get a fire going.

Hate begets hate. Wars beget wars. But art begets art. And love begets love. And the world awaits transformation.

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### ***Why I like the Disney of Olde***

I've become a film history junkie over the years. It's not hard to believe considering I pepper The Drink Tank with all sorts of film history tidbits and fun. This week, I realised that the only company that really gives a damn about their own history is Disney. While every company looks into its back catalogue to find ideas for new movies, only Disney regularly releases DVDs of its historic materials. The Walt Disney Treasures series is a great one, and the Behind the Scenes at Walt Disney Studio disk was a great purchase if only for one segment: the little-seen feature film *The Reluctant Dragon*.

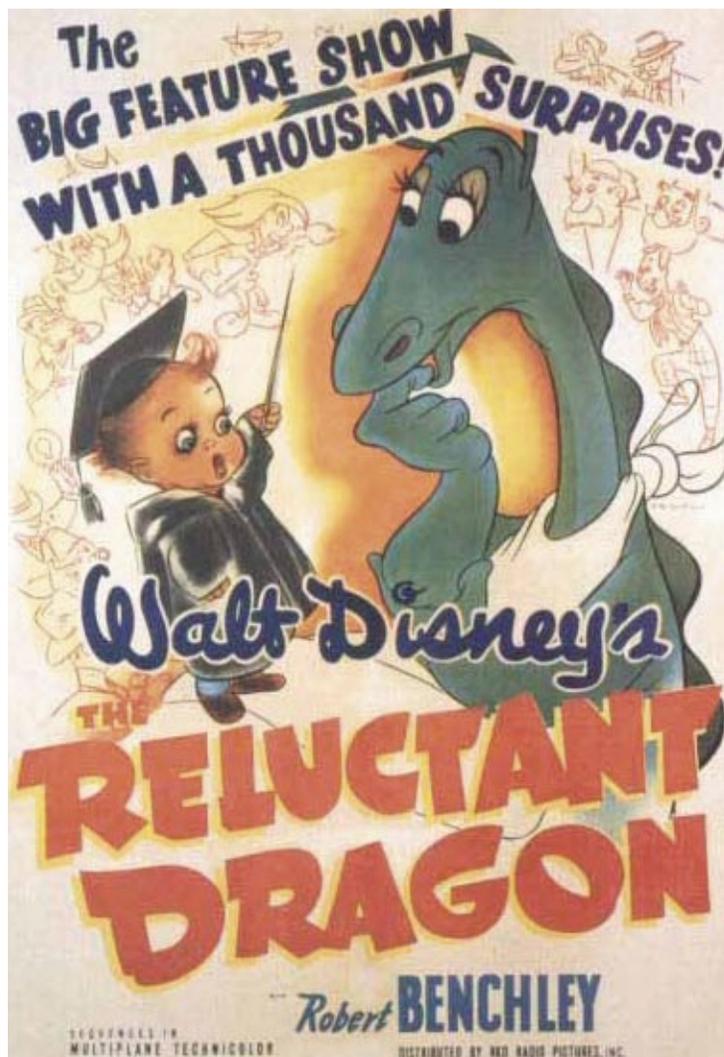
The fact is, without sixty years of history, *The Reluctant Dragon* wouldn't have inspired much in viewers. Disney had always done behind the scenes

shorts, but a feature was a stretch. It failed to make back the Six Hundred large it cost to make it, though it was still a bargain at the time and the deal they reached with RKO Radio Pictures to distribute it helped Disney get the cash they needed for films like *Bambi*. The audience thought that it would be another feature-length cartoon, much like *Pinochio* and all the other films had been, but it was mostly Robert Benchley, a remarkably funny little man, walking around and finding out how movies are made.

The beauty of *The Reluctant Dragon* is that we get to see how films were made in a time when Hollywood was less corporate. We see a world that is totally different from the animation studios of today. Even Pixar isn't as laid back as Disney Studios seem in this one. Of course, you don't show the work-a-day world in a documentary designed to give a glimpse of your studio, but there seems to be a legitimate difference

between this WDS and the one that Walt showed on the Disneyland TV show in the 1950s and 60s.

Robert Benchley is a funny guy in the way that so many of the humorists of the 1930s and 40s were funny, that is, hardly at all to modern viewers. He does a remarkably good job introducing us to the concepts that the guys are showing. He plays dumb, as most of the things they showed were well-known even by that point, but he gets across the ideas in a way that you don't feel talked down to. He was the perfect patsy, in a fashion, as he seemed to be following along remark-



ably well and still acting enough to keep up appearances. When he stumbles into a room full of voice actors, he plays along and gets silly in just the right way to make folks think that he's a mensch of a guy, and he is. The voices of Clara Cluck and Donald Duck both appear in the film and Benchley plays remarkably well with them.

The most impressive scene of the film is when Benchley wanders into the room where a group of animators are working on Baby Weems. This is a great scene and the cartoon, done in storyboard fashion, is the gem of the film.

Really, the Reluctant Dragon section of the film is pretty weak, though animation buffs will probably enjoy it. The behind-the-scenes stuff was funny, and when they showed the paint room, you even saw a bit of why Dali thought that much of the Disney animation fit in as Surrealism. I've always loved watching films about films, and even with some of the obvious fakery of The Reluctant Dragon, the film's documentary portions and the Baby Weems and Casey Jr. segments are well worth checking out. I present as my case, Evelyn, aka The Little One. She loved it, loved the paint mixing part and laughed at Benchley's journey, but lost interest when The Reluctant Dragon part came to the screen. Now that's good commentary.



***Emailed Words of Comment  
sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org  
by my Gentle Readers***

***Let's open things up with a bit of  
TDT Favourite Helen Spiral!***

Hi Chris,

My favourite computer in film or television is Orac, the electronic sulking machine, an LEDs-in-a-fishtank portable AI/computer in the later series of Blake's 7. Although the tape-reels-and-flashing-lights-with-unlikely-sound-effects traffic computer in The Italian Job has to run Orac a very close second. The worst computers in sci-fi are all computers which print their current operations on their displays in plain English, in oversized flashing letters, for no apparent reason. They're closely followed by any computer which talks unnecessarily and then achieves spontaneous AI.

***I love Orac. It shows up in the short Blake's Junction 7 too, which really made me laugh. I can't believe I forgot The Italian Job!***

I'm a bit of a geekgirl and in my home there are, among other cool tech, a Commodore 64, an Apple SE 30, and an Apple Powerbook 150, which all still work perfectly. My favourite computer game was Jeff Minter's Revenge Of The Mutant Camels on the Commodore 64. Now freely downloadable from the interweb along with many other classic C64 games.

***Geekgirls rule! There's an annual event that my co-worker Sellam runs called the Vintage Computer Faire, where everyone brings their old machines and there are lots of great C64 games to play. I judged the competition last year, then loaded up Seven Cities of Gold and lost myself for a while.***

Like you, Chris, I've been accused of laughing inappropriately at films. I laughed throughout Wargames, the movie about global thermonuclear war, when I first saw it at the cinema and one of my companions was so annoyed she vowed she'd never go to the cinema with me again! Although I should probably point out that she's half-French and it would be rather more difficult to extract an accusation of inappropriate humour from a Brit. In fact, in light of recent events, it occurs to me that most Brits would probably think humour was the most appropriate response to global

thermonuclear war.

***I've come very close to being thrown out of movies. I've also made terrible jokes that get me in trouble. One, about a sequel to Schindler's List, has earned me a special place in the fiery inferno.***

Your proposed all "are you gonna finish that" ish would be like shooting fic in a barrel. Writing stories with identical punchlines is comparatively easy but I wonder how many it would be tolerable to read in one go? Gotta have articles about unfinished art/buildings/projects/stuff too. But if you decide you want to do it then I'm prepared to pony up another ultra short aygft fic (not that I want to encourage you). ***There's a new movie coming out in the States called The Aristocrats. It's basically 108 comedians telling the same exceptionally dirty joke (called The Debonairs in the UK). The thing is, there are so many variations that you never get tired of it.***

You suggested I might be made the UK correspondent for the Loyal Order of the Blinking Purple Fez (did you know that in English-like-what-she-is-spoke-in-England "blinking" is a euphemism?). Maybe you should compromise by appointing me DT's special fez correspondent. Then again, better not, the power might go to my head!

***If I had a sword, I'd tap you on both shoulders and dub you so. Wait...I DO have a sword!***

Not only does Fandom As A Whole know about the Penney Hawaiians but we've been waiting for the definitive illustrative fillo for some time... or perhaps a fan art tribute in the form of interpretative fabric collage?

***We should arrange that to be done as a birthday and/or anniversary gift!***

I'm sure Harlan Ellison wouldn't dip himself in sue-age merely because you quoted him on a t-shirt... provided you paid him a royalty every time you wore it,

Helen

***I own a few hundred t-shirts, so that would mean few payments. I just gotta***

***work out the payment schedule!***

***Now, making their Drink Tank EWOC debut, Mr. Jason Burnett!!!***

Curse you Garcia! I come back from a period of GAFIation precipitated by a cross-country move (New Orleans to Minneapolis) and start reading the new releases at efanzines, thinking I'll just let the ones I missed slide. Then I read Drink Tank #34 and enjoyed it so much that I've got to go back and read the first 33 issues! When am I supposed to sleep?

***You and Earl Kemp should start a club to try and stop my mad pubbing. I've been introducing new readers to The Drink Tank with issues 31 (The Winchester House) and 27 (The various missed articles). It's helped me get new readers that's for sure!***

I had never heard of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel before reading your article about it, but nonetheless I enjoyed the article immensely. I love Old Hollywood - it just had a class and elegance that modern Hollywood lacks. Admittedly some of the shine was just painted on, with unpleasant things underneath (the treatment of Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland springs to mind) and some of it was because of studio control of the stars' lives that celebrities today would never tolerate (witness the efforts to keep Rock Hudson in the closet). Still, it had a shine to it.

***I love Hollywood, both the dream and the reality. Old Hollywood is getting further and further away. The old buildings are going, as are the people. Of the Golden Age of Film, who's left? Mickey is, that's true, but really, beyond that, they're mostly gone. The Studio System was evil and wrong when it got beyond the lot, but it did make for great movies. I'd also add to the list of folks like Garland, Rooney and Hudson, the deplorable way that Lana Turner was treated, and Marilyn Monroe had it tougher than most.***

And I have to commend you for your nomination of Maureen O'Hara as the most

beautiful woman of the 20th century - it shows you're a man of taste.

***I've gotten into fights with friends on the Marilyn/Maureen front. It was all those years of watching Rio Grande, How Green Was My Valley and The Parent Trap that did it.***

With regard to your comment at the end about hosting a Corflu at the Hollywood Roosevelt - that sounds like a great idea. Specifically, I'd like to suggest the 2008 Corflu: Then we can celebrate Corflu's 25th anniversary with Corflu Silver Screen!

***I won't chair it, but I'll do whatever it takes (short of chairing it!) if someone brings it up!***

***Good to have a growing readership! Let's keep this Convoy rolling with the guy me, Arnie Katz and Dave Burton believe is the most active fan in the Universe: Eric Mayer!!!***

Hi Chris,

I'm beginning to wonder if you're not shooting yourself in the foot with your unbelievable publication schedule. You've presented such a wealth of fascinating material, there's almost more than can be appreciated. That is to say, one issue gets submerged by the next practically before its existence sinks in.

***I can see how that might happen, though it might be that I'm living in a bubble of Attention Deficiency that requires new material all the time. I do like a weekly schedule, which I'll be trying to keep to more and more.***

I'm amazed at the breadth of your information and knowledge though. Some of the most interesting things elicit no comment. They interest me precisely because they involve subjects I know nothing about. Hotels, for example. I can't respond with a description of my own favorite hotel. I've been in so few, when I was at an orienteering meet last year I thought it was awesome my room had a mini-kitchen with sink and microwave. Well, I did once spend 45 minutes in the Chelsea

Hotel in New York City which was enough. ***I've always been a researcher (blame Forry for that since it was his place what got me into the whole history thing!) and I have a long and varied memory for strange facts. I've never been to the Chelsea. I'm not a big New York fan (I love Boston and DC, but NYC leaves me cold), but there are hotels there I must stay in.***

It's amusing to think about George Melies discovering how you could apparently make things vanish with a fixed movie camera. My friends and I discovered this independently back in the days of Super Eight movies. I don't think we ever shot a reel where something didn't disappear. (The cost of the film made my allowance disappear) People's shoes would vanish, or they'd vanish and their shoes remain. My family's poor little dog vanished endlessly. We also discovered stop action animation.

We used modelling clay, which was fine, except it gradually melted under the intense heat from the floodlights, so our characters tended to become shorter, squatter and less defined as the movies went on. Some of these reels were transferred to video. How wonderful to be able to see old family films. Not of long departed loved ones but half-assed special effects and disappearing dogs. ***I've never been an effects guy, but I've always loved making movies (including the one I did this weekend). Stop Motion is a fannish tradition, starting with that hero of effects-makers everywhere, Ray Harryhausen.***

I loved Frank Wu's account of "lost" things rediscovered. Having grown up in the sixties, a fan of all the British Invasion groups, I thought it was amazing when the Beatles' Hamburg tapes turned up. Those ancient performances were very much legend and those tapes were like having a time machine. I realize, musically, they aren't remarkable, but I was still thrilled to hear something I never thought I'd hear. To listen in on musical history. Wouldn't it be fascinating to hear what the older classical music actually sounded like when it was

first performed? Or to hear, say, Paganini play? But those things really are lost.

***I have a list of those things that I want to be able to experience myself. Along with all those movies that I never got to see because I was born too late, I really wanna hear what Lincoln***

--

Eric

Blog:<http://www.journalscape.com/ericmayer>

***The Editor of the New BArea Fanzine, SF/SF (which I will endeavor to write for) Jack Avery!!!***

Chris:

I've enjoyed all of your issues of the Drink Tank, and lord knows I owe you an eLOC or two, but it wasn't until I read issue 31 that I felt I had to respond.

I, too, like the Winchester Mystery House, although I've only been through it once. I first heard about it when I read an issue of Alan Moore's Swamp Thing series that takes place in a haunted house based on it. When I was in San Jose a few years later, I made it a point to visit. I really should think about taking one of those flashlight tours you mention.

***They are great fun. I went by the other day just to hang around the gift shop, look at the guns and then head over to a movie. I haven't read that Swamp Thing issue. I love Swamp Thing and I can't believe I missed that one!***

But I had to laugh when I saw the photo of a typical Winchester Mystery House "orb" that was supposedly evidence of a ghostly presence. It was even more amusing to read that they have become more prevalent in recent times.

The orb shown in the photo is a common artifact that occurs with digital cameras. I used a Pentax K-1000 film camera for years and never saw these in any of the photos I took with it, but when I switched over to a Kodak digital camera this year, I was surprised to find them quite common. I can tell you that I never notice



these globes while taking a picture, but they show up with annoying frequency once I look at the pictures on a computer screen. They seem to be a product of light, probably from my flash, reflecting off of shiny surfaces. I often find that if a cosplayer has a lot of reflective material on their outfit, these orbs will show up.

As an example, I'm enclosing a photo I took at Wondercon this year that shows a number of orbs "haunting" Star Wars costumers at the Moscone Convention Center.

***Well, WonderCon is a scary place, but certainly not haunted. There have been strange orbs on film shots that I've seen (including one that appeared to be moving) but I'm not one to believe in orbs as a while. Much of the legit Ghost Hunting World loves them though.***

I imagine that there are a lot of stray light beams and reflections from all of those stained glass windows at the Mystery House that you mentioned. This might be why the orbs show up so often in photos taken there.

I've enjoyed your previous issues, in particular the coverage of Baycon. I always enjoy reading con reports.

***Well, you're in luck, as there's a NASFiC, Silicon and LosCon report to come before the end of the year. I'm planning a special issue on NASFiC written by me, my girlfriend (non-fan Genevieve), The Little One and anyone else I can con into it. That pun was unintentional.***

On movies: did you get to see any movies at the "Yet Another Hole In the Head" Film Festival? They had a lot of interesting science fiction and fantasy movies there. I only managed to catch *Godzilla: Final Wars*, but it was well worth the trip down the City. I'd be interested in hearing your opinion of any of the movies you might have caught at the festival. The recent Midnight Mass at the Bridge Theater that brought Tura Satana in for the showing of *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* also was quite good, did you make it up to the city for that?

***I'm almost never able to make it up to the City, but I was quite tempted to juggle everything and head up. I love Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill! and seeing Tura would have been great, but there just wasn't time. I also missed the silent film festival, which would have been the perfect thing for me.***

Sincerely,  
Jack Avery

***-Note: We'll be hearing more from Jack next issue.***

***And Now, what LetterCol would be complete without Lloyd Penney?***

Dear Chris:

It's Sunday night, it's too hot to do much else, and I've got issues 34 and 35 of The Drink Tank to comment on. So, why not? We're just getting ourselves psyched up for Monday, anyway.

34...One hotel I've been to, and you've probably been there yourself, is the Hotel Del Coronado in LA. When the movie *Somewhere in Time* came out, the hotel described in it, with the Hall of History, was that hotel, even though the movie was shot on Mackinaw Island, Michigan. That movie didn't do well at the box office, but it's still one of our favorites, and when we spent two weeks in California way back in 1984, we made it a point of seeing that hotel. We couldn't afford to stay there, but we spent most of the day just looking around and seeing the sights. There are so many historic hotels in California, and so many notorious

ones in the Hollywood area. I'd like nothing better than to come down there and have you show me the sights, but I'd need the transporter to be up to speed, and Scotty's just passed away... Jimmy Doohan, when I was younger, was someone I wanted to meet, being a devoted but not obsessed Trekfan. He was a fellow Canadian, and, I gathered, a great man to chat with. I also discovered later on, to my dismay, that he was an alcoholic, and he would get on the wagon from time to time, but when he fell off the wagon, he'd leave a deep crater, and a huge gap in the local liquor cabinet. He was also an angry drunk, so when he was last at the annual Trekcon in town, I avoided him, and it was just as well...I heard a few stories weeks after the event. When he passed away, many local Trek fans were saddened, but I admit, I was not. He's done his bit, the world admired him, and he's earned his rest.

***I've never stayed at the Del Coronado, but I've been there. There are a lot of historic hotels, mostly because hotels are one of those few historic things that seem to be able to keep making money. The Ahwannee in Yosemite is another of my favourites. I've been there a lot, though again, I've never stayed.***

35...Chris, there was a problem opening this issue with Reader v4.0...the photos wouldn't show up. No problems with Reader v6.0.

Just thought you should know.

***Yeah, I noticed that. I'm working on it as we speak...***

It is a shame that even amongst the best of us, there is no honour, as Thomas Edison seemed quite content to steal from George Melies. Copyright law is much more defined now; I wonder if Melies' descendants ever got any benefit from the genius of their ancestor.

***They have actually done very well for themselves with what survives and assistance of the Melies Trust (that's not the real name, but it's the same concept).***

I hear about guys who somehow find great parties to crash, eat for free, and even know where to find good food in the back passages of convention centres and hotels. Over the

years of running conventions and having to know those hotel back passages intimately, I had gotten to know some of those folks who really run the hotel, and shared a few meals with them. At one point, we'd stayed with a hotel for so long, they'd throw us the keys to the place at the beginning of the con, and we'd leave them in the banquet manager's office at the end. We had access to the pantry, the AV locker, the linen closet, the laundry, every room we could have wanted, and although temptation reared its head, we always left the hotel in better shape than when we got it. We stayed with that hotel for 6 years, and when we left to go to a bigger hotel, we brought gifts for the front office to show our appreciation. The local hotel industry is a little too cutthroat to do that now, seeing that they are still recovering from SARS a few years ago. I never wanted to take advantage of the hotels, but they budget for some free food and drink, so if it's offered, you might as well say yes, and do some business.

**Wow, now that's a good hotel! The Doubletree San Jose must be getting like that. SARS really hit T-dot tourism hard, from what my friends out there have told me. Still, Toronto prices are slightly out of whack with the rest of Canada (Montreal's no budget city either)**

The local...hey, when Earl Kemp says he's going to do something drastic, I'm going to sit down, and eagerly await what it's going to be. Don't make us wait, Earl!

**I told him if his plan is to shoot me an article and hold on to it for a few weeks to keep me from pubbing an ish, I'd welcome him to do it!**

Let's campaign for a remake of TRON...I can only imagine what a programmer would do if he was to be scanned into the modern Web. He might be caught and deleted by a virus programme, or trapped in the infinite pop-ups of a porn site.

**Oh Lloyd, this is a brilliant idea. I'm on it!**

Do you know of any Hugo winners having problems getting their pointy trophies home? I've heard about some Hugos falling

to bits, and others breaking, and some overly-officious security guards wanting explanations about these vaguely rocket-shaped pieces of metal. How do you get one of these safely home in this post-9/11 era? Bet there's a few stories out there.

**I know there was a problem with one of 2002's winners, and I have heard tell of one getting held over-night because they thought it was something else. I think every WorldCon committee should consider a shipping plan for those who win.**

Hey, our Canada includes hockey once again! The fools that run the NHL finally settled on a collective bargaining agreement, and the league will start playing again in October. You can cheer the Sharks, and I'll stick with the long-suffering Leafs.

**God Bless Leaf fans. I was a long-time fan of the Jets back in the day. Talk about long-suffering. I also had the Isles and the Whalers, who both had their moments.**

Page and a half...not bad for commenting on two issues! I'm going to shut down for the evening and sit in front of the rotary fan in the living room, or sit outside for a while. It's got to be cooler out there than in here. Take care, and don't let the drudge of a new work week get you down. See you next issue!  
Yours, Lloyd Penney.

**Try to stay out of the heat, Lloyd!**

**Note: The next issue will be the last before WorldCon and will focus on my 48 Hour Film experience, a touch of fun from M and more. If anyone going to WorldCon would like to drop me a report of their time over in the UK, I'll gladly use it. Also, anyone sending me a snoglobe or fanzines they pick up over there will officially get my highest honour.**

The Drink Tank issue 36 was written by Frank Wu, Chris Garcia, and a whole bunch of folks in the LetterCol. Christopher J. Garcia did lay-out and wrote much of the comment on the EWOCs while sleep deprived. His spellings may vary from your dictionary's.