

The Art of Garthness #15

July 2016



Colophon

Welcome to *The Art of Garthness* #15, dated July 2016, a personalzine from Garth Spencer at 4240 Perry Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5N 3X5. You can also contact me at garth.van.spencer@gmail.com. This fanzine is available for contributions in the form of articles, letters, illustrations, or other fanzines in trade.

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Art Credits

William Rotsler	cover
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And know the place for the first time

Two things became clear over just the last month.

Of course the great obsession with discovering the normal things that normal people normally know and say and do, with finding out what others wanted and expected, was ... just tail-chasing, or navel-gazing. It was a compulsive attempt to placate someone who isn't here, is really just a tyrannical ghost in the back of the mind, and couldn't have been placated anyway: whose role was to withhold approval and self-respect, despite never having the right to do so. Appalling enough that it took enormous effort to realize something simple, worse that it takes decades to do so.

Equally, of course, labouring to discover and describe what we call our social norms – at least among Anglos, at least in the 21st century – may be a waste of effort. Those of us already here in Angloland generally feel we know everything well enough already. The few who think and write about our culture at all are inclined to point out bugs in the program, as like as not.

Desiderata

Camping: went camping in June with friends, and of course we got rained out. (This, when British Columbia faced a rather dry, hot summer, and there were fire advisories and lawn-watering restrictions.) But much of the camping trip was focused on taking care of a three-year-old, and she enjoyed herself. At least I learned how much of camping preparation I have to relearn.

The Club: El Presidente Graeme has informed me he will not renew the Web domain for BCSFA, and he's started a new one. The new domain website can be found at www.bcsiencefictionassociation.ca.

Other Clubs and Fanzines and Fiction Markets Oh My: Graeme has still invited my input to the new website. Now if I went really nuts, I could contribute to Graeme updated Web pages listing of other SF clubs in the region, and SF fanzines at least across Canada, and SF markets, and all ... Just as if we were putting a BCSFA member's handbook online.

But there is a lesson out there, if you care to observe it. Jack Beslanwitch of Seattle did something just like this already ... "Northwest SF Resources" ... which he hasn't updated since 2012. Evidently Life has been Happening to him, although I have only heard silence from his quarter. And the *reason* Graeme started a new website is, frankly, that I was not updating BCSFA.net.

This leads me to ...

Conventions: For financial reasons I haven't attended but one convention a year, for the past few years; but there was a time when I found myself corresponding with fans across Canada and getting conreports from them. For interest's sake, as well as for a Facebook page devoted to them, I plan to work up a new calendar of the upcoming conventions in Canada.

Later I became acquainted with a circuit of conventions in the Pacific Northwest. These ranged from all-things-to-all-fen conventions, such as the annual local VCON in Vancouver, to larger local conventions in the Seattle-Tacoma area (Rustycon and Norwescon) and in Portland (Orycon), to perambulating regional conventions like Westercon. There are a number of special-interest conventions – Anglicon, a British-media convention which raises money for charity; Radcon, which I gather caters to a strong gamer community; conventions specifically for "flat stuff"/fanzine fans, costumers, furry fans, Japanimation fans, or conrunners – not even counting the very many media conventions focused on TV and movie franchises. For interest's sake, as well as for a Facebook page devoted to them, I also plan to work up a new calendar of the upcoming conventions in the Northwest.

Heathen Geeks: Several times I have tried to start my own gang, with no results. Evidently I have everything to learn about motivation and publicity. The latest stone wall I have run into involves starting a modest meeting group for heathens, [here in Vancouver](#) as opposed to the distant principalities such as Maple Ridge or (gods help us) Abbotsford. This needs rethinking.

Of my various efforts – such as a Bavarian Illuminati local, the Royal Swiss Navy, the World Government of Spuzzum, or the Anarcho-Surrealist Party – the single one that really seems to have taken off is the Society for the Perpetuation of Fannish Fandom, a place on Facebook for random discussions and announcements.

Of course I *should* lean into jobhunting, and advertising my freelance services, and writing for eventual publication, whether fiction or nonfiction.

Why am I so apathetic and unmotivated much of the time? Just because I'm 59? Maybe I should stop putting off that medical checkup.

Onward.

Mundania Follies

It was astonishing to hear that a popular plebiscite in Great Britain, I mean the United Kingdom, chose leaving the European Union over staying in. (Apparently the opponents of the European Union were aggravated by the number of foreign refugees fleeing Syria and coming to Britain.) It will be equally astonishing if the United States votes Donald Trump into the office of President. But life has been increasingly astonishing since, oh, about the time Monty Python started covering the news.

At the same time, according to at least one news source, Canadian institutions have trouble keeping up with the Canadian demand to sponsor Syrian refugees.

You call this "reality"??

Letters

R-Laurreaine Tutihasi, July 1, 2016

(in response to AoG #7)

I don't think it's that the authorities don't believe how serious a Cascadian earthquake would be. I think they hope it won't happen while they're in office. They also don't want to be responsible for large expenditures.

My computer is set to British English, but some programs don't seem to want to comply. Also there is the problem of the Oxford preferred spelling for words such as civilization.

David "Murdock" Malinski, June 7, 2016

I cannot recall if you have subscribed to my newsletter at www.rsreal.com

If not then please take a minute or two to subscribe as I plan to put them out more in the next few months.

Also:

stuff like this:

<https://goldsilver.com/news/john-embry-explosive-move-in-silver-will-dwarf-silver-s-move-in-the-late-1970-s/>

The six episodes about "Hidden Secrets of Money:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyV0OfU3-FU&list=PLE88E9ICdipidHkTehs1VbFzgwrq1jkUJ>

could be of value to you

Lloyd Penney, June 15, 2016

I'm keeping up with keeping up, and I've got *The Art of Garthness*, issue 14 here, ready to be commented upon. Let me at it!...

How many people live in the Kingdom of Talossa? Common sense does seem to be rather uncommon these days. The news sources are full of stories that would have

been described as utterly preposterous in a past era. The heathen group might be interesting. Give me that REAL old time religion...

You have asked questions on Facebook, and I am guilty of not taking the time to respond; I hope someone has, but of course, FB has more than its share of trolls and smartasses, who might roll off any fairy story that comes to mind as the serious answer you're looking for. I watch very little television, and no SF at all. I think I am at the age where I would rather be informed than entertained, so I am quite picky. Adult entertainments are based on what we liked as children, that's why movies based on comic book characters are raking in the bucks. I suspect that's what explains adult colouring books...

Yes, we're getting to the age where fannish pursuits are being pushed aside for the basic concerns of life. Paying the rent, getting the groceries, doing the laundry...not much fun, but vital. And, the inside voice coming to the outside is often the most truthful. So many citizens wear their Christianity on their sleeves, and seem oblivious to the fact that their hatreds and their mean-spirited actions against groups they don't like are completely anti-Christian. Golden Rule? What's that? Only for Christians like me! I thought we were just a little more advanced than that, but it seems not.

I think I would expect civilized countries to be able to provide for their citizens should they have difficulties with the basics of life. Yes, the grifters and cheaters will do what they do, but others will have real needs, and our taxes will help with that. Should America reach the climax state you write about, I sincerely hope that I will be relatively safe on this side of the border. Being a hoopy frood just won't be enough. I think most people pick up the birds and bees as they go, and wimpy parents don't have the chance to tell their kids about it, and I think they are happy with that prospect. The wedding we went to was in an old church in Ottawa, just steps away from the hotel we stayed at, and the reception afterwards was in a combination night club/games arcade. Weird, but lots of fun.

Right now, as we prepare for our trip to England in just less than two months, we are keeping an eye on the British pound through xe.com. As of today £1 sterling is worth about Can\$1.81, and that may drop steadily, as Britain votes on whether to leave the European Union. I might make our trip that much more easy to afford, but the long-term losses over the threat of leaving is already in the billions of pounds.

((Now that the plebiscite has been taken, it looks as though both the British pound and the American dollar will take serious hits. I was amused by the Economist cover that shows a cartoon of a British gentleman silly-walking over a cliff.))

Taral's article on what furry fandom was, and what it has become, is mirrored in an article I read just last night, on cosplay, and what it has become. Used to be you put on a costume at a con to have fun with it, and to enhance your enjoyment of the weekend, but now, if you are not the right build of body, or if you aren't totally 100% accurate in your reproduction of the costume of the character you like, you are pushed away and shouted down, and sometimes told you aren't doing it right. The article said that cosplay is now cosmodelling, with professional cosplayers going to conventions, and being paid to attend as guests. More and more, fandom isn't what it

used to be. News to no one, I suppose...what we know as fandom should gather in a comfy bar to drown our sorrows, and reminisce about what fandom was like in our own Good Old Days.

Sorry, having an oldphart episode again. I just turned 57, so perhaps I am a little entitled. Before I go off on another rant, thanks for this issue, and I hope to find something else to rant about in the next issue.

((It is our job as seniors to relate past to present, and to observe what changes have occurred. I think it is also our job to go beyond dwelling on change from the past: there is a challenge to adapt to the future, and the only thing we can predict with certainty is that some unpredictable things will occur. The trend in fandom is pretty clear, though – the things we learned to enjoy, and especially the sense of community, is a transient event, it's part of a process, we can't preserve it, despite our attempts (such as my Facebook group). Other enthusiasms and other communities will arise, despite the commodification and commercialization of what we enjoyed.))

We Also Heard From E.B. "Bernie" Klassen

Reviews

Alexiad #87 c/o Lisa & Joseph Major, 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204-2040 USA, jtmajor@iglou.com, <http://efanzines.com/Alexiad/index.htm>

What make *Alexiad* work isn't necessarily the slice-of-life stories about rescuing a spider from a Greek Orthodox church, or the short blurbs about horse-racing, or even Lisa's brief tribute to Muhammad Ali, one of Louisville's native sons. The best features (to my taste) are short articles like Joseph's comparison of steampunk versus actual 1930s technology, or the interesting discourses Joseph writes under the guise of book reviews; and not least, the pastiches he writes of popular fiction. (This issue, a pastiche of Blackadder. My favourite was actually the one in which a character from Cabell's *Jurgen* screws up *The Lord of the Rings*.) I am never quite sure what to make of some guest articles, or of some letters of comment in *Alexiad*.

Askance #36, March 2016, by John Purcell: askance73@gmail.com, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926, USA.

This issue features a report by Mark Oshiro on his reception at a Kansas convention – which made me wonder if many people in Kansas live in a particularly white-privileged, insular culture, condescendingly ignorant of gays or Latinos or the unconscious harassment WASPs display. (Which would make them like the community I grew up in.) Then I realized they wouldn't particularly unusual in this respect; and that right there is the issue.

John Purcell made very kind remarks in his fanzine review column about my fanpubbing and Graeme Cameron's.

Milt Stevens made observations about grandfatheritis – the condition in which I also find myself compulsively making faces at small children on the bus, and doing itsy-bitsy-spider hand games, to make them laugh.

Fornax #9, March 2016, Charles Rector, crectorATmywayDOTcom,
<http://omgn.com/blog/cjrector>

“*Fornax* is a fanzine devoted to history, science fiction & gaming as well as other areas where the editor's curiosity goes. It is edited/published by Charles Rector. In the grand tradition of fanzines, it is mostly written by the editor”.

As this issue's subtitle promises, it offers genuinely new ideas. Whether some of them hold water, such as Dr. Robin Bright's essay on Heinlein's young-adult novels, the reader may judge. More articles follow on gaming and on US politics, followed by letters

Vibrator #28, May 2016, Graham Charnock, graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk

Sandra Bond on Chiflu (the Chicago Corflu); Murray Moore on how to make baseball more interesting, and everything else at Chiflu; letters; health notes; and the hidden secrets of the taxi business.