



1/15/2020

DON'T TOUCH THE SENSITIVE FAN FACE!



PLUGLUNK

The Corflu Heatwave one-shot fanzine produced on Saturday afternoon, March 14, 2020, during the "Texas Beer Tasting and Create-a-Zine Playtime" panel. This publication will be either mailed or emailed to all members (attending and supporting) of Corflu 37, a.k.a. Corflu Heatwave Real Soon Now. PLUGLUNK assembled on March 28th and 29th, 2020.

Participants in this endeavor included the following:

Artists: Jeanne Gomoll (cover art), John Moffitt(p.6), Joe Pumilia (p. 5,6), and Carrie Root (p. 4)

Writers: Tom Becker, Sandra Bond, Teresa Cochran, Andrew Hooper, with brief editorial blatherings by John Purcell, who is the editor & publisher of this zine.

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as promised, Editorial Blatherings

Technically, this is the first fanzine I have produced, albeit with minimal input from me, here in the COVID-19 apocalypse. Well, technically this is not "the apocalypse," but since I still have three more days until the self-quarantine of 14 days is over, I shall make good use of this time to produce not only this wonderful little one-shot, but also the first issue of my personalzine, *Askew*, since last July. Yeah, I have been a bit busy since then.

Two weeks ago today Corflu Heatwave was in full swing, and even though I was in charge of this affair, I had a very good time. The best part of it all was seeing everything coming together, and as people began arriving earlier in the week, everybody fell into the grand habit of greeting old friends and making some new friends. The total membership of the convention was 65, with 33 people actually being in attendance over the weekend. Considering the travel restrictions put in place by state, federal, and international governments, we got the bugger in under the wire: Texas governor Greg Abbott shuttered all large gatherings in the state the Wednesday after the convention ended. Two days later.

We did it. I am grateful that those who came had a good time. That was exactly my intention. So here is one outcome of this gathering of the clan: PLUGLUNK, the Corflu 37 one-shot. Enjoy.

Andrew Hooper (Seattle, WA)

Why is this Fanzine called *Pluglunk*?

On Saturday afternoon, I sat down at the table where Jeanne Gomoll was roughing out art for a potential Corflu one-shot fanzine. Scott Custis was with us, and soon Carrie Root arrived, trying to reproduce the fantastic Texas wildflowers we'd seen, using colored pencils and crayons. We were eventually joined by Joe Pumilia and John Moffitt, creating a kind of low-key artist's jam.

Jeanne, who was creating a piece that looked rather like a cover illustration, casually asked what the title of the fanzine was supposed to be. This led to a fairly lengthy rant from me on the subject of fanzine titles, and the fact that a "one-shot" offers a little more leeway than a title one expects to repeat over a long series of issues. I was glad, for example, that I had not been forced to use GENNADY YENNAYEV'S LUBE AND LIVE BAIT EMPORIUM on a continuing basis. But the best fanzine titles, or so I opined, are short, between three and eight letters long. If you choose a longer title, such as APPARATCHIK, people will inevitably feel compelled to shorten it to "APAK" in correspondence and conversation. I offered that I had long wanted to publish a fanzine with the title of LUNK or possibly PLUGLUNK, for whatever that was worth. "Pluglunk," said Jeanne, wonderingly. And so, here we are.

The reader will be tempted to assume that such a phrase must have floated up from my own subconscious, but I cannot take personal credit for such a mellifluous construction. I cribbed it from a game called "Sword & Sorcery" published by SPI in 1978. Subtitled "Quest and Conquest in the Age of Magic," it was largely the creation of Eric Goldberg and Greg Costikyan. Goldberg is known primarily for work on various role-playing games, while Costikyan is the author of several works on game design and theory, as well as four novels and a short story that was nominated for a Locus Award. Both had significant connections to fandom, and Costikyan once co-published a collection of filksongs,

In the 1970s, there was considerable connection between fandom and the growing pastime of hex-grid wargaming. Simulations Publications Incorporated, based in New York City, counted many fans among its legion of "play-testers," unpaid volunteers who gave many hours to understanding and perfecting games-in-progress. Arnie Katz was one of them; he allowed me to sell some of his collection of pre-production games in 1998, which proved to be lucrative for both of us.

"Sword & Sorcery" was an attempt to marry the traditional hex-map wargame to the popular field of fantasy role-play. It could be played as a clash of armies and nations, or as a "quest game," involving a series of fantastic characters represented primarily by stat cards. Each of these had a character portrait on the back; and these were drawn by one of the most celebrated

fan artists of the 1970s, Tim Kirk. Costikyan and Goldberg packed the game with references that fans would recognize, and gags lifted from Monty Python, like killer penguins and an Enchanter called “Tim.”

Most notable among these are the “Corflu Cultists,” denizens of the province of Ka-Chunk. Led by the Sorcerer Unamit Ahazredit, author of the notorious “Neopublicon,” the cultists pursued an agenda of pitiless evil, sacrificing babies at the dark of the moon and generally seeking the end of existence. Their most holy object of power was the Rex Rotary, a glowing green apparatus that could produce full-size *Tyrannosaurus Reges*, which were eager to consume the enemies of the great god Corflu. The cultists also had a fleet of Zeppelins, which gave them an advantage against their most dangerous neighbors, the Cronks of Aardvark Wallow.



Covered with hair and possessing a powerful stench, the Cronks congregated around a feature known as the “Bottomless Plungehole.” And their armies were dominated by a class of infantry known as “Heavy Pluglunks.” This clash of Pluglunk versus Zeppelin apparently stuck fast in my memory. Some 42 years later, things have come full circle and the Corflu Cultists have inspired the production of a fanzine at last.

Teresa Cochran (Las Vegas, NV):

I remarked to James every time we went outside that at present, the climate in College Station reminds me of Scotland, only about 30 degrees warmer. Ironically enough, Las Vegas in the 70’s F. is quite a bit cooler than college Station at 70-ish. I was in short sleeves the whole time, even at night. Having said that, the air conditioner served mainly as a dehumidifier.

The program has been full of Texas fan stories, the kind one might tell on a slow sweltering day. I’m now fantasizing about having a program outside on a porch somewhere, with sweet tea, bbeer, and fen doodling and writing silliness. Fun stuff.

Tom Becker (Mountain View, CA)

On the road to College Station we passed pumpjacks pulling mimeo ink out of the ground – black gold. Every once in a while there would be a big flame where they were flaring off the excess corflu, just like the convention logo.

**Sandra Bond
(London, England)**

Put Your Feet Back

You learn things at Corflu.

You learn that more than one fan whom you've always assumed to be well read, even erudite, thinks that Elric was the creation of JRR Tolkien. (Lucky that Michael Moorcock didn't drop in at this one as he did at the last Texan Corflu).



You learn that even though you always assumed yourself to be well read and even erudite, you've been pronouncing "daiquiri" wrongly your entire life because you've only ever seen it written down — or more recently, on the signage of "drive through daiquiri" joints in Texas.

You learn that "~6:00" means "about six o'clock" and is not, as you assumed, a Texan way of writing "six dollars". You learn that Val Purcell makes chilli that tastes easily worth six dollars and gives it away in the con suite.

You learn that Howard Waldrop, whom you have assumed holds godlike stature as well as godlike status, is a short, unshaven, unassuming fellow and is entirely approachable by all and sundry. Can this man truly have written "Them Bones" when Joe Pumilia has to be six inches taller than him? (But Joe Pumilia is approachable too.)

You learn that you don't need to approach John Moffitt, because you can hear him across the programme space without a microphone.

You learn that it *is*, after all, possible for a Corflu auction to start on time, finish on time, and have neither many items that never make it to the block, nor many lots left unsold due to lack of interest.

Corflu is truly a learning experience, to be sure. And that is why Rob Jackson and I hope everyone reading this will be able to join us in 2021 for Corflu Concorde in Bristol, UK.

"You should come," I said to the Purcells, and I intended to go on by saying that they should relax there after the stress of running this year's. But instead of saying "come and kick back" or "come and put your feet up", I invited them to "come and put your feet back."

I also learned at Corflu that I say some odd things when I am tired. But I like to be inclusive; so I extend this invitation to you all.

Come to Corflu Concorde and put your feet back.

editorial blatherings redux

Well, that's it.

One of the best things that happened during the convention actually happened the week before. This was called GeezerCon 7, a gathering of former – *very* former, as in “a long time ago in a dorm room far, far away” kind of former – members of Cepheid Variable, the science fiction club of Texas A&M University, which coalesced in the fall of 1968. By early 1969 the club decided to host a gathering on campus called “Science Fiction Day,” and somehow managed to

get one of the most famous science fiction writers of that time, Harlan Ellison, as their guest of honor. That is quite the coup for a fledgling group of fans.

Well, I went to GeezerCon 7, held at the home of one of these former CV's, and enjoyed meeting some of these folks again, which included Al Jackson, who had driven up from Houston with a longtime Houston SF Society fan, Joe Pumilia. Al was supposed to be attending the convention, but called in on the first day of Corflu to say his wife might have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, so he couldn't attend. Bummer. Fortunately, Joe came up on Friday with John Moffitt, a founding member of Cepheid Variable now living in

Houston, and the two of them contributed mightily to the fun of Corflu Heatwave. They were wonderful contributors to the “History of Texas Fandom and Fanzines” panel to kick off Saturday's programming, and over the weekend both of them were in thick of things, especially John during the Auction.

I wish to take this moment to thank the two of them for being at GeezerCon and joining Corflu Heatwave as attending members at that gathering of old friends. Now I have two more great fannish friends to correspond with and learn fan history from.

This is why I love being a science fiction fan: there are so many great people involved, and they make fandom the wonderful place it is. Thank you, gentlemen, for joining us at Corflu Heatwave.



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