



The Drink Tank

Welcome to The Drink Tank's look at the 2022 World-Con and the city that hosted it - Chicago!

I'm happy to report that it was a great time and a wonderful reunion with so many good people, but you'll read more about that when it comes to my LONG report a little later.

Since the con ended, there's been world-wide news, from the death of Queen Elizabeth II, to the surge of Ukrainian fighters to take back a goodly chunk of their country from the Russian invaders. It's an interesting time to be alive, and all I can hope for is the quick arrest of Donald Trump, which seems to be getting closer but never quite happening.

A lot of the non-photographic art in this issue was generated using either DALL*E 2, Wombo Dream, or Midjourney during a fun little tradition Vanessa and I have started up. We put the kids to bed, I sit in their room playing music for them until they fall asleep, and then we sit up generating art with our AI art generators, sometimes doing the same prompts in different programs, sometimes different. The results are really fun. All this AI art we're using doesn't mean we don't want your drawn (or generated, or photographed, or otherwise created) art, it's just been so much fun to make!

Which leads me to an announce that I'll probably already have announced elsewhere. *Journey Planet*, you know, the other zine we do, is running Inktoberfest 2022! It's a month-long celebration of those artists that are doing Inktober that we'll be running on the *Journey Planet* website! It should be an absolute blast, and I've recently gotten new inks and a big ol thing of clear glue!

OK, enough of this! On to the show!



The Drink Tank is edited by Chris Garcia, Alissa Wales, and Chuck Serface. Cover is by Chris using Midjourney.



Drink in a Tank (Well, a Toilet)

by Dave O'Neill

Long long ago, in a country far far away . . .

...okay, 2009 and Canada, where I had occasion to stop by a suite and offer them some money for a party I knew they were running. The host, a ne'er do well by the name of James Bacon asked if I would do him a small favor, and thus a legend was born.

I left the suite 12 hours later with a request that perhaps I could help make some Pimm's Cup from time to time. The times were every Worldcon after that at the various London bid parties, and by Renovation a few years later it had reached frankly ludicrous proportions where, as I quipped, I had made north of 50 gallons of Pimm's in two nights, in the toilet.

The grammar police struck and reminded me often that I had made the Pimm's in the bathroom. I vowed revenge.

As revenge is a dish best served cold, and we haven't had an in person Worldcon with room parties in a few years, I prepared and plotted for Chicon (see there is a link to the topic). Contacting James I opened with a simple gambit - "James, if I bring Pimm's to one of the Chicon parties can I make it in a toilet?"

"Grand idea, Dave. Do it."

And thus began the saga of Chicon, and the Pimm's and Toilet drink.

The original design, much like the first space shuttle designs, called for a grander plan. We were going to acquire an actual toilet and flush the lemonade and Pimms together. That had to be abandoned because it's frankly batshit crazy and nobody wanted to deal with getting the damn thing into the suite or explaining to the staff why we had brought our own facilities. However, through the magic of Amazon, a porta-potty for camping was procured, along with



some Pimm's and a few bottles of lemonade.

On the night of the first party, we gathered for a test run. Carefully lining the toilet with food-grade polythene we mixed the first batch and lo! Verily we had Pimm's in a toilet. We patted ourselves on the back and walked away for almost five minutes.



“You guys do know that it’s leaking? Right?” asked one of the party mavens innocently.

A frantic five minutes of redesign entailed as the precious Pimm's bled out onto the bathroom floor. Two bags, and a bucket concealed inside the porta-potty stemmed the flow, and finally, after a lot of clean-ups we were ready.

Pimm's-in-a-Loo was an instant success. It was also a hell of a lot easier to make and serve than the individual jugs I'd spent years working with, so, for future generations of UK bid parties I say this unto you with the wisdom of the ages . . . use a toilet. It'll save a lot of grief.

A party requires many things: convivial hosts, a good array of drinks, excellent food, but I do feel that what makes a party truly great is something utterly and unmistakably batshit crazy that people will remember in years to come. Like a loo filled with Pimm's.

Would I do it again? You're damn right I would.



Art Show Thoughts by Fred C. Moulton

Chicon 8, the 2022 Worldcon, had a fine art show.

On one of my visits, I noticed a sign reading "Must Register to Bid" prominently displayed. Signs like this, or at least closely resembling them, are common at art shows, and certainly I have seen them many times in the past. Yet something happened at the Chicon 8 Art Show; I glanced at the sign, I thought, "Well, yes, of course," then just after I had walked past the sign into my thoughts came the "Must Bid to Register" change in word order. And I thought, "well, yes, that also makes sense."

The key to the reordering of the words still making sense is that the word "Register" has a few different meanings in common usage. The usage as reflected on the original sign "Must Register to Bid" refers to the act of adding information to a list, usually name and badge number, and receiving from the art-show administration a number with which to bid on items. However, there is another usage which relates to signifying or indicating or taking an action from which another can gain information. We are probably all familiar with this usage when discussing earthquakes where one might encounter, "Most quakes register less than three on the Richter Scale" and understand the meaning.

In the realm of an art show or art auction, a potential buyer signifies their preference for a work by indicating the amount they are willing to pay; that is, their action registers into the common knowledge pool the information about their subjective valuation in that moment they place their bid. This information can be multi-faceted as it showed preferences for different styles, themes, etc. How the artists themselves respond to the information depends on the artist. For example, it is possible that, *ceteris paribus*, in an auction such as the art shows at most cons, paintings of dragons seem to command higher prices than paintings of cats. And if this happens at con after con, it is entirely possible that the artist who has a relatively small or no preference about cats or dragons in their work might shift over time to doing more dragon-themed works. And again, *ceteris paribus*, we tend not to know the preferences of the persons who do not bid and thus did not register their preferences.

Certainly, this short analysis is incomplete. However, a fuller analysis is outside the scope due to time and space limitations. Since this issue of *The Drink Tank* is not a book-length work, this short article will have to suffice as a quick glimpse into the moment when "Must Bid to Register" began bouncing around in my thoughts at the Chicon 8 Art Show.



My First Artist Ribbon By Phoenix

My first Worldcon was longer ago than I like to recall, lost in the mists of the 1990s at Interaction in Glasgow. Since then, I have been to many local conventions and several Worldcons, both close to home and further afield, too, when time, circumstances and pandemics have allowed. Over the years I have often visited the art shows, admired the displays, and occasionally even bought a piece or two, but had never imagined that one day my art might be on those walls.

My background is in physics, and although I consider myself creative in many ways I wouldn't generally describe myself as artistic. I certainly can't draw in any traditional sense - on a good day I might manage a well-proportioned stick figure, but more by luck than judgement! So the idea that I might ever end up exhibiting in an art show is a little far-fetched. Nonetheless, Chicon 8 turned out to be my first Worldcon as an exhibiting artist, in one of those strange and very unexpected twists and turns that life sometimes takes.

I stumbled across data visualisation as an art form quite by accident at the beginning of 2022. I took a short online course which was advertised to me by Facebook's algorithm in an uncommon moment of relevance and was immediately entranced by the combination of mathematical precision and artistic expression demonstrated by the instructor. I like to think of dataviz, as it's known for short, as art for those of us who can't hold a paintbrush but love a good spreadsheet, which is definitely my kind of art!

I promptly set about finding a data set to work with to try it out for myself - my two greatest passions in life are space and dogs, so I soon settled on the flights of the Soviet space dogs, a subject I really loved learning about and working with. I found an excellent book on the subject and dove head-first into the project. I very much enjoyed working out how to display the data clearly combined with creative use of shapes, colours and design, aiming for an end result that is both informative and pleasing to look at. I tried to include as much information from the book as I could - the dogs' names and translations, the dates, altitudes and rocket types of the flights they flew on, and what happened to them - without the space becoming too cluttered to read. A lot of visual inspiration for the colours



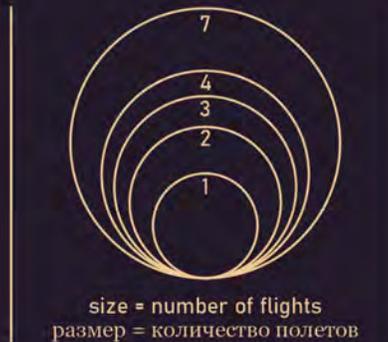
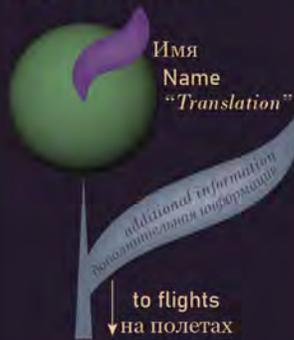
How to Read

Each dog from the Soviet space programme is represented by a circle. Flights are represented by triangles along the timeline at the bottom. Dogs are connected by lines to the flights that they flew on. Symbol shapes, sizes and colours give information about the dogs and flights, as shown.

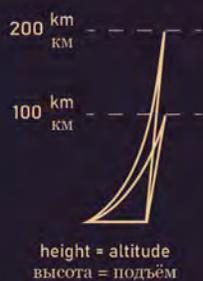
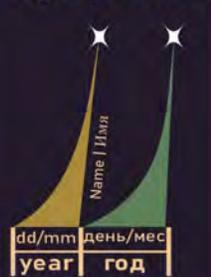
Пояснения

Каждая собака советской космической программы обозначена с помощью круга. Полеты обозначены треугольниками с датами снизу. Собаки связаны линиями со своими полетами. Форма, размер и цвет символа обозначают собак и полеты, как указано.

Dogs | Собаки



Flights | Полеты

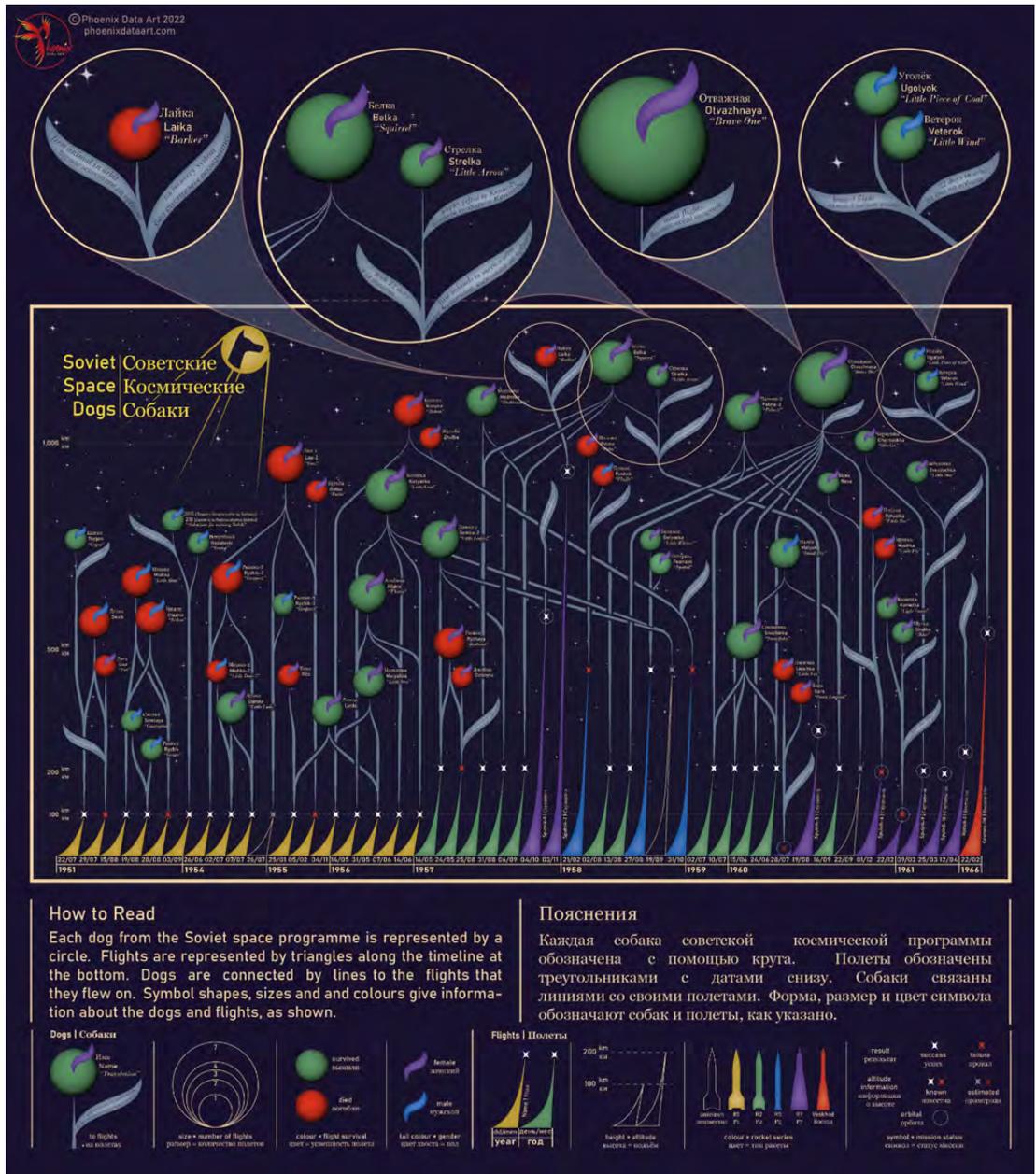


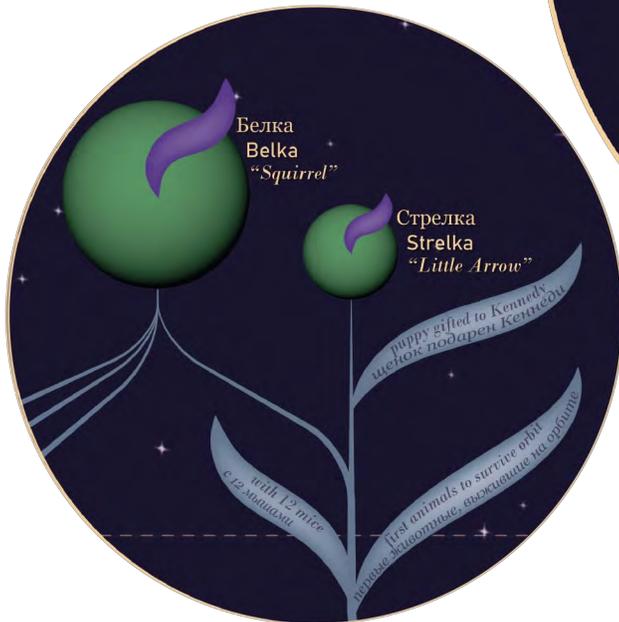
Data Sources | Источники Данных

"Soviet Space Dogs" by Olesya Turkina - fuel-design.com/publishing/soviet-space-dogs
 NASA Space Science Data Coordinated Archive - nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/nmc/SpacecraftQuery.jsp
 Encyclopedia Astronautica - www.astronautix.com

and shapes used came from the book itself, which contains many images of Soviet artefacts, from post-cards to book covers, cigarette packets and sweet tins, which featured the space dogs.

After a pretty steep learning curve both about data visualisation techniques and about programmes such as RAWGraphs and Adobe Illustrator, which I hadn't previously used, the result was my first piece of data visualisation art, imaginatively entitled "Soviet Space Dogs", and while I was pleased with it I wasn't really sure what to do with it. I'd undertaken the project for my own personal interest - it had proved a very absorbing hobby for a few months, and I hadn't thought much further than that. I came up with the idea of selling prints to raise money for good causes, and it didn't take long to find a charity rescuing dogs in Ukraine which seemed like an appropriate and very worthy cause to support. It was a very dear friend, who I





met way back at my first Worldcon, who convinced me it was worth taking along to the Chicon art show, and I'm very glad they did.

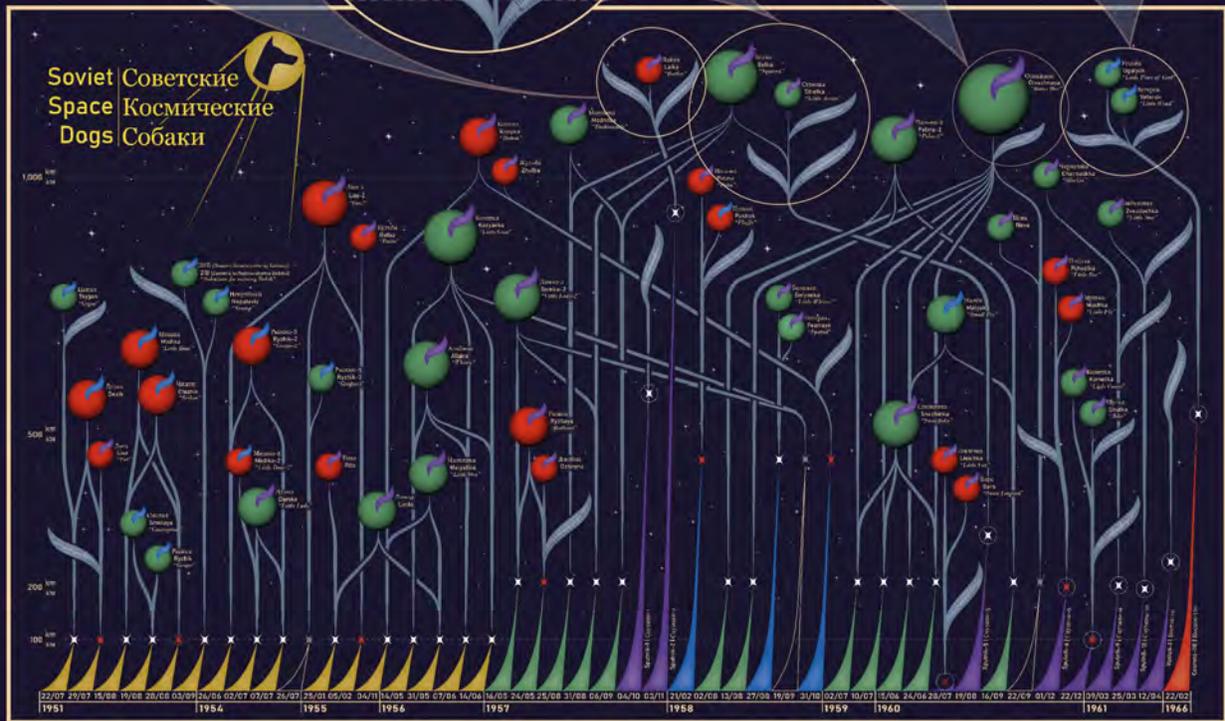
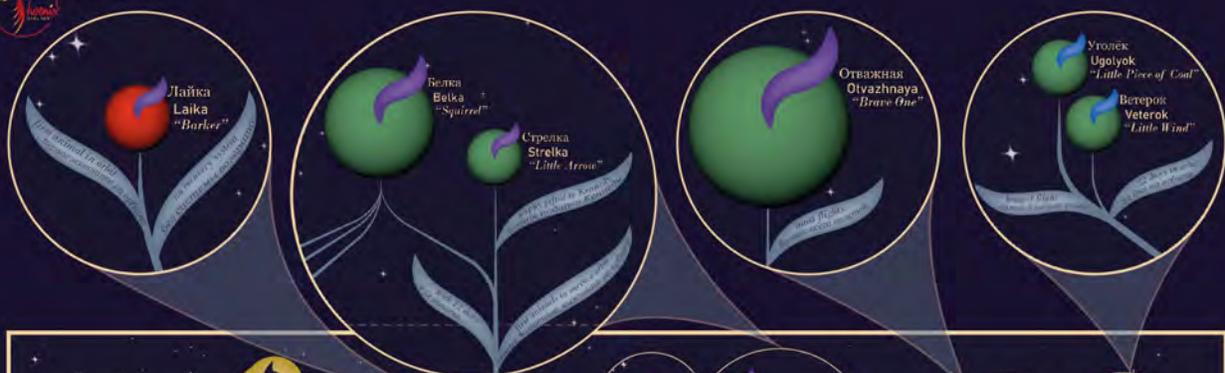
I knew a little about Worldcon art shows, having attended several in the past, but nonetheless found the registration form a little confusing and the online information provided to be filled with art-show terminology about "bid prices" and "quick sales", as well as artistic terminology like "matting", none of which I really knew the first thing about. It felt like there was a leel of knowledge being assumed that I simply didn't have, but I reached out to Elizabeth, who was running the show, and she was very patient in answering all my questions and making sure I understood everything, and also got some advice from friends who had taken their work along to art shows in the past. Nonetheless I was a little nervous in the run up to the show, convinced I had probably messed something up, and generally feeling like something I had produced couldn't possibly belong in an art show.

My friend persuaded me to take a limited edition print along for the show itself and 10 regular prints for the print shop, and to be honest I thought I would be bringing most, if not all of them home again. I was more than a little surprised, and extremely pleased, to sell the limited-edition print on the first afternoon at the quick-sale price, which I felt I had set quite high, and to sell out of prints entirely by the end of the weekend! Not only was it lovely that the project got such a good reception, but thanks to a bit of Fannish sponsorship I was offered to cover the print production and art show costs, it raised \$350 for the charity at the same time - all money that is going to support a very worthy cause.

I also had the chance to chat with interested convention members and other artists, some of whom were old-hands at art shows while others were first-timers like me. Everyone was extremely welcoming and friendly, and the art show staff and volunteers worked immensely hard to ensure the bidding, print shop and auction went smoothly. Although I didn't have any pieces in the auction, I went along to see how it worked, and was very pleased to see friends doing remarkably well there.

For a variety of reasons, I enjoyed Chicon 8 more than I have enjoyed any convention for a long time. I went to interesting programme items, I had great fun at the discos and parties, I met and hung out with old friends and new, and I got my first Artist ribbon. I can't thank all the staff and volunteers, and the wonderful community that is Fandom, enough. And if you're thinking of taking something along to an art show, but aren't sure if you should, I can definitely say - go for it!

If you want to know more about the Soviet Space Dogs data visualisation project, the book that inspired it or the charity it supports, visit phoenixdataart.com. Prints and products are available at phoenixdataart.redbubble.com - all profits go to Shelter Friend, rescuing abandoned dogs in Ukraine.



How to Read

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Пояснения

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Dogs | Собаки



Flights | Полеты





Phoenix

282



FULL



ARTIST

I Love Space Dogs



Ukraine

My Favourite Flavor



Facebook Post

by Bill Rowe

Post-Chicon 8 (Worldcon 80) update: I survived and loved the hell out of it all! This was only my second Worldcons, and second ChiCon, I'd attempted to do a few more but eventually stumbled over COVID.

Tuesday and later on the following Monday was all move-in/move-out. That was somewhat unexpected, but I am good friends with logistics and MIMO leaders, and it was a thing to get done, but it wasn't in the plan of being physically there running Ops for 40 hours. It couldn't have gone more smoothly, using union labor to get much of it done took 1/3 of the time as conscripting volunteers :)

Wednesday began Con Ops office, although I did only a half shift. As it didn't start officially till Thursday, we saw no purpose in being open midnight to 8am. And that all devolved back to setup issues anyways.

Thursday into Monday, and a four-hour day shift that turned into a bonus Monday shift I effectively did the 8 PM – 4 AM, with early start for events like the Masquerade Contest and the Hugos ceremony. It wouldn't have gone so smoothly without Pat at the helm, whose shifts I assumed at the end of his day shifts.

I met so many people I wouldn't normally meet "behind the curtain" and hardly saw any of the usual friends and suspects I usually hang out with in the front of the house :). That was all fine, cons come to Chicago a few times a year, while Worldcons is here roughly once a decade. If we made things easier/happier/resolved for our members, that's all that mattered.

It was the usual of crowd control, late arrivals, who can help me with this(?), parking exit vouchers, and several serious issues that the Code of Conduct office had to handle (with logistics help from Ops), and they did an excellent job navigating disagreements vs. blatantly poor behaviors. None less than the threat that was faced resolutely, that was nothing more than spit-balling and trolling but could have been a horrid tragedy.

I'd like to first thank the committee; I didn't jump aboard till early August. I'd asked Helen and Dave years ago to wait till then to find out what dept was horribly overtaxed, because I can helicopter in to most any role. This worked. The entire working staff succeeded! (And Pat and Guy, the other two Area Heads in Ops, didn't burn out like candles while running a 24-hour department!) Even though Pat (and Drew) also organized Logistics/MIMO, so both Guy and I jumped in to make that happen.

I saw a bit of some panels, walked party floors, and stayed for a few minutes in many of them on my walkabouts, got to see Scalzi's dance party (asking people with no drink in their mouth to mask up), and some of the music track. I never even made it into the filk (sci-fi/fantasy folk) music space,

gaming, or most ceremonies other than closing. I did walk the entire art space (one find captured), fan hall (one copy of *Woof* secured), and vendor space (lovely chat with David Gerrold, whom I'd only watched, not read.)

The hotel staff was wonderful, everything from orchestrating egress from our largest thousand-plus filled rooms to extra service elevators and back passages, to hotel security ensuring the safety of everyone, and kind treatment of those who were compelled to exit the event. Everyone was polite and professional beyond expectation!

Regrets? I have very few . . . and I'll bring those up to future planners for better execution. On balance, I hope it appeared nearly flawless to the participants! I would like to have been a fan more often but wouldn't trade with Guy showing up at the office every morning at 4 AM to let me rest. I missed Scalzi's book signing of my hardcover of *The Kaiju Preservation Society, but that can wait. I know where to find him* [📄](#).

I wish you all a speedy recovery. I'm still COVID-positive, but I know some who brought and many who returned with the newest, ickiest con crud. Hoping that masking got many through without the usual post-event con crud. I managed to catch a head cold that's persisted all week, but it's probably the normal summer yuck.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Marinda, who had largely finished her pre-con job of onboarding and stepped in to fill the newly vacated IT role. Helen appropriately knighted her a Hero of the Con, and it was nothing less than that!

I am coming to Windycon, and Capricon, as a guest, and maybe Winnipeg and likely Glasgow too. I'd love to be there for Chengdu but due to current circumstances, I won't be there. I'll probably do two hours of gofer work here and there, but I'll be "attending." Thanks everyone who helped in any small way to make Chicon 8 the blowout success it was! Chicago was pleased to have you as our guests [📄](#).



Chicon 8

By Alissa Wales

After a week of having time with friends and family in Central Illinois, going to Chicon was yet another reunion. In the before times, when we were having Worldcon every year, coming to con was already the amazing reunion time where it felt like coming home to see family. This one was even more so, on so many levels. But, at the same time, there was a sense of anxiety. Can I hug people? Will people know who I am anymore? After all this time, and because I moved away, will anyone remember me? Well, the best thing about convention friends is that you never feel that way for long. Most times, people are asking permission to hug me before I can even get a chance to ask them, so that's lovely. After asking after people and their respective families, my husband and I had many things to do throughout the event. As it turns out, I was asked to be a liaison for Childcare, which in the end was not terribly taxing, once we got the initial bugs ironed out. I could not have asked for a better Div Head in Shana Worthen, assistant in Andrew Wales, and Facilities Liaison in Joyce Lloyd. Between all of us, we were able to make sure that Kiddie Corp was taken care of, and I will tell you, they are very self-sufficient and professional. They are lovely people, and they made cute projects with the little ones :).



Due to coming from the UK, I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to put anything in the Art Show. In the end, I put six of my pieces in. Because of the nature of their display (as they are coasters), it wasn't exactly trivial to put them up. I am extremely grateful to Sara Felix for her help and offering me space in the ASFA display. We were so pleased that all six of my coasters sold. I was not the only one of my artist friends that had a successful art show, and I am grateful to everyone that purchased art...THANK YOU!

One of the largest jobs we had was to make sure our Glasgow 24 group was fed. I know that when I get wrapped up in convention things, I don't make time to eat. That's probably why James set



me on this task in the first place. For three of the convention days, it was my responsibility to get orders from people on two WhatsApp lists and one email list for different restaurants. I made a spreadsheet for each of the big orders, and then I worked with the restaurants to get the big orders done. Each restaurant worked differently. One preferred that we ordered in person, and they made the orders fresh. We wrote the names on the orders as they made them, and we walked them back. Another one asked for the spreadsheet I made be sent over to them. This was the easiest and the most efficient, though we still had to go pick it up. The final one, we had to order online, enter each one individually, and I entered everyone's name into a comment line. This one delivered. With each one, I learned and adjusted, but we had up to thirty orders sometimes! It was definitely an experience.

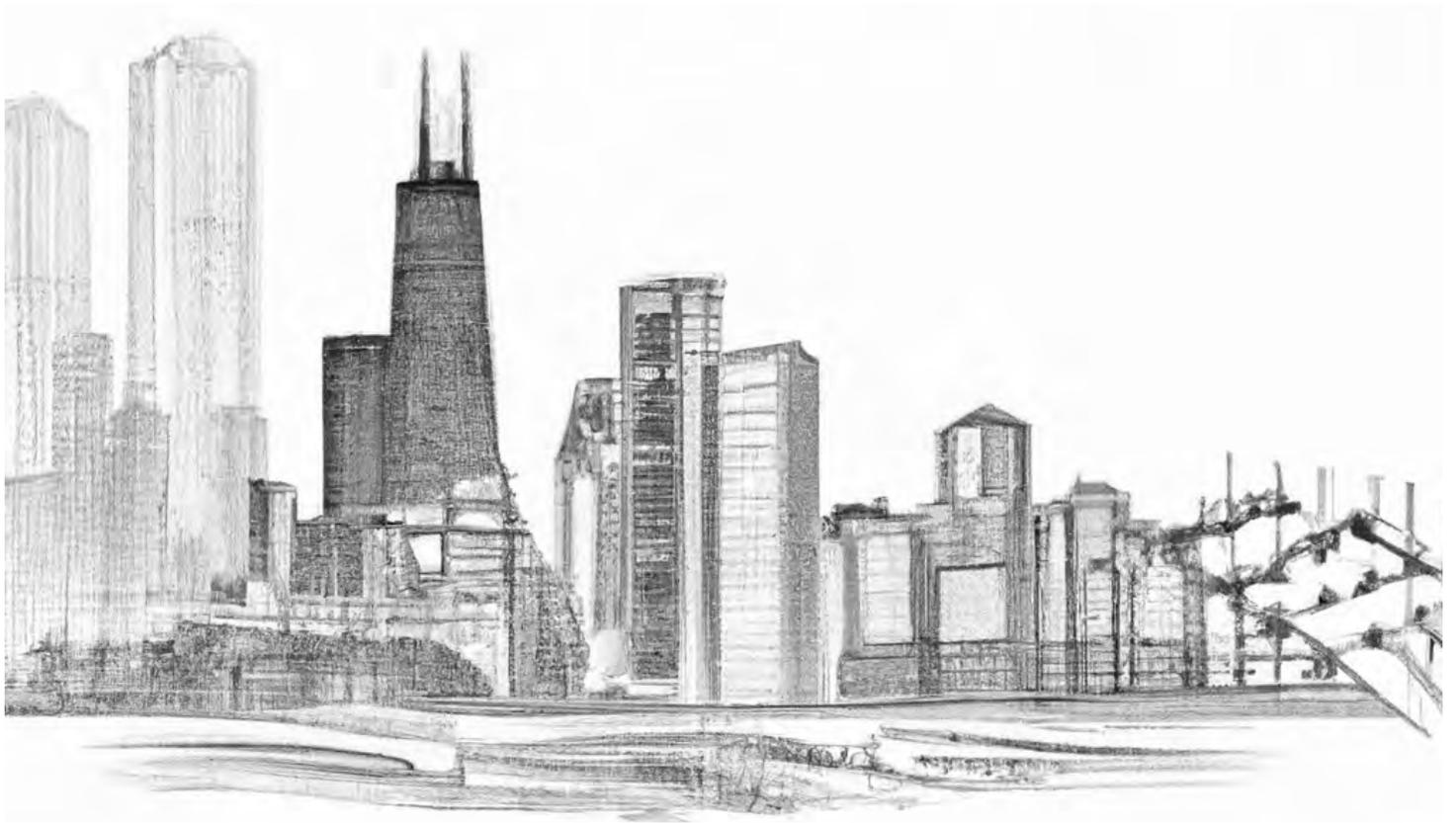
It was great to know that we were making sure people were eating. It's important that people eat at conventions, let alone at any time. I'm so glad we could help make this happen for people.

I am so grateful for the amazing friends that I have. We had some nice meals with friends. We had breakfast with Chris and Vanessa, dinner at Fogo de Chao with Chris, Vanessa, and Chuck, lunch and breakfast with Nicholas Whyte, and my Dad came and had drinks with us. On the last day, we were able to have a meal out with the Glasgow team. We had some really amazing food with some really amazing people.

On that note, we didn't get as much site seeing done as we wanted to, but I have seen quite a bit of Chicago already (having grown up in IL), but I'll let Andrew cover what we did get to see in his write up.

Overall, it was a lovely reunion! I was very busy, but I still didn't sleep through the night, because I never do. I'm looking forward to our next convention, whichever one that may be! And, we look forward to seeing any and all of you there.





Chicon 8

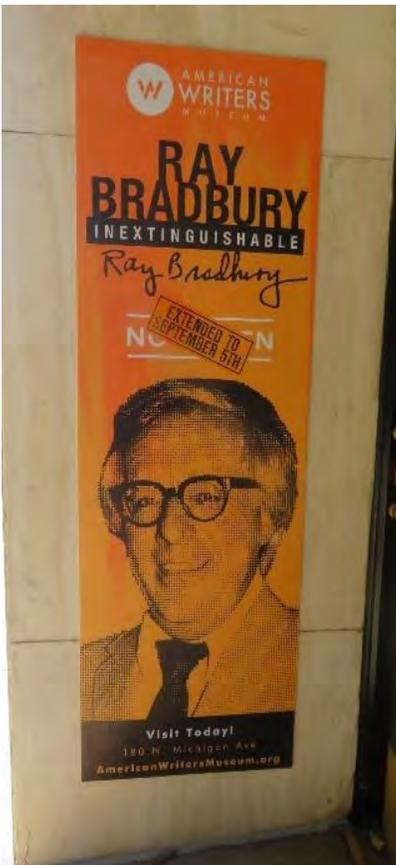
by Juan Sanmiguel

This was going to be a special Worldcon. It was my thirtieth consecutive Worldcon (32 all together) and it would be in the area that almost became my home. As I told many during the con, had my mother not hated the cold, Chicago is where my family would have settled rather than Miami, Florida.

This would be the first time in a while where I got to see Chicago. I usually spend the weekend before the convention in the host city. This was not possible during Chicon 2000 due to the amount of leave from work I had at the time. *Star Wars* Celebration was in Orlando the weekend before Chicon 7. This time I was able to go to the Museum of Science and Industry, the Fields Museum, and walk around the city. If I had seen more bike paths, I might have used the rent-a-bikes.

The American Writer's Museum was a real treat. The museum had a good collection of great literature, and a special exhibit on Ray Bradbury. There was a selection of manual typewriters including an Olympia on display that one could use. If I recalled correctly, Olympia was Harlan Ellison's preferred typewriter. I typed a few lines with the Olympia. I do not miss manual or electric typewriting. Despite its issues, I will never abandon Word. There was also a computer game that was like Mad Libs with samples of published works. The player had to fill in the blanks. One got bonus points if they chose the same word as the author. For Science Fiction, the samples were from *I, Robot* by Isaac Asimov, *Kindred* by Octavia Butler, and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick.

Chris Barkley asked me to help staff the Press Room. I had worked in and used the Press Room (I covered the Hugos for *Airlock Alpha* (a media focused website) for a few years). I prioritized my schedule to focus on Guest of Honor and Special Guest programming and the four panels I was assigned to. It was great helping the Press and acting as a backup Information Desk. Chris gave me a key to our office room and the interview room since I usually came in first thing in the morning after grabbing a breakfast bagel.



Thanks to my fellow Press Office teammate Dave Hook, I knew when they were discussing certain topics during the Business Meeting. I wanted to help repeal the 25% percent rule for the Hugos and stop the proposed definition for Pro and Fan work. Both efforts went well. I understand the need for a clearer definition on the Pro/Fan issue, but better metrics are needed.

Kris “Nchanter” Snyder and their team did an excellent job at Programming. When perusing the proposed topics during the pre-selection process, it looked like the panels would be very strong and interesting. I got selected for four panels:

The Expanse

The Streaming Wars

Star Trek: Boldly Going Everywhere



was writing Fantasy and married Steven. During their Guest of Honor presentation, they talked about how they met and their writing careers which including working with Jordan Peele.

I am not sure when I met Joe Siclari and Edie Stern. It might have been during an Orlando in 92 party or at a Worldcon or a Florida con. At LoneStarCon 2, Joe showed me an advance copy of Vincent Di Fate’s *Infinite Worlds*. When I moved back to Florida, I saw them at least twice a year until they moved to New York. I really respected them for their work to bring Worldcon to Florida and on fan history. The pieces of their art collection on display were breath taking.

The Prime Directive Problem

They all went well, and it was fun talking about past and current versions of *Star Trek* since that was one of my earliest fandoms.

I squeed so loud when I heard Steven Barnes and Tananarive Due were going to be Guests of Honors it surprised my housemate. I have been reading Steven Barnes since 1996 and he has elevated my awareness of how media portrays people of color. I knew Tananarive Due even longer. She used to write for the *Miami Herald* in the 1990s. It was great to hear Tananarive



This was the first Masquerade I did not work for since 2007. It was going to be a smaller Mas-



querade and they did not need as many volunteers in the Green Room (where I usually work). It was interesting watching Masquerade as a spectator though it was hard getting pictures from where I was during the presentation. Post-presentation fan photography was well handled. Best in Show was “Arwen’s Lament” which recreated a scene in *The Lord of the Rings* (see below).

After Masquerade, it was time for the dance DJed by John Scalzi. Songs were from different eras and styles and included “Time

Warp” from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* played at midnight. John made a short video of the dance for Twitter which had me in it.





The Hugos were well paced with the delightful humor of Charlie Jane Anders and Annalee Newitz. It was great to see one of my online friends, Cora Bulhert, win for Best Fan Writer. She does an excellent job reviewing Golden Age SF, new TV shows, and picking out the best and worst parents in media SFF that year. I must thank Glenton Richards, acceptor for *The Expanse: Nemesis Games*, who allowed me to continue my tradition of being photographed holding the Hugo.

I got to catch up with a lot of friends. Central Florida writers José Pablo Iriarte and Elle Ere did a back-to-back reading and looked great at the Hugos. I caught Shaun Duke and Paul Weimer of *The Skiffy and Fanty* podcast before their Stroll with the Stars. At the same, I met Shaun's co-host Brandon O'Brien, and we briefly discussed his observations on Jordan Peele's *Us*. I did the Streaming Wars panel with Olav Rockne, which was fun. I finally met the whole team of *Hugo, Girl!*, Lori Anderson, Amy Salley, and Haley Zapal, after corresponding with them for two years. At the Glasgow party, *Hugo, Girl!* and I met up with John Coxon and Liz Batty of *Octothorpe* (I am not sure if Alison Scott was there).

The virtual experience of the con was great. Dr. Eva Ewing's and the Erle Korshack panels were virtual. For me Airmeet was easy to use, though I heard it was a challenge for some. *The Expanse* panel was a hybrid panel. A con staffer in the room informed us of online questions and it went well. This is reassuring for future cons.

It was a great con, I only wish COVID restrictions had not prevented a dear friend from attending. Thanks go to con chair Helen Montgomery (see below) and her team, for putting this together. I hope to do a more detailed report for my clubzine after I review my notes.





Worldcon 2022

by Thad Gann

You'll hear more about the World Science Fiction Convention, so I won't waste your time repeating other correspondents. Instead let me tell you about my impressions of the evening. To do that, I need to take you back 60 years to another time . . .

I started reading science fiction 60 years ago. My first experience was *Have Spacesuit, Will Travel* by Robert Heinlein. America, and the world, was in the middle of the Cold War, and this former naval officer wrote 'hard' science fiction. Most of the authors of that age were male or had male pseudonyms. Homosexuality wouldn't even be discussed for another 20 years except as a demeaning slur. The civil rights movement hadn't started. None of this really registered to me since I was alone, a loner, and fairly entrenched in my own world.

The first cultural shift wasn't in a book but on TV. *Star Trek* debuted in 1966. The bridge crew, our bridge crew, not only included Nichelle Nichols, the first black woman senior officer, but also Russian, Japanese, and the first Vulcan officer. It's almost as if *Star Trek* was making a point that all peoples, even former enemies, could be friends and partners.

Three score years have passed, and we've seen many changes. There were more than a few struggles both here and in space. People of every sort have enhanced our culture. This has not been a seamless or easy transition. Bigots and haters have railed against these changes. They use and misuse terms like "it's not canon" and "it's heresy." Even reading or seeing someone who is nonbinary, a person of color, or somehow different will upset certain people.

Which brings me up the World Science Fiction Convention and the Hugo Awards. That weekend we experienced people embracing and promoting their collective individualism. We had stickers that showed up at registration so you could add your personal pronoun to your name (Thad: He/Him) Ops teams, volunteers, panelists working together, and people encouraging each other irrespective of the personal or cultural differences.

The hosts and presenters, finalists and award winners, cast and crew, and the audience came together September 4, 2022, to remind us that it is our interests, and our differences that make us special. Science fiction is a mirror of who we are, a telescope to where we can go, and a guiding beacon to show others the way. Whether we enjoy books, movies, television, forms electronic and printed, original works, adaptations, and fan fiction -- our enjoyment does not mean others are wrong.

This was the first time I've been to a Hugo Awards ceremony. It certainly won't be my last. And I have a full year's worth of reading to enjoy from the finalists. More than that I've a sense of community. And I've a sense of home.



Chicago in Pictures

By Paul Weimer









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Ron O's Chicon 8 (and Other Chicons)

By Ron Oakes

The short version: I alternated between being a business meeting wonk and a hybrid panel room tech while the convention went on around me. I still managed to at least say “hi” to many of the people I knew back when I lived in the Chicago area.

The longer version: This was my third Chicon. This was also the third city I've traveled from to Chicago so that I could attend a Chicon.

Chicon 2000 (unofficially Chicon 6) was my second Worldcon and my first North American Worldcon. At that time, I was a resident of the Chicago area, living in west suburban Wheaton, Illinois. I was also both a newlywed and had chaired DuckKon 9 the previous June in northwest suburban Arlington Heights. (Recommendation, do not get married and chair a convention in the same year – even if it can result in having a bunch of Klingons take over opening ceremonies to give you and your fiancée a wedding shower, which happened after the Filk Guest of Honor nearly killed me with his “Ecumenical Horah Medley.”)

Chicon 2000 was a bit overwhelming to me as a fan. Previously, I'd only attended regional conventions. Mostly these were the three in Chicago, but also a few others elsewhere in the Midwest, and some in San Diego and Los Angeles when I briefly lived there, and a couple in Arizona due to business trips. I had also attended several of the Big Minicons, but they had not prepared me for a Worldcon.

Chicon 2000 was still large enough that it had some programming items and overflow rooms at two adjacent hotels besides the Hyatt Regency Chicago: The Fairmont and the Swissotel. If I recall, the Swissotel had gaming and maybe Filk. Because it had a different relationship with certain unions, Fairmont had most of the programs that required any A/V support.

It did and didn't help that I was on many panels. Memorably, I was on a grouping of three panels in a row one day, ending with a *Farscape* panel held at the Fairmont because it was believed they would be showing clips. I was the, as I put it, token fan on the panel. Everyone else was at least marginally involved with the show. By the time I got to the room, it was clear it would be over full, but I could only get in by proving that I was on the panel. My new wife Tara managed to get in on my coat-tails. As it turned out, no video was shown. And, because the panel had such high demand, we ended up repeating the panel two days later, and at midnight, in a larger room at the Hyatt, and still filled it up. I also go to throw things at the audience both times (mostly flexible flying disks).

As the chair of DucKon 9 and 10, I became a member of the board of directors of its parent corporation. I remained a member of the board after I was no longer chair. So, a few years later, I was still on the board when Dave McCarty approached the board for a meeting regarding his vision for the Chicago in 2008 Worldcon bid he was heading up. I had been skeptical of the bid before him taking it over for reasons that I won't go into here. Still, when Dave showed up and shared his vision of using the bid to help unite the somewhat fractious Chicago convention fandom at that time, I saw it as ideal. As it turned out, I was the only board member to become an active member of the Chicago in 2008 bid and was a full corporate member of the corporation – actually serving as a director for some of the time.

Of course, this meant that I was part of the bid on that fateful night in 2006 in Anaheim, California, when we learned at LA Con IV that we had lost the vote and had lost the vote by an extremely narrow margin. This was very disappointing, but we turned around and, within a short time, decided to bid again for 2012. Personally, this may not have been a bad thing. I had worked for Motorola's mobile networks business –the people who built the cellular networks, not the phone that everyone used to carry before they carried Nokia and then Samsung or Apple phones – for most of the time since I'd graduated from college in 1989. But by 2008, I could see that Motorola was moving most of its engineering out of the Chicago area and other U.S. locations to lower-cost centers. Even

as a member of the technical staff, my career was not headed in the direction I wanted if I remained with Motorola. This eventually led to me getting a job with Qualcomm in San Diego. Because of the



timing of the job, my family –including our not-quite adopted son and a rather anxious dog – could combine a trip to Denvention III, the Worldcon that beat Chicago for 2008, with our move from the Chicago suburbs to San Diego.

This brings me to Chicon 7.

By the time Chicon 7 rolled around in 2012, I had settled in San Diego and become part of the San Diego fandom. I had chaired Conjecture 2011 (a.k.a. Conjecture 9), which memorably experienced a county-wide and then some power outage on day zero. I was also chairing Conjecture 2013 (a.k.a. Conjecture 11). More importantly, for purposes of Chicon 7, I had been asked to chair the San Diego in 2015 Westercon bid.

I also designed and built a wholly new web application for the Hugo Awards, including a new back-end database.

Because Chicago has a lot of summer tourism, they are one of the few cities in the United States where the Labor Day weekend still makes significant financial sense for getting hotels. This means that Chicago Worldcons are still held on Labor Day (or at least they were in 2012 and 2022).

But, when one is a high school freshman, it is not workable to take several days off school during the second week. So, my wife and son could not attend Chicon 7 with me. Instead, I attended by myself and shared the room with one of the other San Diego fans (who was my vice-chair on the Westercon bid and, at least unofficially, my vice-chair on the convention)

Eschewing advice from nearly everyone, the San Diego in 2015 Westercon bid launched our bid officially with a bid table at a Worldcon that was held east of 104° west longitude –outside of the Westercon zone.

Again Chicon 7 had some weird issues with the unions (or so the rumors went at that time – the exact details are for Dave, Helen, Steve, and Bobbi to share). Word was that convention staff could not plug things into the outlets in the exhibit hall. This presented me with a unique problem at the fan table: I was convention staff, even though I was not functioning as such at the fan table. But once an extension cord was plugged in, I could plug my laptop into it.

Again, I was on a decent number of panels. This time the memorable panel was the *Game of Thrones* panel. *First, the moderator somehow managed to dig up something I'd posted a year or more before on social media to use in my introduction. Then, we ended up with one of the actors "crashing" our panel since it was on the day of the Hugo Award presentation, and HBO had flown him to Chicago to be there with George R. R. Martin to accept should Game of Thrones win.*

I was also at most of the business meetings. I think my attendance at business meetings started at Denvention III four years earlier, but this was the first time I think I had to figure out how to gain recognition to speak to a motion to present information that at least I considered neutral. Two Hugo Award categories were under consideration, and the meeting wanted unreleased nomination data. I'd been authorized to provide limited data before the awards ceremony. However, due to Roberts Rules

of Order (Newly Revised) and the WSFS Standing Rules, that still requires being recognized and takes time from the debate.



Chicon 7, being my first time on the Hugo Awards Subcommittee, was also the first time I was invited to the Hugo Awards pre-reception. This was nice since it ensured I got a seat at the awards ceremony. It also let me mingle with the finalists, not that I took advantage of talking to anyone I wasn't already acquainted with.

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Time moves on. In 2015 (after a successful San Diego Westercon and Sasquan), I was laid off by Qualcomm. In early 2016 I got a job as a contractor for the Air Force in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Since Albuquerque is my hometown and where my parents and sisters lived, we did not hesitate to move. For various reasons that have to do with much

toxicity between the Air Force and my actual employer, I changed jobs in 2020 to a different government contractor.

My integration with Albuquerque fandom has not been like that with San Diego fandom. Nor has it been like my time in Chicago fandom (where I discovered fandom). I did chair SMOFCon 2019 in Albuquerque, but that was with very little local support.

On the other hand, my son has moved on. He lives with his biological father (my brother-in-law - it's complicated). So, there were no complications with my wife coming this time. On the other hand, I didn't have a job with Chicon 8 until late in the game when one of my friends from Chicago

asked if I could help her husband out with tech. That I readily agreed to.

Because I had limited vacation, we flew out on Wednesday and didn't arrive until early evening. Somehow flying, which I've done multiple times during the pandemic, has worsened over the last year. Okay, the flight was full, I've put on weight, and way too many people in that flying tin can weren't masked, so I was wearing a too small KN-95 mask. But that is just my gripe, not a con report. Wednesday was a lost day due to flying in and arriving late. I hooked up with the tech crew early on Thursday and did some setting up. Then later, a call went out for people to help as "Airmeet Hosts" for the hybrid panel rooms. Having nothing better to do, I volunteered.

This ended up as my primary duty for the rest of the week. I split most of Crystal A/Airmeet 8 with another tech crew member. We'd get a break when a volunteer came in for an hour. But most afternoons, it was my job.

Except for Thursday, my morning was spent in the business meeting. This year I probably had more involvement than many. I was on the committee of one of the amendments pending ratification and ended up speaking on it. I also ended up speaking on a couple of other pieces of business. I also stood for and came in fourth in a four-person race for the three slots on the Mark Protection Committee.

In between all of that, I somehow managed to get over to the exhibit hall to vote site selection, visit with my friends and former coworkers who were running the build-a-blinkie area, and see a few other friends from around the country.

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So, three Chicons, three decades, three different homes, and three different points in my life – both my fannish and non-fannish life. I can say that they were all very different experiences. But they were all similar too. They were all in the Hyatt Regency Chicago hotel (with its strengths and weaknesses). They were all in Chicago, which will always be a city that I have a soft spot for. They all have had friends running significant portions of the convention. But I was also in a very different mindset each time. Then again, that is true of every convention.



Chicago and Chicon 8

by Steven H Silver

My travels to this year's Worldcon, Chicon 8, began and ended in Chicago. In between, there was a lot of Chicago.

I work from home, staring out my window to the tree-lined streets of suburbia, dense enough that in the summer I can't see the house located across the street from me. Just leafy greenness.

However, my company's headquarters is located in the West Loop, an easy walk from Chicago's Union Station (as lovingly depicted in the 1976 Richard Prior/Gene Wilder classic *Silver Streak and the 1987 Kevin Costner classic The Untouchables*). I arranged to drop my luggage off at the Hyatt Regency Chicago (the Chicon hotel) with friends on Tuesday night before the convention started.

My plan was to take the train into Chicago on Wednesday morning, work from the office, and then walk across the Loop to the hotel. At the end of the con, the plan was to send nearly everything home with my wife, spend Monday night at the hotel, walk across the Loop on Tuesday morning, work from the office, and take the train home.

In between, I sat on several panels. The panels that are most applicable to this rather self-referential and self-indulgent article, are "Chicago SFF Landmarks" (Friday at 8:30 AM.), "Fringe: American Writers Museum" (Friday at 1:00 p.m.), "Writing Chicago" (Sunday at 11:30 AM.), "Looking Back on Previous Chicons" (Monday at 10:00 AM.), and "Only Nominally Set in Chicago" (Monday at 1:00 PM).

You may see a theme to these items.

There's a joke, sort of, and like most jokes it holds more than a kernel of truth. How can you tell someone is from Chicago?

Listen to them for two minutes.

Chicagoans love their city. And they aren't afraid to let people know it. We recognize our city has faults. That's part of why we love it. But they are our faults. We can talk about them and try to fix them, but if you're an outsider and comment on them, we tend to wonder what your angle is. Why are you dissing our city that you don't really know anything about?

We have several nicknames. "Hog Butcher for the World," "Tool Maker," "Stacker of Wheat," "Player with Railroads," the "Nation's Freight Handler," "City of the Big Shoulders," "The City That Works," "The White City," and "The Second City."

"The Windy City."

The name doesn't come from the winds that start to build up in Nebraska, race across Iowa, and don't have to stop until they hit Chicago.

The name comes from the Chicagoans who traveled to the East Coast in the aftermath of the Great Chicago Fire (October 7-9, 1871) trying to raise the capital to allow the Second City to be built. To let Chicago rise like a phoenix from the ashes. To permit the city a renaissance that would allow it to host the World Columbian Exposition a mere twenty years after its commercial district and numerous residential areas were laid waste by flame.

Those Chicagoans praised the city and its potential. They spoke of the things that set Chicago apart from the other Midwestern cities. St. Louis, Indianapolis, Milwaukee. They let their love for their city pour out and turned Chicago in second largest city in the country a mere twenty years after the fire had destroyed a third of the city.

Although I was on panels that were not Chicago focused, let me talk about the ones that did look at the city.

I introduced myself in a similar way on each of these panels: If you are a visitor to Chicago, I'm a native Chicagoan. I've lived here my entire life. If you're a native Chicagoan, I'm one of those suburbanites. I've never lived within the borders of Chicago, but I've grown up near the city and except for my time away at college, I've lived in the area known as Chicagoland. I've been going into the city since before I can remember.

Chicago's SFF Landmarks (with Dina S. Krause): About four weeks before the convention, the programming staff asked me if I could do this as a solo talk. I said I could and then time got away from me. Still not to worry. I knew I could handle it, I had notes to work from, and it was at 8:30 on Friday morning. Nobody was going to show up. As we approached the con, I panicked. I invited Dina Krause to join me on the panel to turn it into a discussion. I'm glad I did. We talked about sites of for-



mer Chicons, meeting locations of Chicago clubs, places that featured in films or books, and people who helped make Chicago famous. Dina was able to add an alternative view of the city and its landmarks and what I was saying. And we had about 40 people in the room. At 8:30 in the morning. On the Friday of the convention. Apparently, I spoke the phrase, “You cannot visit it because it has been torn down.” frequently enough that when the panel was over, one of the attendees presented it to me neatly calligraphed.

Fringe American Writers Museum: “All you have to do is lead a small group from the hotel lobby to the American Writers Museum,” they told me. It is a distance of just over a quarter mile. I couldn’t make it that easy. As I led the crowd of about 20 people down Wacker Drive to Michigan Avenue, I pointed out Pioneer Square across the river, the Tribune Tower above it, the Wrigley Building across the street, the little-known McCormick Bridgehouse and River Museum, and gave an impromptu tour of the short walk, explaining a little history of landmark theft with relation to the Tribune Tower and Chicago branch banking laws with regard to the Wrigley Building.

Writing Chicago (with Naseem Jamnia, Barbara S. Barnett, J.R. Dawson, and Brendan Detzner) was really more a look at things Chicagoans say and do that allow you to know things are in Chicago. We started the conversation with the almost obligatory argument over Chicago pizza¹ and talked about Chicago’s neighborhoods, politics, history, and public transportation. This panel took us further afield from Chicago than any of the other Chicago panels I did. Although people think of Chicago as flat, and the elevation difference between the lowest point at 577 feet above sea level to the highest point at 670 feet above sea level indicates the city is, indeed flat, near the city, there are plenty of ravines, ridges, and other geographical formations that give some (although admittedly not much) variety to the area.

1—Chicago has three main styles of local pizza: thin crust, deep dish, and stuffed. Usually when people refer to Chicago style pizza they mean deep dish or stuffed, but many people don’t know the difference between the two types.

Chicago thin crust has a stiff, slightly crunchy crust and is frequently cut “tavern style,” which means squares instead of wedges.

Deep dish has a thicker crust and is baked in a two-inch deep pan with the crust rising up along the sides of the pan. Usually for a deep dish pizza, the cheese is placed on the bottom, followed by the toppings and then a thick layer of crushed tomatoes (and a heavy dusting of grated parmesan cheese on top).

Stuffed pizza uses the same deep pan but has a thin crust shaped to the pan, all the way up the sides. The toppings are laid at the bottom of the dough bowl, which is then filled with cheese. A second crust is placed on top and cinched around the sides. Holes are poked into the top crust and then the sauce is poured into the depression formed between the upper crust and the top of the pan.



Looking Back on Previous Chicons (with Bill Higgins, Mike Fortner, and Dina S. Krause) was a look at the six previous Chicons and one TASFIC that were held in Chicago, as well as some discussion of Chicon 8. Not only has Chicago hosted more Worldcons than any other city, but the Hyatt Regency Chicago has also hosted more Worldcons than any other city (in addition to the three Worldcons held in Chicago at other hotels, two of which you cannot visit because they have been torn down). It was also one of the panels that could have gone on quite a bit longer since we were only able to touch on each of the previous Worldcons relatively briefly. At the end, we were taken to ask by an audience member who wanted to hear more about Chicon IV (1982) than we were able to share, just given our time constraints. Chicon 8 has included a page on its website which provides information on all of the previous Worldcons in the city, including links to program books, websites, pictures, etc., as appropriate.

Only Nominally Set in Chicago (with Benjamin Wallin, Gordon D, and Isabel Schechter) Just as Writing Chicago was supposed to look at the things you needed to know in order to write about the city, Only Nominally Set in Chicago was supposed to look at published works and films that are set in a city called Chicago but is the city in name (or similar name) only. It isn't what we talked about. Similar to the "Writing Chicago" panel, we talked about the things that make Chicago the city it is. The things that people who don't live here often get wrong. It was another look at the neighborhoods, the schools, the cemeteries, the politics, the race relations, the fact that the city grew organically and you can't understand Chicago in the 2020s without understanding Chicago of the 1990s and you can't understand Chicago of the 1990s without understanding Chicago of the 1950s, and so on, and so on, and so on, back to 1837 when the city was incorporated and 1833 when the village of Chicago was founded, and 1803, when Fort Dearborn was founded, and 1790, when Jean Baptiste Point du Sable became the first permanent non-indigenous settler in the area, a fact that was ignored for hundreds of years in favor of promoting the claim of John H. Kinzie, who didn't arrive in the area until sometime in 1802 (or so) and bought du Sable's lands and house.

Lest you think the convention was only about the panels, I spent quite a bit of time in the Exhibit Hall, the Dealers' Room, and the Art Show. I lost another Hugo (my nineteenth consecutive one, for those keeping count).

In 2012, at Chicon 7, the Hugo base, created by Chicago artist Deb Kosiba, was a tribute to the Picasso statue that stands in front of the Richard J. Daley Center. The statue's wing's recreated in metal and glass. It is clearly a product of Chicago. This year's trophy, created by Chicago artist Brian Keith Ellison, was based on the city's flag.

Most people don't necessarily know what their city's flag looks like, or even if their city has a flag. In Chicago, the flag flies proudly. It flies from government buildings and in front of office buildings. Our policemen wear it on their sleeves. Our citizens wear it on their shirts and hats.

Several years ago, I was working on a convention in Chicago with someone who was not from

the city. I pushed to have the convention's logo mirror the city's flag and was told, "Nobody knows what Chicago's flag looks like. It won't mean anything." I convinced them to let me have the logo I wanted. When they arrived in the city, we walked from the hotel to a nearby restaurant. We were outside for 100 feet. We saw three different people wearing variations of the Chicago flag on their clothing in that time.

The flag is described as "argent four mullets of six points gules in fess between two bars bleu de ciel." For those who don't speak heraldry, that means a white field with two blue stripes representing the two branches of the Chicago River, as well as Lake Michigan and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. The three white spaces represent the North, West, and South sides of the city. The four red stars honor Fort Dearborn, the Chicago Fire, the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, and the Century of Progress Exposition of 1933. Each of the six points on the four stars also symbolize aspects of the city, but now isn't the time to go into those.

If the flag seems familiar, even if you don't remember seeing it, just take a look at the Chicon 8 logo.

This year, the back of the Hugo trophy contained four stars, modeled after the stars on the flag. They flared backstop contained two stripes on it, reminiscent of the stripes on Chicago's flag. It was a Hugo trophy for Chicago.

All good things must come to an end, and Chicon 8 finished with a photograph that has become traditional for me. Chicon 7 was led by a leadership team known as "The Flying Monkees," comprised of chair Dave McCarty and vice chairs Bobbi Armbruster, Helen Montgomery, and me. We don't see each other often, but whenever we're in the same place, we make sure to take a picture. It is a reminder of the Worldcon that brought us together in Chicago in 2012 and posing for that picture often signifies the end of a Worldcon.

On Tuesday morning, I walked back across the Loop. I didn't plan my route, but crossed the streets if I had the



lights, and continued down the same side of the streets if I didn't. My meandering route took me past the Chicago Theatre with its iconic sign, The Hotel Cambria, where a friend is currently rehearsing a show that will be premiering in a couple of weeks, across Daley Plaza, where the Picasso stands guard, waiting for another assault by the Blues Brothers, past City Hall, and looking down the canyon of LaSalle Street where it ends at the monolithic Chicago Board of Trade, a faceless statue of Ceres standing as a mute sentinel over the street.

And maybe it is because I had spent so much of the week of Chicon 8 talking about Chicago, but as I walked past those landmarks following the convention, I was struck by their grandeur. Chicago has always been a city of architects and architecture.

The first modern skyscraper, the Home Insurance Building was designed by William Le Baron Jenney and stood on West Adams Street from 1885 until 1931. Although only 10 stories (later 12), and 42.1 meters tall, it was the first tall building to be supported by a structural steel frame. Alas, you cannot visit because it has been torn down.

Architects who have worked in Chicago include Daniel Burnham who created a plan for rebuilding the city following the Fire and is known for the quote that guided Chicon 7 Chair's staff in



2012: "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not themselves be realized. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever growing insistency." Louis Sullivan, Holabird & Root, Howells & Hood, and more recently I.M. Pei, Fazlur Rahman Khan, and more.

The result is a fantastic array of breathtaking buildings, and Chicago's broad streets and plazas allow you to step back and see buildings like the Art Deco Carbide and Carbon Building, the neo-Gothic Mather Tower, the Congress Plaza Hotel, site of Chicon III, which you can visit, they haven't torn it down, and so many more.

My architectural sightseeing reverie eventually came to an end as I entered the lobby of a skyscraper located on the banks of the Chicago River.

Arriving at my office, I found a desk on the 35th floor, overlooking the Chicago River. Glancing down throughout the day, I could see a variety of rooftop gardens on lower buildings, water taxis, boats, and barges navigating the Chicago River, and a variety of architectural styles stretching out to the west of the river.

I was at work, but rather than staring out my window at the tree-lined streets of suburbia, dense enough that I couldn't see the house located across the street from me, I was staring out from above at one of the greatest cities in the world, a view comparable to that of the Board of Trade's statue of Ceres.



In Chicago

by Christopher J. Garcia

In Chicago, we had our first *Drink Tank* editorial meeting!

That is to say we went to Fogo de Chao and had an amazing Brazilian meat and fixin's dinner.

This is mostly about the con, but in true me fashion, it's really about the things that surrounded the con as much as about the con itself. You'll see, I'm sure.

I will admit to being slightly worried about a Worldcon in the time of COVID, and a few of my friends caught it while they were there. Only one I interacted with, and it was while they were still testing negative. I got a booster a couple of weeks before arriving, and a month ago, I was in the thick of the sick, so I don't think there's a period where I would have had better immunity granted to me!

My trip started with a flight. I'd dropped the kids off at the airport to fly to my mom's, and I had a couple of days to myself, and I used it to clean up the front yard, watch *Community*, cook steaks, FaceTime with Vanessa (in Ann Arbor visiting her cousin) and the kids, and create the Public Art issue of *Claims Department*, which turned out better than I ever could have expected due to the work of James Bacon, Cardinal Cox, David Bedno, Debbie and Ric Bretschneider, and having a few moments to actually write about Christo and Claes Oldenburg. It was a fun issue, and I got a LOT of sleep for once.

Anyhow, I had to get a new iPhone, and my tires fixed, which I did, but it also meant I had a lot of time to kill at the mall that afternoon, five hours prior to my flight. I decided that it was time to try a Japanese cheesecake.

There are several varieties of cheesecake in this world, proving that God loves us and wants us to be happy. The Japanese variety, one which is highly popular in this area due to our large Asian-American communities and general fondness for tasty stuff. I went to the place that sells them, they call it a store, at the beautiful and very 2009 Valley Fair Mall. I wanted a slice – they only sold whole cheesecakes. I was not going to pass up the chance, and thus . . .

. . . I bought an entire cheesecake.

And ate it while sitting at the small table looking at the ICON movie theatre.

Now, to say this was the perfect people watching space would be an understatement. I saw a little bit of everyone: youngsters with their parents, including one that reminded me so much of my little JP I had to call them at my mom's, teenaged couples with arms improbably-wrapped around each other's waists, Dads with babies slung over their shoulders, old couples lost but yammering happily, older couples lost and yammering angrily, beautiful women with rugged men, tired women carrying



too much, tired men stopping every ten feet.

I ate the entire strawberry cheesecake.

It was magical, a more sensual eating experience than I've had in years. It wasn't dense, nor was it particularly light. A New York cheesecake has a steak-like quality, a density that runs velvet at the end. This was more a perfect meatloaf – lighter, smoother, carrying flavor in every moment of the experience. It was magic.

I got my new phone. I got my car back with a fixed tire. I headed to the airport.

With three hours to spare, I basically got through security with my three bags, found a seat and plugged my phone in and let it charge. The set-up on the phone wasn't complete, and I was re-starting

from a backup about 36 hours before. This would come in to play later. I got tired of sitting at the chairs by the gate and went looking for something more.

I found the massage chairs!

Now, I don't typically go for massages. I don't like pain and that's usually what I get from those things. I went for the whole megillah: back, neck, and calf massages. The back and neck? Meh. The calf massage?

I was in Heaven.

You sit in that chair, probably not the best post-COVID idea, and the rollers do what they do to the reverse of your torso, but the leg section, it inflates, and squeezes, and presses all the points that need pressing. I was in heaven.

For thirty minutes.

That's right, half-an-hour of leg-hugging bliss. The time seemed to speed up, and just moments after it was done, my flight started boarding. I only had a brief period to call the wife and tell her I was on my way. Boarding was simple, I had my aisle seat, and the flight was basically me playing the few games I could without the Wi-Fi. We took off at 10:30 PM and landed at 4:20 AM.

That was weird.

I wasn't too tired, I'd had all the cheesecake running through my veins and it was only 2am back home, where I left my circadian rhythms. I got into town super-fast, with a Nigerian driver who was very nice and chatty. We drove through town at the kind of speeds that only 430-ish in the morning will provide in a city like Chicago. We drove by the Picasso statue, though it was still dark, so I didn't get much of a look at it. We pulled up, I used the CURB app to pay, and headed up to check.

Because I had no idea what room we were in.

You see, Vanessa had sent me a text with the room number on Wednesday afternoon. The backup my new phone was based around came from Tuesday. That message, and another quite lovely one from JP telling me I was his favorite Papa, were lost in the aether. I did, however, manage to get checked in by a sassy-yet-to-the-point woman at the front desk. I slugged my way up, opened the door, and crawled into bed where I snuggled my wife.

The next morning, we got a message from the magnificent John "The Rocket" Coxon. You know, the guy who is 1/3 of #Octothorpe and married to the wonderful España, who have both graced these pages more than once each. We were going to join them and Liz Batty, Brit endemic to Thailand, and also an #Octothorpean being. They had heard of a place called Wildberries, and I was psyched. We got up and headed over, meeting them there about 8. A good sign - Jim and Laurie Mann were there, and they have exceptionally good taste. They swung by and were the first Worldcon folks I chat-



ted with! Good start! The others arrived and we ate.

WOW.

Now, these are funny and brilliant folks, and the conversation was sparkling. John, a British man, is far more American than any of us, and was expressly happy about having visited a *Star Wars* attraction in Florida. España, one of the most brutally brilliant sarcasts in the world, was on-point as always. Liz, living in Thailand, which is basically Spain, is that kind of hilarious intellectual who will murder your brain when the exact right moment arises.

But none of these mattered. It was the food.

Laurie and Jim pointed out that the food was really good, expensive, and the portions giant. It turned out all of these were true. I got Corned Beef Hash with extra hashbrowns, as is my tradition. This turned out to be more than I could eat, and it was wonderful, with less salt than almost any other corned beef hash I've ever had, and more spices and herbs in the mix. España had the barbacoa chilaquiles, which looked good. Vanessa, as always, had a bit of a hard time, but found that they did a gluten-free waffle.

We ate and chatted. None of us finished all our meals. None of us left hungry.

We walked back and Vanessa and I dropped stuff off and got ready to set up in the Art Show. This was a complicated matter, because Vanessa had never done an art show at a con before, and I had not slept since the day before. Vanessa set up the table and I did the bid sheet data entry. This took me a while, and I had a time wrapping my head around some of it. Still, we did a bunch and as folks started to file in to set up their stuff, people started to notice Vanessa's work!

It was super cool!!!



I ran off to see a few friends, and really just to run around because I was so tired. By noon, I had been up for 24 hours. I took a bath, always a good way to get myself psyched, and somehow time kept on slipping and it was 4 PM almost immediately! That was my first panel, and one of the ones I was really interested in hearing what folks thought. It was called Audio Drama Fans Unite!

Readers of this long-running publication will know that we did a full issue about audio dramas a couple of years ago, so I had plenty in the pipeline to talk about. This was a virtual panel, and I have to say, the system they chose, while it took a little to learn the fiddly specifics, worked very well once we got going. This was a virtual table talk, which meant there would be eight slots, and they were all filled. It quickly became apparent that I was the mainstream kid in the chat. I don't often go for the Indy stuff, though I do know some of it. The audience included podcast and audio drama producers, including one who did a podcast that followed the adventures of a group forced to flee a generation ship and had no video, only audio contact with one another. The idea sounded great. We traded recs and folks started pimping their own shows as well. I did plug everything from *Welcome to Nightvale* to *Rabbits* to *The Thrilling Adventure Hour*. Also, no one had heard of *The Dead Authors Podcast*, with Paul F. Tompkins as HG Wells. It's a great cast, that sadly is defunct but still available.

Some of the ones they suggested were cool! *BODHISATTVA FROM BIT*, *A Journey Beyond the Skies*, *Adventures in New America*, *Among the Stars and Bones*, *The Call of the Void*, *BRASS*, *Diary of a Space Archivist*, *Pod to Pluto*, *Girl in Space*, *The Call of the Void*. I only had a chance to listen to a few of them, but they were all really good.

After that, I was exhausted, but I didn't have time to get any sleep, so I headed down and helped Vanessa with her art show stuff, then went and visited with James Bacon and company in the Dublin suite. We chatted and I helped move some furniture, which revealed old tortilla chips and a Juul vape rig. I had a 7 PM Table Talk, which is basically a caffeine-free koffeeklatch, and two people showed up, a guy from Portland and the wonderful Jay Hartlove. We had a nice chat, and I headed off to the Dublin party where I finally, after many years, met Erin Underwood! We've done four issues of *Journey Planet* together and never met, which was weird, but brings the total number of Team Journey Planet members I haven't met to three, I think. Maybe even two! I hung out for a bit, stopped by Joel Philips Whiskey Zoom party and had a splash of Laphroaig which Vanessa hated but I thought was like drinking the most joyous part of a campfire.

It appears to have been the right idea; I fell asleep within a minute of climbing into bed about ten minutes later.

Friday was a big day for me, starting with the hotel buffet breakfast with Alissa and Andrew. We love them, and the food was very good! They even did an egg-less omelet for me! Hotel buffet breakfasts are hard when you don't like eggs, and this one went above and beyond. I mixed the sautéed onion, tomatoes, ham, spinach, and mushrooms with the hashbrowns in the serve-yourself station and the combo was magical! Our server was really nice and masked the whole time.

And that is one of the few complaints I had about the con hotel. Most of the staff did not mask. Even some of the servers in the restaurants! The attendees were pretty good about always having them on, save for a few folks I saw at parties, but the employees seemed to be somewhere between ½ to 1/3 masked when I saw them. That's not a good thing, especially when I had a couple hop on the elevator with me! I Understand the con can't dictate what the staff of the hotel does, or more generally, the masking mandates of the city and state. We knew going in there was going to be some transmission due to the con but requiring vaccination and masking and vaccination from the attendees was a good idea. I did see a couple of photos of unmasked folks on panels, though none of the ones I was on had anyone unmasked.

It was on the second day, though, that I developed my personal masking protocol. First, I had two masks – a fabric mask with an insert filter, and an N95. I would wear both masks if I was going to be in an area with a lot of people, like the Dealer's Room, parties, the Fanzine Lounge, or even the lobby. This provided me double protection (the fabric mask actually protects very well against “globular” transmission, which is apparently more likely to give you COVID). If I was sitting with some space with a friend or two, I'd switch to just the N95. That was good protection, and less warm. When I was on a panel with space between me and the next person, or just walking' around Chicago in the open air, I wore my fabric mask with the insert. Cooler, easier to understand me when I spoke, and far less warm. I did unmask when I was out walking and there was no one around and in my own room, even if we had a visitor or two. In all, I think it worked. I mean, I didn't get COVID . . . again.

I had two Friday panels, one real and one virtual. The virtual one was first, and it featured Alison Scott and a wonderful panelist who went by Newt. It was How to Build a Podcast Community, something I know a lot about but rarely do. Newt's podcast sounded really cool. Alison Scott was on the panel, and she knows exactly what she's doing. Considering I've been podcasting for more than a decade, and I've never had a show take off, including the time Neil Gaiman tweeted about one, it felt weird to be on this one. I do agree with Alison though – have a letter column.

Newt's podcast, *Where the Stars Fell*, is really good. We talked a bit afterwards about disability representation in her cast because I'm always trying to find things for JP to listen to and see to help 'em along the way. It's not always easy. He wants so much wants to be able to run and jump and play like the rest of the kids, but can't quite manage all the way, but at the same time, he has role models who have CP like Rachel from Instagram (who JP once said would be his bride!) and a wrestler who does some amazing Lucha-type flying.

After that, I wandered down to the Dealer's Room and Art Show and Vanessa's stuff was getting bids! Her first art show and she was selling! Vanessa was at the Locus table, so I wandered over to chat with folks at the Fanzine Lounge. Alison, Coxon, España, Chuck Serface, and various others came and went. It was a really nice spot just to sit and chill. It was roughly where the Lounge had been in 2012 when I ran it in Chicago.

The next was my first physical, in the room panel – The Invention That Changed Everything. This was one of those ‘come up with a bunch of stuff and go ‘yep, that was a big ‘un’ with, Edie Stern, fan guest of honor, author Alan Smale who had written for *Journey Planet* and a couple of others. I love those and I had some good ones, computers, art, language, but there was one moment I won’t forget. The moderator was a chemist and her boss at some point had led the team that had isolated and synthesized a pulmonary surfactant from cow lungs. This proved to be effective in helping premature baby lungs develop. They give it to them in a nebulizer right after birth.

I had watched the kids get that stuff immediately after they were born, before they were whisked away to the NICU and put into their incubators.

After she told her story, I said, simply, “My kids are alive today because of that.”

I did have to fight back tears.

The panel went well, and I was then off to get Vanessa and look in on the Art Show where Vanessa’s stuff continued to get bids and sell! We were kind of shocked, but we shouldn’t have been – it’s all so good!

We headed back to the room for a bit to change and get ready for our *Drink Tank* editorial meeting, which as I mentioned was held at Fogo de Chao. For the uninitiated, it’s the kind of place where there’s a pumped-up salad bar that contains amazing Brazilian foods, including feijoada, a black bean and sausage sort of stew typically served over rice. Then there’s the magical meat portion. Meat brought to your table. Meat, brought to your table, on swords. It is my favorite genre of restaurant!

We enjoyed good conversation, talked about the plans for future issues (including *Welcome to Nightvale* and Grant Morrison) and just had a good time. My favorite things there are the amazing fried bananas and the rolls made of casava flour. You rip one of those rolls open, you stuff a piece of that meat in there and BOOM! You got



yourself a slider! It's also incredibly easy to be gluten and dairy-free eating there. We had a couple of drinks, some dessert, and just enjoyed the company.

We got back and I was wiped, but I did go and walk through a couple of the parties, running into Sondra de Jong, who is an absolute DELIGHT! I headed downstairs and got a decent night's sleep.

Saturday is always the hardest day for me at a Worldcon. It's usually the most crowded, it's almost always when the most stuff happens, and typically I'm programmed pretty heavily. I cancelled one panel I had for Saturday, and when we got up at a reasonable hour, we ate a decent breakfast at the hotel buffet. I was ready for a day that one big thing and one bigger thing. The big thing was a panel at 1 PM, but after that 9 AM breakfast, I had the bigger thing – the Business Meeting. James and Borys had put together two exceptionally powerful resolutions dealing with Ukraine and the completely illegal and wrong Russian invasion. The first was a simple resolution of support. James thought that one would have a hard time, I thought it would skate through. This year's Business Meeting had a lot more wrangling than I'd ever seen in the half-dozen or so I've attended. Jared Dashoff and Jesi Lipp both did a great job in their roles to keep things moving as best they could, but it was the attendees that were throwing up blockers. Eventually the first resolution passed after folks calling for things that would either change the language or simply punt it. Chuck spoke to the matter, having spent his Peace Corps years in Ukraine, and it was a solid move.



Then it got testier.

You see, Sergey Lukianenko is one of the Chengdu guests of honor. He's also a raging anti-Ukrainian and an out-spoken promoter of Russia's right to take the country in the illegal war that Rus-

sia seems to be largely losing, or at least not winning. He's a bastard, put simply, and should never be allowed to be a Worldcon Guest of Honor.

The Chengdu team did not appear to like this one, and convention co-chair Ben Yalow made motions to try and kill the resolution. I absolutely do not blame him for trying, since his job is to protect the convention, and he ate up all the time that had been allotted for debate, which meant that there would only be the absolute minimum of two minutes to talk about it. James got up and delivered a fiery speech which I thought was enough to get it done. The other side had some decent words, but mostly they were of the "politics in the real world shouldn't be a part of Worldcon" variety. I got to say a few words, which were basically this – awards and guests of honor positions are about values. The values of the community. If we truly believe that Lukianenko views are wrong and damaging, then we damn well should say so.

Except I didn't use his name, because I wanted it to fall as a general guiding principle. Sadly, with so little time, the wonderful Olav Rokne, whose wife is of Ukrainian extraction, didn't get to speak. He's good people.

The big thing is we need to start dealing with issues like this more carefully. Yes, this was an egregious case, but if someone like Jerry Pournelle or JK Rowling or even Junot Diaz came up today, we may want to do the same thing we did here. To me, this wasn't a political thing at all; it was about human decency, and Lukianenko's human decency is clearly lacking. While the Business Meeting doesn't have the power to remove him, voicing our displeasure draws a line. I would hope that it serves the purpose of making con-comms more aware that their choices of Guests of Honor actually mean something more than drawing box-office.

The vote happened and it passed, pretty clearly too. The fact is, we've got to start speaking up, and while we all knew there was 0% chance of the Chengdu committee removing Sergey Lukianenko, at least we registered our complaint and let it be known it's not OK. I even noticed that his Wikipedia articles mentions it now!

I bolted and checked in on the art show and Vanessa and then had two public art pieces I needed to see. The first was the obvious, the Bean. Technically called Cloud Gate, it's a symbol of Chicago and it's Anish Kapoor's most famous work. It was also massively over-budget and delivered late. I got pics. All the times I've been to Chicago, and I'd never managed to make it there before! Weird.

Then there was the Crystal Fountain.

If you've never seen it, it's a pair of LED-faced monoliths looking at each other about 100 feet apart. The water bubbles up from the top and cascades down while two close-ups of faces are shown on the front. After a while, the lips pucker and a jet of water shoots out! It's really fun and I wish the kids were there to enjoy. I'm sure the whole family will make it to Chicago at some point.

I walked around Millennium Park at a bit, but I was a bit too sweaty to enjoy it longer, so I





headed back. It was a nice break, and I even went mask-less when there weren't a bunch of people around!

I walked back and went to the Fanzine Lounge, made a couple of circuits around the Dealers' Room and exhibits. There's a new convention history group that I really wanna get involved with. I talked to folks, sat in the Lounge a bit, and got a text that Vanessa was going to go to the Art Institute. I would have gone with her, but I didn't have time before my panel, so off she went, and I pattered around until the panel I really wanted to do.

You see, Stephen Segal had suggested a panel about the cross-over between Avant Garde art and science fiction. Devotees will know I do an art podcast called *Three Minute Modernist* that has tackled this very concept. We talked about so many artists and pieces, about how the Surrealists changed the way that illustrators presented images, about architecture, about Warhol, about the Radisson Blu, the tallest building in the world designed by a woman at the time and inspired by a Greg Bear book cover. I brought up *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* by Nam June Paik, which I've written about here, before, and how Forry knew John Baldessari and Chris Burden, and apparently either knew or had interactions with The Kipper Kids, thus establishing him as a figure tied to some of the most important of all the LA Art scenesters of the 1960s through 2000s. It makes sense, because as John Hertz told me later in the con, Forry knew everybody.

After that, I headed with Ric and Debbie Bretschneider and España and John to Green Street Meats. It was a long walk, but I saw more of Chicago there than I ever had before. The place had a huge line, but it moved pretty fast. The reason for the line?

The food is just that dang good.

You go through the line and when you get to the front, they grab a metal tray and slap a piece of wax paper on it. Then they ask you want meat you want. I had pork belly and brisket. Then they hand you off to the sides. I ordered beans, natch, and elote-like corn.

Now, to give you an idea of what that corn is, elote is a Mexican dish where you get corn on the cob, slather it with butter, mayo, herbs, and spices. Here, it was off the cob, and kinda like creamed corn, only a hundred times better.



And I love creamed corn.

The pork belly was perfect, and the brisket exceptional, if a bit leaner than I usually like it. The smoke was not over-powering, nor was the fatty nature of the meats I chose hidden. We chatted and ate, and then it was time to go back, and I headed straight for the Fan Fund auction. Now, auctions are a form of entertainment. They're performance art if you're a BASFAn, and Fia Karlsson was the TAFF delegate, so she was there. Jerry Kaufman and James Bacon were the primary auctioneers, and they're good at it.

My role? To always bid, and I always started at five dollars.

Things like Fia and I having a back and forth over a pair of *Mad* magazines is surprisingly entertaining. The battle for things like a copy of a 1939 Arthur C. Clarke fanzine or a Bay Area zine with a Heinlein piece (under a pseudonym) made things even more interesting. The big win for me – the shawl that Esther MacCallum-Stewart had made. It's gorgeous, and I figured it would make for a nice piece to give to Vanessa. She wears it so very well.

After that, it was Scalzi's dance party, where the two of us danced to Dead or Alive's "You Spin Me Round (Like a Record)." It's the one time a year I dance.

After, Vanessa was starved. We headed to the local Taco Bell, which was a mistake. They were swamped, and they got our order wrong. We told them, and they yelled at us. We asked for our money back, but they told us to call our bank. Vanessa pushed it across the counter, and we started to walk away, but they called us back and remade it...



poorly. There was nearly no chicken in it. We walked around looking for more food, but everything was closed. We headed back to the room, got into bed, and slept heartily.

Sunday – Hugos.

I had no programming, but needed to do the Worldcon Order of FanEds, aka WOOOF, the APA that's been going for 40+ years. I was the compiler, and there were issues. I got a simple version together, but mounting printer issues and time meant that the final version would have to be done when I got home. I felt bad but really, I think it worked out for the best.

That was my entire morning, save for a quick breakfast. I was happy to get to see a few people I hadn't seen all con, including Marguerite, Brian Nesbit, and a few other maniacs. I went shopping for the first time, and I bought a Philip Jose Farmer letter! I was psyched. It was cheap too.

The Hugos were looming, and it was the first nomination for Vanessa and Jean Martin, so we had a little bit extra getting ready. She wore white and sequins and looked amazing. I wore pajamas. We took pictures, ate what little bits we could since there was so little gluten-free and dairy-free stuff.

FANZINE



Season Five
This Fall



Now, I know how hard it is to work with catering to get all the bases covered. Gluten-free is easy – fruit and veggies and cheese plates. Dairy-free is easy – fruit and veggies and meat stuffs. The two together leaves you with . . . fruit and veggies. Not exactly thrilling. The con, much to its credit, asked for allergies and such, and it's hard to accommodate everyone, but the layout wasn't ideal, so we pretty much went hungry. We did, however, get some cider, which was a nice switch from the usual beer-only.

We got our seats and called the kids. I stood up and called out "Everyone say 'Hi' to my kids!" and the audience did so in kind! JP loved that!!!

I made sure to go around and tell everyone on our team how much I loved working with them, and how much they meant to me. The one thing the pandemic made me realise is that you've got to let folks now when you can, because there might be a wall between us for a long time. Gratitude is something I feel, and seldom. James' superpower is 'thank you' and mine is 'I love you' and I tried to say both.

The awards were good. We didn't win, Seanan dominated the night, winning Fanzine and Best Series, as well as accepting for Lee Mo-



yer. Charlie Jane Anders won two, Best Fancast with Annalee, who it was great to get to see again, and Best Related. The best thing I read last year, *Where Oaken Hearts Do Gather*, won Best Short Story. Afterwards, we went to a rather disappointing after-party, though Chengdu did excellent gift bags!

We headed up to the room and got some sleep before Monday, when we had to break down Vanessa's art display. After that bit of packing fun, including getting a bit of time with the magnificent Meg Frank, we went for a walk and grabbed lunch. James was supposed to have joined us, but there was a brouhaha with Glasgow (the winner of the 2024 Worldcon) that kept him away. We chose a place in Millennium Park, right beneath the bean, and I had a phenomenal burger! We got more shots of the Bean, which Vanessa hadn't seen, and a couple of other pieces we came across. We headed back to the hotel and got some rest. We ended up back in the room early and I just conked out. Vanessa went over her sales and the total for her first art show – 1800 bucks. That paid for the room at least (and I think the whole trip is a write-off now???)



Tuesday we were up early and headed back to Wildberries. I had the chilaquiles, Vanessa the waffle again. We ate and headed back. We had some time, but James and Emma asked if we wanted to grab a taxi. Of course, we did! James also had Flake, my all-time favorite chocolate, for me!

The flights? Dull. We got in about eleven, I grabbed the car and took us home.

This Worldcon was great. It was the first time I've been to a con in person since 2019's Worldcon, which is my gold standard when it comes to cons. This was just as well run, but the whole vibe was a bit strange because of the masking and the sense that you might just catch COVID from it. We haven't, at least not yet, and we saw so many people we missed. The programming was good, though other than the Fan Fund auction I didn't go to any programming I wasn't on. I rarely do that anyhow. I was happy to see so many friends, and so happy that Vanessa got to sell her art, but more important to me, she got to SHOW her art.

A lot of good stuff came out of it. We pitched a couple of *Journey Planets* and folks seem excited. I talked to a couple of people who now want to buy my book! I put out my Public Art issue of *Claims Department* and *The Drink Tank* put forward a thoroughly intelligent slate of issues for the rest of the year. We're ticking off two boxes I've wanted ticked for a while – Robin Hood (for *JP*) and *Welcome to Nightvale* (for *The Drink Tank*)

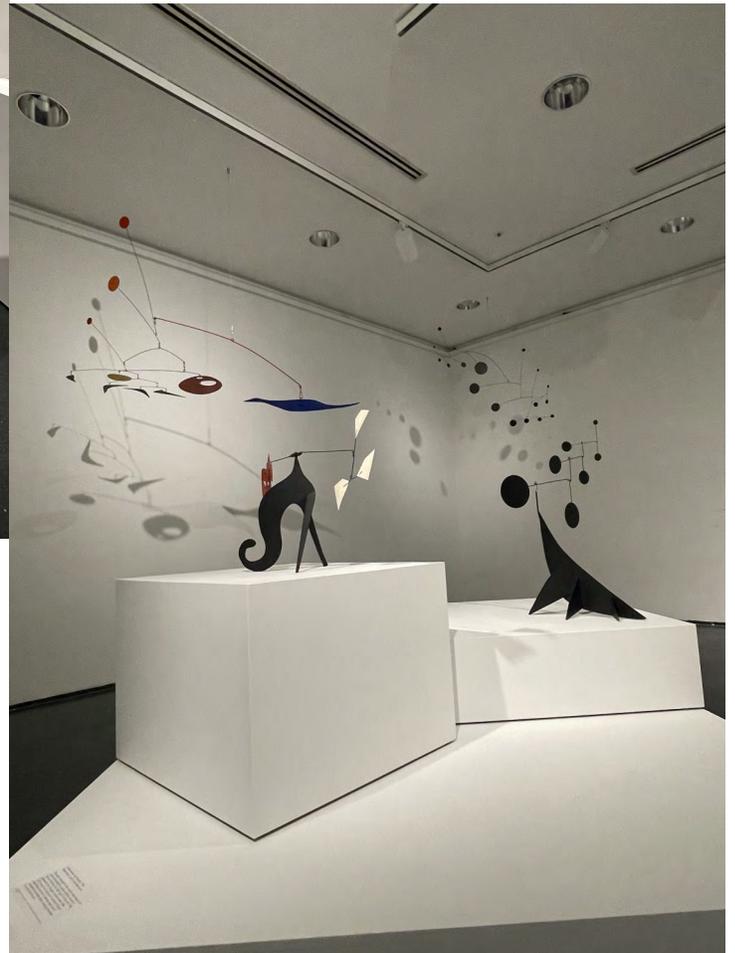
Mostly, I missed people; I missed hugs. This helped.





Vanessa Visits the Museum of Contemporary Art

Alexander Calder





Nick Cave









Community and Acceptance

by Chuck Serface

I spent my final day in Chicago post-Chicon 8 wandering along Navy Pier, lunching, reading lazily under the shade while occasionally peeking out towards the city's magnificent skyline. Chicon 8, as with any Worldcon, had been a whirl of activity. I sat on three panels, all of which went well. I attended parties and sat with friends old and new. I gathered a list containing authors tempting my attention. I lost my sixth Hugo run with Team Journey Planet. Miraculously, Chris Garcia and I survived a ride with Austin "The Accelerator" Winston, possibly a legend among Chicago cabbies, whatever his real name, since I'm sure Austin's not a common Russian name, and by his own admission, that dude was straight Russian, right up there with Gorky Park and *War and Peace*. Thank all deities the ride wasn't that long, shortened even more so by Austin's attempts to match Chuck Yeager's top speeds. The folks we were meeting for dinner at Fogo de Chão arrived to catch Chris and I on the curb, de-escalating from near nervous breakdowns. "How'd you beat us?" Chris's wife Vanessa asked. All thanks to Austin the Accelerator, whose machine was, I could hear Lou Gramm singing inside my head, "aerodynamic and ready to roll."



My first Worldcon was Chicon 7, ten years ago. I'm a Chuck-come-lately to organized fandom. Over decades, I had attended conventions sporadically, mostly keeping to myself, but when I returned from Ukraine in 2010, I was at loose ends, and began meeting people at Bay Area Science Fiction (BASFA) meetings. After about a year and a half, discussions there turned toward Chicon 7, and the voting populace named my friend Maurine Starkey a Hugo finalist for Best Fan Artist . . . and, sorry, spoilers . . . she went on to win the blessed thing! She asked me during one meeting, "You going to Chicago? If so, you can be my +1 at the Hugos." Others chimed, "Yes, come! One of us!" And so I went. Maurine, Chris, Adrienne Foster, Brad Lyau, Dave Clark, Kevin Roche, Andy Trembley,

Dave Gallaher, and others made sure I received E-ticket treatment all the way. Chicon 7 was my induction into the fandom community. No longer a solitary fan, I became one of you.

What a ride it's been since 2012:

- At the Worldcon in San Antonio, I danced on stage dressed as a space cowboy, complete with a flying-saucer apparatus worn like a pauper's barrel, all flashing lights and sparkly fabrics. Kevin Roche had recruited me for this duty, and we won top honors for his ingenuity.
- For Sasquan, I organized fan tables for Randy Smith. Two Heinlein factions would have battled for space had one not shown. The one who hadn't reserved space showed, naturally.
- For Worldcon 76, I acted as Division Head for Member Services which turned into a four-and-a-half-year long gig given all the prep beforehand and the necessary but unfortunate mopping up afterward. You know what the mopping up entailed. We'll leave it at that because the event rocked, and some matters are best left dead.

While in Ireland for the Dublin Worldcon, I stumbled onto my family's ancestral farm and met my cousins still living there. You can read about that life-changing occurrence here: <https://chucksurface.com/2020/05/09/finding-shinganagh-a-irish-homecoming/>

It never stops, does it, so why would Chicon 8 have been any less charged?

No, because shortly before the event James Bacon sent an email about Ukraine, specifically about two resolutions that he and Borys Sydiuk were putting forward at the WSFS Business Meeting. The first resolution, entitled "Solidarity with Ukraine," read:

Resolved, that it is the spirit of the Business Meeting to offer solidarity with Ukrainian Fans, recognizing that Ukraine has been invaded by fascists. We encourage all to boycott those who would platform or champion the illegal invasion. The Business Meeting looks forward to a return of freedom and fandom to Ukraine.

The second, "Sergey Lukianenko," more pointedly was as follows:

Resolved, that it is the spirit of the Business Meeting to show solidarity with Ukrainian fans and to condemn Worldcon 2023's Guest of Honour, Sergey Lukianenko's appalling utterances, calling Ukrainians Nazis and encouraging an illegal invasion of Ukraine. This is utterly unacceptable. Lukianenko should neither be platformed nor celebrated, and we ask the Chengdu 2023 committee, fans and members to refuse Sergei Lukianenko as your guest. It is shameful that he is honored by Worldcon.

File 770 reports more on issues these resolutions here: <https://file770.com/sergei-lukianenko-defends-russian-policy-towards-ukraine/> and here: <https://file770.com/eph-re-ratified-pro-ukraine-and-anti-lukianenko-resolutions-passed-by-chicon-8-business-meeting/>. Why would anyone hold anything against Sergey Lukianenko? Learn for yourselves: <https://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/2112/russian-writer-sergei-lukyanenko-ban-on-ukrainian-translations-of-work> and <https://file770.com/numerous-russian-sff-writers-support-ukraine-invasion-in-open-letter/>

James and Borys were seeking co-signers and support, and several from Team Journey Planet jumped at it, especially me, obligated by my Ukrainian connections. From 2008 – 2010, I served in the Peace Corps with Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Group 35, country of service: Ukraine. My post was with the Department of Foreign Languages for Banking Business at Ternopil National Economic University (now West Ukrainian National University) in Ternopil, a small city containing roughly 350,000 individuals barely removed from their native villages. I taught their students and children, joined them on vacations, ate at their tables, spoke their language (more or less), and blended into their community. How could I refuse when James and Borys came calling? I would stand and speak loudly. We were clear beforehand that our issue wasn't with the fans and convention



planners from Chengdu, fan community members working hard toward their Worldcon. We would ask, however, that fandom exercise values we know lie at the core of our collective spirit.

I rose at the appropriate moment, Business Meeting Chair Jared Dashoff recognized me, and upon reaching the microphone, I looked out over the crowd, noting friends who through my relatively short time among fandom have become family. Why the fuck should we even have to discuss this topic? Why debate? I know – protocol. And immediately I lost rationality, fell straight into emotional overload, stared blankly, and then began stammering out my message. I’m not sure what I said. Within I remembered a working vacation during my first summer in Ternopil. Friends owned an enormous cabin outside Yaremche, a major skilling center in southwest Ukraine, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. For three weeks, I instructed children in verbs and articles, hiked Carpathian backwoods, and consumed shashlik, varenyky, holubtsi, food, food, more food! Finally, our last weekend arrived, and the mothers, my colleagues, called me from the garden into the cabin’s living room. Together, they presented me with a hand-embroidered vyshyvanka, an intricate shirt embodying Ukrainian culture and history. I changed into the shirt. Then my friend Ruslana Stepanovna tied a matching sash around my waist. The girls appeared wearing traditional Ukrainian garb. Two sisters who lived nearby, who’d joined our lessons, brought out their Sunday best. We went out to the patio for photos. Quite a scene, indeed.



Afterward, I quipped, “Will this go straight to the *Kyiv Post*’s advertising department? A big university promotional?” I’d played show pony more than once. Ruslana shook her head and said:

“Ні, Чак, ти не розумієш. Тепер ти українець.”

“No, Chuck, you don’t understand. Now you are Ukrainian.”

Behind the mic and inside my mind that remembered, monumental moment of acceptance intertwined immediately with the acceptance I’d experienced from my BASFA friends over ten years ago. So much for my public-speaking skills. How could I maintain given how important both

communities are to me? Surprised, John O'Halloran commented that he'd never seen me nervous since I'd said something about that while speaking. Not nerves, friends, but an overwhelming love for Ukraine and fandom mixed with fear for both.

I thank all for passing these resolutions, for supporting their own values, for accepting Ukraine into our community just as they'd accepted me into theirs. Let's continue doing so with fandoms all over the globe. Thanks to Helen Montgomery and her team for a fabulous Worldcon. Onward forever.





Cover—Chris using DALL*E 2 (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline) arts)

Page 2—España Sheriff (An actual human drawer)

Page 3—Chris using DALL*E 2 (Prompt: A UFO over Chicago)

Page 4 and 5—From Dave O’Neill

Page 6—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline)

Page 8- Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline)

Pages 9-12, 14-15—Phoenix Data Art

Page 16- Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline)

Page 19—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline pencil drawing)

Page 20-22— photos from Alissa and Andrew Wales

Page 23- Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline pencil drawing)

Page 24-27— Photos from Juan Sanmiguel

Page 28—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline, futuristic)

Page 30—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline under attack)

Page 31-38— Photos by Paul Weimer

Page 40, 42—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Chicago skyline late impressionist)

Page 44- Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Chicago Skyline in the style of Richard Diebenkorn)

Page 46—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Futuristic Chicago Skyline pointilism)

Page 48—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Chicago Skyline fibre arts)

Page 50—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Chicago skyline with Taco)

Page 51—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: impressionistic Chicago with deep dish pizza)

Page 52—Photo by Chris Garcia at Chicago Architecture Museum

Pag 54 - Chris using Midjourney (prompt: strawberry cheese-cake at the Mall, hyperrealistic)

Page 55 Chris using Midjourney (prompt: photo massage chair)

Page 56—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Chicago under attack by a cryptid army)

Page 59—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Brazillian barbecue of the Damned)

Page 60—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: World Science Fiction convention business meeting)

Page 62—photo by Chris using a timer

Page 63-65—photos by Chris

Page 66—Meme created by Ric Bretschneider

Page 67—Vanessa using WOMBO Dream (Prompt: Chicago)

Page 68—Photo by Chris

Page 69—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Social Realism Chicago at night)

Page 70—75—Photos by Vanessa Applegate

Page 76—Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Chicago in the rain in the style of Winslow Homer)

Page 77—80—Photos from Chuck Serface

Page 82—Vanessa Applegate using Wombo Dream

Page 84— Chris using Midjourney (prompt: Femme Fatale watching Chicago)

