

EXHIBITION HALL X



EXHIBITION HALL - ISSUE 10 JUNE 2010

CHRIS GARCIA- EDITOR, JAMES BACON - LONDON BUREAU CHIEF,
ARIANE WOLFE - FASHION EDITOR

May's done come and gone, leaving us with the memories of the busiest month in the history of Steampunk Fandom. Seriously, there were more Steampunk conventions and fairs in the month of May than all of 2009! It's impressive how fast we've grown and how excited everyone is to be a part of all these events!

The Great Steampunk Debate has also launched and I've been actively taking part in that as well. After a long development period (seriously, it felt like trying to get a Terry Gilliam movie made!) it finally hit the streets and seems to be a grand success. Lots of traffic, and while there is some strong discussion on hard issues in harsh terms, I think it's an interesting place and it's doing what we'd set out to do- it got folks talking. One of the most popular topics in the first week was the role of Makers in Steampunk. This led me to think a bit while I was interviewing Steve Wozniak.

Yes, THAT Steve Wozniak.

I make my living working as a Curator at the Computer History Museum and as a part of our developing our new exhibit, we needed to interview Woz about a few things. While my colleague was in charge of the questioning about what Woz had done in his days working with the Homebrew Computer Club, he asked Woz if there was a shared feeling between the Homebrew days and what was going on at Maker Faire

and such goin' on these days.

And it hit me that not only was this true, but it's also a major call to us.

Woz said that there was the same feeling, that need to do it yourself, to make something that didn't come out of a store, that had never been done. He equated writing your own software programs with building your cars or making your own toys. It was an interesting point and what made me think that there is a real possibility that we could see Steampunk in the mainstream. I know, I know, I can hear those that want to maintain the -Punk in Steampunk getting their Irish up, but listen! That's a wonderful thing! It is through wider acceptance that we can find wider acceptance! There's a major green streak through us Steampunks, especially on the Maker side of things, but there's also a buck to be made.

And not a distributed or Etsy buck, I mean a serious corporate dollar.

Major companies could find themselves dealing with the Makers for their designs, using them as templates which they could then assembly line, or at very least, Fast-Make. That sort of thing could easily happen and we could see steam-y goodness in the seat-back magazines alongside the reproduction swords and jewelry. We're not that far away from that state, and I'm here to say that it's a good thing, because once there is a cross-



over, it allows funds to flow in, gives the folks who are doing Making or such a chance to make a living at it. And that would allow for them to create stuff in their off time that's more complex because they have the money to live off of. You can see this exact scenario happening in the 1950s and 60s in Science Fiction Art. You'd see guys who now had money and they'd still do images for the fan magazines, still put together their own pieces, and why? Because it was what they loved. Jack Gaughn is a great example of that. True, at some point, the busiest of the artists are no longer doing anything outside of their assignments for cash, but it happens.

The Mainstreaming of Steampunk is not a bad thing, though it does raise a classic problem: can you still consider yourself an outsider when you're running with the devil, as it were. There are those who are a part of Steampunk, or any scene really, because it is alternative, it is outside of the mainstream, and if we saw Steampunk culture out and about, what now for those? Who knows for sure, but I'm sure that people will complain loud and long, and some maybe even for good reason. I'm one of those who believes that no one can destroy what you love by loving it too, even if they're doing it in a different way. We're all eligible to do what we will with Steampunk, no matter what we do, so long as we actually DO something.

Because, in the end, Steampunk is both a society of Makers and a Society of Doers. The doing is what's most important, and that's why I do Exhibition Hall. I can't Make, I'm no good at it, but I can write about those that do, I can provide a place for folks to say stuff. While yes, there's no consensus on what it means to be a Steampunk, I'm pretty sure a part of the definition should be "those that do Steampunk-y things".

We are incredibly lucky to have a Spotlight Artist again this month! She is Meli Hoppe! You'll see her art throughout the issue and we've got a brief interview with her. Lots



of Photo Manipulations and some fun line drawing knot-work as well. She's involved all over the place and you can find her stuff at <http://froweminahild.deviantart.com/>

This issue also features words from James Bacon on Robert Rankin (and I really must write-up Retromancer soon!) and a Rick Geary graphic novel. There's Pecia Deveney covering The Steampunk World's Faire, me on the Steampunk Hamlet and more! I think this'll be another good one!

ART CREDITS

MELI HOPPE - COVER, PAGES 1, 2, 3, 5 AND 6-10
PAGES 13-15 - PHOTOS BY KECIA DEVENEY
PAGE 18 PHOTO FROM CALISTA TAYLOR

GOT ARTICLES OR ART? SEND THEM TO JOURNEYPLANET@GMAIL.COM

VOX-HAUL & I

We begin with Hugo nominee (who will join me in losing to Fred Pohl!) Mr. Lloyd Penney!

May 10, 2010

Dear Chris, Ariane and James:

I have fallen behind, haven't I? Not one, but two issues of Exhibition Hall reside in my Zines To Loc file on my desktop. My hours at the Globe and Mail changed for the better, which allowed me to get home a little earlier, but now, my contract at the Law Society of Upper Canada has ended, and this shall allow me to do my patented Grand Catch-Up. Allow me to demonstrate...

Always glad to hear from you! And you gotta love the Globe & Mail!

8...A great cover. Reminds me that we were at a costuming gathering for a special steampunk play at the end of the month just yesterday, and we cobbled together costumes for the day. We will look great when the play takes place at, of all things, the local annual anime convention. The working title is Steampunk Hetalia.

Diana does great work! I hope we can get more from her (though I imagine the closer we get to SteamCon, the less time she'll have!). I'm seeing Steampunk Hamlet in a week and I am psyched!

I have signed up for the Great Steampunk Debate, but have not yet contributed to it, and not sure if anything I could say may have already been covered. We often say that Fandom is a Way of Life or Fandom is just a Goddamned Hobby, and I think you could replace

the word Fandom with the word Steampunk. We are enjoying what we do to the level we do it, and no one should really say that one's a steampunk fan, and another isn't. If you prefer the punk aspect, or just like the costuming, then that is fine, IMHO. And, greetings to Nick Ottens...good to see that the magazines are meeting with one another. **I love Nick's zine (and if you're not reading Gatehouse Gazette, you should be!). The Debate is interesting, though as always, there are a few folks who seem to be stirring the pot. Still, there've been some classic entries!**

I believe there are contingents from around here going to the steampunk conventions in Michigan and New Jersey, and now comes the temptation of an old convention come back to life...CanCon was last held in Ottawa around 2001 or 2002, and it is being revived for this year with good lit guests and a steampunk theme. We promised ourselves no out-of-town conventions this year, but it is sooooooooooooo tempting...

Another one! I'm so regretting not going to at least one of the cons in May (I probably could have pulled it off, but I'm still paying off England!). CanCon is a con I know nothing about. Always good to hear that cons can come back from wherever it is they go when they die.

Nick is right; like SF fandom, steampunk has a basic anarchism behind it, there is so much you can do within it, and there is (or should be) no one to tell you you're not doing it right. Of course, we do try



COMMENTS? JOURNEYPLANET@GMAIL.COM

to define steampunk as best as we can, but in the long run, it is what we want it to be, and there will always be someone to disagree with us. Deal with it, do as you please and have fun.

Do what thou will shall be the whole of the law! Wow, I can't believe I can quote the first tenant of Thelema. We're fans, we're definers, it's what we do, which is a problem at times, since we're also always trying to test boundries.

Ah, Nova Albion. Before this article, the only thing I'd heard about this convention was that attendance was lower than expected. I know Mike Perschon is from Edmonton; where is Blaine Kehl and Jennica and Kim from? Looks like the con did get the numbers it needed, but the hotel and surrounds were less than cooperative. I hoping that I will get to a steam convention where the Foglios are, and I can take a role in their Girl Genius Radio Theatre. I would have myself a blast. Congratulations to Ariane on the Nova Albion event; I wish I could say see you next year, but this is a very big continent.

Our Canadian cousins are all from the Edmonton area, as I understand it. I'd say the four of them, teamed with Adrianna Hazard out your way, are the leading Canadian Steampunk Flag-bearers. Ariane did a great job and I understand she's doing some Steampunk programming at BayCon (which is three weeks away as I write this)

One thing we need is a general list of steampunk resources. There are myriad links to website, podcasts, bulletin boards, e-zines, etc., etc., etc. How does one keep track of it all? There is a Polish site that keep a historical list, but I'd like one that keeps a more modern list, a directory of where one can go for steampunk stuff right now.

I may have to compile one, perhaps as the year-end issue of EH. That's a good idea, Lloyd! I'll name it after you! We'll call it The Lloyd!

9...Definitely some steampunk influences in this year's Hugo ballot. Lots of Canadians, too! (Just had to say that, didn't I? Congratulations to Chris and James on their

nominations, too.)

I'd love to see Taral win Best Fan Artist this year! I'm so happy that James will be there representing the Drink Tank if there's some sort of error and a fanzine actually wins the Best Fanzine Category!

Terrific artwork from Kimmo Karvinen. Chris, are you still getting those neat 'newsletters' from Roger Wood? If not, let me know, and I will fire off to you what I've received.

I haven't been, so send 'em along! I love his stuff!

And, greetings to Bill Wright. Wells and Verne wrote about a future that was different, but yet vaguely uplifting, and would stay that way if we weren't careful about what we do today. Suddenly, we are flooded with steampunk writing, and I am glad to read about them; wish that I could actually find them and read them. I fear that most libraries today are underfunded, and certainly wouldn't understand why I might want a particular novel.

I'd say that Verne's view was a little darker than Wells', but neither of them were as negative as any of the SF that was coming out in the 1960s!

Excellent! A steampunk calendar. Adam Smith is an old friend who's worked on movie props and stuff for ren faires for many years, and steampunk had been a godsend to him. Adam and Liana Kerzner seem to be the driving forces behind the steampunk play at the anime convention mentioned at the top of this letter. Yvonne will portray Mother Britain, and I will be Northern Italy in the first part of the play; the historical will give way to the fantastical. So many conventions are adopting steampunk, and I am finding that while they may advertise it as an attracting word on their flyers, many give it a half-hearted attempt to provide something of interest.

Mother Britain's gotta be a great role! I'm sure that there's gonna be at least a dozen Steampunk cons by this time next year.

One of the local conventions in Toronto, Polaris, has a history of staging mini-conventions within the con itself, and with the impetus of some fans more familiar with the workings of Polaris than I am, I am now planning to see about the idea of a steampunk mini-convention as part of Polaris 26 next year. No guarantees, but now to see how certain people feel about it, and see if the convention may be willing to accommodate us, or if we'd need to rent our own space. More later on as plans build.

Cons within cons are always a good thing. We've done that with the Fanzine Lounge more than once. I think it's a good way to get folks together. There's basically been a Steampunk convention within Dragon*Con for at least 5 years.

And with that, my second page is nearly done, and so am I. Off this loc goes to you, and to my LiveJournal, to the anger of

some we will not mention at this time. Tough. Many thanks to all of you for your wonderful work with this magazine, a fine companion to Steampunk Magazine and the Gatehouse Gazette. I am unaware of any other magazine-style steampunk publications; these three do just fine. I am looking forward to more, and I promise a more timely response for next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

We love doing it, and we're planning on keeping it up for a good long while! I still can't believe that folks are upset about you putting the stuff up on LiveJournal. It's helped me so often to be able to check whether or not I got a LoC! So weird.



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: MÉLI HOPPE



One thing I love about doing Exhibition Hall is that I always need to run around frantically looking for new art to use in each issue. Yes, that's an odd thing to say, but there's a very good side-effect: running into artists into that I'd never come across. One such artist lately was Meli Hoppe, who you can find on DeviantArt.com as FroweMinahild. Her stuff struck me so that I instantly sent her a few questions so that we could have her as our next Artist Spotlight.

You work in various media: textile, drawing, sculpting, photography, etc. Which one do you connect with best? Is your approach to each different?

As I was a little child, I was always interested in drawing people and sculpting things and I was always interested in all of the arts. So my parents saw this and they advanced me into my doing. My mom showed me a lot of traditional things, while my dad showed me trade things.

But I was always a creative mind, so I can't stop learning art-things and my parents couldn't give me enough. So if I saw something interesting for me: I try to learn it by myself. Today, I can do 70% of it by myself :-D

What films/television has influenced your art?

Oh, I'm a movie-junkie. But the most genre I look are Tim Burton movies, historical and fantasy movies.

You're relatively new to doing Steampunk work. What attracted you to Steampunk? How do you find it different from other stuff you've done?

Yes, I'm a newbie. My first contact with Steampunk was the movie "Wild, Wild West" and I was in love with the "steampower" and the colours and the "historical future". Normally, I'm into the gothic culture and I didn't wear so many colours, but I love all these brown and gold tones. The second thing is that I love that Victorian things are combined with futuristic things, the technical aspects and the close contact to Jules Verne's stories. He's one of my favorite writers. My problem is that I live in a country where not so



much guys live who are interested in steampunk. I think I have a lot to learn and there is a big way for me to go, which I start into the last weeks.

Tell me about Vikings? How do you incorporate your re-enacting with your other art?

I'm absolutely interested into history, and Vikings are a small part of it. The complete European past is my passion. So I had an (ex-)boyfriend who was active into the European Viking scene and I join him into the time we was into a relationship. Now I finished the

reenactment, because I'm more interested into combine historical and fairytale things (like steampunk).

I love the Jewelry you make. How'd you start doing that? What sort of inspirations for pieces do you have?

Jewelry is my job. I was educated as a goldsmith, so my first profession is as goldsmith. :-D I started my education in 2005 and finished this January. Now I'm a journeyman.

My inspiration for the jewelarts are often natural things like butterflies, fireflies, moths etc,

I don't know why, but sometimes I think I'm a reincarnation of a Victorian/Belle Epoque girl! lol

You do some great photo manipulations. What programmes do you use?

Thank you. I use Photoshop elements 6.0

I'm looking at the photo set with Spring Is Back, Touch of a Pirat, With the Angels and Out of A Tree. It's a beautiful photo-set. Can you talk us through the creation of the outfit to the actual photo-shoot itself? How did you work with the model/photographer/etc to get teh results you were looking for

Oh, the outfit was really a spontaneous thing. I was in the central of my country and went into a shop for sewing things and I found the stuff. The stuff was a curtain, so it was a small piece, but enough to create a small jacket and a skirt...I don't know why I sew it like this.

I drew a quick doodle of what I would love the dress to look like. Then I made the pattern out of a Victorian jacket and started to sew. As I finished, I was happy about the result! And because I planned shooting with the photographer, I told her about the outfit and her boyfriend and her told me about the location and I was happy with the plan. The model was me and I had to leave really early and the photographer was also the visagist and she made up my hair and make-up. Then we drove to the castle and did our shoot. And there were a lot of good results!

What are you working on next?

I'm working on a commission work and on a steampunk outfit for myself :-D



THE MELI HOPPE ARTIST SPOTLIGHT PIECES

COVER - LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT, PHOTO MANIPULATION BY MELI HOPPE, STOCK FROM BLISSSTOCK.DEVIANTART.COM, STOCKMEDIA.DEVIANTART.COM, DARKROSE42-STOCK.DEVIANTART.COM, OBSIDIANDAWN.COM AND SXC.HU

PAGE 1 - DARK CASANOVA

PAGE 2 - LA DISTRACTION DE SOIREE NOIRE, PHOTO BY PETER ZELL, MODELS/HAIR/MAKE-UP BY MADAME DE CORBEAU & MADMOISELLE MÉLI

PAGE 3 - CELTIC CATS

PAGE 5 - MANIP BY MELI HOPPE, PHOTO BY REINER EISENBEIS

PAGE 6 - MADAME POUPEE, PHOTO BY PETER ZELL MAKE-UP/HAIR/DRESS BY MELI HOPPE

PAGE 7- THORS HAMMER BY MELI HOPPE

PAGE 8 - PHOTO/HAIR & MAKE-UP BY ARTSTYLE PHOTOS, DRESS/JEWELRY/MODEL - MELI HOPPE

PAGE 9- STEAMPUNK. MANIP BY MELI HOPPE PHOTO BY ANDRÉ M. HÜNSELER (THINKINGPIXELS.COM), MODEL - NEILA FYNN (NEILA-FYNN.MODEL-KARTEI.DE)

PAGE 10 - MY JOURNEYMAN'S PIECE BY MELI HOPPE

PAGE 10 - PHOTO MANI BY MELI HOPPE, MODEL MISS RATTENSTEIN, STOKE FROMSXC.HU AND ICONZERGSTOCK (HTTP://ZERGSTOCK.DEVIANTART.COM/)

PAGE 10 - TIM BURTONS SALLY BY MELI HOPPE

PAGE 10 - RENOIRE POSING. PHOTO BY MARKUS WEISS DRESS/HAIR/MAKE-UP BY MELI HOPPE





THE JAPANESE DEVIL FISH GIRL AND OTHER UNNATURAL ATTRACTIONS BY ROBERT RANKIN

Exhibition Hall readers will no doubt be interested in this future book, a sequel to *War of the Worlds*. We can expect the usual high quality humour, but there is an element to this book that is very 'scientific romance' and that will of course appeal to many of us who enjoy Steampunk, at its finest, set in Victorian London, with a wonderful twist of History with Pimms.

Here is the official word:

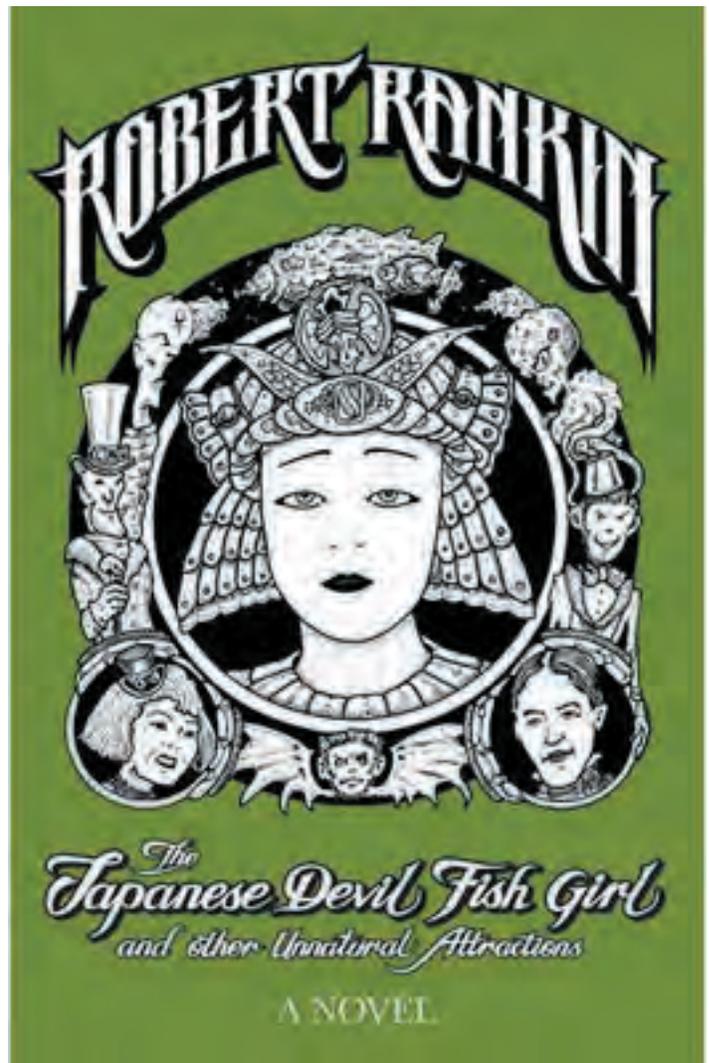
"ROLL UP ROLL UP AND SEE THE MOST WONDERFUL BEING IN ALL OF THE UNIVERSE."

'The pickled Martian's tentacles are fraying at the ends and Professor Coffin's "Most Meritorious Unnatural Attraction" (the remains of the original alien autopsy, performed by Sir Frederick Treves at the London Hospital) is no longer drawing the crowds.

*The year is 1895 and nearly a decade has passed since Mars invaded Earth, as chronicled by H.G. Wells in *The War of the Worlds*. Wrecked Martian spaceships, back-engineered by Charles Babbage and Nikola Tesla, have carried The Queen's Own Electric Fusiliers to the red planet and Mars is now part of the ever-expanding British Empire. Contact has been made and trade opened up with other planets and Venusian missionaries seek converts on Earth, whilst jolly Jupiterians take their annual holidays in Blackpool.*

*Off-worlders' money is as good as any, so what the less-than-scrupulous sideshow proprietor really needs is a sensational new attraction that will pull in punters from all parts of the solar system. And word has reached his ear about something very very special. The most wonderful being in all of the universe. She is known as *The Japanese Devil Fish Girl* and nothing quite like her has ever existed before.*

*Professor Coffin's quest to possess the ultimate showmans' exhibit will take him into realms as yet uncharted and cause considerable friction amongst the folk of other planets. Sufficient, in fact, to spark off *Worlds**



War Two.'

*'This is Robert Rankin's Far-Fetched-Fictional Steampunk sequel to *The War of the Worlds* and as with *The Japanese Devil Fish Girl*, nothing quite like it has ever existed before.'*

All sounds splendid.

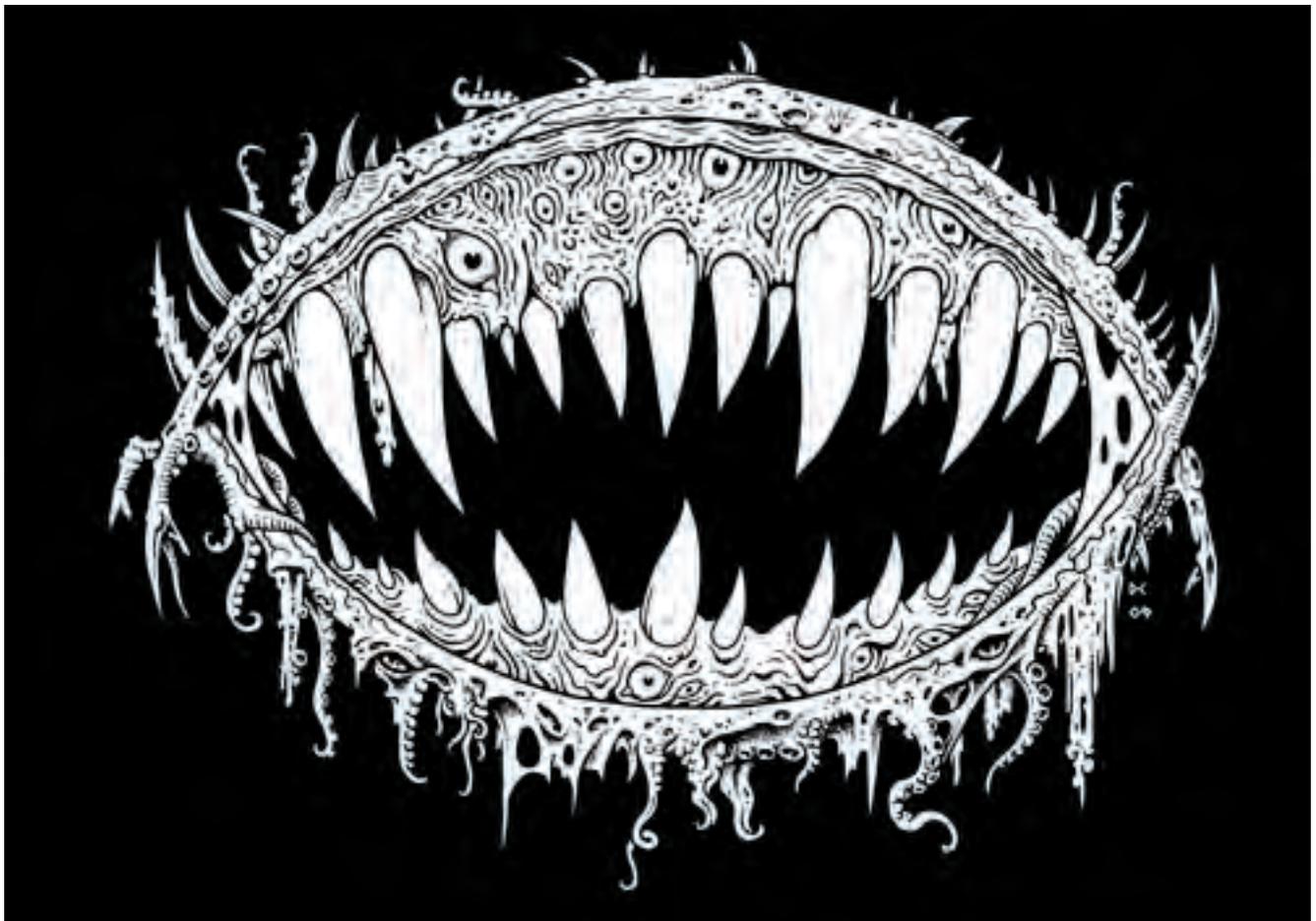
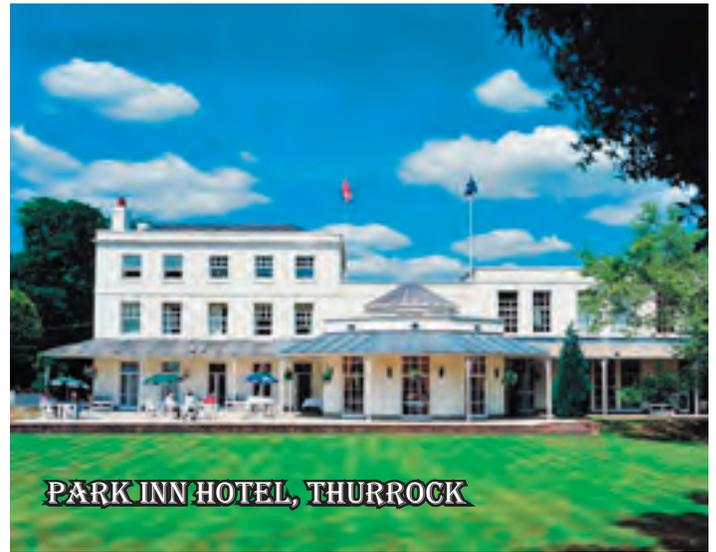
In a synchronistic move, the book's release is planned for September, and in September is Da'con.

Da'con is a three day convention, being run by The Order of The Golden Sprout, the official Robert Rankin Fanclub. The event which will take place in September, 24th to 26th, will be happening in Park Inn Hotel, Thurrock, Grays, Essex, just east of London and rather accessible thanks to the great gyratory autobahn.

There are two guests of honour so far, Robert Rankin and famed Artist Dave Carson. The areas of focus, are the Lore of Lovecraft and the Stupendous genre of Steampunk, as well as Alternate History.

The venue is salubrious, a beautifully converted Georgian Manor , set in six acres of landscaped gardens. Within is The Regency Restaurant is decorated in the Regency style with French doors leading out onto the patio and croquet lawn and The Champions bar is a relaxed gentlemen sports bar.

Membership is currently £45 and more information can be found on <http://thegoldensprout.com/dacon>



STEAMPUNK WORLD'S FAIRE

Wow, what a fun event! I drove north about an hour to Piscataway to attend the The Steampunk World's Fair. I really didn't know what to expect, since I've never gone to one of these before. I figured if anything, there'd be some awesome picture opportunities. I was not disappointed.

I started taking pictures the moment I got there, and kept on until the moment I was walking out the door. Everyone was so accommodating for photos (and I think they are quite used to it!) it was a beautiful day and there was a courtyard where they had music, food, tents and more. It was a lovely area to just sit and lounge in the sun and watch all the people.

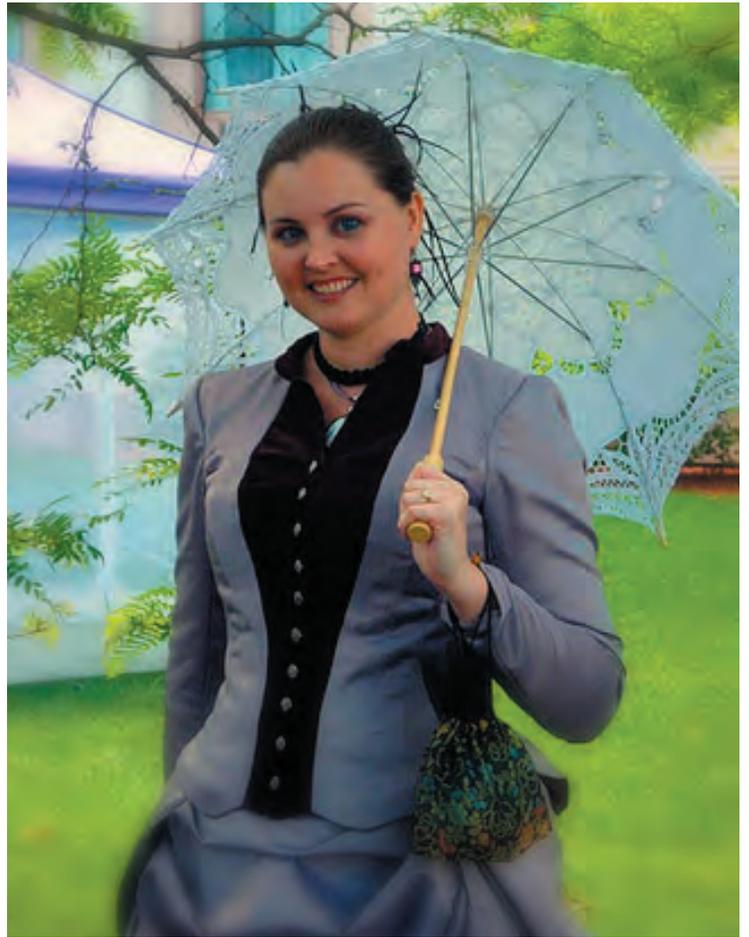
I really enjoyed the music by a band called Emperor Norton's Stationary Band. After walking around the lobby, I went to check out the vendor event. For some reason, they didn't have it all in one area, but in a few rooms around the lobby and then you had to walk around the 1st floor guest room area and go into each room and see what they had for sale in there. It was kind of fun that way. People were milling in the hallways. It reminded me of my old college days with parties in the dorm hallways. The marching band came down the hallway, too and I got some fun video of them.

From there, I went outside for more picture taking and lunch. The hotel had set up a yummy buffet (and for hotel food, it was REALLY good). I ate lunch with a mother and daughter from Delaware (Pat and Jackie, if I remembered that correctly - and please let me know if you read this!). We were discussing how nice people were. It seemed to be a place where you could be who you wanted to for the moment and no one was there to judge or criticize you. One of the staff members, David Isecke (operations), joined us for a little bit to see how we were enjoying ourselves. We were talking about how these types of events are so fun to attend because it does give you an opportunity to step outside your normal life and experience new things. David said something I really liked- "some people are too



quick to throw the magic out of their lives”. So true!

Another thing that I really enjoyed was seeing the men dressed up. I see women dressed up all the time. They like to dress up; do their hair, makeup and wear pretty things. Men, not so much. They tend to put on ball cap, wear some really boring polo type shirt and jeans or some sort of khaki/beige colored pants. There isn't a lot of variety in the way a man can dress. Nowadays, dressed up for a man is a suit and tie and although a suit can look nice, again, not much variety or a way for a man to stand out as an individual. At this event, there were so many varieties of how the men were dressed. maybe it was because it was fresh to my eyes, but I was digging it!
blog: www.lemoncholys.blogspot.com
website: www.lemoncholys.com





STEAMPUNK WORLD'S FAIRE - MAY 14TH TO MAY 16TH, 2010

ON STEAMPUNK HAMLET: A THEATRE REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF ADAPTATION

The Butterfield 8 Theatre Company, headquartered in the far-more-cultured-than-we-thought city of Concord, California, has been around for years. It's done some marvelous work, most notably productions like *The Women*, and the word of a Steampunk Hamlet rolled through not only the local area, but also through the Steampunk Society. The *Lovely & Talented Linda*, my long-suffering girlfriend, was once a costumer for Butterfield 8, made sure that we made our way there.

Even before the play started, I was thinking about the methods for the incorporation of Steampunk into Shakespeare. There were three obvious techniques that could be deployed, and this came to me as a part of larger thoughts, thoughts on how Steampunk can seep into all corners of literature or theatre or film or whatever. There are really only three ways to go about it: re-imagination, adaptation or re-visualization.

Re-imagination is the hardest to produce. It's taking the piece and simply re-writing it entirely, fitting it to the genre instead of shoving the genre into it. *Barbed Wire* is a re-imagining of *Casablanca*, so thorough a re-imagining that it uses even some of the same shots. *O*, a great and over-looked teen version of *Othello*, is another one. It takes the story of *Othello* and imports it to the world of Private High School Basketball. It's pretty impressive, and doesn't use the words of the Bard at all. It uses the structure, analogues to the characters and the themes, but it imports them to another place. Steampunk can do this beautifully, taking a story such as *Twelfth Night* and putting in airships and automatons to make it a steampunk story.

Adaptation is harder. It keeps the spirit, and most of the text, but makes changes to fit the setting. For example, you'd never change the 'To be or not to be' speech, but if you were to have Hamlet carrying a Steamy Ray Gun, you'd have Horatio and Marcellus swear by Hamlet's Gun instead of by his sword. It adapts the

text to fit the visuals, but it changes none of the themes, keeps the characters (in large part) and settings. In this, you would be far more genuine to the text, but not fully. Gus Van Zant's shot-for-shot re-make of *Psycho* is an example of this. Very faithful, perhaps too faithful, but it changed a few little things. The Ethan Hawke version of *Hamlet* is another excellent version that certainly falls here.

The final version, re-visualization, is the most widely-used and the most variable. The version of *Romeo + Juliet* done by Baz Luhrmann would fall into this simple category. I've seen dozens of versions of *Hamlet* that have been visualized in everything from Zapata's Mexico to Roman Gaul to a Space Station. This was, at my guess, the first Steampunk Shakespeare ever produced, and it worked.





In truth, it was 95% re-visualization with costumes, set pieces and props all having a marvelous Steampunk attitude. There was about 5% adaptation, with a few characters having their genders switched (notably Polonius become Polonia and Rosencrantz being played by a female) and there were quite a few switches in pronouns. At least I think they changed pronouns. I'm not good with olde tymie wordyings.

Butterfield 8's theatre seems to be a converted store of some sort, which I think is a great thing. It forces them to use the floor as a stage, and the entire floor. John Butterfield, the director for this play, used the entire floor and stage to exceptional effect. There was an altar on one side, and when Claudius knelt to pray and Hamlet made as if to kill him, there was a combination of intimacy made possible only by the location that was chosen for the conflict. Every part of the theatre had some specific part, giving every audience member something in the way of personal interaction for the players.

The key to any version of Hamlet is Hamlet. This production had a fellow named Nick Jackson playing Hamlet. He was good, though he was best when he was playing Hamlet the Crazy, Hamlet the Obsessed or Hamlet the Scared. Hamlet the Reflectionist, or Hamlet the Mournful were far less his ball of string. His take on the 'To be or not to be' speech wasn't revelatory, it was almost just Hamlet the Talky. His interactions with Ophelia were fantastic, his interactions with the players were fabulous, and his take on the Yorick speech was down-right fantastic. He also hit it pretty solid on the ending. I would say he was a good Hamlet, but he was actually up-staged a couple of times.

Horatio, played with a limp and a sense of fidelity and heavyweight loyalty, was beautifully played by Peter J. McArthur. I found his take on Horatio to be slid right in that slot where you want a player to go into. Queen Gertrude, Deborah Doyle, was on that swing that every actress who has played Gertrude understands. You can play her too knowing, too subtle, too denying, too dedicated. Doyle rode the line hard, swinging

back and forth at times between sympathy and despair. I was very impressed with the way she went about things.

The role that every young, big-eyed ingénue aspires to is Ophelia. Becky Porter played her marvelously. You can not go too far with Ophelia, and Becky did no such thing. She hit every note big and brassy. She had the kind of chemistry with Hamlet that you seldom discover. There was both a simplicity to it and a quiet fury covered-over with a madness that was simmering underneath even from the first go. Her's was a stronger Ophelia than many I've seen, and she took to the staging better than any of the other performers.

I loved some of the marvelous touches to make this a Steampunk production. The Gravedigger's Assistant was an Automaton that needed winding. The Ghost King Hamlet was built as a giant, menacing ghost that seemed like one of Herr Doktor's masks placed onto a costume for a Steampunk Star Wars Sandperson. With the dark, patchy lighting (a great choice), it was quite a disquieting effect. The Hamlet Ray Gun upon which they swore as a 'sword', was gorgeous. There was also a gorgeous steel top hat that I loved!

There were no airships, but when Laertes leaves for France, we know it is by airship because he dons an aviators leather helmet and goggles as he leaves the stage. That's a simple touch, but it is the kind of thing that we instantly understand without the need for re-writing. It was awesome.

All in all, Steampunk Hamlet was partly made by the intimacy of the venue, the costume and art direction and the performances. I love Butterfield 8 and I hope that I'll get to see more innovative theatre productions out of them. I also hope others will take stabs at Steampunking Shakespeare, because it is a field that is ready to be harvested.

THE THINGS I LEARNED GOING TO THE STEAMPUNK FESTIVAL

Over the weekend, I had the pleasure of attending (and was actually a featured artist) at the first annual Steampunk Festival, held at the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation in Waltham, MA. There was a huge turnout for the event, especially when one takes into consideration it was the first year for the event-- over 1300 people attended. Hats off to Christine Gill for the excellent job she did in putting the event together.

I wish I'd had a bit more time to get a more steampunk outfit together, but unfortunately, after many difficulties, most of time was spent constructing the leather corset from hell. Here were a few things I was reminded of, since it had been a while since I'd last strapped myself in to a corset of considerable stiffness.

First of all, be sure to dress the lower half of your body before you put the corset on, since getting on shoes, socks, pants/skirts, etc. usually involve bending at the waist. I, of course, did not remember this little tidbit of information, and I'm sure you can all just imagine the contortions involved in getting the rest of my clothes on.

When I designed my corset, I did not use a busk because I decided it would be neat if I could make the corset reversible to the red brocade. As a result, I needed another set of hands to lace me up, and since I was going to the event alone, I went fully dressed.

This brings us to the next thing I quickly figured out. Driving in a corset is far different to driving without one on. When the gods decided to scramble my genetic makeup, they decided to be generous in the area corsets are designed to restrain. With a corset, there is only one place for those curves to go, and that is up. It wasn't much of a problem until I decided to sit down and at-

tempt driving. Sitting only shifted the corset further up, and all that had already been pushed to the heavens, got pushed up even further, practically drowning me in my own cleavage. Funny? Okay, maybe a little. However, cruising down the highway at 80 mph, when you no longer have the stability of resting your arms by your side, is a little precarious-- although I can only imagine the image from passing vehicles had anyone bothered to look over. I'm just glad I didn't get pulled over or get a flat, though my dear husband had the sense to ask if I had anything stashed in the car that I could potentially cover myself with should the need arise.

The event itself was great, and the museum was the perfect setting for a steampunk event. Though not everyone was dressed up, the steampunk outfits there were all amazing, and it has definitely motivated me to complete a few more articles of clothing. I think next on the to do list will be a bustled skirt, and underskirt. And maybe another corset, complete with steel boning and a busk.

Though I did love the snug feel of the corset while at the event, I must admit that it felt so incredibly nice to get out of it for the ride home, especially on such a hot day. And that brings me to my final point, though

this was not figured out until the day after, when I awoke to sore muscles around the ribs and back. I guess wearing a corset involves using muscles you don't normally use-- perhaps in keeping you so terribly upright and pulled in. Still, a small price to pay, don't you think?

You can find out more about the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation at <http://www.crimi.org/>. You can find Calista Taylor's blog at <http://asteampunkreverie.blogspot.com/>

