



EXHIBITION HALL 17



EXHIBITION HALL 17 - MAY 2011

Lots of Steampunk happening in March, April and May. There were a bunch of events, the release of The Steampunk Bible, Makers Faire, a new Steampowered Railroad opened in Russia (and I'm hoping to get an article on that!) and much much more. I'm excited for the rest of the year, a new Gail Carriger book and Steamcon and so much more, and the Hugo Nominations came out and James Bacon and I are both up for two: The Drink Tank for Best Fanzine (which we edit together) and each of us up for Best Fan Writer. It's not going to be easy to lose to James, a force of nature he is, but I'm willing to accept my beating.

Speaking of Steampunk Literature, I'm so excited to see that we are much, much closer to the release of Gail Carriger's next book, Heartless. It's the fourth Parasol Protectorate novel and I'm hyped! On the panel at Nova Albion I did with Ay-leen and Gail saw Gail showing off the cover to her 5th book, Timeless, and I was struck by the reference on the baCover about 'Undead Porcupines'. How am I to concentrate with that staring at me?

I'm also excited to remind folks that Gail Carriger is the Writer GoH at FenCon in Dallas September 23rd - 25th. The Fan GoH is my pal Steven H Silver, while Joe Bethancourt is the Music Guest of Honor, Vincent di Fate, Les Johnson is the Science Guest, and Lou Anders is the Editor Guest of Honor. Good line-up. I'll be there as will some great folks

like Warren Buff, Guy Lillian, Brad W. Foster and more. It's also the DeepSouthCon for 2011, so that'll draw even more good folks from all over.

Speaking of cons that I'll be at which also have Guests of Honor that y'all Steampunks will be interested in, Westercon 64 is coming to the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose July 4th Weekend! It's got Patricia McKillup as the Writer GoH (and I've read nothin of her stuff), but important to us is the fact that The Foglios are the Artist GoHs! How awesome is that? It'll be great to have them as Guests in the BArea once more, and I'm very pleased to see that Phil and Kaija are up for another Hugo for Best Graphic Story. It's a good thing. It should be a fun con, especially with the fact that I'm running the Fanzine Lounge during the day which is always a good time.

OK, let's get on with the reviewing and con-going portion of our zine!

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“LIKE A BEDOUIN LIBRARIAN...”
THE STORY OF MY NOVA ALBION
STEAMPUNK EXHIBITION
BY CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA

I got profoundly drunk. A former Locus-er lured me to my doom on Saturday evening. OK, maybe not lured, more like said was available and I went to it. The lure of a beverage made by a master while I was already 2 and a half sheets into the wind was the instrument of my destruction. I am shocked Linda did not stab me upon my return to the room. In the night, the rest of our room asleep deeply, or pretending to be so, and I had my stomach revolt against the mere sips of water I'd taken in the hours since. These things happen, but it was only a moment, a speck of pain in a sea of amazing.

That, and it proves that such encounters with Our Blessed Lady of Late-Night Rerurgitation are the wages of sin.

Let's talk about the con. I brought James Bacon with me. The man had flown in the night before from London and after we stopped to get him his first taste of In-n-Out Burger, we slept and then ran into town to pick a few things up. James, the Mad Irish Man living in Croydon, is always a good guy to have about, and as soon as we got to the con, we instantly started running into people and chatting away.

Sadly, this was the first time I've been to a Steampunk con that didn't have The Steampunk Scholar Mike Perschon. It was said, but as you can see from the photos that run with these words, he was well-remembered!

I ran into Nessa, one of my favorite people in the 'I wish I had more time to sit down and get to know them' category. James is constantly chatting, a brilliant mingler, far better than I am. We had a panel set-up for Friday about Fanzines. Sadly, no one showed up. There weren't a lot of folks at programming on Friday afternoon, so James and I headed to the con area, I handed out issues of ExHall and I really enjoyed introducing James to the good folks of NorCal Steampunk. Instantly we met Pat Yulo and various others. It was a good intro to the con.

Registration was a bit rough. It seems that the Nova Albion Crew seems to get themselves a little bit better every time, and while this was a better registration that last year, for sure, it wasn't optimal and it did take forever to get Linda's badge. Still, I think they'll get around to making it a better registration experience.

We got our room, and as has happened

more than once in my experience with the Hyatt Santa Clara, we got the wrong room type. A King instead of a Double-Double. Luckily, they brought up a rollaway for free, so all was good.

The big event for Friday was the music. There was a dance, which seems to be standard operating procedure for Nova Albion. I'm not much of a dancer at times when dancing is appropriate. I prefer to rock out when there's no good reason, but this was a good little evening of Waltzing, featuring Unwoman, which was great. I love watching Unwoman perform and this time she played a great set. Sadly, I didn't get to see all her set. There were a couple of parties up on the party floor that I wanted to get to. I did, and they were fun, but that wasn't when I sent myself to the depths. No, I was the King of Moderation.

Saturday morning was early. Too early. I had an early panel with Ay-Leen The Peacemaker and Roger Ratchford. It was on the Technological History Between the East and West. We talked about various cultures and time periods and about Technological Imperialism and Ay-Leen made some great points (and I still have to send her 4 more dollars for the Buttons to Support Shelterbox, and you should be supporting them too!!!) and it was Roger who brought some great comments and pitched them all very well. I really enjoyed this panel.

After that, there was a brief break for me and then it was the scariest part for me: the Keynote. Ariane asked me to do the Keynote and I, perhaps foolishly, said yes. I called it The Steampunk State of the Union, I ran the original in the last issue, but the one I delivered was slightly different and sadly, I only recorded half of it. I wish I'd remembered to hit record at the start, but once I did, I also started talking in front of the table, doing moving emphasis. There were some good folks in the audience, maybe 25 or so total, and afterwards a bunch of them chatted with me about my saying that the Hot Topic-ing of Steampunk was going to be a good thing in the long run. It's a controversial topic, but I stand by my declaration.

After that, lunch. I think we went to In-



n-Out. I don't remember. I do remember coming back and enjoying the Dealer's Room and chatting and recording various videos and PodCast stuff. The Airship Home Companion program in the evening even saw me record a podcast of a magic trick. Noting like a visual medium on Radio!

One of the highlights was walking the fan table area and Linda got dragged in to looking at feathers. I've been lamenting the lack of hats in my size. And Andy Trembley brought a wide-brimmed hat that was too big for him that fit me just fine. I was wearing it and Linda was fitting for feathers for one of her many hats and Pat Yulo brought over a small spray of feathers and once I saw them, I had to have them for the hat. As Ric Bretschneider said "Chris, you look like a Quaker pimp."

I concur.

There was a pause before the doors opened for the evenings entertainment. It was a bad scene, but one that was saved by the Magnificent Unwoman playing a few won-

derful songs. She did her covers of Michael Jackson's Billie Jean and Papa Don't Preach. I am glad I was hanging around in the area of the Fan Tables when she was performing. She really made the folks in the waiting area not notice the time waiting. It was a good call and Anders, the Tech guy, said that she'd become her hero. I would agree.

What's funny is that the Airship Home Companion thing didn't seem to come off any different than just having a bunch of music going on. The main band was Lee Press-on and The (Brass) Nails, who was great. There was then a performance by Veronique Chevelier. It was not good. She has a decent presence, some charisma, and she can sing a bit, but for some reason, the few times I've seen her, it's never come together. Her signature seems to be wearing stuff around her neck. It's a good gig, but it's not great entertain-



ment.

We headed upstairs around 11 or so and James, Jen, Linda and I had a few drinks. This was the start of the getting sloppy portion of the evening. I went out to see Kevin Roche, who was tooling around in the Tiki Dalek that he'd built for Gallifrey and had brought to the con. Along the way, I ran into Rachel, formerly of Locus, and she recommended a drink. We headed up to the ConSuite and enjoyed a beverage. I, at that point, was wasted beyond belief. We chatted for a few minutes in the hallway, and then I headed back to the room. It was a fun night.

The next morning came even earlier than the previous. I had three panels, the first of which was a great one on The What-If Revolution with Roger again and Lynx Crowe. It was a fun Alternate History-type panel where we talked about the various times you could introduce technologies and how that would effect history. I always have a lot of fun with those kinds of panels. I wish we'd had one more person, Anina Bennet was supposed to be on it, but as it was, we all got good laughs and made some salient points.

After that, there was my panel with Ay-Leen and Gail Carriger about Unappreciated

Cultures for Steampunk Writing. This one Chris Lester recorded. It was a good panel where I got to say one of my favorite clichés: If you have a untrustworthy Dutchman, you've got a Steampunk story! OK, that may be an over-simplification, but it's so true! We talked about various cultures, about people who are writing Steampunk in other cultures, I brought up Alex Irvine, whose A Scattering of Jades would probably count, and other names that popped up were NK Jemmesin and even Michael Swanwick. Gail mentioned Peru as an area with a culture that is rife with Steampunk concepts. I know that there is a lot of influence of the American Victorian period still today in Bolivia. In fact, there is women's professional wrestling in La Paz where the women dress in clothes that are largely influenced by the clothing worn in the late 1890s and early 1900s. I'd love to see someone work with that!

After that, I was wasted beyond belief. It's impossible to understand just how exhausted I was. Usually, I'm peppy, and on Friday, I was more full of Pep than usual. On Sunday, I was lethargic, draggin' ass, as it were. I was beat and it was unusual for me. I've always had at least a little in my reserves



at the end, but this time, I was damaged by a torpedo shot of booze the night before, coupled with the fact that I'd enjoyed myself so much partly because I had to face the fact that my apartment, blooming mould every minute, was about to become my ex-apartment. Also, I was not looking forward to sleeping out in my car until I found a new apartment. One things cons can be very good for is to make you forget your troubles, at least for a weekend. This was a time when I had it all come rolling back fast and hard on Sunday afternoon. Ain't no exhausted like post-con exhausted.

Overall, the con was amazing. I got a chance to chat with so many wonderful people, especially the wonderful Cherie Priest, the especially awesome Kevin 'Airship Ambassador' Stiel (who I sadly didn't get to sit-down and chat with nearly enough), Chris Fisher and many, many others. It was one of the most awesomely fun weekends I've had in years. There was a certain youth vibe, as there have been at all the steampunk cons I've been to, and we were staying right next to a room full of Chico students who came down for the weekend. We don't see youth like this at too many cons these days. At Windycon in 2009, I certainly did. At the 2005 Norwescon I did. Not so much at others, and this is something where Steampunk Fandom is going to be able to bloom.

The one thing about Nova Albion is that it's slowly getting the big things like Reg and

publications right, and this year's program book was really good, but they still need to pick up on a few of the smaller things. There were folks who wanted the font on the badges to be bigger, which is a old SMOFish complaint. Tech was greatly improved over last year, and the facility was a million times better. I love the Hyatt and the large open lobby and the free parking are both wonderful things that a con like Nova Albion can take advantage of fully. Of course, there's also the fact that a Lego convention was right next door and they came up with a ten dollar cross-entry thing that allowed you to go from one to the other. This brought Grant Imahara from Mythbusters over to Nova Albion. It was a great double-bill and I think a lot of folks loved doing both. I, sadly, only got to see the couple of things they had brought over into the hotel lobby, most notably a recreation of the Sushi Bar in Lego which was AWESOME!

All in all, I had a better time at Nova Albion than at any other Steampunk convention yet.. Steamcon may be better put together, feel more like the kind of cons I'm used to in the SF world, and maybe runs a bit smoother (thought they could learn a thing or two about how to keep people who are waiting entertained), but Nova Albion is an absolute blast.

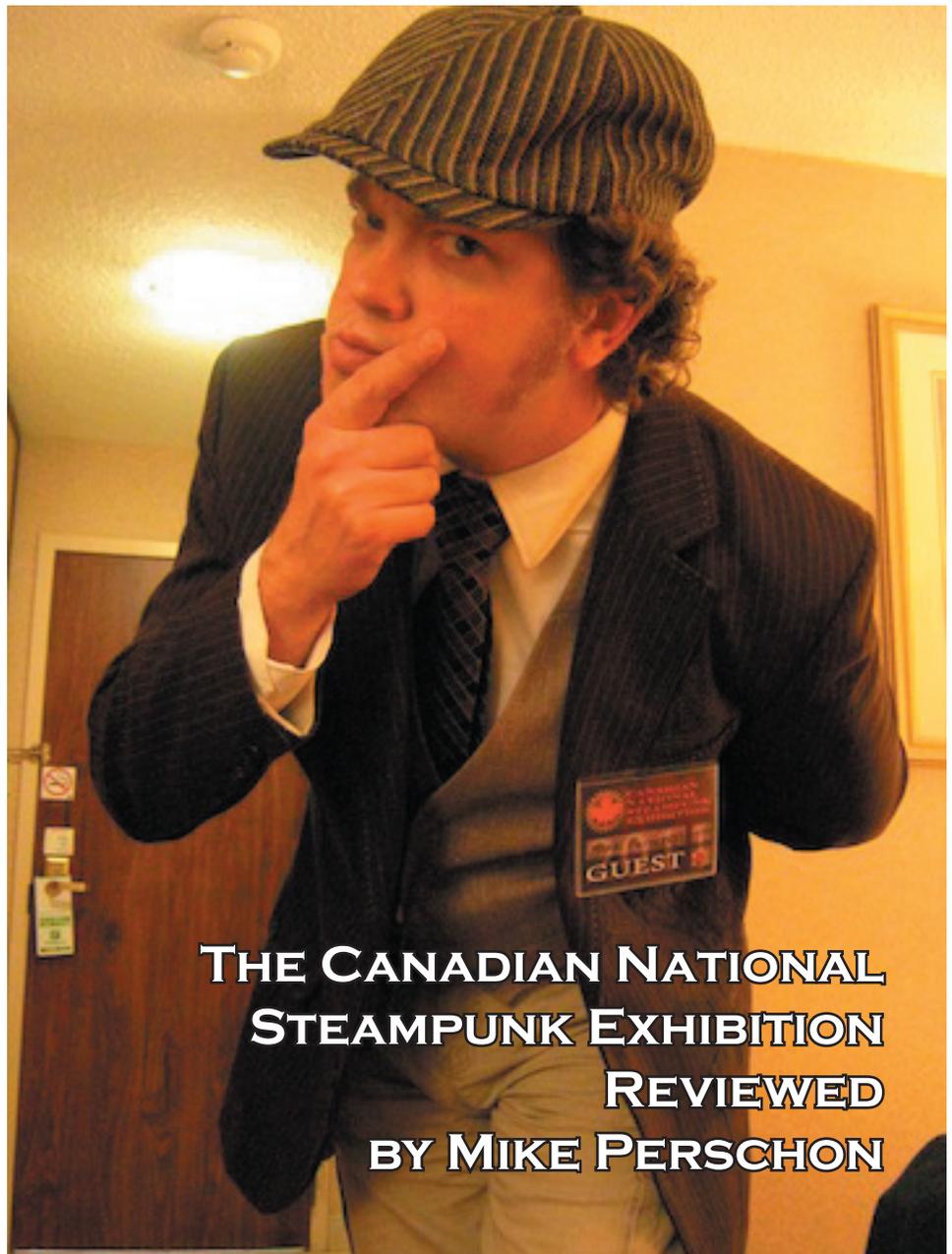
I only wish Mike had been there. We missed ya, Mr. Perschon!



Three years of research, and I've never attended a steampunk convention in my homeland. That is partially due to Canada picking steampunk up like last year's fashions: we're often behind the Stateside curve on what's *cool* at a subculture level. We got Bieber same time as everyone else, but steampunk took a while to filter across the International Boundary. Our first steampunk con was arguably the Victoria Steam Exposition, a small con with the amazing distinction of being housed in the opulent Fairmont Empress. That hotel, along with the rest of the Fairmont hotels and resorts are easily the most steampunk a setting one could ask for in Canada. I was unable to attend, having just returned from the *Nova Albion Steampunk Exhibition* in California.

Thankfully, it wasn't the last steampunk con in the Great White North. Last fall, I was invited to present at The *Canadian National Steampunk Exhibition (CNSE)* in Toronto by Canada's Queen of the Geeks, Liana K. I knew Lee Ann Faruga, aka Countess Lenora of Steampunk Canada (steampunkcanada.ca) was also involved in the planning for the event, and the persistence of both these lovely ladies proved too much. Plus, there was a seat sale on flights with WestJet that decided where my meager travel funds would take me in 2011. Futurecon helped sponsor my journey, and with my tickets booked and bags packed, I was bound for Toronto.

Canada is a massive nation, geographically speaking. I've lived in Alberta my whole life, but never traveled to Toronto, save to switch flights on my way to Jamaica. So while I knew I wouldn't see much more than the



THE CANADIAN NATIONAL STEAMPUNK EXHIBITION REVIEWED BY MIKE PERSCHON

hotel the *CNSE* was in, I was excited to add Toronto to the list of places my steampunk research has taken me.

I won't bore you with descriptions of the Great Lakes from my window seat vantage points, or gloat over the exceedingly comfortable town car I took from the airport (save to say that my driver may have been the inspiration for Jason Statham's character in *The Transporter*). Instead, we'll fast forward to me stepping out of my twelfth floor room-with-a-view in my steampunk threads to get registered before my first presentation.

I'm dressed in a Mark Ecko pin-striped brown blazer with an ornate pattern embroidered on the chest and pocket. Underneath

the jacket is a light brown vest, a checked tie, and white dress shirt I picked up at a *Le Chateau* outlet store only days earlier (*Le Chateau* outlet is one of the best ways to put together steampunk fashion on a budget in Canada). I have eschewed long pants for clam-diggers (standing in for the plus fours/Tintin pants I can't find anywhere!), and have knee-high socks to give a somewhat highland-hiker feel to the ensemble. It's topped off with a newsboys cap my mom bought for me at *Heritage Park* last year (*Heritage Park*, along with *Fort Edmonton*, are spaces of historical re-creation in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta, respectively).

I've itemized my threads to underscore how different my first Canadian steampunk convention was from my first American one: when I attended *Steam Powered* in the fall of '08, it was with a cobbled together assortment of items from my days as an indie musician (again, notably, a *Le Chateau* suit with mandarin collar being the center piece). Now, I have options.

I took the elevator, the first of many such trips this weekend, down to the main floor and registration. Unlike many other cons, the *CNSE* was not the only group in the Markham Holiday Inn. We shared the space and most significantly, elevator with many mundanes: hockey and lacrosse teams, school groups, and their parents. I'll spare you the joys of riding the elevator with a hockey dad in full redneck mode commenting on our steampunk attire.

Approaching the registration desk, I spotted Jaymee Goh, aka Jha Goh of *Silver Goggles*. While we've corresponded for years, this was the first time we'd met in person. While speaking in line, Liana K introduced me to J.M. Frey author of the excellent SF debut *Tryptych*, who was to share panels with me over the course of the weekend. Liana, Jaymee, and J.M. are diminutive in stature, but stand tall in every other way. Standing in line with three such well-spoken and opinionated ladies was like mental warmup for the weekend's presentation rigors!

Registered, J.M. and I went downstairs to find the room we were to present in. Our

first panel of the weekend was *What is Steampunk?* This was a dissemination of my basic thesis on the steampunk aesthetic: Steampunk isn't a genre; it's a style that employs Neo-Victorianism, Retrofuturism, and Industrial-era Technofantasy. The response was positive, and J.M. was an excellent co-presenter, even though she'd only had limited exposure to the idea. With a background in



LIANA K, QUEEN OF THE GEEKS, AND HER HUSBAND, ENVY OF THE GEEKS



STEAMPUNK SCHOLAR WITH JAYMEE GOH

acting and voice work, she jumped in during the reading of cartoons, providing the other voice, as well as positing some very cool ideas about the way in which the steampunk aesthetic is about exposure, from the tech, to the fashion, to the historical reflections.

I was solo for my next presentation, “Steam Wars,” which has the distinction of having been presented at every location I’ve ever been to in my research: Seattle, SF Bay Area, Toronto, and even here at home in Edmonton. Since the full academic article is now available from the *Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies*, I focused more on recursive fantasy ideas, exploring how the narrative might change if the steampunk aesthetic really were applied to *Star Wars*, based upon the images. It was during this panel I met Stuart Long, a huge fan of *Star Wars* and student of history, who was good enough to correct me on an erroneous statement I made, and then better still at engaging me in geek banter throughout the weekend.

My third panel, “Canuck Steampunk” was shared with Lee Ann Faruga, and Canadian steampunk writer Rob St. Martin, whose books, *Sunset Val (or, The Pirate Queen of the Seven Skies)* and *Princess Smith and the Clockwork Knight*, are an interesting mix of fantasy and steampunk in a secondary world. We discussed what makes Canadian steampunk different from U.S. steampunk: mostly, a more prevalent interest in historicity, and a less bombastic approach to steampunk culture. In a nutshell, we’ve applied the Steampunk aesthetic to the Canadian stereotype of polite peacemaker (although that still doesn’t explain all those brassed-up Nerf guns). I should also mention that we talked about how science in Canada was different from

the industrial growth of the United States. For those who are interested further in these differences, check out Suzanne Zeller’s *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation*. In it, Zeller focuses on how Victorian geological, geophysical, and botanical sciences moved Canadian science beyond “the eighteenth-century mechanical ideals that forged the United States.” We discussed how this difference presents an opportunity to take steampunk in some eco-directions, as well as a means of breaking out of the industrial cul-de-sac of most steampunk tech. We also discussed how Canada presents a lot of undiscovered territory for steampunk writers willing to do their research.

By now it was seven o’clock, and Jaymee Goh and I went for food together at a local sushi restaurant. The food was good, but the conversation was better. Jaymee’s a fiery advocate for gender and ethnic awareness in steampunk (and speculative fiction in general), and I have appreciated the journey she’s taken me on in that awareness. As always, one of the best things about cons is the people,

and getting to finally meet Jaymee in person was a real pleasure.

Back at the Holiday Inn, Jaymee and I headed up to the Green Room, the Penthouse suite at the Holiday Inn, to hobnob with other presenters and artists. There, I met Professor Elemental, the CNSE’s musical guest, which resulted in an immediate photo opportunity – two steampunk professors in conversation (although the snapped photo looked more like two really inebriated professors: one laughing uproariously and the other passed out with pipe in mouth). All my interactions with the Professor



over the weekend were of the best kind: he's really a gentleman and a scholar, albeit a very funny one. I sadly had to miss his performances, as I was either presenting or chatting when he was rapping. Reports from con attendees were unanimous though, that the Professor was a real hit. As I milled about the room, J.M. Frey introduced me to Ken Shelley of Strange Days Costumes and Apparel, a man who could replace my clamdiggers with plus fours (thesearestrangedays.deviantart.com). We discussed the merits of real wool and fine fabrics over drinks on the Green Room balcony, and I began

thinking hard about making my first fashion-commission purchase. Ken told me to wait until seeing his outfit the following day before making a decision.

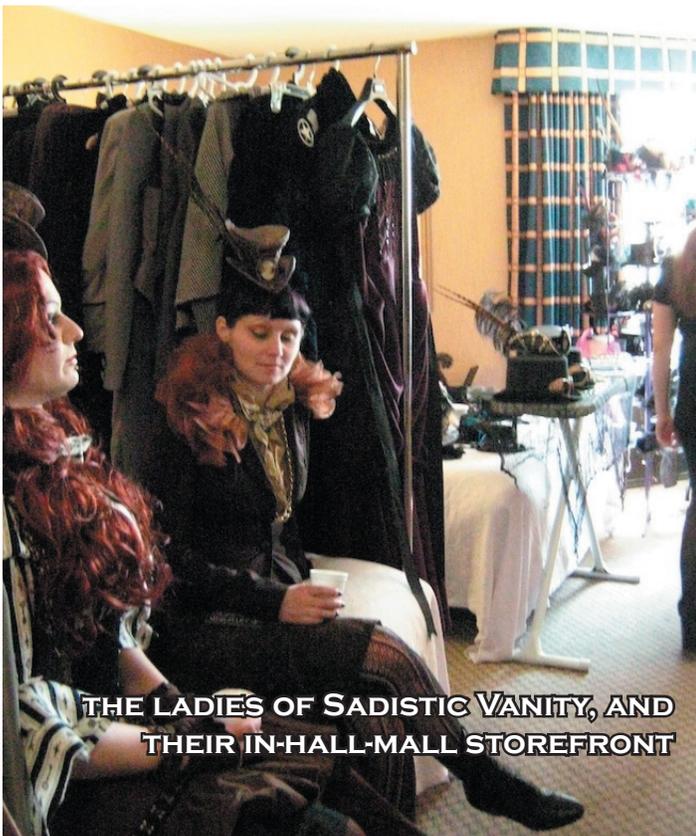
Saturday began with Jaymee Goh's roundtable "Envisioning a Better Steam Society: Social Issues and Steampunk." When Jaymee does a roundtable, she's dead serious about keeping it round: as people kept flocking into the room, she repeatedly encouraged



JAYMEE GOH LEADING HER ROUNDTABLE

us to widen our circle, so that all were in the front row, and all were given a voice. Some people find Jaymee too blunt, but given where the conversation can go with topics as sensitive as this, I found her mix of humour and hardcase the right moderating tone to keep things from denigrating into either a *kum ba ya* campfire or cage match. I jokingly referred to myself as her token WASP male, although there were certainly enough of those in the room. The conversation was good, animated enough that I felt at ease in keeping my own voice largely out of the conversation. What I was exceedingly thankful for was an obvious lack of the "punk in steampunk" chestnut. Instead, to use the words of Thadeus Tinker, it was mostly a discussion on how to be "splendid" in steampunk crafting, culture, and fandom.

Following Jaymee's roundtable, I wandered up to the second floor, where the vendor's "hall" was located. Unlike other vendor rooms I've seen, this was literally a hall, or several, encompassing the entire second floor. Each vendor had a room, entirely to themselves, which allowed browsers to loiter in the hall, or enter the room-stores. It made for a far less noisy and far more accessible shopping experience. I took a moment to chat with the ladies from Sadistic Vanity (sadisticvanity.com), whose bottles of phony elixirs and tonics, along with racks of gorgeous fashion



THE LADIES OF SADISTIC VANITY, AND THEIR IN-HALL-MALL STOREFRONT



STUART LONG AND HIS LONGSUFFERING COMPANIONS

caught my eye like no other shop did. Both lauded the choice of the vendor hallway of rooms over the single vendor room: after all, each came with a bathroom that doubled as a change room, a lockable door provided instant security, and if you got tired and needed a rest, you had a convenient place to lie down! I highly recommend this approach to other steampunk con organizers, as it makes for happy shoppers and sellers.

Done shopping (which for me is mostly browsing – I have research *travel* money, not research *fun* money), I headed up to the Green Room for sustenance, where I met Lloyd Penney and his lovely wife. Lloyd is something of a legend among fanzines, a man who regularly, and with steampunk clockwork precision, writes letters of comment to publications like *Exhibition Hall*. Appropriately, Lloyd was dressed as a conductor, the nineteenth century paragon of clockwork timing. After finishing my food, Lex Machina J.M. Frey and I headed downstairs to the steampunk photo booth/studio. I had previously said my steampunk bucket list included being photographed by Lex, so it was a highlight to spend a few minutes getting “shot in the face” by her. Despite knowing Photoshop techniques for “aging” images, I’m always suitably impressed with the end result of Lex’s work. She’s got a definite style I’ve seen others attempt to ape, but never achieve.

After my photo session, I met up with Stuart Long again, and along with his com-

panions and a nearby vendor, we spent roughly two hours standing in the same spot discussing Star Wars, Superman, the Star Trek reboot, and Sucker Punch, to name only a few of the geek topics covered. Our conversation was cut short by a request to come and meet Martin Howard, who had brought his collection of antique typewriters to the CNSE for display. Martin was clearly glad to have an audience of people interested in his collection, and I was enthusiastic over seeing an actual portable typewriter of the sort Mina Harker uses in the final chapters of

Dracula. I took a photo for future lecture purposes. You can check out Martin’s collection online at antiquetypewriters.com.

A late afternoon panel on *Steampunk Literature* followed my afternoon of leisure. I was reunited with J.M. Frey and Rob St. Martin, and added Adrienne Kress, author of *Alex and the Ironic Gentlemen*, which sports one of my favorite steampunkish covers. We discussed largely approaches to steampunk writing, with Adrienne making one of the best jokes of the weekend upon finding out the plot of Cherie Priest’s *Boneshaker* involved a wall containing zombies in Seattle: “well, that explains the grunge movement.”

I was fortunate enough to have fantastic company again for my evening repast: J.M. Frey and I inadvertently met up with fa-



THE PORTABLE TYPEWRITER USED BY THE REAL MINA HARKER. REALLY!

ther/daughter con attendees at a local pub, and enjoyed conversation over beer and shepherd's pie. Our waitress commented on how great the steampunks she'd served had been, reinforcing the earlier goals of being "splendid."

My late supper was followed by a laid back series of readings in the Con Suite on the second floor, a quiet alternative in programming to Professor Elemental's performance. I read excerpts from eight recommended steampunk books, including Ekaterina Sedia's *Alchemy of Stone*, Gail Carriger's *Soulless*, and James Blaylock's *The Adventures of Langdon St. Ives*, ending with the last pages of Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*.

Ending my own presentation schedule at 10:00 p.m. threw off my internal clock, and I entered the Green Room with the mistaken sense it was much earlier. Kenneth Shelley measured me for my plus fours right there while I carried on conversations. I'd seen Ken earlier in the day, and witnessed his expertise in costuming. The commission was a done deal – my first steampunk commissioned clothing! Much Kraken rum was consumed, and Liana K, J.M. and I bantered long into the night about topics as diverse as roleplaying and religion. As a result, I didn't make it back to my room until the wee hours of the morning, which had the further consequence of me missing Jaymee Goh's Sunday morning roundtable. Instead, it was all getting dressed, packing, and getting to the lobby to meet up with my ride to the airport.

As I flew home, another steampunk adventure behind me, I reflected upon how excellent the weekend had been. My report hardly scratches the surface, as my experience of conventions is relegated largely to the sort of entertainment an academic researcher loves: presenting, panel debates, and lively conversation. Thankfully, mine isn't the only report out there, so you can get a fuller experience of the CNSE online through blog reports, news pieces, and Flickr photos. For myself, a huge thank you to organizers Adam Smith, Lee Ann Faruga, and Liana K for letting me add a Canadian experience to my research adventures.



THE PENNEYS!



THADEUS TINKER, "NAKED DAVE," AND J.M. FREY



THE STEAMPUNK SCHOLAR WITH COUNTESS LENORA



Dear Chris, James and Ariane:

Yes, you were missed, and welcome back! Comments on Exhibition Hall 16 will follow. I do know who Tristram Shandy was, but go into a bar, ask for him, and see what you get...

I'm not a Shandy fan myself, being Beer-adverse...

Hmmm, interesting! Who will you have at the CNSE? Chris, will it be you? Any reports from Nova Albion yet? I think NorWesCon is about to start, and we're now getting into the busiest part of the convention season. If the CNSE looks anything like that picture from Steamcon II, we should have a fine time indeed. (The committee has said nothing to us about guest registration in the green room, so I would expect them to be available downstairs, along with all other registration matters.)

I was thinking about making my way to the CNSE, but alas, I didn't. Mike made it sound awesome, no?

Hard to read that Jay Lake has to fight cancer yet again, but this is his third time with this, and as they say, it is the charm. Fight and kill it, Jay. I must also relay to you that Veronique Chevalier, who was CNSE's first guest, will not be appearing after all. Prochaine an, chere Veronique? Mike Perschon has a diabolical plan for the summer? I must ask him when he arrives, next week! This convention should be full of good friends you just haven't met yet.

I always worry about Jay, it's my thing. I hear they caught it early enough that it's not going to be too much of a problem, all things considered.

The problem with Steampunk is the convention? You may be right. Many others conventions benefit from people who come to have a look and see what's going on. Only a handful of costumers are there, and they are there to show off their costumes and get some feedback and love from the others at the convention. A Steampunk convention may be a convention with nearly nothing but these costuming types who want public feedback and confirmation. After all, players only love you when they're playing, and we will all be players at a Steampunk con, all in character and fancy dress. I know that CNSE will have a number of workshops...maybe what we need are some costume-free times to discuss the interest and actually meet the people behind the vests and bloomers.

I don't think that the cons are a problem, merely that they could give rise to a problem, and one that has been evident in SF fandom in places for a couple of decades

The Gatehouse Gazette is now coming up on issue 18, and has a competition, to state why you love Steampunk in one paragraph, to get it published in that next Gazette. Nick Ottens is right that we may reminisce about a fictional past, but we also must wonder about a future for Steampunk. Are we simply going to go through the motions, and show off the most recent goggles or pocket watch purchase, or is there a particular future we should aim ourselves at? Some focus more on the punk aspect, and try to make it a lifestyle; I can only imagine what they think of the rest of us.

Steampunk fandom should have as

many avenues of creativity as SF fandom, and so far, I think it's getting close. Yet, there are those who would prefer to be exclusive rather than inclusive. These folks are in every fandom you can imagine, I guess. I know some even complain about the wealth of costumes...perhaps they think the costumes let too many people in? Are sheer numbers a real indication of health? There's no consensus about that. Being mainstream or being compartmentalized or Balkanized is also something to think about, and decide whether either is good or bad. No Steampunk Worldcon? I can only imagine what 2000 of us gathered together might look like? (Well, the hotel staff would be well and truly freaked...)

2000? Try more like 1 ten or fifteen thousand. The Steampunk area of Maker Faire drew at least that many and there's a bunch of events that are in the two to three thousand range. I've heard some prelim numbers from Nova Albion and they're in the 2K range. All in all, I think a large Steampunk WorldCon done every couple of years would be an interesting thing and help bring us all together again.

You mention Steampunk publications in your address...I have quite enjoyed this very publication, plus Nick Ottens' Gatehouse Gazette, and Allegra Hawksmoor's Steampunk Magazine. I haven't seen a new issue of the last one for some time; I look on the website, and see what's new. Nick's been faithful to the every two months schedule. Are there other publications that are either in a paper or .pdf format? The more the better; discussions disappear quickly on a bulletin board.

In the long run, I don't know what will happen to this most interesting set of ideas we enjoy taking part in. For me, going a little further back to a fictitious time, brings us back to when you could like in a world with a little adventure and wonder in it, something we could use and sadly lack today. No wonder SF had embraced Steampunk the way it has, it gives us a taste of a sensawunda.

Steampunk Magazine's good stuff, though it's slow to come out of late. I'm not a huge fan of their politicalisms, I like steampunk cause it lets me get away from all of

that, but I have to admit, for layout, quality writing and general awesomeness, it's hard to beat.

Just purchased it yesterday at my local SF bookstore, The Steampunk Bible by Jeff VanderMeer and S.J. Chambers. A cursory glance reveals lots of interesting art and ideas, and some historical aspects to the book. I must go through it all, and see what the authors have for me. I plan to discuss it at CNSE, and write a review...sorry, Chris, already promised to Adam Smith and the next issue of the Dominion Dispatch.

We'll have a review of The Steampunk Bible in the next issue. It's decent so far, though I have some trouble with the way it goes about things. I am enjoying markign up my printed-out copy of the Steampunkopedia and marking what I've seen.

I didn't see a letter column here, and I don't recall one last time, either. I hope there will be one next issue...but then, I usually pester Nick Ottens to do the same. Not to worry, if you choose not to have a letter column, you will still get feedback from me. Every good zine deserves response.

Like all GarciaZines, we don't get much response. I think a big part of that is the fact that it's mostly me writing. People just can't find hooks into the things I write. It's either that or the audience just hates my stuff and puts me on the ballot for the Hugos because it's someone to lose to No Award! It's always good to have some Penney love in here!

I noticed you didn't list an e-mail address to send a response to...but I do remember I sent to the Journal Planet address, and it should get to all of you. My thanks to all of you, a happy Easter weekend to all, and see someone the weekend after? Sure hope so. I bid you adieu.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Always good to hear from ya and I hope we'll be seeing you soon, old bean!