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Janet Chui

An electronic fanzine from the mind that can't seem to get enough of this kind of thing:

John Purcell
3744 Marielene
Circle
College Station, TX
77845

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jpurcell54@earthlink.net

and furthermore #4

E-Mail:

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Like the field mouse on Janet Chui's marvelous artwork, which is raising its eyes heavenward, searching for an ultimate truth, an ultimate answer, I have been wondering about cosmic meaning ever since AggieCon 37 ended. For some reason, the con left me with an empty, awkward feeling, even though I had a good time with my son Daniel, who attended his first ever convention (now he knows what to sort of expect in the future at more of these things). So, ever since the con ended, I have been trying to figure out why I feel this way.

The sole letter that I have received in response to *and furthermore #3* came from *Chris Garcia*, and in it, I believe Chris touches on the core reason why I feel this way. I have italicized the section where he pins the tail on the faned:

Like the swallows returning to Capistrano or my annual reunion with my ex, John Purcell has returned to a con.

Steven Brust is always entertaining. I met him at Conjecture I and again at Loscon and had a fine time both events drinking and listening to him play his guit-box. Nice guy, good drinker as well.

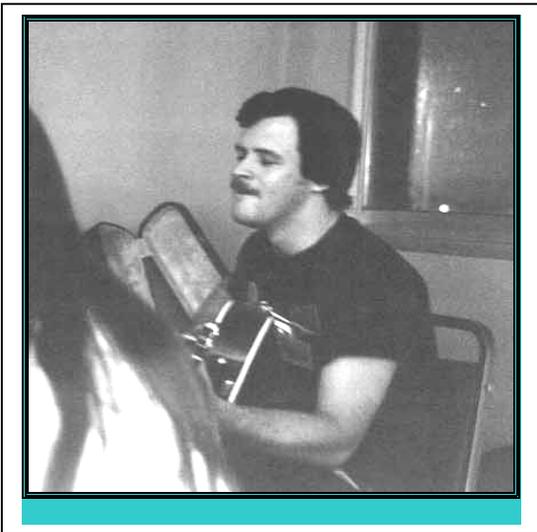
It's hard for fanzine fans to find stuff for them at most modern cons (save for Ditto and Corflu) and having been a long-time con fan makes it harder. Things have indeed changed. The current fannish generation isn't like the old days, and that's for the best in some ways (number of people and different areas for discussion) and a big negative in some ways (too little focus on Olde-Timey FANAC, too many punters, etc). I like the atmosphere, but wish there'd be more stuff for the old fandom crowd. Then again, I've been lucky: every con I go to there's either Frank Wu or Art Widner or someone that I can latch on to and get that sorta experience.

Good little ish. Maybe you'll join us for a BArea con experience in the future. I'll make sure you get a good view of life in these Bayside regions!

Chris

There is no question in my mind that I am a fanzine fan. AggieCon 37 is – and has been for 37 years now – a “student-run science fiction convention” that is held on a college campus. As such, the emphasis is going to be geared for that primary audience: college students. I expected this, too, and kept telling myself that despite the obvious similarities (huckster room, art show, masquerade, auction) to the conventions that I went to eons ago – the Minicons, Windycons, Byobcons, Wiscons, Demicons, a myriad of relaxacons, and two World Cons – this “return to conning” convention would be very different from my past experiences.

I was so very right. A big plus for the weekend was that my old and wizened Minn-stf friend, Steven Brust, was the professional writer guest of honor, and the media guest of honor was Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca of *Star Wars* fame, to the ignorant few of you who may not know this), and the fan/pro artist guest of honor was Brian Stelfreeze (never heard of him, but he is *really* good!). A solid line-up, and there were numerous Texas writers, artists, and media-type pros in attendance as well.



This is me at Not-Anokon, 1980 (picture by DavE Romm), Playing a song during one of the many, many music parties back in the day. Dig that ‘stache’ as I get into it, man.

So what was bugging me? It is exactly what Chris Garcia is talking about in that paragraph above: *I had no-one to really sit down and talk to!* Back in the days when I was actively attending Minn-stf functions and cons around the Upper Midwest region, it was so easy – in fact, even *natural*, if you can believe that – to slip into the group and become a part of the experience. Being a guitarist/songwriter made that transition even easier; the music jams we’d get into at those functions form most of my treasured memories of that era.

Coming back to cons at AggieCon was a guarandanteed let-down when compared to What Had Gone Before in my fannish experience. In the last issue of this zippy little fmz, I said that my expectations were set way too high; this was no exaggeration. I would even say they were astronomical.

The more I thought about it, the more that I convinced myself that this was the wrong con to get my feet wet in again. Then as I thought some more, I came to the realization that as far as cons go, AggieCon 37 was alright. It serves its intended purpose beautifully, and provides students, local sf and f fans, and other fans from SouthCentralEastern Texas a much needed break from the tedium and demands of schoolwork. The primary emphasis was on media, especially gaming (board/card/computer/video). Like Chris noted in his loc, it has its advantages, but for an Old Phart like me who was breastfed on the milk of fanzines, it left my gut still hungry for the nourishment it was accustomed to.

Therefore, I think I have finally come to grips with what was bugging me. So, as Roger Rabbit said after downing a quick gulp of whiskey and toonishly exploding around the room, all I can say to Chris Garcia right now is, "Thanks! I needed that!"



So, rather than going into great depth about AggieCon 37 here, I think I'll just leave it at that. I am actually glad that I went, and Dan and I really did have a lot of fun playing lots of computer games, but the con was still a bit of a let-down for me.

What I am going to do, though, is reserve any further comments for the con report proper that I'm working on for *In A Prior Lifetime* #10, which I am still gunning for an Easter Weekend release.

Speaking of which, I was really having difficulty deciding how in the heck I was going to write the con report. Somehow, the old tried-and-true method of "I did this on Friday" and "met so-and-so in the con suite

and we babbled for hours on end about *Firefly*..." didn't appeal to me. Not for AggieCon. I knew inside that it demanded a different approach, something that I had never really attempted before as a fan writer.

Once again, you can thank Chris's loc above as giving me a much needed kick in the pants to get me going in the right direction.

What I'm going to do, then, is not write a completely chronological con report. *Passé*. Instead, drawing on my experience as a college English instructor, it's going to be more of a reaction paper to the con utilizing a compare and contrast rhetorical analysis method. Got that? Good. Already, I feel much better about writing this report. But it requires doing some shuffling around of the other contents of *IAPL* #10. To wit,

- I am pushing back Garth Spencer's piece, "On Writing Fanhistory," an issue, and breaking that into two parts. It is 2500 words long, but is taking me more time than I expected to edit, and this scheduling change allows me to send it off to Garth for approval before I run it.
- "Dust from the Attic Redux" will be a brief recollection of one of the music parties from Not-Anokon of September, 1980.
- One fanzine review, not a long column: David Burton's *Pixel*.

That should do it. I look forward to seeing all of you in the funny pages in a week or so.