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Corflu 41, styled COR41U was held at the Gold Coast casino
& resort, Las Vegas, NV, from February 29 - March 3 2024

These are our memories

Compiled by Nic Farey

Cover art by Alan White

Bacover photo by Spike

THE BORING CO-CHAIR

NIC FAREY

I suspect everyone knows by now that I'm terrible at making proper notes (or indeed *any* notes) prior to having to stand up and say things, so as well as being an introduction to this collection, please also consider this a rendition of my closing ceremony thankyou's as they probably should have been.

It takes a community to make a Corflu, and I have to recognize all the members of that lovely group who showed up for this year's iteration, not forgetting the ones who participated virtually. Every single one of you plays a part.

More specifically, much 'boo to the program participants: our panelists and moderators who made the proceedings fun and informative. This even includes the performers who sacrificed whatever shreds of dignity they may have otherwise held in the inevitable shambles that is a Saturday Night open mic "entertainment".

The operational side of things isn't as extensive as larger events, of course, but it's crucial to a relaxacon; this is especially true for the hospitality suites, managed for 41 by the exceptional team of Aileen Forman, Lori Forbes, Jacq Monahan and Cathi Wilson, themselves ably assisted by industrious runners in the forms of Chris Clay and John Hardin. Nor should we forget (as I egregiously did on the day) the dedicated efforts of Tommy Ferguson running the teck, especially wrangling the Zoom and virtual attendees, and Claire Brialey's management of our Discord channels.

The auction is another staple of a Corflu, and here (as has often been the case) efficiently handled by Andy Hooper with

Carrie Root, Bill and Mary Burns, Mary Ellen Moore and Jerry Kaufman.

Others contributed specifically: Roy Hessinger curated a well-received beer tasting to ameliorate the after effects of Saturday evening's show, and while we're on the alcohol (as if we ever weren't) Tommy Ferguson, happily sponsored by next year's Belfast Eastercon ('Reconnect') and this year's Glasgow Worldcon provided a Dead Dog party whisk(e)y tasting experience. Jerry Kaufman again proved to be an engaging MC for the FAAn Awards, and Ted White graciously agreed to present the Lifetime Achievement Award as well as supervising the selection of Past Presidents, fwa one more time.

Although it might not seem like it sometimes (ahem) there is some actual planning which needs to occur. In that respect I must acknowledge the following: Rob Hansen for leading the Lifetime Achievement Award decision making; Bill ("Magister") Burns for ongoing webmaster duties; Nathan Silva for the design and manufacture of this year's trophies; Keith Freeman for UK and Europe bookkeeping.

It would also be remiss of me not to thank the Gold Coast, particularly Sales Manager Douglas Gardner, Banqueting Manager Jidel Sae-Eua and their terrific staffs. And speaking as a now former taxi-driver in Las Vegas with 9 years of observation, I know a good front-of-house operation when I see one, and found theirs to be excellent.

Two people in particular were crucial to the success of COR41U. The first of these had only attended one previous Corflu (Pangloss in Vancouver), nevertheless having been co-opted into bookkeeping duties for that event. However, she fully applied her many and considerable abilities to being the CFO for 41, and I most definitely couldn't have done this

without her. The fact that we got through it all without mariticide or even threats of impending divorce is a testament to her determination, and of course I refer to my darling wife Jennifer L Farey, long may we continue.

I now turn to the other major force, my co-chair, Sandra Bond. I described her as “unwilling” in closing ceremony remarks, and there’s a grain of truth in that. Much persuasion was applied to getting her on the team, as well as, cynically perhaps, pulling every string I could on the basis of our long-time friendship. I made fervent promises that I would handle “all the boring bits”, allowing her to concentrate on creating a fine programme, something I have learned that I’m really not much good at, and she is, as I would contend we have proved.

She gets the next word though, so perhaps we’ll expect some rebuttal?

It’s all good...



Photo by Alan White

THE PROGRAMMING CO-CHAIR

SANDRA BOND

...so fandom's biggest alky and fandom's worst depressive got together and decided to run a convention, and it actually went really, really well.

I have spent most of my life in fandom avoiding convention committees. Oh, I've served my time on a few; for example, I recall all too clearly Mexicon 4, where the con chair resigned immediately after persuading me to sign up, and I seemed to spend most of the convention grimly sticking and re-sticking inadequate little transparent photo-corners onto the justly huge Arthur Thomson exhibit in the art show.

It says much for Nic Farey that he is one of *very* few people in this world who could talk me into another stint on a convention committee, and possibly the only one who could wheedle me into being co-chair. I still don't rightly know how he managed it, and for my sake and the sake of all fandom, I urge him never to reveal the secret and arcane methods he worked upon me that left me staring at the fearful prospect of jointly running a convention a little more than five thousand miles away from me.

But he did it.

Nic promised to do all the hard work -- the hotel liaison, the publications, the general wrangling -- so long as I organised the programme.

This basically allowed me to do nothing for the convention until a couple of months before it, except periodically have

fainting fits and depressive episodes about what I'd voluntarily got myself into.

By the time I felt I could no longer ignore matters, though, things were starting to move without me. Leigh Edmonds not only volunteered himself to present a slideshow of his 1974 DUFF photo-album, but also suggested a topic on the pregnant issue of what provision we aging fans should make for our collections, whether SF-related or otherwise.

Gerri Sullivan and Pat Virzi decided it would be a fun project to tabulate and record every fan who has ever been to a Corflu (ye gods) and offered a programme item upon that.

Dr Farber of Minneapolis (whom God preserve) made the jesting comment on Facebook that every Corflu programme item could be given the subtitle "Fandom Sucks Nowadays". I took this as a challenge and put together a panel discussion to address whether it really does, and if so, what we could do about it other than taking our ball and retreating behind Corflu's walls.

Ted White had been lured out of retirement via the Corflu Fifty fund, and if there is one thing everyone knows about Ted, it is that he will happily talk for any length of time about his seventy years or so in fandom. Putting him down for an hour-long interview was a no-brainer.

And of course we had to have the traditional "Future of Corflu" and "Just a Minac".

Toss in the open mic which Nic had insisted must feature, and that was really enough to fill the single-stream programme which I had determined from the start would suffice. (Corflu has on occasion had multiple streams, but they generally lead to comments about over-programming.) I declined Nic's invitation to perform on guitar, and offered to

play washboard instead, feeling secure that this would stump the bastard.

Turns out he's only got one hanging on his sodding wall, doesn't it? I groaned, and ordered some thimbles off Amazon...

Invitations went out. Most were accepted; a few were not, for perfectly sound reasons; one or two were accepted and then rescinded. Jen Farey, for example, so scared Jacq Monahan with her description of Just a Minac that Jacq got the willies and changed her mind about taking part; but by that time I knew that Eileen Gunn had decided to attend after all, and as one might expect from a professional word-slinger, once she got the idea of the game, she proved to be a quite savage participant. I'd expect her to be challenging for a podium place if we can talk her into a return shot. As it was, Rich Coad went into the final round one point ahead of Jen, and exited it still that one point in front. The closest finish I can recall since I started running the game -- christ, ten years or more ago. (Definitely a Corflu tradition, then.)

The original candidate to interview Ted had been Dan Steffan, but we gave up hope of luring them along and I volunteered myself for the interviewer's chair. After the programme had been finalised -- only just before the start of the convention -- I encountered a grinning Dan and Lynn on the casino floor. They'd come after all, and it was a joy to see them in such fine form. But by then I'd formulated a list of topics for Ted's interview, and I hope some of them were a little different from previous ones which Ted has had to field at conventions.

I claim a small no-prize for the shortest ever answer elicited from Ted during an interview:

Me: -“You’ve done almost everything there is to do in fandom, Ted. Is there anything at all you *haven’t* done which you wish you’d accomplished?”

Ted: “No.”

General amusement...

And so I arrived in Las Vegas on Wednesday 28 February, bearing shortbread for Geri Sullivan, tea for Suzle, bourbon for Tommy Ferguson, and enough worries for a small army.

My mental condition was oscillating wildly between my arrival in Vegas on Wednesday and the real start of the programme on Saturday. I was so downcast on Friday night that Lucy Huntzinger and others had to take me aside and console me, for instance. The thing about being a convention chair is this: if you fuck up a fanzine, the only person to really suffer is you, but if you fuck up a convention, every fan attending the convention has a bad time AND IT’S YOUR FAULT.

A bunch of his old friends were taking a short trip to see Arnie Katz in his care facility, first thing Saturday morning, and I was feeling pretty ambivalent about that. I hate hospitals, and I like Arnie, and I worried greatly that I’d get there to find a mere inert shell of a human, with no trace left of the fellow who’d been involved in running all the previous Vegas Corflus I’d attended.

Well, the hospital was a hospital, but thankfully Arnie, even without his sight, was still Arnie the K. I asked if I might take his hand, and shook it. “I suppose,” I said with my mouth, “there’s no chance of persuading you to stand for TAFF now?”

Space permitted only two friends at a time to visit him, and I gave way to those who have known him longer, which was most of them. Lenny Bailes, Arnie’s childhood pal, was in

there with him so long that he must have been at risk of being admitted himself. We finally left half an hour late, and held up the whole of programming for the day; but I don't think anyone minded, in the circumstances. (See, Nic, I *told* you to schedule the first panel for 1130 and not 1100.)

By Saturday, I began to dare believe that every fan attending the convention was having a *good* time. And as Saturday wore on, even my brain-weasels couldn't deny that everyone *was* having a good time. People were telling me so; verbally and in body language.

By the time of the open mic I was exuberant. I love to perform; see, while I'm performing, I don't have to have conversations with people and display how little small talk I have. My poetry set went down a storm, though privately I was glad that Eileen had signed up too late for us to ask her to do one. The ensemble of Nic, Tee Cochran and myself on the untraditional instrumental trio of keyboards, mandolin and washboard somehow hung together too. Nic's roast of James Bacon was if anything improved by James not being there to sizzle, or to protest. Thankfully, he didn't carry out his threat to give us a fannish version of "Carrot in a Box". (If that reference baffles you... be grateful.)

The Sunday brunch and awards told me much the same. People at the dead dog on Sunday afternoon, and at Nic and Jen's afterparty on Monday? Same again.

There was one poem I didn't do in my Saturday night set, though. I'd written it as a joke for Nic and Jen, but the unfeeling wretches promptly insisted that I should perform it on Thursday night in honour of their wedding anniversary which fell on that date. As it happened, the Thursday night merriment was a little slow to get itself together, and the poem remained unread.

But I have the true author's disinclination to let anything, once written, go to waste; so I'll follow this piece with it.

Gentlefen, chaps and fatheads, I present -- with apologies to William Cowper -- "The Ballad of Nic Farey".

With which it's goodnight from me...

[Nic] ...and it's goodnight from her.

[both] Goodnight!



Photo by Jen Farey

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF NIC FAREY

SANDRA BOND

*Shewing how he went to extremes, as was his Habit of Old,
and yet came home safe again.*

Nic Farey was a citizen
Of credit and renown:
A taxi-driver eke was he
Of famous Vegas town.

Nic Farey's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
Eight years, yet anniversaries
But one have we yet seen.

"Forgive me, dear, if I remark,
That 'twas a foolish thing,
On February twenty-ninth
To troth me with thy ring."

Then Nic replied, "Why, Jen, my dear,
I have a plan for you:
A rousing party we shall throw,
The night before Corflu.

I am a taxi-driver bold,
And used to punters' ire:
But years upon me heavy weigh,
And I would fain retire."

Quoth Mrs. Farey, "That's well said,
And soon you shall have leisure;
But first that party let us plan,
Where fans may come for pleasure."

"I have a plan," Nic Farey cried,
"For verily I know,
A place where we may celebrate --
The Gold Coast Casino."

And so the twain did plot amain
And soon resolv'd their scheme,
To hold a party on the day
When they had wedded been,
A day that comes not yearly -- nay --
But once in every four;
To Corflu, then, they did invite
Full fifty fans and more;

Now let us sing, Long live the King!
And Farey, long live he!
And soon enough you'll find, I trow,
In Vegas I shall be.

ROSS CHAMBERLAIN

Permit me to express Special Appreciations to Geri Sullivan who had more than enough to deal with at the shindig but also ferried me thrice — once to and twice from — the Gold Coast. Again my thanks to Sandra Bond who agreed to drive me home one day, and to James Taylor, with Tee Cochran, who brought me to the venue another time, and finally to Alan and DeDee White, who provided Sunday transport both ways.

I could not have shared any of it, though, without Heath Row, who kindly provided me a full membership, almost at the last moment, when it turned out he couldn't make the trip. Wholehearted thanks again, Heath!

There were some fans that harked back to my New York days with the Fanoclasts (primarily Ted White, of course), Fistfa or the Insurgents, such as Dan Steffan and John D. Berry, Eli Cohen, Jerry Kaufman and Suzle, and Linda and Ron Bushyager. It was good to get acquainted with Joe Siclari and Edie Stern, whom I'd not interacted directly with much back then. I had to be reintroduced to some who, like me, have changed a bit with the years (mostly grey topped...).

It was also good to see fans of more recent acquaintance from the Las Vegrants days here who've moved away, though some have visited from time to time, including for one or more of the previous Vegas Corflus. For the most part, I was pretty much a the quiet one one in the corner and digging the surroundings. Pat Virzi noted I seemed to have put down roots and rights to a particular chair at the back right corner in the meetings room. Close to the exit, should I need to bolt. But I wasn't dog-in-the-manger about it.

Best of all was just getting into conversations with folk who had the Corflu spirit. I contracted a bit of that over time.

This is a shot I took from my rear vantage point while Sandra Bond was preparing to interview Ted White.

L-R at the stage: Tommy Ferguson, Sandra Bond, Ted White
L-R seated (from behind): James Taylor, Tee Cochran, Dan Steffan

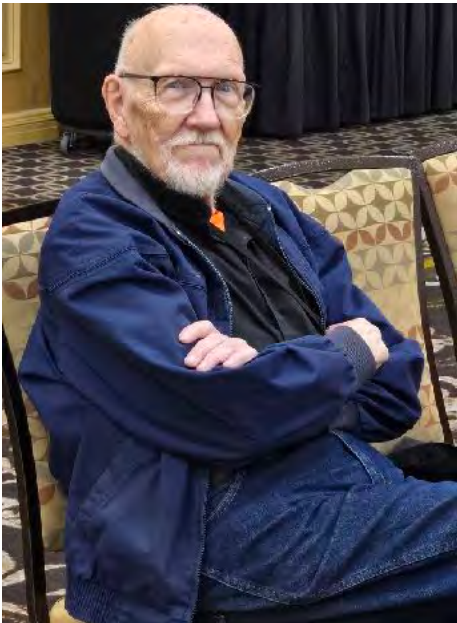


Photo by Gary Mattingly

GAIL KOLTHOFF

Although I have been “in-and-about” fandom for decades, Corflu 41 was my first convention. I wanted to attend mostly because I hoped to meet the writers and artists that had participated in the nine issues of *Portable Storage* — sort of like the other kind of fan girl — the one screaming as the Beatles descend the plane steps. By the end of the convention, I began to take issue with the murmured possibility that Corflu fans were unwelcoming or insular. I found the opposite to be true. From my first ‘Nic hug’ to my last chat with Pat V., I felt I could be welcomed into any conversation even with that big non-fan light flashing over my head. My uneducated guess aligns with Lenny’s comment, fans are turning to other mediums and that print/in-person fandom is going by the wayside. So what? When was the last

time you saw kids kicking a ball around in the street? We, who we are and what we produce/have produced, has value to each other. That’s really all that matters.

Thank you Nic, Jen and Sandra, for making my first time great!



Photo by Gary Mattingly

THE ATOMIC MUSEUM



Photos by Geri Sullivan

L-R: Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer, S&ra Bond, Pat Virzi

RICH COAD

S&ra was a writer of crime and poetry.
She wrote with style and wit.
Her poems they ended cleverly
And none of them were shit.
Nic Farey played a drinker
Who liked to smoke a fag.
In truth he was a thinker
Putting out his monthly rag.
Now Nic he was in Vegas
And S&ra in Potteries
How they thought they'd pull it off
Is one of life's mysteries.
So they said to one another
I know I'm here and that you're there
But if it's not too much bother
Will you be my co-chair?

And the fans all said
It's true, it's true!
S&ra and Nic will run a Corflu.

AND WILL NEVER GET A REST!

Arrived at McCarran Airport,
It's no longer known by that name,
Fans from far places and all sorts
Desperate fun was the forthcoming game.
At the Gold Coast fans skirted the slots
Escalated upstairs to the spots

Where many fine things could be found:
A game show - look! - Just a Minac
Fanzines unstapled, unbound!
Are scanned by the gang from Fanac.

And the fans all said
Yahoo! Yahoo!
Nic and S&ra are running Corflu.

AND THE FANS ARE ALL IMPRESSED!

On Sunday, the banquet was here
And everyone shed a small tear
Coz the end of the con was now near.
The guest said “G’day, I’ve no banjo to play.”
So instead a good roast of one of our hosts,
And Mark Plummer was safe past the post.
Prizes were given - I even won one
And then, all too soon, it was over and done.

And the fans all said
Boo hoo! Boo hoo!
S&ra and Nic have run
their Corflu.

AND IT WAS ONE OF THE
BEST!



Photo by Lucy Huntzinger

WILLIAM BREIDING

Of the forty one Corflus — that’s 41 years! — I’ve been to exactly six: Berkeley, 1984; Napa, 1985; Los Angeles (Hawthorne), 1992; San Francisco, 2005; Richmond, 2014; Las Vegas, 2024. That’s not too many.

At my first five Corflus I was a wallflower. I could go into an in-depth analysis of why that was, but I won’t. Suffice to say that I fell into the shy, retiring fan category rather than the loud, obnoxious type. I still fall into that category. What changed with Cor41u was that I had published a fanzine in the interim between Richmond and Vegas.

Imagine that. I published the fanzine I’d dreamed of publishing when I was 17 but didn’t know how. I was still a shy guy in Vegas. What changed was that some of you approached me because I’d published a pretty decent fanzine instead of being a blushing no account former zine publisher with zero street cred. And so. Ta-Dah — I actually spoke with some of you. Thank you!

I think the single biggest thing I took away from Corflu 41 was everyone’s concern with the continuity and legacy of fanzine fandom, what has been referred to by some as “core” fandom, the original science fiction fandom. No matter what our concern, I think it’s fairly obvious that within a generation fanzine fandom as we know it and how we perceive it will be obscure and mostly forgotten. Even I get caught up in the importance of our history — when Leigh Edmonds gave his slide show and came to that absolutely wonderful photo of the three fan fund delegates of 1974, Leigh Edmonds for DUFF, Peter Weston for TAFE, and the special Mae Strelkov fan fund to bring her up from Argentina,

I shouted “that’s an historically important photo — it needs to be preserved!”

And indeed it does. But there is only so much any of us can do, as individuals or as a group. The best we can hope for is David Hodson’s analogy of the massive archeological warehouse where there is only room for one item each as an example of a period of history. One brick from a building. One fanzine to represent a fannish era. To be honest, we’ll be lucky if we get that much. We are culturally peripheral even though science fiction becomes continually central to world culture. Adjacent to these concerns was the panel on what to do with all of our STUFF. This was a lively and painful panel/audience discussion on the decimation of fannish collections after death. How to avoid the trashing of fanzines, even at library collections, remained nebulous at the conclusion. And I believe that to be the only conclusion. We’re goners — let’s live for today!

Personal highlights: Nic’s hugs throughout the convention, Jeanne’s 24 hour whirlwind tour, Pat’s purple head and

snarky comments, watching Gail having intense conversations with strange fans, Joe asking permission to scan my fanzines for fanac.org, Andy’s fez, Dan Steffan’s generosity, Jen’s quiet omnipresence, and finally, good Chinese food for the first time in ten years!



Photo by Gary Mattingly

CURT PHILLIPS

As one of the handful of Corflu regulars (I do dare to think of myself as such, because although I haven't attended many of them, there haven't been any Corflus that I haven't *wanted* to attend) who only watched some of the proceedings of Corflu 41 on the Zoom broadcasts, I'd like to say a few words in praise of Tommy Ferguson, who made that Zoom broadcast possible throughout the convention. I've watched most of the Corflu "virtual conventions" since we started having them, and as far as the technical aspects go, this year's broadcasts were the best we've ever had. And since it was Zoom, the experience was completely interactive and allowed me to speak with friends old and new, and be heard and seen by them with perfect clarity. The broadcasts all started promptly on time, and the video quality was excellent. There were a few episodes of audio buffering, but these were infrequent and didn't affect the overall comprehension or enjoyment of the broadcasts. It was obvious that Tommy was working steadily throughout Corflu to give us the best possible presentation, and we unfortunate stay-at-homes appreciated it.

I also want to commend Nic Farey for adding a new third level of Corflu membership this year that allowed us to pay a small fee to access the Zoom and Discord features of Corflu. It may seem odd to praise the implementation of a new added fee for something that's been offered for free in the past, but it was the right and proper thing to do. We should have been charging for this virtual access all along because we all want our Corflu conventions to be successful and not lose money for those who host them. The modest fee

charged for Zoom and Discord access was not burdensome and knowing that it went directly towards paying the necessary expenses of the convention made me feel like a true member of Corflu and not just a distant observer. I hope future Corflus continue this practice and that Fandom will embrace it as a good way to support the convention when we can't be there in person.



Tommy Ferguson hard at work: photo by Gary Mattingly

SATURDAY NIGHT BARELY ALIVE

“FANZINE TABLE”

A sketch (#2) written by S&ra Bond and Nic Farey. Oh, all right, largely stolen from a rather well-known Monty Python bit. (The less said about sketch #1 the better.) Dan Steffan played the proprietor and Karen Schaffer the fan. We should probably mention that in sketch #1 Dan essayed the same role with Lucy Huntzinger as “Fan #1” and William Breiding as “Fan #2”.

Scene: A fanzine table at the convention, beside which THE PROPRIETOR stands. A FAN approaches...

FAN: Morning!

PROPRIETOR: Morning!

FAN: I'd like some excellent fannish reading please.

PROPRIETOR: Certainly madam!. I'm your finest purveyor of fanzines in this entire convention!

FAN: How about *Idea*?

PROPRIETOR: Sorry, some grumpy old fan already copped them all. Said something about a bonfire.

FAN: Ah well, *SF Commentary* then.

PROPRIETOR: Oh, Bruce hasn't printed any of those for years. Something to do with weight restrictions and a new breed of wallaby. Or Leigh Edmonds...

FAN: *BEAM*?

PROPRIETOR: The co-editor's exercise bike broke down. Haven't seen one of those in ages.

FAN: *Captain Flashback*?

PROPRIETOR: Yes!

FAN: Ah, give me a mixed bundle of *Captain Flashback* then.

PROPRIETOR: Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you were addressing me. Captain Phineas Flashback, US Navy, retired.

FAN: Pleased to meet you... (they shake hands)

FAN: Um, OK. *Inca*?

PROPRIETOR: Seized at customs I'm afraid. Very suspicious and lascivious content, apparently.

FAN: *This Here*... then.

PROPRIETOR: Not much call for that one round here.

FAN: Not much call?! What are you, File770? It's the most popular perzine in the world!

PROPRIETOR: Not in these parts.

FAN: Well what *have* you got?

PROPRIETOR: (hefts a large pile onto the table)
Vanamonde. Got hundreds of them*...

**Lost in translation: the "punchline" from sketch #1 was exactly the same. You had to be there. Or possibly be glad you weren't...*

LUCY HUNTZINGER

Many room parties have come and gone over the years, but I will long remember the splendid retirement party Rich Coad, Nic Farey and I gave on the Friday night of Cor41u. DJ Rich set up his first-rate playlist of five hours of 70s and 80s punk in the main hospitality suite; it provided a suitably rockin' background and served up some serious nostalgia for those of us who remember the music when it was all new. The food and drink flowed, there was champagne for four of us (Mark Plummer retired just in time to be in on the party), shiny paper crowns were available for those who liked party hats, and I wore a sequined hat strewn with seashells, crystals and rhinestones as the Party Queen. It was a delight to see how happy people were to be at Corflu again, talking about fanzines and art, dancing and laughing, mingling and telling stories, sharing our history while making memories. When a party transcends into a community celebration it's magic, and there was magic that night.

Photo by Karen Schaffer



BEN WILSON



Photo by and including John Wesley Hardin

It was entirely fitting that Ben and Cathi Wilson came up for this one, since they're legendary round these parts, having got married as part of the programme of the first Vegas Corflu in 1995. Ben also co-chaired Corflu Blackjack in 2004 (with Ken Forman) at which Cathi worked hospitality with the equally legendary Aileen Forman.

ROB JACKSON

FANNISH OASIS IN A GAMBLER'S HELL

Of all the continuous sequence of Corflus I have been at since 2007, Cor41u was one of the best, both for being soundly organised with an absence of major hiccups, great food both in the consuite and the Banquet, decent fannish brain-food in the programme, effective communication with the outside faniverse, and – most importantly – for being a warm and friendly event with great fannish togetherness and (as far as I was aware) no animosity or feuds worthy of note.

But since coming back home I have been vaguely unsettled by something – not just the fact that I came back with a rotten stinking cold which went down to my chest.

There is something uniquely weird about Las Vegas Corflus that distinguishes them from Corflus in the rest of the USA, or indeed the rest of the world, and I need to sort out what it is.

We can start with the fact that Las Vegas itself is weird. Vegas may be science fictional in the futuristic or otherworldly sense, but it certainly isn't fannish.

I already know very well that I am no fan of gambling as a pastime. Two previous Corflus in Vegas taught me that; and I have also learnt to dislike gambling from a completely different direction – my professional knowledge about addictive behaviour. It is also an anachronism that smoking is still allowed in casinos. I am no fan of walking through acres of mephitic carcinogenic miasma surrounding beeping and flashing slot machines. Though it is banned in the eateries, accommodation areas or foyer, the smoke follows you everywhere – even up in the lifts. Also, you have to tune out the non-stop jangly music.

Of the hotels which hosted my Vegas Corflus, the layout of this one was definitely the worst. To get to anywhere useful in the Gold Coast casino hotel we had to walk – first from the hotel reception through the first acre of slot machines to the TGI Friday’s restaurant which also served as the breakfast Bar in the hotel, then further to the lifts to the room block.

Then when you came downstairs again to get something to eat or go to the escalator to our con hall, you had to negotiate several further acres of beeping machines, mostly populated by smoking saddoes. As a rule of thumb, the more interesting a restaurant was, the further away it was from the room block. Why do they plan the layout this way? To maximise exposure, like putting sweets at the supermarket checkout, or siting the toilets in a motorway service area at the end, beyond all the shops?

But this merely accentuated the sense of gloom from walking through an atmosphere of cigarette smoke that most of us have got used to doing without, past people with consistently glum faces at slots, roulette or blackjack tables. I spent about a week in that hotel and can’t remember seeing or hearing any exclamations of glee, joy or pleasure from any of the gamblers. Mind you, winners may have to learn to avoid attracting attention. That’s where the phrase “poker face” came from, after all. But this still makes it a pretty soulless process. It really does seem like a sad activity, and it looks to me like these people are wasting their lives as well as their money.

We know that the fannish aura generated by Corflu is one of close camaraderie and friendship. This was at its strongest in Cor41u precisely because the contrast with the alienness of the city and the exposure to the gambling culture was so stark.

Next year in Newbury will be completely different, but in another good way, as it is in a small hotel, a coaching inn in a traditional English market town. If it were in somewhere like Brighton it would market itself as a boutique hotel. It is just the right size for a Corflu to fill it, so it will be almost all ours. The other way in which Newbury will be totally different is the atmosphere of an English market town. At the time of a recent visit to the hotel, the banner front page headline on the Newbury Weekly News was: Man Shoots Neighbour's Cat for Peeing On His Lawn. Gosh, what dramas occur in Newbury. Not as glitzy as Vegas...

Finally, another summary of Cor41u's success – fanzine fandom's best-known alcoholic and best-known depressive between them co-chaired one of the most successful Corflus ever!



Photo by Gary Mattingly

CLAIRE BRIALEY

THAT WAS THE DISCORD THAT WAS

Before the convention this year it wasn't clear how much use the Discord server was going to get. I'd been posting the PRs, and putting various pieces of news and information from them into relevant channels along with exhortations to vote in the FAAn awards. There had been some little chat about travel, and the hotel, and even about the detailed breakdowns of FAAn award voting from previous years; non-attending members got excited about the announced at-con publications, and there were a couple of declarations of intent to publish a fanzine. When S&ra Bond confirmed the programme and Tommy Ferguson confirmed the Zoom link I created individual programme channels for people to chat in later, along with daily schedules, and hoped that this would be useful or at least make the server look as though things were happening there too as the convention got closer.

In desperation for the final PR I stopped trying to describe what Discord was for and just wrote a 'choose your own adventure' game as a last-ditch attempt to get members to turn up and join in; some more people did pop up to find out what, if anything, was going on in there. And then people began to arrive at the hotel too, and we found out which rooms the consuites were really going to be in and I updated that; at least a few people at the con began to check the channels for news, information, and scurrilous gossip, and it began to feel that Discord might be useful.

We had a request for a channel for recommendations, and I remembered to unlock the 'overheard at the con' channel too.

When the programme started and many audience interjections were made without a microphone, I found myself doing live captioning for the benefit of those watching the programme over Zoom; I guess the same content will come in handy for anyone watching the videos on YouTube to catch up later. As I'd hoped, it was possible to chat with those watching live – including a few other people in the room – without disturbing the programme participants or having a comment suddenly loom up large on the Zoom screen. Meanwhile we had warnings of wild weather, and a successful lost-and-found report (although to be fair S&ra did the finding as well as the losing herself, without much help from the Discord). There were reports and photos from that weird city outside the convention – not least from the Meow Wolf exhibition, which led to modelling of Lucy Huntzinger's fabulous hat.

Back at the con, the open mic session prompted a host of links to other performances by relevant members – although as yet no chance to hear Rich Coad's banjo. Kat Templeton wrote a fanzine at home and posted it in the server, and Heath Row dropped in a copy of the fanzine he'd just sent out by post. Spike offered virtual attendees a video tour of the hotel and casino on Sunday morning, following a dry run with Alison Scott to test all the technology.

So the server seemed to fulfil at least some of the goals that we had for it this year, and it was fun hanging out there and chatting during the programme. I did notice one downside, though, in trying to keep up with things online while also being present at the con myself; I didn't want to neglect the virtual members, especially when programme wasn't happening and they didn't have any other way to interact with people at the con – but that meant I felt I

needed to keep checking my phone and posting information, which meant that my own interactions at the con felt a bit interrupted.

Next year I'm hoping that some of the always-online Brits who are also at the hotel will help to spread the load, although I still hope that more members who can't be there in person will hang out with us virtually instead.

The pre-con channels for Corflu 42 are all set up and running. All we need now is for more members to come back into the server. It might even be safer that way, according to Corflu 42 chair David Hodson: "I met you face to face; you stopped being legends after that."



Photo by Gary Mattingly

KEITH FREEMAN

So, Nic growls that he wants my memories of Cor41u...

Due to a fall I have no memories – no, I don't suppose that'll satisfy him...

Starting at the beginning – I was met at Las Vegas airport by AC Kyle (Arthur Chester if you insist) who had taken virtually the same length of time to drive down from San Francisco in his hired Tesla as I had coming across the pond in a Virgin Atlantic 787.

Arriving at the hotel and being hit by its smoky miasma was a shock but following a short period at the undermanned check-in sorting out that my 1 night + 6 nights booking could be accommodated in the same bedroom I headed for sleep... the only fitting end to my 32 hour birthday!

Thursday was spent wandering round finding where the action (non gambling) was and meeting old and new friends. Without my distance glasses a few new friends turned out to be old friends... such is old age, which the participants in the retirement party have yet to find out! But, for today, the party was a welcoming and a celebration of Jen & Nic's anniversary (where $2=8$ proved correct). The promised (in the programme book that I'd yet to see) collation of ephemeral items into the smart bags duly took place amid cries of "two dice per bag" followed by "We're running out – only one die per bag" and other comments I've conveniently forgotten. Oh, the memories of BSFA collating weekends...

By Friday I was feeling a bit more like a human being and thoroughly enjoyed Leigh Edmonds nostalgic pictures from 1874 (whoops – a typo there, should be 1974) – with cries of recognition ringing out (and gaps where no-one recognised

the fans of years gone by). This also revealed to me that Leigh and I had a common interest in aviation – a subject we took up at a later time.

“What Will We Do Tomorrow” revealed that the four retirees really have no idea of the life they’re about to embark upon – how quickly they’ll realise hours, days, even years are much shorter when you’re retired (or is that only my justification for how little I’m now accomplishing with locs flowing like, er, lead).

Later the inevitable Opening Ceremony took place. Is it only Corflu that has the opening ceremony after nearly two days of frantic activities? Sadly we had a far too long list of fans who’d died since the last Corflu with, in the majority of cases, a photograph. An excellent piece of work by Gary Mattingly, and I should emphasise that bit just above “far too long” was not aimed at the time taken but merely the number of deaths listed. The drawing of the GoH then left several relieved people and one, Mark Plummer, to contemplate that, maybe, he should have spent \$20 to avoid it.

Saturday we awoke to the sight of palm trees apparently trying to shake themselves to bits in the forecast 85mph winds buffeting Las Vegas. Despite this AC & I decided to get some exercise by walking through the streets, up and down the strip and back to the hotel in time for “What do we do do with all that STUFF”. Of particular interest to me as I seem to be acquiring things (books!) faster than I can dispose of them.

One sight I’ll remember is a barrel being rolled across a six lane highway by the wind away from us while almost at the same moment a plastic panel came flying across towards us. Only in Vegas, I guess, can the wind blow in two directions at the same time...

I didn't learn much about the wind, however, as on the final stretch back to the hotel I was leaning into the wind when it suddenly stopped! Having nothing to lean into I promptly fell... hitting my head causing a couple of grazes and bloodshed. I'll gloss over that incident – though it's the first time I've had people coming up to take photographs of me!

Needless to say I was fussed over, face to face by AC, via phone by Kerry Kyle and Curt Phillips and, finally, face to face by Dr Rob and thus missed the panel which should have told me what to do with my books etc!

I was, I'm glad to say, fit enough (though not “a pretty sight”) to moderate “Fandom Sucks Nowadays” a panel that was unanimous that Corflu fandom does not suck, though we didn't seem too sure about other fandoms – at least that was my impression.

I then retired for a delayed lunch, returning for “The Future of Corflu” wherein the discussion on the future became slightly more optimistic with Dave Hodson accepting that his bid was accepted – Newbury in 2025 it is.

Next item I got to was the unmissable “Just a Minac” wherein the contestants strove to outdo each other with, eventually, Rich Coad pipping Jen Farey by one point to take the prize. I last saw Rich play when I dethroned him... will I have to rejoin the panel next year to see if I can do it again – come to Corflu42 and find out!

The auction, under Andy Hooper's expert guidance saw a lot of money being spent – probably wisely in some cases and not-so-wisely in others... but it was an enjoyable spectacle even to those, like myself, who resisted all temptation (for a reason I gave several paragraphs back).

What can one say about the banquet – not, perhaps, the best – but far, far from being the worst! And capping it Mark Plummer’s GoH speech which seemed to consist of stories about Nic Farey – a small selection, I’m sure, of the many, even more scandalous events that will be revealed when Nic writes his autobiography...

Oh yes, the Newbury Bid was officially accepted and Sandra finished off the excellent work she’d been doing all weekend by making the closing statement with “help”(?) from Nic.

Of course, like all good cons it didn’t finish there but at Jen & Nic’s house where food, drink and very good company left no doubt the weekend had finished – other than the wearisome trip home by Tesla (AC) and 787 (me)...

Perhaps I should add that, other than one incident, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and hope to see most, if not all, of the participants next year.

OK, Nic – take your blue pencil to 99% of that – PLEASE!

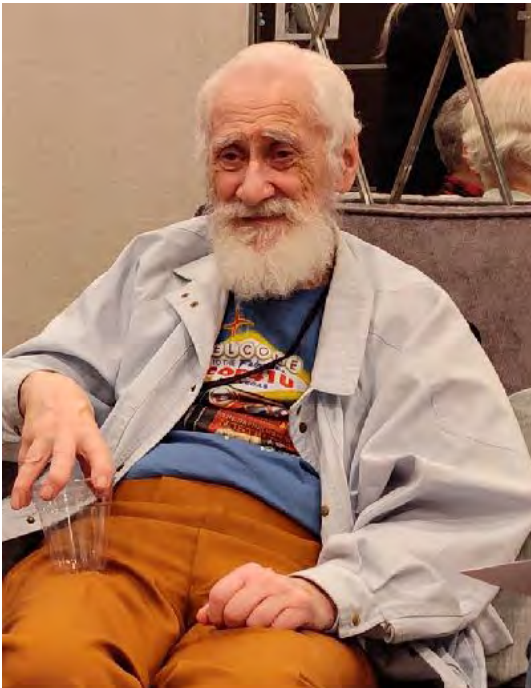


Photo by Jen Farey

LEIGH EDMONDS

My memories of the Corflu in Las Vegas are mixed, mostly memories of having a great time but also of being something of an outsider trying to fit in.

Last Christmas my sister invited me up to her place for a family get-together for Christmas. It was her family's get-together; her children, their partners, their children and grand children - many years of shared experiences. I was made welcome and enjoyed myself, but I didn't feel at home. They were my people in one way but not in another. It did not help it that everyone referred to me as "Uncle Leigh", something that I'm rarely called.

For the first couple of days I felt the same at Corflu. I knew the names of most of the fans there from long years of fannish activity but had met only a handful of them previously. I knew the form that conventions like Corflu take so it was not difficult for me to work out how to make the most of the opportunities the convention offered. What I was missing was the shared experience of previous conventions and other fannish activities, and that shared experience seemed to be part of the glue of this convention. As well as being a convention it was a family reunion, and I was not a part of that.

It took a couple of days for me to start feeling as though I belonged at Corflu. Everyone I met was welcoming and the informality of the organization made it easy to just relax into whatever was happening.

One of my real problems was that I knew the names of most of the people there from past fannish experience but did not know the faces to go with the names. This was not helped

by the small print of the names on name tags and the fact that they were dangling half way down people's bodies, well out of range of my limited eyesight. So I probably had deep and meaningful conversations with some of our BNFs and SMOFs and had no idea who I was talking to. There are only so many times you can ask a person's name without severe embarrassment. If I were ever to run a Corflu - and no, I'm not offering - I would stencil everyone's names on their forehead so that the name and the face became closely linked in what passes for memory in my brain.)

Despite these difficulties I enjoyed this Corflu and you are likely to see me at the one in Britain next year. For me there were quite a few highlights but let me remember two. The public one was Mark Plummer's GoH Speech - everything a speech should be with touches of humour and profound insight with some clever wordplay. (I meant to ask Mark if he wrote speeches in his long years in the Service, but forgot.) The other was more personal, Dave Hodson standing up next to me and saying "They said you were tall".



Photo by Gary Mattingly

EDIE STERN

Corflu always feels like a gathering of old friends, with even the people you don't know being welcoming and helpful. At Corflu 41, my peak moment came right after Joe and I received the Lifetime Achievement award.

I came into fandom in about 1970 or 71, through reading the Clubhouse column that John D. Berry had in *Amazing*. I read the fanzine reviews, sent in my sticky quarters and started reading the fanzines. That turned into a lifetime of fanzines, conventions, clubs, travel, parties, and deeply cherished friends.

After Joe and I received the award (which was a huge surprise), and sat back down, I realized that we were handed the award by Ted White, editor of that 1970/71 set of *Amazing Stories*

where I first read about fanzines.

Then I realized that John D. Berry was in the room. After 50+ years, I'd come full circle.

Also dim sum.

There was dim sum.

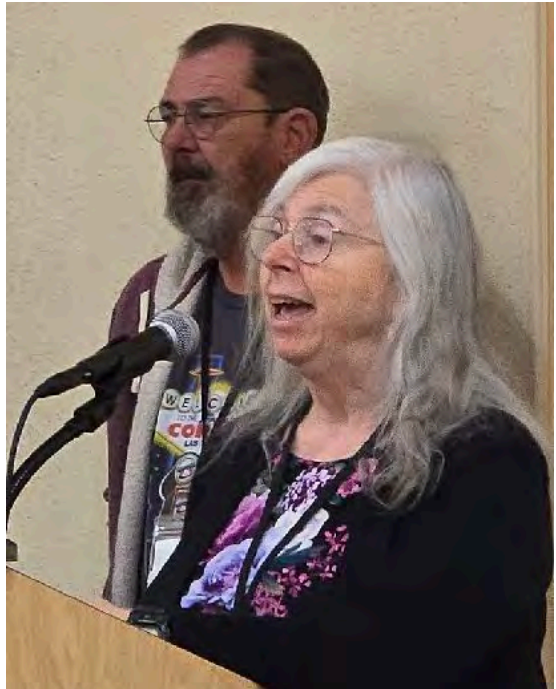


Photo by Gary Mattingly

JACQ MONAHAN

ADVENTURES IN BEVERAGE

The Bell Desk was our best friend during the Cor41u weekend. I lost count of how many tons of libations were stacked on the cart, awaiting unpacking and stacking in Room 1061's shower stall. One load seemed to get lost on its way up. I was following the employee from a bit of a distance when he turned a corner and seemingly disappeared. Since I was behind him, I was sure he'd be on the tenth floor before me and took the elevator (tap your key card on the Security Desk's device first) to the main consuite. Hmm... no delivery yet. This set off my "what if" alarms. It's been hijacked... it's been lost... there's been a misunderstanding. Give me my lager, you fiend! I went down to the Bell Desk to ask about it and some nice young man told me that the shipment was on its way, but was delayed by some guests needing help with their luggage. I said I understood, but was puffed up with a seething, yet comical umbrage which I managed to keep to myself while on the mission to refill the loo with oceans of alcohol.

Some of it, like the whiskeys, a tequila, and the wine, stayed on a bedroom shelf. A whole drawer was dedicated to a small crate of Bordeaux. This missing shipment contained a Malbec (red) which was a request, along with white wine that was NOT Chardonnay (another request).

Yes, we had a corkscrew.

Back upstairs for the second time, I saw that the boxes, bottles, and sixpacks had arrived. As a near teetotaler, I found it quietly hilarious that I wanted full custody of this giant

load of booze, as if I were the mother hen to a large brood of glass and aluminum offspring.

Jerry Kaufman, bless him, appeared in the hall, seemingly out of nowhere, to assist with the manual transport of all the products through the consuite door, to the left into the bedroom and then to the right into the bathroom that contained no bathtub. Six-packs, cases, bottles, and single cans of Enterprise beer (yes, that Enterprise) were stacked, sometimes precariously with bottled water and cans of sparkling water. The red Gatorade was courtesy of Jen. When everything was settled, and some of the contents removed for chilling in the leaky cooler the hotel provided, I patrolled the restroom as soon as anyone came into the room looking for a particular brand, stepping over the lip of the shower to grab the requested item.

From the coveted Guinness/Harp products to the acceptable Tecate lager, to the dubious Budweiser (hey, those Clydesdales are Badass!) to the Peanut Butter Stouts, pale ales, and hard ciders, John and I wanted to make sure there was *abbondanza*, the Italian word for abundance, along with variety for our Cor41u guests.

You can imagine how gratifying it was to hear kudos about “all this good beer” from Claire Brialey. And then this came a few days after the Dead Dog:

Jacq!

Thank you for your efforts in the Wine Department last weekend! The Bordeaux box was a pleasant surprise, the white wines got chilled sufficiently and were tasty. Loved the malbec. Donations that came in (I love shopping with Dr Rob, and we picked up a few bottles) rounded things out nicely. Karen brought some real glasses, but it turned out not everyone cared. It was all good! You and your team delivered for us wine

drinkers (I speak for all of us - I just do that sometimes), we had a great time and appreciate all the HOSPITALITY! (Spike)

This very gracious email had me smiling for several days. I want to clarify that I did bring my own stash of wine glasses (Riedel!) for others to use, setting them up as a multilevel display in front of the wide screen television in the main consuite. Most people thought they were for decoration only and they sat untouched until Carrie Root used one at my urging. I absolutely wanted to look after the wine people, which included Rob Jackson, Karen Schaffer, and the aforementioned Carrie and Spike. Apologies to those I may have missed in my quest to keep Diet Coke and acceptable lager on hand at all times.

Another memory:

Overseeing consuite operations was pretty much all-consuming. Not complaining, just explaining. I missed nearly all of the afternoon panels on Saturday, except for the Just a Minac competition. I was asked to be on the panel and initially said yes before chickening out. (Nic, you called it). When I saw how much fun it was to play, I became more intrepid and vowed that next time, I would wait even longer before chickening out.

Yet another memory:

On Sunday, I caught the very end of the auction, walking in when others were filing out. Imagine my surprise when Andy Hooper directed me to collect my merchandise. Huh? I was never in the audience and had just recently closed the consuite to attend the banquet and FAAn Awards.

Apparently, someone thought I had bid on, and won, a Corflu Cobalt T-shirt for three dollars. Maybe that's why DeDee White greeted me with an unexpected, "You outbid me!" when I first saw her. With the investigative help of John

Wesley Hardin, it was discovered that DeDee was the one who bid on the shirt, but I was declared the glorious winner. Go figure. It had to be hair length and someone's obscured view. DeDee was in an elegant, black steampunk gown, complete with top hat and goggles. I was also dressed in black, but with an appearance more suited to that of Ms. Frizzle from The Magic School Bus. That is how Alan White finally got his Corflu Cobalt T-shirt and how I stopped imagining that the Kanamit pictures on suites 1057 and 1061 plunged the whole affair into a real Twilight Zone.



Only half of a fine consuite team
L-R: Jacq Monahan, Cathi Wilson, Lori Forbes

Photo by Gary Mattingly

KAREN SCHAFFER

On the Wednesday before Cor41u, Mike Ward and I drove to Las Vegas from San Jose. It was a lovely drive down I-5 with the almond orchards blooming on either side of us, with snowy drifts of petals between their rows. We managed to leave at the crack of ... noon, ahem. So what with meal and rest breaks, it was around 9 pm when we rolled into the Gold Coast hotel. We made contact with Spike, Tom, and the Fishlifters to transfer 'the goods'. Yes, we were wine, beer, and book mules.

Thursday morning Mike & I ventured over to The Strip. We're not interested in gambling, but we appreciate public art and theme parks, both of which apply here. Bellagio had a colorful Chinese New Year's display in the atrium, plus lots of Chihuly glass. The feet of the faux Eiffel Tower descend hilariously into the ground floor of Paris. Caesar's Palace has mosaics and tapestries that the Romans would have loved. In fact, as Mike often remarks, the Romans would have loved Las Vegas. It is marvelous and over the top.

Then we went to Omega Mart, an immersive art installation by the Meow Wolf art collective that Geri Sullivan had alerted us to, located in "Area 15". It's a stunning installation that can be enjoyed on three levels:

1. The Omega Mart store which is filled with hilarious merchandise. You could easily spend an hour or more exploring all of the offerings, from Meats of the World to Plausible Deniability laundry detergent. And more, much more.

2. But then, if you go through a 'secret' door at the end of an aisle, you will find yourself backstage where weird and

wonderful light displays surround you. Trance out and groove on.

3. But you might start to notice little oddities. Why was a biologist collecting those samples? What do the files on that person's computer mean? Those employee training videos in the Omega Mart break room are ... odd. What's going on here?

The answer is: I don't know! We only had two hours and it wasn't enough. Give yourself more time, and when you figure it out, let me know.

So we hurried back to Gold Coast and to the consuite where we enjoyed the pizza bounty courtesy of our gracious hosts, Nic & Jen Farey, in honor of their leap day anniversary. Congrats and best wishes for many more!

Friday morning a botanically-minded group of us set off for Springs Preserve, which turned out to be about 8 miles due north of the hotel. Really, just straight north on Valley View Boulevard.



The core group of myself, Carrie Root, and Ulrika O'Brien had been augmented by our partners Mike Ward and Andrew Hooper, and native plant enthusiasts Murray and Mary Ellen Moore. (Photo by a friendly passerby.)

We navigated our way out of the hotel into the parking ramp (it's not straightforward!), where we discovered that in the vast plain of this gigantic parking ramp, we had managed to park our rental cars right next to each other. We divvied up passengers and set off. The gardens were marvelous, and we soon lost track of each other. Happily, we had made plans to reconvene near the entrance, but cleverer heads realized that meeting at the café and having lunch first would be an even better plan.

Back at the con, we joined the group attempting to identify fans from Leigh Edmond's 50 year old photos of his 1974 DUFF trip. "Is that Tom Digby?" "That's not Tom Digby!" "Now THAT'S Tom Digby!"

We made it back from dinner (an ill-fated expedition to the hotel across the street – sorry again, Sandra! Glad you managed to find an acceptable cheesesteak on your way back) in time for opening ceremonies, then off to enjoy the fine consuite hospitality of Lucy Huntzinger's retirement party.

Saturday was a blur of panels and conversations. We had a jovial dinner at the hotel steak house (with Carrie & Andy, Joe & Edie, and Mark Olson), then back upstairs for Nic's "Saturday Night Barely Alive" already in progress. Nic had asked me to read a part in his fannish take on Monty Python's cheese shop skit, which I was delighted to do. Thanks, Nic!

Much hilarity then ensued with Sandra's "Just a Minac". Eileen Gunn kept being foiled by her fine, fine rhetorical training, Dave Hodson was bemused, Jen nearly retained her

title as past winner, but Rich Coad stealthily snuck past for a last minute victory.

Sunday's Italian lunch buffet was excellent, just as Nic & Jen had promised. We admired the beautiful FAAn awards designed by Nathan Silva, and laughed long and hard at Mark Plummer's GoH speech. Congrats to all.

The Dead Dog got off to a roaring start with Tommy's Whiskey/Whisky tasting, followed by yet more excellent conversations with friends old and new. My convention goal is to have a good conversation with at least one new person at any con. By that metric, this was an outstanding con! People that I met for the first time or had a substantive conversation with for the first time include: Nic and Jen, Tommy, the consuite crew Aileen, Jacq, and Cathi, Las Vegas fans Tee and James, Ron Bushyager, Keith Freeman (who was NOT blown over by the wind, btw; he had been leaning heavily into the strong wind which suddenly shifted away and that's why he fell), Leigh Edmonds (I listened to a fascinating though sometimes impenetrable conversation between him and Keith about Australian vs British RAF), and Eli Cohen & Linda Gerstein. Given the number of mutual friends we have, it's somewhat astonishing that I had never met Eli before.

Finally rectified.

Monday we drove back to San Jose from this truly fine and memorable con. Thanks to everyone who made it so!

TOMMY FERGUSON

MEMORIES OF A TECH DESK JOCKEY

I got to attend every panel and event – possibly the only attendee that did. Highlights were definitely the retirement panel – all that time available and yet nothing gets done! Just a Minac was great this year – real LOLs! Leigh’s DUFF trip - I saw this twice and it was even better the second time. However the standout and clear winner – Mark Plummer’s GoH speech. Hilarious, revealing and – best of all – available to re-watch on the Corflu YouTube channel – check out the playlists here: <http://www.youtube.com/@Corflu>



Photo by
Claire Brialey

ALAN ROSENTHAL

I attended Corflu clean-shaven for the first time in several decades. This was not my intent, but it was interesting to see how many people didn't recognize me at first glance. This was my first trip to Vegas since the first Vegas Corflu in 1995. I really missed Jack Speer while walking across the casino floor. It was great to meet Leigh Edmonds in person for the first time. We still have much aviation geekery to get caught up on. And it was also *very* nice to see Ted for the first time in many years, and to have a chance to really converse... There was enough space in the con suites to hear one another talk, which was very welcome. And Rich *finally* won Just a Minac... Thank you all for a wonderful weekend.



Photo by Gary Mattingly

JOE SICLARI

Nic Farey is a self-proclaimed son-of-a-bitch, but he did spend a weekend playing host to over 60 people, sort of polite most of the time. He even coordinated (with advice from S&ra Bond) a multi-program schedule and numerous sidelines of entertainment, con suites and awards. (Thank you from Edie and I, btw.) Some really nice people worked hard for him so maybe he's not as bad as he says. They were up early in the morning to assuage the dietary cravings of fans. Up late to cover their peptic requirements, not to mention libations.

So over all, at my first time in a Vegas fannish mob, I had a pretty good time. I'm terrible with names of people I just met and sometimes the only memories are the outrageous or scurrilous stories I've heard, like the many cohabitation stories of NY fans I learned at Corflu or casino tall tales and otherwise.

Corflu Conversation blur: stories about food, and the great food buffets around the US now that there are so few in Las Vegas. Talking to John D. Berry about several new projects he is doing, and to Ted White on the aforementioned cohabiting New Yorkers; to Nic about an entire carton of zines he wanted us to keep for the FANAC.org archive and to Aileen Forman about some of her casino experiences; Keith Freeman remarking to all that he was not affected by his rapidly changing face (tough man, but of course he is the only one I know who actually watched an Atom bomb explode and is still here.)

One of my primary reasons for coming to Corflu 41 (besides seeing old friends) was to enhance the depth of our

fanzine archive. We did that in spades. Mark, Edie, and Mary Ellen Moore all worked with me on the dis-assembly line (and reverse) to get the maximum number of zines saved. Murray Moore brought some great issues of *Canadian Fandom* from 1950-60. A.C. Kyle had some 1940s pubs and Hydra Club documents. I thought we had a lot of Vegas (mostly Katz) zines online already. I think we may double that or more now. Vegas really has been a pubbing hotbed. We scanned over 3,200 pages!

Corflu 41 just seemed to fly by one bit at a time, too quick to inventory or keep track. Not long enough to talk to all I wanted.

A good weekend!



Photo by Gary Mattingly

GUEST OF HONOR



Mark Plummer does full-on Roast-a-Host
Photo by Gary Mattingly

THE NEXT CORFLU CHAIR

DAVE HODSON

After ten hours of my 6' 4", 120+ kilo frame being wedged into a seat designed for a 5' 10" midget in a pressurised plastic tube, my first impression of Las Vegas as the British Airways Airbus 320 I was on came in to land was: haven't they been told there's an energy crisis in Europe? The place was lit up with just short of enough lightbulbs to illuminate Harrods at Christmas.

After a slight mishap with the hotel on night one and a few hours sleep sharing an airbed with Nic and Jen's dawg, the morning of my first full day in Vegas was greeted with Rob Jackson appearing from nowhere. A few hours drinking coffee and chatting segued into transportation back to the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino and this is when all resemblance to reality disappeared. More than once over the following week, some captive or another surfaced long enough from the nicotine induced stupor to comment on the Ballardian ambience of the casino floor; the soulless, obsessive-compulsive nature of gambling at machines that never seemed to explain how to actually win, or more importantly how not to lose, in amongst the flashing bells and flaring whistles reflecting endlessly across the ceiling from spectacles, dentures, and pallid skin. All the machines seemed to have Oriental, hentai-inspired females daubed on them. So, this is how Beijing intends to conquer the world.

Nic Farey, sans teef, is a terrifying apparition; billowing clouds of tobacco and beer fumes waft around him in a toxic miasma and I'm struck by visions of him cab driving in a John Carpenter inspired urban dystopian future, protected by both

a bulletproof glass shield and his poisonous cloud. Jen really is such a charitable soul; I envisage a future fan fund raised purely to de-programme her from her fannish Stockholm syndrome.

Las Vegas is gaudy. I mean REALLY FUCKIN GAUDY. Without a convention or a crippled vagabond that I haven't been in the same room as for over thirty years, I doubt I'd have visited the city, but there are some fabulous people here. I see Jacq Monahan for the first time in over a decade; I meet her lovely partner John, who, with Chris Clay, takes me to visit a local comic store and a gaming shop; Aileen Forman supervises a no fucks given, I will eat your liver if you step out of line fan lounge. Can I find a way to fund her to come to next year's Corflu and wrangle the hotel for me?

The steak restaurant at the back of the casino becomes, at times, a refuge of sorts, and Jeff, the Brooklyn born barman, entertains Tommy Ferguson, Nigel Rowe, and me with anecdotes and alcohol. I have two very fine steaks over the course of the week, which is more than I've had in a decade previous. I would come back just to chew the fat with Jeff a few more times, but it's disappointing to find out that he's a Trump supporter and minor conspiracy freak. A little bit of bad in the best of us, a little bit of good in the worst of us.

I have a long conversation with Ted White, but not about the things I anticipated asking him about. I have long wanted to question him about his time editing Heavy Metal, but we end up talking mystery novels; have no fear, I have now ordered a copy of Work In Progress from Amazon. Talk of mysteries reminds me of the late Bryan Barrett. When Nic first told me of his plans for a Vegas Corflu I had not long recovered from a near fatal bout of Sepsis. Bryan harangued me, told me to take better care of myself so we could share at

least one more laughter session in a hotel bar, and made plans to see me in Vegas; “you’ll love the place,” he said, “it’s batshit crazy...”

Lucy Huntzinger convinces me to speak on camera of Bryan to Edie Stern. I get a bit choked up and lose track of everything I wanted to say.

Lenny Bailes and I connect over a mutual love of comic books, and he introduces me to a Facebook group of sercon neofans. I must reapply to join the group because I missed the application questions attached to his invitation. This piece will serve as my reminder to do that once finished. Aileen Forman and Lorraine Forbes hover around every conversation, checking that the participants are fed, watered, and generally in good spirits (in that no fucks given kind of way).

I have stupidly offered to run a Corflu in Britain. I never was the brightest of people.

A party at Nic and Jen’s and then off to the airport for the 9-hour flight back to reality. Because of the radically different environment, I suffer none of that post-con psychic hangover; I don’t walk down Enfield High Street thinking I’m seeing Jerry Kaufman in the distance or S&ra Bond at the cheese counter in Tesco’s and I actually miss that feeling that used to strike me so often in the 1980s in the couple of days immediately post-Eastercon or Novacon or Mexicon. I wish I hadn’t walked away from fandom for as long as I did, but it was probably for the best; I doubt I’d appreciate the many highlights I experience now without the gap.

Next page: photos by Dave

Top: Chris Clay; Bottom: Jeff the barman

THE CFO

JEN FAREY

For the last week, I've been trying to write up a Corflu reflection. The problem is, I don't have any big, cohesive moments to share. Lack of sleep and constant running (more like a fast, limpy-walk) turned my brain to mush. So it's bits and pieces that come to me in no particular order. But when I look back on Corflu 41, here are some things that stick out:

- Running two printers almost non-stop in the days right before the con (and pretty much breaking my laser printer) because the quote from the print shop was SO darn high that I was determined we could do it way cheaper than that (which we did).
- Starting out Friday and Saturday with an intentionally solo breakfast at TGI Friday's (because the protein and the relative quiet gave me a necessary foundation for the controlled chaos to come).
- Watching Nic stick his head out the bathroom window to sneak a smoke.
- Using a hotel room safe for the first time (because I had to put all that bribery money somewhere).
- All those amazing conversations and hang-outs in the consuites. Like the time that Jacq Monahan and I got positively punch-drunk on exhaustion, to the point that everything was hilarious and I started snort-laughing.
- The frantic fun of playing Just A Minac. Even though I lost by one point (looks at sky, shakes fist in a Shatner-



like manner, and yells, “COAD!”) I’ve been told that I’m the first Corflu player to speak for an entire minute on one topic without being challenged (a feat that gets you extra points in the BBC’s original game, Just a Minute). So I’m kinda proud of that.

- The surprise of being nominated for Past President, fwa. I'm happy to share the honor with my co-Past President, Jerry Kaufman. We most certainly presided in a fair and honorable fashion. Sure glad that's over.
- Trying to hunt up more chairs to put out in our living room at the after-after party on Monday evening, an event that turned out far better than I expected (in part because we discovered that El Pollo Loco is an affordable and tasty catering option). Really glad we had one last Corflu hurrah!



Corflu 41 was exhausting, but also so much fun. Thankfully we’ve got this great book of memories to help fill in all our blank spots until the next time we get together and make a whole slew of new ones.

Photo by Alan White

MISCELLANY



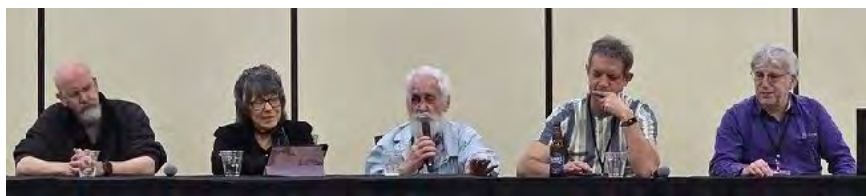
L-R: Murray Moore, Mark Plummer, Leigh Edmonds,
Nigel Rowe, Claire Brialey. Photo by Bill Burns



Old friends: Nic & Ted
Photo by Jen Farey



Karen Schaffer, Eli Cohen, Mike Ward



“Fandom Sucks Nowadays”: AC Kyle, Suzle, Keith Freeman, Nigel Rowe, Alan Rosenthal



“The Future of Corflu”: Ulrika O’Brien, Dave Hodson, Nic Farey, Rob Jackson

Photos this page by Gary Mattingly



Above: Lori Forbes, Aileen Forman



Left: Shirley (or Samantha) the showgirl, Nic, FAAn awards, beer

Photos this page by Jen Farey



L-R, top to bottom: Ted White, Nate and Cora Silva, Lynn Steffan, Andy Hooper, Geri Sullivan, Bill Burns
Photos this page by Alan White

