



COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
SPRING 2020

How I got into this mess.

“Okay. Fine. I’ll think about it.”

I do believe those were my exact words when Pablo Miguel Alberto Vazquez – hereafter referred to as simply Pablo to save space and avoid unnecessary spelling errors – approached me about the idea of bringing Corflu, the fanzine fan’s annual gathering, back to Texas. It has been twelve years since Corflu Quire (#24 in the series: collect them all, like Ted White) was held in Austin, Texas (expertly handled by that human dynamo called Pat Virzi), and I agreed that it had indeed been awhile. I had a grand time at Corflu Quire, and marveled at not only seeing old friends again, but meeting new friends that I had known through their fanzines for practically decades. I even still have pictures of that affair, and wrote up the event in the first issue of *Askance* (March 2007) in “A Full-Voiced Quire,” which I thought was a clever title for that con report.

About a week later I wrote back to Pablo, stating that the idea was worth looking into, but noting that we needed a venue that was accessible to me as I offered to research the idea while Pablo was off in England working on his graduate degree. Sheesh! The things people will do to duck out of their responsibilities...

Anyway.

I started asking some people here in Texas who might be willing to help out, and got some cautious responses. Here is the listing of the people whose sanity is now in question – much like mine – but they are all still fine folks:

The Irresponsible Parties of this Affair so Far:

Pablo Miguel Alberto Vazquez & John Purcell: co-chairs

David Thayer: Publications (most likely)

Brad Foster: Artwork for publications

Valerie Purcell & Diane Thayer: hospitality (most likely)

Pat Virzi & Jeremy Brett: TBD, but I do Have. Some. Ideas.

Good people, all. Everyone was receptive to the idea and replied with kind words of encouragement after first asking me, “Are you crazy, Purcell?” For that I had no coherent answer. In fact, I still ask myself that very same question.

But without a doubt, this is all Pablo’s fault.



Thematic Content

This actually isn't a necessity for Corflu, but by an interesting bit of synchronicity that makes sense when you look at it in a mirror, the number 37 is very significant for me. If you reverse these numbers you get 73, which happens to be the year when I attended my very first science fiction convention (Minicon 7, Easter Weekend of 1973). Not only that, my entire fannish lifetime was shaped and defined by being involved with Crazy Minneapolis Fandom, which in its heyday was an incredibly active, fun group of people to be with. I loved it, and there is no doubt that my viewpoint of fandom is definitely founded upon the principles of Crazy Minneapolis Fandom: have fun, get involved, get things done, but do have fun. As Mike Glicksohn so admirably put it in his dictum of IF3 years ago: If Fandom Isn't Fun, It's Futile.

I agree, and my goal with Corflu 37 is to make it a fun, embracing experience. When surrounded by all of our friends, how can it not be otherwise?

Why is it called Corflu Heatwave?

Well, it gets pretty damned hot here in SouthCentralEastern Texas. It rarely snows during winter – which is essentially three to six weeks in January and February – and while the temperature does drop below the freezing mark, that only happens a half-dozen times a year. I get the darndest looks when people see me using this contraption called an “ice scraper” when the car windows do frost over in the morning. Then they ask me where can they get one? My answer: not in Texas.

Average temperatures during the possible dates of Corflu 37 are as follows:

February, 65°/44°F (18°/7°C); March 72°/51°F (22°/11°C); May, 85°/66°F (29°/19°C)

Also, between the months of December to April there can be extreme weather changes, so be prepared for anything if Corflu 37 is in either February or March; in May it is guaranteed hot. Summer usually begins here on Easter Weekend.

General Specifics

Our target hotel site - the [Courtyard Marriott](#) - is definitely interested in hosting Corflu 37, and if we can settle on a weekend date then we can proceed apace to get things settled. Thanks to Pat Virzi's invaluable input on What To Ask Hotels, here is information about the hotel. The [Courtyard Marriott](#) has two good sized meeting rooms (2300+ square feet), 24-hour business center, 24-hour market, outdoor pool and hot tub. There are a total of 125 rooms (single, double, suites). There is easy access to the hotel, which is just off Texas State Highway 6 at Rock Prairie Road exit, on the northeast side of the intersection. A map with directions will be included in PR #1.

And yes, Virginia, the Courtyard Marriott has a pool. And a bar. Restaurant, too. Oh, heck with it. Here is their link: <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-rooms/cllcy-courtyard-bryan-college-station/>

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After researching past Corflu membership rates, here are the results (finalized items are in **reddish bold font**; proposed in **blue font**):

Potential dates for Corflu 37: February 21 - 23, 2020; February 28 - March 3, 2020; **March 6 - 8, 2020**. However, the third weekend of May 2020 is beginning to look like the ideal time with exact dates TBD RSN. [**May 15 –May 17/** May 22-May 24/ May 29 – June 1; 2020) Mid to late May is a very good possibility with more rooms available since this is after TAMU's spring graduation ceremonies and people are leaving town for vacations. The problem with either February or March dates is that fans coming from areas where winter exists is that blizzards may hinder travel. Hence the focus on those mid-May dates.

So, how much will this cost?

Regular room rates at Courtyard Marriott run in the \$107-129 range for singles & doubles, suite \$149-170 per night. This is naturally *negotiable* depending on how many rooms we can guarantee. Convention room rates will be published as soon as those are determined.

Corflu Heatwave membership rates (at present, but this may change according to projected membership numbers):

Supporting \$25 / £ 20 from now until December 31, 2019

Supporting memberships change to \$ 50 / £ 40 on January 1, 2020 up to Corflu 37.

Special Pre-registration attending rate \$40 /£ 30 (at Corflu Fiawol until May 31st)

Supporting memberships changing to attending pays the difference during the time frames shown below:

Attending: \$ 50 / £ 40 (June 1 - Aug 31, 2019)

\$ 75 / £ 60 (Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2019)

\$ 100 / £ 80 (Jan 1 – February 29, 2020 if **March or April 30, 2020 if **May**)**

\$ 125 / £ 100 (from either **March 1 or **May 1, 2020** and at the door)**

Pat Virzi offered – and I accepted her generosity – to collect memberships after our bid presentation at Corflu Fiawol. 20 people paid by check or cash to her directly, which is a great start: Pat then mailed what was collected directly to me for the Corflu 37 account. I am very grateful to have her on board for her expertise in running a Corflu – she did a fantastic one-woman show handling Corflu Quire back in 2007 – and already she has been a font of wisdom.

Since Corflu Fiawol is now over, people can register using either PayPal or by check. If using PayPal, please send your payment to askance73@gmail.com and include a note/memo saying "Corflu 37." Make personal checks payable to "John A. Purcell" and include "Corflu 37" on the memo line. In North America, people should send cash or personal checks directly to me at this address:

John A. Purcell
3744 Marielene Circle
College Station, TX 77845

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In the United Kingdom and Europe, send membership amounts (see the chart on the previous page for those rates) to Rob Jackson, who has graciously offered to be the repository of UK & European membership monies. The postal address for sterling cheques (note the old-fashioned UK spelling!) is still Rob Jackson, Chinthay, Nightingale Lane, Hambrook, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8UH, UK.

If joining Corflu 37 through PayPal, Rob says the best address to use for that method is this email location: jacksonshambrook@uwclub.net Again, make a note that your monies are for "Corflu 37" on whichever payment method you use.

Accommodations and Other Considerations

There are many other accommodations close by: directly across the highway from the Courtyard Marriott are a Sleep Inn & Suites and La Quinta, both very reasonably priced (\$65-\$125 range, depending) with pools; these are essentially two long blocks away. Three to five blocks north of the main hotel (also along the Highway 6 frontage road) are the Microtel Inn and Suites (\$64-\$90) and America's Best Value Inn & Suites (cheaper), and there is a Best Western (\$76-\$110) a mile and half south on Highway 6. This last one is in the Tower Pointe development, which includes a bunch more places to shop and eat.



As for food and libations, there are numerous low to moderate cost eateries in the immediate two to four block area. Directly in front of the Courtyard Marriott are a Honey Baked Ham and Luigi's Italian Bistro (a ristorante & bar: jazz combos usually play on Friday and Saturday nights), and opening this summer a half mile walk north of the hotel is a Cooper's Old Fashioned BBQ restaurant. Across the highway from the hotel are Double Dave's and Marco's (pizza), Cotton Patch Cafe, Freebirds World Burrito, T. Jin China Restaurant, Must be Heaven, McDonalds, Jimmy John's, Whataburger, Subway, C&C Asian Garden, and

so on. Additionally, there are two banks, a Kroger Signature Store (groceries, beer, wine, deli, etc.), two hospitals, and a smaller Specs Liquor Store. A newly opened Stella's Southern Cafe is right behind Kroger, so again, easily in walking distance. Ergo, there are lots of inexpensive to moderately priced eateries and such very close by (just across the highway). A map showing all this will be in PR #1.

There are also a good number of walking and bike paths nearby. In fact, a short drive (6.5 miles) southwest of the Corflu 37 site is Lick Creek Park, a nature preserve that has approximately 12 miles worth of hiking, jogging, and bike trails and paths. It is quite lovely, but be forewarned: there are snakes and other critters that call that park home. ADDENDUM: Jim Mowatt and Christine Lake are required to run the Lick Creek Trails; the rest of us will walk, thank you very much.

All of this information is based on what I learned from reviewing memberships for the past five Corflus and the websites of local travel accommodations. Hotel costs in

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College Station are actually quite reasonable, especially during summer months. Frankly, I can understand why. It's frigging **HOT** here in summer! Who in their right minds would even want to come here in summer? Oh, wait a minute...

An actual budget projection will be computed once we see what kind of interest there is in people wanting to come to SouthCentralEastern Texas at that time of year. By mid-May -- heck, most of the year, when you think about it -- the weather can be beastly hot. Refer to the earlier section about the naming of this convention for those details.



Courtyard Marriott Hotel in College Station, Texas

A proper map with directions on how to get here from Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, and San Antonio will be provided in Progress Report #1, which will be published in June 2019. Naturally, a lot of the information already provided in this initial Corflu Heatwave announcement issue will be reprinted and amended as additional information is acquired. In short, the Courtyard Marriott is located at the intersection of Texas State Highway 6 and Rock Prairie Road. Here is a link that you can use to peruse for information: <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/clcy-courtyard-bryan-college-station/>

The hotel is in the fastest growing part of town, and is a mere two miles from my house. So there is that.

There Will Be Programming – sort of

Regarding programming and a major local attraction, I approached Jeremy Brett, the curator of the SF Collection at Texas A&M University, and he is very supportive of this, and Jeremy said that a display of old/rare fanzines could possibly be arranged. I am even thinking of writing to James Halperin, the Dallas millionaire comics and sf fan who bought Harry Warner, Jr's fanzine collection back in the fall of 2006. (See *Askance* #3 (July 2007) for an interview I conducted with him.) I have not corresponded with Mr. Halperin in quite a while, but I wonder if he might also be interested in doing something for Corflu 37. I am already receiving queries from former members of Cepheid Variable (Texas A&M University's student sf club) and other fans who live in this part of Texas, so a Texas fan history panel is a strong possibility.

Programming **Definites** & Ideas [*]:

- *Thursday afternoon (for those who arrive a day or so early):
trip to the Museum of the American GI (2.5 miles south of hotel)
- * Thursday night is Open Mic night at Village Inn in Downtown, Bryan (11 miles from hotel): John Purcell usually plays there. Bring ear plugs.

Friday late morning or early afternoon: Tour of the SF & F/fanzine collection at TAMU - display of vintage/rare fanzines from collection

- * Friday afternoon: tour of Messina Hoff Winery & shop
- *Also, there are three microbreweries in College Station and Bryan, TX:
New Republic Brewery (live music on weekends)
Blackwater Draw Brewing Company
Zoigl Brewery
- * Specs Liquor Warehouse Run (4 miles north of hotel) if necessary or desired (Friday &/or Saturday afternoon)
- * Friday late morning/early afternoon: George H. W. Bush Presidential Museum (TAMU west campus) (6 miles from hotel)

Saturday: Auction (silent and live)

- * Saturday Panel Suggestions from Members
(possible topics: trivia game, blogs vs. efanzines vs. paperzines, trimming the fat off the FAAns, create a Corflu 37 one-shot?, another classic Andy Hooper play?)
- *Texas sf fandom history

Sunday: Banquet & FAAn Awards ceremony. GoH speech, other awards and honors to present.

Sunday afternoon and evening.

**Dead Dog/Barbecued Dingo Party
at the Purcell's house
(2 miles due west of the Courtyard Marriott)
backyard barbecue with music, noshing,
and much conviviality, plus pets.
(Dog and cats living together warning!)**



Travel

Getting in and out of College Station is not as hard as it used to be. You can fly into Easterwood Airport (west side of College Station) and there is a shuttle service running to the major hotels in Bryan and College Station; also cab service, and car rental (Hertz/Avis/Enterprise) available. If flying into Houston, Texas (Bush International Airport), which is 90 miles from College Station, the College Station based Ground Shuttle service runs their shuttle directly to their main location in town (a short drive from the hotel), but also can take passengers to the major hotels in town (Hilton Hotel and Convention Center, [Courtyard Marriott](#), and the Texas A&M University Hotel) for the basic fee of \$35 per person; the boarding location at Bush International for the Ground Shuttle (<https://www.groundshuttle.com/>) is directly outside the luggage claim area at that airport. I will check into possible group rates (if available) for a round trip discounted fare: special charters can be arranged. Ground Shuttle also runs from Austin to College Station (the goes up to \$50 for the 2 hour ride from there) in case attendees are flying into Austin, Texas.

If driving, the Courtyard Marriott Hotel is on the eastside frontage road (northeast corner of the interchange) just off Texas State Highway 6. College Station is approximately 90 miles northwest of Houston, Texas, making it roughly halfway between Waco and Houston. Like I have said before, a proper map with directions will be included in PR #1.

So that's what's in the works. Pablo and I look forward to hearing ideas and helpful input for Corflu 37 to be a successful and enjoyable convention. But do keep in mind one very important thing:

This is all Pablo's fault.

John Purcell

Co-chair Corflu 37

Outgoing North American TAFF Administrator