

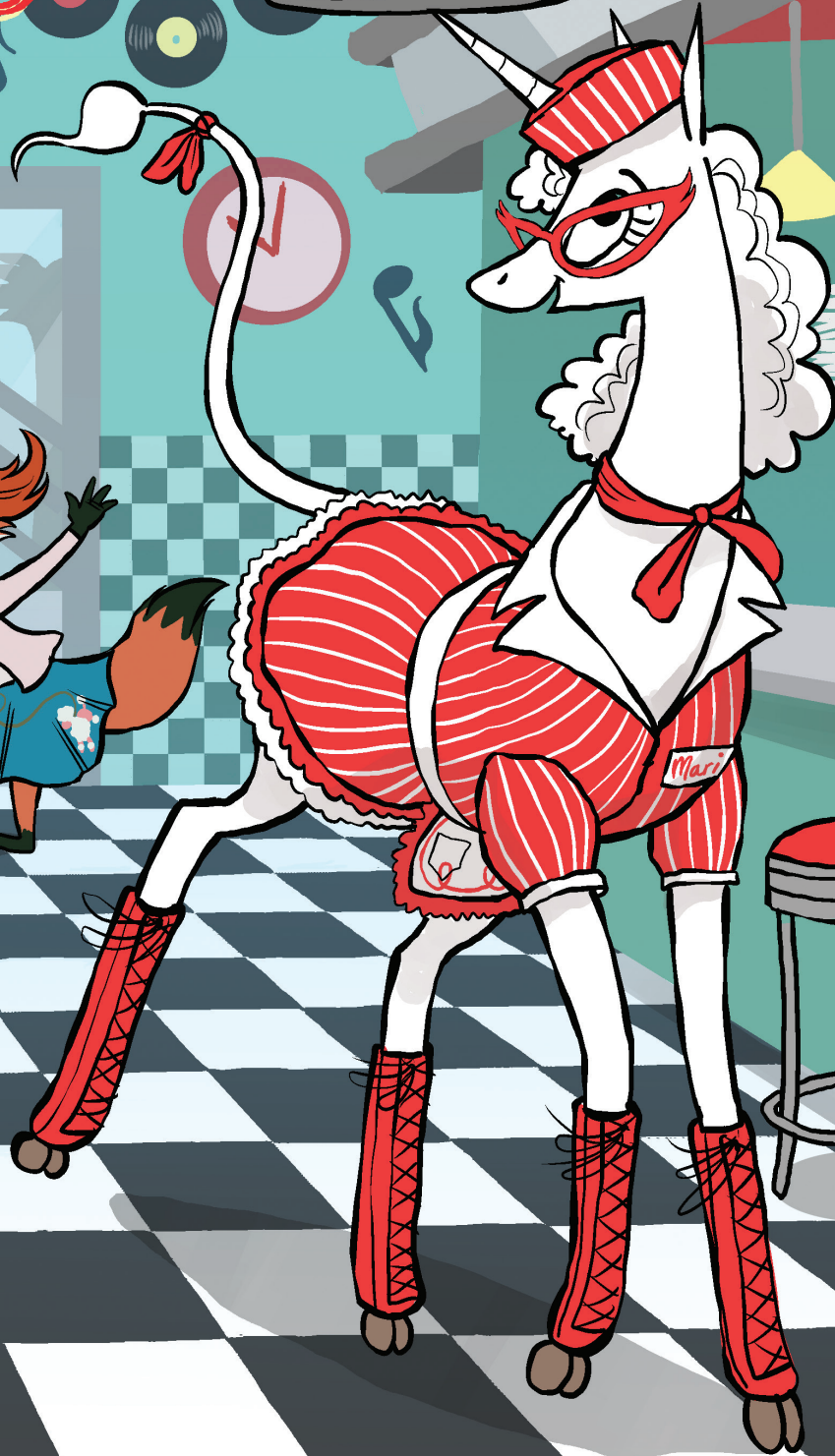
# \*Further\*

# Confusion

2016

Eat

Coffee



Jana

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The Further Confusion Convention Book is a production of Anthropomorphic Arts and Education, 105 Serra Way PMB 236, Milpitas, CA 95035. Web site: [www.furtherconfusion.org](http://www.furtherconfusion.org). This compilation is © 2016 Anthropomorphic Arts and Education. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part of any text or illustration in this publication via any means without written permission from the artist, author, or holder of the copyright in question is strictly prohibited. All works contained herein have been reproduced with the permission of the artist, author, or holder of the copyright. This publication is meant as a single item and is not to be unbound for sale. Printed in the U.S.A.

Version A (01/06/16)

Conbook edited by Dax and Latte  
Created in Adobe Illustrator/InDesign CC using  
Libre Caslon Text, Open Sans, Featured Item, and FontDinerDotCom Jazz Dark  
Cover art by Dana Simpson

# A Note From Our Chair

Warmest welcomes to Further Confusion 2015! We're glad you could grab a seat at the counter for Cafe FC: Classic American Diner!

This weekend, over 3,000 folks from all corners of the world will congregate in downtown San Jose. Many long-time friends will reconnect over coffee, share updates from the past year, and some may be meeting each other in person for the very first time. We'll celebrate our common interest in anthropomorphics with artwork, informative panels, eye-catching costumes, fantastic shows, and dancing each night for five full days!

I'm privileged to welcome our Guest of Honor, Dana Claire Simpson, syndicated cartoonist and award-winning author/illustrator of *Phoebe and Her Unicorn* and *Ozy and Millie*, as well as our distinguished Community Guests: Syber, Fox Amore, and Pepper Coyote! Be sure to catch some of the panels and performances from all of our guests this weekend! I also have the honor of welcoming representatives from this year's charity, NAMI Santa Clara. NAMI works to educate and end the stigma of living with mental illness, and serves as a resource for the local community to find the help and comfort they need. Be sure to stop by their table on the 2nd floor of the Marriott, and catch the return of our Charity Auction on Sunday!

We have over 150 individuals to whom we owe our deepest thanks. Our Volunteers have dedicated countless hours to the success of this convention, working in their free time and often late into the night. For every email thread, Saturday afternoon meeting, planning huddle, and locker inventory, we raise a glass to each and every one of you who worked so hard to make this weekend possible.

Cheers, and bon appétit!

Lauren "Latte" Kelsey

FurCon 2016 Chair

# BIGGEST LITTLE FURRY CON FALLEN UTOPIA

ALL YOU CAN EAT SUSHI SUNDAY MIMOSA BRUNCH BUFFET GAMBLING  
12 RESTAURANTS 13 ELEVATORS 24 HR BOWLING GO KARTS MINIGOLF  
DRIVING RANGE AMPLE FREE PARKING NIGHTLY DANCES SATURDAY DANCE TIL DAWN  
LASER TAG VIDEO GAMES BOARD GAMES ART SHOW ARCADE  
PANELS EVENTS DEALERS DEN



GOBLFC.ORG 2500 EAST 2ND ST RENO, NEVADA MAY 12 2016

# Code of Conduct

The goal of Further Confusion is to enable our attendees to have the best time possible. While our attendee demographic generally consists of young adults and older, FurCon is an all-ages event. If you are not eighteen years of age or older (or fail to provide a photo ID with your birthdate at registration), your badge will be marked as a minor, and you will only be allowed admittance to general-audience programming. Please be prepared to show your badge at any time you need access to convention space or events—it identifies you as a fully-paid attendee of the convention. Further Confusion strives to maintain professionalism at all times.

We hope that each attendee enjoys the fun that our wide-ranging community can provide. Please consider how your actions reflect on the convention and how they may impact or affect others. We take pride in our appearance and we want you to as well, while still having fun. To this effect, if the convention becomes aware of any of our attendees engaging in illegal activities, either in convention space or in private hotel rooms, we will be forced to inform the proper authorities. Keep in mind that there are always other guests of the hotels and convention center, especially on the first floor and lobby areas. Offending the hotels' other guests is inappropriate; impressing them with how much fun and enthusiasm we have for our fandom is appropriate. What you consider to be acceptable behavior may not be so for others. Consideration of others is the hallmark of a mature individual and a healthy fandom, and we encourage that courtesy from all participants in our community.

Matters of safety for convention attendees and volunteers are generally handled by FLARE. FLARE can be contacted through Convention Operations, at the FLARE base, or by asking any convention volunteer. FLARE may ask you to stop an activity or to move it to a private room. Repeat offenders may be required to return their badges and to leave the convention premises. For your safety, we ask that all attendees promptly comply with requests made by FLARE. If you feel that FLARE has made an unfair request, or has not been fair, you may bring this up at a later time with the convention chair or vice-chair.

## Costumes, Clothing, and Behavior

Costumes of all designs and materials are welcome, provided that they are displayed in a manner appropriate for all ages. Collars, leashes and sled-dog like harnesses may be worn

either with costumes or discreetly with your normal street clothing; overt and blatant displays of bondage/BDSM may result in FLARE asking you to leave public convention space or return your badge. As a rule, a minimum of a non-thong bathing suit must be worn at all times in public areas. "Anatomically correct" costumes must be likewise appropriately clothed in public areas.

No costume is no costume: We ask you to wear at least a shirt, shorts, and shoes in public areas of the hotel and convention center. Body painters should keep shirts handy at all times in case they need to pass through a lobby or other area that the hotel's other guests might frequent. Additionally, if you are wearing body paint of any kind, please refrain from sitting on hotel furniture. Please do not use the lobbies of our hotels nor the convention center concourse/parking to decorate other attendees as animals with makeup, liquid latex, or special effects appliances—please retire to a private hotel room instead. Public exposure of genitalia, buttocks or (female) breasts is not permitted.

Use common sense in public areas. If you have to ask or think twice about doing it in public, take it to your room. For example, kissing and holding hands, regardless of sexual orientation, are fine. Groping, tongue battles, and nudity, regardless of sexual orientation, are not.

## Harassment and Assault

"No" means no. "Stop" means stop. "Go away" means go away.

If someone won't understand these simple rules, please contact FLARE. Harassment is any behavior that intentionally annoys or alarms another person. Unintentional or misinterpreted behaviors may also cause feelings of harassment. This includes unwanted physical or verbal contact, following someone in a public area without a legitimate reason, or threatening physical violence. Offenders may lose their badges and the matter may be referred to the proper law enforcement authorities. If you are being harassed, we strongly encourage you to immediately contact FLARE through a nearby convention volunteer or by calling or texting their number on the back of your registration badge.

Additionally, the act of wearing a costume or fursuit does not grant license for anybody to make inappropriate or suggestive comments, gestures, or unwanted physical contact with



“Hungry Hyenas Choose” by Weremagnus

costumed attendees. Further Confusion is proud to play host to a wide variety of costuming, including but not limited to: mascot-style fursuits, video game and pop culture cosplay, fantasy/sci-fi genre cosplay, etc., and we wish to provide a positive and safe environment for costumers to enjoy.

### Buying and Selling

Further Confusion has two main areas where merchandise and services are sold: the Dealer’s Room and the Furry Marketplace. Anyone who receives payment for goods or services (such as body painting, massage, etc.) in convention space must comply with all convention rules regarding this. The Dealer’s Room Rules apply in this situation, regardless of the location, and vendors must ensure they have proper California Sales Tax IDs. If anyone wishes to request payment for goods or services and to donate the proceeds to the convention charity, Further Confusion must be informed of this ahead of time to allow for the convention to organize the correct tax reporting. Further Confusion takes its legal obligations very seriously in this area. Any solicitation for payment at the convention that does not comply with these obligations may result in the offender losing their badge and being required to return all payments.

### Parties, Alcohol, & Zero Drug Tolerance

Further Confusion does not tolerate serving of alcohol to minors. If you are hosting a party where alcohol is being served, it is your responsibility as host to ensure that the age of anyone drinking alcohol is checked. You should also designate someone not to drink, so that there is a fully competent person present to deal with any emergencies that might arise. Further Confusion does not tolerate the use of illegal substances. The violation of the above rules could subject you to the immediate loss of your badge and convention privileges and referral of the matter to other authorities.

### Water Pistols, Silly String, & Weapons

Due to the potential damage to property, water guns, silly string and the like are prohibited in public areas of the hotels or convention space. If it looks like a real gun in any way, shape, or form, it should not be brought to the convention. The State of California has recently instituted new state laws regarding replica weapons. There should be no “live” steel or whips being wielded in any area of the convention. If a bladed weapon or whip is part of your costume, please have

it peace-bonded. This can be done at the FLARE Base at any time. If you kill it, you have to eat it!

## Photography and Video

Further Confusion wants you to have great memories from a fantastic convention. Photographs and videotape footage by attendees are generally allowed in all common areas of the convention with the exception of the Art Show. Specific rules regarding these matters may exist for selected events. Please consult the program guide at the convention for information relating to specific events.

When photographing or videotaping individuals or costumes, please use common courtesy and ask before photographing them. Please respect their rights if they do not wish to be photographed or videotaped. If someone asks or otherwise indicates (remember, many folks in costume do not speak) that they do not wish to be photographed, do not photograph them!

Photography or videography for the purpose of sale or publication to the press is expressly forbidden unless written permission has been obtained from AAE, Inc. in accordance with its press policy. Individuals may take pictures and videotapes for private viewing or sharing with friends. We ask our attendees to be courteous to those they wish to take pictures of, especially if you wish to place those pictures or video clips onto any internet archive. In this case, please ask your subjects for their explicit permission to do this.

Attendees should be aware that footage gathered by volunteers in public areas of the convention, including events and panels, may be used in a highlights reel and that attendees may appear in the video without compensation. Consult the pocket program for specific video, audio, and photography restrictions for specific events. Further Confusion will require a release only for footage that is obtained in areas that are not fully public (i.e., private functions and personal interviews). These rules apply to all attendees (dealers, guests, or any level of regular membership). All members of the press and volunteers will conform to Further Confusion's press policy and we encourage attendees to become familiar with those rules as well.

## If You Need Assistance

During operating hours, Further Confusion's Convention Operations center will help get you connected to the assistance that you need. The back of your registration badge has phone numbers for Con Ops and FLARE, which you may call at any time during the convention if you need assistance.

Remember, we cannot address a problem unless we know about it. For less urgent matters, messages may be left with Convention Operations to be forwarded to volunteers. As with all messages left with Con Ops, please remember to give details of how, when, and where the recipient can contact you.

Further Confusion has a large volunteer staff to handle most aspects of the running of the convention. This allows the Chair and Vice Chair to remain available to talk about any comments or concerns that our attendees bring to them. If you see them around the corridors, feel free to speak to them—even if they appear harried—ensuring our attendees have a good time is one of their primary roles! If you need to contact the convention Chair or Vice-Chair at any other time, you can do this by leaving a message for them at Convention Operations.

## Have a Fun and Safe Con!

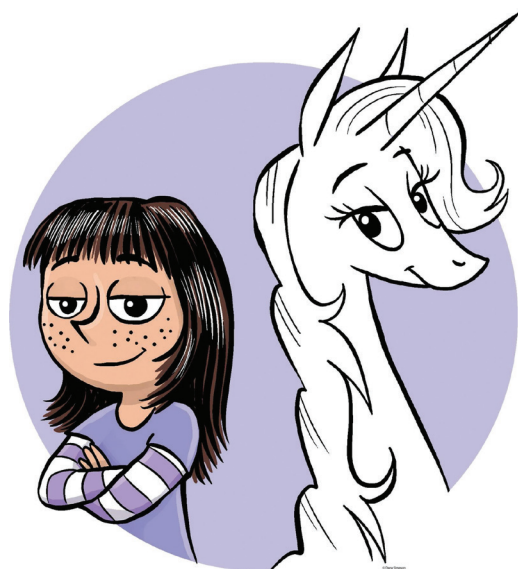
If you have questions or comments regarding Further Confusion policies, please send an email to [info@furtherconfusion.org](mailto:info@furtherconfusion.org).



“Sly & Fly” by Spalding

# Our Guests

## Dana Claire Simpson



Dana Simpson is best known for the syndicated comic strip “Phoebe and Her Unicorn,” which appears in more than 100 newspapers daily, and the two book collections *Phoebe and Her Unicorn* and *Unicorn On A Roll*. The strip chronicles the adventures of Phoebe, a smart, weird little girl, and her best friend Marigold Heavenly Nostrils, a vain, magical unicorn.

Before that, between 1998 and 2008, she wrote and drew the long-running webcomic “Ozy and Millie,” the story of a pair of tween foxes surviving elementary school, long-winded dragons and reverse-aging couch pirates. For several years, she also drew a biweekly left-leaning political comic called “I Drew This.” Shortly after finally bringing both those strips to a close, she won the Amazon.com/Andrews McMeel Universal “Comic Strip Superstar” contest, which netted her the development contract that led to the launch of the strip now known as “Phoebe and Her Unicorn” (originally called “Heavenly Nostrils,” and it’s kind of a shame the syndicate insisted she change it).

She lives just outside Seattle, in Auburn, Washington, is married, and has an energetic, rather stupid cat.



# Our Guests

## Syber



Syber is the artist behind the company Made Fur You, creating eye catching artwork, fun crafts, and one-of-a-kind costumes. She is also known for the multiple variations of her character in fursuit form made by different artists.

Syber became interested in the furry fandom in 2000, but officially joined the fandom in 2007 by attending local meets and starting her very first fursuit. After gaining much support from friends and furries alike, she decided to offer commissions to those who were interested. Over the years this has built into something amazing: Made Fur You was born in 2010, creating a way everyone can perform as their character and make smiles at the same time.

Syber has appeared at over 35 conventions throughout the United States, commonly found in one of her Syber costumes. There are 13 active Syber costumes as of now, and there may be more by the time this is published!

## Fox Amooore



Fox Amooore is a musician hailing from the hilly and wet (but beautiful) lands of Scotland. He's played piano ever since he could climb up onto a piano stool and has been composing his own music for almost that amount of time as well.

Fox Amooore has performed at conventions all over the world, helping to raise thousands of dollars, pounds, and euros for various charities. He's also been involved in numerous other convention activities including Jam Sessions, providing Piano backing for Uncle Kage's Story Hour and also just randomly hopping on the piano for a good sing-song. He has released numerous feature albums, both on CD's, digital download and even VINYL. In 2014, with the help of the fandom through a fundraiser, he recorded his first "studio" album at the world famous Abbey Road Studios in London, producing "Come Find Me", featuring the English Chamber Orchestra and a host of talented special guests. He is already planning and preparing the follow-up album to be recorded and released by late 2016.

## Pepper Coyote



Pepper was born in a small town in Northwestern PA. He grew up hating everything and naturally became a musician. Since the age of 17 he's been sitting in a room somewhere yelling, strumming, and howling into a microphone. Oddly enough he found an audience in the furry fandom just a couple years later.

In college he started a band called Look Left which played at just about every con on the Eastern part of the US, including Anthrocon, FAU, Furstivus, Midwest Fur Fest, Furthemore, and Western PA Furry Weekend. That was all well and good but eventually, everyone graduated. So now what? We have this ginger idiot bobbling around from one convention to another, but without a band, they won't let him on stage anymore! Well, he thought of that.

At the beginning of 2014, Pepper picked up a looper pedal, along with a few other gadgets and took a trip out to the woodshed. A month or two later he had emerged with a brand new show that included dance, RnB, and even Dubstep influences. The music he'd written for Look Left was still there, but things were different. Luckily, people seemed to like it.

# our Charity



**National Alliance on Mental Illness**

NAMI Santa Clara County's mission is to help people with a lived experience of mental illness and families by providing support, education and advocacy; to promote research; to reduce stigma and discrimination in the community; and to improve services by working with mental health professionals and families.

NAMI provides a wealth of information and/or referrals on a multitude of mental health issues and resources, including:

- Understanding mental illness, and its effect on individuals, families and friends.
- Understanding the mental health laws and systems, how to obtain mental health services, and how to overcome obstacles to getting help with mental health problems
- NAMI education classes and programs
- Support groups for individuals and their families, offered by NAMI and other organizations
- Referrals to services available from agencies within the Santa Clara County
- Referrals to commonly requested community resources, including: legal services, financial assistance, housing, job training and placement, and social support and activities.

Further Confusion is a proud supporter of wellness, not only among our animal friends but of our community: our participants, friends, family, and the Bay Area that hosts us. Many of us have found happiness and support in this fandom, and many know someone living with mental illness—or are living with one themselves. We are proud to further this network of support by naming the Santa Clara branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness as Further Confusion 2016's official charity.

EXPERT ADVICE

FREE GAME ROOMS

FAMILY OWNED

# GAMES OF BERKELEY

THE BAY AREA'S LARGEST GAME SELECTION

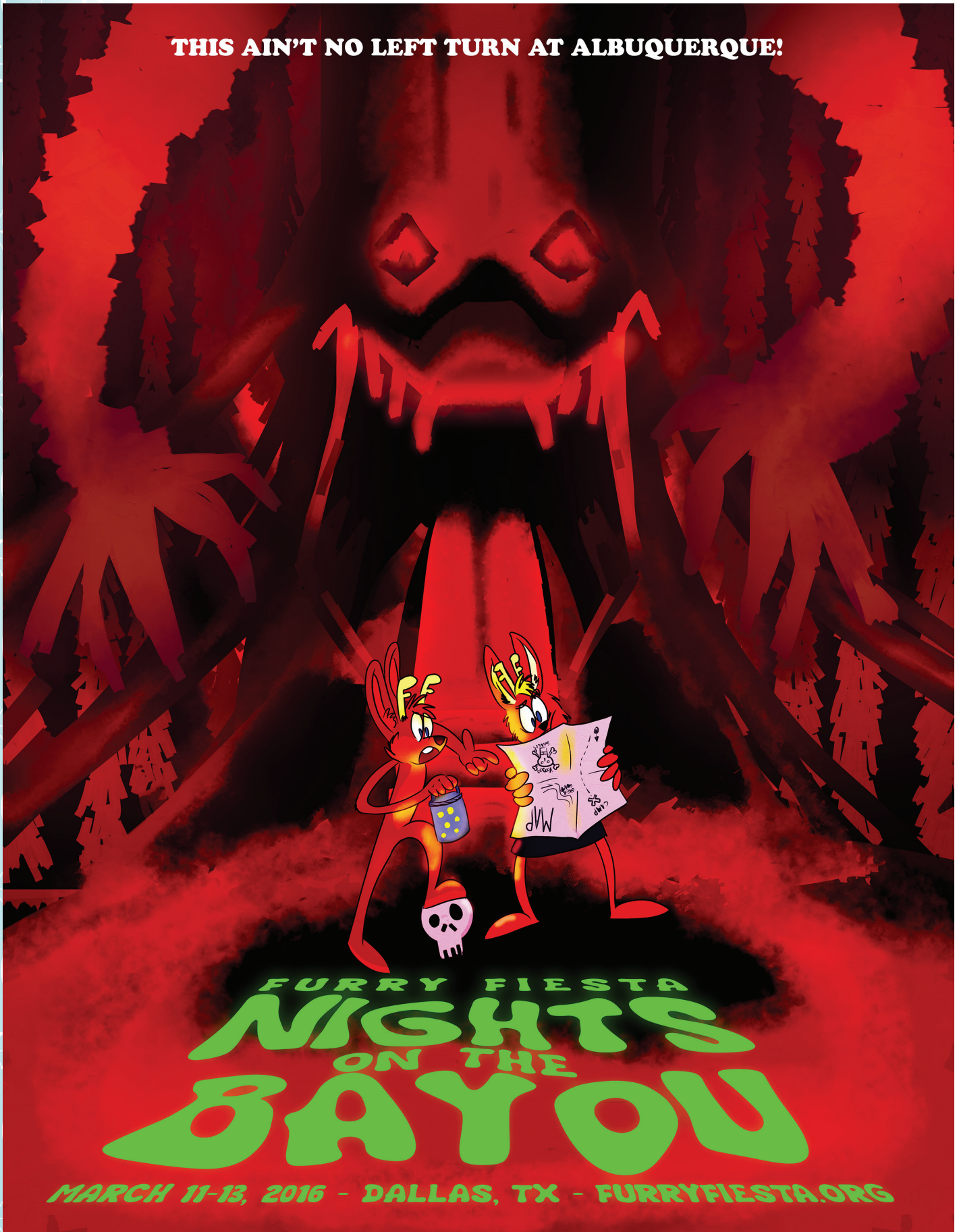
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# A Burger At Val's

by Thomas Steele

"You really think you can take this baby?"

The jackrabbit idling next to me pats the side of his shiny new Ford Thunderbird, a '55 by the looks of it. Fresh off a Detroit assembly line, it's sleek, definitely customized. There's no doubt that it packs plenty of pony power beneath the hood.

The bunny shoots me a sly grin, the kind that wouldn't fly back in Brooklyn. However, this ain't Brooklyn, this is Nowheresville, Texas, out in the middle of the Chihuahuan desert. Oil's the lifeblood out here, and I've spent the last week in this little town making friends—or not—with the local yokels while I investigate a big drilling outfit that's shadier than the cigarettes selling for a dime a pack. Some namby-pamby pinkos want the outfit shut down, claiming it's polluting the Pecos River so bad you can set the water alight and watch it burn like gasoline. While I think the boys out in San Francisco that hired me are a bit too out there for my taste, they pay cash and don't ask questions. That's all that matters.

The hooligan next to me revs his engine, drawing my eye. He's sporting a checkerboard flannel shirt with rolled-up sleeves and pilot's glasses tinted dark enough I can't see his eyes. Eyes can tell you a lot about someone. Whether they're interested in you, for instance. Most males won't bother to make eye contact with a rough-and-tumble PI like me, but those that do...well, it usually involves a tearoom rendezvous later that evening.

While I don't know what exactly about me attracts his attention, I might as well show off. See if that might win a date out of him, on the off-chance he's a country trade.

"I'll bet you a meal at Val's Diner that I'm the first one there," I reply. I gently tap the throttle to summon the auditory fury of my straight-six. I picked up this little number off the importer's lot in Newark Bay, a German-built 300SL with more speed than *What's My Line?* has laughs. I'd heard that engineering like this doesn't come cheap, but I got a sweet deal on it in exchange for huntin' down some rich fox's cheating mate and documenting her expedition to the Ritz with a big-name actor. So you wanna be in pictures, eh? Two thousand dollars and an "I owe you one later" ain't bad compensation, all things considered. While I'd usually take a nondescript carriage on a case like this, I decided I needed something that could outpace the local muscle. Sometimes jobs turn ugly, and you don't want to be outrun by goons in a Hudson Hornet if it comes down to hightailing it out of town.

But being a private eye does have its benefits, and the money ain't half bad if you attract the right clientele. Dick Drake, at your service.

My train of thought is derailed by the traffic light flashing green. I punch it, grunting with effort as I pop the obstinate clutch and shift into first gear. The engine slowly builds momentum as the country boy in the souped-up coupe beside me pulls away on a wave of torque, really goosing it.

Well, he ain't seen nothin' yet. While my ride doesn't pack the low-end punch of an old-fashioned Ford bent-eight, it does channel some of that Nazi Blitzkrieg spirit as I wind it out. I gradually gain on bunny-boy as it tachs up. I'm reminded of that time I chased down a mobster in a commandeered depression-era Auburn Speedster. Dip stick thought he could outrun me in a Lincoln. He should've known he was messing with best driver on this side of the Rockies.

As my opponent's machine finally runs out of breath, I'm burning rubber, my engine screaming bloody murder as I take it into second. My peripheral vision's starting to blur. All I can see is straight ahead, where a classy-looking chromed-out building coming into view marks the end of our little drag. As soon as the jack shifts into top gear, I know I've won. My rocket swoops past him almost effortlessly. I shoot my rival a contemptuous wink as I fly by, hoping I've managed to give him something to think about as I swing in front of him and tap the brakes to bring my ride to an easy halt into the parking lot of Val's. I flick the key to the left and climb out, a grin on my muzzle as the greaser pulls beside me.

Funnily enough, he sports a smile that matches mine.

"You really razzed my berries back there," he says. "Someone who drives like that ain't no square. So what's your tale, nightingale? It's gotta be one helluva a story, 'specially since you're driving one of those." He gestures at my slick machine.

"Well, I ain't the type to spill secrets, but you can't be all bad with a souped-up little number like that," I reply. I admire the paint job, black with jets of fiery orange that caress the vehicle's body. "What's she got under the hood?"

"A 292 with a Paxton-McCullough supercharger I dropped in myself." He pops the hood to allow me to admire the chromed-up carburetors. "But that's not important," he says as he slam it shut. "Whatever's powering that machine, it's the finest thing I've ever seen, and that's worth a burger to me."

"So, what're you waiting for?" I ask, giving him a friendly punch on the shoulder. "Let's head in."

We're greeted by a friendly-looking cheetah in a white mini-apron and a pink one-piece that skims her hind limbs.

"Afternoon, boys. Booth alright for ya?" There's a bit of a country drawl to her words.

"Perfect," the jack replies.

I grab the seat facing the door, which gives me a clear view of whoever enters and exists. I doubt anyone's on to me, but it always pays more than Washingtons to be extra cautious. A friend of mine let his guard down and woke up a week later in the hospital with smog in his noggin' and no clue how he got there until the mob sent flowers.

"So, what's your name? We should get that outta the way first," I say, nodding to the waitress as she pours us two tall glasses of water.

"Leroy Ronnie," the jack says with pride, lighting up and inhaling deeply before taking an obligatory swig of water to cool his muzzle down. "And yours, mister?"

"Dick Drake." I pause to order a burger with all the goods, extra ketchup. Leroy orders the same, plus a nickel Coke. On second thought, I order one as well. An ice-cold beverage beats lukewarm water by a mile when you're looking for a reprieve from the scorching heat.

"So, what's a big-city cat like you doing around Red Rock? There's nothing here 'cept cattle and oil. Closest thing to entertainment we get is *The Lone Ranger* on the Blue Network." He shrugs. "You look outta place, scooch."

I chuckle, shaking my head. "It's nothin' that'd rattle your cage. Just a little business on someone else's dime is all." I leave it at that. It doesn't do to divulge too much information.

"You sure? Why, if I didn't know better, I'd mark you as one of the FBI guys sent down here to infiltrate the government, you know, hunt for reds." He flashes an excited smile, which quickly turns to a frown. "Though, if you were, that car is as obvious as a flashing neon sign."

I shrug, shaking my head. "How about we stop playing 20 Questions and just enjoy the food instead?" I reply, shooting him a wink as two steaming plates clatter onto the table.

Taking the hint Leroy doesn't press. Instead, we chat and make small talk for a good hour, nibbling at our food between pauses in the conversation. Before we know it, our Coke bottles sit empty and all that's left on our plates are ketchup streaks and sad bits of lettuce. The sun's sinking in the sky; it's given up on trying to blind me through the unshaded window. Leroy still looks chrome-plated in his leather jacket and DB hairstyle, and I can't help but want to play a game of back seat bingo with him later.

"*Seven Samurais* is playing at the Silver Moon and I hear it's boss. You free around eight tonight, Dick?" Leroy flashes a brilliant white smile, the kind you see in a corny commercial. I find it cute coming from a country boy.

"I can manage that—sounds like a date to me." I toss some long green on the table to cover the tab, with a little extra

thrown in for that sweet waitress, and head for the door, keys in paw. As soon as I've got my ride fired-up, Leroy pokes his head through the passenger side window, looking curious as the proverbial cat.

"If you wouldn't mind, I'd like to go for a spin. I know a little road that's straight as an arrow with no heat to slow us down." He winks and I know what he's got in mind. I tilt my head, pausing for just a moment before I reach over to pop the lock.

"I guess we're moving up that date then." I grin. The Mercedes fires up with a satisfying purr.

"What're you waiting for?" he asks, patting the shifter. "I'd like to see exactly how you beat me."

"Hang on, my friend, as I'm about to lay a patch." I grin as I pull onto Main Street, heading toward the flat plains beyond. As the engine begins to scream and Leroy begins to whoop with pleasure, I can't help but feel satisfied. While it may not be a blow-off, my heart pounds for another reason, and he's sittin' right next to me.

So we head out of Nowheresville, immediate destination unknown. I've got a smooth machine and a hard-boiled sheik, and that's enough for me.





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# TREVOR DEVALL

VOICE ACTOR

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STARRING RICK GRIFFIN AS ARTIST GUEST OF HONOR

IN THEATERS AUGUST 14-16, 2016

STARRING SNAP E. TIGER AS FURSUITER GUEST OF HONOR

CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER DIA, DENVER, CO



# Mystery Meat

by Bradley Cohen

“I don’t get it...” he thought to himself. “What makes them so good?”

Chester was amazed. He just couldn’t figure out why the burgers at Eric’s Diner so were good. Was it the sauce? The redness? The cow it came from? He was desperate for answers. What seemed like a normal hamburger was anything but. No one ever makes them this good, and he wanted to know why.

He went to the manager’s office, where Eric himself was working. “I’m sorry to interrupt, but I’d like to ask you something.”

The wolf smiled at him. “Go on...”

“What makes your meat so good?”

His smile quickly faded. “I don’t even know you, and you expect me to give away my secrets, and to a raccoon, no less. How very cliché. Maybe I should give you the whole diner as well!”

“Please don’t be like that. I just asked a simple question.”

“And I gave a simple answer in return. Now leave.”

With the manager refusing to provide any information, he decided to contact an old friend. With the mystery meat in a take-out box, Chester entered a nearby phone booth.

“Is this still the number for a rat named John Wilson?”

“Chester? Is that you?”

“Yes, it’s me. Your old college roommate. I have something that I need you to look at.”

“I’m not a licenced physician, but I’ll do my best.”

“It’s not a medical problem. I need you to figure out why this hamburger meat is so addictive.”

“Addictive? Where did you buy it from? That stuff could be dangerous!”

“I got it from Eric’s Diner. The manager won’t tell me what he does to it. I need you to find that out for me.”

“Just bring it to my house. I’ll analyze it for you.”

John received the hamburger later that night. “This is for study, not for eating.” said

Chester. “Find out what makes them so good.”

Chester continued to visit the diner. Everyone was still talking about the irresistible meat.

It was starting to bother him, but he was sure that John would find the answer soon enough. He put a quarter in a nearby pinball machine and played it until he was hungry again. He took a seat at the bar. “What will it be tonight?” asked the barmaid.

“Ham sandwich and fries.”

“You don’t like our burgers?”

“No, I do. I really do. I just want something different this time.”

“Alright then...”

John came to the diner that night and sat next to Chester. “I studied that burger meat you gave me last night.”

“What did you find?”

“Absolutely nothing! It’s normal in every way!”

“But how is that possible? There has to be a reason why everyone is addicted to them.”

“Maybe everyone else is just overcompensating. They’re adding all kinds of secret sauces to it.”

“So they just cook it and serve it? No sauce or anything?”

“Maybe you should let everyone know about our discovery.”

He thought about it for a moment, and then he ended the conversation with “Maybe it should just remain a secret.”



“Strawberry Shake” by GrrrWolf

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**Special thanks to all of FLARE for your help and expertise,  
to all of our volunteers who join our team at FC2016,  
and to any staff we may have missed!**

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art © padunk

# Milkshakes and Foxes

by Makyo

Two foxes walked into a bar.

Well, okay, a diner. But most of those middleAmerican diners are outfitted with a bar type area, complete with red-andchrome stools you know the sort which is close enough. Both were full of giggles, outfitted with grins and their most casual of “nice” clothes. Somehow managing to look similar without being related, the two got along as though they were brothers. One was taller than the other, and though both were thin, he came off as lanky, whereas the the shorter fox seemed more waifish more of a track runner than his friend, the basketball player.

Although the restaurant was nearly empty its only other customer being one of those old hound dogs who sits at the bar, nursing his second cup of coffee while staring at the gold flakes on the formica counter as if they might somehow swirl into formation, revealing the deepest secrets of the universe or the solutions to all his problems the two jovial friends made their way to the corner booth and plopped down across from each other.

Their animated discussion, more gossip than anything, was interrupted by a cat on roller skates popping her gum loudly by the table.

The foxes grinned up to the waitress, who had picked up on the jovial mood and was beaming down at them. “What’ll it be, you two?”

Straightening up, the larger of the foxes proclaimed, well rehearsed, “A vanilla milkshake, please, and a couple of spoons.”

The waitress’ eyes flicked between the two, but she said nothing, simply taking down the order before rather pointedly asking the other fox what he’d like. The smaller of the two stammered for a second, caught off guard, “Uh.. coffee, please.”

The rollercat nodded and skated on off, leaving the two foxes to glance at each other, nervous, unsure as to whether they’d committed some sort of faux pas. Each shrugged at each other at the same time and both giggled, slipping back into their animated chatter.

The feline rolled smoothly up to the table again, this time with a tray holding a shake, two mugs, and a carafe of coffee. Setting the shake in the middle and the two mugs in front of each fox, she poured them both a cup of coffee before zooming back to the kitchen with the kick of a skate.

The coffee sat ignored by both foxes as each grabbed a spoon from the shake, pulling it out to get that first bite:

that one where the spoon’s already covered with a liberal coating of shake, whipped cream, and chocolate sauce. Coated spoons made their way into waiting muzzles and subsequently licked clean by attentive tongues.

With much laughter, the conversation continued, drifting from teachers to movies, parents to homework. Slowly, carefully, the shake was diminished, each taking care to leave the maraschino cherry standing in the middle of the glass atop a pillar of sagging whipped cream.

The talking wound down until the two were eating in silence, the taller of the foxes apparently lost in thought as he stared out the window, while the smaller watched his friend with tilted head.

“Whaaat?” asked the larger vulpine when he caught the other’s gaze, muzzle lifted with a half grin.

Laughing, the fox shrugged and dipped his spoon in the slowly melting desert, holding it out to the taller fox. Giggling quietly, he leaned forward to take the proffered bite.

Resting his chin on his paws, he smiled happily as he let his friend feed him another few bites of the treat.

Smiling just as much, the shorter of the two fished around in the glass with his spoon to get at the cherry, bright red. Picking it up delicately by the stem, he offered that as the next bite, his movements slow and deliberate. Leaning forward a little further, the larger fox delicate picked the almosttoo-sweet fruit from the stem, eyes locked with the other’s.

With his coconspirator in shake enjoyment still leaning forward like that, it didn’t take much for the smaller fox, still moving deliberately, to press toward him across the table. It was fairly clear what he intended to happen next.

Clear even to the waitress, who had rolled up at this inopportune moment to refill the untouched coffees. With a snap of her gum and a grumpy look, she jotted something on the check, slapped down on the table, grumbled, “I should’ve known,” and pushed off towards the kitchen.

The two foxes sat in stunned silence for several seconds as the insides of each of their ears blushed a matching shade of pink. The larger fox’s shaky paws fiddled with the check for lack of anything better to do, while the smaller fox sat still, eyes wide and welling up with frightened tears.

The check had “get a room” scrawled across it, and “on the house” scribbled hastily at the bottom. Taking that as their cue to leave, the pair made a clumsy escape from the diner, followed by the disdainful gaze of the rollercat.

Once they had made it out onto the curb, the warm evening air a welcome change after the spreading coldness from the shared milkshake, the two foxes gave a cautious look back through the glass into the diner. The waitress was still watching them from behind the counter.

They decided on home instead.

The two walked slowly down the street toward the larger fox's house, the closer of the two homes, in silence. The taller of the foxes kicked at the sidewalk, more trudging than walking, and the smaller fox gave his friend a few glances with apologetic eyes.

"I didn't think... I mean, I guess I shouldn't have done that..."

Nothing.

"I'm sorry, I guess I forgot..." he trailed off once more.

Still nothing. The larger fox was looking down at his shoes as they scuffed along the concrete, his paws stuffed deep within his pockets.

"I think we should call off the rest of the night." He walked in silence for a few more steps, brow furrowed, before repeating, "We should call off the rest of the night. See you tomorrow?"

The shorter fox, stunned, stood still for a moment before hurrying to catch up with his friend, grabbing lightly at his elbow, "No, wait."

The taller fox stopped, but would not meet his friend's gaze, frozen in place.

"I'm sorry, don't go," continued the smaller fox.

The taller of the foxes turned slowly and unhooked his friend's paw from his elbow, taking it in his own, slipping his other paw free of his pocket to hold both of his friends in his own. "I just feel weird about things, you know?"

"Well, shucks, I do too, but," he paused, then gave a defeated shrug. "It was still a nice night, wasn't it?"

A smile tickled at the corner of the taller fox's mouth and the tenseness in his shoulders and posture softened. "Yeah," he said at last, nodding. "Yeah, it was still a nice night."

Thank you."

They smiled shyly to each other then both looked down the street to where the larger fox's home lay, the soft glow of the porch light.

The larger of the vulpines turned to look back his friend, grunting in surprise when his muzzle met with another, one which had been aiming to give him a kiss on the cheek.

Both blushing foxes mumbled an apology at the same time, giggled together, and pressed into an awkward kiss, noses mashed together and lips not quite hitting their mark.

Two foxes stood on the sidewalk, half in light and half in darkness, working out the logistics of their first, vanilla-flavored kiss: all the little things that make foxkissing nice, like tilting muzzles just slightly so that the nose is out of the way and standing on tiptoes, exploring new intimacies. Ears laid back and tails all atwilt, still holding hands, the couple relaxed back from the kiss and smiled at each other before averting their eyes bashfully.

Still blushing, still grinning, still paw in paw, they continued on their way to the taller fox's house.

"Times are changing," the smaller vulpine observed as they neared the lowslung suburban home. "I think they're getting better, don't you?"

The other fox was slow to smile, but it was an earnest one. "Yeah," he offered, nodding slowly, as though his mind was still churning away. "I take back what I said earlier. Do you... do you want to come in for a while?"



"Lollipop" by PeakitArt



Art from the FC2016 Flyer, by Thornwolf

# A Burger By Any Other Name

by Daedalus

In all her years of being a waitress, Sheila had seen any number of strange requests and odd proclivities of her customers. Squirrels tended to order too much coffee for their own good; raccoons rarely ever used silverware and preferred to eat with their hands; pandas took forever looking over the menu but always ordered a salad; and foxes tended to be more interested in flirting than eating.

Being a fox herself, she felt she was more than clever enough to deal with most anything that walked into the diner. However, on this particular day that sentiment would be put to the test thanks to a group of gazelles and another table of wolves who just happened to be seated next to one another.

Sheila had only just greeted the gazelles and asked to take their drink order when the craziness started.

"We were wondering why you do not have a section specifically for meat-eating customers."

The fox waitress grinned and laughed off the comment. "Oh, shucks – ya'll don't have to sit nowhere special. I'll bring you whatever you want to eat no matter where you're at. Now, what'll ya have?"

"No, no. Not us. Them," The perturbed gazelles gestured to the table of wolves seated beside them. "We don't want to have to be exposed to their secondhand meats. It's well known that the presence of 'peripheral meat' is very detrimental to those with - uh, shall we say - more civilized palettes."

The waitress stared, perplexed at this while one of the wolves leaned over and smirked, "Hey, there's no need to worry. It was probably no one you know." The rest of the wolves howled and laughed.

Sheila quirked one eyebrow and forced a smile. "Well it's like this - see, we're all full up and it's pretty crazy in here what with all the folks wantin' lunch and all. So, how 'bout ya'll just ignore the wolves and just tell me what I can bring you from the kitchen. Bert's a right fine cook and he'll fix you up right!"

The gazelles shot looks of disgust at the rowdy wolves and sighed, "Fine. Whatever. Just tell them to keep their disgusting carnage confined to their area. So, we'd like to hear what you have for vegetarian entrées. Do you have hummus? Or perhaps some squash risotto? Oh, some pissaladière would be delightful. We'll just take one of each of those."

Sheila popped her gum and flicked her ears. "Hon, take a look at the menu. We've got Burgers, Hot Dogs, Fries,

Coleslaw, and Salads. Oh, and ice cream floats too! Now tell me which of those sounds good to you?"

The gazelle looked down her nose at the waitress and shrugged. "I'm sure your head chef will have no trouble at all making any of the things we requested. Why not ask him to try anyway?"

The table of wolves proved to be no better at understanding the menu than the gazelles did. Several wolves all spoke at once, peppering her with all manner of questions.

"So this meat you have – is it free range? Was it raised on corn or grass? Is it real Kobe beef or some cheap knockoff? Do you use hormone infused beef or is it all natural? Was the pasture GMO-free and are pesticides used? Is there an ultra-lean option since I'm trying to slim down for bikini season? It is gluten free, right?"

The fox stared back in disbelief, waiting for them to quiet down. "So... that'd be burgers all around, right?" Without waiting for a response, she scribbled down the order and disappeared off to the back.

Sheila slapped the tickets on the kitchen counter and cried, "Order up!" while ringing the bell. A large bear paw reached over and grabbed the tickets. She waited patiently for the inevitable and a few seconds later, a bear wearing an apron and a confused look stuck his head out.

"Are you kidding me? 'Free range, non-hormone, organic, fat free, all natural, no pesticide, corn fed, grass raised beef' and just what exactly is 'gluten-free, squash... hummus with' - okay, I can't even pronounce that last one. Is this some sort of actual food or am I going crazy? Someone actually tried to order all this nonsense?"

Sheila nodded. "You know how the owner is about the customer being right and all. Hey, that's what they told me and I wrote it down. All I said was I'd see if you could accommodate. Don't go gettin' your apron in a bunch, I'll go back out there and tell 'em - again - all we got is..."

Bert grumbled and snatched the tickets back up. "Don't bother. And don't say nothin' except the cook is preparing something special just for them."

Sheila looked worried. "Are you sure?" Bert shot her a serious look that meant 'get out of my kitchen' and off she went to refill glasses with a smile.

After several minutes of anxious anticipation, the kitchen doors flew open with a clang and a metal cart filled with covered plates came rolling out. Quiet filled the diner. Everyone stopped and stared at the sight of the rather large



bear wearing a neatly pressed chef's coat and slicked back fur strolled out of the kitchen pushing the cart. Sheila couldn't help but notice that whatever Bert had slicked his fur back with smelled oddly of bacon grease. He positioned the cart in between the two tables and started with the group of wolves.

"Gentlemen. Today I present you with one of our finest signature dishes. Minced 'eye of round' that has been seared and lightly seasoned. It is garnished with a hint of salad fixins and served warm on a toasted yeast-and-flour roll. It is complimented with a serving of julienned 'Yukon Gold' tubers."

Having laid out all of the plates on the first table, he then turned to the gazelles and continued his ostentatious display. Sheila stifled a giggle at his performance.

"For mademoiselles, I have prepared the finest, rich assortment of hand-tossed sprigs of chopped greenery from around the country. It is highlighted with roots, berries, nuts, and bathed in a spiced 'Oil de Elaia' from a Grecian recipe."

Having left the two tables speechless, Bert retrieved the final two large covered plates and placed one on each table.

"And to top everything off, I have prepared my signature dish: Russet strips lightly seared in oil, seasoned, and garnished under a blanket of Wisconsin's finest fermented curd, and a beef au jus reduction sauce. It is guaranteed to

fill you with a powerful feeling that the Spanish call, 'Aroma del baño.'

The bear took a large bow to each table and left them to their meals. Both tables began to curiously lift the covers off the plates, murmuring to each other, and all asking if anyone had any idea what he had just said.

Sheila followed Bert back into the kitchen with her paws clasped firmly over her muzzle to keep from laughing out loud.

"Oh, you are too wicked! What exactly did you make for them anyway? What is 'minced eye of round, lightly seasoned on a yeast roll' anyway?"

The bear smirked and tossed the chef's coat off to the side and retrieved his apron. "Burgers with a side of fries. Oh, and the gazelles all got salads with olive oil dressing. And the last one? My favorite: Chili cheese fries!"

Sheila peeked through the swinging door and smiled. "Well, from the looks of things they seem to love it. I guess it really is true what they say - Haute Cuisine is just 'grub' with a fancy name."

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# Going Home

by Crimson

Her sister's new car rolled smoothly down George Street. Jen patted the dash fondly; it was a '52 Ford Victoria, and her sister had made special arrangements to loan her the car for a few days while she was in town. It might have been last year's model, but it was very nice, and it fit their budget. When she got back, she'd owe Alice and Mike a nice dinner. Perhaps a celebratory dinner, perhaps not. She'd find out soon enough.

She turned the radio off and enjoyed the remainder of her drive and let the sounds of the town join her through the open windows. She'd been away for a long time. About six years. A long six years, between nursing school and the war. Now that Korea was over, she was on her first leave anywhere near home since she'd left right after high school.

She'd already been to see her parents, out north of Ranson. It had been good to see them, and good to catch up, though she'd managed to keep up with them in letters. They were a little older, but just as vibrant as ever. She'd even had a little time to catch up with her father one-on-one and swap war stories. Her mother hadn't wanted to hear it, having had enough of war with the last one, when their father had been called up while she'd kept the house going and raised Jen and Alice. That was what had driven her to become a nurse; she wanted to do what she could to see that as many men got back to their families as possible.

She turned east on to Washington and drove through downtown Charles Town. A late afternoon, it was fairly quiet; the traffic was mostly wives running errands and a few drivers making deliveries. Small groups of high school kids strolled the sidewalks, lightly bundled against the classic October hint of winter's chill. She smiled. It hadn't been that long ago since she'd been one of those girls on a favored boy's arm, but it felt like half a lifetime.

Just down the hill from the racetrack, she saw the sign for the diner where she'd arranged to meet Dan. The Mountain View Diner was aptly named, since just about everywhere in West Virginia had a mountain view. It must have gone in while she was away, but Dan had been right: she really couldn't have missed it. She did nearly miss the turn for it, as it was set back off an unassuming side street. It was a good thing the road was empty, because she tested the brakes rather thoroughly. Turned out, they worked just fine.

Gravel crunched under the tires as she pulled up. There were a few cars out front, but she didn't see Dan's old Chevrolet, but maybe he'd parked it around the other side.

Heck, maybe he drove something different now. She hadn't thought to ask. Or maybe it was just that she was early.

Jen got out of the car and smoothed her uniform, brushing out the influence of the long drive. She settled her service cover between her ears and looked at her reflection in the window of the diner. She thought she cut a rather fetching figure, a tri-color smooth collie in olive jacket and knee-length skirt, silver bars of a First Lieutenant just barely glinting in the overcast light. She grinned; she'd earned her silver bars, and she'd make Captain soon if she decided to renew her commission. Of course, that was all part of why she was here.

She had enough of admiring herself and went inside, tucking her cover under her arm she crossed the threshold. The bell over the door announced her presence, and she was greeted almost immediately by a short, white-furred waitress in an almost painfully-pink uniform.

"How ya doing, honey? How many?"

Jen paused and looked around. She didn't see any sign of Dan, and as a Bernese, he'd have stood out. "Just me for now, I guess. My friend should be joining me in a bit, but I'm rather early."

The waitress shrugged. "Well, as you can see, we're jam-packed, but I'll find you a spot."

Jen looked around. There was an older dog working on a sandwich at the bar, and in one corner, a couple seemed to be sharing a dessert. She found the waitress looking at her expectantly, so she grinned. "That's mighty kind of you."

The waitress chuckled and led her a short walk to a booth by the windows. Jen settled herself on the seat that faced the door. She placed her cover on the seat beside her.

"My name's Maggie. I'll be taking care of you today. As you can see, we're full up, but I'll try to stop by when I can. Can I start you off with something to drink?"

Jen chuckled again. "Slow day, eh? A coffee would be great."

Maggie's tail wagged behind her. "Sure is. Gotta keep myself entertained somehow. I'll be right back with that coffee."

Maggie walked away, and Jen glanced at the menu, then set it down. She wasn't up for food just yet. She'd spied a jukebox when she walked in, and she went over to go look at what it had. It held a collection that reminded her of high school dances, with their safe songs. Well, mostly safe. The Ink Spots and Glenn Miller had pleased the chaperones, and



she admitted a great fondness for their music. There were newer songs, too. “Blue Tango” had been popular in the canteen when they’d finally gotten a copy. She dropped in a dime and pressed buttons for that and String of Pearls. She walked back to her seat with a little extra sway in her step and her tail as the music started.

Maggie had just finished pouring her coffee and gave her a quizzical look. Jen guessed that song was a little lively for the regular crowd, despite being wildly popular. She just shrugged and smiled as she returned to her seat. “Thanks.”

“Sure, honey. Waiting on a hot date?”

“Hm. Maybe?”

Maggie quirked an eyebrow. “You’d think a girl would know. But I guess that’s your problem.”

Jen nodded. “That it is. I haven’t seen him in a while, so who knows?”

Maggie patted her arm. “Well, good luck.”

Jen just smiled as the waitress walked away. She took a sip of her coffee, then closed her eyes and settled a little deeper into her seat, relaxing as the music washed over her.

Tires crunched through the gravel of the lot, and she looked up when the bell over the door rang. Dan stepped through. He was a tall, solidly built dog, with the classic black pelt and white-striped muzzle with rust cheeks. He’d always

been a handsome dog, and he seemed to fit his black sheriff’s deputy uniform perfectly.

She stood and waved as he looked her way. His face lit up, and she felt her tail wag at the response. They embraced, and Dan nearly crushed her in his arms. She nipped his neck gently, and he let up.

He grinned and licked her cheek. “Hey Jen! It’s great to see you again!”

She smiled and licked his muzzle in response. “And you. It feels like it’s been forever.” She rubbed a paw over the arm over his shoulder. “This looks good on you. You didn’t tell me you’d become a deputy.”

“Well, it was a short phone call, and you caught me by surprise.” He seemed to remember he was holding her and stepped back suddenly. “And what about you? I see you got into the Army Nurse Corps!”

She smiled and took his paw, guiding him to sit across from her. “That I did. But that was three years ago! You hadn’t heard?”

He grinned. “I run into your dad from time to time, sure. He told me, but I just didn’t quite believe it until I saw the uniform. You look good in it. Happy.”

Her tail thumped on the seat. “That I am. It’s good work, and I seem to be good at it.”

He chuckled. "Nobody doubted you would be. You don't do anything by half measures."

She squirmed a little. Even from Dan, she'd never been great with compliments. There was always something she could do better. "And how long have you been a deputy?"

"Oh, about four years now. I knocked about after school for a couple years, then figured I'd try this and see how it goes."

Jen rubbed her thumb lightly over the back of his paw. "And do you like it? You look happy."

He smiled at her. She could hear that big, feathery tail thumping on the seat. "I am. You know I've always loved it here, and now I get to help out. It's a good feeling." He covered her paw, sandwiching it between both of his. "What brings you back here?"

"With the war over, I'm cashing in some of my leave to visit folks. I have another year left on my term, but I might renew. I've loved the work. I wanted to see if maybe this was still home."

"Still?" His ears perked as he leaned across the table. "Jen, it's always been your home."

She smiled and lifted his paw to kiss his fingers. "I don't know anymore, Dan. I'm not the same girl as when I left; I haven't been home in six years, between nursing school and

then the war. I was in a M.A.S.H. pretty much the entire time. It wasn't a nice thing, but it was good. I want to keep doing it."

He looked at her, ears drooped. Dan had always had the best brown eyes, and she'd always had trouble even wanting to say no to him. "You know, we have a new hospital here. They could use more experienced nurses."

She chuckled. "I know! Right after I went away, typical!"

He grinned. "Well, it's here now. And I'm here. I've missed you."

Jen opened Dan's paw and kissed the pad at the center. "Oh, Dan, I've missed you, too. But surely there've been other girls. You're a nice guy, and damned handsome, and you have a good job."

It was Dan's turn for wryness. "Flatterer. There have been a few, but none of them stuck. The job is demanding, you know. You probably better than most."

She sighed. "Yeah."

"What about you? You're even more gorgeous than when you left."

She chuckled. "Like you said, the job's demanding. I certainly met a lot of guys, but they were all so needy: 'please save my arm,' 'please don't let me die.' You know the type."

Dan barked a laugh, then tried to cover it as a cough. "Ah. Ahem. You were always a little terrible." He grinned. "I think you might be worse now. I like it."

She grinned again and kissed his paw. "Thanks. I don't think it's going away." She stared at him for a moment, taking in the way his black fur flowed into his uniform, and those soft, brown eyes she'd always loved. It had been a long time. She shook herself to break the spell. "We should eat! I'm famished."

They passed an early supper with catching up. Dan's family had always been good for stories, and that hadn't changed. She shared what he hadn't already heard from her family, which wasn't much. He'd clearly kept up better than she had. She supposed that wasn't much surprise. Her sister lived down near Washington, and she was pleased to have something to share he didn't already know. She told stories from nursing school and the officer prep course and even a few from the war. Dan regaled her with tales from the law enforcement academy and from the job. Jefferson County clearly hadn't changed much since she'd left.

She watched Dan as the sun slipped towards the mountains, catching him in that early sunset glow as he told a story about one of the town's stupider drunks getting himself in trouble. That was Charlie: a good guy when he was sober, which was rarely, and a clown when he wasn't, which was frequently. It was sad, but he never caused any real trouble, and he was



"Drive In" by Southpaw Fox



always kept the deputies guessing about what he'd do next. She wondered how much he did it for the attention.

She stared at him for a time in silence before realizing he'd stopped talking and was looking at her expectantly. "Hmm?"

He chuckled and leaned over the table to lick her muzzle. "I said, you look like you're somewhere else entirely. What's on your mind?"

She grinned and reached out to ruffle his cheek fur. "What says I wasn't just lost in watching you?"

Dan leveled a look at her that must have served him well as a deputy; he was clearly skeptical. "Mmhm. We dated steadily for what, three years, before you left?"

She sighed. "Yeah. About that."

"So I know when you've got something on your mind. Besides, your ears are tucked back. What's wrong?"

Dan's observations called her attention to the sinking feeling that had been growing in her stomach. "I guess I was just thinking about how much this place has stayed the same."

"But you haven't. There's a lot more steel and drive in you than there was. And that's saying something!" He grinned at her, his tongue lolling out of that big muzzle of his.

She smiled. "I guess so." She stared a moment longer, then stood quickly. "But let's dance! We haven't danced in, well, I guess six years." She didn't wait for him, but went over to the jukebox and dropped in a quarter. She considered it for a moment, then pushed the buttons for those songs she remembered from high school dances, those pleasantly long nights of slow dancing in Dan's arms.

Dan stood when she returned, and they settled into that old, familiar embrace. The sunset lit them both as they stood in the empty diner's aisle, and the needle settled onto the first record. First the singer, then the violins, and then they stepped together.

*"You must remember this,  
A kiss is just a kiss,  
A sigh is just a sigh.  
The fundamental things apply,  
As time goes by."*

Dan gave a soft, rueful bark and nosed her ear. His breath was warm on her short fur when he spoke. "Hmm, I have a guess what you're thinking."

Jen smiled and nuzzled at the fur of his neck. "And what's that?"

"You're going to renew."

She sighed. "Yeah." She looked up at him. "You know I still love you, Dan."

Dan smiled, then licked her lips. "I love you, too, Jen. But it's not enough, is it?"

She pressed her muzzle against his, and they danced in silence for a moment. "Not for me. I'm sorry."

He held her a little tighter. "I'm not surprised. You've changed, Jen. It's good for you, but I don't think you're ready to stay here right now. Maybe not ever."

"Yeah." She looked up at him. "Do you remember when we first heard this song?"

He lapped at her muzzle again. "Of course. Eighth grade, Casablanca had just come out. It was my excuse to ask you out. I'd been looking for something for a while."

She chuckled. "And you picked a movie? I loved it, but, really?"

"I got tired of waiting!"

Jen licked his cheek. "Well, I'm glad you did."

They rocked through a slow turn. "It's feeling a bit prophetic, right now."

She chuckled. "I suppose it does."

Dan sighed. "I'll miss you, Jen, but I guess it's best for us both. I'm happy here, you wouldn't be. I wish you only the best. I'll always love you a little."

Jen smiled and licked at his lips. "God, Dan, you know I feel the same about you. But I can't stay, I'd go crazy."

"Yeah."

They danced as the sun set. The last song finished, and they stopped. Jen looked out the window. It was pitch dark, and she saw their reflection, Dan in his uniform and she in hers. They were a picturesque couple, if only they had a future. She pressed herself against Dan and kissed him firmly. They held the kiss as long as they could, but finally stepped apart. She gathered her cover and tucked it back under her arm, then fished a handful of quarters.

Dan tried to object as she put them on the table, but she laid a paw on his arm. "Let me get it, Dan, just this once."

He smiled quietly and gathered his hat from the seat, then followed her out. They paused by her sister's car. A white ford with Sheriff markings was parked next to it.

She leaned in for one more kiss, then stepped back, giving his paw a squeeze. "I love you, Dan. Take good care of yourself."

He squeezed hers in return. "Love you, too, Jen. Knock 'em dead. Er, maybe knock 'em alive?" His tail wagged and he shrugged. "You know."

She wagged in response and smiled. "I do." She opened the door to her car and paused. "Goodbye, Deputy Williams."

He raised a paw to his hat and tipped the brim. "Lieutenant Roberts. Ma'am. Drive safe, now."

He stood there as she backed out, watching her. She pulled out to the intersection and turned left towards 9. It would take her back to Washington, and she wanted to go before she changed her mind. She caught a last glimpse of him as the road took her by the diner again. He'd be fine. She'd be fine. They'd be fine, just separately. It hurt, but they both knew it was for the best. Dan had his county to serve, and she had her country.

# Spots on a Wednesday

by C.W. Euwyn

As much as I hated working as a waitress, there was one afternoon I would always remember. Every Wednesday, at exactly three o'clock, a hyena would walk in. When those spots came through the door, I would think to myself, "well, two more hours and I can head home," and I'd leave it at that.

One day though, he comes in, takes his hat off, and starts scrunching up a napkin. I didn't know why, but he was a good customer, so I walk over and ask him what he wants. "Coffee," he says, "with an egg and some fries."

I gave him a look, thinking I could cheer him up. Hyenas like to laugh, right? "Do you want the egg and fries with the coffee, or would you like them separate?"

He gives me a look, like I'd just asked him the colour of the sky, and goes back to scrunching up his napkin. "Moody" I say, walking into the kitchen. It's three; they know what he wants, taking the order's just a politeness at this point.

So I put it aside, trying not to think on it. People have said worse. When his order's done, I consider pretending to ignore it, so somebody else has to bring it out. The fox was doing her nails, the cat was chatting up some guy. If I wait for them, it's going to seem obvious. Gritting my teeth,

I pick up the tray, walk over, and force a smile.

The hyena thanks me. "I get it now," he says, seeming genuinely happy, "it's funny because, with the way I asked it, my order could have been misinterpreted as me wanting the coffee, with, the food."

I nod.

"Sorry about that," he says, laughing to himself.

It's a slow afternoon, there's not much to put my mind to. I don't like putting my mind to much, but, when something gets you, it's nice to be a bit busy. In the newspaper, I start doing the crossword, looking up every now and again to check on the diner. Hyena's still eating. I thought they were meant to be quick about it.

I'm about done, when Suzy, the cat, comes along, chewing her gum. She leans over the counter, smiling, the same way she does whenever she wants something from me. "Y'know y'love me, yeah?"

Whenever she needed anything, she'd always suppose I loved her. She leers at her boyfriend, waving her pink-painted claws. "Well, me an' Tony, we wants t' go out, an, I was wonderin'..."





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I know where this is headed. I think for a moment. I can head home at five, where I'll get in, untie my dress, sit down, fiddle with the television, then fall asleep in the armchair. It had been a long day already, but the cat was only meant to work until seven. "I'll cover," I say. Back then, I really could have used the money.

"Thaaanks," she says, skipping out of the diner.

"Waitress," calls spotty, "I'd like another coffee, how do you take yours?"

"Why'd you want to know?"

"Well," he begins, "every time I come here, I order coffee without milk. How do you like yours? I'd like to try a change."

"Without cream," I say. We both laugh at that.

"Do you take your tea without sugar?" He asks.

"I take it without two sugars."

We both giggle again. I'm interested now, so, with the rest of the diner still dead, I ask, "why the change?"

He looks away. "It's been a bad day, if you couldn't tell. I'm a banker, for what it's worth.

There's been a robbery, half the vault's gone. Don't tell nobody; we're trying to act like we've still got it. That's all that matters: What people think. It's like being here. Honestly, I just like sitting in some place with noise. But, unlike anywhere else, you've got to order. Not eating in a diner's not like not eating anywhere else."

"If nobody ate, we'd be filled with folk wanting to sit down," I say, though I did understand what he meant. At home, you

could sit at a table for hours on end, taking as much time as you liked. In a diner, an empty table was something else.

"You busy?" he asks.

"No."

"You want to not drink coffee with me?"

"And just sit at the table, not doing anything?" The thought seemed so rebellious. I pushed my skirt forward slightly, and sat. Me and spotty were both grinning like school kids. It's exciting; sitting down without ordering. We wanted to see how long we could keep it up, wasting space, chuckling. Nobody else could understand what was funny. Eventually, I think I've got to get up.

"I'll get fired," I say.

"Do you care?" he says back. I didn't care about the job, I just wanted the money. "There's something exciting," he goes on, "about taking risks."

We agree on that point. I take my apron off.

"You want a coffee?" I ask.

"You're maker's been switched off."

"I know. I meant, at mine."

He gets up, pays the bill, and puts his coat on.

When I said I'd remember that afternoon, I didn't mean it figuratively. It's been three years. I never found out how that business with the bank went. Needless to say, I think it worked out for the best, since, when spotty proposed, the ring was twentyfour carrot. He put it in the bottom of a mug of coffee, which I began to sip, at three o'clock, on a Wednesday, at that very same diner.

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Lupercaleb  
Makyo  
Mallikeet  
Michelle  
Mint Deer/Feesh Barkshark  
MiraKHall  
Mr Mowshi  
Netolu Shadowlin  
Nieghclaw  
Odakota  
Ogg  
PaintballFox

PC PRINCIPAL  
Phin Tin Tin  
Pyre  
qualia  
QuietFire  
Ralen Fox  
Ralkor  
Rambling Mutt  
Ranger Tia  
Relay Raccoon  
Ren  
Resafandrab  
Rioichi  
Robin Bobcat  
Rue Dragonmutt  
Rylee!  
Ryu Raccoon  
Sake  
Sardan Shikami  
Satomi  
Saturnwolf (a.k.a. Wolfie)  
ScritchWuff  
Shadow  
Shievina  
Sifuri  
Soggymaster  
Solus Krieger  
Squirrel  
Static Hazard  
Stazz  
Steelfire  
Storm  
Sugra Tiger  
Tabbicus  
Tarocco  
Tau  
Teh  
Tidus  
Timberwoof  
TM Drake  
Torne  
Toshifox  
Triac  
Trip E Collie  
TruthWolf  
Tursiae  
Tusky  
Uck!  
V  
Vesper  
Vurticaw  
WATER  
whiteibizan  
WhiteTiger  
Wild Wolf  
Winterpaw  
Wolfstang

YO! SHE KNOWS ME.  
Yukiama  
Yurex/Drakeil

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lauwv Tigerpaw  
Jericho Wolf  
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John Connor  
Kagur  
Kes  
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Lakota Lander  
Leo  
Majik Bear  
Marigold Heavenly Nostrils  
Mohr (Stripes by Dre)  
Morgan  
Mulefoot  
Niko Utahraptor  
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Orville  
Orzel  
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Vaille  
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Vox Fox

Many thanks to our generous sponsors, as well as to all those who choose to sponsor or upgrade after press time!

# From Our AAE Board

From all members of the Anthropomorphic Arts and Education, Inc. Board of Directors, welcome to Further Confusion!

Much like cooks in a busy kitchen, the volunteers behind FurCon have been hard at work creating a great experience for each and every one of our attendees. Many folks dedicating long hours in their spare time have made it possible for us to be here today.

While you're here, we encourage you to take in a little bit of everything: Browse the Dealer's Room and Art Show, take in a few panels, dance your heart out in the evenings, and explore the surrounding Downtown eateries and attractions. We're extremely fortunate to be located in a very walkable and intriguing location with plenty of amenities nearby.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your time here at FC, be sure to pop into ConOps and seek the assistance of one of our fantastic volunteers. Our goal is to make sure you have the best time possible during the convention.

Best wishes for an amazing time here at Further Confusion!

Sincerely,

Sean "SmackJackal" Wally  
Vince "Berg Polarbear" Cardinale  
Laura "Squirrel" Cherry  
Lauren "Latte" Kelsey  
Grant "RedXIX" Lautz  
Gavin "Decca" Douglas

Board of Directors,  
Anthropomorphic Arts and Education, Inc.



## Special Thanks To:

All of our brother and sister conventions around the world

All of our fabulous Volunteers and Go-Furs

All panelists, dealers, DJs, and performers

All artists who contributed work to this book or to convention collateral

Dragonscales Photography

FLARE

Games of Berkeley

Keovi

Michael Dominici of Legend Theatrical

Kelcema Audio

LJ Productions

Legend Theatrical

PrintPapa

Reilly Grant - our Programming programmer

San Jose Convention Bureau

The Staff of the San Jose Marriott

The Staff of the San Jose Hilton

The Staff of the San Jose Fairmont

TEAM San Jose

TechShop San Jose

Thornwolf (for our fantastic logo and flyer!)

# House Art

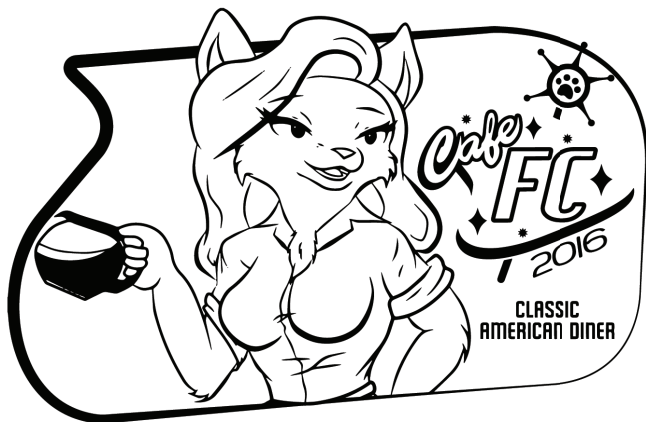


**FURTHER CONFUSION 2016**

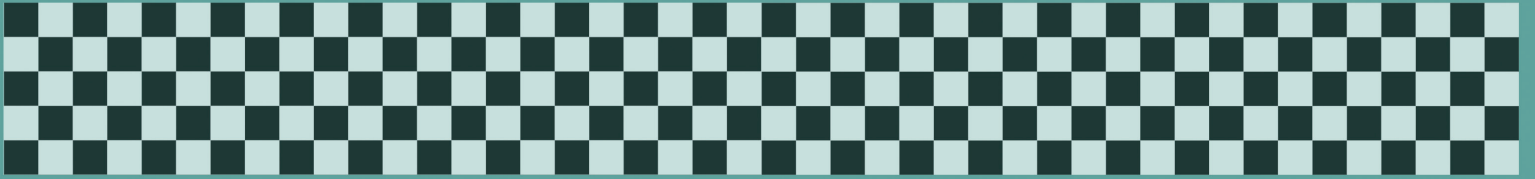
CLASSIC AMERICAN DINER

Sandwiches	
big wolf burger.....	\$1
chicken salad.....	50¢
grilled cheese.....	45¢
bacon and tomato.....	60¢
liverwurst on rye.....	50¢
Specialties	
cluck fried steak.....	\$1.40
caribou chili.....	55¢
squirrel spaghetti.....	75¢
liver and onions.....	\$1.30
fish and chips.....	\$1.10
peacock pork chops.....	\$1.45
feline french fries.....	25¢
gecko green salad.....	25¢
polar bear pie.....	30¢
Fountain Favorites	
snake shake.....	30¢
croco cola.....	10¢
strawberry skunk sundae.....	35¢

Lil Tiger Says... **IT'S GOT BITE!**

A big thank you to our fantastic staff artists who made this such a stylish and swingin' year!



With 17 years' experience in the Bay Area, Cafe FC is the place to go to rest your paws and enjoy a tasty beverage with friends old and new.

Whether you're just stopping by, or are one of our regulars, we're delighted to have you with us.

