



2008

RAINFURRIEST

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Letter from the chair

Welcome to Rainfurrest!

You might not know how much effort goes into these conventions before they take "flight", but the Rainfurrest team has been working their tails off all year to make this convention the very best it can be! This year, I'd like to dedicate the convention in memory of one of the team, Roberta Carlson. Some of you knew her, and my heart goes out to you for your loss. Roberta was our hospitality lead this year up until her untimely passing July 2nd. We will miss her.

This year, my Co-chair and I set a clear goal; if we were going to do something we were going to do it right, or not at all. Last year we launched Rainfurrest and exceeded most everyone's expectations. Although I'm writing this before the convention, I'm sure that we're going to do it again this year. I think you'll clearly see our dedication to doing the best job possible. Yeah, we're only in our second year so we have a frugal budget but we've done our best and now it's time for you to reap the rewards of all that planning and hard work!

There were a few things I felt so strongly about that I threw myself (and other things of mine) into them, personally making sure they were ready for the con. One item was the wings pin in your registration package. They're intended as a gift to you – EVERYONE -- not just the high rollers. As a Rainfurrest '08 member, wear your wings proudly -- even outside the convention.

You'll see three kinds of pins this year at Rainfurrest; copper, for the coach (attending) level of which only 375 exist. Silver are for business class (sponsor) and first class (patron), there are 125. In the theme of this year's convention, the most honored pin is the gold wings pin for aviators. There are only 30. To get yours, bring me your copper or silver pin and show me your valid pilot's license. This means that if you see someone with a gold pin, you can, if they are not busy, ask them questions about what it's like to be a pilot.

A second nice thing that you'll notice this year is the new staff shirt which came from an idea my Co-chair North had. He suggested that we get a staff uniform of some kind. Nothing uptight or strict, but rather something that makes staff easy to identify even from a distance, so you can find us for help.

The staff shirts will remain basically the same every year from now on, at least for as long as they turn out to be a good idea. They are a khaki uniform shirt with an embroidered convention patch. On the pocket will be the name of the department in which the person you're talking with works.

Staff members will only wear the shirt while they are on duty, so if you need any help or have any questions just look for someone with the staff shirt. As a final note on the staff shirts, please don't think of them as pilots uniforms or

stewardess uniforms, they are supposed to be similar to park ranger uniforms because after all we are "Rainfurrest" and these uniforms will stay with us for more than just this year.

Lastly, I want to remind you that this convention was designed to be "by the furries, for the furries". I cannot stress enough how important it is we hear your feedback on the convention at the Scritch and Bitch session this year. It's just as important, if not more so, for us to hear what we did well, as it is to hear what we did poorly. If we did something great and no one tells us it was great we might think it flopped and not repeat it. If something failed and no one says anything we'll probably be beating ourselves up for it going poorly even without being told.

Also, even though we have a full staff, we are always looking for new enthusiastic people with new ideas to help us run the convention and bring their energy to our team. There's always more room for people who want to contribute.

I wish you all a wonderful Rainfurrest '08, and please, if you have any problems at all know that I am very approachable. I am always interested in hearing your comments, blame and praise, or ready to just give you a big hug. Please remember that I and all the staff are only human, even if most of us refuse to admit it.

--Trapa



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How Rhari Spent 2008

May - June



Hey guys!
Anyone wanna
submit some
art?

April



Content?
Anyone?

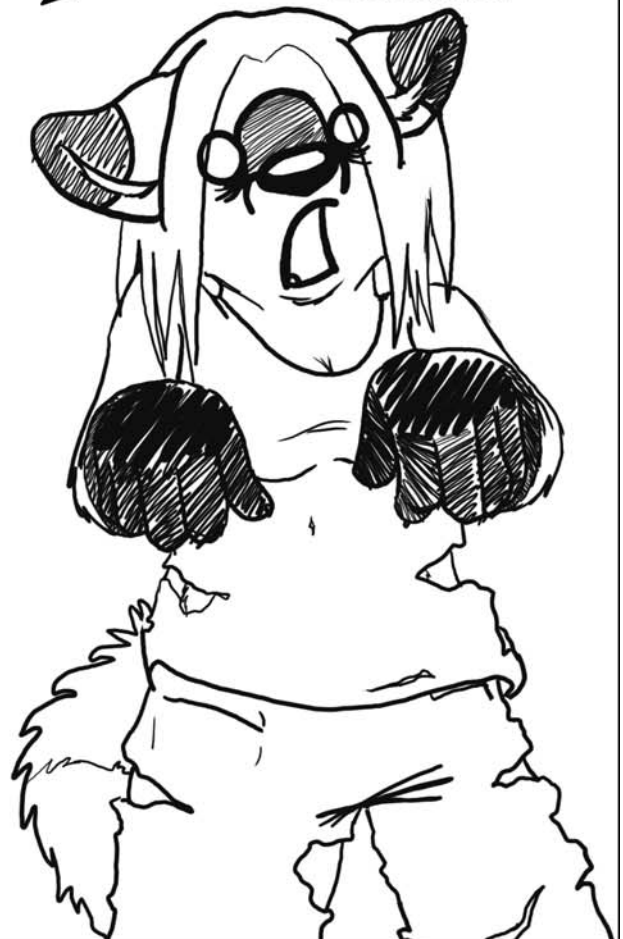


I can
has content?
Plz?

July

August

**COMING
2009 The Content
Zombie**



Letter From the Editor

2008 September

Ahh! Printing
delay!! OMG!



Code of Conduct Rainfurrest 2008

General Conduct: Please use common sense and respect others' right to enjoy the event. Remember that any activity which is illegal outside the event is still illegal inside the event. Event Staff may ask you to stop an activity or take it to a private room. Repeat offenders may be required to leave the event. Please also note that the event staff retains the right to deny entry with approval from executive staff to anyone and that you can be asked to leave at any time without warning or particular infraction to these stated rules of conduct.

Media Policy: As per our policy, the staff has decided not to allow ANY media coverage at the event without PRIOR approval. Attendees purchasing a membership agree not to act as media agents in any way, shape, or form while attending our event. Making photographic, audio or recordings of any Convention event for investigative or commercial purposes is strictly forbidden.

Hotel: As a attendee, you are a guest of the hotel and must abide by the hotel's rules and policies whenever you are on the premises. If you are expelled from the hotel for violation of their rules, you immediately forfeit your event membership. You are responsible for any damage you cause to hotel property. The event space and public spaces within the hotel are not sleeping areas. This includes hallways, the lobby, and public restrooms.

Harassment and Assault: Harassment is defined as any behavior that intentionally annoys or alarms another person. This includes any unwanted physical contact, following someone around a public area without a legitimate reason, or threatening to physically attack someone. Please remember that if you approach someone and they tell you no or to leave them alone, your business with them is done. If you do not leave them alone as they have requested, your actions may be grounds for a complaint of harassment. If you feel that you are being harassed, you have been assaulted, please report the matter immediately to event security or staff.

Weapons: Blade weapons such as daggers and swords are acceptable provided they have been peacebonded such that they obviously cannot be drawn. Water guns of any sort are NOT acceptable, even when obviously not real weapons, due to the potential for damage to hotel property, etc. Silly String is subject to the same restrictions for the same reasons. For the safety and comfort of our guests, firearms should not be brought to Rainfurrest without prior permission from Rainfurrest executive staff.

"if it's Drawn your gone" any drawing, brandishing, or any threatening gesture with any weapon real or replica shall be cause for immediate expulsion from the event. The only exception to this shall be at a prearranged demonstration or event with the permission of the event coordinators.

Underage Members: Minors under the age of 13 shall be accompanied by parent, legal guardian or an adult designated as responsible by their parent or guardian at all times. For minors from the age of 13 - 18 there must be a responsible adult on site and able to be contacted at all times.

Refund Policy: No refund of any kind will be given for memberships, products sold (not included with your membership fee) may be exchanged or refunded on a case by case basis.

Violations and Appeals: Violation of these policies will be handled by Event Staff as deemed appropriate. Violators will be asked to cease and desist. Violators may be asked to exit the event by event directors enforced by security staff. Disciplinary action may be appealed to the Event Directors. Decisions made by event directors are final.

Room Party Policy

The difference between a party and a social gathering

Recently, there has been discussion with various hotels about party policies. When the hotel hears the word party, they immediately think of alcohol, drugs and people throwing furniture around the room. To date, I have never personally seen this kind of "Party" at any Furry Convention.

Typically, what we have seen as parties at furry conventions may consist of groups of artists, and costumers, or people who talk on the same online forums. Sometimes these people have and serve alcohol in the privacy of their room, but in almost all cases, these "parties" are quiet and consist of fairly few people.

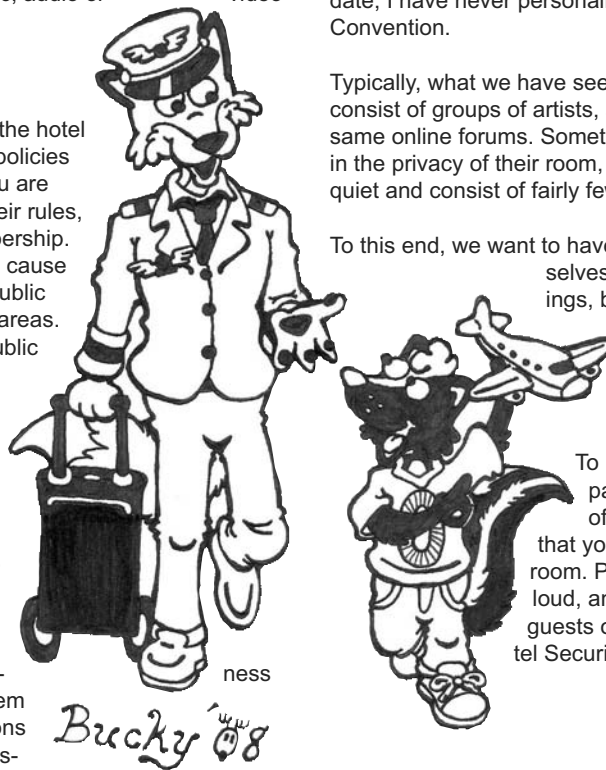
To this end, we want to have attendees of our events, enjoy themselves and have these kinds of social gatherings, but we would like to have you all refrain from calling them parties. Calling these kinds of social events parties makes the hotels (not just our hotel) nervous about hosting our events.

To be clear, Rainfurrest does not sanction parties in rooms, but has no problem nor official part of or role in any social gathering that you would like to host in your own personal room. Parties, in the traditional definition, that are loud, and cause any kind of disruption to other guests of the hotel will be shut down either by Hotel Security, or Convention Security. However, since our event doesn't have "parties" of this nature we are sure that this will remain a non-issue as it has been in the past.

If you're hosting a social gathering

If you're hosting a social gathering, these are the rules that Rainfurrest recommends you abide by in order to make sure that your social gathering doesn't get into trouble with our event staff or the hotel.

- Keep your room door closed - Although you can use the latch to keep your room door from locking, and invite people in. If you prop the door open, then the noise from your room will end up in the hallway, and most likely you will receive a visit from security. Our security staff does routine patrols of the hotel floors and will just give you a happy friendly reminder to keep the door closed.
- Keep your music at a talking level - Although we have no problem with you enjoying your music, just like religion we don't want to see you forcing your music on other guests. If you can easily hold a conversation overtop your music then there will be no issues.
- No illegal anything - Of course anything that is illegal outside the convention is still illegal within the convention. If anything illegal is discovered or we have any reason to believe that there is something illegal going on, we will immediately discuss the matter with the local authorities and the hotel. Once we have done that we will leave it up to their capable hands.





J. Hawens

Staff - 2008

Executive Staff

Chair - Trapa
Co-Chair - North
Accounting - James

Operations

Hotel Lead - Aloha

Conops Lead - Kay
Conops Second - Verdauga
Conops Staff - Darkenwolf
Conops Staff - Aloha
Conops Staff - RainRat
Conops Staff - Angel

Security Lead - Ravenwood
Security Staff - Saber
Security Staff - Nick
Security Staff - Arthur
Security Staff - Waarhorse
Security Staff - Orka

Reg Lead - Aphinity
Reg Second/Lead - Whitepaws
Reg Staff - Justin
Reg Staff - Loial
Reg Staff - Sparks
Reg Staff - RyeBunny
Reg Staff - Cricket

IT/Engineering - Loial & Kay

Theatrical - Rex
Video Production in Theatrical - Chrysolithos
Theatrical staff - Spuds

Programming

Programming Lead - Gene
Fursuit Track Lead - Xodiac
Art Track Lead - Setti
Writing Track Lead - Foxcutter
Masquerade - Xodiac
Pet Auction - Kae
Dances - Rex
Gaming - Sharako
Gaming Second - TracerFox
Gaming Staff - Sideway
Console Gaming - CerberusTheHitman
DDR Tournament - CerberusTheHitman
TCG/Board Gaming - Sharako
PC Gaming - Erik Tategami / CerberusTheHitman

Dealers Den Lead (Pre-Con) - Glen Wooten
Dealers Den Lead (At-Con) - ForestPaw
Con Store Lead - Dwarf
Con Store Staff - ForestPaw
Art Show Lead - Angel
Art Show Advisor - Glen Wooten
Art Show Second - Blaze
Art Show - Ahiru
Art Show - Mike

Publishing

Photography - Slash
Con Book - Rhari
Con Book Content - Tomae & Rhari
Con Book Layout - Tomae
Pocket Program - Electric Keet
Pre-Con Newsletter - Aloha
Fliers - Rhari

Website

Website Content - Aloha
Website Programming - Trapa
Website Hosting - Whitepaws
Wiki Administration - Kay
Forum Administration - Kay
Forum Administration - Rex
Sign Shop - Loial





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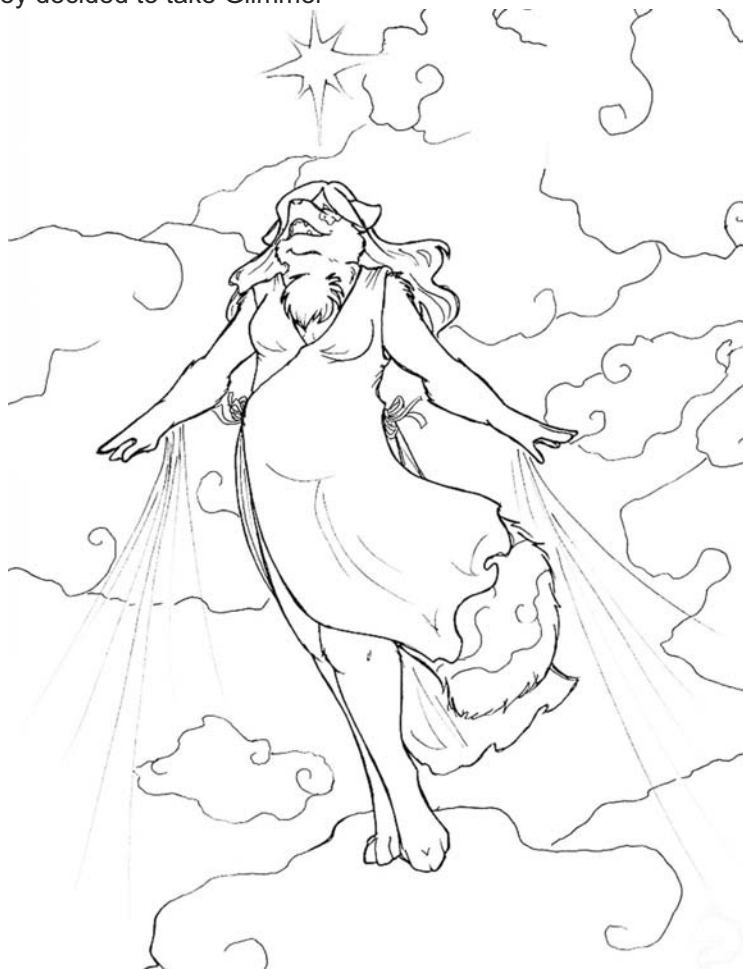
Washington Ferret Rescue Shelter

This is the part where I am supposed to tell you about the The Washington Ferret Rescue and Shelter, the part where I go over what they are and what they do. I am supposed to tell you why we are choosing this local group, above all others, as our sponsored charity. Here, I am to mention they are a no-kill shelter based in Kirkland, WA that takes in abandoned ferrets and provides adoption and care services. But I am not going to fill this page with statistics and data. I am not going to just tell you who they are and what they do. I am going to tell you a story.

A young couple, lets call them Greg and Tina, had just purchased a ferret. Named Glimmer, she was lively and full of personality. Greg and Tina have never had a ferret before, and spend quite a bit of time learning how to cope with an animal that takes nearly as much responsibility and care as a 2-year old child. Glimmer would get into EVERYTHING, and every time they thought the house was proof against her antics, she would find another method. But Greg and Tina doted on little Glimmer, and watched as their household began to revolve about this little bundle of energy. Anyone with a ferret can remember the moment when they stop being a pet, and become part of the family. So, when Glimmer began to settle down, and be less interested in playing Greg and Tina got worried. They called a couple local vets who said that Glimmer was just getting older and this was natural. Soon, however, the quietness turned to real lethargy and they decided to take Glimmer

in. A local vet provided an examination and found small tumours throughout Glimmer's body, as well as a larger one attached to her ribcage. Furthermore, the examination itself proved almost more than Greg and Tina could afford, and living paycheck to paycheck would not allow any of the treatments the vet offered, which would only provide comfort and ease to poor Glimmer, not save her life. Heartbroken and panicking, they are able to find a small group called The Washington Ferret Rescue and Shelter. Calling them, Greg and Tina were advised with empathy and concern, given tips and told if Glimmer gets any worse to take her in. Sadly, this is exactly what happened, Glimmer was not able even to eat anymore. One of the staff at the Washington Ferret Rescue and Shelter, lets call her Kimberly, kindly assisted, boarding Glimmer there and giving her round-the-clock care that two working 20-somethings could not provide. While nothing could save poor Glimmer from her fate, the Washington Ferret Rescue and Shelter provided support, advice, and a knowledgeable and kindly shoulder for a heartbroken couple. They provided Glimmer with the happiest environment possible in her last days, and asked for nothing in return.

With this story in mind, I am asking you to remember that couple. Remember the people willing to help when all others could not. Find it in your heart to support our charity this year, and listen to some of the stories the staff. Please give freely to these angels of the mustelids, so they can help enrich the lives of more ferrets and owners.



“Snapshots”

by The Dark Ferret

Copyright 2008

<http://us.vclart.net/vcl/Authors/The-Dark-Ferret/>

I sat on the back of the combine harvester as my father worked on the broken part. With nothing more than the Leatherman tool he kept in his pocket at all times, he was able to replace the broken pin on the auger, and get the massive machine running again. My father, a simple farmer, a man of the soil, was a mechanical genius.

I'd often sit on the hillside behind my home after my morning chores and stare up at the sky, watching the birds effortlessly traverse that endless bowl of blue so impossibly high overhead, stretching from horizon to horizon. Sometimes I felt that it was a giant, inverted, fish bowl, and that we, the animals of the land and sky, the fish.

Long hours I'd spend helping around the farm, learning how to use my muscles, and getting a feeling for the animals we raised, and the cycles of life in the fields. Wheat, sorghum, soybeans. All similar, all unique. The seasons passed as I grew, but never did my fascination for the skies above wain.

Over the years my father taught me how to use my brain as well as my paws; he taught me how to work smart. He taught me how to fix the tractor and the conveyor, and the truck and the harvester. I learned how to plow the earth, and how to repair the plow. It wasn't all that long before I was the one fixing the combine out there, in the fields, under that immense blank canvas of a sky, the birds: ravens, crows and raptors, circling high above me.

My every free moment was spent reading or sketching the ubiquitous birds I saw everyday. The jays and the magpies, the woodpeckers and the whippoorwills, and the nearly invisible humming birds. I drew the hawk and the eagle, studied their anatomy, and dissected their carcasses. The walls of my room were filled with such drawings - pictures from magazines, pages from books, the rare photograph. A shrine to those gossamer creatures that could so glibly defy the laws of man, and steal away from this earth upon a whim.

How I had longed to be among them, to fly with them. Not to escape Kansas, nor the farm, but simply to experience the unbridled freedom of their flight. To commune with these denizens of the sky - to understand their world, and to see ours from their perspective. To feel the wind in my fur, the sun on my back, my mind filled with the details of flight: roll and pitch and yaw - alert to the state of the constantly changing air: the thermals, the downdrafts, the cross-currents. To simply be alive in the moment of flight, consumed in the joy and sheer exhilaration, to know of no other state, than the state of flight, unburned by the toil and responsibility of earthly matters. Just once, to simply be one with that great bowl of sky that dominates my horizon.

As my father grew older, I was given more room in his workshop, and more leeway on how I spent my spare time. I found myself tinkering with rods and gears and linkages, connecting them to the pictures in my head; of birds and bones and muscle. The contraption slowly took shape, with many failures along the way. I spent more time those years studying engineering and aeronautics, retracing the work of the great aviators, Wright's, Bleriot, Antoinette, Cody. I went back to my books on anatomy, back to my drawings, and made many a long walk to town, to study the few relevant tomes available in the local library.

Years of labor and many a sleepless night were spent in pursuit of a dream only half-realized. A thought, a hope, an idea that wouldn't sit quietly and let me be. The dawn broke hard and bright that morning, harsh on my perhaps childish ambition, though softly did it seem to shine on my assemblage of wire and canvas, gears and pulleys, motors and parts. I stood quietly on the hilltop, ears peaked, my eyes staring into the distance. Watching with no small measure of awe as the darkness of night gave way to day in awesome glory. The birds rustled, making the noise of a new day, and the convection currents of dawn started to lift the quiet blanket of night.

I crossed my arms over my chest, and grasped the handles, pulling on them experimentally, ensuring that the mechanism worked, twisting them, watching the wings flex in response. Relaxing, the wings folded neatly onto my back, and I closed my eyes for a long moment, breathing in the last vestiges of the evening, before the day made its final claim for attention. I breathed deep, and opened my eyes, taking one last look at the world from the only perspective I have ever seen it, and, pulling hard on the handles, swept my mechanical wings high overhead in a rustle of fabric and gears. A flock of birds broke cover and took to the sky, and I followed right behind them.

Gliding over the earth, I exalted in the joy of it, reveled in the feeling of it, thrilled in the strain, my ears filled with the noise of the gears grinding, canvas billowing, rods and struts cutting the air, and the wind - the glorious wind - flowing past my body in a magnificent rush, making me tingle all the way down to my toes.

As I circled high overhead, birds off my port and my bow, I looked down upon an earth I had only ever seen in my dreams. The rivers and lakes looked like spars of light, lancing and dancing across the surface of a gravity bound world, the sun reflected off them like a giant, moving mirror. I saw the farm, the farmhouse and the barn, the animals in the field; horses running in their pen, as if filled with the joy of living another day earthside. The fields of grain stretched out all around me, merged with the fields from surrounding farms, and made the whole world look like a giant patchwork quilt of greens and golds and browns. And still I climbed.

The sky dominates my world now, bigger, and rounder, and more bowl-like than ever in my time on the ground. The horizon is bigger than I had ever imagined, and the sky is infinitely larger than anything I could have ever dreamt of. On the ground I saw birds everyday, everywhere I looked - up here the sky is empty, the birds are few and far between. Ground is a distant object, an abstract concept, just a green blanket that plays counterpoint to the black sky looming forever overhead. I ride the warm air as it rises, circle the cool air as it falls, and drift as the currents will take me. Now I understand the world of the sky. Now I am complete. Now, I am home.

The end.

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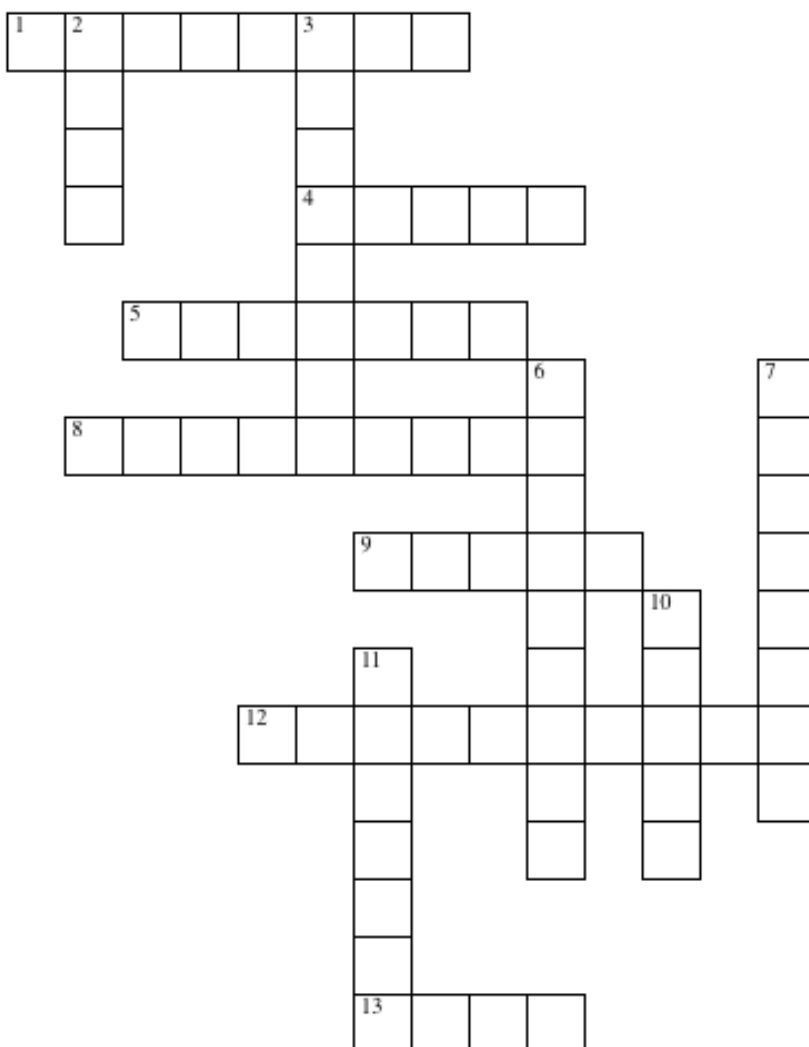
ATTENDANCE ONLY: £50 Sterling
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SPONSOR'S PACKAGE: £200 Sterling

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Crossword Cipher

Show your completed puzzle to Rhari for verification and prizes!



ACROSS

- 1 A list at the end in our bodies.
 4 Crease up foreign article? That's disgusting!
 5 Gloves involved in mood change – smitten.
 8 All encompassing.
 9 Poisonous snake in commercial is the opposite color of blood.
 12 Ones who never think of flying?
 13 The answer is easy in clues of this type.

DOWN

- 2 Left red wine in harbor.
 3 Let down, is flat indeed.
 6 Ted returns with fur to get the answer.
 7 Clear as a document.
 10 They say baby birds made beer.
 11 Ladder found in Siberia we hear.



A Koala with Delusions of Grandeur

By North

How does a kid from 1960's Texas become Rainfurrest's 2008 Artist Guest of Honor? Even he's baffled!

"I have been a furry about as long as I can remember, although I didn't have a name for it until about ten years ago. At least, I didn't know there was a community--thank goodness for the internet!" says Mark, better known to the Furry Fandom as Werepuppy.

"I used to do sci-fi and fantasy cons before I discovered fandom. I think the furry fandom suits me better, although I'm still very much a sci-fi geek at heart...don't get me started talking about Doctor Who or Star Trek unless you want the pants bored off ya!"

A long time resident of the Puget Sound region, Werepuppy has Texas roots. "I was born in Texas in the 60's...although



that seems like an oxymoron since it feels like Texas went directly from the 50's to the 70's. Maybe I just wasn't paying attention. I've lived here for the past 25 years... much longer than I lived there. So I sort of feel like I belong here now."

Werepuppy's journey to becoming an artist began even before his journey to the Pacific Northwest. "I learned a lot from my grandfather, who was an artist who never really had the chance to pursue an art career...so I think he had high hopes for me. Sorry Grampa! I turned out to be more of a cartoonist than a painter."

The unique and distinct style of his drawing is evident in his well known comic book *Rocketship Rodents* and can be easily seen some of the artwork he did in preparation for Rainfurrest. "Most of my influences have been comic book artists, or fantasy and film artists. There are also a few wildlife artists I particularly admire. So mix all those things together and what else could you come up with but furry art!?"

In the mid 1990's Werepuppy's life took a turn from the mundane. He explains, "I discovered the fandom at about the same time I came to realize that I was gay...so in a way they go sort of hand in hand in my mind. My whole life and

outlook changed practically overnight. It was the internet that was the agency both discoveries. Thanks, Bill Gates and Al Gore!"

You might not expect with a moniker like Werepuppy, Mark has deep inner connections to non-canids. "I would like to imagine myself as a sleek and powerful (not to mention beautiful) snow leopard...but I generally can only picture myself as the chubby little bear I am, and a koala seems to suit me best. So I'm a koala with delusions of grandeur. The snow leopard's name is Silverthorn. I like to think I have a bit of him on the inside at least."

He goes on to explain, "as for the name WerePuppy, I actually picked it on a whim when I was trying to think of an email address. I didn't have any sort of fursona, but I always liked the Wolfman when I was a kid and I felt like a newbie in fandom, so WerePuppy seemed like a good idea. Now I'm sort of stuck with it."

The name Werepuppy not only stuck as his popularity as an artist rose, but so did his association with the furry fandom in the Northwest. He says his very first furry con, "was a Conifur, where I met and was sort of taken under the wing of none other than Chris Sawyer! It was really an exceptional experience because before that I had always done sci-fi/fantasy cons and although I enjoyed them, I never quite felt like a part of them. Even though I don't fursuit or do the on-line gaming, I still feel closer to the furry community than I ever did to the other genres."

Werepuppy was excited by this year's theme of "Flight!" It's no surprise as a Texas kid in the Apollo era he first had a keen interest in spaceflight. "I was mostly attracted to space and the idea of space travel. As I've gotten older, however, my interests have widened to include more retro kinds of ideas, which led me to early air travel. "The artist's interest is highlighted in the T-shirt he created for the event. "I love the WWI planes, all flimsy and beautiful, made of wood and canvas. Also, there are WWII planes I am enamored with, like the Flying Tigers' P-40s and the bent-winged Corsairs. I guess I like the romance of early flight."

When asked how he'd like to be remembered by the furry community, he chuckles "By how irresistible I was to hordes of hot fanboys who all wanted to pose naked for me!! I don't think it's likely, but just remember it that way anyhow. Mostly I just want people to think he was a good artist and he was nice...or even, god forbid, kind of cool."

We think he's cool and are very proud to have Werepuppy as this year's Rainfurrest Artist Guest of Honor.

General Paneling

Switching Fursona's:

Why do people switch there fursona?

How old is too old to be a furry?:

Is the an age limit to being furry?

So This is Your First Furry Con?:

Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask About Cons.

When did you discover you were a furry?:

When did you know that this was the lifestyle for you?

Furry Computer Etiquette?:

When and where to have your yiffy background up and where is the right place to look at your pictures.

Would you abandon your human body to be your fursona?:

The title means what it means.

Young Adult books and furry fandom.:

Is the amount of new young adults books helping furry fandom grow.

Furry fandom vs. Sci-Fi fandom:

Who's more excepting?

Guest of Honor Panel

Adult Comics – Werepuppy:

You must be 18 years old or older to be in this panel. So please have your ID on you.

Furry Flight School:

Do you look up any time you hear a plane fly overhead and think "I wish I could do that.". Come to the Furry Flight School and find out what it takes for you to join the ranks of the furry pilots! Learn about how to pick a flight school and instructor, what to expect in your training and fun things to do with your certificate. Also find out flying as a career. We'll help separate the myths from the facts!

Writing Panels

Publishing as a Small Press:

Are you interested it publishing your own magazine or 'zine? Fox Cutter, publisher of Renard's Menagerie shares his experiences in publishing a small press magazine. He'll talk about the good and the bad, what works and what

doesn't.

Transformations:

Lions, Tigers and Bears... or maybe it should be Werewolves, Transgender and Magic spells? There are many different kinds of transformations, almost as many as transformations fantasies. You could be a woman, pig, or even a tree. This is a round table panel talking about all sorts of transformations, sit down and join in!

13 ways to make a bad story (In my opinion):

There are many ways to write a good story, but there are even more to write a bad one. Come join Doug Linger as he talks about 13 things an author can do to make a bad story. You can bring your own list as well.

Effective Beginnings:

"It was a dark and stormy night"? No... that won't work. "The night was moist"? Moist isn't quite the right word. How do you start a story? It's more than just the first line (but that's important too).

Chekhov's Gunman:

We've all heard of Chekhov's Gun: "If a gun is fired in the last act, it must be on the wall in the first act." But what does this mean and how does it apply to your writing? What's the different between setup and foreshadowing? and how play fair with the reader.

How to get published:

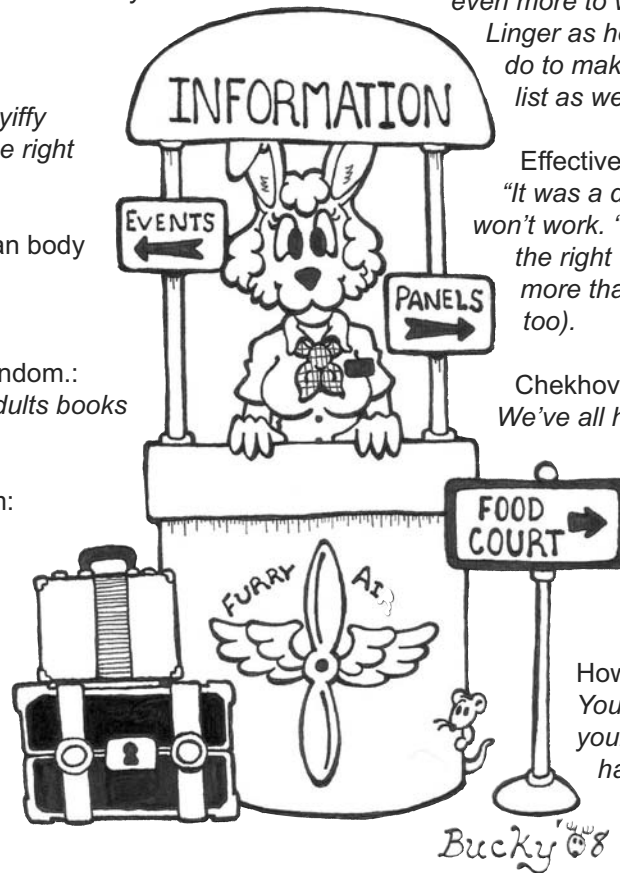
You've put in the time to write and edit your story; all your friends and family have read it and say that it's fantastic, so no what do you do? Getting your story published takes more than just mailing it out then crossing your fingers.

Write Anthropomorphics:

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“Airshow Caper”

By AndyPanda

“Hey Bats wake up...” Rodger’s eyes shot open as a hand clasped over his mouth, stifling a yelp.

“Shhh! I need your help.” Lucy was grinning at him. That was never good.

Rodger groaned; burying his face under a pillow, “It is three in the morning what need me for?”

“I need to get something that is mine.” The raccoon said as she plopped down onto the bed next to Rodger. “Besides, aren’t you bats supposed to be nighttime-r-nal or something.”

“That’s nocturnal and not this bat. What do you need Lucy?” Rodger said.

“Moffet took it! I was almost done too! The air show is two days and I need it back! The bucket won’t go with out it.” Rodger could see she was almost in tears.

“The bucket? That old thing? Lucy what did Mo...” Rodger whispered.

“The oil pump!” Lucy shouted cutting him off.

Rodger almost fell out of bed diving across to cover her mouth. “Do you want to wake up my parents? Good hearing tends to be a family trait if you hadn’t noticed.” He twitched his ears as if to make his point.

Lucy squirmed out of his hold. “Oops Bats, sorry but I need to get it back and Moffat has it in his junkyard. I figured you could get over that fence easier than I could now that that overblown kill-joy put up the barbed wire.”

“Um, didn’t he put that wire up to keep you out?” The bat smirked as he put on his glasses.

“Hey those parts could have gone anywhere, he aint’t never had proof that was me.” Lucy said indignantly. “Besides that pump was mine fair and square, Pop sent it to me.”

Lucy’s father had been away for awhile, most people didn’t talk about it much, something to do with planes. Lucy always said he was making planes for the army. He used to fly the only crop duster in the valley. Old thing broke down a few years back and he had taken a job out of town.

Lucy had been working on it whenever she could, unlike Rodger she was a wrench head at heart. Her father had taught her everything he knew before he left and now she was learning tricks that he had never dreamed of. She had fixed up his old duster and now ran the old business. Most of her free time in the last year has been spent on “The

Bucket.” Lucy’s stunt plane she had been restoring.

Lucy lived with her aunt who didn’t much approve of her flying. Then again she didn’t much approve of anything, one short sighted bat in particular. Somehow Lucy’s antics always ended up his fault in her Aunts eyes. Granted Lucy didn’t do much to correct her.

Rodger yawned and threw his arm around her. “OK I’m in, but you will be the death of me you crazy dame.” Rodger joked in his best tough guy voice.

“I knew you would help!” Lucy jumped up pulling him with her.

“I always do, love.” Rodger said giving her a wistful look before Lucy pulled him out the window with her.

Outside in the yard Lucy pulled something out of her satchel and tossed it over her shoulder to Rodger. “Here put these on.”

His trousers hit him squarely in the face. “Ack! Lucy why do you have my trousers?”

“Well we can’t go skulking around with you in those silly pajamas now can we?” Lucy said tossing him one of his black shirts.

“We’re going to be skulking?” I wasn’t so much as a question as a defeated sigh. “Wait, why didn’t you just let me get dressed in there.” Rodger said pointing back at his bedroom window.

He could practically hear her grinning. “Less talk more dressing, explanations later.” She said stalking off through the orchard.

Rodger was pretty sure he looked quite the fool struggling to keep up with Lucy while slipping on his pants.

“So here is the plan Moffat has the oil pump in junkyard office all I need you to do is fly over the fence and unlock it for me. You should be able to get enough height if you climb that tree across the street. Easy right.”

Rodger wasn’t quite so sure still hopping on one foot pulling on his pants. “Doesn’t Moffat have guard dogs, really big ones?”

“Ah, that is why I am giving you the wrench.” She said with a quick smile.

“A wrench?” Rodger obviously was unimpressed.

“Well it’s a really big wrench. It’ll scare them away, no problem. Well at least it does after last time I went over there...” Lucy trailed off still trying to look innocent.

"You know, you can keep the wrench I will just be quick. We do have another problem, how are we going to get there the junkyard is on the other side of town? It will be dawn before we can get there on foot." Rodger said, not sure if he really wanted to know the answer.

"Like I said Bats, no problem. I got Auntie's Plymouth. If I can fly a plane I can drive a car." Lucy declared matter-of-factly.

"If you say so..." Rodger said wearily.

The drive wasn't nearly as bad as Rodger expected. Lucy obviously had been practicing. Well, at least a little. The old Plymouth bounced down the old dirt road to Moffat's junkyard, the fearful bat clinging to the seat with all of his might.

"Almost there Bats!" Lucy grinned.

"Do you really have to be enjoying this so much?" Rodger said as they pulled off the road.

Pulling her toolbox from the backseat, "Hey I didn't start this! Moffat didn't have any right to touch the Bucket. Getting a chance to get even is just the icing on the cake."

"Why do I suddenly get the feeling you have more planned than getting your pump back." Rodger eyed her wearily.

Lucy tossed the toolbox, Rodger barely kept his feet as he caught it on his chest. "Less talking, more skulking." She said with a devious smirk.

"Far be it from me to question a raccoon with a plan." Rodger said dejectedly.

The duo made their way over to the high fence surrounding the junkyard. The poor old thing looked more like it was more apt to fall over than keep any one out, but Lucy knew better. The barbed wire that Moffat added to the top made scaling the rusted sheet metal all the more dangerous.

"OK Bats, just climb that tree and glide over. Unlocking the gate will be easy once you get over, just look for the green button. You have to hold it down for about 10 seconds." Lucy said, pointing to the old oak rusted old gate not far from the fence.

"Oh. Is that all?" The bat sighed.

"I still have that wrench. You're sure you don't want the wrench?" Lucy said playfully.

Climbing the oak was much easier than Rodger would have guessed. Once he was at the top he took a deep breath and jumped. His wings hadn't caught the air for months and for a moment of sheer panic he thought he was going to drop. Then a familiar exhilaration took over and it was easy as breathing.

Lucy watched from below as Rodger jumped, she loved to see him fly again. In a way she envied him, he knew the sky in a way she never would with her planes.

Rodger glided silently over the fence. With a soft thud he landed, Rodger winced remembering the dogs. Slowly he looked around. Nothing. The coast was clear. Very carefully he made his way to the gate. It was right there not ten feet away. He reached for the button and stopped. From across the yard he heard them wake. The soft clink of their collars echoed through his head as Rodger slammed his hand down on the button and waited for counting of the seconds in his head.

1... A low growl from across the yard. 2... There was a crash as something was bowled over. 3... 4... The growl turned to snarls. 5... He heard them racing towards him. 6... Rodger looked over his shoulder, his heart racing. 7... Two of them round the corner. Were they always so big? 8... One of them lunged. Rodger squeezed his eyes shut and hoped. 9... click.

Rodger was pressing so hard against the gate, when it finally gave way he tumbled to the ground. The snarling dog tumbled right after him. As he scrambled away the young bat heard a sharp yelp.

"Yeah you better run!" Lucy hissed under her breath. Rodger looked up to see Lucy wielding what appeared to be a wicked looking wrench about the size of his whole arm.

He grinned as he thought "My hero, a crazy girl with more power tools than sense."

Lucy nearly knocked him over, as she scooped him up into a big hug. "I knew you could do it Bats!"

"Yeah me too." Rodger said catching his breath. "Thanks for the help, I guess you weren't kidding about that thing huh?"

The raccoon just grinned dropping the wrench back into her bag. "Have I ever give you a reason to doubt me?" Rodger remembered one of their hijinks back in school that left him deaf for a week in one ear and singed eyebrows but let it slide.

"My turn now just wait out here."

With that she slunk off into the junkyard and for the longest time Rodger couldn't hear her. Terrible images swam through Rodgers mind. She was going to get stuck, or wake up Moffat. A soft scratching let him know she was on the roof of Moffat's office. He could hear a window open and Lucy skitter down the side of the building.

It got quiet again. Rodger strained to hear anything but no

sign of Lucy. Suddenly the junk yard flood lights burst on. Rodger scrambled behind the tree and hid.

"Brat! I know you der girly!" The old gator's voice was unmistakable. "Moffat! You know you ain't supposed to be here! I told you, next time I catch you theivin' from my yard I was gunna skin ya alive!"

What am I going to do? Rodger thought. I can't just leave her there. Rodger ran over the fence and listened for any sign from Lucy.

Rodger heard a soft shudder coming from the sheet metal in the fence about 20 yards down from him. Making his way over he lightly knocked on the fence. Two raps came back in reply.

"Lucy?" Rodger whispered.

"Yeah I'm stuck but I think I can get out. Go get the car. Back it up here and keep it running." Lucy sounded calm and cool and usual. "Catch!" Before Rodger could react the car keys landed on top of his head.

"Ow! Watch it!" Rodger yelped.

"Shhhh! Get going bats!" Lucy whispered.

With that Rodger took off running. They had parked the car quite a ways away. He was panting by the time he got to the car. Unlike Lucy, he actually knew how to drive and quickly backed the old Plymouth up to the fence where he had found Lucy.

"Ok I am here Lucy." Where are you?

"I am ready Bats stand back." Rodger quickly took her advice.

WHACK! One of the bolts holding the sheet metal in popped out of the fence post.

"Hey! Watcha doing over there!?" Moffat was getting closer.

WHACK! WHACK! Two more bolts popped out. The bottom corner of the fence peeled back. Lucy poke her head out.

"Gimmie a hand here!" Lucy yelled, reaching out for Rodger. With a quick yank she was free and the fence and running.

Before he could get a word out, she was already behind the wheel. "Come on get in!"

With a groan Rodger hopped in next to her. As the sped off they could see Moffat trying to squeeze through the Lucy sized hole in the fence.

"We did it! I got the pump back! You were magnificent Bats!" She dove across the seat and planted a wet kiss on him.

The car lurched, "Lucy! The wheel!" Rodger squeaked still blushing.

Lucy grabbed the wheel and beamed "Next stop the air show!"





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Anyone Can Fursuit

By Trapa Civet

Not many people really know me as a fursuiter, and to be honest I'm really not. I have the creative talent of a piece of ceiling tile, and even less artistic talent. However, I have made a couple of fursuits in my past. So I sometimes have people coming to me to ask me to help them build a fursuit, or have them ask me to build a fursuit for them.

In my many years of experience with talking to all those who want to build costumes, one nugget of information that I'd like to share with all of you is that the hardest part about building your own fursuit is getting started. Sure, we all can all think of the reasons why NOT to get started, they number in the thousands. Common ones I hear are; "I don't have time", or "I can't afford the fur", or "I don't have any artistic talent" and on and on they go. My article here is my attempt at trying to convince you all that not only can you do it, but that it's not that hard.

On the most part I'd like to break this up into sections that talk about the most common excuses that I've heard for not being able to get started on building your fursuit. These discussions I've had again and again, and no matter how many times I have heard it, they all seem to boil down to one thing, people not being able to find the push to push them over that final hump and get started.

I have a great idea for an animatronic

...

Ahh animatronics, the elusive god of fursuiting, or is it? Countless people have come to me and said "I have the perfect design for an animatronic tail" or head or ears or muzzle. When I ask if I can see it, mysteriously they don't have it, though they can draw out their idea in their mind (but not necessarily on paper). They too have fallen into the trap that proves the toughest part about making a fursuit is getting started. Sure animatronics are cool, but if this is your first fursuit, leave them out. I don't care how good at electrical, or mechanical engineering you are, if you don't have the ability to start, you simply aren't ever going to get it finished.

In addition to simply not starting, animatronic designers have another common flaw. They're so focused on the mechanical or electrical that they don't understand that the final product is what is important. I associate this with my

brothers train set. I call it my brothers because at the time I was too young to build it myself, so my mom told him to help me build a train set. The problem was that my brother is a modeler, not a train enthusiast. So where did he start?

Well he started by building the mountain, and then the city and all the buildings. While there was still a place for the train track, he wasn't interested in that part. When we finally did lay down the train, the track wasn't flat enough and the trains ran poorly at best. Now that's not to say he didn't build something I was totally enthusiastic about and loved, but in the end he took it from the wrong approach.

People who are interested in building an animatronic tail or ears often have the same problem.

They worry about the things they love, instead of starting to worry about the final product. In my brothers instance, it should be a train layout first and foremost, so thereby (therefore?) the track should have come before the decorations, in the fursuit world it's the opposite. The final design and look of the fursuit has to be the goal, and so everything leading up to that design has to be thought out.

My suggestion, is if you have a design for a tail, make sure you can build a non-animatronic tail first. Even if it's not very good (your first thing never will be), it will teach you important lessons about how big you can make it, or how many parts it takes, or what you want the tail to look like. These things can then be used to make your animatronic design even better. With fursuits it's all about the final look and feel, and a non-animatronic suit that looks good will beat out the oohs and ahhs of an animatronic suit that looks

poor any day.

I don't have the money for the fur..

The second most common reason that people have for not building a fursuit is cost. They say, "I don't have the money for the fur I want so I can't start". This is a very unfortunate phrase, yes a fursuit is going to cost money, probably not a insignificant amount of money either. However, the amount of money you spend can be broken up into bits and pieces, and let me tell you Fur is not the first thing you should be buying. There are at least five of my friends with enough fur to build a fursuit, and nothing to show for it but less storage space and a lighter wallet.

If you want to start with building a fursuit, start with the head. That's the biggest hurdle in building them from my point of view. Certainly it's the hardest part to build. The other nice thing about starting with the head, if you know

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where to look, the materials can be next to free or free. For example, I received a whole bunch of the foam that we use in fursuits from a place that makes custom mattresses. All i did was look in the yellow pages for mattress companies, and asked if they had any foam that they are throwing away. Low and behold they had a massive garbage bag of scraps, and it was all free. I think Aphinity, Selkit, Loial, Farore, RainRat, and a few others built heads with the amount of foam I got for free.

That being said, you can wait on buying fur, and you know what it's the best thing to do anyway. When I'm looking for fur for fursuits, I'll travel to my two favorite fabric stores once every few months and buy the furs that i love for my project. I've never been able to say, "I need grey, and brown" and just go to the fabric store and have them have it on paw. Fabric stores don't often control what they get in stock, so you want to spend a good deal of time browsing stores looking for what you want to use. Then you'll end up with nice furs for a reasonable price.

I don't have artistic talent..

I hear that a lot, especially from artists, and I think to myself, "Well that's nice, but this person probably has more artistic talent than me in their little pinky". The simple fact of the matter is that in order to build a fursuit you don't really need the kind of artistic talent that you think you do. The great fursuiters out there, yes they have artistic talent, and it truly is amazing, but it's not absolutely required for the job.

For those of us who aren't the artistic genius' that the great fursuiters out there are, well there is a way around that. Work with blueprints. All fursuiters that are producing something of any skill are working off blueprints of some kind. Blueprints for a fursuit are your final sketches. If you have to, outsource your artistic drawings. I hire a artist to do a body model sheet, and a head model sheet. This is so that i have reference when I'm carving the head, and reference when I'm making the body.

A artist that tries to do it without reference is either stupid, or very very talented. I know that even the professional fursuiters use model sheets. If it's good enough for the pro's why do us untalented people try to do it without?

I don't know where to start...

Well, there was someone a long time ago, who built the first fursuit. I don't really care who that is, probably some caveman somewhere, and i doubt very much that he had any idea where to start either. That didn't stop him. I'm not a fan of guns, but I'll share this little story. There is a gun out there, that can shoot a million rounds of ammunition a second. Sometimes referred to as a laser line of lead. The handgun version can shoot several bullets out before the recoil of the first bullet affects your aim. It's a really amazing piece of technology. So how does this amazing gun work? Well basically, no one told the engineer who built it, that it was impossible to have two bullets in the

same barrel at once. So without knowing anything about how guns work, this guy revolutionized the way they work. He did the impossible without knowing it.

Why is this relevant, well basically the way i see it, if you don't know where to start on building a fursuit head, then that's a good thing. Just try to think something out and do it. It may work, it may not, but maybe you could be the next person to revolutionize fursuiting, by doing the impossible because you didn't know it was impossible. Most importantly however, don't let anyone make fun of how you designed yours, if you make your head from potato skins, it doesn't matter, because at least you've done something, and chances are , they haven't.

I don't have the time...

I'm not sure I should even cover this one. If you can't put down Second Life, or WoW for a hour a day to find time to build a fursuit, nothing I can say will ever change that. You need to decide you want it bad enough to stay offline and do it. Time management skills are terribly void in the furry fandom, and well when you find the time you'll be able to make one, whether you think you can or not.

The right materials For the right job.

While this isn't really a common excuse for not being able to make a fursuit, the other really important nugget of experience that has taught me well, is the right materials for the right job. I can't stress enough that the right materials for the right job is very very important. So many times I've seen fursuiters swear that hot glue is the religious right to all fursuiters. I'm afraid to say that I simply don't agree. In fact there is only two things I've ever seen hot glue used for that worked really well. The first is gluing fun-foam, it does that really well. The second is sculpting, but the sculpted eyelashes in that case were brittle when cold and fine the rest of the time. So at most that was a 50% success.

The right glue for the right job. In my cabinet at home i have probably no less than 30 different kinds of glue, and at least 4 of those are different kinds of spray adhesive. They all smell terrible, and probably should be used in a place better ventilated than my apartment. The trick is however, that each of these glues have their own special set of materials they work fantastic on. The spray adhesive is pretty hard to put on in the right area, but is probably my favorite adhesive.

The other trick is reading the instructions. So many times I've heard people say spray adhesive doesn't work very well. If that's what your saying, you haven't read the instructions. To portray this in a story, I'll tell you about when I was covering a piece of wood with carpet. I went to the store and got some 3M Super 77 spray adhesive. I choose that because the store had a handy little chart saying which product was best for binding the two types of material I was working with (wood and fabric). I read the instructions and sprayed both sides liberally and let them stand for five minutes, then I applied about 10 square inches to the wood, before realizing that I was attempting

to cover the wrong side of the wood, I instantly tried to take the fabric off the back of the wood, and very quickly realized that the fabric was so well adhered to the wood that I was going to rip the fabric if I tried any harder to take it off. I ended up covering both sides of the wood with the fabric.

It doesn't matter what you use to build your suit, but it does matter that your using the right materials in combination with each other. You could build your head out of dried oatmeal (eewww), but if you do I'm guessing that your going to want some kind of spray fixative or something in order to make sure the head remains together. Make sure that whatever you use to build it, that the combination of the parts work well together, and does so well. You shouldn't

have to use kid gloves around your final product, no one else will especially the little kids if you end up interacting with them, and the last thing you want is a wardrobe malfunction while your performing. So whatever you use to build the suit, make sure it's constructed well.

I guess as a final note, realize that building a fursuit isn't easy. If it was, you probably wouldn't even want to do it anyway. So take your time, be careful, and realize that your first one is not going to come out the way you want it to. You can build a fursuit, anyone can. Those of us who may not be artistically talented, can use our other talents to create new things, and possibly better ways of building fursuits. Don't get dejected from you first attempt, one last



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Evening with Friends

By Vikky Cutter

As the movie faded out into the closing credits Vikky let out a pleased sigh. "That was pretty good," the mouse said, pulling her glasses from her nose and giving them a brisk cleaning. "I thought it would be a lot worse."

"It was okay, but the opening set piece was a bit silly, you can't simply free run like that," the vixen next to her said, her nine-tails flicking in amusement as she lay on the living room carpet, her chin propped up on her paws.

"I guess so, but the stuff at the airport was pretty cool," as she spoke she stood up and walked over to the DVD player, removing the disk with deft hands and a touch of magic. As she moved her long skirt fluttered around her hips and over the top of her bare legs.

The vixen shrugged a bit. "I suppose so."

After putting the film away the mouse sat down across from her friend, looking at her blue and white face. Rhea just smiled back and pulled herself into a sitting position. It had been months since they had last gotten together and had spent most of the evening either chatting or watching movies.

"Lazenby was still the best," she said.

The mouse smiled a bit, falling into the familiar pattern. "Come on, he only did one movie, that's hardly being the best. Anyways he was more of a pretty boy than a man of action, and that whole marriage plotline was just tacky."

"His performance was spot on, and a lot closer to the books. As for the love story, it worked just fine and was integral to the plot, it wasn't just tacked on," Rhea replied with a knowing smirk, her ears flicking forward just a touch.

The two women gave each other a quick look and snickered in time. The vixen spun around and stood up, stretching out from her neck to her toes. She was

dressed much like the mouse, in a long shirt and her under things, a decision more about comfort than anything else. She glanced up at the wall clock and clicked her tongue. "I guess we have enough time for another movie, do you have anything to snack on?"

Vikky stood up and walked back to the kitchen, making a quick search through the cupboards. "Not really, I wasn't quiet planning for company."

"Well, let's go get something! It's only just after midnight, the convenience stores should still be open."

Casting a glance back at her friend the mouse smiled a bit. "There's one up the street about half a mile, close enough to walk," she said.

"Fantastic, I could use a good walk," Rhea replied, gathering up her blue jeans from the floor and quickly pulling them on, only to pause for a few moments to work with the tail clasp. The pants had been made for someone with just one tail and even though they had been adjusted to fit her nine it wasn't perfect.

Gathering up her own skirt from the chair she pulled it on, followed a moment later by her jacket. She checked it over for her billfold, and then pulled on her shoes. As she tied them up she looked at her staff, wondering if she should take it with her. It was a short walk and the area was pretty safe, but she had learned a long time ago that she could never be too careful. She picked up the tall staff, the white of the wood contrasting with her grey fur. With a simple spell she changed it into a small hair clip, the only sign of its true form a small red gem near the top, and tucked it behind her ear.

With a quick flick of her wrist the vixen picked up her dark blue beret and pulled it down over her head, letting it rest between her ears. "Let's go!"

"You're not going to put on a disguise?"

"It's dark and it's late. Anyone who would see me would just assume I'm a wolf with a very expensive dye job and some extra work," she said, flicking her tails back at the mouse.

Vikky looked at her for a few moments then shook her head with a touch of amusement. "You stay outside of

the store, inside people will be able to tell you're not a wolf," she said, pulling the apartment door open.

The pair of woman walked out the door and down onto the street. The sky above them was clear, without a cloud or the moon in the sky. The stars twinkled down over them casting everything in a pail glow that muted the colors of the world. It made the two women, one blue the other grey, look like they had the same color of fur.

There was a little traffic on the road, but only one driver took notice of them, slowing down slightly to look at the vixen then accelerating back to full speed. She didn't seem to notice or care, in fact seemed to enjoy showing off her usual number of tails.

As they neared the store Vikky felt a slight twinge as something passed overhead, momentarily blocking the starlight. She glanced up, watching the edge of a shadow pass around the building and into an alleyway. Coming to a stop she reached out and touched her friend on the shoulder. "Did you see that?"

The vixen looked up then back down towards the alley where the mouse was pointing. "No, I didn't. What did you see?"

"I'm not sure, but I think it was magical," she replied, then started down the alleyway, her staff quickly appearing in her hand. As she went along between the buildings the darkness grew deeper. With a small flick of magic she summoned a light from the orb on the top of her white staff. The white light cast everything into a stark relief, the shadows cast by the clutter in the alley where sharp against the stone walls.

"Are you sure this is safe?" Rhea asked. Her ears flicked back slightly around her hat.

The mouse nodded to herself, her red hair bobbing over her shoulders. Lifting her staff up higher she was startled by something moving in the shadows behind a large box. Her first reaction was to jump away, but she held herself in place, even so her fur rose around her shoulders.

Catching her breath she looked around the box, letting out a small gasp of surprise when she saw the source of a movement. It was a gryphon cub, only a few

months old judging by his size and the few pieces of down over his wings. The cub jumped back a bit, his brown wings pressed to his tan sides as his beak quivered.

Vikky bent down, resting her weight partly on her staff and smiled at the cub. "Hello, are you lost?"

The cub looked up at her and shivered slightly. "Yes," he said.

She nodded and offered out her hand to him. "It's okay, I'm a friend, I can help," she said with a small smile.

The gryphon looked up at her and pressed back against the dirty stone wall.

Letting out a short breath she turned around and handed her staff to Rhea, then looked back at the cub. "It's okay, I'm a mage, I know how to help you. How did you get here, how far did you fly?" she asked.

Shuffling a bit the cub looked up at the sky above them. "I don't know, I was in the trees and the wind was strong and it just took me so far," he said, his black eyes glowing in the light of her staff.

She nodded and looked back up at the sky. The mountains could be in either direction, and there were dozens of gryphon colonies in the Seattle area. "Did you fly over water?"

The cub shook his head. "I... I don't know."

"I'll find your way back home," she told the cub with a reassuring smile.

He looked up at her for a few moments then took a few steps forward, nuzzling at the side of her hand.

"I'm Vikky, and my friend is Rhea. What's your name?"

The cub looked up a bit and fluttered his wings. "Robert," he said.

She smiled to him. "Everything is going to be okay, Robert."

Rhea touched her on the shoulder. Standing up she looked at the vixen. "Do you have anything under your hat that can track this young man back home?" Getting the gryphon back to his family was a priority. Gryphon's didn't like the city or the authorities, it would be weeks before they would ask for help.

"Can't you do that with your magic?"

The mouse shook her head. "I can't track with magic, never really was my skill."

"Ah, I see. Well I might have something," she replied, handing the staff back to the mage before removing the beret from her head. With a flick of her wrist she reached inside, her hand, and then most of her arm, vanishing inside the hat.

Vikky watched this with a slight bit of bemusement. The hat wasn't magical, it was simply a form of advanced technology that just looked like magic, even to someone who could do the real thing. It was just one of the many tricks that the vixen had, but then again she was out of place herself. It was a tossup which made her stand out more, her blue fur, her tails, or the fact she was the only vixen in the world.

As the vixen searched Vikky turned her attention back to the gryphon. "How old are you Robert?"

"Nine months."

She smiled a bit. "That must have been a big flight for you, have you ever flown that far before?"

The young man shook his head. "I've never been out of the mountains before."

"Could you see the city from there?"

He thought for a moment then nodded his head. "At night, I could see the lights in the trees."

That wasn't any help for her. There were places on both side of the sound where you could see the city lights, and the lights of all the suburbs.

"This should do," Rhea said, pulling out a small boxy device from her hat. With a press of a button the box opened it two, showing a small keypad on one side

and a screen on the other. They keys were labeled with colors instead of letters.

Vikky looked at the device then back to the gryphon. "That will find where he came from?"

She nodded and looked at the cub. "It should, but it will take a few minutes, and I need a small sample," she said, and then bent down to look at Robert. "Can I take a little piece of your down? It will only be a little bit," she asked.

The gryphon looked up at Rhea, his feathers ruffling a bit. "I guess," he said in a soft voice, his head dropping down.

Carefully she reached out and picked out a small piece from the edge of his wing. Holding it gently between her fingers she lifted it up and placed it on the screen of the device. There was a small flash of light and the down simply vanished.

With quick fingers the vixen typed on the keyboard, a moment later a few specs of light lifted from the display and into the air. They skimmed down the alley and vanished into the night beyond.

Tucking her skirt Vikky sat down on the box rested her staff against the stone wall. "It won't be long now," she said.

Robert nodded his head and moved up to her, hiding under her skirt and legs, his short tail flicking quickly against the dirty ground. She wanted to talk more with the young man, to try and comfort him, but he wasn't interested anymore.

Rhea stood next to them, her hat back on her head as she watched the screen with an intense look. A soft glow cast over her narrow muzzle and reflected in her eyes. After a few long minutes she smiled. "Found it, about thirty miles to the east. Do you want to drive or should I?"

"Do you have an image of the area?"

She nodded and handed the device over to Vikky. On the screen was an aerial view of a piece of forest, gryphons moving under heavy branches of the trees. She could see a clearing at the edge of the frame.

Turning the display to her friend she pointed at the spot on the display. "Can you get a better image of this?"

The vixen nodded and fiddled with the keys for a moment. The image on the screen moved to focus on the clearing.

Nodded her head she fixed the image in her mind and gave the device back to her friend. Standing up she picked up her staff in both hands. "Both of you, stay close," she said, looking down at the young gryphon. "This might be a bit scary, but hold onto me as tight as you can."

Robert looked back up at her then reared back and placed his forepaws against her legs. The tips of his talons weren't dull and poked at her legs through her skirt.

Composing herself the mouse lessened the light on her staff and took in a long breath. "This is going to be a bit rough," she said, the magic starting to swirl around her, glowing in a color only a mage could see. It twisted around the three of them creating a wind that fluttered their hair and feathers. As the wind grew the light dimmed even further, then without warning the world moved around them. There was a crash like thunder and a wave of air, and a moment later they were standing in the clearing in the woods.

The butt of her staff hit the ground hard and she leaned her weight against it. An unprepared teleportation spell was more than enough to drain much of her reserves. It would take a few hours before she would be back to full power, until then they would just have to spend a night in the woods.

Rhea touched her on the back. "Are you okay?" she asked in a soft voice.

She nodded and slowly stood back up. "I'm fine, just a little winded. Robert, are you okay?" she asked, looking down at the gryphon.

The cub looked back up at her and nodded his head. "That was strange."

"Robert!" A new voice cried, a moment later a large gryphon burst into the clearing, running around the

trees at full speed her wings partly extended over her shoulders. She came to a skidding stop in front of the three of them, throwing debris in the air. She looked worried, feather ruffled around her head.

The cub jumped up and rushed to the older gryphon. "Mom!" he cried out and pressed to her side. She dropped one wing and wrapped it around the young man, holding him to her side.

The gryphon looked at the two women with a something close to a smile on her beak. "You brought him back. Thank you!" she said.

Vikky smiled. "It wasn't a problem, though I think we're going to be camping here tonight, if that's okay?"

She nodded her head. "Yes, yes. You are more than welcome to spend the night."

The mouse nodded and flicked back her ears. "Thank you," she replied.

Bending down the gryphon looked at her son. "Come on, everyone is waiting for us," she said, turning and walking back through the trees.

Rhea shook her head and kicked slightly at the clearing. "I always liked camping, but I wasn't expecting it tonight, and what is it with you and gryphons?"

The mouse shrugged her shoulders. "I'm a mage, we attract these sort of things. You should know that by now."

"A gryphon. Really, what are the odds?" She asked, placing her hands on her hips and giving her friend a sharp look.

Vikky pointed at her friend's hat. "Do you have a tent in there?"

"Just the one."

"That will be fine," she said, and turned too looked up at the night sky. The stars were even brighter now that they were away from the city lights. The sky hung over them, hanging just above the tops of the trees and

out of reach. Around them she could hear the sounds of the forest and the gryphons, but nothing else. There wasn't even the distant buzz of the freeway.

With a smile she looked at her friend, a wind brush up around her, fluttering her skirt around her legs. "Well, it beats spending the night at my place watching movies."

Rhea returned the smile as she started to assemble the tent, her tails flicking in the wind.



Cover Art:
Werepuppy

Internal Artwork:

Robert "Bucky" Losiniecki
<http://www.furaffinity.net/user/buckywhitetale13/>
Pages: 1, 3, 6, 7, 16,

Casey "Casidhe" A. R.
<http://casidhe.deviantart.com/>
Page: 2

Black Fox Productions
black_fox1@gmx.net
Page: 7

JKerr//Kendavi
www.kendavi.com
Page: 8

Boundbystars
<http://www.furaffinity.net/user/boundbystars/>
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Cricket
<http://www.furaffinity.net/user/dreamersdestiny>
Page: 14

Werepuppy
Pages: 15, 36

Jennifer Rae Allen
<http://www.furaffinity.net/user/farellemoon/>
Pages: 17, 33

Rummyhunny
rummyhunny@gmail.com
Page: 18

Shayley "Rhari" Duval
<http://www.furaffinity.net/user/rhari/>
Page: 4, 21, 34

Amanda Keay
<http://6298.deviantart.com>
Page: 23

Knox
<http://www.furaffinity.net/user/knox>
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