

# This Here...

*"...has an agenda that does not favor me." (C Phillips)*

## EGOTORIAL

Mountain. Molehill. Cat. Pigeons.

This writing is bound to be affected by the usual Saturday morning hangover, not to mention actual earthquakes, but since I *did* voice my intention to several interested denizens of the Faniverse to get the fuckin' thing done this weekend, I suppose I'm going to have at it, with occasional guilty glances at the empty bottle which formerly contained cheap whiskey, and which now eyes me back with a typical "what did you expect, matey?" shrug of its smooth shoulders.

The surprise receipt of an envelope from "Flashback Services" (aka Andrew P Hooper himself, the ubiquitous and generous git) contains gravitational pull in the form of Cheslin, Berry and the Astral Leauge. Is this a cynical attempt to waylay me and prevent thish from timely completion? As it turns out, there's a useful segue to be made out of this, since I'm about to get a bit fanhistorical, at least as an adjunct to the latest All Fandom Plunged Into War bollocks.

There's really no such thing as "All Fandom" anymore. Them as are reading this are the descendants, perhaps even inheritors of an old-school mentality dating back to the days when the entirety of "fandom" could meet in a toolshed, and if one of them brought a twelve-pack you'd be sorted for drink for the week. I more or less realized this in a rare foray onto File 770 last year, commenting on the obvious disconnect between the FAAn award results (which Mike Glyer so kindly published) and the Fan Hugos. I suppose it was predictable that I'd get flamed to a crisp, accused of all sorts of pretensions of superiority and told to fuck off in the bloviated manner of "Filers" (who would never say a simple



"fuck off" when a 1,000 word whiny screed can achieve the result).

Of course, I'm about to get into Ulrika's "Fuck Scalzi" polemic from *BEAM* #14, but what interests me is not so much her well-made argument, but the reaction to it. I've never been much of a devotee of the minutiae of the Hugos as I have of the FAAns (and the Novas, when they still existed) other than the occasional larf in previous sequences of this fine fanzine about Langford winning another one.

There's nothing in common, it would seem, between what I refer to as the "Faniverse" and the space inhabited by the basement-dwelling (and yet, Worldcon-attending) sometimes pseudonymous denizens of the cozy safe space they've established under Glyer's non-judgmental wing. I must interject here that knowing Mike (and having met him), I consider us friends, and we'll have the occasional DNQ private chat. His decision not to overtly editorialize in F770 seems a wise one, though I suspect that from time to time he might wonder at his creation with a sad shake of the head.

As an act of simple reportage, Mike published Scalzi's twitter feed link (saying oh my adoring acolytes, *please* don't be outraged because I'm not <wink wink>) and several of the responses, some of which (and some of the comments on the F770 thread) referred to Ulrika as "he", indicating that they hadn't read through to the byline, or were just fuckin' thick, or oblivious out of a sense of correctness that a name ending in "-a" would be assumed to be feminine, which of course it shouldn't be anymore because cis-boom-bah, or something that could offend delicate sensibilities.

Andy Porter makes some valiant yet fruitless attempts to point out that if it weren't for previous giants upon whose shoulders they stand (albeit, as he so cynically put it,

wearing hobnailed boots) they wouldn't even exist as this group, though I'd contend that he's wrong, in that birds of a feather would find *some* common ground in which to share their misery. Macrame, perhaps?

Two things struck me with the comments, one being not only the ignorance but the outright dismissal of the building blocks some of us still revere. Quasiquoting from memory: "[For them] it doesn't count unless it's done on a mimeograph" is a fine example of the concept that current technology must have arrived *sui generis* without precursor - what would they all make of Lily Tomlin's switchboard operator? - and I also had to have a larf that I suspect many of these people might be enthusiastic devotees of steampunk, and would see *no contradiction* there. Porter mentioned Mike Glicksohn (and Tom Bombadil, tip o' the hat for that one AP) as someone the Filers wouldn't have heard of, and one went to the effort of a Google, concluding that he was (qq again) "Some guy from another country who's been dead for eight years and won an award for a fanzine I've never heard of when I was three years old". One fervently hopes that the writer of *that* piece of outstanding arseness is treated similarly by posterity, except that I doubt their name would trouble Google any time soon.

The second observation I made was the tone of many of the comments. "Proud and lonely" is the old descriptor that used to go with "fan", but that never implied any sense of victimhood, more a concept that "fans" were derided and more importantly *underestimated*, given that they were often intellectual types, if in some cases misguided ones. This alludes to an attitude of superiority of the old-timers (who, let's face it, believed they knew better than anyone else) which has indeed been handed down to later generations who would also subscribe to that philosophy, and it's that assumed "superiority" which is so scorned by the whiz-kids. You kind of have to give them that one.

The tone I refer to is, however, *very* weird. It's a mix of stating that the "modern" fandom has assumed the mantle of superiority from their worthless forebears, and yet the remarks are couched in the language of victimhood. Cognitive dissonance, in spades.

I'll close by observing that, were Scalzi an "actual fan" (by *our* definition) he (a) would loc *BEAM* (nothing received as yet) and (b) perhaps have been aware of the dismissive review of *Redshirts* by Jim Trash in a previous ish. Perhaps one of his more enterprising <ahem> followers might find it?

It's all good.

Nic Farey, July 2019

## IS THIS JUST FAANTASY?

### (3)

*[[Interspersed editorial comment...]]*

Andy Hooper writes:

"There were drawbacks to your [FAAn award administration] approach -- when the vote counter has such a big dog in the fight, it's hard not to think of him or her when the ballot is in front of you -- but there's no question that 78 votes was a frankly staggering achievement, while 19 votes is a sick joke.

"And your tweaks to the procedures and particulars seem utterly rational now.

*[[I genuinely appreciate that hindsight...]]*

"Purcell should form a FAAn committee -- with four or five people to help flog for votes, and diffuse the identification with a single editor. If you and I and Mark Plummer were *all* 'The Administrator,' then maybe it would be a fair match between *BW*, *BEAM* and *CHUNGA* for the first time..."

*[[Premier League? There's an implied arrogance in suggesting there might only be three contenders; and frankly, the last time there demonstrably wasn't a "fair match" was when the Fishlifters excluded themselves...]]*

"If we're talking of things that make us cringe, giving myself FAAn Awards has not been one of my favorite experiences in fandom, but if you have found a way to actually *like* that experience, more power to you. The fact that so many of your readers wanted to take the time to vote for you is pretty sublime, whoever counted the votes.

*[[More on this below, but noting that 35 voters gave that award, not me. I voted for Rubber Crab...]]*

"It isn't so much the issue of eligibility that makes me feel like a FAAn Award Club would be better than another FAAn Award Czar, so much as the abuse of trust represented by Mike's transformation of the awards. We have trusted Corflu organizers to be the ultimate arbiter of all these issues, and they have generally tried to preserve as much continuity as possible, while adding their own innovations as they went along. But Mike not only wanted to expand the awards to an unrecognizable form, he wanted to pass judgment on the future eligibility of Bill Burns and Steve Stiles, albeit with their willing assent. There was a touch of Trumpian over-reach to this, sufficient to leave me skeptical of executive power in general for the immediate future.

"I know that arriving at a group consensus on the 2020 awards will be tortuous, but the debate second-guessing unilateral action would be just as contentious. If you can convince a small group of equally-interested parties -- which certainly does not have to include me -- about your plans for

the FAAns, I would feel better than having you or John Purcell or anyone else act by fiat.

*[[This seems to suggest that I am, or will be involved in the 2020 awards in some way, which I am not, other than as a commenter on the process. In accordance with my beliefs, John Purcell (as Corflu chair) would have the final say on what happens - "executive power", I'm afraid. Of course, if he chooses to convene a consulting group of interested parties under cover of darkness, or even take note of public comment such as is occurring here, then that's all good...]]*

"That's about what I can muster for now -- I'd prefer to comment on Jamaican music, frankly. "

Nic Farey takes over...

As has so typically been the case, Andy and I disagree on many levels of *detail*, even though I firmly believe that we both fundamentally agree that the FAAns should be *meaningful*, however much they can be rightfully also seen as a trivial bit of fun, very much little more than an egoboo poll, albeit one which should have a wide catchment area within fanzine fandom.

I came to conclude, however, the exact nature of our fundamental difference in philosophy. The points which consistently seem most important to Andy are solipsistic in nature: he has commented several times in denigrating terms about the FAAn awards that he has won, stating a direct cause-and-effect between his position as administrator and the results, referring to "giving myself awards", almost as if he created them as grant rather than being the will of the voters. The problem seems to be that he thinks that *everyone else must feel the same way* (cf " ...if you have found a way to actually *like* that experience...").

Also: " ...it's hard not to think of [the administrator] when the ballot is in front of you... ", which may be the case for Him Up the Norfwest, but I have strong doubts that this is true for anyone else. Certainly for myself, when merely an humble voter during Andy's admirable tenure, I considered categories on their merits, not at all influenced by the supposed Fanzine Giant to whom I would be submitting my ballot. I trusted then, as I still would today, that ballots would be collected and counted fairly and honestly, even though the admin had skin in the game. Where, I might ask, would you find someone for the gig who *wasn't* somehow a contender in one or several categories, since you'd presumably like to have a person with knowledge of the field?

I would suggest that *most* people can easily separate the administrator-as-contender from the administrator-as-administrator. The suggestion that the awards and the voting are somehow gamed by a given admin is, frankly, insulting to the intelligence of voters. What's important is the *perception* that things will be done fairly, a perception shared by just about everyone except A Hooper who appears

to see the voting populace as ridiculously easily influenced and cowed by the mere presence of some alleged BNF.

My "solution" to these suggestions was and is to promote and widen interest and voting. Simply enough, while compiling *The Incomplete Register*, this was largely achieved by emailing every fanzine listed and ensuring they got copies of *TIR* as the then quasi-official publication of the awards. At the time of the results being announced, this apparently caused griping and illness among some who were unaccustomed to seeing names and titles which were not necessarily *Banana Wings*, *BEAM* or *Chunga*, and I will *still* despise Dobson's self-serving contention that his 19 voters were *so* much better than the 78 the previous year, because, anecdotally, some arseholes attending Toronto whined a bit - none of them having gone public, naturally.

The "many admins" concept, while rather sweet in theory, seems nevertheless a solution in search of a problem, that problem only existing in Andy's mind. The practicalities remain that *someone* has to issue ballots, *someone* has to receive them, and *someone* has to count them. As far as "flog for votes", anyone already has the liberty to do so.

And yeah, Mike's "Trumpian overreach" was insanity. If anyone cares, I'm still in favor of the *Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards*. Core values, and that...

## RADIO WINSTON

Exigencies of deadline: here's a fuckin-A bass player (Sage Chavis, formerly of the Regrettes).

In case you're wondering, she had me at Rickenbacker...



## FOOTY

My prognostication abilities are shite to non-existent, aren't they? No sooner do I opine that it's bonkers to suggest Maurizio Sarri would be canned as the Chavski's manager



after the Europa League win, than he's off back to Italy, where he apparently would much rather be, since he came in for a lot of stick off the Blues' fans. As I remarked back then, in distress, my Hornets manager Javi Gracia was in the frame as a replacement (idle speculation by the tabloid sports pages, which also named Rafa Benitez - subsequently off to China for silly money, adored by the Magpies' fans, not so much by the Blues where he was previously in charge, *and yet also* brought that ungrateful mob a Europa League win).

A lot of fans (especially those with the herd mentality that are easy to get riled up) will piss and moan about anything and everything (and there's those on the Watford fan group who are no exception), as shown by habitual chants at Stamford Bridge of "You Don't Know What You're Doing", directed at Sarri when he made tactical decisions that weren't agreed with - and this is not limited to SW6. The steamrolled appointment of Frank Lampard, who will be greeted with elation back at his old stamping grounds does make you wonder, though, since it's a thorough reversal of previous form by owner Roman Abramovich. Lampard is the first *English* manager to serve the club (not counting one-game caretakers) since Glenn Hoddle (1993-96), and the most inexperienced, with just the one year (albeit a decent one) helming Derby on his CV. It's not really that wicked to suggest that, given the club is under a transfer ban, it's unlikely that any of the bigger names would want a hot seat where they're basically shackled from the off, and thus you could conclude that Lampard's appointment is a clever sop to the fans who might give him more leeway to find his feet, although we'll see what the reaction is when they're mired mid-table by October. (Caveat: see first sentence of this column.)

"Are you even going to talk about the Women's World Cup?", some correspondents have asked, perhaps with the mild implication that there might be a bit of misogyny going on. Oh ha ha, sure. While "soccer" <cringe> is increasing in popularity in mucky Merka (although this may now tail off with the recent success of not-USA Toronto FC, as mentioned by Lloyd Penney [*locs*], a knock on "American exceptionalism" as much as the Toronto Blue Jays winning the World Series (baseball) in the '90s), the clear fact remains that the USA men's team is generally rubbish, whereas the women's team is an absolute fuckin' juggernaut, no doubt much to the distress of, oh, Biblically strictured pulpit pilots (aka "sex offenders") and Republicans in general.

We've had a million years of the "keep politics out of sport" (and vice versa) arguments, notably in my memory over various cricket tours of South Africa, the D'Oliveira affair (and that's going back a bit), yet I've always noted (as have other observers) that Ireland has managed to field a unified rugby team forever, haven't they?

Politics, being the art of bad governance that it is, is nevertheless inescapable, especially in the divisive times in

which we find ourselves. Megan Rapinoe in particular has achieved Kaepernick levels of targetting due to her admirable unwillingness to shut the fuck up and be a good girl. I've had two, well, more than two, but two notable convos about the World Cup this past week, one with a white male fellow driver who excoriated Rapinoe in terms Claire Brialey wouldn't like [*see locs*] for alleged unpatriotism, disrespect, not being a heterosexual white bloke (and on, and on, and on...) and another with an equally white male valet at the Luxor (who is as blokeish as almost anyone I know) about how fuckin' awesome she is, being ready (and insistent) to play in the final (tomorrow, as I write) despite a hamstring problem which sidelined her for the semi. Non-footy taxi aside: some valets generally despise cab drivers, and those that do get despised back by those of us who are just trying to do our jobs and make a crust in the face of some of these thieving shits diverting rides to equally thieving arsehole limo drivers for kickbacks. *Some* of us try to cultivate relationships with the valets on the basis of professionalism (and us doing our jobs as we should and not being dickheads). Jason (for that is his name) at the Luxor is a case in point: I got to know him quite well while habitually staging at the north valet (tower side) of the Luxor and impressed him (as I have others) with my honest approach to the job. I don't see him that much lately, since the north valet isn't staffed by valets or bellmen now (just security), but once in a while when I get a drop at the Luxor main entrance he'll be there, and we'll have a chat for a minute. A general rule at any stand is to pull forward and not block the thru lane - even when you do this, some valets will urge you to move the fuck off asap, but given that I *am* pulled forward and not impeding thru traffic, Jason is happy to catch up and talk sport for a good five minutes. It's his house, he's allowed.

Back to sport & politics, re: the different themes of discussion noted above, one was pure politics, the other was pure sport. I preferred the sport one, in this instance.



Not Frank Lampard

# AMERICA THE DARNED

BY ULRIKA O'BRIEN

Graham Charnock has been tackling the craziness of Americans under the rubric of *America the Damned*. It's a worthy project. As an embedded observer of Americans for over five decades now, I can testify Americans do the crazy in glorious Technicolor. But it's tricky to pinpoint the nature of the crazy in another culture while peeking through the keyhole of commercial and social media from a couple of thousand miles away. I know. I've tried it on Britain, with pretty mixed success, myself. Therefore, I'm taking up a counterpoint, from just a little closer to the Americans, on the theory that my perspective might be instructive, or at least fodder for further conversation.

In particular, I encountered some bumps in Graham's assertion (in *This Here... #16*) that the rise of false Messiah figures like David Koresh and Jim Jones is a direct result of the peculiar history of Protestantism in the United States. Don't get me wrong. In itself, it's not a terrible thesis; it has quite a lot of plausibility. I imagine a good argument could be made. It's just that as a matter of fact, Graham doesn't. His grasp of the history lacks traction. The facts keep getting away from him. It's not on the order of oil-wrestling otters in a ball pit of greased eels, but the family resemblance is striking. With the bulwark of his supporting evidence falling flat either from being dubious or outright wrong, the overall argument doesn't achieve lift off. I'll explain why, but before I get into the specifics, let me pause for a general plea:

Dear journalists and correspondents of the Anglophone world - Please, pretty please, stop using "begs the question," to introduce speculation into your journalism. Not that you care, but the phrase does actually mean something. Something specific and rather useful and important to know, at least if you're at all interested in logical reasoning, critical thinking, and particularly critical reading, in the public sphere. Begging the question is a logical fallacy. It's the act of sneaking the conclusion you're trying to prove into the premises you assume at the beginning. Being able to spot question begging is an invaluable tool for spotting bad arguments generally. I think we'll all agree that being able to spot bad arguments in public discourse is something America and much of the Anglophone world could collectively do with a bit more of. So it would be swell if we could use that phrase correctly if we're going to use it at all, so as not to confuse the issue, eh? Help make America smarter. You wouldn't think it could get any dumber, but sadly, that's not the way to bet.

However, arguing for correct use of logical terms of art never gets me anywhere with writers for some reason. So let's try the argument for good writing, instead. The reality by now is that using "begs the question," for a segue is cliché as fuck.

It's lazy. Every Comm 101 graduate uses "begs the question," to mean, "here's something I personally am wondering about, but I know I'm supposed to use the objective voice to pretend myself out of the picture so let's try this instead." And many who have never even seen the inside of a Journalism classroom mindlessly ape them, in an infinite conga line of increasingly threadbare imitation. It's stale enough to use for croutons. Change it up, people! Find something fresh. Even "raises the question," would be better. Or, "inclines us to wonder..." Or, you know, you're supposedly writers, think up your own damn' segue for a change. Graham Charnock, this means you.

But back to the glaring problem at hand. It's hard to take any of Graham's speculation on the origins of deadly messianic sects in America seriously when he bungles very basic facts of Protestantism in America and of the religion, generally. The Amish, for example, are not, and never were, Lutherans. They're Anabaptists. Martin Luther didn't "supplant strict Catholic doctrine" except on the very specific topic of church and tradition superseding scripture as ultimate authority on doctrine (or rather, not), and on the acceptance of salvation through works (or again, not). And far from being hidebound, Luther's propositions were so radical that they triggered the Protestant Reformation. Possibly Grah is thinking of the Puritans (who were also not Lutherans, but rather Church of England -- they were a splinter group who wanted to purify it of its various Roman Catholic practices). They might fairly be said to have evolved their own "rigorous and hidebound ethic," in their turn, being that many of them were also Calvinists. That's some rigorous ethical shit, right there. Dual predestinationism, yowza. And the tendency to idealize deep religiosity and to proclaim righteous exceptionalism because of it, a thread that runs steadily through the weave of American culture, can plausibly be traced right back to the Puritans of the Plymouth colony in Massachusetts, too. So that would be useful to Graham's argument if he were to use it. But in the meantime, the basic point is: Puritans aren't Lutherans, so if you mean Puritans, say that.

Also, religious emigrants from Europe like the Puritans didn't merely find European religious traditions repressive, they found European treatment actively oppressive, dangerous, and even deadly. Under Elizabeth I, Protestants deviating from the early C of E faced fines and imprisonment for dissent, and executions for heresy were rare but not unheard of. In France, the Huguenots were subjected to torture, burning at the stake, and wholesale massacre for their deviance from state religion. And we all remember why Mary I of England is still referred to as "Bloody Mary," right? It wasn't for her choice of cocktails. "Repressive," in her case would qualify as understatement for comic effect.

Then I'm completely baffled by Graham's reference to the Plymouth Brethren in the context of the early religious

influences in the United States, since the Brethren were a community formed in Dublin, Ireland, in the 1820s, well after the US colonial period, and never a religious force in the Americas at all as far as I can divine. Does he think he's referring to the Puritan colony at Plymouth? That's a completely different bunch of people, about 200 years earlier, with a very different religious focus. Plymouth Gin was also not a cornerstone of American religious experience (perhaps it should have been), though it, too, invokes the name 'Plymouth.' Not everything with the word Plymouth has anything to say to the topic at hand.

And I have literally no idea what Graham's on about when he observes of the Quakers, "outwardly mild-mannered...yet they controlled their own children by instilling their own set of rules...to the degree that many now grown children find [it] impossible to escape them." How is this different from the children of religiously observant parents anywhere, ever? Isn't this pretty much why we're still living with Christianity, Islam, Judaism, et alia, in the face of a world where God, if She exists at all, pretty clearly doesn't care what you believe? Parents inculcate their beliefs in their children and most people find it difficult or impossible to overcome early habits of belief, even in adulthood. That is a human pattern not limited to Quakers. But if the world must be saddled with believers, give me Quakers every time. Pacifists whose idea of religious practice is sitting quietly together and only speaking when the spirit moves them to seem like a much better idea than several of the alternatives. I've yet to meet one of the Friends who wasn't kind, pleasant, generous, thoughtful, and intelligent, and they're not the slightly over-earnest, trying-too-hard pleasant you find among (some) Mormons. I've never had a Quaker proselytize me or explain why I was doomed to hell.

Speaking of the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons, to you), though, it seems to me that Graham also pretty much skipped the entire middle bit of his argument. If you're trying to establish that deadly messianic cults are the natural outgrowth of the nutty course of American Protestant history, there's a lot of nutty American Protestantism that he passes over in silence. Now, it's hard to blame him. The history of Protestant Christianity in the US is dizzyingly complex: an expanding crazy quilt of churches and sects stitched together by common geography and mutual antipathy. Yet I imagine the historical details are largely invisible from the UK. Americans seemed to leap from one Protestant fad to the next with the frenzied, ecstatic fickleness of a pop-crazed tween serially discarding one adored idol for the next. Evangelical Protestantism was co-



invented here, and Americans have enjoyed no less than three, and arguably four massive religious revival periods or Great Awakenings, waves of renewed religious fervor marked by the rise of new movements and charismatic leaders. Joseph Smith, who went on to invent Mormonism, was a product of the Second Great Awakening in the early 19<sup>th</sup> C in Western New York state, as was William Miller, founder of the Millerites, who in turned spawned the various flavors of Adventism. A person could spend years putting together a coherent picture of all that. I don't pretend to follow it well, myself. So I totally get why Graham might avert his eyes from that chaotic roil of ever more exotic orthodoxies. And yet, I can't help feeling that if you're going to make the case that Jim Jones was a hot house bloom nurtured by a very specialized environment, the two hundred or so years from the late Colonial period through the early Twentieth Century are exactly the place to look for the emergence of that environment. If I was going to trace a history of fringe cults in America, it's certainly where I would start.

Writing about Jim Jones, Graham says, "He was officially ordained in 1956 by the Independent Assemblies of God and in 1964 by the Disciples of Christ. All this of course begs the question of what 'officially ordained' actually means." No, no it does not. I take this to be of a piece with Graham's cavalier attitude about distinguishing even fairly well-known Protestant churches from one another. The fact that Jones was ordained twice simply means the obvious, which is that ordination in one church does not in any way imply being ordained in another, even if both churches are Protestant denominations. Being a Catholic priest does not

automatically make you a rabbi, a vicar, or an imam, either. While prodigal proliferation of Protestant sects in the US can seem baffling to the outside observer – it certainly does to me – a simple guideline to the uninitiated is that if they go by different names, they're probably different churches. A moment with Mr. Google will tell you that the Assemblies of God are a Pentecostal sect originating in one of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American revival movements, whereas the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) dates back about a century earlier to some schism or other among the Presbyterians. While both start with 'P,' Presbyterians and Pentecostals are emphatically not the same thing. Boy are they not. It's the Pentecostals who are particularly enamored of apocalyptic visions and any Biblical scripture that talks about the end times. If they're conducting cattle breeding programs to reliably produce genuinely red heifer cows to ship to Israel to trigger the Apocalypse, they're probably



Pentecostals. (Yes, this is an actual thing. Google Clyde Lott. I *said* Americans were crazy, didn't I?)

But most impressive to me in its sheer obliviousness is Graham's idea of just *how* his "history" of American Christianity laid the ground work for David Koresh and Jim Jones. "These...sects, in rejecting the Catholic faith...left themselves open to what I might call 'religion by interpretation,' for the freedom to practice your own faith exercises no control over what that faith should be." Dude. DUUUUUUDE. What process do you imagine gave us most precepts of Catholic faith and indeed all of Christianity in the first place? Interpretation. In fact, going beyond mere interpretation, the process often appears to have entailed tossing out the actual Bible entirely and making shit up wholesale. Yes, of course they put lipstick on that pig by convening "Councils" entirely composed of men in order to *jointly* make shit up, but still. Make. Shit. Up. Trinitarian doctrine? Not in the Bible. Process of canonizing saints? Not in the Bible. Medieval practice of selling Indulgences so the rich could buy their way into heaven? Definitely not in the Bible. Ditto any of the various ensoulment doctrines of the Catholic church, including the medieval ones where soul did not enter the body until some weeks postpartum, and conveniently for female infanticide, stating that the souls of girls did not enter their bodies until days later than the souls of boys did. (Women! You know how they are, always running late.) And then there's Purgatory. A Catholic apologist can offer you an *interpretation* of certain Biblical passages to support the claim that it's in the Bible, but if you have to expend entire essays explaining why it's obvious that it's really there, and addressing counterarguments that say it isn't, maybe it isn't that obvious. Maybe you could even say, it's not in the Bible, or at best, a matter of interpretation. And then there's this business of praying openly, in Church? That goes literally, directly against the preaching of Jesus (Matthew 6:5). It's interpretation all the way down, baby. It's almost as if the source document is frequently vague, profoundly obscure, and even repeatedly self-contradictory. It's almost as if interpretation is literally the only way to make sense of it. The main question being, who gets to do the interpreting, and by what authority? But claiming that the difference between American Protestantism and Catholicism is that one engages in religion by interpretation and the other does not is bunkum of the highest order.

So. Yeah. Agreed, Americans can be mad as hatters in their religious enthusiasms, and agreed, that susceptibility could well have contributed to the rise of more contemporary nuttier cults and charismatic cult leaders, but getting us from A to B needs to be done a lot better. Also? While I'm happy to agree that the Branch Davidians under David Koresh were pretty bonkers on their own stick, it's a lot less clear that they qualify as a suicide cult, rather than victims of the

excess enthusiasm of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

*[[Editorial note: other potential guest columnists are invited to submit contributions on the topic. Locs may be repurposed to that effect...]]*

## LOCO CITATO

*[[Editorial comment still looks like this ...]]*

From: graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk

June 8

**Graham Charnock** writes:

Any response to Dobbo and FAAn awards requires some prehistory. I first met him at Corflu in Austin. I had followed Rob Jackson down a corridor to Ted's room, but stuck with the trail after Rob had peeled off when he realized the ultimate destination was an excuse to smoke dope. There I curled up on a bed next to Earl Kemp who refused to recognize me even when I kissed him. Dobbo stood nonchalantly against an item of furniture puffing on a joint whenever it was offered. I don't think we exchanged a word. Later I cadged a lift with him to some barbecue place, because his car had a satnav. Again not many words were exchanged. I was still rather wondering who the heck he was. He was far too good looking to be a regular fan, for sure.

Another year we were in Sunnyvale. I had lunch with him, Frank Lunney, and Ted White in a diner across the way. He spent most of the time on his Ipad, showing us the significant events of the hour, the day, the year, etc. I was still confused about his role in fandom. Leaving Sunnyvale, Bill Burns gave us both a lift to the station for a train into SF, and I remember running through subways with our luggage in fear of missing the train. We might have because I was confused by the ticket machines, but Michael swam in and punched the right buttons. He was always good at punching buttons.

The train back to SF was the only time I felt I really got an opportunity to know him, and he impressed me as a regular guy. I only wish I could now recall the various funny stories he told me.

Later, encountering him on Facebook, I came across a barrage of proud-father photos of his son who had graduated from military college.

Well everyone is proud of their offspring, I suppose, but I wondered about his need to post them in their full shining military uniformed splendour.

Well, it's a funny old world, and now Dobbo has had his own Corflu.

I'd been aware that somewhere down the line Dobbo had been involved in what may be called inspirational speaking on management techniques. I'd wondered how he made his living, and this seemed as close as any theory.

With his Corflu he seemed intent to put all or some of his management theories into action, if only, I suspect, to accrue experimental data for later use. I include of course his management of the FAAn awards.

First of all he predictably established a consultation group, of which I was a member, with the ostensible object of determining how the awards process should be structured. While not exactly seeing the necessity of this I went along with this, chipping in with whatever I thought was relevant. After a while the futility of it began to dawn on me and I realized that whatever Dobbo wanted to do would be done. Thus we were subject to what amounted to preliminary draft notes towards yet another Dobbo Textbook of Management, not a whit of it related to the matter at hand, which was 'How does Fandom recognize and celebrate its participants'. Dobbo had an agenda which forced that essential question into places it didn't really need to go. His scattershot array of awards debased, in my opinion, what was a trivial but entertaining process and reduced it to the fairground level of throwing darts at cards.

I still remember my experiences of him affectionately but am secretly glad real fans and not management consultants will be in control of the next Corflu.

As for Jerry Kaufman [*locs*], I'd rather be entertaining than pedantically correct.

*[[I should point out that I was in fact the guilty party in convening that FAAn awards discussion group, although I suppose it's arguable that Mike & I did it jointly. As you know, having been there, the arguments went off in directions I did not expect. I must also observe that your statement of underlying philosophy "How does Fandom recognize and celebrate its participants?" is a perfect summation of what Corflu should be about - I would only correct it to read "Fanzine Fandom" specifically...]]*

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From: srjeffery@aol.com

June 8

Steve Jeffery writes:

Did I call them the 'Corflu awards'. Oh, I did.

I still think they're a bit of fluff and the real point of fandom is the content - the fanzines, letters and artwork and the conversations, discussions and debates that go on inside them, rather than the medals hat get pinned on them. But then the only fannish award I have is a printed General

Certificate of SF Education from a Novacon quiz thing many years ago. Perhaps if I had a house full of FAANs and Novas I'd feel differently. And ponder whether I should get a mantelpiece, and a servant to dust and polish them.

But I don't think so. Perhaps I should extend my coinage more generally to FIABOF (Fandom is a bit of fluff) for people who think even FIJAGH takes it all a bit to seriously.

*[[At risk of repeating myself, not that that's ever stopped me, I do agree with the "bit of fluff" concept, but if you are going to have these awards (and I wouldn't blame Corflu Heatwave if they threw up their collective hands and announced that the FAAns have now been destroyed for ever - or ok, until someone decides to revive them in ten years) then they ought to seem, I dunno, purposeful. I very much take "Killer" Kaufman's point (locs, #17) when he describes looking at the numbers to see if he got any votes, as I think most of us do. The point is not necessarily who takes home the prize, but that your fanzine fanac is being recognized by somebody...]]*

Although I do not want to downplay just how grateful I am to the Corflu 50 for inviting me to come to Corflu 36. I really had a good time, and met lots of people I either haven't seen in years or haven't seen at all until then, and made, I hope, some new friends.

Give 40 million people a poll with a choice of just two options and the result, while statistically significant, can completely divide a whole country.

So what change are you likely to get from 19 voters splitting voting over two or three times as many categories and having to nominate one only in each, rather than a first, second and third choice. It sounds a recipe for a completely random lottery. Perhaps someone with a bit of computational knowledge might like to run a Monte Carlo on those numbers with just a couple of random changes in each category to see just how strong a butterfly effect one or two votes in each category could have on the overall results. As I say, I was quite chuffed with how the results came out (even for people I didn't vote for) but I could have been equally pleased with a different set of results. ("Everyone has won", said the dodo, "and all must have prizes.")

OK, so the final ballot form itself was an experiment that didn't work. Too many (sub) categories, too confusing, and too many exclusions. "Best non-US sercon fanzine printed on A5 in twilltone with one staple." That kind of thing.

*[[One other issue that rankles is the seeming inconsistency of "certificate" awards, where it appears that, despite Mike's initial caveat that "insufficient participation" would result in No Award, that some certificates were issued on the basis of the recipient having got 2 or 3 votes (I mean, seriously, how fuckin' pathetic is that?) and yet others who got 3 or 4 votes (equally fuckin' pathetic, really) had their*



categories airbrushed out. "Orange slices for (almost) everyone" indeed - yes Andy, I'm going to use that phrase eternally. It is wonderfully apposite. I still hesitate to denigrate the 2019 awards as totally worthless, since I must agree that the "trophy" winners were a solid lot, but as you say, a different set of names and titles might have been equally well-regarded, and despite Mike's ludicrous claims that his 19 voters were somehow so much more meaningful than last year's 78 I see a fuck of a lot less validity this year, as I suspect even the "winners" might, looking at those numbers...]]

Lot of discussion about reggae in the letter column. The summer of '77 is completely associated with reggae for me. It's where and when I first heard (and completely fell in love with) Culture on the John Peel Show. And Misty in Roots, the Mighty Diamonds, The Gladiators, Augustus Pablo (they played King Tubby Meets the Rockers Uptown on radio 6 the other night. I had to crank the radio up full. It's just glorious, especially those rimshots)

And of course, in the UK, Matumbi, Aswad and Steel Pulse. I cannot get over the first sight of the latter performing 'Ku Klux Klan' dressed in white hoods. That has to be one of the angriest songs this side of Tom Robinson's '(Sing if You're) Glad to be Gay' or the Jam's 'Down in the Tube Station at Midnight'. That year I bought a caseful of 12 inch singles and dub compilations. I still have them.

[[And you didn't mention Marley once...]]

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From: absarka\_prime@comcast.net

June 8

**Curt Phillips** writes:

I just read a fanzine this morning that was so drenched in bullshit that it's soured my day. Ever had that happen to you? It's no fun to get stabbed in the back by another fan. It appeared to have been written by a vengeful fool.

Being not aware of something; not being part of that something, really makes it hard to judge, doesn't it? In fact I'd say it would make any valid judgement absolutely impossible. Not that some would hesitate to pass off a judgement anyway. Fans are funny old birds in that respect, wouldn't you agree? Everyone's always got some sort of opinion to push out there.

[The] editor doesn't seem very receptive to my comments and I believe he has an agenda that does not favor me. Nevertheless, I'll eventually make my comments known to him in some effective fashion.

[[Context: these curious comments were an aside (sent to me personally) to discussion within the Corflu 50 group (which is of course considered DNQ in substance of the topic of next year's potential recipient). Is it even the case that Curt is

talking about This Here... #17, which was emailed out that day? He does get two mentions in the ish, both in editorial comment on Andy Hooper's loc, one of which was certainly mildly derogatory, but hardly "vengeful" or rising to stabbed-in-the-back levels (YMMV). It's cutesy how Curt tries to be clever by not naming the zine which soured him so, and this reminds me of, perhaps, an energetic Welsh corgi puppy attempting to retrieve a tennis ball which is at present a little too big for his jaws. That's also a reminder that any critique pointed in his general direction inevitably ends up with the author drawing kitten-drowning comparisons and feeling just a little guilty, although Curt himself can be notably not nice when upbraiding others for failure to live up to his high standards of - er - niceness. I am prepared to be corrected on the tennis ball retrieving abilities of Welsh corgi puppies from those with more observational knowledge...]]

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From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

June 11

**Leigh Edmonds** writes:

*This Here ... 17* flowed out of my printer nice and easy and I carried it around in my back pack for a while on my trips to and from Melbourne, but had other things I had to do first. I finally got to it on my trip back from a day at Continuum 15 and was so tired I kept nodding off while trying to read it.

Contented, eh? That seems to me to be a highly desirable mental state. In many ways it is more desirable than the state of happiness which is usually a fleeting emotion and often counterbalanced by equal or greater amounts of unhappiness. Perhaps the contrast between the state of contentment and the state of happiness is that one becomes content but one strives for happiness. Striving is such an important component of the American psyche (it seems to me) that I can't imagine their founding document having, instead of its current form of words '.. Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Contentment.' Maybe the world would be a happier place if it did. Not as much would get done, but hey ...

On this FAAn business. It entirely escaped my attention that there was voting in those awards this year. I am not the most active or involved fan around but you'd think I would have seen a ballot form or something about it. But, as we say around here after a general election that went horribly wrong, if you didn't vote you don't get to comment. So much for that topic.

[[I didn't vote either, but I have a lot to say about it. Once again, remarks such as "you'd think I would have a seen a ballot form" from an actifan such as yourself (and I do consider you one) are as telling as Jerry Kaufman's

*fundamental yet understandable misconceptions about the process...]]*

Whatever you were writing about in this 'Radio Winston' segment was a complete mystery to me. Nothing to see here, move along.

The same for 'Footy', though I gather that your side lost. I know the feeling. Last year my team 'The Ds' made it to the Preliminary Finals but this year they seem to have forgotten how to play and are back in their accustomed place towards the bottom of the ladder. Just as well there's no relegation in the AFL. Let's not think about that any more, move along.

'America the Damned', did I miss the point, or wasn't there one. Of yes, it was about conspiracy theories. Is this a theory about where conspiracy theories came from, which would make it a conspiracy theory too? My brain hurts, moving on ...

There's lots of writing in the letter column about the FAAn awards, on which I am unable to comment. There's also writing about reggae which, of course, makes no sense to me. Not that a lot of people in Australia didn't listen to and like it. One of my colleagues at work in those days was seriously into it and tried to convert me by showering me with recordings of the stuff, but it just didn't stick when I played it - the same way that I never got the Doors. My Methodist childhood, perhaps? (There's nothing in the bible that forbids one from listening to reggae, is there? There must be something about the Doors though.)

I'm relieved to read that I'm a fan of Peter Tosh (I must look him up on YouTube to confirm that diagnosis) but I have to tell you that even though 'Men at Work' and that appalling faux reggae song originated in Australia, the mastermind behind it is Scottish and still speaks with that accent decades later. So blame them, not us.

I don't know that the world went away from us wrinklies, as David Redd suggests. To me it's just become more complex than I need to know about. I'm old enough to recall that one of the lessons we were taught when I was in Cubs was how to go to the local post office, put a penny or two in the slot and then talk to somebody you couldn't see. Our elders and betters clearly thought that that was such a complex procedure for young people that we needed special instruction in how to do it, and now youngsters expect us to be able to do all the wonderful things that smart phones do. Meanwhile, I'm still struggling with the idea of how to get the pennies into the slot and which end of the telephone to talk into.

And here the train was just entering the outskirts of Ballarat, so good timing to get me onto the last page at just the right moment.

*[[Claire Brialey habitually claims the 'Longest Ever WAHF' title (see BEAM #14), but you, Leigh, totally nail the longest habitual RAEBNC - to which I must add that it's always a*

*pleasure to hear from you, nevertheless. Your Peter Tosh education should be eased into with the whimsical 'Reggaemyelitis'...]]*

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From: dave\_redd@hotmail.com

June 18

**David Redd** writes:

Bob Marley? Well, his "Three Little Birds" is an all-time feelgood pick-me-up, whether from him, the Haley Sisters or anyone - and his collection "Legend" still does the business at parties and barbecues. (Which I suppose is evidence enough towards the Judgement of Farey.) In the end, Bob Marley made a lot of people happy, not a bad epitaph. Of course, to me Bob and the Wailers arrived when more of my time was being occupied by Real Life and my attention to modern music had become a bit intermittent. I'd be happier discussing Acker Bilk as a role-model for the Beatles.

So that's *my* age-group defined then. You'll guess that current Hugo nominees, say, are mostly as obscure to me as current pop charts. At least the FAAN awards were still pleasingly full of people I'd heard of. So the awards were based on just 19 voters? Small but select, I'd say, and FAANs are still more of The People's Choice than juried awards. I didn't vote myself because I don't feel I know enough of what's going on. (For someone who *does* know what's going on, see Claire Brialey's letter in BEAM 14.)

*[[I continue to reject the "small but select" argument the reductio of which is basically asking Claire, or someone of equal but cheaper standing to simply announce the winners and thus do without all that balls-aching and possibly guilt-tripping voting nonsense. I also reject the "I don't know enough" excuse (and an excuse is exactly what it is <glares at Killer Kaufman as well>). In my book the point is to acknowledge and celebrate stuff you liked, not that you should have an in-depth knowledge of every word that ever appeared on efanzines or anywhere else. I'll restate my conception that the FAAns are basically just the egoboo poll for the world's largest public APA...]]*

Football? Not so much a loss of interest as an increase of irritation. It's not the beautiful game any more (writes Reactionary of Haverfordwest.) Last season is barely over and already we're getting hyped-up looks at next season's fixtures list. No decent break to concentrate on cricket, just perpetual big-money "clubs" with identikit teams of international players and rotating managers, or else local teams starved of funds and support. The continuing richer, poorer pattern of daily lives. Sorry to hear that even two full-time earners can't rise out of the poverty trap; familiar even in my family, full-time work not enough for full-time payment of bills. Paying so much for big-name football skews our finances. And it's not just football; that

relentless barely-a-break between commercial campaigns is everywhere. Christmas marketing starts in May with next year's calendars and the BBC advance-trailing their big Christmas special – for 2019, Gavin and Stacey are back (good news in itself, but a little early). And my grandchildren won't have finished their summer term before the supermarkets fill up with BACK TO SCHOOL – STOCK UP NOW ready for September. (Hmm, I don't need "America the Damned" to raise my blood pressure, I see.)

As for other aspects of UK life, things change so quickly now, this letter could be out of date by the time I finish typing. Currently the Tories are in the process of voting for Boris Johnson as our next Prime Minister, with "Brexit by October, deal or no deal" top of his list. So will the UK become a proud minnow among sharks, hoping for kind sympathy from your Woody Johnson, Mike Pompeo and the rest? Or will the Chinese colonial supereconomy simply buy us out as they've bought so much else here? And why did so many Brits vote for Brexit? Conspiracy or cock-up? You over there in Las Vegas may have other problems, but at least you can treat UK politics as a spectator sport. Oh well, maybe should have avoided the news headlines before turning to jolly knockabout *This Here...*

**[[Unable to discuss the despair of politics while in the throes of ICC World Cup and Women's footy World Cup...]]**

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From: jakaufman@aol.com

June 27

**Jerry Kaufman** writes:

I finally remembered, yesterday, that you sent me this here *This Here...*, so I've now printed it out, read it, and thought twice about responding. "Think twice, write once," isn't that what carpenters say? I haven't read *BEAM* yet, though, because Ulrika forgot to bring copies to the most recent pub gathering, and you know I like paper. (However, when I saw yesterday evening on File 770 that her editorial about the Fan Hugoes has become a thing, I did get into efanazines and read enough of it to get a general idea of her thoughts. I haven't gone back to read the comments yet.)

**[[It is of course "measure twice, cut once". The carpenter's joking corollary to that is: "I've cut this fucker three times and it's still too short" ...]]**

The Easy button? Whot an image.



I'm sure that if I had read Michael Dobson's explanations of the awards scheme he invented for the FAAN Awards prior to Corflu, I would have understood what was going on, but I was not planning to vote and didn't think I needed to know the details. So my confusion is at least partly my own fault. Although I have access to everything that appears on

eFanzines, I don't read it all. Really, my fanzine reading is fairly limited, so I don't think I can fairly judge what's the best in the field. (And this goes double or more for the Hugoes.)

**[[See <glares at you> above in comment on Dave Redd's loc...]]**

Because the subject of Reggae continues to be discussed, I can add that what I know about the subject can be summed up simply by reference to *The Harder They Come*, the movie. (Random bits about ganja, Rasta, influence on punk and New Wave and Hawaiian music are all in the frame but only as jigsaw pieces that don't complete the puzzle.)

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From: claire.fishlifter@gmail.com

June 29

**Claire Brialey** writes:

Oh good, I thought, when you sent #16 of *This Here...*; that'll be another good regular fanzine to read. Oh bollocks, I thought shortly afterwards, as I realised that it would not only be another fanzine to feel guilty about not LOCCing but that it would be coming out often enough to make it harder to keep up and so make me feel guilty more frequently. Oh hell, I concluded, when I also remembered that there'd be an incomprehensible wrestling section. But it's even worse than that: bloody football, of all the boring sports with annoying adherents. Although maybe you'll be writing soon about the women's World Cup, where I gather the spectators are being better behaved in person and the rest aren't clogging up decent pubs and shouting as much as with the men's game – which, for some reason, everyone is expected to want to watch. (Your photos from the FA Cup viewing in #17 make your fellow viewers look pretty civilised, but due to the time difference I'm assuming that no one was in that pub except to watch the game and – being just one trophy awarded in a potty little island nation for a sport less popular in the USA – that there were plenty of other bars available where it wasn't on. So you could all shout together as much as you felt like.) With someone else I could probably get my own back by going on about the cricket, but obviously that wouldn't baffle you and in any case the England men's team are struggling a bit in that World Cup at the moment so it's not all that cheering...



*[[See comment on Dave Redd's loc above. Also the level of "civilisation" at the Crown & Anchor does not prohibit chucking down pints in the early morn...]]*

But maybe this is the chance I've been waiting for, since I'm not convinced I'll ever get Tony Keen or Dave Hicks to write the fanzine article I'd like to publish about what it is about football that engages not only people's interest but their emotions; maybe you can explain it instead. Except maybe, like religion or wanting to have children, it can't be explained if you don't feel it yourself. Or maybe I'm actually asking you to somehow explain why I dislike football so much, since that remains a mystery to me too. I can and do get interested in quite a few sports when they're being played really well, although usually not to the extent of seeking them out again subsequently, but I find football pretty dull – and I find the fandom around it, and the expectation that everyone is not only interested but considers it genuinely important, completely bizarre. Why is it so tribal? Why is it so shouty? Why is it not off-putting and annoying to the intelligent, thoughtful, and generally non-aggressive people I know who do enjoy the actual sport?

*[[Your religion/having children analogy is likely spot-on...]]*

And when I asked some of those questions I'd not realised that Graham Charnock was about to consider what calls people to cults...

You're back grinding axes, you wrote in #16. And since I know that you care about the FAAn awards in general, as well as having put in a lot of thought and effort to get things working well the previous year, all credit to you for not making your views known publicly this year until the awards process was over. [...]

I spent a good few years arguing that the Nova awards needed to be killed off, given low participation and the apparently increasing irrelevance of fanzines for the vast majority of Novacon attendees. So it's not surprising that I have similar qualms about low turnout figures for the FAAn awards – in some previous years, including the one I was in charge, as well as the big dip this time. However knowledgeable the voting population, the choice made by many more eligible voters not to participate can make winning an award just feel uncomfortable, rather than any sort of positive affirmation.

I wonder what the biggest problem was this year, or whether it was simply that there were several problems. Was it more that even the usual suspects need to be constantly badgered to vote, that Michael's publicity didn't reach beyond those usual suspects, or that the process was too elaborate? It seems to be all too easy to scare off FAAn award voters, which is perhaps the biggest argument for giving up on the whole thing; I'm not convinced we have to press the big red button just yet, but I also don't know quite what I'd do for next year. Personally, I didn't find the process for voting this time to be unclear; perhaps the discussions I'd had with

Michael, and professional experience of far worse forms, helped more than I realised. In any case, as a former awards administrator myself and not one whose approach was in direct conflict with Michael's, I was quite willing to give this year's process a go, and also to take the time to consider how to use the votes available to me to praise the people who'd been doing things I enjoyed in fanzines. It did take some time, though. And what I can't tell from the voter numbers – and thank you for Paul Hardcastle although I raise you Rory Bremner and the Commentators – is how many people were put off by the prospect of even that amount of thought, compared to how many were actively withholding their goodwill from the whole process out of principle or pique at Michael's approach.

*[[Several problems indeed, which you have accurately listed. Many of last year's voters (and eligible contenders) weren't even aware of the ballot until very late in the day, if at all. (See Leigh Edmonds' loc). I wasn't even aware of the final format until someone else (Steve Jeffery, I think) mentioned it in passing...]]*

But I want to give Michael some credit too. He was prepared to try something new, not least to respond to problems he perceived and others he considered still to be bothering some of the people engaged with the FAAn awards. Unfortunately that did result in a ballot form which seemed to strike some people as too dauntingly complex and yet left others without a way to offer egoboo to the range of people they'd like to have praised – but I liked the way that votes for, for instance, fan art and fanwriting were then counted to also reflect some credit back to the fanzines in which they appeared. I felt there were too many sub-divisions within categories and too many awards made, but I appreciated the attempts to recognise people whose activities support fanzine fandom. Michael was also committed to reporting fully on the process as well as the results, and hasn't dodged the brickbats; his statements about the worthiness of the winners were, I think admirably, intended to deflect any of that criticism from them (or, I suppose I should say, us. But we've had a lot of awards and other praise, as well as brickbats, over the years so I don't take the FAAn awards personally at this stage).

*[[I will confess (and don't all faint at once) that I did find the concept of vote aggregation interesting - after all, that's exactly how the '#1 Fan Face' has been determined on past occasions. But again, the complexity of the mechanism gave me pause, as it almost seemed an attempt to codify and record the thought process wherein a voter considers elements of content, design and so forth when deciding upon their choice for 'Best Fanzine'. This might imply a level of contempt toward the ability of voters to work this out for themselves, even though the basis of a great deal of voting may simply be "Ooh, I liked that".*

As to being “prepared to try something new”, there’s that, and there’s totally ripping everything up for no obvious good reason. And I thought that my suggestion of the removal of the “website” category to focus exclusively on *fanzines* was a bit radical. We are in many ways a conservative bunch, perhaps more so as we get ancient (not you - forever young), and I think we’d like institutional changes to be incremental rather than apocalyptic...]]

Being fond of the little beasts as they frolic around our garden, I was a bit disconcerted to come across your euphemism about the attack of malevolent squirrels, although in that case I’m still not sure whether – rather than blaming the beer, although if you will drink brown British bitter with twigs in then you may well be ascribing blame to the right place – it was caused by, or could instead have been averted by, shoving one of this year’s rather pointy FAAn award trophies in the direction you suggested.

It rather feels, though, from the cumulative effect of your comments across two issues, that you’ve ground one of your axes with the intent of ramming it firmly into the head of Curt Phillips – who, quite apart from anything else, by all accounts not only worked very hard but to extremely good effect on this year’s Corflu consuite. Maybe it’s blokey banter, which you know I don’t get; maybe the two of you are arguing elsewhere about something and it’s spilled over here (props to Steve Jeffery for his description – although for different reasons – in #17 of Facebook as ‘an anti-social media platform’), but it jarred for me.

[[See Curt’s loc above. Small Axe (obligatory Marley reference)...]]

While I’m at it, let’s not leave Kev McVeigh – who’d have thought – to bear the whole burden of calling you out on political correctness grounds. I know it’s a long-formed habit, but *please* try to resist calling people cunts – unless perhaps you really want to describe someone as, say, warm, deep and powerful and can’t bend your considerable vocabulary to finding a better term... It’s not just you I’m getting at; I can assure you that I yelled at a bunch of otherwise woke young people near us on a demo recently, not least since I don’t dislike any part of my own body enough to want to have it compared to Jacob Rees-Mogg.

[[Can we then describe Kev as a “woke bloke”? <falls off chair>...]]

Then you actually used the phrase ‘slip her a length’ in the #16 lettercolumn and I realised I’m on a doomed quest here. And you still made me laugh with the poem about Mary’s dress.

[[As the Sainted Strummer remarked many years ago “For someone who works in construction (as I then did), you’re the most unreconstructed person I know”. Is it habit, or is it affectation? Or is it Memorex? Certainly I was inculcated into the (blokey, I expect you would say) British tradition of

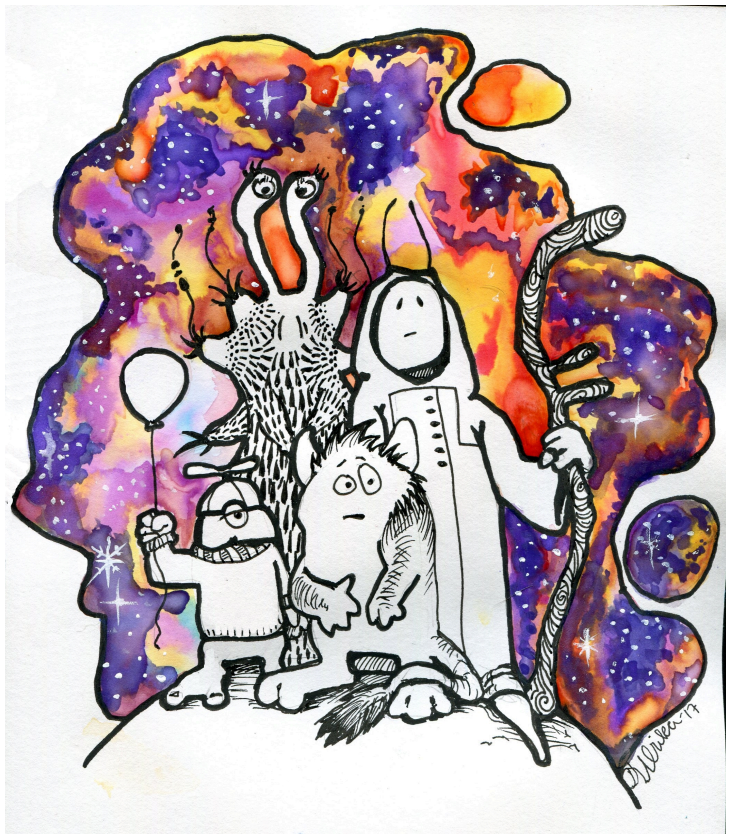
using the word as a term of *affectation* as well as derision, although I tended to consider its (over)use to have been demystified to an extent by Peter Cook and Dudley Moore as ‘Derek and Clive’. In America it’s almost universally a term of abuse (I knew one cab driver, since retired, who habitually referred to all women as such). If there’s a US equivalent, a word certainly devalued by overuse, it’s probably “motherfucker”...]]

Of course, as soon as you dubbed *Banana Wings* ‘The Only Fanzine That Gets An Ish Out On A Decent Schedule’ in #16 I knew we were in trouble for another reason, since we’ve lagged a bit this year – partly down to energy and enthusiasm at our end and partly due to the letters keeping coming but the contributions less so; even when we commission people, life and/or the gloomy state of the world seems to get to their energy and enthusiasm too. But doubtless, like James Bond or indeed James Bacon, we will return. Having a weekend when I can actually read and thus respond to some fanzines will, I hope, make me feel more in the mood to write something we could publish ourselves.

Assuming that’s what you’re going to do with some of this – I entirely take Leigh Edmonds’ point that ‘you don’t want long and tedious letters in your little thin fanzine’ – and I haven’t just missed the window for another issue anyway. But the main thing I wanted to do was to respond to you, so go ahead: WAHF me, WAHF me, you know you want to...

[[As you wish. See WAHFs...]]

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From: stevecartoon2001@gmail.com

June 30

**Steve Stiles** writes:

I think it's appropriate to mention that I wanted and requested to be removed from the Best [Artist] Faan Award category; this was not my friend Mike Dobson's idea. There was a time when I resented a certain person for getting the Fan Art Hugo year after year and I didn't want to hypocritically follow his example. ("Hey, Steve," he once said, waving his Hugo at me, "You ought to get one of these some day!" "Yeah," I replied, "But I never know who to blow!")

*[[Even though I would have thought that the people interested in following the FAAn award discussions were aware of your desire to withdraw from consideration, it's probably useful that you confirm that the "exclusion poll", if we call it that, was at your specific instigation...]]*

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From: penneys@bell.net

July 4

**Lloyd Penney** writes:

Welcome back to *This Here...*! [...] Comments only now commence on issue 16.

Ain't nothin' like regular employment... wish I had some. I stopped looking a couple of months before the trip to England, and have picked it up again, but it is the summer. With luck, something will happen in the fall, or most likely, I will get some short-term, work-at-home editorial work.

Apple-flavoured whisky... whatever happened to whisky-flavoured whisky? A lot of that stuff is made here, anyway. There is a Crown Royal bottling plant in Amherstburg, Ontario.

The FAAn Awards breakdown is out... looks like I will have to pick up my game if I want anyone to notice me. But then, so many of us do not participate in the voting, including myself this year. Once things calm down, perhaps there will be more next time, in Texas.

*[[I wouldn't give this year's numbers too much credence, Lloyd (see remarks passim ad nauseam)...]]*

Want some footy content? Look up Toronto FC, Major League Soccer champions of 2017. Wish they were doing better this year, but it is always difficult to repeat as champions. When we were setting up Yvonne's retirement dinner in 2017, the restaurant we were in was showing the game, and the place went nuts at full time.

I'd like to see Graham's take on the so-called military parade Trump put on for today, July 4. So few people were actually there, the organizers actually turned off the webcams on the

mall near Pennsylvania Avenue. And, the rain bucketed down, making Trump look even more foolish than usual.

The loccol... like Chris Garcia, we will never own a home. The price of a one-bedroom home in Toronto is now close to C\$600,000, and the value rises faster than people can save for it. Greetings to Mark Plummer, and we met this past June at The Bishop's Finger. We had a wonderful time.

The sun goes down, and so do my eyelids, so I'd wrap this up. Many thanks for this issue, and to quote myself from the locol, don't let it be another year, okay? See you nextish.

**WAHF**

**Sandra Bond** : "I greatly rejoice in [*This Here...*'s] revival and all that. Fandom is a better place."; **Claire Brialey** : "...if part of the point of reviving *TH...* was to generate conversation, it's working..."; **Bruce Gillespie**; **Jim Linwood**; **Jacq Monahan** : "Excellent, Nic, just freakin' excellent!"; **George Phillis** : "Many thanks! The file is, alas, too large for my mailing system, but I am sure I will enjoy reading it myself." *[[You better, you bet...]]*;

## INDULGE ME

✓ From my friend and workmate James Kerns: "I put Red Bull in the hummingbird feeder; I swear I just saw one of them go back in time..."

✓ The gorgeous, pouting and hiding Ms. Fairchild posted a link on FBF from, I think, Tor.com which was an extensive analysis of *Babylon 5*, warts and all. One phrase that startled me was the statement the show proved that the demise of capitalism would inevitably lead to fascism, whereas us old deranged Marxists always assumed the triumph of the proletariat. Looking about, it does seem Straczynski was sadly accurate.

✓ More from the inevitable FBF: A friend writes... "It's incredible working in a hospital. In one room there's a father holding his son for the first time. In another there's a son holding his father for the last time.

And in yet another there's some bloke with a remote stuck up his arse. It's the circle of life..."

✓ You do get to a point where you need some wacky input from Paul Di Filippo to fill up a bit of space, or then again you can just fill the space by observing that you could use some wacky input from Paul Di Filippo. Unless he's contracted it out to Howard Waldrop. OK, that's enough space-filler name-dropping, innit...?



- ✓ Jennifer and I had an ageless beauty discussion, in which she quite reasonably suggested Angela Bassett, who I rejected on the basis that she's younger than me. Should I retain that as a cut-off...?
- ✓ Ageless beauty, comics edition - ah, Weezy... <sighs>



## MIRANDA

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Art credit this issue: **Ulrika O'Brien** (pp 11, 13),

“Here we stand or here we fall,  
 History won’t care at all.”

Sixteen pages is a good number. Do with this as you will.