

This Here...

"...this is what all religions do." (G Charnock)

EGOTORIAL

I am officially deaf.

Not yet at Langfordian levels of living in blissful silence, but sufficiently messed up to require hearing aids which, upon their acquisition, will no doubt mollify Jennifer in that (a) the TV won't need to be turned up to quite such Airbus-taking-off volume levels, and (b) she presumably won't need to repeat everything she says to me when more than a few feet away. Now I've had hearing loss, mostly in my left ear (or so I thought) for many years, accompanied by manageable tinnitus.

Earlier this year I had a bout of cellulitis, not the first, since I'm reliably told that it's one of those annoying bacterial things that, once you've had it, stays in your system on a timeline adjacent to fuckin' forever and likes to reassert itself at any random juncture when it starts feeling its oats. This last go was on the face, just beneath my right eye and it's actually left a small scar which is still a bit painful from time to time. I got the usual treatment of horse-pill antibiotics to chase away the infection, but noticed thereafter that the tinnitus (and consistent headaches) had ramped up past 11. I read somewhere or other that three or four episodes of noticeable and possibly debilitating tinnitus per day is considered "severe". Well, this shit is 24/7 and less ignorable. I deduce that the concentration required to ignore it (or try to) isn't helping the headaches any, since it adds another slice of stress to an already stressful job requiring constant concentration.

My general reluctance to visit a doctor for anything less than a major limb being severed is a bone of contention round here, since Jennifer, as you'd properly expect, exhibits wifely concern for my continued well-being. My attitude isn't

created by any anathema toward the medical profession in general, but rather massive distaste for the *system* you have to navigate in God Bless Merka. I've also got that bone-headed caveman "tuff-it-out and go to work" mentality that's quite ingrained. Therefore, I put up with grim constant noises for about a month before I fessed that it might actually be a good idea to get checked out, as even I had started to worry that the facial cellulitis might have given me a leaving present of some kind.

Off I do go, therefore, to consult with the predictably very nice Dr Dickerson, who wants me to have a CT scan of the facial bones and sinuses, which I dutifully get done. She calls

up a few days later with the results, describing them as "good news/bad news" <gulp> so, driving home at the time, I pull over so I can give this conversation my full attention. The good news is that there's no sign of infection having got into the bones (or anywhere else you don't want it, which would be - er - anywhere else), and very importantly that there's no sign of tumor. The bad news end is that, therefore, they've got no clue what's made the tinnitus so suddenly severe. She says I should make an appointment with the Ear, Nose & Throat specialist, and here's where the glorious

mess of the American healthcare system kicks in. The earliest appointment I can get is *three fuckin' months* away, consigning me to resignation over my condition and the grumpy fortitude for which I am so well known.

The appointment was last week, and the hearing test results show that *both* ears are about equally bugged, and I'll need to get fitted with hearing aids which, according to the equally predictably very nice Dr Yu are free in our otherwise apparently shoddy health plan for which I'm paying a tad over \$200 per paycheck (every two weeks). I'm supposed to hear from the audiologist in the next 7-10 days (which will



hopefully be before you read this) and get the actual hearing aids about the same time thereafter.

It'll surprise nobody to learn that I have symptoms of COPD, undoubtedly the result of 46 years or so of dedicated and extravagant tobacco smoking. For the unaware, this primarily involves coughing up a ton of spoo during the course of a day, inevitably worse in the mornings when it's all had time to drain into unwanted areas.

Jen, on the other hand, has suffered from Rheumatoid Arthritis most of her life and has been reliant on six pharmacy-loads of drugs to simply function, until recently, when she discovered the benefits of CBD (cannabidiol), an extract from the notorious plant which is not the psychoactive THC bit. Though largely untested, this stuff is shown to relieve pain, sleeplessness, anxiety, and in her case has remarkably resulted in her being able to drop a couple of her existing prescriptions. The stuff isn't FDA tested or approved, and thus doctors aren't supposed to discuss or recommend it *unless* the patient actually brings it up, in which case they have the nod to pontificate. Her RA doc was happy to do so, but did advise a tapering off of the pharmaceuticals rather than a hard stop. Her instant results with the stuff (and, anecdotally, those of others who've tried it) are atypical, but not uncommon.

Of course she's been on at me to try it, so I have been, and mentioned this to nice Dr Yu who suggested I should give it a month to assess the results. I haven't personally noticed much reduction in pain, maybe a slight improvement in sleeping, but a definite reduction in the gobbing up spoo department.

Anyone interested in the possible benefits of CBD should rightly beware the plethora of snake-oil products claiming to be it, when a lot of them are not, so it makes sense to do the research and go with a reputable manufacturer, which, as it happens (yes, plug, plug) Jen is now working with as a representative.

www.hempworx.com/jenfarey

It's all good.

Nic Farey, late July 2019

IS THIS JUST FAANTASY?

(4)

David Redd writes:

"You reduce the "small but select" argument to its minimalist "Claire announces the winners" conclusion, which would mean essentially a juried award, in which case Claire or whoever would definitely have to inspect the

whole year's output. No, that's not what anyone wants, but I still think that to vote I should see more than the half-dozen-plus titles I do see, knowing there's so much else out there.

"Same with the Hugos. These days I see just two (2) sf magazines regularly. In 2019 so far I've particularly liked, say, Margaret Killjoy's story "The Free Orcs of Cascadia" (F&SF) for ticking many of my boxes in handling her material, mode of telling, breakfast-in-the-ruins with 2019 people, etc. But could I honestly nominate it for best-of-the-year without seeing at least some of the other USA/online magazines, not to mention book collections? Don't think so. Nominating the best of what I happened to see on such a small sample doesn't seem fair to others.

"Okay, for the FAANs you say, "acknowledge and celebrate the stuff you liked". A fair point. The most fun I had in a fanzine last year was from Bob Silverberg's "The FAPA Project" (TRAP DOOR 34, Dec. 2018), which was totally fannish in subject and telling, and written with all the skill of the USA's most-pro-ever pro. But was it actually the best of 2018? I've no idea. Did anyone else enjoy rereading it the way I did? Maybe not. By your book, I should have voted for it and given egoboo its chance. Not totally convinced."

Nic Farey takes over...

OK, let me unpack that and try this one more time, then. How many people might there be who, in your opinion (or anybody's), have sufficient command of the field to be allowed to knowledgeable vote? I can think of maybe two or three, and I'm not a member of that elite, although I might have considered myself such in 2017 due to compiling *The Incomplete Register* as a voting guide for the 2018 awards. I'm sticking firmly with "acknowledge and celebrate stuff you liked", since the way to broaden the catchment is to include those who specifically don't read a million fanzines habitually, but do read several. Let's imagine a Venn diagram of zine readership, which might show significant overlap between A Hooper's quoted triumvirate of *Banana Wings*, *BEAM* and *Chunga*, and yet perhaps little to none with the likes of *Alexiad* or *Fadeaway*, the latter of which would have its own significant overlap with other N3F ishes.

My admitted reductio of having "Claire announce the winners" is little more than a frequently-used device to point out the absurdity of the contention that "because I don't see everything, I must not favor anything", out of some fucked-up concept of "fairness". It's also an implicit criticism of elitist attitudes which persist, and of course it's massively unfair to Claire herself since I'm not trying to suggest that she'd be up for it - in fact I'm sure she'd recoil in abject horror at the idea. I can't remember exactly the honor-system "requirement" for voting in the Nova awards back in the day, but I think it was something like having

received (and presumably read) three or four different fanzine titles, so if you're at a "half-dozen-plus", you're a well-informed voter according to those old BSGF rules. Someone with (a) better memory, or (b) the inclination to look it up will no doubt rush in to correct me, that person being probably named Martin, Steve or Fishlifter.

[[The day after I wrote this, I'm doing some reorganizing in the Man Cave, and opened up an old metal under-bed storage chest which I knew contained a lot of old fanstuff. Lo and behold, there was Tony Berry's Nova ballot pro forma, and the criteria was in fact six titles (so you're still "qualified")...]]

Referring back to the good ole Novas, there was once a bit of teacup rattle over suggestions that the "Leeds Mafia" were gaming the results by - er - being bothered to vote, and then shamefully voting with an element of unanimity. Grumblings not unlike those anonymous Toronto creebers cited by Mike Dobson (and probably from people who hadn't bothered to find their crayons and apply them to the ballot) ensued, prompting then Nova award admin Tony Berry to somewhat controversially declare "This is the point of the bloody award!", which I took to mean, as I believe he did, that the people motivated to vote would determine the outcome. Imagine that.

Part of the point is that fanzine fandom is as fragmented as fandom in general. I can't imagine, for example, Andy Hooper avidly reading anything from the N3F stable any more than than I could envisage the readership of *Alexiad* being engaged by *Askance*. As far back as Corflu Valentine in 2002, while *eminence grise* Ted White privately acknowledged my naive efforts to be as inclusive as possible, he did warn me that such efforts would fail, as they quite spectacularly and incandescently did, the dismissive comment of "Why don't we just invite Henry Welch's mailing list" cementing my distaste and contempt for those who consign a whole slew of toiling faneds to a second division, allowing them 'Ditto' as perhaps a less eminent version of Corflu, the latter of which has presented itself as "Fanzine fandom's worldcon" ((c) A Katz, ironically a purveyor of many crudzines) when it manifestly isn't. Now there's *nothing wrong* with a group of nice people with a common interest getting together on an annual basis to celebrate their hobby and honor participants in it (as was so succinctly put by Graham Charnock in a previous loc). However, even though we're all critics to some extent and it's probably very easy for some people to look down on zines they may consider less worthy for whatever reason, that shouldn't end up being quite so exclusionary. I personally find it admirable that the likes of George Phillies, John Thiel, Joe Major and Dale Speirs, to name but a few, continue to pub their various ishes, yet they are largely or totally ignored by FAAn award voters (except, of course, when I was admin and engaging in outreach - nothing wrong with blowing your own trumpet,

since I recall an aphorism that if you don't, someone else will use it as a spittoon).

Circling *way* back, so far that this is as much an interjection as anything else, I meant to mention that, while I've roundly criticized "I don't know enough" as an argument for not voting, I had also criticized the award to Fred Lerner's APAzine *Lofgeornost* as being a nod to "the only APAzine I actually receive" outside of the APA. This might suggest inconsistency or hypocrisy on my part, so I should clarify that this criticism was about Dobson's "orange slices for everyone" method and not about Fred's zine (which is truly excellent, and I must highly commend the lead piece 'The Sturgeon Inversion' in #135).

So, Dave, my core argument is *still* that the FAAn awards should have some meaning (achieved by strong participation), while, yes, being an adjunct piece of silliness to Corflu, though not as obviously silly as the election of "Past President, fwa".

Awards are, I suppose, flattering, as is any slice of 'boo given by some voter (this means you!) who cares to recognize work they've enjoyed, and as I've tediously reiterated, that recognition can be satisfying to anyone who got a few votes (cf "Killer" Kaufman) as however small an indication that *someone* thinks they're doing good stuff.

We do, however, have an actual ongoing non-award-related metric for 'boo: reader response. I'll say again that I'd rather get locs than awards any fuckin' day of the week (and thank you for your own reliability there, mate) - a lively and interesting (and well-populated) loccol is a staple of any zine worth the name, and that observation again gives me the opportunity to state that *Alexiad* should be massively admired for not only its own internal consistency but the wealth of response it accrues. Joe, I think, disdains any connection with Corflu or the FAAns, as evidenced by the lack of participation of his readership in 2018 voting, despite a few letters of mine on the topic which, of course, he did publish. I felt somewhat chastened by my inability to engage his readership in the process, but y'know what, on reflection, that's quite all right. The Majors don't need awards to inform them that their zine is worthy, they get that affirmation *every single fuckin' issue* by the reader response metric. The rest of us should be so fortunate.

I offer the usual contrast with *Journey Planet*, which has an award or two, but nary a loc in sight, although it's arguable that the eye-glazing roster of approx 7 billion contributors constitutes "response" of itself.

The Venn diagram has been running and compiling in background, working the three remaining brain cells (two of which are loose) as I write. The central intersection is tiny, but I employ maximum magnification to reveal its content: "Lloyd Penney".

RADIO WINSTON

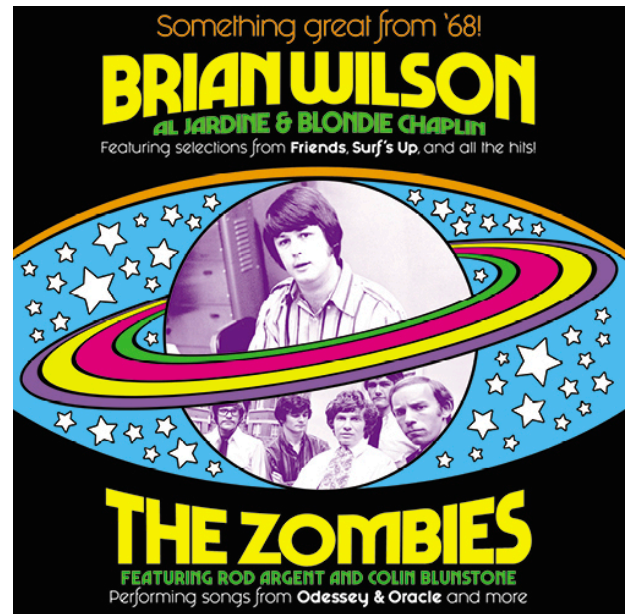
You sometimes wonder whether Las Vegas is a graveyard for ancient performers who you're surprised are still even alive (cases in point (1), a couple-night engagement by Paul Anka last year and (2) a continuing show by Wayne Newton, who does actually look embalmed), a venue for money-making career retrospectives from big names of varying endurance (as diverse as Cher, Aerosmith, Diana Ross, John Fogerty, George Strait, Janet Jackson, to name but a few) and the occasional "Seriously?" residency which would be the Def Leppard shows at the Zappos theater in Planet Hollywood, right after Florida Georgia Line. They're triflically popular.

A lot of these are in and out of town with rotating "mini-residencies" of anything from a few days (Madonna, coming this November) to a month or so of three or four shows a week. I considered for a minute whether the 'Reelin' in the Chips' Steely Dan shows, which are back, might be considered unseemly given that it's just Fagan + band now. I quickly realized that this could be considered quite hypocritical on my part, given that the Greatest Rock Band of All Time still gigs with Roger and Pete + band, and of course I'm a dedicated Who fan, and meh on Steely Dan. It's arguable, though, that half the Who is still a semblance of the lads, whereas Fagan without Becker is - well - just Fagan, innit?

Then there's the weirdness of different versions of the same band. The Beat (the English Beat in the US) has two active lineups, the US-touring version still fronted by Dave Wakeling and the UK-based one with Ranking Roger. That's perhaps slightly less confusing than UB40, gigging here at the Palms soon with small print (although admittedly large pictures) viz: "Featuring Ali Campbell and Astro", the former of whom left the band in 2008, the latter in 2013 to form this version of the line-up with Ali. Soon come to the High Court in London.



Nostalgia acts are also in the frame, and apparently do decent business, even dear old Peter Noone who does a three-night stand at South Point every year - presumably there's still enough grannies who might want to chuck their capacious bloomers in his general direction to make this worth his while. I suppose the notable throwback event will be at the Joint at the Hard Rock on August 31 tagged "Something Great from '68", and headlining Brian Wilson (with Al Jardine and Blondie Chaplin in the band), supported by the Zombies, admirably including Rod Argent and Colin Blunstone from the original line-up.



Had an interesting chat in the taxi about various shows a few months ago with a very nice couple of diehard music fans from the left coast who visit regularly to see acts older and newer. I was generally bemoaning the fact that I had neither the time, nor especially the money to catch any of them. A year or so before, Joe Walsh did a mini-residency at the House of Blues, a relatively intimate hall, and never having seen the Bomber live I was predictably keen until I discovered that the *cheapest* tickets were \$200. Even if I'd had the dosh I'd have thought thrice about it. Same goes for the immensely talented Lady Gaga who is part of the rotating residencies at the Park Theater (Park MGM, formerly the Monte Carlo). What perked me up in particular was that in each residency she has several dates which are jazz piano sets. I'll admit that I hadn't even bothered to look up the prices for those, but I hear enough people in the cab having sticker shock over the "big name" shows to again expect a \$200 price tag for the worst seats.

The nice aficionado couple agreed about the silly money being asked, but (having seen, I think, three or four gigs over their stay) said that the blindingly best one they'd been to this go was Van Morrison at the Coliseum. For \$60. No doubt that was a simple staging without Cher-style flash, but still...

FOOTY

Oh good gawd, *another* diatribe at the Chavskis? Well, since my lot have been all but silent in the transfer market so far, apart from the decent signing of Craig Dawson from West Brom (and sorry, Martin Tudor, my old mate and diehard Baggies man), I'll have to find *something* to comment on, although at least I'm happy to observe that we haven't lost any players so far, while still thinking we ought to have a sniff at Aaron Mooy (currently at Huddersfield) and/or Aleksandar Mitrović (Fulham), despite convo with a fare this last week which suggested that Mitro was happy enough where he is. We'll see how he feels after a couple of months of Championship footy. Still and all, if he did come to the Hornets he'd be seen as a replacement for Troy Deeney, who at 31 *might* be considered to be winding down a bit, although he upped his fitness and dropped a bit of weight for last season, and the effects were noticeable.

But yeah, Frank Lampard has barely got his feet back in blue socks, manages a 1-1 pre-season friendly draw with Dublin club Bohemians (in which he, you might consider sensibly, left out some of the A-list) and all of a sudden #LampardOut is the biggest trend on the internet machine. This has to be a particularly egregious example of "tourist support" from people who simply attach themselves to successful clubs and then get the arse when they don't win every single game 10-0.

Jurgen Klopp is having a moan about the early start to the EPL season (and he does have a point about Liverpool's fixture crush, since they'll be active in *seven* competitions, the poor little lambs), the official opener being this coming Friday (August 9th) with promoted Norwich visiting Anfield. You have to wonder what bright fuckin' spark up at the FA thought that this all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza would be an ideal fixture to start the year. Klopp might well also have the arse that he's on a hiding to nothing here. Although the Reds will have a couple of their first team still on the way home from international duty, there's still the proverbial ten-nil expectation, and anything less will be seen as failure. Will the Canaries be overawed? Will they come to play or will they park the bus? The excitement round here over this one is nonexistent. You would *think* that a fixture between two of the "glamour" teams should have been the first kick-off. Spurs v Chelsea at the new stadium suggests itself there.

And oh my good gawd, as Arthur Daley might have remarked, is Harry Maguire really worth 80 million quid? Gary Rose, writing for BBC Sport, takes a hard look at his statistics and comes up with "probably", Maguire's notable lack of pace more than offset by his reading of the game. He's already being touted as a future captain for Man U. We shall see...

AMERICA THE DOOMED

This is partially, or even mostly inspired by lastish's 'Indulge Me' paragraph that *Babylon 5* contended that the collapse of capitalism would result in fascism rather than the triumph of the proletariat. Last night, and probably a fair bit of today was and will be spent picking up on a rewatch of that fuckin-A series, and I'm already picking up nuances that I missed the first go, not least the fundamentally anti-authoritarian subtext (no mean feat since we're located on a military base) as well as direct references to aspects of spirituality (and the importance thereof) at both general and personal levels.

But never mind all that, you just know I'm going to get all Marxist on you, don't you?



Steve Jeffery (locs) remarks: "...a central flaw of Marxism: the somewhat naïve view that the proletariat, freed from the chains of oppression - would fall into line with ideologically approved behaviour rather than in a manner that made you wish you'd never unlocked the shackles in the first place."

Steve's observation is, as more intellectual arse-talking leftists might say in other contexts, "quasi-correct". The doctrine of "historical materialism" (not, incidentally a term ever used by Marx, but coined by Engels in 1880) has tended to be regarded with suspicion in its terminology, especially by Western socialists, for the "materialism" aspect of it. I'll spare you the interminable philosophical analysis to simply point out that its fundamental tenet is that classes would collectively act in their own self-interest: that of the proletariat being to secure the means of production for themselves, and that of the capitalist class to at minimum preserve their *status quo*, and at possible maximum to enhance the stratification of society to their continued benefit, as we see has been happening for some time.

The term “materialism” is inevitably associated with those whose prime directive is acquisition of stuff, and money, and more stuff (or if you’re G Charnock, guitars) in an endless “most toys” pursuit. I myself would contend that things like - ooh, I dunno - life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are effectively “material” benefits since they’re directly connected to a modicum of quality of life. Y’know, stuff like not worrying about what’s for dinner or where the next month’s rent is coming from. (In our case right now that’s the change bucket and a fervent hope that I pull in some decent tips from conventions and conferences starting on the 28th.)

I’ve noted for several years (despite the barely alleviating Obama interregnum) that the US in particular is governed by what I call “ultra-capitalism”, a philosophy that the rich must get richer, the continuing “trickle-down” lie and what appears in all respects to be the delight of right-wing elements in institutional cruelty. The concentration camps on or near the border, and the utterly startling proposed resumption of Federal executions just this week (reason: “Because we can”?) are clear evidence that Straczynski was at least in part spot-on that the demise of capitalism would lead to fascism, except in the one important detail that “regular” capitalism isn’t having a demise as such, as much as a transformation into a totalitarian version of itself.

It really is ‘Bread and Circuses’ for the wage-slave class. Or it would be if they had any bread.

In the preface to his 1859 book ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy’, Marx wrote: “The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness”. This is, if you think about it, incredibly prescient if you choose to spend a minute thinking about how the term “social existence” would *currently* be defined, and how that truly affects and disrupts any collective instinct that the proletariat ought to have by setting elements of it against each other by exacerbating perceived and generally untrue differences on the basis of race, country of origin, skin hue or whatever the wannabe totalitarians can think of next.

We also have NewSpeak, in which the word “socialism” has become an all-purpose spit-word for supposedly unAmerican beliefs, an accusation against the likes of the old waffler Bernie Sanders and the new despised “firebrand” Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, both of whom would be considered in a moderate-left tradition in most European countries, but with the rightward-lurching discourse over here are branded as criminally dangerous.

I’m undoubtedly mostly preaching to the choir in pointing out that “socialism” as both a political and personal philosophy is about being *nice*. It’s about caring for your

fellow person, and making sure they get their due share of that life, liberty and happiness thing. It’s about recognizing diversity and rests on the assumption that everyone has something to contribute, since we are all created equal. Against this we have a background of consolidation of power, largely driven by the wish for even more personal enrichment, and, incredibly for what’s supposed to be the world’s shining beacon of “democracy”, not-joking discussion about whether the current President might refuse to ever cede the position.

John Brunner’s 1960s short ‘The Totally Rich’ conveyed in part and in subtext the old *noblesse oblige* idea, a very British concept. These days the *oblige* has been supplanted by contempt, and *noblesse* is counted in dollars. Perhaps there’ll be a breaking point, but it’s hard to envisage.

LOCO CITATO

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

From: srjeffery@aol.com

July 7, 9

Steve Jeffery writes:

I ought to fess that I cribbed the comment that falling in love with fanzine fandom because it was all perversely backwards came from a comment Rick Wakeman once made in an interview about why he joined Yes, because they seemed to go completely against the grain and do everything arse backwards, from Anderson's choirboy alto (and Accrington accent) to Chris Squire cranking up the treble on his bass amp and playing lead lines over a drummer who could pay every time signature except a straight 4/4. It worked for me too. (And yes, you also had me at Rickenbacker with that photo in TH18. I don’t know Sage Chavis or the Regrettes, but I think Gail Greenwood of Belly and L7 also sported a Rickenbacker (Google also shows her with something that looks like a Gibson Futurama). The Cure's bassist was also playing a Rikki - mostly down by his knees in Pete Hook style - though their Glastonbury set this year.

[[I highly recommend the Regrettes, and I’m still mystified as to why Sage may have left the band. They’ve supposedly got a new set coming out later this year, but please check out the 2018 release ‘Feel Your Feelings, Fool’ and, for a larf, their AV Undercover version of ‘Fox on the Run’, all to be found on the YoobToob...]]

Reading Ulrika’s run through of the myriad religious groupings, churches and splinter sects in the US in response to Graham Charnock in ‘America the Darned’ is almost as befuddling as reading about the never-ending wars, schisms,

internecine rivalries and power struggles between central the countless Middle European states and the Habsburg and Holy Roman Empires in Simon Winder's splendid *Danubia*. I've been fascinated by that bit of history since I encountered it in Mary Gentle's stories in *Scholars and Soldiers* and *Cartomancy* and running through her novels *Ash: a Secret History* and *1610: A Sundial in a Grave*, but I'm not sure I understand any of it any better (my fault, not Winder's) apart from the fact that most of them were as mad as a box of frogs given a long history of dynastic inbreeding.

I also suspect that the UK is not without its history of false prophets and fake messiahs (nor Europe for that matter) so while the issue might be more tragically visible in figures like Jones and Koresh (or Manson) it's likely not uniquely American or rooted in American Protestantism.

And thank you by the way, Ulrika, for drawing attention to the misuse of the phrase "begging the question" which even commentators and presenters misuse on the BBC almost as often as they do with the word "literally". (I suppose in defence of the latter, people might be excused for thinking that "literally" derives from "literature" and so its usage implies more a metaphorical figure of speech than strict to the letter actuality.

Then again, you could argue that language is just a convention and that usages slip over time to take new (even opposite) meanings, and that "begs the question", like "literally", is on its way to becoming a Janus term whose polarity will eventually flip. At which point I will be, like, literally gutted.

One phrase that startled me was the statement that [*Babylon 5*] proved that the demise of capitalism would inevitably lead to fascism, "whereas us old deranged Marxists always assumed the triumph of the proletariat."

That's always struck me as a central flaw of Marxism: the somewhat naïve view that the proletariat, freed from the chains of oppression - would fall into line with ideologically approved behaviour rather than in a manner that made you wish you'd never unlocked the shackles in the first place.

[[See 'America the Doomed', thish...]]

I have a new favourite musical genre: Palestinian psych-rock ska. (Take that, Kev McVeigh). The band is TootArd (their debut album, *Laissez Passer*, is on Glitterbeat) and it sounds like they have listened to and channelled everything from Hawkwind and Gong through Price Buster on weirdly tuned instruments. The song in my head is now playing in quarter tones.

(I wonder how easy it is to add extra frets to my guitar?)

[[Grah may or may not contribute a guitar expert column to a future ish, you never know...]]

From: graham@cartilegeworld.co.uk

July 7

Graham Charnock writes:

Ulrika's rigorous dissection of my rushed and unworthy article begs a lot of questions, including why she even bothered. Especially when she bolsters my opinion that Quakers controlled their children with the startling takeaway that this is what all religions do. My own personal takeaway on Puritans and Protestants, since that question has been begged, is that both resulted from people who were not entirely happy with the traditions of European religion no matter what its specific stripe. Perhaps I should spend several hundreds of thousands of words expanding on this central thesis but I think even Ulrika would be too bored to read it. And I can totally see where Ulrika, if she wanted to write my article, would start from an entirely different point. In which case it would have been Ulrika's article, and not mine.

On the issue of ordination she is probably spot on, but I must say I am not really interested in a dissection of its processes. It begs the question of why Ulrika herself is particularly obsessed with these irrelevant details, but maybe, yes, it is solely to put on record her mistrust of me as a reliable reporter.

Finally, DUUUUUDE, she seems to give me some accreditation for recognizing interpretation. I chose to give it a few words whilst her exegesis runs into hundreds and frankly is DR/TL.

Needless to say I will be shelving my series and not writing any more since I am obviously speaking, from my viewpoint of being an Englishman, to a culture too embroiled and embedded in their own problems to find any solutions.

[[I'm sorry you won't be continuing the series. Maybe I'll do, I dunno, a taxi column or something to fill in?...]]

[[Ulrika writes: "Graham Charnock doubles down on Importance of Talking Out His Arse and flounces off in a snit. Film at 11:00."]]

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

July 7, 19

Leigh Edmonds writes:

Where were you when I needed another issue of *This Here* ...?

My sister's son-in-law rang up and asked if I wanted to go to what we call the "footy". His team, Carlton, and mine, Melbourne, were playing and we'd talked about going to see a game together, and here was the opportunity. Wracking my brains, I think that the most recent time I've been to the

MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground) to see a game must have been about fifty years ago so I thought, "Why not?". As it turned out, it was not a particularly good game though I did enjoy the first three quarters, the final quarter not so much so. The crowd was 55,000 which is about half the ground's capacity and when they all shout out "ball" in unison one has to have an instinctive understanding of what they mean. Watching the game live I wondered if an understanding of how the game works has to be transferred from one generation to the next genetically, it wouldn't make much sense if the rules weren't part of one's DNA. In comparison, the rules for what you call footy are fairly obvious from watching it for a few minutes, apart from that stupid off-side rule.

[[MCG has a capacity of 110,000? 'Kinell! That's got to be one of the honkinest sports venues in the world. By comparison, the under construction Las Vegas Raiders stadium will accommodate 65,000...]]

Anyhow, to get to the MCG one has to go to Melbourne, and one needs stuff to read on the way there and back. Last night I looked in vain in my email in-box for something from you to read, but nothing... When I get back, here it is.

Time to go off and watch Le Tour de la Belle France on the box. Who says I'm not interested in sport?

The past month has been fraught and not much fanac has happened. We had to go to court to dislodge some lodgers who refused to leave, but they disappeared a couple of days before the hearing. I'm having more root canal work done. I'm in the middle of a history writing project that seems to have gone out of control and there is, as always at this time of year, Le Tour de France, which is on during daylight where you live but on the tv late at night here. Consequently I have been in pain, distracted, stressed and lacking in sleep. I think I may have misses a SAPS deadline too. It's all going to hell around here.

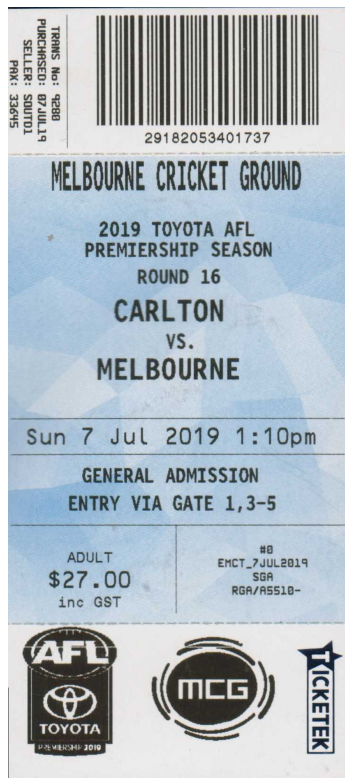
Which bring me to the latest issue of *This Here ...* It's Saturday afternoon, I've taken a day off from the mind numbing history writing exercise, done the chores for the day and now have time to sit, listen to the radio broadcast of what we here in the southern states call 'footy', read a frnz and perhaps write a letter of comment. It's the depth of winter (or what passes for winter in Australia), the sun is beaming in through the window and one of the cats, Isolde, is looking at me as though I should be paying attention to her rather than to my keyboard.

[[You are naturally welcome to submit a guest 'footy' column any time you like, Leigh...]]

I had gathered, from whispers that reach my corner of the interweb, that Ulrika's editorial comments in that BFF that you two generate had set a few people off. What fun for them. I have a great deal of sympathy for people who call themselves fans these days but don't know, care about or acknowledge where so much of what the call fandom came from. That is their loss. A handful of Hugos (what they have become these days, anyhow) won from a voting public that is mostly just a bunch of consumers is worth little in comparison the rich and living fannish tradition that a frnz like *This Here ...* represents. I could go on about this at some length but, being a child of my times, I much prefer the fandom which was (and is) a way of life (and self analyzing enough to know it was/is also just a goddam hobby) rather than modern day fandom which is only one of a very large number of consumer options. Our fandom, fanzine fandom really I guess, will come to an end one of these days but all human institutions - even the Catholic Church and the Hugos - won't last forever. Let's enjoy it while it's still alive and kicking, and those folk over there who call themselves fans too... well we know they're really only fake fans, so who cares about what they think anyhow. They don't care about what we think so I chose to ignore them as much as they ignore me.

[[The incipient demise of fanzine fandom has been confidently predicted almost since I started in the game in the early to mid-80s. My first ever zine was a one-shot: Countenance Divine, a short fiction collection which, if anyone has a copy (and I'm not at all sure that I even do), could well be worth no money at all. The genzine Arrows of Desire (that's enough William Blake-inspired titles, shurely?) followed thereafter and ran for 8 ishes over 10 years (1988-98).

"Fake fans" in the context you use the term isn't really something I agree with, but then I have a bit of an old-school interpretation of "fakefan", or "fakefaan" as a descriptor. The lot to whom you refer are fans, just not the type that those of us in varying degrees of dotage might recognize. They are, by their own lights, as dedicated and even as clannish as fanzine fandom, but as has been pointed out by several correspondents in response to what will probably be known in perpetuity as the "Fuck Scalzi" editorial, there's a cognitive chasm that separates us. I coined a metaphor several years ago during the run of *Vibrator* that envisaged G Charnock toiling in the fields with only the view of the Clydesdale's arse all day while



John Coxon zooms overhead wearing his jet-pack. I sometimes think that I may have the same arse in my sights, but let's not forget that the mighty horse is a noble and purposeful creature.

I am highly affirmed, and frankly humbled by "...the rich and living fannish tradition that a fuz like This Here... represents." That does sound a bit too fuckin' grand, mate, but I do kind of see what you're getting at. There were several impulses which led to my decision to return to this title for a third time. One very significant factor was, after having bottled up any comment on Dobson's version of the FAAn awards while the process was ongoing, I wanted to detail my disagreement with it in no uncertain terms, and in public in the interests of open discussion. A second was definitely that, with the retirement of Vibrator, there wasn't any frequent zine offering an opportunity for timely call-and-response on topics both trivial and of fannish import. Grah, of course, has rarely been shy of voicing an opinion, and neither am I (in case you hadn't noticed). Previous series of this title included argument about E B Frohvet's critique of what he deemed the "Corflu Cult", as well as correspondence concerning Lloyd Penney being told that he wasn't the "right sort of candidate" to run for TAFF - an opinion about which I voiced my extreme distaste at the time. Lloyd would not reveal who has discouraged him so, although I have my suspicions based on later and very similar trashing of another candidate, which on that occasion nearly voided the entire race as there were just two contenders, the one of whom was about to withdraw due to the opprobrium (meaning that the race would have been cancelled as the rules are that there must be two or more candidates). Finally, I did somewhat miss the discipline of producing the "taxi tales" for Grah, and This Here... does provide the opportunity to blither on about not necessarily fannish topics of interest eg music...]]

On your comment that fandom 'is a bit of fluff'. I can't disagree but you should have been here the other night when Isolde found a bit of fluff and it gave her endless and totally absorbing entertainment for as long as my enjoyment of her enjoyment of the fluff lasted.

[[We really have to credit Steve Jeffery for 'FIJABOF'...]]

I felt a little uncomfortable with Ulrika's penetrating and merciless commentary on Graham Charnock's work. If we were to subject most of the stuff written in fanzines to such well argued criticism there wouldn't be much written in them. What Ulrika's article does is show that Graham was careless with the facts and therefore that much of his argument is unsound. That may be so, but I doubt that many of us readers of *This Here* ... would disagree with the starting and ending point of what he wrote, just the way in which he worked his way between those two points. I think that probably Graham, Ulrika and I would agree (if we were to sit together around a bottle of Beam) that the basis of the

American sickness is the Leveller philosophy, and I will add to that the thought that occurred to me while reading Ulrika that, so far as I am aware, the United States is the only part of western civilization in which one person is constitutionally enabled to kill another simply by pointing at them (with a gun in their hand). This gives Leveller tendencies a kind of power that was extinguished in most places with the Glorious Revolution of 1670 which ended the English republic.

[[See Grah's loc for how well he reacted to Ulrika's viewpoint. I suspect people are missing the point that, while fact-checking can be a good thing, Grah is more often than not impressionistic in such writing...]]

Boy, I did get serious there for a moment. I enjoyed Graham's LoC which was quite evocative of a part of the fannish experience. Not that I've met any of the fans he talked about apart from Ted White (briefly and in passing), but the experience and the feeling of that experience, definitely.

I enjoyed Claire's commentary on the common use of the word that describes a very pleasant body part. The trouble is that the fact that it is a source of such pleasure has made it a taboo word because the fun police have held such strong control over our culture for the past couple of centuries and we are not allowed to even think about such things and so not talking about them is part of that process. So, if I were to say the word 'cunt' I would not be thinking about a vagina but a strong word that has been reserved for special and expiative use due to the culture that gave it that purpose.

OMG, I've gone all serious again. Time to quit.

[[Time to quote "the Sorensen joke"?...]]

From: dave_redd@hotmail.com

July 13

David Redd writes:

[...]

I don't recall seeing a [FAAn awards] nomination invite lately, although with many distractions earlier in the year I may have missed it. For the 2020 Corflu, I could try being more awake and send in some choices, particularly if you're that short of voters. No promises; I expect I'll need reminding.

[[For something that ought to be really fuckin' simple, misconceptions about the FAAn awards abound, not least of which is this reference to "nomination", not only off you. Of course we all know what we mean when talking about "nominations" in this context, but it's one of those things I get the arse over. In the awards' usual and most basic construction, there's been a ballot form and a vote...]]

Lots more to be said about America the Damned, thank you Ulrika, but again I don't know enough, etc etc. "Damned" could cover a lot more than just psychopaths of course. I gather that a century ago the USA's nascent social conscience got snuffed out by big-business interest, and a capsule overview would interest me. (It's probably on-line somewhere.) As for 2016 and Donald Trump, the conspiracy-theorist in me thinks Mr Putin must be delighted with such big returns for such a small investment (ditto for the UK's Brexit fiasco paralysing our government). Is this the Marxist notion of capitalist upper-class decay coming true, sort of, or is it just terminal decadence? No, on reflection the situation isn't quite Damned enough. Plastics, then, destroying our life-support system? A high proportion of marine plastic branded waste comes from just two USA soft drinks companies – are their CEOs Damned enough? Possibly not. I suppose for real reader excitement you need guns and injustice. Whatever, it'll be fun seeing who Graham picks on next.

Still envy Leigh Edmonds for his "This Here...17 flowed out of my printer nice and easy". If only.

No more comment on reggae from me, since it was blue beat when I first heard the like, and by then my young self was too hooked on more orthodox folk/pop to transfer across. (Other than as an occasional change of flavour.) Odd discoveries from that time can still intrigue me, e.g. discovering an old Lemon Pipers album hovering between The Flying Burrito Brothers and early Pink Floyd, but I know the rest of the world has moved. To Ed, Stormzy and whoever, I sigh. Music, the last free country?

As for corgis and tennis balls, YouTube shows you quite enough.

From: jaxn8r@msn.com

July 13

Jaqueline Monahan writes:

Thank you! I always appreciate receiving *This Here...*

You and Ulrika are such impressive writers - I can't hold a candle to you.

[[I don't think you should downplay your own considerable skills, Jacq. There's an interesting contrast to be made between myself and my BEAM co-editor in terms of

whatever writing abilities the reader may judge that we each may possess. Ulrika has an OCD-perfectionism when writing, which often means that a piece has to be burgled from her hands earlier than the potential revision no.94 - she is almost never completely pleased with her efforts, but can be somewhat persuaded that "it'll do", albeit with inevitable misgivings. The results of her efforts are clear, though, even though I suspect that she may not be fully aware of (or even in denial of) her obvious fluency. This is in contrast to my own stream-of-drunkenness ramblings which, paradoxically perhaps, I tend to edit at a level of detail which would possibly surprise Her Swedishness From Kent, WA. I coined an adage back in the long-ago days of Arrows of Desire in which I observed that I would "write drunk, but edit sober". That's not even the case anymore, since given my workweek, all fanac gets done on my days off, during which it's true to say that I'm never entirely sober (as indeed I am not as I write this)...]]

Another LoC from Claire! That makes you nearly legendary.

I don't want to weigh in on the FaaN awards in print, but thanks for saying what needs to be said in the wake of the minority wankers who just can't let Toronto go. Positively heroic, I say.

[[Toronto grumblings are, I think, overstated on the basis that it may just have been one or two people who had nothing better to do than get the arse and possibly cement their reputations as resident complainers. My contention is that Dobson may have exaggerated or even invented these creeps as part of his justification for attempting to legitimize the 2019 awards in view of the pathetic voter

turnout compared to the previous year. Nobody, so far, has publicly owned up, have they? Like any given Trump speech or tweet, the phrase "without offering any evidence" comes to mind. Well, apart from Hooper who remarked at the time that he felt physically sick at each mention of John Thiel. As much as I reflexively despise this implied elitism (as I've banged on about repeatedly and at eye-rolling length), you do have to convey a level of admiration that Andy is often willing to say what he thinks and how he feels in such unedited outbursts...]]

You'll find this uncomfortable, but I think you are a true intellectual; it comes out in your writing and always makes me exceedingly proud to be in the ESI circle. I don't think anyone who tries to take you on has a chance. Well done (again)!



[[Um. Yes, well. No need to be so understated there, Jacq. I do cavil a bit at the phrase "anyone who tries to take you on". That seems to imply the existence of a pissing contest which, I grant you, might be a superficial impression taken away by some people who read my - er - robust comments on various topics, none of which are about scoring points. Admittedly some ad hominem is going to sneak in here and there, which is almost an inevitability given the style of This Here... . I am, however, fine with disagreement, and part of the point is to have these discussions out in the open. I doubt I'm revealing any smoffish secrets by noting that John Purcell is following the FAAn award column with particular interest, and has indicated an intention to contribute which will of course be most welcomed at ESI Central, not to say highly relevant. Ulrika noted something pertinent very early on in our collaboration on that BFF. The background to this is that I had been highly critical of certain actions during her TAFF administration in the sole issue of nichevo (November 2000 (!), and at <http://efanzines.com/TSBS/Nichevo-01.pdf> for anyone who cares to revisit those halcyon days), though without knowing her personally, or knowing the backstory to what was going on. I was writing then as a mere outside observer (albeit one with a great interest in TAFF). It might therefore seem unusual that we'd end up working together (and very successfully), given how scathing I was back then. The observation Ulrika made (which was actually mildly surprising to me, but a clear truth) was that I had an admirable ability to change my opinions based on new information. Then again, Jennifer thinks one of my better qualities is that when I take my socks off they are right-side-out...]]

From: jakaufman@aol.com

July 22

Jerry Kaufman writes:

I don't think I'll have a lot to say about this issue, but one never knows; I've certainly been much more wordy since I tapered off one of my medications and no longer need it (I hope). I think I've already said everything I want to say about Ulrika's essay in BEAM except that I was not surprised to hear that no one that criticized her language or opinions in venues like F770.com or on Twitter bothered to write directly to you and her - and would only be surprised if this has changed since I last talked to Ulrika.

[[No, they haven't, and neither am I surprised. We might as well exist in separate Faniverses, and really observably do. All these separate Faniverses may well tend to have echo chamber qualities to an extent, but the precious little souls over there with their wacky pseudonyms reflexively engage in wagon-circling in ways that I'd suggest that the much derided by them "old-school" of fanzine fandom did not. Early fandom was a genuine minority, and as such tended to

be welcoming to others of even peripherally similar interests (Breendoggles notwithstanding, not much "similar" about that one in certain specifics) whereas I've remarked on the attitude of superiority which emanates from Gen-Filer which is yet couched in the language of minority and victimhood. Ulrika's email sig, the David Brin quote "Criticism is the only antidote to error" is utterly lost on anyone whose response to any robust polemic is to retreat into group hugs and mutual masturbation. The subtext is almost that they'd like to deny our inconvenient ability to continue to exist, isn't it...?]]

And my last word for now on the FAAn Awards? After your <glare> at me in the letters, I was all ready to give you a tortuous defense of my perfectly good excuse - if I'm reading the same half-dozen or so zines all the time, why keep voting for the same one or two zines or people every year, based on that relative ignorance? Don't be fooled - this is not that defense. Instead, I'll just vote this year, no excuses. So there.

[[Good...]]

I still don't know much about European-rules football (or whatever it's officially called) but you know there's been a lot of news about it everywhere, especially the women's league. This might have been even more intense in the state of Washington, what with Megan Rapinoe of the US team being on the Tacoma pro team. Inspiringly outspoken, isn't she?

[[*"Association football", and indeed she is...*]]

I doubt that Graham Charnock will appreciate all the work Ulrika put into "America the Darned" - it's just more mere pedantry. Like he said in his comment about my last letter, Graham would rather be entertaining than right. Which assumes that if one is entertaining, one doesn't have to be right. Boy, do I want to say, "It begs the question..." I guess what I want to say is, "It begs me to ask the question..." The question being, why can't one be both entertaining and (factually - or pedantically) right? Especially if one, and here I certainly mean Graham, intends to persuade me that his point of view is valid?

One item in "Indulge Me" caught my eye, about wacky input from Paul Di Filippo: Andy Hooper convinced me I should send a Friend request to Paul via Facebook., because I was missing out. Paul kindly accepted, and Andy was right. Thanks to both of them.

[[I've known Paul now for a long time, and for a while habitually phoned him up on Christmas Day for a seasonal and not entirely sober chat. Issue #2 of Arrows of Desire (May 1989) contained pieces collectively referred to as "The Rock 'n' Roll Stories", the intent being that these would be pieces of short fiction designed to be read while listening to their titular songs. I can't remember at this remove (30 years!) exactly who suggested that PDF would be a likely contributor, though as usual I suspect Kev McVeigh. Paul

happily supplied a piece based on Eno's 'Before and After Science', and also contributed to future issues.

When BEAM #1 was under construction, I found a manuscript from him in a long-lost paper file folder ('Maybe the Whole Thing was Mental') which I gleefully transcribed into the light. To know him is to love him...]]

From: askance73@gmail.com

July 20

John Purcell writes:

*This Here... has an agenda? Curt Philips seems to imply it does, but quite frankly I think it bounces around like a drunken sailor from pub to whore house and back to the pub. Then again, that could very well **be** the intended agenda of your zine. Considering the proprietor of the zine, that is.*

[[Curt is, of course, quite mad, which is probably why he and Graham Charnock get along so well <falls off chair>...]]

Perhaps I should start this pub crawl of a loc with the "All Fandom Plunged Into War bollocks" you so accurately describe. This whole debate about the worthlessness vs. relevance of the Fan Hugo brouhaha is like a never-ending episode of *Seinfeld*: a lot of repetitive tripe about nothing. There is no question among us "traditional" fans - I dare somebody who has entered science fiction fandom since 2001 to define that term and convince me their perception of a traditional fan is correct - that the Fan Hugos have been corrupted beyond repair to the point that so many of us really don't give a shit about those awards anymore. Hell, we've pretty much given up on the fiction Hugos, too. I admit that I am enough of a purist fan in this regard that I did not particularly care for Fred Pohl winning the Best Fan Writer Hugo for his "The Way the Future Blogs" blog. Yes, Pohl was a lifelong science fiction fan and bestowing this award upon him near the end of his life was a nice nod to his fan career, but he had been a professional writer, editor, and agent for something like 60-plus years! I can appreciate both sides of Pohl's interests, but if you're making a living off your writing career - and John Scalzi certainly does - then I believe you are automatically disqualified from the Best Fan Writer category, no questions asked. It's all just a popularity contest anyway - always has been - that simply has no relevance anymore. This argument really is all about nothing since the Fan Hugos have no value for so many of us.

[[I'm going to slightly disagree with your "if you're making a living off your writing career" disqualifier, to the extent that my conception of fanwriting, fanart ect certainly as it relates to the FAAn awards (and used to for the Hugos before the New Media) is that it appears in fanzines, with all the unpaid glory that implies. I was fortunate and

honored to have printed pieces by several full-time pros back in Arrows of Desire, (eg Paul Di Filippo, Colin Greenland, Dave Langford, Graham Joyce, Storm Constantine), all of which were specifically produced for the fanzine, unpaid, and therefore "fanwriting" in my eyes. As far as I can tell these days, Michael Swanwick (as a Random example, sorry, a Tor example) could write a dirty limerick on the lav walls, and that would count as fanwriting because those who saw it didn't spend a penny. Oh, wait. <falls off chair again>...]]

Since I have now mentioned that feelfy pro John Scalzi, I freely admit that I do enjoy his writing - *Old Man's War* and its sequels are all very well written and enjoyable - and his blog "Whatever" is at times interesting, but he is NOT an amateur writer anymore. It doesn't matter if he and other professional authors (like Robert Silverberg or Paul Di Filippo) write articles about fannish interests, they are still professional writers, which knocks them all out of the running. If the planets line up and great Roscoe smiles upon my head, thinning hair and all, and I end up selling beaucoup stories and novels, I would not accept being nominated for a Best Fan Writer or Fanzine Hugo award. To accept it seems so hypocritical to me. I mean, I will always be a stfnal fan first - I love my fannish comrades in arms - in life, but even if the impossible happens, I will follow Pat Paulson's paraphrase of General William Tecumseh Sherman's famous 1868 statement to the letter: "If nominated I will not run. If elected I will not serve." Or something to that effect.

Well, I can dream, can't I? Now I can stagger into another topic on my pub crawl through *This Here...#18*: the dreaded FAAn Awards.

In actuality, there really is a "FAAn Award committee" for Corflu 37 and it is the lettercolumn of *This Here...* because there is a lot of cogent commentary upon this albatross I have now slung around my neck so that it dangles onto the computer keyboard while I type this letter. And the stench...! Geez, Louise! It's bad.

The comments about the fate of the FAAn Awards in this 18th iteration of *This Here...* are quite illuminating, especially considering that I am now responsible for figuring out what to do with them. I actually voted in this year's selection, despite being at first put off by the sheer magnitude of the task. "Bloody hell!" I thought. "This is like taking a post-graduate examination." It did seem a bit complicated upon first glance, but after a while I started to get used to it. That does not mean I plan on creating such a monstrous selection process for next year's awards. Far from it. In fact, my initial idea is to scale things back and simplify the bugger. Reading through all the comments in the loccol was illuminating, and made me feel a bit better. Trying to figure out what to do with them is going to be a bit of a bother, but I Have Ideas.

Backtracking to Corflu Quire helps my thinking process here. I have been looking over the FAAn Award ballots for each Corflu since then, which takes a bit of time, but definitely helps to spot a pattern. The pattern that leaps out is one of “we need a new category!” every other year or so to keep up with the variations of fanzines appearing these days. Perhaps Michael Dobson's über-ballot was so daunting to us traditionally-laden oldphart phans that most of us ran screaming into the nearest pub to drown our sorrows. I do appreciate his desire to try something different (a lovely thought), but I think he went a bit overboard. Also, while I have no desire to use my “executive power” (respect mah authoritay!) to lay down the law, I do reserve the right to final decision making. In the meantime, everyone’s input into this topic is going to help.

In short, my current thinking is to simplify the voting process. Again, I go back to Corflu Quire for how Pat Virzi handled it. Ah, such a simpler time... Anyway, I much prefer maintaining our primary categories: Best Overall Fanzine, Best Genzine, Best Personalzine, Best Fan Writer, Best Fan Artist, Best Letterhack (Harry Warner, Jr. Award), Best New Fanzine Fan, Number One Fan Face, and the Lifetime Achievement Award (TBD by a select committee of knowledgeable old fannish farts). But I’m considering the idea of keeping the Best Cover Art category and Best Online Achievement (which should encompass blogs, websites, resource sites, etc.), and that should be that. All those individual “achievement awards” that Mike Dobson added were a bit much, I’m afraid, and I would like to avoid doing those. Like some of the loc-writers in *This Here...#18* opined, the FAAn Awards were a good way to spread egoboo and foster goodwill as a bit of fun. My goal is to encourage more people to vote, and I have found both Bill Burns’ fanzine covers listing very helpful and Nic’s *Incomplete Register* compilations invaluable in making fan-voting decisions. After all, the FAAns are bestowed by a group of people who are literally all involved with fanzines in one way or another, so having a large number of people voting on them removes the stigma of a Select Committee judging the field. I want the FAAns to be reflective of the efforts and opinions of many, so perhaps the best way imho is to keep it simple, stupid. They really are a jury of our peers kind of deal, and that’s good. The only actually juried award is the Lifetime Achievement honor, and I think it should stay that way. As far as I am concerned, any fanzine fan interested in contributing to this discussion is welcome to toss their sticky



quarters into the pot. On the other hand, I really like the image of me in a dark, pinstripe suit meeting with a “consulting group of interested parties under cover of darkness,” with me sitting at the end of a long table, cotton wads stuffed into my cheeks, mumbling words like “smof” and “tanstaaf!” at random. Executive power, indeed.

[[I’ve got comments on the number of categories (and other things, still), oh yes I do, but perhaps I’d better hold something back for next issue’s ‘FAAntasy’ column, which to be honest I didn’t necessarily envisage going past three installments. But here we are...]]

There. That should get some comments going. These thoughts will also be in Progress Report #2 (out in late August) and I really want to hear from readers of *This Here...* to get some feedback. It will help.

Oh, and folks, don’t forget that the attending membership rate for Corflu 37 is still at a mere \$50 USD or £40 GBP until August 31st, and then goes to \$75 USD or £60 GBP until midnight December 31st.

Such a deal! Act now! Join the party! Go to

corflu.org for the full registration information needed to join as as either attending or supporting (which remains a mere \$25 / £20 until midnight of December 31st this annum).

The preceding was an unabashed, uncalled for plug for Corflu 37 (a.k.a., Corflu Heatwave).

Thanks for the chance to sound off, Nic. I look forward to reading what other people think of what to do with the FAAn awards next. year.

From: daverabban@gmail.com

July 30

Dave Cockfield writes:

TH. 18 (short for THX1138?)

Thanks for the various fanzines. I think you are producing something quite fantastic.

[[I normally edit out general effusive praise, but I’ve left yours in because I didn’t want you to think that I don’t agree with you...]]

Unfortunately I have been remiss in responding due to ill health (pneumonia and depression).

My life could be said to be in a bit of an upheaval at the moment.

The other day I was talking to Kev Williams and we both decided that we should at least send you a thank you.

[[Thanks lads, and I hope things are looking up for you, Dave...]]

All the stuff about the FAAn Awards goes over my head because I've never been involved with Fandom enough so would not so would not dream of expressing an opinion.

As far as book awards go though I think that it is quite amazing that the fiction categories of both the HUGOs and the NEBULAs are dominated by women writers. Virtually all of them are unknown to me other than Aliette de Bodard whom I enjoy very much. I don't read enough modern SF although I do think highly of Ted Chiang, Jeff Vandermeer, Michael Swanwick, James S.A. Corey, and Lavie Tidhar.

[[I don't read enough of anything at all, but what I have read of Vandermeer suggests quite bonkers genius at work...]]

At the ripe old age of 68 I have finally discovered, and become a great fan of, Robert A. Heinlein.

He was someone I just happened to bypass in my youth.

[[I, too, had my time of enjoying Heinlein, which began teetering with 'Time Enough for Love' and crashed completely with 'Number of the Beast', the latter being one of the few books I've ever failed to finish, and did pretty much throw aside in disgust. He did redeem himself somewhat with 'Job', which I quite liked...]]

The influence of religion is something else that I find very strange. I was born and baptised a Catholic. Then as a child I went to a Presbyterian Church because they had the best Sunday School. As I got older the Methodists took over when I joined the Boy Scouts. The Church of England never got a look in although for a time at age 13 I was a member of a Protestant and Conservative Youth Club where at the insistence of my stepfather I became an Orangeman. Every Wednesday I would pay my sixpence in the committee room, give a nazi type salute, and say "All Hail King Billy, Fuck the Pope". I did enjoy the marches though with the added spice of imminent attacks from catholic youths. I think that I can safely say that organized religion is NOT for me.

I was surprised by your football meanderings. I'm a Maccam (Sunderland fan) so take great delight in the trials and tribulations of Newcastle United. Ashley is a fool for not hanging on to Benitez, a great manager) who now according to Ashley had to leave because he was demanding £12 million a year on an eight year contract plus total control on signing players on a £300 million transfer kitty.

It seems as far-fetched as making a success of The House of Fraser.

[[Ashley is a prize arse, but I don't necessarily fault him for not wanting to be blackmailed by Rafa, who no doubt felt that Chinese wads of dosh in his sights might give him

leverage. I doubt you'll see extensive reportage on Chinese footy, especially since Gareth Bale (according to latest news) isn't going over there to do a Beckham. I think any manager worth the name would relish the opportunity to compete in the best league in the world, and that Benitez took off in pursuit of the Oriental Shilling while the Magpies were arguably on the up taints his reputation...]]

I enjoyed the Women's World Cup. However out of the 7 matches that I watched only 2 came anywhere near the skill and excitement of a men's match. I see that they want parity with their male counterparts on wages. A sure way to destroy their game. Most games in the UK seem to have a 10 pound entrance as opposed to 30 pounds for the men's game. Could they attract the size of crowd needed with higher entrance fees. Unfortunately I doubt it at the moment. Something for the future I think.

[[Capitalism, innit? As much as the US women's team deserves plaudits and \$\$, it's simple sums to note (as you do here) that there's less money coming in to the ladies teams in gate, sponsorships ect ect, so obviously there's less available to go out. Individual-based sports (eg tennis) seem less affected by this than team sports do (remember the Wimbledon fuss over gender differences in prize money?) but yeah, it's about levels of public support. In the US, where "soccer" is still perhaps considered a minority interest (although the support isn't insignificant) the women's team has much more of a case, given that the men's national team is still basically rubbish in comparison...]]

WAHF

Claire Brialey; Bruce Gillespie; Jim Linwood; George Phillis : "Nice issue."

INDULGE ME

✓ Doing some background research for thish's 'Radio Winston' column, the Wikipedia entry on Steely Dan was, I think, the first time I'd ever seen the descriptor "spree killer"...

✓ As I'm about to use the phrase "as any fule kno", I'm suddenly reminded of an old Pete & Dud sketch, possibly the one where they're discussing art:

PETE: "...as any fool knows."

DUD: "I didn't know that, Pete"

PETE: (pause) "Well, as *most* fools know..."

✓ What is Andrew P Hooper's middle name? I'm going for "Phineas"...

✓ I do watch (and re-watch) Perry Mason (and collect the novels), and one day I'll get around to the article on Erle

Stanley Gardner I've been meaning to write, perhaps even for *BEAM* #15, scheduled for this December. It's therefore not unreasonable to suggest I may be channelling Paul Drake as I inevitably greet an arising Jennifer with "Hello, beautiful"...

- ✓ Off FBF, probably via Roy Hessinger: "The worst thing about cleaning out the freezer is that you keep finding people you don't even recognize..."
- ✓ Binged the first 6 episodes of 'The Boys' last night, and yeah, it's noticeably derivative in places (and *very* gory) but overall highly watchable, especially Karl Urban who is nothing short of magnificent as Billy Butcher...
- ✓ Ageless beauty, **Buffy Sainte-Marie**...

MIRANDA

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"Some days there's things on your mind you should keep.
Sometimes it's tougher to look than to leap."

You're sixteen, you're beautiful, and you're mi-i-ine...