

# This Here...

*"Now I want to read Van Vogt!" (H Row)*

## EGOTORIAL

### CURSES! (SERIOUSNESS TRIGGER WARNING)

Well, that was weird, and a little creepy to be honest with you.

On certain subjects here and there, or even just as an inserted *non sequitur*, I've occasionally (ahem) hewed to a founding principle of *Private Eye* magazine, stated by either Ingrams or Booker (though I think the former) that "we like to attack our friends as much as possible". Thus you'll see what I refer to as "teases" (but others might call outright insults) directed at fen of my acquaintance. #26 included a couple of such mentioning **Frank Lunney**, at least one of which was written after he was already dead. I emailed out the zine on March 1st (Sunday), only to learn the very next day (via an **Alexei Panshin** post on FBF) that Frank had apparently gone to the Fan Room in the Sky the previous Friday, initially reported as being caused by food poisoning, later amended to a "coronary event".

The human mind likes to make connections to explain things, whether or not they're valid (hence conspiracy theories). So I thought about the argybargy I had with Steve Stiles, for example, over the FAAn awards, shortly followed by the Original Crazy Man (as I usually called him, to his delight) dropping off the twig, and then I tweak Frank lastish, only to find that he, too, joins the choir invisible. The simplicity of typically lazy thinking *wants* to infer a cause and effect, as logically non-existent as that is.

*Private Eye* had (still has?) a very dark concept known as "The Curse of Gnome", wherein anyone who sued the

magazine (a frequent occurrence) would be repaid by bad things happening to them thereafter, so it seems inevitable that my crazed thoughts conceived a "Curse of Farey" for a minute, which is, of course, pure tincture of bollocks.

An excellent question would be, do I therefore regret getting into it with Stilesy, and do I also regret namechecking Frank in a derogatory manner, now knowing that he wouldn't have even read the mentions, let alone have any opportunity to respond in kind (which rather was the idea, as it usually is)?



Actually no, I don't.

I've never been a one to retrospectively edit anything I've written (and by "retrospectively" I mean in later years rather than in a timeframe that is arguably contemporary), preferring instead to allow comments of any given moment to reflect the thoughts of that particular time, at which the ever perspicacious **Ulrika O'Brien** will crow "Aha! You are "Timebinding", my lad!" turned up to 11.

Please allow me, however, to expand upon those "Frank" (ahem) mentions lastish in no small part as eulogy, something I find easier to do with those I

knew less well than others I have been closer to.

Frank and I had socialized, and broken bread together at a few Corflus over the years, though less so than we might have since he was part of the "Potflu" crew - not a habit I have an especial objection to, but nevertheless one I'm not a participant of.

He could be an annoying fucker, online in particular, capable of posting extended and eloquent diatribes of complaint which were just that, absent of any corrective suggestions: an absolute master of having a good moan. In person he irked me more than once with the request to tell the "dead ferret"

story - again - which, although it involved more nuance, perhaps, than *some* fannish tales of woe, I suspected he just liked it immensely because it confirmed his instinctive (and perspicacious) dislike of Bill Mills.

It was a definite gallows humor moment, seeing the initial report that food poisoning had done for Frank, given his notable (though possibly exaggerated) penchant for ordering anything and everything on the menu, however weird, or indeed the weirder the better. I used to joke that he wouldn't attend any Corflu unless it could be established that there was a Nepalese/Moroccan fusion restaurant within walking distance.

All that tosh having been said, I liked him and I'll miss him. Frank was an old-school zine hero, and I see very well in retrospect that he recognized and appreciated others of us who still toil at the hobby.

Thinking about it, I don't reckon I ever saw him frown.

Just days later, we learn that the venerable old scrote **Earl Kemp** also left the building on February 6 (!) from a head injury resulting from a fall. Having asked **Graham Charnock** for permission to use the photo of Frank from Corflu Cobalt that he posted on FBF, it was disconcerting to learn from him that it was in fact taken by Earl, so let it be a tribute to the both of them.

Earl and I met at Corflu Silver and, as with some other luminaries I could name, just seemed to "click". The banquet photo of me in my silly straw cowboy hat grinning at Earl giving me the traditional one-finger salute caused general amusement. I referred to it in a cleriheiw written specifically for the otherwise mostly rehashed piece I did for *el* on the topic of that poetic form:

*Earl Kemp:  
An apologist for hemp  
But if you are a Corflu singer  
He may well give you the finger*

(I had "performed" a couple of fannish parody songs on the Friday night - an inevitably scruffy 'Werewolves of Fandom' and an even scruffier 'Roll Over, **Bob Lichtman**').

When BB and I had decided on a move west, we looked at the Kingman (AZ) area as having potential, not least for the absurdly large tracts available (up to 35 acres) but also the self-sufficiency of being off-grid and powered up by combinations of wind and solar. We set up a tour of some properties, and knowing that Earl was himself living unencumbered by power lines, asked if he'd be willing to tag along and provide expert advice. Of course he was, and got rewarded by a nice dinner at Kingman's only but excellent Mexican restaurant. We didn't end up there, obviously, but I never forgot the kindness and willingness of someone who honestly didn't know me especially well to lend a wise fannish hand.

When I was having insistent dental problems (which did eventually result in the removal of the last 8 teeth and the acquisition of dentures which I'm *still* not great with), he invited me to go stay with him and enjoy the benefits of cheap but good Mexican dentistry, also providing the contact numbers to make that happen. The delightful prospect of a week or so in his relaxed company never came to pass, though, but I do remember asking what we'd be doing, exactly, while waiting for toothlessness to occur. "Oh," he slyly suggested, "Hang out at the beach and drink beer?"

It's all good.

**Nic Farey, March 28, 2020**

## TAFFNESSABEYS

The best laid schemes o' Mike and men gang aft a-gley.

The enthusiasm and admirably broad reach of Mike Lowrey's TAFF trip plans have been utterly scuppered by Covid-19 and what some might term overreaction to the virus while others will see more sensible precautions having been taken. "Wherever two or three are gathered together" (or more than 250, if you take on the cutoff number from British Columbia) has nixed all the significant stops on his tour (Swecon, cancelled, Spain, closed) and now Eastercon also, causing Mike to eventually decide (after a moment of reckless determination to go ahead anyway, but that was a few weeks ago) to not take the trip at this time.

It's the proper decision.

What should be clarified, though, is that this isn't, and should not be seen as a voiding of the race and the result of the vote.

A number of options for a later trip (possibly to Novacon, and including perhaps a rescheduled Swecon) have been mooted, the delay possibly even running to *next* year's Eastercon (which is also up in the air - no bid as of now, and the current group apparently not inclined to defer to 2021).

The opinion that I'd like to make *very* clear, however, is that Mike Lowrey *is* and *remains* the incumbent TAFF delegate and should take the trip when circumstances allow, even though he's going to be dispirited right now that his timely plans have been kiboshed. Let's continue to assess the situation, keep the TAFF constituency informed (and engaged) and above all make it crystal clear that this is just an unfortunate delay, not a wipe-out.

**Mike Lowrey** writes: "Nic's summary is quite solid. I will only add that we do stand to lose an indeterminate amount of money in the form of non-refundable travel tickets and the like. Anybody who feels moved to donate a bit more than usual to TAFF is urged to do so, especially if you suspect you might have kicked something in at a TAFF auction of a convention now cancelled. But above all else:

take care of yourselves, so that we may be around to enjoy each others' company in years to come!"

**Johan Anglemark** writes: "TAFF is a journey. That's the whole and sole point of the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, to send a fan from North America to Europe, or vice versa. The race, the auctions, the pamphlets and everything else about TAFF exist only for this purpose.

However, this year the covid-19 pandemic has stopped the TAFF winner from going. Once, twice or three times earlier, depending on how you count, a TAFF trip has been cancelled. Vince Clarke won the very first proper TAFF race in 1954, but couldn't go for personal reasons. The race in 1956 was won by Lee Hoffman, who refused to take TAFF's money and instead travelled at her own personal expense. Although she made the trip, at the time she was considered to have "turned down the award". And then in 2007, Eastercon was cancelled, but since that happened before the TAFF race was over, the race was postponed to 2008 (but as there was only one race in 2008 and not two, perhaps it's more correct to say that the 2007 race was cancelled).

But those were exceptions. Other than those, TAFF has managed to send fans across the Atlantic for almost seventy years, for the greater good of fandom. Friendships have been made or strengthened, trip reports have been published. TAFF is a good thing.

A TAFF winner who didn't go on their TAFF trip would still be a TAFF winner, of course, but not a TAFF delegate. No trip means no new fannish friendships made or strengthened, and no trip report. Thus the current TAFF administrators take it for granted that Orange Mike Lowrey will make his trip either later this year or next year, depending on when it becomes possible. The pandemic might rage for another half year or for another year, and international travel might be under restrictions for as long. And Mike's employer must of course agree to him taking his vacation at the time he wants to travel.

The details remain to be worked out, but to me and Geri there is no question about it: Mike Lowrey will go on his TAFF trip as soon as it is possible and convenient for him. Whether that means that he will attend Eastercon next year, Novacon this autumn, or some other con, remains to be seen. Financially this presents no problem. Most of the money Mike spent on flight tickets will hopefully be recovered, TAFF has enough money to be able to fund two trips next year, should that be the case, and we live in the hope that extra donations will compensate for any money lost this year.

Any decisions about the TAFF race in 2021 will have to wait until we see how the pandemic unfolds."

## BURN IT DOWN

### WILLFUL OBSCURITY

Yeah, I know, I do have a penchant for being a bit obtuse with a title here and there, and I tend to leave it to the reader to figure it out, or not. This time, however, I'm going to explain.

Given the current end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it wailing going on, and despite the fact that I've got a few separate bucketloads of columns on just about all my fannish topics of interest, wouldn't it seem rather bizarre if I didn't weigh in on the dominant topic *du jour*? Having been effectively laid off because Vegas is shut, I got nothing but time.

Anyone who's a bit familiar with either me in person or me in writing (or on Radio Winston) will have a clue that my train of thought tends to operate not so much necessarily laterally (which tends to get implied as a *good* thing) but often more randomly, veering off into odd connections. Thus, even as I posted the Sean O'Casey quote "The whole worl's in a state o' chassis" ('Juno and the Paycock') on FBF, the musical braincell immediately made the connection with Dexy's 'Burn It Down/Dance Stance' which mentions him and an eminent host of other Irish authors as a rebuke to those thickies who like to try to preserve the lie that the Paddies are thicker than they are, ignoring the most excellent literary tradition of that country.

As a typical aside, I'll mention Simon Hoggart, who observed as astutely as usual that the English perception of the Irish was that they were a bunch of feckless lower-class idiots, whereas the Irish see the English as a bunch of feckless upper-class idiots. (G B Shaw consistently depicted the English this way.)

And there, several paragraphs in, I *still* haven't got on topic, and them as got this far will still be expecting an anti-capitalist diatribe just on the basis of the title. Ask me about how I got the title of 'Jumping on the Couch' sometime (locs, lastish, thanks **David Redd**) and your eyes will roll.

So yeah, I have to at least *mention* the fact that novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has just put the hobnailed boot into what used to be our regular lives. That aforementioned Senior Wales Correspondent sent me an email today (March 21). **David** writes:

"Just to say I hope you're both well and coping under present conditions in Las Vegas.

I saw the UK go critical with coronavirus reaction over Wednesday lunchtime, when Wales closed our schools, then Nicola Sturgeon closed Scotland's, and then I saw breaking-news banners about cancelling the 50th Glastonbury festival *and* the Eurovision Song Contest, the world changing from bad to crisis in about 30 minutes.

As a 70+ hermit in the country my own life is little different, except for no shopping and no going into the main part of



the house where my daughter and her family live. But it's worse for others. My nephew works at a bowling alley - closed along with pubs, clubs, football etc - and is on a week's holiday before the wages run out. My good friend Paul works on the cash desk at Boots the Chemist, but is 74 and diabetic, so he's at home self-isolating with no work, no pay. And similar stories around. Various shops/businesses closing for the duration some with little prospect of reopening. (Oxfam shops being shut means charity income slashed.) Uber income down 70%, I note, but as I'm sure you've found it's affecting real taxis too and people I've known for decades drive them. In short, the tv views of empty Trafalgar Square are eerie yet familiar, half-remembered from *Day of the Triffids*.

Will stop now because anything else I mention, like the Saturday football commentary replaced by sports chat and music, would be just one more samey detail. I'm not expecting bright and breezy fanzines for some time to come. Still, my sister-in-law - a decade older than me - said we'd lived through the war and we'd live through this.

As we here sign off to each other these days: Stay safe!"

**Nic** : Let me point out a kind of dichotomy here. While Dave expresses (or infers, if you want to be picky) as well as he does on any topic the new patina of fear and frustration that now informs our daily lives, the *mere fact* that he chose to take a minute to check in actually cements our long-presumed feeling of community and concern for "our own", and y'know what, *I feel better* just because he did. David's not the only one, and you shouldn't make an assumption that he is, nor infer any implied criticism for not having got in touch to determine that I'm not dead yet.

Regular correspondents, within and without the circulation of *This Here...*, as distracted as all of us may be, have been in contact, and life, such as we must now define it (and whatever is left of it), goes on.

I'm not about to give you a detailed update of the contents of the pantry (all right for now), supplies of bogroll (we're good) or the inevitable money worries. These concerns exist for many people, and I've no doubt we're possibly a little better off than some, although that in itself is a tad depressing if we take a sec to consider those in undoubtedly worse straits.

Nor do I need here to chuck in anecdotes about empty shelves and grocery queues, *nor* do I intend to punt any kind of glee at the imminent collapse of capitalism *nor* the disastrous performance of certain politicians who really ought to be shot and eaten (and possibly will, given the upsurge over here in guns & ammo sales).

I'd prefer to hope for *best* case scenarios, at the very least the survival of the people and ideals we cherish, and as embarrassing as it might be to **D Redd**, his email inspires me to hope...



## CORFLUX (2)

### THE NEW MASTERPLAN TAKES SHAPE

As I write these words on March 14th, it's a day away from the Corflu Heatwave "business meeting" at which we can safely assume **Rob Jackson's** 2021 bid for Bristol, UK will get the nod. There's been, as tends to happen, a back-channelled convo among interested parties, some (or much) of which was reported lastish. More of the same coming up, and I expect a paragraph or two from the Doc summarizing whatever discussions might have been had in sweltering Texas. You can correctly assume that I'm quoting and/or describing stuff with the permission of the source.

The spanner in the works is still **Tommy Ferguson's** nevertheless admirable suggested commemoration of 75 years of Irish fandom, an anniversary occurring in 2022, which he pitched as a Corflu possibility. To recap, the prospect of two successive UK Corflus prompted **Andy Hooper** to moot an event later in '21 in the Pacific Northwest for those unable or unwilling to go to the UK in successive years (or at all). Tommy then indicated some flexibility with his plans, positing 2023 as an anniversary option.

I said then, and I'll say again that two UK Corflus in three years is about as disconcerting as two on the trot, but that there's no reason why the Irish milestone couldn't be

celebrated, just *not as a Corflu*. Fancyclopedia 3 tells me that the historic first meeting of James White and Walt Willis occurred on August 26, 1947, so wouldn't it make more sense to have an event closer to the exact 75 years, which in turn wouldn't impact the typical "Corflu calendar" which places that gathering in a February-April window.

If we take Tommy's willingness to punt his event for 2023 as a given (although I'd still prefer a non-Corflu option), '22 opens up, and there's a firm suggestion which has arisen.

**Ulrika O'Brien** writes: "...if Tommy is indeed willing to hold off the Belfast bid until 2023, then I believe we are going to be able to host 2022 in the Seattle area. My first choice, if we can swing it, is actually the Sylvia Hotel in Vancouver, BC. It's super centrally located in downtown Vancouver, close to all sorts of restaurants, has some amazing suites for hospitality and is right on English Bay for walks by the beach if that's your thing. It's also not in the United States, so for some UK travelers, that may make it more feasible or at least, less odious should we, as I fear, end up with four more years of der Cheetofuhrer. I've been wanting to find a way to organize a small convention there for yonks. If that falls through, we're likely to look at the Renton Red Lion, where we held Prolog(ue) before Sasquan. [...] I know Andy Hooper is also still thinking hard about putting on a separate, non-Corflu fanzine convention in the summer of 2021 but I expect he will talk more about those plans as they coalesce." *[[See also Ulrika's loc beginning p23...]]*

**Nic**: This idea met with approval. As usual my default would be non-attendance, although who knows, we could be improbably well-off by then. I nevertheless had a glance at the Sylvia hotel website, and it looks fuckin-A!

So, it would appear, sorted for the next two Corflus, with '23 still up in the air depending on what Tommy decides, but I suppose at this point he *might* be considered to have a first refusal on that slot, and he does have a minute to make up his mind.

**Rob Jackson** writes: "Basically, having looked back at the end of your 'Corflux' section in #26, the simplest way of putting it is that things are moving along in roughly the same direction, with (obviously) Corflu Concorde confirmed as the 2021 con in Bristol (viral restrictions permitting), and an acceptance by Andy H at Corflu Heatwave that if Ulrika was going to do the heavy lifting regarding a 2022 con in Vancouver (with the advantages you cite, of being in Canada rather than the US, and thus less likely to put some people off if Trump is re-elected), he wouldn't stand in her way. He still hankers after the "Obliterine" concept, though, of a fanzine fans' con with some changes of idea and programme.

Tommy is still keen on the Belfast in 2023 idea, and my personal view is that this would fit the Corflu style quite well. He came home from his Heatwave C50 trip full of plans to get Belfast fans more involved by getting a posse together

to come over to Bristol, which I think would be a Good Thing. However he has been quiet since his return; this may be due to the coronavirus scare, and thus understandable."

## RADIO WINSTON

### MANU DIBANGO

I'd had it in mind to punt a column on the man who served as my happy introduction to what tends to be lumped under the overall umbrella of 'Afrobeat' (but includes 'Afro-jazz', 'Afro-funk' and whatever other labels *Rolling Stone* may have made up) but in Manu's case especially I prefer to use "makossa" (meaning 'dance'), a word he used in some seminal titles.

There's an added urgency now. As I write (in mid March) I learned that the 86-year-old Dibango was in hospital having been diagnosed with novel coronavirus COVID-19, though it was reported that he's doing all right and recovering, the tuff old fighter. I'm hoping that publication date of this confirms that prognosis.

Because drink, I'll never remember what might have prompted me to pick up his 1978 set 'Sun Explosion', although in the time of punk I was expanding my horizons generally and I can reasonably suspect that he might have been recommended by a fellow student at LSE, possibly even a Cameroonian countryman (or woman) of the man. That 20-year-old me was suitably impressed, and I'd never heard anything like it. 42-(very)-odd years ago, my main concerns were drink and knob, and I was only slightly later to discover the seductive power of Otis Redding to induce knicker-dropping in the objects of lust, but before that the





opening 9-minute slice of 'Sun Explosion' ('Anty') I happily found to be a fair guarantee of getting the end wet.

Naturally, I must hasten to add, the considerable musical merit within surpassed the more venal uses after a time, and I did embark on further cultural discovery, inevitably finding Fela Kuti, King Sunny Ade and others (all of whom Manu played with and influenced).

Kuti's *oeuvre* became fiercely political (and you can't beat 'TTT - International Thief Thief' for a fine anti-capitalist-imperialist diatribe) while Dibango remained celebratory and rooted in the makossa. There's room for both, of course, and while I'll always retain tremendous affection for the Cameroonian approach, I'll also not denigrate Fela's much more Nigerian philosophy (and anyone who's ever spent time with Nigerians will know how politically engaged they tend to be, putting it mildly) since at the time I was solidifying my personal political views, Kuti was an affirmative voice telling me I was correct.

**Andy Hooper** argued (and I paraphrase) that my contention that Bob Marley was highly overrated was irrelevant since he was a gateway for listeners to become interested in and explore depths of Jamaican music, and so it was for me with African music and Manu Dibango, of whom I wouldn't be quite so dismissive.

So here's 'Anty'. Give it some ear, whether you indulge in glorious sweaty lovemaking to it or just appreciate the astonishing skill, it's up to you innit...?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciPyGPCJhCA>

**Postscript** : I wrote this column yesterday (March 23) and today I learn that Manu died in a Paris hospital. Je suis triste...



"...the original Giant of African Music and a beautiful human being." (*Angelique Kidjo*)

## FAAN UNFAIR?

### LAND OF CONFUSION

Where to even begin? Realizing that the sort of analysis that's about to occur sends the crowds fleeing to the exits, let me try to capture your attention with the following:

### THERE ARE FIVE AWARD CATEGORIES IN WHICH THE RESULTS COULD BE QUESTIONED

The tally of votes received should be out in John Purcell's latest *Askew* by now, either arriving at your inbox or shortly on efanazines, so I'm not going to reprint them here - you can either refer to that or take my word for what I'm quoting.

Let's start with the one category that's *possibly* fixable by a recount: 'Online Achievement'. Equal third with six votes each, "TAFF eBooks" and "Ansible Free Books", which are - er - the *same thing*, since the link from top right of the news.ansible.uk page ("Latest free ebooks at the TAFF site") takes you to "TransAtlantic Fan Fund Free Ebooks". I asked John about this after he'd kindly sent me the numbers ahead of publication and his response was that since voters had expressed their preference either way, he counted them separately, even though he seemed to be aware that the link and/or actual web address ends up in the same place. *If it's* the case that these are votes for the same thing, then "TAFF free ebooks" by whatever means used to get there had a total of 12 votes, thus winning the category over fanac.org with 10. *However* (and I think you'll be seeing that word again), I'm aware of at least one voter who voted for news.ansible.uk (Langford's 'main' website) of which the TAFF link(s) are merely a component. That site doesn't appear in the listing, suggesting that anything mentioning Ansible was lumped together.

As I said above, this is fixable by looking at *exactly* what voters wrote on their ballot and interpreting that accordingly, asking for clarification if necessary. With only 23 voters in total and certainly less than that in the 'Online' category (judging by previous participation) that shouldn't be too onerous.

Let me interject something important here, before the litany continues. I fully believe that the issues I'm raising were caused by simple inattention. John bravely took on the thankless task of deciding how to follow Mike Dobson's massive re-tool of the FAAns in 2019. I commend him for that, and for his policy solution with which I was in broad agreement and, it will not surprise you to learn, advised him upon (though I should make clear that John's decisions were all his own). *However*, his focus in the lead-up to Corflu Heatwave would necessarily have been on event management (made more interesting by the Plague) and not on the clerical minutiae of the FAAns,

hence the presence of titles both ineligible (not first published in 2019) and arguably out of category in the lists or showing in more than one category. I suspect even the fiercely *laissez-faire* Andy Hooper might have queried some of these.

The next major issue is not so obviously remedied. *Lofgeornost* is particularly ill-served. Although not “publicly” available since it’s an apazine, Fred Lerner does distribute the title outside of FAPA at a level which meets my personal “generally available” standard which defines it as a perzine, the category in which I voted for it. I did ask for a ruling on where it might belong for this go-round, but got no answer, despite pointing out that I’d left a blank slot in the WTF category in case I needed to recategorize it. That seemingly minor detail becomes important in a minute. *Lofgeornost* got 8 votes in ‘WTF’ (tying for the win with *Ansible*) and 6 as a perzine. If the latter 6 are shifted into the other category, then Fred gets the win running away, or if the 8 WTFs are moved over to perzine he’s a close second there to *This Here...*

However, here’s where it gets awkward, and this dodginess causes doubts in other categories, although the perzine / WTF confusion is perhaps easier to demonstrate in this case. Shifting the 6 perzine votes to WTF is possibly less problematic, and logical to the extent that more people went for the title in the latter category than the former. It’s also observable that the WTF winner(s) with 8 votes demonstrate less interest in the category than the perzine winner with 16. Let’s therefore consider that more ballots may have submitted a full slate of choices for perzine than they did for WTF. If it’s argued (as I would) that *Lofgeornost* counts as a perzine, then those who voted it as WTF might then wish to transfer it to the perzine category at the expense of another title. Conversely, though, moving perzine votes to WTF frees up a slot in the former category for another title. With the possibility, maybe unlikely, but still, that all six votes go to *The White Notebooks*, then *This Here...* still gets the nod but only by the proverbial gnat’s cock. At this point we then have to look at the fact that *\*brg\** and *Quoz* got one vote each in ‘perzine’ and two and one respectively in ‘WTF’, which muddies the waters further, as does a combined total of 9 for Andy Hooper’s *Captain Flashback* in those categories.

At this head-spinning point I suggest you begin drinking heavily, as I typically am. Maybe you’re already ahead of me...

The low voter total especially (23), the category confusion and such do potentially affect things, especially in the ‘Best Fanzine’ and ‘Best Genzine’ categories where the results were much closer.

As far as I’m aware, though as always willing to be corrected, the most recent issue of *Trap Door* was dated December 2018, and thus ineligible for this year’s awards, as it was stated upfront and several times throughout the ballot were for work first published in 2019. Nevertheless it got

three votes in ‘Best Fanzine’, a category in which the top three were close (*Banana Wings* 13 votes, *SF Commentary* 12, *Chunga* 10), so an “oops, sorry” change from those three voters, if they’d been called on it, could have resulted in a tie or indeed a win for Bruce Gillespie.

‘Best Genzine’ was, as I might be wont to observe, tighter than a nun’s chuff on a holy day, with *Banana Wings* and *Chunga* tying for 12 votes and William Breiding’s *Portable Storage* getting 11. There’s also three arguable votes here: one for *Trap Door* (ineligible?), one for *Alexiad* (perzine?) and one for *Random Jottings*, which has generally been considered a perzine except for certain specific Corflu issues - I voted for *RJ #17* (Corflu Fanthology) as a ‘Special Publication’, as did 8 others. A requested change in any of those three could have resulted in any one of three outright winners.

There are further down-ballot examples of votes which should have been queried, perhaps notably *The Rose Motel* (a 2017 publication) getting a vote in each of the ‘Special Publication’ and ‘WTF’ categories.

John Purcell might argue, with reason, that, well, this is what people voted for and anyway it’s all a bit of unimportant fun, an argument which is essentially correct to an extent. However, when you’ve got five categories where the award recipients might legitimately wonder “did I really win?” that rather takes the pin to the fun balloon.

I’ve given a little consideration to whether I ought to decline the perzine award on the basis that its provenance might be dodgy, and for all I know other faneds might be thinking along the same lines when they see the numbers. That, though, as seriously as I already take the management and process of the FAAns, may be a seriousness too far.

You might be aware by now that I’m retaking the reins as FAAn award administrator for Corflu Concorde, so this is my last minute of shouting from the terraces at the ref on the pitch (footy analogy).

Shout at me all you want, I’ll engage with you...

## FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

Well, there we were: watching Liverpool amble towards the Premier League title despite a little stumble that had seen them exit both the F.A. Cup and the Champions League in a month and then, whammo, like a cheap sci-fi novel, the world turned to shit. Zombies wander the land, flouting isolation rules as though it’s an extended Bank Holiday and the sun has come out, and supermarkets are stripped bare by giant mutant locusts that refuse to obey the stay at home orders of their reptilian overlords.

Back in the dim mists of time around 2005, whilst retraining as an archaeologist after having been made redundant by the Probation Service, I was in Romania on a student training

dig. It was April, so the Spring weather was erratic at best and the work of excavating what was supposed to be a Roman villa was hampered by days of brutal, sideways rain. The site was just outside Alba Iulia, in Transylvania, known as Apulum whilst part of the Roman Empire from the second century A.D. It's a fascinating place, with a large medieval university, a huge baroque fortress, brutalist Ceauşescu era blocks of flats and, at the time, largely still-empty supermarkets as the country struggled to find its place in the capitalist era. Potato and lemon pizza anyone?

Of a two-week dig, the sideways rain washed out about 5/6 days. It's impossible to dig a site properly in the rain as it destroys a lot of the stratigraphy (gosh, a technical term, I must be a scientist or something), although most commercial units in the U.K. wouldn't admit that for obvious economic reasons, and the site director, the former head of department at Birkbeck College, University of London, was having not just kittens, but raging great polecats because he'd never have access to the site again.

On the penultimate day of the dig, we were worked to last light to try and make up time and, on an exhausted coach ride back to our digs on the university campus, the question was asked whether we'd have a light last day so we could hit the bars and celebrate before the eight hour train journey to Budapest and flight home. My response was a cynical: "Ian (Haynes, the head of archaeology at Birkbeck at the time. Now up in Newcastle) will have us out there even if it snows."

The next morning I woke up late. Neither of my room mates (hi Greg and Mark, I'll make sure you see this) had roused me for breakfast (thank fuck, the breakfasts were bloody awful). I got out of bed, walked to the window to draw the curtains, and, as I looked toward the Cold War era guard tower in the distance (remarkably, it was still kept manned) couldn't fail to notice the six inches of white stuff that had been dumped on the ground by the storm that had blown in from the east overnight. When I finally appeared in the cafeteria where the sadistic bastards were still serving "breakfast", the inevitable first question I was asked was what I thought when I looked out the window that morning.

"I nearly shat myself laughing..."

To add insult to Ian Haynes' injury, the next day, before the grand trek to the train station, was spent in glorious late-Spring sunshine, tee-shirt weather, drinking beer and eating ice cream in the town square with not even the vaguest hint that snow had ever fallen at any time recently.

That story obviously reflects my attitudes to this season's Premier League title race. Don't get me wrong, I know the current pandemic of CoVid-19 Coronavirus is serious and I sincerely hope fatalities and serious consequences for individuals are kept to a minimum all over the world, but, in

such grim circumstances, every silver lining has to be dragged kicking and screaming from its cloud. Speaking as someone who has come round in an intensive care unit on a ventilator, it's not much fun and even the extremely hallucinogenic effects of some of the drugs can hardly be called entertaining. I'm just taking the pleasure where I can in a situation that, should I contract the virus with my pneumonia scarred lungs, may prove to be even more stressful than it already is.

The season is over. There's absolutely no way it can restart in any reasonable timeframe. With the virus expected to peak in the UK around July, the current public lockdown, due to last three months into June, will no doubt be extended. It might be lightened a little, but mass gatherings will not be on the agenda until September at the earliest. The season IS over and next season will have to start late, so there will be no alternative but to null and void season 2019-20 and start afresh with season 2020-21, which may also have to be truncated, but in a pre-planned way obviously. The Football Association know it, the Premier League know it, anyone with half a brain and a sense of social responsibility knows it, and it's not just football in the U.K. that's affected, it's the game worldwide and the worldwide calendar of interconnecting tournaments.

And, just as the sun appeared to warm us on that Spring Saturday in Romania, so does the thought that Liverpool are unlikely to be able to run away with any future Premier League title in the same manner they threatened this season. Unfortunately, I was unable to get in on the panic buying toilet paper act sufficiently to enable me to give full vent to my pleasure.

Player contracts run from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, so they are timed to run season-to-season, not year-to-year. Once the season is voided, the transfer window will open and it's not unreasonable to assume that Manchester City will embark on a mammoth rebuilding of their side. They know they need at least one centre-back, a defensive midfielder, and some other defensive cover. It's also unlikely that Tottenham, now under the management of Jose Mourinho, or Everton, with Carlo Ancelotti in charge, won't make strides to strengthen. And that's all before any developments at Manchester United, Chelsea, or Arsenal.

On the other side of that coin is the likelihood that at least three and possibly as many as five Liverpool players will be pursued by the Spanish giants of Real Madrid and Barcelona, and footballers being the superstitious beasts that they are, some might conclude that fate has decided it's time for them to move on in order to win more medals.

Yesterday's winner can all too easily become today's lame duck when it comes to sportsmen and women, a charge being aimed at Mourinho after his stint at Manchester United despite actually winning trophies. There's also the age factor to consider with a fair few Liverpool players



coming up to that “last big pay-day” range of 27 to 30 years old. Of course, the vagaries of the transfer market can't be predicted, but it's highly unlikely that more sides won't strengthen whilst Liverpool have to go again from a standing start at best.

So there you have it, another football column that says precious little about football being played on a pitch because there's beggar all football being played. Maybe I should dig out one of the copies of Wembley, the old Waddingtons F.A. Cup sim boardgame, that I own, and report how much I cheated to get Tottenham to the final. Soccerboss was a pre-computer age management sim, Soccerama did much the same but from a player's point of view. There are others, some of which I own, some I'm still hunting down. I won't even go into the number of emulated ZX Spectrum footie sims that I own and the devil's own job I had getting them to run under Windows 10. I could even start writing a cricket column that features absolutely no cricket...

## LOCO CITATO

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

**Leigh Edmonds** writes:

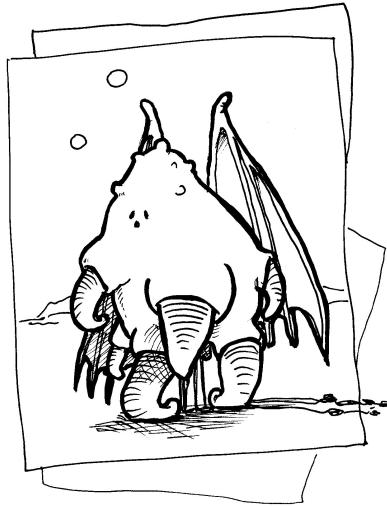
Here is it 2 March (probably still 1 March where you are) and it's loc time. The reason for this is simple, having found both *BEAM* and *Banana Wings* waiting for my on my email yesterday I was so confounded on the decision about which one to read first that I went off and did some cleaning in the kitchen instead. Not too much, just enough that it was noticeable. This morning I considered my horrible dilemma again as I turned on my computer, to find *This Here ...* waiting for me. Three good fnz in two days, my cup runneth over. Anyhow, since *This Here...* will be less demanding, I thought I'd read it first.

*[[I'm sure you'll deem me uncharacteristically nice by thanking you not only for your engagement and interest in the fine fanzines of the age, but especially for your reliable response. I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention your conrep in BEAM. There'll possibly be insults later, of course...]]*

I was also attracted by the photo of a boot on your front page. I used to wear boots like that, only they came from Tasmania with the brand name Blundstone. I think I started wearing them back around 1980 and kept wearing them. A pair would last me a couple of years and when they wore out I just went into the shop, asked for 'size 12 Blundstones' and walked out with the box under my arm without having

to try them on. Other times I just put the new pair on and told the shop people to throw away the old ones. Happy days indeed. Feet are a long way from the rest of me and so I didn't pay them much attention. Then they started to demand attention by hurting when I went for my morning constitutional, sufficiently so that I went to the local pediatrician who took one polite look at my Blundstones and said that was my problem. Next thing I'm in a shop called 'The Athlete's Foot' or something similar and they are getting me to walk on a machine, taking measurements and making muttering noises. The end result is a pair of not inexpensive shoes that make me feel like I'm walking on feathers. They wanted to know if I wanted a bag to take my new shoes away in but I told them they were staying on my feet, they could do what they liked with my old boots. The thing I hadn't realized then but did later, is that these new shoes don't have steel toe caps so I don't have to take them off every time I'm confronted by a metal detector.

*[[Blundstone's are available here in the US at posh outlets (eg Nordstrom) and go for about \$200 a pair. I'll take me Doc Marten's, ta...]]*



March 2 All that stuff about where to hold the coming Corflus went over my head. I did think, though, that the idea of holding a sort of Corflu Nasfic because poor North American fanzine fans wouldn't have a get together for a year was a bit reminiscent of all the wailing and gnashing of teeth that went on when we were bidding for the WorldCon in '75 so somebody went and invented Nasfic just so North Americans would have something to attend because they wouldn't come to Australia. I can understand the cost problem which is very real for some of us older and less than rich fans but there are other factors I think. I don't know that politics is one of them because even though I get very cranky when thinking about the political leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom and our Commonwealth, I'm sure that there would be enough fans at conventions that could be got together to do a rousing rendition of 'The Internationale'. What really puts me off about thinking of international travel these days is the idea of the painful 14 hour flight and then the horror of having to get through customs and immigration where a bunch of goons treat everyone as though they were prison inmates. I still remember with some dread arriving at Honolulu on our DUFF trip in 1974 after an overnight flight from Auckland and standing around for what seemed like hours as we were interrogated in turn. It wasn't so much that the goons who let us in were evil, just that they didn't want to be there and we didn't want to be there so there was a certain

environment, shall I say. I'm told that things are much worse these days. Maybe I'm just over that kind of treatment these days, even for the sake of what I seem to recall Sam Moskowitz saying would be 'unendurable pleasure indefinitely prolonged' which is what I'm sure a Corflu is.

*[[Also relating to your next paragraph, but after the successful first Corflu outside North America, Leeds (UK) in 1998, I recall at least a semi-serious suggestion/bid for an Antipodean one in Airlie Beach, spearheaded, as you would expect, by Eric and Jean. I suspect what kiboshed that would have been the likely inability of R Twidner and Ted White to attend, thus knackered their unbroken attendance. Fun idea, though, but I'd put it in the same boat as Tommy Ferguson's plans for the anniversary of Irish Fandom: excellent plan, not necessarily a Corflu as such, although with the elements that make Corflu what it is...]]*

Of course, in Australia these days any meeting of fanzine fan population occurs when Bruce Gillespie and I happen to be in the same place at the same time, if you don't count ANZAPA which is doing very nicely, so I am told. It's a bonus if Roman Orszanski and Kim Huett are there, of course.

*[[Certain Fishlifters (hint, hint) may have comments on the longevity and viability of ANZAPA, of which they are dedicated members...]]*

I agree entirely with your comments on *Dr Who*, but it's still better than just about anything else on the box these days. Valma and I are currently watching *The Originals* on the box which is really just a soap opera in which, if somebody is killed, you can never be sure that they will stay dead. We watched and enjoyed *Arrow* but haven't caught up with any of the spin offs. In the end most of those shows turn into soap operas in which the fantastical elements stop them from becoming too tedious to watch.

The ins and outs of the politics of your Footy is even more confounding than the politics of the AFL (Australian Football League to you). We do hear about the latest going on of FIFA and UEFA but they seem to be even more convoluted and venal than ordinary political politics. Sport seems to have that effect on people.

*[[FIFA and UEFA have garnered a reputation for being corrupt. Dave Hodson (and John Oliver on TV over here) are well informed on the topic...]]*

I gather from David Redd's letter that he is one who would join me in a rousing rendition of 'The Internationale'. Your comments add to the overall pinko tone of this issue and I hope that your comments on the failure of "trickle down" economics doesn't reach the readers of the Murdoch press because they would find it very hard to believe and probably upset their brainwashed minds. I'm sure that our glorious

leaders in the Australian coalition government (Liberals, right wing fascists and National Party, even further to the right) would ban such thought if they believed they could get away with it. Give it a few years and they probably will.

Thanks for the gorgeous photo at the end of my letter. If it wasn't for his reputation I'd have him around any time. And I note that John Purcell has turned to the dark side, by which we mean Windows 10. I did it too a week ago and I'm not a happy camper because all my saved passwords seem to have disappeared or, if not that, the new software is ignoring them.

You and Mark Plummer are right about fandom and fun. When Valma read an academic article I'd written about fandom in Australia she rebuked me because I'd forgotten to say that we were in it because it was fun (so I added it in). This past weekend I was down in Warrnanbool where an old time fan was having a show in the local gallery and he commented to me that in fandom we *used* to have fun. He and Valma are right. I don't know that fandom these days is any less fun but I think that what we write about on many occasions is not fun. The state of the world these days is certainly more dire than back then when all there was to get angry about was the Vietnam War and the military-industrial complex. It might also be that I have less energy to expend on having fun than I used to have or that life in general has ground a lot of the fun out of me. Even despite all that, sitting here reading and responding to *This Here...* is a lot more fun than most of the things that I have to deal with after I finish writing this letter, so I'd appreciate if it you kept publishing.

*[[I really do appreciate that encouragement. (Jeez, what happened to the fuckin' promised insults?) But yeah, as I mentioned in a previous ish, I am having capital F-U-N with this This Here... here revival ((c) M Strummer), and also with BEAM, twelve, thirteen years in now, which I do feel has been newly energized by some fine co-editor who shall remain unnamed, as much as the title took a step up with the addition of Jim Mowatt (since departed) in that role approx 2,346 years ago. Fanac, baby!...]]*

Finally, I loved your missing poster on your back page. I don't know who he is but if you replaced his photo with photos of at least half the members of the Melbourne Football Club team it would be appropriate. Now that's a reason they'd be unhappy, I write with a forced grin on my face.

*[[FYI, Mo Salah...]]*

Before I forget, I found your comments on taxi driving interesting as usual. I've used taxis a few times of late since I killed our car and payment is always encouraged by credit card. No tipping involved as far as I can see but I have yet to work up enough bravado to ask any of the drivers how

much they get paid and how they get paid. You are a brave and hardy bunch from what I can see.

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From: 4367 Globe Ave, Culver City, CA 90230

March 2

Heath Row writes:

I received *This Here... #21* from the N3F mailing service and read it in the car while waiting for my son [who was] doing a flute lesson. I enjoyed it tremendously, and will keep my eyes open for more recent issues.

*[[Thanks for that, and thanks to N3F for the forwarding. This loc arrived as a handwritten letter, and while not quite as scrawly as those I used to get from Steve Sneyd was nevertheless - er - challenging to transcribe. Apologies in advance for whatever I've got wrong...]]*

The discussion and debate about the FAAn awards, categories, and whether people who withdraw should be explicitly recognized was interesting. My take is that when people withdraw from consideration they next [wouldn't?] say "Don't give me the award if I win", but "I'm not running". So to recognize someone who withdrew is silly and normally disrespectful of whoever does win. Naming a winner who withdrew basically says that person would have won or should have won instead of whomever did win. Fascinating, the variety of opinions on the matter.

*[[My BEAM co-editor, Ulrika, considers me totally hypocritical in that I have declined to be considered for certain fannish honors for which my name is occasionally mooted, and yet I'm wholly against formal "withdrawal" from the FAAn awards, insisting that the will of the voters should prevail. However, I have no problem at all with anyone publicly stating that they'd rather not be considered and ideally advocating for other contenders (as is my personal method), trusting that voters for whatever honor is under consideration would be disinclined to give a nod to anyone who's stated that they don't want it. Then there's always the option that an award winner could refuse to accept, however churlish that might look (but would likely guarantee that they'd never be considered again) - the most famous example probably being D West's refusal of the Rotsler Award. Later note: now having got this year's FAAn award voting numbers, Bill Burns' efanzines.com and Steve Stiles still got votes in their respective categories, despite a clear statement on the ballot form that both had expressed their wish to not be considered. Whether this was a case of voters not paying attention or just saying "bollocks" I have no idea. Most readers know that I'm not in favor of*



*"withdrawal" from the FAAns causing votes to be rejected, though I've no issue at all with anyone saying as loudly as they like that they'd prefer the voters looked at someone or something else...]]*

I also thoughtfully read 'Deauville the Damned'. I'd separate the two topics, perhaps. There's a slight difference between separating the value of a person's art and their personal lives, and whether long-standing awards should be renamed in the light of changing views on the person whose name is used for an award. Both are examples of cancel culture, and both are rich discussion topics. The naming of public places is similar to award naming in some ways, but perhaps another thing entirely.

*[[I'm hoping that, in addition to clocking more recent issues of This Here..., you'll also find your way to BEAM #15, which turned out (unintentionally) thematically to concern itself with "cancel culture"...]]*

On the awards side of the discussion, I look at it like this: awards are named after people because that person in some way represented the spirit of the intent of the award - or were otherwise historically important somehow. That's fair, even if our understanding of the person changes over time.

Awards are given to people, some who might be honored to be associated with the [award-named-after] person and some who might not be. What is the point of giving an award to someone who is offended by or hurt by the award's namer? Doing so neither fulfills the promise of the award nor honors the recipient. So are we left to people declining an award... or only recognizing people who are OK with whomever it's named after?

*[[Fair point, but realistically who knew that Jeanette Ng was going to have an anti-Campbell rant? However, knowing that she was a nominee for the award, she could have alerted the organizers of the "acceptance" speech she'd be making in the event of the win, but chose not to do so, unless you credit her with making a last-minute decision to denigrate Campbell. The former scenario is in my mind even more egregious than her stated opinions, which she is naturally entitled to hold...]]*

That said, I do like a straight line to history, or lineage, so I mourn the loss of some names. But my interest would more squarely fall on the intent or spirit of the award - who are we recognizing? Thanks for giving me a reason to think about that. Now I want to read Van Vogt!

Leigh Edmonds' recommended FAAn award categories seem sensible to me, as does the idea that someone withdrawing



takes them off the ballot rather than declines an award if given.

I also appreciated Jerry Kaufman's recognition of George Phillies for describing the N3F zines. As the current head of the N3F directorate and former editor of *The National Fantasy Fan* - my numbers are Vol 9 #1-2 (June 2009) through Vol 70 #2-4 (December 2011)... returned to original volume numbering under my stint - much of my fanac is through the N3F and to a much lesser extent LASFS and various zines and apas I come across. I will have to check whether Jerry joined!

*The Incomplete Register* and *The Zine Dump* are new to me, so I will have to check them out. [...]

*[[TIR is currently moribund, and seems likely to remain so since no other FAAn award administrator has wanted to take it on. The Zine Dump is happily still going, however. Both are available at efanazines.com. Later update : TIR will be revived, since I'm doing the FAAn awards admin gig again...]]*

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From: penneys@bell.net

March 4

**Lloyd Penney** writes:

Behind as usual, that's me. I've been doing some editorial work I might just get paid for, and that's my story. (Did some I won't be paid for, but that's more than okay.) And once again, I am three issues behind, and that's issues 24, 25 and 26 of *This Here*... Off I go, and maybe a large coffee might help me out...

24... I am still checking to see if CBD is legal here, and what products are available, if any. It might be as good a dietary supplement as Omega-3 and CoQ10, but the legality of cannabis products here seems a little fluid right now, with our Conservative government ready to ship us back to the 1800s with their outdated attitudes. If they are available in caplets, I might give them a try.

*[[AFAIK, HempWorx can legally ship to anywhere in North America and the EU. [www.hempworx.com/jenfarey](http://www.hempworx.com/jenfarey) ...]]*

Money is so tight here, what with Yvonne now firmly retired, and me unable to find any work, coming up on two years now, so we did not vote for TAFF. Next time, when we might be in better shape. I tried to vote in the FAAn Awards, too, but couldn't make any decisions, and got so busy, the deadline flew by.

The unpaid editorial work I did was for my fifth issue of *Amazing Stories*, and I just finished my editorial part earlier today. I will give you a scoop in that one of the articles is by *Amazing* owner **Steve Davidson**, and it is about the much missed **Steve Stiles**. I am not sure when it will be printed, but when it is, it's an issue to get.

I am not into ska music at all, but I do know the name Jackie Mittoo. Much of his performing life was right here in Toronto, and he co-owned a music shop here called The Record Nook. A couple of local stations would play his music during special theme shows, and I'd bet you could find something on the CBC Gem site. Music fans might like to know that if they followed the music scene here for any period of time in the past, the El Mocambo is on its way back, and re-opening in April.

*[[Indeed, I could have mentioned that Jackie emigrated to Toronto in the mid-'70s and was a fixture there, recording at least three albums, setting up a record label (Stine-Jac) and, as you say, running a record store...]]*

**Leigh Edmonds**, I would swear that Molson muscles, referring to a beer-assisted paunch, was a full Canadian term, but given Molson Breweries seems to be everywhere these days, I am willing to share. I will trade that term with another, one from Toronto-born Mike Myers, a Scarborough suitcase: a 24 of cans in a thin cardboard casing.

*[[“Molson muscles” is a Canuck term, as I thought I made clear? I was pondering what other jurisdictions might call it. Try to keep up...]]*

Years ago, I had none other than **Rob Sawyer** telling me about some of the fan-produced Trek films, and while I have yet to see any of them, I gather that some of the actors often participate, and fill similar roles on screen. I admit to watching *Discovery* and *Picard*, and I'm enjoying both.

*[[As are we...]]*

25... Boy, could I use a good hot beef vindaloo right now. There are a number of really good Indian restaurants we could go to, but there's that tight money again. Ah, no TAFF for me is fine. If I have to be an example, I might as well be a bad one. My SF editorial career might take off, and where would the fund be then? I certainly agree with your support for **Alan White's** *Skyliner*. For a year or so, I was the only loccer he had, so I am certainly subjective here, but his graphic work was and is spectacular.

*[[I locced Alan too, actually...]]*

No more comments on Brexit, it's done, but now, with our western provinces having their regular hissy-fit about never getting their fair share, the newest word in Canada is Wexit, the separation of the Western provinces into their own little banana republic. Sigh, this comes up just about every generation now, and it looks and sounds more ridiculous than ever. Now to see if Western politics turns more Republican than it already is.

*[[All the dire warnings from rightist elements about some kind of appalling 'World Government' are having their effect, since the implication from the I-wish-it-were-still-the 1800s crowd is that, inevitably, “the world” tends to include many people who are various shades of not-exactly-white,*

*and we can't have that, can we? The classic sf predictions of inevitable unity look pretty fuckin' silly now, don't they?...]]*

[...] I have had some lucky opportunities come my way, and the fact that the *Amazing Stories* editor-in-chief is a Toronto local helped, too. Given I cannot find work, I have to try. I'd rather not sit on my ass and watch the TV, as appealing as that sounds sometimes. I have to get out and do something. Taking authors out for Japanese? Hm, I do prefer Indian...

26... I could use some new boots, but we are enjoying a relatively snowless winter, so my shoes will hold out for another year or so.

More Corfluvian news here and there... I have only been to two, and I think that two will do. Tight money, once again. It does get repetitive, but it is my current reality, and efforts are on the go to change all of that.

Hey, you bunch of ruffians, be nice to our man **Chris Garcia**. Wife's in the hospital right now, getting a broken wrist repaired, and he has to deal with twin boys, too. (Actually, maybe now's a good time to send him something, just to razz him. At least, he won't feel alone.)

*[[Cue much wicked conjecture as to how the wrist was broken...]]*

It's nearly my bedtime (yeah, right, hello insomnia, my old friend), so I will get this fired away to you on the assumption that you've already gotten a start on issue 27. Thanks for all this, and a *Beam* loc soon.

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From: dave\_redd@hotmail.com

March 5

**David Redd** writes:

Since you asked: No, the final of the Welsh Cup moves around the country and was at Parc y Scarlets (the Rugby regional ground for Llanelli) when we went. Unfortunately a couple of decades ago Swansea, Cardiff and the other teams playing in the English league departed - I don't recall why, but suspect economics rather than politics - and attendances plummeted almost instantly until our ancient Cup is now a minority interest. Pity.

*[[Yeah, pity indeed, and I didn't know that the English league playing teams had doxxed out. I suppose it makes a sort of sense in that "minnows" such as Cardiff and Swansea might not want to risk injuries to members of what's inevitably a smaller squad by committing to the extra fixtures required by participating in an additional competition. Mind you, if I was a local and diehard fan of, say, Llanelli, I'd be well into the Welsh Cup, I'm sure. I could draw a parallel with having been to more than a few games at Hitchin Town, for example. (Who they? Well, exactly my point)...]]*

And talking of economics, I should have remembered without you reminding me of your useful notes (in *TH12*) on the "rational actor" theory behind capitalist exploitation to destruction. I think of it more as "greedy logic" encouraging the exclusion of externalities until anything which doesn't make maximum short-term profit is someone else's problem. This is the logic which has turned World Book Day (today, as I write) from a day about reading to a day for merchandising character costumes. Parents battered by the advertising buy Elsa and Spiderman outfits, not books.

*[[Blimey! You actually remembered (ok, after prompting) the content of 'Jumping on the Couch'! I'm humbly gratified by that. The "rational actor" theory was my own interpretation of Eliyahu Goldratt's 'The Goal' contention, putting my own typically reductio spin on it. My point, and my fond hope which remains, is that capitalism will tend to destroy itself in the longer term, an opinion which is a major modification of Marxist theory which did not and could not possibly have envisaged the current media landscape wherein the bewildered and deliberately uneducated masses are misled into supporting a system which is against their own fundamental interests. Marx posited that the proletariat would recognize their own oppression and thus ultimately rise up against it, which at the time of his writing wasn't out of the question, but it sure as fuck is now, innit?...]]*

More economics: Mud as a group were good live but not stadium-fillers, hence a fund-raiser gig in one with Mud as headliners lost money, I recall; the organisers should have had a different main act or used a concert-hall for cheaper overheads. No reflection on Mud themselves though.

We await the promised golden dawn of the Brexited UK next January, some of us hopeful, some not. The buying up of UK companies by Chinese, US or Arab money goes on apace. At this rate even on the most favourable trade terms imaginable, any coming UK boom will benefit the owners not the UK. As you the economist note, trickle-down doesn't work any more. The money valves have stuck open in the up direction.

*[[Blue passports, David. Oh, wait...]]*

Should say more because more good stuff in there, but eyes are tired. And *BEAM* has arrived! Thanks for that and for *TH*...

P.S. Arg! Forgot February Is Shite! This corner of SW Wales is always at a low ebb in February - people hard up after Christmas, no tourists visiting, farmers short of produce to sell. A new squeeze this year was the big firms weathering their February low by cutting some staff to a three-day week. Hit one of my best friends and my son-in-law. And that's before coronavirus and panic stockpiling took effect. Hope March is better for all, both sides of the Atlantic.

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From: mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

March 23

**Mark Plummer\*** writes:

Turning my attention to *This Here... #26* now, it seems less a bulletin from three weeks ago and more a message from an alternative world, a world with pubs and restaurants and food shops that don't resemble an English-speaking equivalent of pre-reunification East Germany. [...] Oddly, in this era of social distancing we've become especially social, what with long online chats yesterday with Justin Ackroyd and (separately) Spike, and a virtual pub meeting in the evening with eight people in six different houses hooked up on Skype and drinking beer 'together'. Obviously it's no substitute for the real thing, but the beer was better.

*[[It definitely seems to be the case that we're being more communicative in non-physical ways. Jen, for example, has been doing a daily 'Facebook live' video, and it's surprising to an extent what we do have to convey, since there's a kind of presumption that nothing happens while we're moping about on lockdown (whether officially or just effectively). I'm not the first, nor will I be the last to mention 'Journal of the Plague Year', I'm sure. But yeah, the Faniverse (or at least the bits of it we engage with), some members of which have known each other for 97 years (ahem) are to an extent rediscovering, or at least recognizing the renewed importance of the sense of community that binds us...]]*

No immediate comment on Corflu Concorde beyond that we certainly hope we'll be allowed out of the house by then. I think slotting in Vancouver or Seattle between Bristol and Belfast is a good move, although now the latter will likely be the year before a Glasgow Worldcon. I suspect considerations like that only effect a handful of people, but the Corflu audience is already small.

*[[I think I counted 26 people in the Corflu Heatwave group photo, implying an attendance of 27 with Spike behind the camera, although I saw John Purcell mention a tally of 33, presumably some one-dayers from Friday and Saturday making up that number. That's not a big crowd, and puts this Corflu among the least-attended, but there were the factors of difficulties of travel (some virus-related, some because of the location) and a definite unwillingness of some to go anywhere near Trumpistan - one wonders if the latter consideration might also transfer to Borisville...]]*

I await #27 with interest to see your views on the FAAn Awards this year. I think I am largely happy with individual winners. They don't entirely match up with my personal picks but there's nothing I'm unhappy with, not that I'd admit it if there were what with my non-combative style. The low turnout is notable. I mention that only because I realise there's a danger that you might overlook it, and so this is just an oh-so-gentle reminder to you to have an opinion about it. Perhaps some frequent zippy little fanzine



could poll fans to find out why they don't vote, inviting them to pick between a bunch of broad reasons: forgot, don't feel sufficiently knowledgeable, don't care, ballot form was accidentally destroyed in a bizarre gardening accident and so on. Thus you could subtly trick them into voting for something.

*[[I'm writing this bit before I've seen the full breakdown - and I'll aside that I do tend to write these comments very contemporaneously with the receipt of a loc. I'll generally also leave such comments as they are since they represent the genuine reaction of the moment, unless I need to go back and correct something that's factually wrong or has been overtaken by subsequent events. This shows that even a nominally "frequent" fanzine can't necessarily be on top of everything. I had heard a few snippets of info about the awards voting numbers (including the low turnout you mention), and while I'm curious as to how those leaks, if we can call them that occurred, that's less important than the kind of psephological analysis that causes just about everyone except Claire and myself to flee in terror. As I write, John Purcell has promised the numbers within 24 hours, so we shall see. Oh yeah, and ignoring the 'perzine' category, as I would, I'm also "largely happy" with the results, although I do wish there's been just a bit more traction with U4E, but that having been said, two awards for Ulrika ain't to be sneezed at into your elbow. I could also be said to have been "largely happy" with the actual results from 2019 too, my criticisms there were coming from other directions, as I suspect they will this time...]]*

I am of course hugely flattered by the comments of the Mighty **Leigh Edmonds**. I note that in your comments back to him you refer to 'The Doc and the Magister' which is possibly the title of a satirical Russian novel, or maybe they're a crime fighting duo. I think in that respect I prefer 'Magister and The Doc'. Should be good for a six-episode season on ITV2.

You asked, "[W]hat is your ideal for TAFF, then?" I should start off by saying that I do recognise it's an ideal and possibly it's something that never truly existed. Even if it did, part of that ideal has vanished as the world changed,



and it's a loss I can't entirely mourn because those changes have brought undoubted benefits.

It comes from my early days in fandom when I read accounts of fan fund trips gone by, where delegates got to finally meet people who had previously only been names in fanzines and letters, people who they felt they knew but had never met, and who they were probably meeting in person for the only time. Maybe we'll be going back to something like that, what with the current crisis, its likely fallout, and the general sense that we should all be flying less anyway, but we've now had a few decades of relatively easy and affordable intercontinental travel, although I stress that I do accept that there were and are many people who couldn't easily make such trips without TAFF and its ilk. I always remember a conversation at a British convention with an eminent former fan fund delegate. He was looking back to the days when TAFF winners would come to the UK for two or three weeks, be wined and dined, parties thrown in their honour and all that; and then they would wave goodbye and we'd never see them again.

"Whereas now," said the eminent former fan fund winner, glancing down the bar at a recent American fan fund delegate who was currently on, I think, their third trip to the UK that year, "you can't get rid of the buggers."

So part of it is a specialness that was a product of its time and I would stress again that I'm not advocating undoing the advances that have eroded that value. My ideal in our current context is for fewer, and ideally no self-promoted candidatures.

Rather I'd like to see fans identifying the people they want to stand and encouraging them to do so, especially fans at the destination end saying, hey, wouldn't it be great to see X over here this year? Campaigning should be done by supporters, not candidates.

I'd like to see nominators lending their names to candidates they genuinely support and then promoting that candidate through whatever channels are open to them. I accept that in modern fandom it's less clear what constitutes "well-known and active fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean" (per the TAFF ballot) and it's entirely possible for somebody to be both well-known and active while being completely unknown to, say, me.

But I think having just two people willing to nominate you at the destination is a pretty low bar to demonstrating that you are "well-known and familiar" and yet often administrators end up scrabbling around trying to find nominators for prospective candidates. If I'm counting correctly, six of the ten nominators in the most recent race didn't actually vote.

*[[Before we get on to your final bit on the topic, I'm compelled to express wholehearted agreement with the principles you evoke, with only minimal reservations and perhaps corrections, if I might be so smarmy about it (who,*

*me guv?). I've no inherent objection to "self-promotion" as such, but as usual I think I know what you mean here. I believe you're referring to a person who themselves decides they'd like to have the gift of the trip and acts to make that happen, rather than some perhaps more modest potential candidate who might be surprised to be urged to stand by others who consider them deserving of a go. I've got a suggestion along those lines which I'll be getting to. I'll confess to some distaste at the last two West-East races. I don't need to revisit my issues with Mike v Ann because they've been detailed here. I actively supported (though did not act as a nominator for) a candidate in the 2019 race, even though it was obvious to anyone with even my few remaining braincells that Geri Sullivan was going to be the prohibitive favorite, because Geri is Geri. In that case also, several nominators did not bother to vote. It irked me somewhat (referring back to your "can't get rid of the buggers" quote) that she'd been the recipient of a gifted trip in 2016 via the Corflu 50, something evidently uninteresting to the TAFF constituency. But ey, Geri is Geri and has unquestionable fancred. I still hew to Don Fitch's contention (discussed in some previous iterations of this fish-wrap) that TAFF should be an encouragement to future fanac rather than a reward for that of the past (or present), but I'm realistic enough to recognize that this isn't much the case. It's thorny, really, and we all have specific conditions in mind when we're assessing candidates and who gets our votes. Perhaps the most important conclusion is that TAFF can still engage bits of the Faniverse, and, yes, remains relevant...]]*

I'd also prefer to see candidates demonstrating some engagement with the idea of fan funds before they seek to become beneficiaries. I purposefully name no names there, but will instead emphasise again Alison Scott's candidature for GUFF, somebody who's done a huge amount for fan funds across decades. At this point I've no idea whether GUFF will go ahead this year now -- although I expect not -- but once again I'll try to take advantage to your pages to encourage people to vote for her anyway.

*[[That's a fair point, but see above the 'Fitch theory' on encouragement rather than reward. It's demonstrably the case that Jacq Monahan, for example, engaged thoroughly with TAFF both during her trip and her period of administration, despite having basically zero previous there. Admittedly, others haven't stepped up as well as she did. That is to me a prime consideration: the potential of future greatness rather than a nod to past glories, even though we might expect a track record of past glories to continue...]]*

Chuck [Connor] mentions and you agree that "people used to knock out an issue" come awards season. Maybe some people did but people would say that of us, typically at Novacon back in Nova days, and I always rather resented the implication. We've produced issues at most Novacons for

twenty-five years -- and will likely continue to do so -- because it's nice to have a calling card, as well as the practical saving on postage costs arising from hand distribution. That really was what it was about.

*[[Yes, and as usual I was insufficiently clear that I was referring to the FAAns more than the Novas (although that wasn't guilt-free either), since as you might remember I also tried to get an issue of good old 'Arrers' out so I could distribute it at at Novacon. Probably typical of me that the remark was supposed to be an unsubtle dig at Lichtman. I really should be more forthright <falls off chair>...]]*

\*M Strummer (who feels mildly sorry for the few remaining fans who have yet to acquire a Farey-bestowed nickname)

*[[More than a few, because I really stopped doing that some time ago. Most US fans have escaped the application of Farey-created monikers with, I guess, the notable exceptions of The Eminence Grise and the Mighty Rob!...]]*

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From: claire.fishlifter@gmail.com

March 24

Claire Brialey writes:

On 19 February – yes, yes, more than a month ago now – we got three fanzines in the post. Sort of. That gave me a problem since, whenever I thought about writing to you, I'd be struck by a recurrence of the earworm that afflicted me on that morning, meaning that the phrase was looping round and round in my head to the tune of That Bloody Football Song 'Three Lions'.

This was particularly maddening since I'm not fond of the song itself – for all that it was recorded by The Lightning Seeds, whose stuff I generally like – not least because it served to remind me that yet another men's European Football Championship tournament was set to take over televisions, pubs, and public spaces generally for a month this summer. (In all my comments on football, I'm not saying that I think other people shouldn't like it, for all that I don't personally understand the appeal of the sport itself or its fandom; there's no need for everyone to like all the same things, and it doesn't matter what people enjoy if it doesn't hurt anyone else. What makes me so grumpy about it all is just that: while I'm clearly in a minority, it seems that when it comes to football there's an assumption that we do all like it and it should take priority over anything else – particularly when there's an international tournament on.)

More specifically it's down to the facile chorus, endlessly reiterated now as a less tuneful chant, asserting that 'Football's coming home'; annoying enough to listen to, it drives me up the wall as a concept, both in its tribalism (which you will doubtless tell me is part of the point with sport) and apparent sense of English entitlement, and in its

evidently erroneous assumption that football had somehow gone away. To borrow Lilian & Christina's phrase, this never happens... except that now, of course, having taken weeks to write this letter, it has for a while – along with many other sport and arts events and science fiction conventions, as viral pandemic got even more of a grip on modern life than football usually does. And so there's currently little sport on tv, and now most public spaces including pubs are barred to us all – which is the inevitable consequence of first trying a voluntary approach to keeping British people out of pubs. But maybe I shouldn't make assumptions about British national characteristics; we've recently demonstrated that, far from keeping calm and carrying on, we can't even be trusted to buy loo paper properly.

*[[It's startling to realize that I managed to completely avoid ever hearing 'that song'! I quite agree that "Football's coming home" is nationalistic bollocks, but good for revving up the crowds, as nationalistic bollocks tends to be. As far as me and I suspect most if not all other "thinking" (and dedicated) fans, we'd agree with you that football never left. One important and I'd suggest positive aspect of creating a viral terrace chant for the national team is that it's fundamentally unifying in the sense that many longstanding club rivalries are put aside as we rally round the Lions, although in terms of results and actual old-school passion and grit you'd do better with the Lionesses. The tribalism you refer to (and while I might consider that a somewhat harsh descriptor, I can't really fault it) has clear parallels in the Faniverse, doesn't it? I do, however, tend to refer to our lot of hobbyists as being 'Balkanized', which I deem more accurate, and that Balkanization is sadly evident even within the microverse of fanzine fandom...]]*

Nonetheless, during the most recent men's football World Cup tournament I managed to repurpose That Bloody Song by imagining crowds cheerfully singing about a shirt decorated with sea lions. And I was amused during a recent rewatch of *Frasier* to encounter the episode where Niles, having been adopted as personal psychiatrist by a successful basketball player who'd hit a dry spell, spent all of the preliminaries for the game he attended being utterly baffled by the rituals and protocols until Daphne translated it all for him into what happens at the theatre or the opera. We all have our enthusiasms.

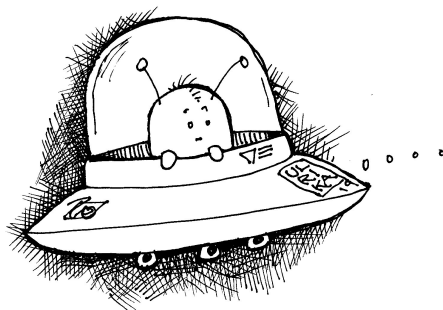
That's perhaps partly why I've found **Dave Hodson** on football to be surprisingly readable; he's writing from within a fandom, and telling me about things that interest him which I didn't previously know or think about much, even when they involve a depth of detail which is more baffling than illuminating (it's quite similar to listening to one's partner's parents recount a story of local life, deemed of potential interest to the partner because they know the participants – but, having not encountered any of them for about thirty-five years, some further explication and

triangulation is usually required before we get to the main point). I do read occasional pieces in *The Guardian* about football, as well as about the sports I enjoy, because I'm interested in the broader context of what's going on especially when it's written about well – and in #26 I found my attention caught by Dave's account of the UEFA/Manchester City stand-off. I'd also seen some passing references before to the growing use of VAR and the sense that it wasn't quite right yet, on which point I refer you again to cricket and DRS (the Decision Review System, for those who don't know but care at all); there, I think, much of the criticism now comes down not to the technology itself but to tactics around referral. I'm even slightly familiar with the current fortunes of Tottenham Hotspur through reading John Crace's round-up of the week, which allows him a more personal perspective than his daily political sketches, because he's also a longstanding fan of the club which he appears to regard as an essential act of quiet desperation.

And maybe Barney Ronay – who also writes in *The Guardian* about cricket, which is why I chanced to read his comments on this – will be proved right that 'Sport has always been at its best as a source of celebration and collectivism, as a note of beauty that stands outside the real world. A Euros in 2021 does at least offer the promise of some kind of re-emergence. Distant as it seems, it could even be a time of joy.' Due to so-called social distancing we saw a Prime Minister's Questions last week without baying displays of testosterone, so maybe anything's possible.

*[[I thoroughly agree that Hod-me-son, certain similarities in style notwithstanding, is a much better football writer than I am, and I'm made up to have his contributions in here. Dave can certainly write with more authority on broader footy issues (while still retaining his fierce Spurs allegiance) whereas I've been more parochial - this is a reflection of the nature of our respective teams, of course...]]*

In any case, last month we got three fanzines in the post and I thought of you – and that had happened even before I got the earworm. This is because one of them was the new *Inca*, featuring – among a variety of other discussions and digressions – a loc from subsequent FAAn award-winning letterhack **Steve Jeffery** which mentioned the previous issue arriving 'in the middle of a small flood of fanzines (*Banana Wings*, *ANoR*, *This Here...*, *SF Commentary*)...' and reminded me of how long I've been meaning to send locs to Skel (which needs to happen next, in the hope both that he's going to publish again soon but not *too* soon), and to Bruce (where I can argue I've been waiting for the concluding part of his Massive Anniversary Issues, although even responding comprehensively to just one of them is daunting; my excuses have run



out there, however, since *SFC 101* finally arrived last week), and, of course, in various guises to you. So this is my best available attempt at the last of those, and indeed it would have been a loc ostensibly on #25 and threads that still seem relevant from however many other issues it is since I last wrote – although it turns out that was after #17, over eight months ago, so maybe not backtracking all that much would be better for everyone – had it not been for the even more pressing task of proofreading a rather hefty new collection of Algis Budrys non-fiction which has been put together by **Dave Langford** and **Greg Pickersgill** (*Beyond the Outposts: essays on SF and fantasy 1955-1996* – and very good it is too, although, as I might have indicated, quite long).

The other fanzines from that delivery, incidentally, weren't entirely fanzines in the post in the sense that *Inca* #17 was. One was actually a small box of beer (that is, three cans of beer) from BrewDog's Fanzine beer club, which **Jim de Liscard** has delivered to our house since it won't fit through his letterbox and might end up somewhere random in his street. Since then, mind you, I've learned that there's an IPA (brewed by Fort George and Grapes of Wrath) which is actually called Fanzine and is an award-winning one at that; looking at the results of this year's Oregon Beer Awards – whose number of categories make even the Hugos, never mind the FAAns, look rather minimalist – is too distracting, so I should focus on the original type of fanzine instead. The last of ours came by courier rather than in literally in the post since it was our box of *Banana Wings* #76. If only I'd have been clear about those caveats in my own head I wouldn't have an earworm and you'd have been spared nearly 1,400 words of largely irrelevant introduction. Still, at least this time I've made it easier for you to cut my letter down.

*[[But not by so much. While such a long loc to what Leigh Edmonds would term a "little" fanzine (thish a bit less "little") might be deemed overkill, what interests me very much is the evidence of the thought process at work, something I try to include in my own screeds. The difference between us there, I think, is that your stuff tends to be more coherent (don't fall off the chair) whereas I'll have contradictions in viewpoint. I do go back and edit previous comments but mostly for sense and context. I'll keep in statements which might be reversed later to show the development of thinking and, hopefully, some indication of the causation of that development...]]*

Since I started thinking about writing you this letter, of course, the plague has come for the countries we both live in. But I should still write to you about the actual contents of your fanzines – at least the most recent issue or two – and what it made me think about, rather than all the things which we arguably read fanzines to get away from.



That train of thought, however, naturally brings me back to *Homefront*, **Rob Hansen's** excellent collection of writing by and about British fandom in the second world war; I've been enthusing about it all over the place and see no need to stop now – especially when it's relevant. *Homefront* shows not only what fandom was trying to do collectively but also what many individual fans were thinking about and doing; in particular it showed me that daily life was not only focused on the fact of being at war. For sf fans, continuing to read and discuss sf and contribute to fanzines and maintain their fannish friendships clearly helped to take their minds off the grim reality of the rest of life. And we can do that now. **Alison Scott** commented recently that being part of fandom means knowing a lot of people, across generations and in a lot of places; while big networks inevitably mean that we hear about a lot of bad things happening in people's lives, right up to relatively frequent news of people's deaths (and, as you used to, I have a default assumption that everyone in fandom is roughly the same age, although my impression of this hasn't moved on for a long time and thus I often have to remind myself that it's even less true than it used to be that everyone is in their early-to-mid-30s), that's just a by-product of something much more positive, i.e. having a lot of connections. Certainly we've spent a lot more time chatting over the internet and emailing people in recent days than I can ever remember happening all at once. Until we got even more thoroughly locked down I felt quite guilty not being out volunteering to shop or otherwise help older or vulnerable people in our neighbourhood; but at the same time I was glad to be able to maintain and reinforce connections and avoid too much isolation within our own worldwide community. Before, perhaps, it's too late.

*[[Indeed. See 'Burn It Down' thish...]]*

You might note that my long silence meant that I ducked the opportunity to comment topically on the categories for this year's FAAn awards, the fall-out from Ulrika's editorial in *BEAM* #14, or the somewhat lopsided TAFF race. Indeed, I've been unresponsive (again) for so long than you've managed to put out another splendid-looking issue of *BEAM* in the meantime and it's probably safe to go back in the water there too. And of course you're promising us lots of further commentary on the FAAn awards this time, now the results have been announced, and so off we'll all go again. So I might as well make some attempt now to jump back into the conversation and respond to #25 and #26 together, even though some threads are running which started even before that (I somehow missed the point in previous issues when many of you started reminiscing about females you fancied in the 1970s; all I can say is that never mind appearances, if any of you encountered anything sexier than Felicity Kendal's voice then that would be something to write about).

*[[My candidate for sexiest voice ever would actually be Jenny Glover...]]*

[...]

[I] note my appreciation for **Dave Hodson's** #25 summary of the political situation (pre-plague, perhaps), part of which chimes rather well with my own personal perspective: "I have to accept that most people don't think like me; they value intangibles like "sovereignty" and "patriotism", whilst I'd prefer some concrete positives like a National Health Service and a social security system that actually supports people." Is that the part **John Nielsen Hall** described as "idiot politics"? That seems a shame.

I wonder whether Corflu 37 was the last sf con before even more of the barriers went up? It looked on the livestream as though a good time was being had, and not even with a sense of truly desperate fun; I presume you'll have secured **Tommy Ferguson's** Corflu 50 write-up for one of your organs, and I look forward to that. When Tommy's idea surfaced of a 2022 celebration of Irish Fandom, 75 years on, another thing I felt rather guilty about was having strongly encouraged Rob Jackson to move away from a 2020 UK bid to 2021. The rationale was straightforward, having noticed that the 2015 Corflu in Newcastle was about eight months after a Worldcon in London and that some fans from outside the UK couldn't quite manage two trips over in so short a time; the Dublin Worldcon in 2019 was going to sit in precisely the same relationship in time to a 2020 UK Corflu, and it was surely better to maximise the opportunities for USian fans, in particular, to get to another Corflu over here. At the time it seemed less likely there'd be as much overlap between the potential Corflu crowd and the attendance at the Worldcon in New Zealand.

*[[Unintended consequences at play, but then who knew we'd be rooted in place for the foreseeable? Corflu Heatwave has already been referred to as 'The Last Con Ever', and those present seemed to concur that it was a fine send-off, as apocalyptic and distressing as that thought is...]]*

But now things have moved on; Corflu Concorde is thus scheduled for Bristol next year (in late March; the weekend before Easter, to enable overseas visitors to take in both Corflu and Eastercon if they want to, although some UK attendees might find themselves compelled by financial and/or time constraints to choose between the two), always assuming the new normal is not too unlike the old one. I'm enthused by the idea of a Vancouver Corflu in 2022 – if the relevant airlines still exist by then, we might even be able to get there on airmiles – and I do wonder whether a convention that's a lot broader in scope than a Corflu, in the summer or autumn of 2022 perhaps, would suit Tommy's purposes better; in particular, it would have an easier route into explorations of all the rest of Irish Fandom – which I think could be really interesting, and I'd hope that would be the case for quite a lot of fans from a variety of backgrounds – than would be the case with a convention rooted in fanzine

fandom. But I'm sure he'll keep everyone posted about his thoughts and plans.

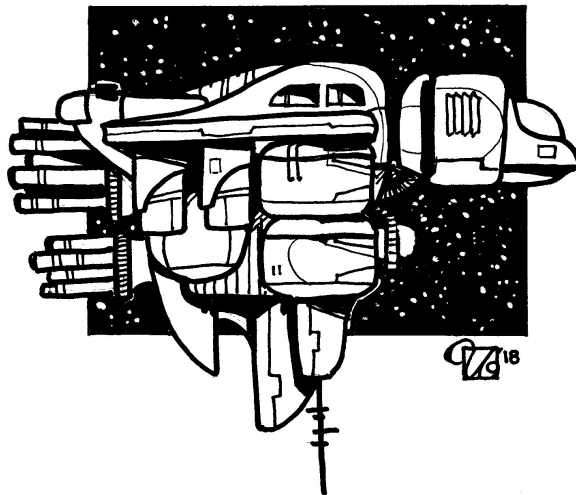
**David Redd's** letter about the depressing economic realities of the old normal reminded me of some illustrations in the past few days showing how, for instance, air pollution has dropped in the wake of largely involuntary but significant plague-induced behaviour changes, along with speculation about what sort of economic and social changes might result in future, assuming the future isn't essentially post-apocalyptic. One huge risk is obviously that many small businesses, in particular, will go to the wall and that the collapse of the local high street will be complete along with many people's jobs and livelihoods; but, given that even conservative free-market-inclined governments like ours are now putting many billions into support for workers as well as businesses (and effectively renationalising the railways for six months at least), the starting point for rebuilding could look different in all sorts of ways, no matter how difficult it will be in a lot of respects; there will be both political and economic principles cautioning against thinking about everything differently, but clearly also some other pressing and practical considerations. It's rare for me to display optimism, and this might be a remarkably odd time to start; but even as only one option on the whirling Wheel of Emotion, along with incredulity, anxiety, and despair, it seems to be coming around from time to time.

Mind you, one question about Plague Times suddenly looms large: when is **Leigh Edmonds** going to read fanzines now that he can't be taking all those train journeys?

OK, you made me check: 'Margaret' Beck in the TAFF race in 1985 (#25)? I'd always seen her referred to as Martha, and I can't find any different now – or was this just a brain fart?

[[Brain fart...]]

On your specific question, I've very rarely voted to Hold Over Funds in a fan fund race, and I didn't this time; sometimes that's just because, while I might not be overwhelmed with enthusiasm by all the candidates, it's rare for me to think someone so unworthy and/or unsuitable that I'd want them to suffer finishing below Hold Over (I have similar views about No Award for the Hugos, and so – other than in the Sad Puppy Years where there was a bigger principle at stake and my unsuitable/unworthy trigger was frequently reached anyway – often just don't vote in categories where I've got nothing positive to contribute). I appreciate your point that this time around it was the race, not the candidates, that prompted your opinion (and action).



The DUFF race in 2012 resulted in a final verdict of Hold Over Funds, as I recall due to objections about the timing of the race; **Murray Moore**, who was one of the candidates, consequently switched to campaigning for Hold Over, and the other candidate, **Juanita Coulson**, won the following southbound race in 2014. The winning 2012 DUFF candidate 'Holdover Funds' did have the grace to put in an appearance at the Australian Natcon that year, though:

I will confess that, for me, not voting to Hold Over also often comes down to being too Establishment, and not wanting to create problems – especially with TAFF and its 20% rule – for administrators who I usually know well and work with. But I vote No Preference more often than you might think (and in a multi-candidate race it quite often comes in after my top one or two choices). I have voted against at least one Eastercon; for the one I definitely remember, I wasn't impressed by the bid and didn't want to go, so I thought I should stand up for my views – even though it meant doing so in a room full of people who were by that stage feeling warm and fuzzy about the potential convention. No secret ballots for Eastercon bid sessions.

Of course, **Michael Lowrey's** TAFF trip is now another casualty of the plague, with several of the countries in Europe where he'd been invited to meet and stay with fans closing their borders shortly before he would have left and the Swedish national convention, his first destination, being one of the earliest cons to announce its cancellation. But, assuming that this hasn't entirely changed life as we know it forever, there's no question that he'll be entitled to make a TAFF trip at some later date. In that respect, there being a range of conventions across Europe which could help to anchor the trip (as mentioned by **John Purcell**) should be a very useful thing. I was a bit perplexed, though, to use John's own term, at his surprise that this year's trip should have been formally directed to the Eastercon (i.e. the British national convention). It's not just an unthinking tradition that the Eastercon has been the anchor location for Europe-bound fan fund trips unless there's a European Worldcon. As well as being relatively large for a fan-run European con – in the range of 800 to 1,200 attendees – with the associated opportunities to meet a lot of people, including from non-UK nations, there's the reasonable expectation that the con will know about fan funds and have both a budget and a programme that can readily accommodate a fan fund delegate. The Eastercon customarily represents the most significant fundraising opportunity for fan funds in Europe. As delegates visit more fans and cons in more countries

across Europe, I'd hope that opportunities will increase to raise funds at fannish events in other places too, and the Eastercon won't need to be so significant in those terms. Fan fund delegates with enough time for a trip of several weeks have often managed to go to more than one convention in more than one country in recent years, and if they're able to continue that seems to be both a positive trend and in the spirit of the whole thing.

I keep expecting fan funds to change quite drastically, though; all it needs is a couple of delegates with less concern about the origins and history of their fund but plenty of ideas about what makes sense in the twenty-first century, and suddenly we'll be doing things very differently. If indeed we're doing them at all. As I write, the DUFF and GUFF races are still on, to send delegates to the Worldcon in New Zealand in July – but whether the Worldcon will be able to happen, and whether people will be able to travel easily and safely from North America and Europe to New Zealand and Australia, is a bigger question than who to vote for.

Nonetheless, while the GUFF race continues and the prospect of a trip and CoNZealand remain possible, I encourage people to vote for **Alison Scott**, who fulfils my trifecta for a fan fund delegate: she's already contributed a lot to fandom (including considerable support for the fan funds); she can be expected to continue to be an active contributor to fandom subsequently (including being a sound and effective administrator); and I think she'd make an excellent delegate, who people in the Antipodes will enjoy meeting and who I'd be proud to see as a representative of sf fandom in Europe. She's also just lost her gig as an Eastercon Guest of Honour due to the plague, and I think she deserves the recognition.

And there's a daytime tv segue just waiting to happen: on to the FAAn awards. In describing your 'slate' for the awards in #25, you unpacked your view of the idea of 'Best Overall Fanzine'. This is the only category this year that I felt definitely didn't work: whatever the intention of its supposed independence from the other publication categories, it makes them all feel to me like subsets of it, not least since it seemed very likely that the winner of one of them would in any case take the overall category as well – and so it proved, which is why I'm now comfortable continuing to make these criticisms in public! I appreciate that awards in other spheres have a 'Best in Show' category, but those are more often a specific run-off between the winners of the others, judged in a way that can't work for the FAAn awards; that's what the No.1 Fan Face designation already does, albeit across the board. Actually I suspect the publication categories are due another overhaul, since the dividing lines aren't quite right; some genzines have a more personal feel, some perzines feature regular external

contributors, most 'watchamacallit zines' could easily fit into one or other of the first two categories, and this year again muddied the waters about whether 'special publication' could include a single issue of an ongoing fanzine. I do think it makes sense to have more than one award for publications, though, along with two for writing and two for art; perhaps the way to go is 'fanzine' and 'one-off publication', although I don't at all object to maintaining a genzine/perzine split too. Over to you, boss.

*[[Yep. I have Ideas...]]*

Thanks to **Leigh Edmonds** (and to you) for kind comments about my own fanwriting, but I've long accepted being the B-side; there was an odd and embarrassing period when I got more awards attention than Mark – probably not coincidentally during a period when I was enjoying fandom, fanwriting, and life generally – but even when I liked what I was writing the natural order of things is clearly that I'm the second-best fanwriter in this house. No self-pity in that, although I admit to some envy of the particular skills of all the fanwriters I most admire, including Mark. The top results in all the FAAn categories – and I write this without seeing the detailed voting breakdowns, for which I am psephologically panting, of course – reflected some of my own votes, other than those for *Banana Wings* obviously. And thanks to everyone who voted for us, although that's a pretty small value of 'everyone' given the apparently small total of actual voters.

*[[I well recall that you've consistently opined that you're not even the best fanwriter in your own house, but in many ways that's a moot point. Without attempting to list or name those we might deem the eminent fanwriters of the day (but we'll see who got nods when we get the FAAn numbers) it's utterly apples and oranges innit? We can observe some stylistic similarities between, say M Strummer and yerself, and some commonalities of topic, and the same could perhaps be said for U O'Brien and N Farey (and obviously I lied about not naming people, so I might as well go on) but we also note substantial differences in both areas. Is it a fair comment to imply that co-editors create a gestalt? It may be relevant to observe that we'd expect co-editors to continue to influence each other, even those who are long-term life partners (and long-term fanwriters) like you and Mark (or Jerry and Suzle). Now, that presumed influence is much more demonstrable in a collaboration like BEAM, I think, as perhaps it also was in Chunga, Apparatchik and Attitude. I've tended to believe that topic is a substantial driver of peer acknowledgement as well as consistency and prolificness. The dim bulb flickers as I may now comprehend what Mike Dobson was getting at with his "orange slices for everyone" format (although I remain to be convinced that this was a thought-out motive) which is: how do you objectively compare something like one of Hooper's*



*historical 'Worldcon' articles with, oh I dunno, Steve Jeffrey's C50 trip report or Mark's 'For Want of a Spoon', all of which are exceptional writing?...]]*

Good for you, though, in delaying *BEAM* until the voting deadline had passed. I did the same thing in putting *Banana Wings* in the post box – although it was partly a matter of principle and partly a desire to avoid snark. I remember when it felt as though there was no good time to publish a fanzine from early September to mid-November; the cut-off for Nova award eligibility being 30 September, anything produced too close to that was likely to be seen as a scramble to qualify, while anything distributed at or just before Novacon (while obviously being ineligible) was inevitably branded as a pathetic attempt to jog people's memory towards whatever one had done that counted. Even publishing in October could be sneered at not only for trying to do one of those things but for then being inept into the bargain. Well, no, in retrospect most of that was probably semi-friendly joshing – especially given that the Novas had written into their rules that they were just a 'friendly pat on the back' that had 'no vast cosmic significance' – but it certainly felt pretty snarky at the time.

*[[The original plan for BEAM #15 had us pubbing the ish in October or November of last year, but we all know how that goes. Once we got delayed into 2020 I became uncomfortably aware of the need to avoid committing the 'Lichtman maneuver', which I suspect no-one else would have given a fuck about, but still. As it turned out the delay did give us time to work some layout and formatting changes, got us Sara Felix's fuckin-A cover and kept me choffing Advil as, after we'd shoehorned into 60 pages subsequently had to work back up to 64 with the inclusion of additional loccol comments from Ulrika - which, I must add, I had encouraged and was well pleased to get in, so I ought not whine about that shite, eh?...]]*

Which reminds me tangentially that I keep meaning to listen to more Snarky Puppy (and probably to start by actually getting myself a copy of their album *Culcha Vulcha*), for all that it makes me think that it was a missing group in the Hugo Wars...

I was going to stop writing and let you get on with shaking your head and wahfing most of this, but then **Steve Jeffery** surprised me by stating he'd not heard of paneer peas. I just assumed that mutter paneer (as all our 'Indian' restaurants call it, albeit with a variety of spellings, and I assume this is the same dish) aka cheesy peas was a staple of Indian meals consumed in the UK. Mind you, I also have Strong Views about cheese even if they're not the same as Vikki's. Mostly, mine are that good cheese is essential and there are many good cheeses – although if I had to pick just one forever (long pause to contemplate long list, and to wonder whether I could argue for all of a short list, and to reflect on

individual cheeses – St Agur, Barber's Reserve Cheddar, Gruyère, Manchego, Ossau Iraty, Vacherin Mont D'Or – and salivate a lot) I would probably have to come down for Comté. Probably the eighteen-month aged variety. Mmmm.

*[[I too was a bit gobsmacked at Steve not knowing about that standard Indian dish of many spellings ("matter paneer", I think I recall it as)...]]*

Cheese might be one of the areas on which I find myself having to compromise as grocery shopping is overwhelmed by the plague and behaviours. But virtually any cheese would be better than no cheese at all.

[...]

I started this by writing about an earworm, so I should conclude by saying thank-you-so-very-bloody-much to **Chuck Connor** for his *The Sound of Fanac* lyric. But at the same time I have to applaud **Chris Garcia** for apparently doing something with which I've been struggling too much: continuing to have fun doing fanac, and doing what he enjoys. Let's all keep on keeping on, while we can. And thanks for doing that too, regardless of my own recent lack of response.

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From: [jakaufman@aol.com](mailto:jakaufman@aol.com)

March 27

**Jerry Kaufman** writes:

[...]. I was pretty down all winter, and it took awhile to get more cheerful and interested in things, including fandom. So this is the start on a letter about all four [recent issues].

#23. That's an appalling selfie you've decorated page one with. Somewhere inside (can't locate it) you give an alternate explanation for the cut that doesn't involve a fight. I'm glad for that.

Comments on the TAFF race are now moot, of course. I thought that Ann Totusek's platform was better than having no race, or a one candidate race, but only slightly. I didn't know anything about her, and even with a fleshed-out real platform, I'd have likely voted for Mike anyway. But now Mike's trip has been canceled entirely. So not only are comments moot, so is the result.

*[[No, it isn't (see 'TAFfnessabeys' thish). In summary, I agree with the admins, as well put by Johan Anglemark, that Mike is the TAFF winner, just not yet the delegate. The trip is not cancelled, merely postponed...]]*

I liked the Clash's first album immensely and played the grooves off it. I bought their second album, too, and one of the singles ('White Man in Hammersmith Palais') but somehow failed to buy the third - and usually cited as their best - though I've heard some of the cuts from it. Still like 'White Riot' a lot.

Noticed you use a word for “song” or “cut” (or, going back to jazz terms, “side”) that I’ve never seen nor heard before: “slice”. Is this common in Britain, or regional to where you grew up, or is it original to you?

*[[You’ve made me wonder if it’s original usage. One definition of “slice” is “a part of something” (Macmillan) and that’s the sense in which I use it...]]*

[...]

#24. I did not know that vindaloo originated with the Portuguese as “vinha d’alhos”. Thanks for the information, but vindaloo is still above my hot-spicy tolerance threshold.

I enjoy ska when I find it, though I mostly know it through Madness and the Two-Tone revivalists. Andy Hooper is a huge ska enthusiast, however, and if ever I want to get educated on the subject, I’ll borrow cds from him. (He also likes reggae quite a bit, if I’m not misinformed.)

As I said, I’ve only just read this issue and was chuffed to see my name included among your choices for best letterhack. I voted for three out of your four recommendations (can’t recall for the moment who was my fourth).

I laughed out loud at **Pete Young’s** “three English football teams” observation.

#25. I’m sure I said “Happy Birthday” on Facebook, but if that’s the actual birthday cake on page one and not a stock photo, wish I’d been there to have a piece.

*[[I’m sure you did, and no it isn’t...]]*

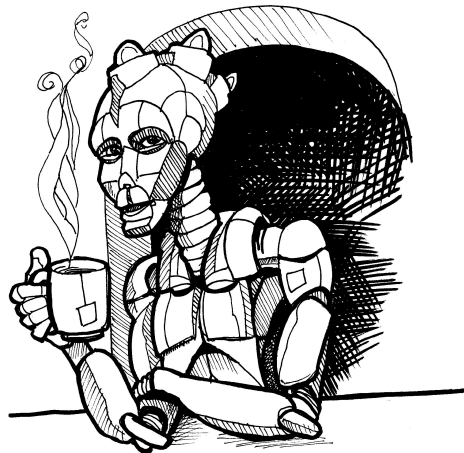
Thanks for the recommendations of various people, zines, and art for the FAAN Awards. Of course, I’ve only read [those recommendations] this week, and voted mostly from my own memory, glances through eFanzines, and discussions with **Andy Hooper** and **Suzle**. Still, I managed to vote **U4E** in many categories. I do hope **John Purcell** gets around to a complete listing of the votes, as I’d like to see how well *Science Fiction Commentary* did. **Bruce Gillespie** gets impressive response in letters, but I think he’s long deserved a better showing from various awards.

*[[See ‘FAAn Unfair?’ column. It was close...]]*

Emmylou Harris is an exemplar, all right.

#26. Nice boot - is this ageless beauty?

I’m sorry to hear how tough it’s been for you and other cabbies, though currently almost everyone who works for a living is in the same aimless taxi. I hope you’ll get one of those stimulus checks - and that



you can hold out until it arrives.

If Mr. Hooper does decide to hold some sort of fanzine-oriented convention here, Suzle and I will support it and possibly even help out in some way. No telling if it’s going to be a Corflu, a Ditto, or a ZineCon (my own construction). Maybe if we were to “market” it to zine communities other than sf fandom, we’d get some new blood - but our ethos and those of other publishing worlds might be mutually incomprehensible.

*[[Oh I had such a good eye-roll at that one that I’ve had to wait a few minutes for the orbs to get back into forward-facing position. Your remarks on the FAAns below suggest that you wouldn’t consider “marketing” to all sf fandom’s zine communities, and yet you blithely suggest looking outside of it...]]*

Though I enjoy both *Dr. Who* with Jodie Whittaker (having previously watched very few episodes) and *The Flash* (as well as *Black Lightning*), I must say I see little difference between them in terms of writing and especially plausibility. ‘Crisis on Multiple Earths’ *[[sic]]* struck me as total nonsense, with its bizarre notions of what antimatter is and does, and its Monitor and Anti-Monitor. All alternate universes are wiped out, but immediately there’s another alternate “mirror” universe? Oy.

*[[‘Crisis on Infinite Earths’ (as it was) largely followed Marv Wolfman’s original comic book script. Admittedly a tough gig to get right, but the faults you cite largely come from that source. The cop-out is, of course, that given the shows themselves take place in some other universe, why would you assume the role of antimatter is the same as it may be in ours? I do get, though, that this is the sort of thing that makes a lot of skiffy fans cringe. I continue to admire the Arrowverse writers’ handling of a highly complex situation...]]*

**Steve Jeffery** mentions Aragorn’s many names. In my early days in fandom, I was much amused by a song called ‘High Fly the Nazgul-o’, a Tolkienesque version of ‘Green Grow the Rushes-o’. The sixth iteration is ‘Six are the names of Strider’.

I could never remember, even after reading the trilogy the third time, what all those names were. Can Steve?

**David Redd** talks about Supply and Demand as it applies to recycling. Here in Seattle, and in the US generally, recycling has lost a bit of luster because China is no longer buying recycled materials from us, and I’m not sure other markets have opened up. I hear about innovative ways of reusing plastics, etc. from time to time, but I don’t think that these have caught fire (so to speak).

I wrote to **John Purcell** about the number of ballots cast in the FAAN Awards, so that I could write a bit about the negative effect of the “One point per vote” counting methodology. Sure enough, as John’s statement in his letter to you implied, “double digits” was more than nine and less than 100 - and as you guessed, it was closer to the former than the latter. John received 23 ballots. That’s only a slender increase over last year, and Suzle and I accounted for two of the increase.

*[[Not quite so straightforward, actually Killer. There were twelve voters this year who didn't participate in 2019. Eight people who voted last year didn't bother this time...]]*

My guess is that these voters (like last year, not even equal to the number of people attending Corflu) all inhabit the same corner of fanzine publishing as I do, and mainly read the same fanzines I do (around ten titles, as I don’t read everything that appears in eFanzines, or is published by the N3F). This is a generalization, yes - you, for instance, read several zines I don’t.

*[[Corflu attendance isn't a voting indicator. I've noted that certainly the last few years, attendees have not significantly participated. Without looking it up, I believe the turnout, if we can call it that, was about 20%. Quite a remarkably low number for a bunch of people who are supposed to be “core fandom”, innit?...]]*

With so few voters and so few titles read, with only one point per listing on the ballot, the chances of ties or very small differences in points are much greater. We’ll know better if I’m right when John publishes the numbers. But I wonder if the FAAN Awards serve any real purpose with this small a voting and publishing pool.

*[[You were right. I considered the argument whether after the last two poor showings the FAAns ought to be retired, but Rob Jackson wants them to continue for Corflu Concorde, and I've signed up for a second go as admin. I wouldn't have said that the “publishing pool” was so small, though. The Incomplete Register 2017 listing named 49 fanzines, 211 fanwriters and 36 fanartists. And that's still “incomplete”...]]*

Maybe the problem has been disseminating information about the awards and the ballot? That might be a factor, but I have seen skepticism about the award in more than one zine over the years, about the voters and administrators. There’s also the fuss many of us raised about the number of N3F zines and fans who ranked high in the voting two years ago. (That was a year with a particularly large number of ballots.) I think these are factors that have suppressed more involvement.

*[[And here I cried “AHA!”, swiftly dialing down to a more wry “Well, well...”. I've referred to “Toronto grumblings” less specifically than I might have, since I was well aware*

*that the appearance of N3F titles in the results was the likely cause, with only Andy Hooper (typically of him) having the cojones to say that he threw up in his mouth every time John Thiel's name was mentioned. No-one else until you just now with your “many of us” has seen fit to fess up. Now it's quite all right for you to dislike or even detest N3F zines in general or anything else in particular. What isn't all right is this sanctimonious bollocks (and utterly mixed messaging) that we really ought to do more outreach, then subsequently getting the arse because other voters favored things you don't approve of. Yes, there's been “skepticism” (putting it mildly) elsewhere about the awards. ‘E B Frohvet’ in particular was all over this back in the day, and although I couldn't ultimately change his mind (since there were those determined to prove his points for him) I did at least make the attempt. The flagrant elitism on display coupled with a lack of wider publicity (whether deliberate or not) is voter suppression...]]*

Anyway, that’s enough. Thanks for the photo of Tina Weymouth, but you didn’t need to include to get a letter out of me. I just had to be in the mood.

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From: [ulrika.obrien@gmail.com](mailto:ulrika.obrien@gmail.com)

March 28

**Ulrika O’Brien** writes:

A brief observation on your taxi stories – you seem to be blaming the lease drivers (and by proxy, the Uber drivers) for the financial squeeze that all cab drivers are in now (or rather were, before Plague-19 landed) and that strikes me as a bit unfair. It may be that lease drivers are, universally, pond scum, but as you say yourself, it was the law that permitted Uber to operate that also created their niche, and presumably the taxi-leasing companies are the ones that set the lease rates that put those poor bastards in the bind they’re in. In my experience, people take the jobs they can find, given very imperfect information about what’s available, and given monopsony control by employers, and do what they have to to get by. If you’re going to blame somebody, it seems to me that the cab companies, Uber, and the law that governs them are more properly to blame. Working people blaming other working people for the shitty state of the economy is precisely what benefits our Dear Oligarchs best. (Feel free to take up a chorus or two of “Solidarity Forever,” here.)

*[[Naturally you're correct that the lease drivers themselves aren't the sole culprits. The original legislation played a part, certainly, but at that time the decisions of the Taxicab Authority to obviate any differences in medallions (some of which had been time constrained as well as geographically limited) and the decision to almost double the number of taxis on the roads were definitely more significant. The cab companies didn't start leasing until a year ago, and while*



*the lease rates might have been originally more reasonable they were "bid up" by arseholes with dollar signs dancing in their heads. There was, apparently, a near-riot at our yard week before last when every lease driver returned their cabs and basically left them in the street, attempted forceful cries of "Oi! You can't just do that!" from cab managers being met by choruses of whatever is Ethiopian for "Fuck you!". But yeah, of course the causes if not the effects aren't as cut and dried simplistic as my rant might have suggested - I did make a semi-conscious decision not to weigh it down with what you're now getting here...]]*

With respect to the lease cab driver who ran the red light, I guess there are some palpable benefits to the Corvid 19 (CDs available in the lobby) shut down of much normal travel – fewer auto accidents. I hear that traffic accidents in WA (that's Washington, not Western Australia) are down 65% since the governor's "Stay Home" order for non-essential personnel and businesses. Which some wag suggested means that 65% of auto accidents are caused by non-essential personnel. Hmmm.

*[[As I observed on FBE, driving to the yard yesterday to get my paycheck I didn't see a single taxi or bus, and the roads were much less busy than usual. Bus service is running a Sunday schedule due to a 70% loss of ridership and a shortage of drivers. The great Irish comedian Dave Allen once observed that, having read that 20% of road accidents were caused by drunk drivers, he could only conclude that the other 80% were caused by sober drivers, who should therefore generally stay out of their cars and let the drunks drive home safely...]]*

On to the meat, now, and the only reason you're actually willing to wait to hear from me: the Corfluvia. I should thank you for your background on the smoke-filled negotiations of siting the convention, since I had a vague outline of recent events, but not nearly all the details. And, as our personal history suggests, everybody sees these sort of non-transparent processes a little differently. I'll be interested to see if anybody disputes your version.

*[[So will I, and I'm happy to be corrected if I got anything important factually wrong, since I wrote my recollections without any reference to the convo of the time...]]*

But speaking of Corflus future, the world has changed radically over the months since late December, when I voiced some of my thoughts on possible Northwest small-conventions future to fen at Jerry and Suzle's holiday open house. At this point, what the hotel and travel industries will be like on the other side of the pandemic is anybody's guess. So for now, I'm going to pretend that we'll all be going back to something like the old normal I was imagining when these thoughts were aborning.

Chief among those thoughts, for Corflu purposes, is my long cherished dream of organizing a small fannish convention at the Sylvania Hotel, in Vancouver. Hal and I have been devotees for yonks, having first found it because it was both inexpensive and very centrally located in Vancouver. I think we first stayed there on a little road trip we took from Seattle with Vicki Rosenzweig and Mary Kay Kare during the week break between the Corflu and Potlatch components of Corflatch in 2000. The Sylvania is a lovely old early 20thC apartment building that's been converted to hotel use. It sits right across the street from English Bay Beach Park, with some lovely water views. Because it used to be apartments, the rooms are quirky and idiosyncratic – generally slightly different from each other, with many boasting full-on sitting rooms or kitchenettes or at least roomy sitting areas with couches. It's always seemed ideal for a relaxacon with lots of little room parties. It's a bit trickier for function space. The lone meeting room claims a 30-45 person capacity, which is on the small side for a large Corflu – which a Canadian one might just be. My thought on that at the moment is radical (for a Corflu), which is to actually use explicit counter-programming in the consuite (or one of two consuites?) to take some of the attendance and distribute them around the hotel. I'm not sure how people would like that idea, since it divides the group up and means there won't be a unified con experience, but it only matters if the attendance on the day is more than 30 or 45. For a Corflu the size of Heatwave, it should be fine. My plan would be to warn people in advance of securing the hotel and bid, so anybody voting for it would know what they were getting. Aiming for transparency again.

*[[I had a look at the Sylvania website and some associated info from Vancouver tourism, and it does look very good indeed, I might say suitably quirky for a Corflu, but that lack of function space is a bit of a bugger, innit...?]]*

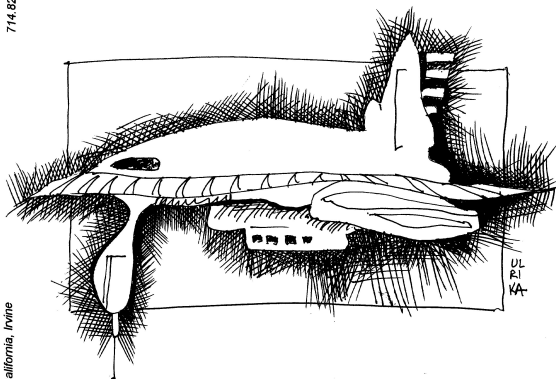


There are other hotels that have caught my fancy in case the Sylvia didn't work out, but the rest of them are in Washington, so they lack the extra Canadian cachet (there's a phrase you don't often hear). I'm sad to report that the Deca Hotel is no more, having been bought out by the Graduate chain. One might still consider it as a venue, but it's chiefest appeal, the penthouse suites we used for consuites, have been converted to a high-priced, concierge-guarded fern bar. But we have alternatives. The Red Lion in Renton, which we used for Prolog(ue) before the Sasquan Worldcon in Spokane worked well for a small convention, has sufficient amenities, and while a little bit outside of Seattle proper, it is both closer to the airport, and considerably less pricey than anything in Seattle itself. I've also wondered if one might not put on quite a fun small event using the two refurbished Victorian hotels in the old downtown of Centralia, one of which is a McMenamins pub, cinema, and pool hall and which would be most conveniently reached by Amtrak train, which stops at the Centralia Station just down the street. Or we could all take a pilgrimage out to the lodge and cabin hotel on the Pacific Coast that Randy Byers loved so much and have big bonfires on the beach. The possibilities just keep getting wilder and weirder in my imagination. At any event, we have some options, if people want to come to the West Coast again, and I have already started chatting with Suzle about it, since she's got the decades of hospitality and hotel experience that I can as yet only dream of.

Well, it's almost noon, so I'm gonna stop there. There's much more to be said on the subject of bringing a Corflu Out West in 2022 or so, but for now this may put some bees in some bonnets, which is always an eventuality deeply to be something or other. Allusions fail me.

*[[I'm starting to think that, as much as we expect things to be "back to normal" at some point sooner than 100 years from now, there's no definitive indication of when that point may be, whatever certain leaders might say. It could be the case that plague issues continue into 2021, Ghu forbid I know, and that implies a domino effect perhaps, or even a free-for-all in which several contenders could be legitimately considered up for the cup here. That having been said, though, it seems sensible to act and plan as though normal service will resume...]]*

714.8c



California, Irvine

## WAHF REPOPULATED

**William Breiding** sends *Portable Storage Three* ; **Pat Charnock**, who also sent the latest *Raucous Caucus*, for which much ta! ; **Rob Jackson** ; **Jerry Kaufman** : "I've fallen behind on my fanzine reading, but I did see that you included a photo of Tina Weymouth just for me. Loved it." Jerry also got a loc in just under the wire; **Fred Lerner** sends *Lofgeornost* ; **Paul Skelton** : "I have been enjoying the recent copies of *TH...*, albeit without feeling I had anything interesting to add to the mix. Will try to do better."; **Taral Wayne** (re: proofreading woes): "Happens to me all the time... even though my proofreader, Walt, used to be a professional" ;

## INDULGE ME

- ✓ **TV GUIDE** : **Chris Clay** correctly observed that I missed a step in lastish's *Doctor Who* generic plot summary: before "(4) Doctor has "ohhhhh!" moment of revelation/realization" I should have inserted "Waves sonic randomly"...
- ✓ **TV GUIDE (2)** : been watching and enjoying *Picard* on CBS All-access and *DEVS* on FX/Hulu, both of which feature Alison Pill, whom I've never seen before, despite her having begun her career at age 12. (Don't bother to tell me all the other stuff she's been in, I already looked.) What a fuckin-A performer! The oddest thing is that she looks almost identical in both shows but couldn't be playing more different roles, one highly emotional (in *Picard*) the other completely emotionless (*DEVS*). She's Canadian, of course...
- ✓ **RADIO WINSTON EXTRA** : I had been prompted to do the Manu Dibango column by having lucked across the group Newen Afrobeat from Chile (!) - "Newen" means "strength" in their aboriginal lingo, and by gawd they got it nailed - Fela Kuti covers an'all. I encourage you to check 'em out.
- ✓ **STIR CRAZINESS** : Shared by Don D'Amassa on FBF: Publix and other Florida groceries are announcing special morning hours just for people 60 and older. The other 10 people in the state are thrilled to have the stores to themselves the rest of the day..
- ✓ **RADIO WINSTON EXTRA (2)** : While working on the ish on *this* old grid of a computer, the newer and flashier one is used to play some background music. I was trying to get a playlist of the Radio Stars, ideally a full album, but so far just managed to get a couple of performances of the single 'Nervous Wreck'. Always been rather impressed that the verse break should consist of the beautifully-sung girlie chorus of "electroencephalograph"...



✓ I've had *two* computers in what we refer to as the Mancave for a while now. The fanzines are composed on this old grid of a Mac, since that's where the 'Pages' software resides, but I do just about everything else on that spiffy yet Windows-poisoned HP on the next table. I can be remarkably slow-witted about the daftest things (as loved ones will attest), and it's only the last day or so that I clocked that it would be a lot easier to keep my smokes in the pocket of the fleece hoody as I flit from machine to machine rather than having to get back up when I realize I've left them over *there*. Still happens, though, also qv beer...

✓ **TV GUIDE CLASSIC** : Composing the above paragraph, I thought of an old episode of *Steptoe and Son*, titled from a script quote referring to the relative affluence of, I think, Harold's latest girlfriend: "Two Toilets, That's Posh"...

✓ Sun over the yardarm? I'm not even waiting until it's over the fuckin' *horizon*...

✓ Ageless beauty: A classic English rose, **Susan Hampshire**...



## MIRANDA

*THIS HERE...* is (mostly) written, edited and produced by: **Nic Farey**, published on [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com) by the Grace of Burns.

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Art credit: **Ulrika O'Brien** (loccol fillos)

✓ **EGOTORIAL EXTRA** : Anyone could quite legitimately argue that there's more important concerns right now than delving into discussions on TAFF, Corflu, the FAAn awards or any given fannish topic, all of which really pale beside the grim reality that some or many of us could fuckin' *die* sooner than we hoped we might. No, we can't blithely do "keep calm and carry on", because life *has* changed for us all. There's a difference, though, between *pretending* that we can dodder along in a state of ignoral and consciously continuing to do things that have been a significant part of our lives. Like fanac. Like maintaining as much of our previous routines as is feasible, a substantial part of which, for me, is doing fanzines. We can't ignore the effects of the plague on TAFF, conventions and such, but we *can* to an extent compartmentalize it, perhaps?

Covid-19 informs our daily lives now, and will inform just about anything we engage with, but it doesn't have exclusive rights.

Stay safe, my friends...

**"...and every step I take takes me further from heaven. Is there a heaven? I'd like to think so..."**