

This Here...

“...suffering from a lack of words from others...” (R Lichtman)

EGOTORIAL

DREAMSCAPES

First up, some *mea culpa*: I failed to record a WAHF from **Tommy Ferguson** lastish, probably because it was a message on FBF and I forgot, him noting that the severed-knob-end shotglass supplied by **Ulrika O'Brien** actually has a name: “dick head”, which may be why she happily entrusted it into my care, considering that highly apposite, perhaps. Also, for unknown reasons possibly related to drink, **Dave Cockfield**'s loc somehow completely escaped the proofreading process, so arg, sorry mate...

OK, so on to the dreamscapes.

I've had odd dreams on occasion which involve me having an affair with someone unlikely (eg Nikki Haley), but before any of you randy lads start drooling about what I'm about to relate (you can scrape that off when it dries, you know), I'll disappoint you all by noting that the “affair” bit is just the *premise* for the dream in that it's a given situation in which the relationship exists but is not depicted in scenes of wanton plunging, which would presumably be otherwise included if the other person in question was an actual object of unrequited lust such as Geena Davis or Laura Dern.

That leads almost inevitably to a mention in a previous incarnation of this swearsy publication (pure aside, here) which distressed **John Nielsen Hall** massively, in which I stated that I'd always considered Benazir Bhutto to be “highly knobable” as the pre-woke vernacular would have it, no doubt also stunning **Claire Brialey** into wordless

disapproval with perhaps a guilty tinge of amusement at my appalling incorrectness.

So anyway, in *this* unusual dreamscape I'm having an affair with Patsy Rowlands, an actress likely best remembered for her several 'Carry On' appearances and later in the Sally Army sitcom 'Hallelujah!' with the execrable Thora Hird. Patsy was most often typecast as the dowdy put-upon lady, but had the occasional sideline as a repressed nymphomaniac, something she apparently quite enjoyed doing. The photo is from 'Carry on Loving' (1970) in which she transforms from the dowdy mistreated housekeeper into the glam seductress with her eye firmly on snagging Kenneth Williams (hilarious in and of itself in retrospect, given Williams' proclivities, and his abject horror over her attention is likely quite genuine). So *this* is the Patsy incarnation with which I am involved - she would have been 39 years old at the time and long-divorced from her only husband.



Here's where it gets complicated, and actually skiffy.

I'm 63 years old now, and the squidgy bits don't perform as much as they used to back in the day when I had, well, let's say “a reputation”.

The obvious solution was for me to build a time machine and nip back to inform my 30-ish self (in the late 1980s) that we're going to get the end wet with Patsy and thus *he* needs to build the time machine to scoot off to 1970 and make it happen. I think this assumes that I'm not handing over the device since I'd then be stranded until previous me had done the dirty deed(s) and brought it back, and another spell under Thatcher's rule had no fuckin' appeal at all.

And so it came to pass. I'm now recalling that Patsy isn't actually in the dream much at all, since it's all mostly the setup that's going to make *l'affaire Rowlands* happen.

I then consider, with a bit of wonderment, that, wait, I built a fuckin' *time machine* to achieve this venial objective, and so how did I do that? Fairly obviously, having given the instructions to my 30-year-old self, I would later remember them, creating a perhaps dodgy closed timelike loop which Stephen Baxter would no doubt reflexively denounce as a *terrible* use of science. Or even of science fiction.

It's all good.

March 2021

RADIO WINSTON

JAH B, GOOD



I got tagged on FBF by several people with the news of the sad demise of Bunny Wailer, which of course I'd already clocked and been saddened by, which is not to say I had the arse over the shares, nor should the sharers by that comment, since all were punted with communal sadness and respect for the legend.

It's always seemed a bit off that, while utterly revered in Jamaica, Bunny seemed to be substantially ignored elsewhere, but that was most likely because he preferred to stay at home rather than engage in world tours like Marley (significantly) and Tosh did.

Neville O'Riley Livingstone was the *de facto* brother of Bob Marley, since his father took up with Marley's mother and they were raised together in the same Trenchtown house, later meeting another local lad, Winston McIntosh, and started assiduously practising their harmonies in the tradition of just about every other Jamaican vocal group of the time. All influenced by Curtis Mayfield, Bunny's high tenor was the closest to Mayfield's style, and his harmonies and leads showed that off a treat, 'Let Him Go' (lead vocal) being a fine early example.

<https://bit.ly/3r4lcW4>

Not atypically, the nascent Wailers were fairly comprehensively fucked over by the Jamaican producers and record companies, but found a sympathetic ear and avid promoter in Chris Blackwell of Island Records, who shepherded 'Catch A Fire' into existence and undertook promoting the lads as if they were a rock band, as it turned out a perceptive move, but one that almost immediately sundered the group.

The set itself comprised just two slices written by Peter Tosh and *none* by Bunny, since Blackwell had apparently decided that Marley was going to be his focus. The accompanying tour caused Bunny to be the first founder to leave (in 1973), since apart from (I presume) having his songwriting excluded, he primarily didn't care for the cold weather and the problems in maintaining his strict Ital diet. Tosh went shortly thereafter, and so Blackwell succeeded in his aim of having Marley as the star and focus.

Bunny remained back in Jamaica, releasing the well-received 'Blackheart Man' set in 1976, including the slice 'Fighting Against Conviction' (aka 'Battering Down Sentence') about his 14 months jail time for marijuana possession back in the late '60s, a thing just about any dedicated Rasta ended up with on their resume, as these were times in which the use of the herb was universally frowned upon.

<https://bit.ly/3ICA7pl>

While the more gregarious Tosh and Marley were on concert travels, Bunny didn't tour again until 1986, yet effortlessly sold out Madison Square Garden - maybe the thirteen year wait to see him live had something to do with that.

It makes somewhat of an interesting contrast that Bunny, the most spiritual of the original Wailers, didn't concentrate on political statements (like Tosh) or what were basically barely-disguised fucking songs (like Marley - and yes, you can quote exceptions at me all day, and some of you probably will), but in much of his recorded output remained a devotee of the poppier dancehall style, to the extent of having an actual *line dance* (the Electric Slide) created for one of his slices, 'Electric Boogie', a minor hit for Marcia Griffiths in 1990 covering the 1989 original, which is here:

<https://bit.ly/3tz1aEI>

Bunny suffered a stroke in 2018, but still managed to show up to accept the Pinnacle award the following year. Also unfortunately, his wife of over 50 years, Jean Watt (who was suffering from dementia) went missing from their home in May 2020, and the stress induced another stroke a couple of months later. Last word to Jamaican producer Copeland Forbes:

"The three founding members of the legendary Wailers are now together in Zion, and, as they sang on 'Rasta Man Chant,' 'one bright morning when my work is over, I'll fly away home.'"

FAANWANK WORD

BOLLOCKS

Congratulations to the award winners, who will learn their fate in the March 28 Zoom ceremonies (tomorrow, when you receive this), starting at noon PDT, 8pm UK:

<https://bit.ly/3c5ur46>

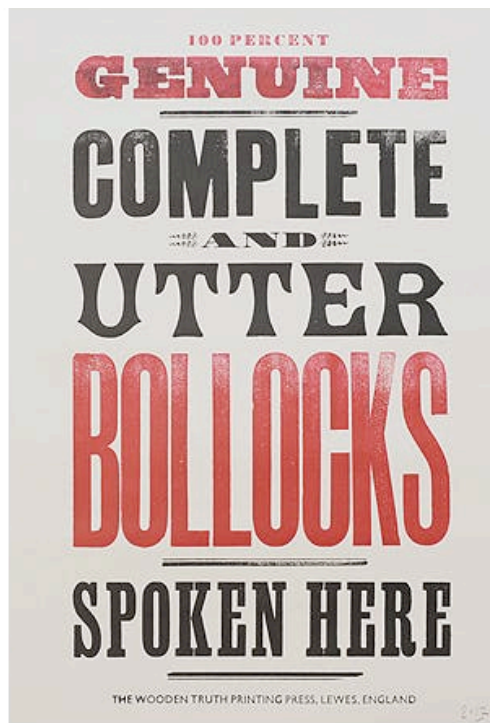
Going forward, I received comment along with one ballot which I'll include here, with editorial remarks in the usual format.

John Hertz writes:

Too many categories. Dilutes the Awards. I dislike "Letterhack" separate from Fanwriter; fanwriting is fanwriting; also this distinction suggests a possible award for correspondence that isn't good writing - note that Harry Warner, whose name was on this award once (a change I'm for, I never have liked "the [name] Award") was admirable not only because he seemed able to loc everything but also because his locs were good. I'd not separate Genzine and Perzine; a good perzine is better than a bad genzine. This year in particular the excellence of *Outwords 71/Afterworlds* is made awkward: is it a one-shot (as you list it)? A genzine? Both? Calling WOOF a one-shot is silly: it's an apa that appears annually. "Letterhack" or "Loccers" or whatever you call it has got [Mike] Glycer back in, presumably because he didn't think to exclude himself explicitly; mind you, I still think *F770* even in its present electronic-only form is among the best (as a zine; never mind as a website, grr), he as a fanwriter is among the best, I think he's wrong to exclude himself - but he did.

[[Let's just call that paragraph "misconception central", shall we? It cries out for some enterprising writer to concoct a response as if from Blackadder to your Baldrick. Despite your admirable involvement in the fanzine Faniverse for a number of millennia, it's clear that you're either not paying attention or that you're adhering to some fixed conceptions. The "letterhack award" is still the "Harry Warner, Jr. Memorial Award for best Fan Correspondent" and has been since 2003. Harry's prolificness was legendary, but opinions as to the actual quality of his work do differ. The argument about the genzine/perzine split has been had, most recently last year in which I advocated for their recombination but was persuaded otherwise by a clear majority opinion that the distinction should be maintained. History 101: a

combined fanzine award was perceived as favoring flashier genzines over the often more humble (yet perhaps more fundamental to the hobby) perzines, and further, "special publications" were seen as having an advantage over regular genzines in a similar way. Thus, the present categories were established to increase recognition overall, something I know that you for some reason don't care for. When I opined that the FAAns are in part about "spreading the 'boo' back in 2018, you protested this, equating it with a "Buggins' turn" approach, which is of itself tincture of pure bollocks, at least in my opinion. Next, I've no fuckin' idea how you conclude that Mike Glycer has "exclude[d] himself" from anything, or would want to. Despite Mike Dobson's efforts in 2019, I've resumed with my own conception that the voters determine the outcome, and there is no ~~er~~ing exclusion in the FAAn Awards. Your other points (re: WOOF and Outworlds) are more arguable - I can only defend their categorization as "management decisions"...]]



We should have secret ballots. Can be done electronically and worth the trouble. I'm not ashamed of voting for myself as Best Fanwriter (note that I don't vote for *Vanamonde* as Best Perzine), I just think secret ballots are more healthful unless there's a need for voters to be answerable for their choices (as there is with e.g. UK Parliament, US Congress).

[[Again, this is baffling. What's your argument for the fact that the ballots are not secret? They're not published nor revealed, unless individual voters choose to state their choices, as you've done here, or presumably have their votes inferred by advocacy, as some people have done, Andy Hooper having notably (and successfully) done so in the past - nothing wrong with that. If you refer to

the fact that the voters' names are published, that's been common practice for ages, as it is with, for example, TAFF votes...]]

The miserable showing of Fanartists isn't a balloting failure, it's a fanzining failure. Fmz aren't pubbing art - and grabbing images off the Internet doesn't count. So fanartistry declines. Look, I put my molecules where my mouth is: poor *Vanamonde* has more art per square inch than other zines: it's the only zine pubbing current **Tim Kirk** art, for Roscoe's sake.

[[Extra crate of tincture of pure bollocks, there. "Miserable showing"? What, because there aren't 200 fanartists as there are fanwriters? Your "per square inch" metric is a [falls off chair] remark. One fuckin' piece of artwork over two pages, well, sure, that's super-impressive. Almost every zine I see

includes actual fanart, and I only have to look at my own pages to note terrific work from Alison Scott, Ulrika O'Brien, Alan White, Julie Faith McMurray and stellar photography from Anthony Moore recently. Who else is Tim Kirk submitting fanart to? I'd be more than happy to receive some, because "not me" is one answer...]]

It's silly to say the cost of an electronic zine is 0. Hardware, software, subscription to Internet service, are costs, just like paper, ink, a mimeograph. Too many of us don't notice that, more of the mind-rot Electronicland seems to bring.

[[Overhead vs operating cost. And you left out postage. (N Farey - BSc(Econ), LSE 1979)...]]

The printed fanzine isn't surviving "despite" anything. It's a different medium from the electronic. Different qualities. Luckily we're artists enough to feel this even if we don't recognize it. Right tool for the right task, which includes - by instinct or deliberation or both - choice of medium.

[[Not entirely another bottle of tincture of pure bollocks, but rather a very deterministic (not to say implied dismissive) view of the fanzine media landscape, which isn't as cut and dried as you'd suggest. "Paper first" zines also end up on efanzines, for example Trap Door, in that case some time after it's initial publication. This Here... and indeed BEAM are designed to be printed, even if few or zero actual print copies are created at the source. Banana Wings has both print and epub versions, distributed according to the individual reader's preference. So it's not at all one thing or the other, and never the twain...]]

FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

[[Editorial note: trying something here, as Dave tends to put a lot of links in his columns, I've embedded most of them in the text, which I do realize rather fucks up those who print out their copies rather than just perusing the pdf. Let me know what you think, please...]]

Despite saying last time out that writing this column is a pleasure, it has to be admitted that the last couple have also been a bit of a chore. I've felt, maybe rightly, maybe wrongly, that they've been a little shrill and I definitely feel they've become repetitive. Leigh Edmonds' LoC in the last issue brought my unease about the column into relief: it's never actually about what it's meant to be about and the theme rarely makes itself apparent to me until after I've written the damned thing. I'm about to start writing a column for the BSFA's Focus writers magazine about world building, where I can use my archaeological knowledge and experience to point to real world examples that may be of research use to potential authors. At some point I'll research the football stands of Archibald Leitch (no, not Cary Grant, he was Archibald LEACH), the architect who, between 1899 and

1939, built dozens of stadia for the top English and Scottish clubs of the day (he also built greyhound and speedway racetracks in London). At least then I should know what the fuck I'm talking about as it appears on the page, although that's by no means guaranteed.

I've eulogised about the new Spurs stadium several times before in this column, and it truly is a thing of beauty that is also being touted as a Superbowl venue, despite the gridiron field under the retractable grass pitch only having been used twice in anger thus far. Another of the English game's venerable clubs is about to start building a new stadium and, although it won't be as big as the Spurs ground or as multi-functional, it will be a thing of beauty if the plans are anything to go by. Everton's Bramley-Moore Dock waterfront stadium has been given planning permission and should be built by 2024/5 season kick-off. I have to say I'm envious of its gorgeousness, even if it has to be situated in the shithole that is Liverpool and the design drawings paint the Merseyside weather in a more favourable light than I've ever experienced there.

(The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government gave final approval for the scheme just as I finished this column, so it's full steam ahead for a scheme that I believe will make Everton the pre-eminent club in the city in years to come.)

Hopefully the project won't get caught up in the current corruption shenanigans that have allowed the greater floppy-haired Tory (Boo! Spit!! Hiss!!!) central government to send in commissioners to oversee the running of the city

Also: <https://bit.ly/2P3RKTt>

Away from my general sense of confusion (it's probably early-ish onset dementia or some such), Covid, and building projects in Liverpool, the football itself continues to be absolutely dire. I sit and I watch games and I'm bored stupid. Without crowds in the grounds to hurl abuse at both home and visiting players, the managers, the referee and his assistants, and the opposition fans, it's all so bloodless and the players really are just going through the motions. The best that can be said is the international quality players are just about keeping themselves fit enough to be able to play at full pelt in the European Championships in June and July, whilst ensuring they don't pick up anything other than niggly injuries that might stop them from appearing. It's got so bad, I'm even starting to agree with Graeme Souness about the quality of the refereeing and I detest Souness with a passion. I'm not going to talk again about bad decisions souring games, I've done it enough, but for pundits to be quite so outspoken about the quality of the officials says it all. I've long thought that gambling patterns in the Far East should be monitored closely during some of these matches, maybe as a secret official investigation, because it's not like Indian cricket, Chinese football, and

other European leagues haven't had their betting scandals in the past.

Also, as much as I'd really love to not talk about the finances of football AGAIN, the shitstorm at Barcelona has got so bad, it's even being covered in the [New York Times](#), and has resulted in [arrests being made at the club by the Catalan police](#) after a mind-bendingly surreal episode where the club was accused of hiring an internet consultancy to attack their own players on twitter. Grown (very rich) men have been known to lose all rational thought once they buy a football club. Mike Ashley has been reviled by fans of Newcastle United for not spending the fortunes needed to turn them into title contenders, much like Daniel Levy has been accused of only wanting to be chairman of Tottenham because of the cash cow they represent, despite the fact that ENIC, the company run by billionaire Joe Lewis that owns the majority of Tottenham Hotspur's shares, don't take any money out of the club (Levy does earn a tidy personal wedge though and is the highest paid chairman in the Premier League). Newcastle and Spurs fans (not this one, mind you) must really wish the two chairmen were more like Steve Gibson, the owner of Middlesbrough. [Gibson has reputedly been underwriting the wage bill](#) there by an estimated £35million in the past season and covering the difference between the "every £100 that was coming into the club, (for every) £160 (they were spending) on wages". Again, I've written before about the relationship that should rationally exist between demographics and football club expenditure, but I guess Gibson can be excused seeing as

Middlesbrough's population (141,000) is ten thousand higher than that of the footballing colossus supported by one Nic Farey, Watford (132,000).

Just as it appeared that nothing that could happen on a football pitch could match the strangeness of the goings-on off it, Spurs went to the Emirates stadium to play Arsenal in the Norf Lunnun derby on the 14th of March. Spurs were in a good run of form, five straight wins in all competitions, but so too were Arsenal and they had home field advantage. Spurs started off poorly and got worse which, in turn, made Arsenal look better than the "bang bloody average" assessment of my landlord who happens to support them (he's actually a really nice fella despite it). In the 33rd minute, fourteen minutes after replacing Son Heung-Min, the smiliest footballer in the world, who had suffered a hamstring injury, Eric Lamela scored an outrageous left-footed rabona goal completely against the run of play. Just watch this and weep: <https://bbc.in/2PDf8ag>.

Unfortunately, Arsenal went on to win 2-1 and Lamela was sent off in the 76th minute for putting his hand in the face of Arsenal's Kieran Tierney, but those details will be long forgotten years before people stop talking about this goal. It's just a shame no one will ever be able to say: "I was there..."

Lamela has previous rabona form. I knew about the goal against Asteras in the Europa League in 2014 (<https://bit.ly/39kxZ0C>), but had completely forgotten the cross he had put it into the penalty box against Norwich City in 2020 (of which no video seems to exist on t'internet). Now, it has to be said, the only reason Lamela produces so many left-footed



rabonas is because he can barely stand on his right foot, let alone kick with it, but one does have to marvel at the breath-taking audacity of the goals.

The Premier League, along with all other top level club football around the world, is currently on an international break for World Cup qualifiers. England vs. San Marino, or Albania, is a fixture that inspires less enthusiasm than even Sheffield United vs Newcastle United on a wet, windy January weekday night. It's obvious England are going to win the game, it's just a matter of by how many and when will the players stop making even 75% effort in order to avoid needless injury. Fortunately, English international sport has been saved by the various England cricket team performances in India. India may have won the Test series easily after losing the first game and the T20 series narrowly, whilst the One Day series is currently all square at one each, but England have made enough of a fist of most of the games, even in light of the usual "doctored" pitches, to suggest they will be there or thereabout when the T20 World Cup takes place there in October and November. Australia had been due to host this tournament, but, for some obscure reason related to the Covid pandemic, they swapped with India and will now host in 2022. I've always wanted to watch cricket in Australia, but I doubt it'll ever happen now; I really can't see international travel of any kind recovering significantly for the next five or six years plus three months abroad in hotels and travelling around isn't something my bank account has ever been able to stretch to. Hopefully, there might be some cricket to attend near the end of the English summer as the vaccination programme powers ahead here. I had my first jab in the arm at the start of February and am due the second early May, so I should be able to confidently stride forth by August or September unless some mutant Covid variant that completely escapes the vaccines rears its ugly head. I may even have mastered the new camera by then, although I'll need the 300 quid or thereabouts bigger lens to get close-ups of the action. It's nice to tentatively plan ahead again, even if it's better to err on the side of caution come the time.

I think, like all the news stations, I'll finish on a good news story of a kind. On December 5th 1921, the English Football Association banned women from playing football on FA affiliated pitches saying "the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged", effectively banning them from playing for fifty years until 1971, when the prohibition on the use of affiliated pitches was lifted.

Since then, and especially in the last twenty years, women's football has come on leaps and bounds in the UK. There's now coverage on the mainstream television channels like the BBC and, probably more importantly for the long-term development of the game, female pundits are now featured alongside their male counterparts giving views on the male

game on all channels that show football and not just every now and again, but pretty much every weekend.

On the 25th of March, the BBC website reported on the story of Melbourne City's 28 year old Rhali Dobson announcing her retirement from the game to care for her partner Matt, who has brain cancer. As the game finished, [Matt got down on one knee and proposed to Dobson on the pitch](#). The thing that struck me was: twenty years ago, this story wouldn't have merited even a single line as an adjunct to another story on the BBC website, but here it was with a whole page on one of the biggest websites in the world half a globe away. It's not unusual to see stories about male (usually ex-)players who have suffered tragedies or have had to re-arrange their lives to accommodate sickness of partners or children. Some of them have even had documentary programmes appear on television about their situations. I have no problem with that, but there's something about this story that talks of glass ceilings being broken. I'm not quite sure how yet, but the fact that this story got the coverage it did is extremely important.



LOCO CITATO

[[“Well, I must endure the presence of a few caterpillars if I wish to become acquainted with the butterflies.” (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, from ‘The Little Prince’)...]]

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

February 20

Gary Mattingly writes:

Wow, I have to be faster. I actually started writing a LoC on #38 and here is #39.

Here's what I wrote so far on #38. Now I must immediately (well, later today) start working on #39.

First the 'Egotorial'. I'm sorry to hear about the slow taxi times and the financial problems. I hope things take a better turn in the very near future.

I was also wondering about the date I see on page two, Jan 22nd/23rd 2020 ? Should that be 2021?

[[And congratulations - as noted in lastish's 'Egotorial', if anyone else spotted it they didn't comment. Added later: Justin Busch mentioned it in his Tightbeam review, correctly presuming a typo...]]

And onto 'Radio Winston' = Eruca Sativa. Now I have to go to Vortex Theater. Unfortunately, that might be a few years in the future, say maybe when I finally get around to hiking in Patagonia. Let's say, 2023. I'll only be 71. I'll fit in with the crowd there, right? Oh, by the way, I'm always linguistically challenged. I remember how to say something, whether it be English or Spanish usually several hours after I need to say it, or would that be temporally challenged?

Anyway, I like the video and cover by Eruca Sativa + Utopians - 'Gimme Shelter'. Perdóname, no es 'Fuero a Mas Alla' ("Went Beyond"), es 'Fuera o Más Allá' (Out or Beyond).

Todo lo que existe
Fuera o más allá
Ríe en tu mirada
Y lo acabo de encontrar

[which translates to:]

Everything that exists
Out or beyond
Laugh in (at) your gaze
And I just found it

(or something like that)

[[Thanks for the more accurate translation...]]

I can sort of vaguely see a System of a Down in the background, but . . .

<https://bit.ly/3s4E48V>

I think her vocals need to be harsher here and there, otherwise, okay.

I enjoyed their music anyway. Thanks!

Mientras tanto, de vuelta en el punto focal. Gee, I don't know. I look at a limited number of fanzines. How would I know what point is focal at the moment? I'm certain *This Here...* is for a certain group of fans, gee like **W^m Breiding**. My goodness, you did spin him up.

[[Well, there you're pretty much making my point about bubbles and Balkanization - I continue to maintain stridently that broader involvement in the fanzine Faniverse can be helped along by outreach, particularly to clubzines, in the fond if perhaps naive hope that people will be encouraged to check what else is out there. Clubzines giving

signal boost to the FAAn awards and many including zine review columns is all good...]]

From: fred@fredlerner.org

February 20

Fred Lerner writes:

I regard the N3F as one of Fandom's most inspired inventions, by which a meritocratic anarchy created a place where those who imagined a need for a bureaucratic structure of officers and committees could go to create them — and be totally ignored by everybody else.

[[More people, including myself, perhaps wish they could be as succinct and on point as you are, Fred...]]

From: mikeglyer@csl.com

February 20

Mike Glyer writes:

The definition of a "focal point" fanzine is more elusive than I would have expected. I agree with you that **Leigh Edmonds'** efforts to corral the important components are good work.

As a purely subjective experiment I began to make a list of what I thought were the focal point fanzines. That did not turn out to be a very long list. *Energumen* is the last one that seemed to me a focal point fanzine as opposed to "a fanzine that lots of different people participate in." Surprised at that result, I probed my cranium for an explanation and came up with this one. In its day, *Energumen* was the place where both the faannish fans and the sercon fans, plus some of the major pro writers, all wanted to get involved. And why was that? Because Mike Glicksohn was a charismatic fellow who made friends in all corners of the sff community. So he didn't just have the book reviewers and feuding pros that Geis published, or just the New York centered fandom that was at the core of Katz' zines, he also had the Scotch-drinking cardplayers who rarely wrote for anybody's zine, and all the best artists, and add to that Susan (then Glicksohn) and fandom's nascent feminists, and on and on.

[[I find this highly persuasive, while also (and again) noting your timestamp below, which argues that Energumen was perhaps the last hurrah before the previously implied somewhat coherent Faniverse actually disintegrated, even though you note (I must presume accurately) the existence then of defined sub-groups...]]

It also helped the sense of all-encompassing community that circa 1973 was just before fandom underwent the population explosion generated by the paperback revolution, the proliferation of local cons, and the syndication of *Star Trek* (yeah, yeah, yeah, but don't you have some friends who wouldn't have found trufandom if there hadn't been that

transporter to beam them up, figuratively speaking?) After fandom experienced the growth spurt of the Seventies not even all the pages and the many fans involved in *Mythologies*, or *Science Fiction Commentary*, or *Mimosa* represented the same reach as *Energumen*. In my completely subjective opinion, anyway. And people will read this and say "Who cares?" if there weren't any LoCs from some of those neighborhoods in the mix. Which is a prevalent attitude in many disparate corners of fandom, one that (I would say) guarantees the center will not hold, and thus my short list of focal point zines.

[[As I've related many times, I was one of those people who was beamed up from ST fandom, happily discovering the BSFG Novacons in the mid 1980s via Rog Peyton and Dave Holmes - I made lifelong and remaining friends there, also apparently leaving behind some lifelong enmities - I did have a foot in both camps right up until I emigrated in 1993...]]

From: xbenford@gmail.com

February 20

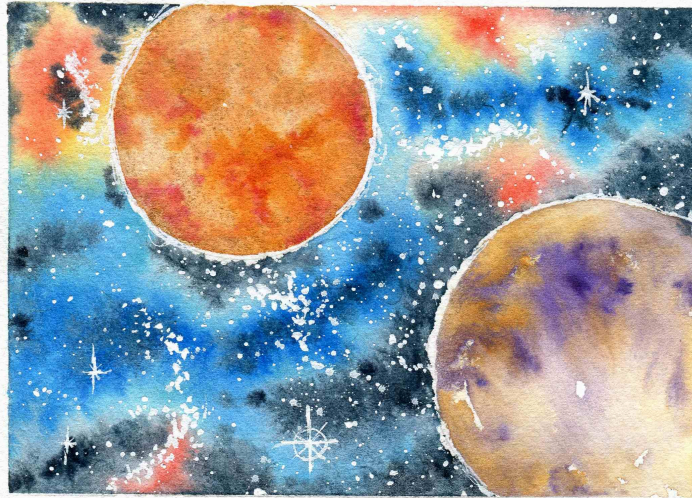
Greg Benford writes:

I was a good friend of Brian [Aldiss], liked your reflections on his work. But! - we differed on his theory of sf: Mary Shelley was not by any means the first science fiction writer, or even the first woman science fiction writer. That was actually the result of some very effective propaganda of Brian's. In his autobiography he describes how he got tired of people arguing over who was the father of science fiction, so he decided to give sf a mother. (I draw a veil over the rather unsavory episode in 'Frankenstein Unbound' in which the Aldiss-avatar has sex with Mary Shelley and inseminates her with the idea for 'Frankenstein', thus figuratively making himself the true father of science fiction.) He seems to have chosen Mary Shelley almost at random, though it does tie in with his idea of linking the origins of sf to the gothic. But there was plenty of sf being written over a century before Shelley. For an early woman writer, try the extraordinary Margaret Cavendish, a far better and more interesting writer than those who like to disdain what they call "proto-sf" would have you believe.

[[I would have thought that any fan worth an ounce of salt would be aware of Cavendish's 'The Blazing World' as much as it was featured by Alan Moore in LXG. As far as the origins of sf, or even "proto-sf" go, I've generally hewed to the not uncommon view that the satirist Lucian of

Samosata (2nd century AD) gets the honors for 'A True History', although it's also been pointed out that there were previous works which were the object of Lucian's parody...]]

Liked your "Martin Amis denying up and down that his 1991 novel 'Time's Arrow' was remotely sf, oh no, despite the very skiffy conceit of reverse chronology, not to mention his own acknowledgement in an afterword of a debt to Vonnegut's (inevitably far superior) 'Slaughterhouse Five'." - & indeed in Amis' latest, 'Inside Story', he ignores sf connections, Ballard, Aldiss etc...



[[I'm considering a column about people who are massively up themselves, and Amis fits would likely be included...]]

From:
robertlichtman@yahoo.com

February 20

Robert Lichtman writes:

In your comments to **W^m Breiding**, it's not 100% the case that I'm retired. I don't know if there will be another

Trap Door one of these days. Steve's death took away my best source of artwork to decorate an issue and I'm suffering from a lack of words from others to fill an issue. I could put together a letter column, but that's about it. As for editing, I do it on both the levels **W^m** describes. As for LoCs, like him "I shorten some letters, with others, I let them sprawl."

[[Getting good content for a genzine isn't always easy, I know, which perhaps shows why there are more perzines out there right now...]]

Like **Andy Hooper**, I may not be working on a genzine but I'm in a couple of apas. Last year I retired from being the FAPA Secretary-Treasurer after 33 years on the job. I was more than ready. Ken Forman, who took over as OE, agreed to also do the SecTreas job. As I pointed out to him, SAPS has had a single person filling both roles since its inception and has gotten along just fine.

From: penneys@bell.net

February 21

Lloyd Penney writes:

Gotta be catching up yet again. I have issues 38 and 39 of *This Here...*, and a bit of time to write and get it all down. Hugs to Jennifer, and I hope she is doing well, and recovering from her accident.

38... We're all having our health problems, and Yvonne and I have had our own, and we are still having them. On February 6, I had to take a COVID-19 test because of a short upcoming hospital stay, and damnit, it came back positive. Yvonne promptly went for a test at another hospital, and she was positive, too. It's 15 days later now, and I think we're okay, but this has been the longest time sick we've had in decades. Weight loss may be the only good thing here, for everything fits very well. Some costumes may now be too big.

The focal point discussions... well, calling them discussions might be the most diplomatic thing we can do. I have noticed we're getting a little hostile here, and to me, it's just not worth it. I made a few remarks about the level of toxic politics we're going through elsewhere, and even making some remarks appears to offend. Some are too eager to be offended, so I back off.

[[I'm not at all sure what you considered "hostile" in the discussion on the topic. Certainly I'll tend to be acerbic at times, but that goes for any topic - and I encourage others to state their views robustly. I don't have any problem being disagreed with, in fact I welcome and enjoy people feeling they have an environment in which to argue, knowing that they won't get censored in any way to comply with whatever I might happen to think at the time. I'll note yet again that I'm quite capable of revising my own views and opinions based on persuasive points made by others, so bollocks to bubbles and required "niceness". We don't progress without being challenged...]]

Hmm, loccers tend to write about themselves? Well, I was always taught that a letter of comment included a little personal journalism. I've never been told to keep it to myself, but if anyone feels that way, well, just don't read that part of my loc.

Hmmm, who is Carl? I can't remember the exact story line, but Burnham and Georgiou are on a wintry planet, searching for a cure to Georgiou's medical problems, and as they turn around, an older gentleman wearing a bowler hat is suddenly sitting on an Adirondack chair, smoking a cigar, and reading a newspaper. Eventually, he identifies himself as Carl. (The actor is Paul Guilfoyle, Jim Brass from CSI Las Vegas.) By the end of the scene, Carl finally identifies himself as...The Guardian of Forever.

[[Oh, that Carl...]]

39... I have indeed submitted my nominations/votes for the FAAn Awards, and I am quite interested in seeing what the final results will be.

I knew that the N3F had unwittingly connected itself with far-right-wing chat sites, but I am only learning now that David Speakman had left after being with the N3F for more than 40 years because of it. All I can do is shake my head and

wish that this had never happened. More politics to ensure that we never return to a Worldcon is the fuss over at Baen Books' Baen's Bar online, where the toxic discussions there made Discon III disinvite **Toni Weiskopf** as their editor GoH. Sigh... I know, there is always politics in fandom, but it just seems there such a lot of it lately.

[...]

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

February 21

Leigh Edmonds writes:

I'm going to begin this letter by saying that this issue was one that made me think, and then add the quip that, like most things of course, thinking should only be done in moderation. You're putting my belief in moderation to the test, but I hope to survive.

Some of the commentary in this issue is actually about science fiction, which is a novel change. I tend to agree with you about *Report on Probability A* and wondered how you went with *Barefoot in the Head*, which lost me around page 80, having no supply of acid on hand at the time to help me. This by way of referring to the idea about literature and science fiction not coming from the same place. This was brought home to me this morning when I read something that **Kim Huett** sent me. Kim and I have both been trawling (a technical term historians use) the newszines in Fanac.org for slightly different purposes but in the same period. Kim learned that I've been following the fannish exploits of Australian fans of the early 1960s including John Baxter and he sent me a couple of John's columns from a fanzine I'd never heard of called *Parsection* produced by a faned I'd never heard of called George Willick. One is a fairly thoughtful piece about entertainment in science fiction and the other is a less focused viewing of a couple of old publications he owned at that time, which is a real reminder that science fiction comes out of a pulp magazine tradition, or at least American science fiction. Baxter comments on two magazines he owned, *Startling Stories* for March 1940 and *Spicy Western Stories* for February 1937. (Aside, was there ever a magazine called *Spicy Science Fiction Stories*?) His description of the magazine is rather lurid so I get the impression that the magazine was too, for 1937 anyhow. (*Parsection* 4, p.10, in fanac.org). This magazine was banned in Australia, not surprising given the delicate natures of our censors at the time. The point is, I think, that science fiction's roots lie more in the industry that produced *Spicy Western Stories* than in the industries that produced the works of Verne and Wells (or perhaps even what my grandmother used to refer to as "the penny dreadfuls"). My knowledge of popular publishing in the UK is more than a little limited but I cannot imagine that similar publications

to *Spicy Western Stories* were allowed there. What I do know about instead is the tradition of juvenile publishing in the UK with its boys and girls magazines in a more literary tradition with its stories of school days, detectives, etc, etc. (This, by the way, is where I first came across science fiction with Dan Dare in the *Eagle* magazine.)

[[Some of us BOACAs cut at least a few teeth on traditional very British schoolboy stories, inevitably set in the closed environment of boarding schools - as a side note it's perhaps worth remarking that some of the best British TV shows were closed environments, to name two very different ones, 'Steptoe and Son' and 'Red Dwarf', and when not necessarily physically "closed off" were psychologically closed eg 'The Lotus Eaters', starring the tragically-ruined-by-drink Ian Hendry alongside the terminally gorgeous Bandersnatch Cumberbund's mum. That's a typical aside to me mentioning the startling discovery some year ago that S&ra Bond and I both recalled Anthony Buckeridge's "Jennings" schoolboy book series with affection...]]

This is, I'm speculating, the difference between *Report on Probability A* and writing from the likes of Harlan Ellison, Larry Niven, Roger Zelazny, etc, etc. My memory tells me that what captivated me about *Report on Probability A* was the simplicity of the text and its crystalline description of every detail. This in comparison to the vivid wordplay of much other writing of that time, as though the writer had got the biggest, fattest thesaurus they could find and extract every vivid word they could use from it. When it comes to reading, and my writing, I like to follow the old aircraft designer's adage of making the aircraft as light as possible and then adding more lightness - make the text as simple (and clear) as possible and then add more simplicity (and clarity). That was what I liked about a lot of Aldiss's writing (perhaps not *Barefoot in the Head*) and Chris Priest also comes to mind. On the other hand I had trouble with a lot of Ballard though I did find *Crash* absolutely unputdownable.

[[It's perhaps paradoxical that I criticize some of Aldiss' poncing excesses while continuing to hold Ballard in the highest regard, and I might hold that over as what would most likely end up being another unwritten piece suggested by DoMI. I agree with you about the crystalline clarity of 'Probability A', and would argue a similar test passes 'The Heat Death of the Universe', although as you will see Paul Skelton thoroughly disagrees...]]

Enough of trying to think about that. Instead a thought or two about the fragmentation of fandom. I've trawled every newszine on Fanac.org from 1955 to 1964 (so far) and reached the conclusion that the fragmentation might have occurred from the early 1960s. I based this conclusion on the fact that in the newszines of the time such as *Fanac*, *Sykrack*, *Starspinkle* and even *Science Fiction Times*, there's a lot about general fan doings, conventions, clubs and mentions of filking, costuming, comics and, of course, film and television.

The focus is, however, on fannish doings with travel, parties, conreports, relationships and fanzines. Kim disagreed with me that the fragmentation took place in the 1960s and, like you, thinks it began earlier. Thinking about it some I'm not willing to change my mind just yet but I am willing to admit that we don't know everything there is to know about fandom in the 1950s and 1960s. The fact is that most newszines were published by fanzine fans so that is the historic record we are left with and if they weren't interested in some of the things that were happening in fandom they didn't write about them and we can't know about them from their sources. Perhaps there were similar newsletters published by comic fans or costumers but a quick look at Fanac.org does not display them to me. Which leaves us with what might, or might not, be a biased historical view of fandom during those periods. However, we can only work with the evidence that comes to us from the past so at the moment I'm thinking on the new beginnings of fandom in Melbourne in the 1960s using CoAs in newszines, Google Earth and a couple of photos of parties from the period. The conclusion I reach might not be right but it will, by definition, become history.

[[I'm confident enough in my assertion that the "fragmentation of fandom" as you call it happened far earlier than my discovery of what I've termed "proper fandom", in the mid-1980s. Mike Glycer's analysis (see above) argues that fandom was already, perhaps not broken but effectively separated into subgroups with different concepts of socialization and that Energumen was the last "perfect storm" of a big tent...]]

More thinking is required when it comes to the various comments about my comments about faneds editing. Perhaps I should admit that I wrote what I did without thinking enough on the subject. I have noticed that some of my traditional typos have appears in fanzines which suggests to me that the editors of those fanzines have not edited fully, but what I should really have said was 'sub-edited'. As for more general editing, I have to admit that I only notice editing when it is bad. That is, text rambles, syntax is incomprehensible, writing is too drab to be readable and that sort of thing. In some fanzines this kind of thing is obvious but in the top-flight fanzines of today it is not. There are some fanzines available on efanazines that fit into the former category and some into the latter. No names no pack drill.

Your column on music reminded me of skiffle, which is something that I had not thought about for lo these past five decades at least. I remember Lonnie Donegan and enjoyed seeing him again, looking more like a rocker than when I previously saw him - on the silver screen in a picture theater in Horsham (in the Wimmera) in the late 1950s or early 1960s, if my memory still has any credibility. That must have been just before surfer music came along and perhaps

contemporary with Cliff Richard and that crowd. To me everything in popular music is like an unformed fog until the Beatles came along to clarify the situation.

[[Atypically, perhaps, I'm going to leave that dubious contention alone - for now...]]

I kept moving in and out of consciousness during my reading of **David Hodson's** column. There were some interesting thoughts about money, greed and sport in there but I kept blanking out with the specifics of club, player and coach names so I didn't follow it very well. In any case, the Women's AFL has started here and the Mighty Melbourne Ds women's team is not doing so well so I am not yet able to work up much enthusiasm for the game. No doubt the flame of hope will be rekindled in my heart when the men start playing in another four weeks, only to be snuffed out cruelly later in the year by all the usual failures too horrid to contemplate.

You will have to include in your next issue a short section which explains the **George Phillies** letter at the beginning of your letter column. I haven't been following any of this and not looked at File 770 for some weeks so I must have missed another 'all fandom plunged into war' event. And is there also some connection between the WorldCon and the N3F that I'm missing? On the subject of the N3F, if I could find my copy of Robert Bloch's *The Eight Stages of Fandom* at the moment I'd no doubt find the N3F as one of the earliest stages where neofans begin - some move on to more advanced fandom and some get stuck there. Or, perhaps, *The Enchanted Duplicator* where, I'm sure, the N3F would be one of those stages along the road to trufandom where neos get sidetracked and seduced, never to escape.

[[Those who haven't been following the latest N3F v the World saga may indeed have been left with glazed eyes, but trust me, you're better off in ignorance...]]

I'm sure there's a few other things I could think about, but one can do too much thinking in a day.

From: extollager@gmail.com

February 22

Dale Nelson writes:

The photo of Brian Aldiss reminded me of a question I have suffered from for many years.

What happened to the tape?

Sometime in 1962, CS Lewis, Aldiss,

and Kingsley Amis recorded a conversation on science fiction. A transcript was published first in *SF Horizons* #1 (1964) and reprinted in a 1965 issue of that excellent magazine *Encounter*. As "Unreal Estates," it is readily found now in *Of Other Worlds*, a Lewis miscellany. It is also available online here:

[March 1965 Issue, ENCOUNTER - The Unz Review](#)

I am obsessed by the question of *what happened to the tape*.

Wouldn't a lot of people love to hear these three fellows talk about sf (and we'd also hear the sounds of pouring drinks).

Does anyone *know* what happened to it?

[[Kingsley Amis was certainly a pisshead of magnificent proportions, and I'm always reminded of the observation (which may have in fact been said about Winston or Randolph Churchill) that "He certainly knows how to hold his drink", giving rise to the reply "Yes, but the trouble is he never lets go of it". I've got no idea where the original tape might be, but some reader might - could be Kim Huett's next project?...]]

From: caughranjim@gmail.com

February 22

Jim Caughran writes:

I kept putting [*This Here...*] aside, promising myself I'd soon read one and comment. I imagined, from your frequency, that they were short, personal, and easy to comment on.

Now that I've opened one, I see that I was imagining what I might do on such a schedule.

I know what I'm likely to do as consumer of *TH...* When the next issue arrives before I've looked at the last issue, I get discouraged and let the whole thing slide for a month or two. Repeat until I feel left out. And repeat some more.

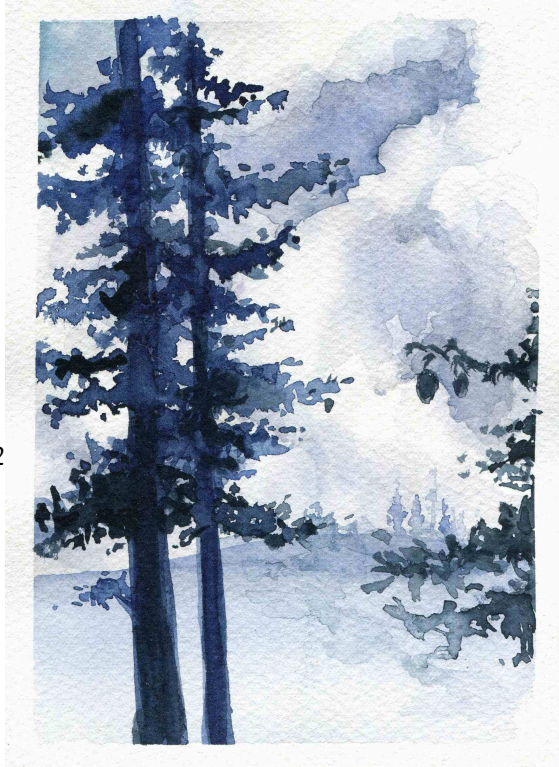
For me to learn something about skiffle, I'd have to spend the rest of my life listening to whatever skiffle is. Am I so ambitious?

[[Leigh Edmonds can explain it all...]]

You make loocing easier by presenting things I don't give a shit about, like football, which I can therefore ignore.

The long lettercol is to be applauded! Trouble is, I'll have to lurk for a while to understand what's happening.

In Ontario, the premier is beholden to commercial interests who want



everything to open up last week. So we lock down against covid for a while, then relax. The newspapers scold the premier, it's locked down for slightly longer than the last time, and the virus takes a short break. This is, of course, much better than what happened under Mr Trump. But it still puts us in hazard.

With my COPD, I don't need covid on top. In fact, I haven't left the apartment for a month or two. Getting tired of the Great Indoors, however.

The discussion here seems to show that focal point fanzines spend more time defining what "focal point" means than anything else.

[[I rather approve of that viewpoint, since I don't think there's any such thing currently as a "focal point fanzine" really, or alternatively that every zine is a "focal point" by some measure...]]

I'm procrastinating on getting this finished. So I'll send it to you, and hope there's more to come.



From: johnsila32@gmail.com

February 24

John Nielsen Hall writes:

American folk and blues records, even actual rock'n'roll got into this country by two seaborne routes. Tourists rich enough to afford to take holidays in New York by means of Cunard liners were going to clubs for nights out, some of them maybe brave enough to go to Harlem, where they heard things that set their ears and brains afire and had to buy the records, and merchant seamen, who bought a lot of records knowing that when they got back to Liverpool they could resell them at a modest profit to various record shop owners. It is said also that whoever founded the Two I's coffee bar in Soho imported a jukebox and all the records to go therein. This may be true.

[[Old joke: couple of women gossiping over the fence, and one asks how the other manages to take cruises every year. "Oh, my husband works for Cunard", getting the reply, "Yeah? Well my husband works fuckin' 'ard an'all, but we can't afford a bloody cruise!"...]]

Anyway, jazzier Chris Barber hired Lonnie Donegan, either as a jazz guitarist or simply as entertainment for the interval, and Donegan had all these Leadbelly and other records and performed his own versions in the interval of Barber's trad jazz band's act, when all the trumpet blowers were wetting their collective whistles. Thus was skiffle and the early Brit versions of R&B brought forth. But from very early on, the real scene was in Liverpool and you don't need me to recite the entire roster of bands that began there in the late fifties and got signed up by any and all record labels by late '62.

[[I remember the caption for the artwork of Cilla Black in Guy Peelaert's 'Rock Dreams' collection, which I wish I still had since I think it's worth a bob or two now, in which it was stated that post-Beatles, the record companies descended upon Liverpool to sign up everybody until "barely no-one able-bodied was left behind" (from memory)...]]

In my school, the cool kids managed to be seen with Leadbelly albums, Chuck Berry albums, Muddy Waters albums, or any and all of these tucked nonchalantly under their arms, as if they always carried their favourite L.P.'s around on their way to and from school. I was confined at that age to the south east environs of London, but in south west London they had slightly more nous and started clubs for fans of this music, and so eventually The Stones and The Who had somewhere to play.

Personally, I set my own sights higher and was possibly the only teenager in Britain with a collection of L.P.'s and singles by Jan & Dean and The Beach Boys. You may think me to have been misguided.....

[[Knowing that Keith Moon was a massive fan of surf music, I'll never denigrate it. Have you heard the Who's apocalyptic version of 'Barbara Ann'?...]]

Heaven knows, the N3F is nothing to do with me, but this bloke **Phillies** must be thicker than a sideways turd. The composer Richard Strauss, interviewed shortly before his death by Allied investigators who wanted to know how he came to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic in front of Hitler, simply said "I know nothing about politics." I suppose that's what **Phillies'** position amounts to, but he knows enough to be aware of where all the nutjobs hang out online. I don't know anything about running a Science Fiction club at a national level, but I think I know what sort of person shouldn't be running one.

[[See Fred Lerner's loc above...]]

Not only is Annie Nightingale still on the radio at her advanced age, but if you catch it, her show is always good. Jimmy Young was still on the radio at beyond Annie's age, but you cannot say the same for him. He may still be alive, for all I know. Or undead, at any rate.

[[He died in 2016, aged 95...]]

From: paulskelton2@gmail.com

February 25

Paul Skelton writes:

Ah, your reminder about voting in the FAAn Awards has put me in a bit of a quandary. I both want to do it, and feel I ought to do it, but I am also keenly aware that I see so few fanzines these days and would be very much one of those poorly-informed voters that many of us used to blame for screwing up the Fan Hugos. Oh, I could just about fill in the five spaces with the five-or-so zines I get in that category, and to me they are the best because they are the all. They may all be worthy of some egoboo, but are they all worthy of an award, which is what we are supposed to be voting for? But if I just list the two or three I think worthy of an award, am I guilty of depriving the others of egoboo?

[[I'd call that overthinking. Not everybody (or anybody) sees or reads everything. The point in getting yer vote in is that it represents what you liked, and the broader the constituency, the more it's all covered - as stated earlier, I hope people will check out zines outside their bubbles, but it's ok if they don't so much - very much "I know what I like", inmit?...]]

Now clearly fanac is supposed to be fun and I shouldn't be beating myself up like this. I guess that's just one of my foibles. Another is that I only get involved with zines people send to me. I need to be invited to join somebody's gang. I don't go looking. Oh, I used to go looking on efanzines, but without the personal invite that predisposes one to get involved, I found most to be either dully written or not

catering to my specific interests. Other than historically, efanzines seems like that space at the front of the bus that holds a supply of the free daily newspapers...full of stuff that's not particularly interesting but which the very process of investigating might prevent boredom for twenty minutes-or-so.

I don't have to explain this to you, because you go to the trouble of sending me your stuff... of involving me. Of course my piss-poor response rate might make you wonder if this is worth the trouble. As I've said before, I always enjoy reading it but usually feel I've nothing to add. After this response you might feel you didn't know when you were well off.

Anyway, I will hopefully vote (egoboo should be disbursed where appropriate), but will do so whilst feeling a bit like I am sailing under a false flag. Anyway, onto the rest of the zine...

I have no idea what the various acronyms you sprinkle throughout the zine are supposed to mean (BOACAs, AOACAs, DoBFO, etc.). I tried Googling them but ended up none the wiser. For BOACA I got Bradford on-Avon Community Agriculture, I got a tweet producer whose latest tweets are about growing a veg-box, and Laura Boaca, a conference producer which, if the conferences mentioned are the type of pear would at least maintain a degree of consistency, but seem strangely inapplicable to the start of your editorial.

[[Ah well you need to be a more dedicated reader than you are, don't you? The acronyms have been explained at various and sundry points, but in the spirit of the 'Lichtman Memorial Glossary' I used to occasionally do for the taxi columns in 'SexToy', here's the Skelton Bewilderment Avoidance version: 'BOACA' = 'Brits Of A Certain Age', 'AOACA' is Americans, or possibly I suppose Australians depending on context. 'DoBFO' = 'Department of the Blindingly Fuckin' Obvious', and also in thish, 'DoMI' = 'Department of Mad Ideas'...]]

In Radio Winston I had a minor epiphany. I am somewhat forgetful. I have been known to go out with my reading glasses on instead of my bifocals. Occasionally I forget to put in my dentures before leaving home. I have even been known to shut the self-locking front door without first picking up my keys. Cas has taken to reciting a checklist as I prepare to leave the house. Have you got this? Have you got that? Etc. In my defence I have taken to finishing my responses with "I got pig iron. I got pig iron, I got **all pig iron**".

I have to say Nic, I used to think you were my kind of guy. But in this issue you go on about liking Ballard, Pamela Zoline's 'The Heat Death of the Universe' and, ugh...black pudding. If you tell me you also like tripe I will be tempted to cancel my non-subscription immediately.

[[You can rest assured I'm not a tripe liker, whether comestible or written...]]

David Hodson's footy stuff was, as usual, the best bit in the issue. One point about the 'Net Debt' table that annoys me, as a Manchester United fan is that it ignores the fact that the debt was originally the Glaziers in taking over the club (which at the time was cash rich) and then subsequently dumped onto the club by perfectly legal jiggery pokery.

According to Boris' Road Map Out of Lockdown ('No restrictions after late June') **Mike Lowrey's** concerns would seem to be unfounded as things would have to have gone seriously off-piste to bugger-up Corflu, and surely the new US administration would have sorted things out enough for them not to be 'red-lined', and by then the vaccination program should have gotten as far as everyone's pet hamster. Of course what will happen to transatlantic air fares in the short term is anybody's guess, but Cas and I have our fingers well and truly crossed that any US fans who want to come over will be able to make it.

[[As I remarked to Mike, while I do have sympathy, this paralysis of indecision can't continue much longer...]]

Leigh Edmonds is right about moving being stressful. Both Cas and I are agreed that when we leave this house it will be in coffins, or whatever alternative is used by Manchester University who have first dibs on our mortal remains...body bags probably.

Speaking of stressful, Cas has just pointed out that Lady Gaga's dog-walker was shot and they stole her French Bulldogs. Why is the shooting of a celebrity's dog-walker stressful? Well, we walk our next-door neighbour's dog twice a week, and Cas was amazed to see him (the neighbour, not the dog) in an episode of Corrie the other week. She thinks we maybe should ask for danger-money. Anyway, I'll stop waffling.

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

March 2

Gary Mattingly writes some more:

Well, I could go back and finish writing the rest of my TH... 38 LoC but TH...39 showed up so probably better that I just dive into it.

First I'm glad to hear that Jen's GoFundMe worked.

In the past, I've read a number of books by Aldiss but I don't recall the titles you mentioned. It is true though that my memory never was very good. Although I still have many Aldiss books on the shelves I haven't reread them for ages so no idea what my current view of what happens in his stories would be.

[[The collections may have been UK only, or (as was often the case) have been retitled for the US market...]]

With respect to music, I can't recall hearing Hilton Valentine. Nor do I recall the Lonnie Donegan rendition of The Rock Island Line. I find it interesting that after listening to the opening:

"The driver, he shout down to the man
I got pigs, I got horses, I got cows
I got sheep, I got all livestock, I got all livestock
I got all livestock
The man say, you alright boy just
Get on through, you don't have to pay me nothin"
I immediately thought of 'No Love Today' by Chris Smithers.

"I got ba-na-na, watermelon, peaches by the pound,
Sweet corn, mirleton, mo' better than in town,
I got okra, enough to choke ya,
Beans of every kind,
If hungry is what's eatin' you
I'll sell you peace of mind,
But this ain't what you came to hear me say,
And I hate to disappoint you,
But I got no love today,
I got no love today,
I got no love today,
No love today"

<https://bit.ly/2NG9CmA>

Obviously a very different song.

Anyway, I like Lonnie Donegan's version of Rock Island Line.

I had heard the "Original 1934 John Lomax recording of 'Rock Island Line' by Kelly Pace and Prisoners" I have quite a collection of Lomax and have listened to it numerous times. The rendition by The Reverend Payton's Big Damn Band of that song also is quite good, IMHO.

Since you're writing about musicians and also note RIP notices I thought I would include some current thoughts on something I was recently listening to, 'Flirted With You All My Life'. I thought I would send this just because I hadn't heard it before (well, I don't remember hearing it before) and thought you might be interested in hearing it, although you probably are aware of it. It isn't really a fun song but it has been covered several times, most recently by Bright Eyes and I think the most known cover is by Cowboy Junkies. However, the song is by Vic Chesnutt. This music is definitely not for everyone but here it is anyway.

<https://bit.ly/2PbNVuM>

Cowboy Junkies:

<https://bit.ly/30ZaJR4>

Bright Eyes:

<https://bit.ly/2OSzXOD>

If you don't know the history of Vic Chesnutt, "At 18 (1983), while drinking and driving, a car accident left him partially paralyzed; in a December 1, 2009 interview with Terry Gross on her NPR show Fresh Air, he said he was "a quadriplegic from [his] neck down", and although he had feeling and some movement in his body, he could not walk "functionally" and that, although he realized shortly afterward that he could still play guitar, he could only play simple chords. After his recovery he left Zebulon and moved to Nashville, Tennessee; the poetry he read there (by Stevie Smith, Walt Whitman, Wallace Stevens, W. H. Auden, Stephen Crane and Emily Dickinson) served to inspire and influence him."

"On Christmas Day, December 25, 2009, Chesnutt died from an overdose of muscle relaxants that had left him in a coma in an Athens hospital. He was 45 years of age. In his final interview, which aired on National Public Radio 24 days before his death, Chesnutt said that he had "attempted suicide three or four times [before]. It didn't take."

"According to him in the same interview, being "uninsurable" due to his quadriplegia, he was \$50,000 in debt for his medical bills, and had been putting off a surgery for a year ("And, I mean, I could die only because I cannot afford to go in there again. I don't want to die, especially just because of I don't have enough money to go in the hospital.").

- from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vic_Chesnutt

And more music by him:

Tiny Desk Concert

<https://bit.ly/2OOkfnk>

I have albums by Vic Chesnutt but haven't listened to them for a while. Guess I need to revisit them.

[[I almost considered giving over the 'Radio Winston' column thish to your Chesnutt bit, but nah, had to memorialize Bunny...]]

I'd love to say more about literary SF or non-literary SF or books but I just read what I like and sometimes it falls into one area and sometimes it falls into the other area. Sorry, I can't immediately make a more astute statement. However, I definitely don't feel the need to get rid of older books that may not match up with today's viewpoints. They were part of my reading history. Times are different and I certainly wouldn't push for the revival of certain types of fiction that I read in the past. Some could come forward easily. Some would certainly make some people uncomfortable. Different times.

Sorry, no comments on Footy. I don't watch team sports in general and have next to no knowledge of current or past soccer teams. I did read a book about Manchester United fans though. Yeah, quite a group. Trying to remember if it

was 'Among the Thugs' by Bill Buford. I'm sure it is on a bookshelf around here somewhere.

Now I'm all for photos and the music of Shakira. I like Shakira, from a distance admittedly.

[[Perhaps she feels the same way...]]

There's some mention of cameras, the Nikon Z5, I think. I had a Nikon DSLR and quite liked it. It got older and older and I wanted a camera for trips but I didn't want to lug around a bunch of lenses. I traded in (receiving a minuscule amount for the body and lenses I had) and bought a Sony DSC-RX10 IV. I took that on a couple of trips. It is not as cumbersome as a DSLR with multiple lenses and does have great features but I have yet to be as accomplished with it as I was with my Nikon. I'm afraid, considering the bulk and not-so-great ease of use I will probably just use my cell phone on future trips which has worked admirably well. I just bought / traded up my Samsung S10+ for the S21 Ultra which also has great features and is a lot less bulky than the Sony. I still have a lot to learn about its capabilities but it is very easy to use.

With respect to **George Phillies'** LoC I had not known that the N3F was recruiting from Parler and Gab. I also do not consider this a good thing. I am not a member of the N3F although I was back in the 1970s and I met and corresponded with a lot of enjoyable people, many of whom are now, unfortunately, dead. I was even a director and published some of the N3F zines. I get the N3F zines currently but am rather behind in reading any of them.

I doubt that I will make it to the Corflu in England. I made it to the one in Austin last year but then travel everywhere ended, for the most part. This year I hope to get to Peru and Bolivia in May and June but beyond that, everything is questionable. Why my high school is even having a 50th-anniversary reunion in the fall, I think. It is actually a year late. It had been scheduled for last year but that didn't happen. I've only been to one high school reunion. I was unfamiliar with most of the people there. I think a number of cheerleaders organized it and there were probably some



high school athletes there also. I didn't really associate with cheerleaders in high school or the athletes except for one or two who were in the advanced/college prep type courses that I was in. It is doubtful that I will get to this coming reunion. I must admit a certain desire to see what the cheerleaders and athletes look like now. Over the past three or four years (after retiring) I've actually been exercising more, eating better, and am at a better weight than I was in the past. Well, there were periods when I had next to no money when I was at a lower weight but that wasn't necessarily intentional. It was more forced upon me, in a manner of speaking I guess. So if I were to see said cheerleaders and athletes in far worse physical states than me there would be a certain selfish smile in my mind. I fully understand this is an inappropriate viewpoint. So be it.

Speaking of playlists (I notice **Leigh Edmonds** did so it gave me an opening) I listen a lot to the several playlists Spotify provides me every week based on its algorithm of what I listen to. They frequently find some excellent music which I had never heard or totally forgotten. Add to the weekly NPR Music's New Music Friday playlist and I wind up listening to lots of music, much of which is new.

Ooh, and then we're back to that focal point thing. I certainly don't read enough fanzines these days but time is fleeting.

Brings me momentarily to Longfellow's 'A Psalm of Life'

"Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave."

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

I can't say my life is sublime and in all likelihood, you'll be leaving footprints more remembered by many than me but time is indeed fleeting and I have too many other things I want to do, I'm afraid than being up to date on a ton of new fanzines. I'm too busy studying Spanish, exercising, walking the dogs, hiking, watching classic movies, etc. Then there are great gaps when I'm traveling and have little time for any of that, well, except for hiking and photographing

things. And the thought crosses my mind, did R O'Brien read Longfellow? Probably.

"It's astounding
Time is fleeting
Madness takes its toll
But listen closely
Not for very much longer"

I guess I used to be more acquainted with focal point fanzines or at least focal to me. this was back in the 70s and 80s and I worked on Autoclave and I knew and corresponded with a number of, um, what I would consider focal point people, at least to me.

Hmm, mention of TV series. Well, I won't go into that here. You'll have to see my comments in **John Nielsen Hall's** fmz.

I can't remember the song **Jerry Kaufman's** looking for, "a Spanish-language rap number from a few years ago, but I can't remember the right title or performer's name - I think the title was, in Spanish, something to do with fire. You may know what I mean."

However, I may have heard it but failed to register it in my brain, a frequent occurrence, unfortunately.

W^m Breiding certainly thinks a lot more about the process of doing a fanzine than I do. This may be due to him currently doing a fanzine whereas I am not. I'm simply rambling on to a small number of fmz in LoCs and such and hoping some other person will edit them down into some readable form or at least something they like. I'll only be a little pissed off if they cut out the parts that I thought were particularly good. However, my opinions of things that are particularly good that I write frequently are not the same bits other people consider good. Actually, I think **W^m** has always thought a lot more about it than I have, past, present, and, no doubt future. Other thoughts inhabit my brain although more often than not I just let them flow through and don't hold on to them for any great length of time. For me, better to let it flow than to hold and dwell.

Hm, going down the pages I think I am on **Mark Plummer** and your response about "I don't think at all that any given loc has to be "joined up and coherent" in the sense that I think you mean that it should be an essay of itself."

I have this feeling that my LoCs are never very "joined up and coherent". But that's okay with me.

[[Fine with me too, Gary, as I hope I conveyed. There's a process which seems to be out of favor these days for organizing (and thus breaking up) locs by topic, I suppose with the idea that people can laser in on the bits that might interest them more and skim the rest. I did actually do this once in Arrows of Desire, but haven't since, and probably won't again as a device to present an entire loccol - that having been said, I have done so for particular topics in these pages when it seemed reasonable to do so...]]

Your note on fandom, particularly, “all participate as equals in the conversation.” I don't think I have ever felt that I am participating as an equal in most conversations. I have a hard time sticking things into conversation particularly when I think of a very good response ten minutes to days later and obviously, the conversation is well past that point. A conversationalist I am not. A great speaker (hey, even mediocre speaker) I am not. I grew up in a household where the best option was to keep my mouth shut and I never progressed much beyond that point.

[[I dunno Gary, on the occasions that we've met (always at Corflus, I believe), I've always enjoyed your presence. Now whether that's despite or because of you tending to lie doggo in any convo I honestly can't determine...]]

I received both COVID shots (Pfizer) and felt nothing more than a slightly sore arm that evening and possibly a little into the next day. That's it. Nothing beyond that.

I like trains too. My father, for a few years, was a depot agent in a small town, Bronson, Kansas. At somewhere in the 5 to 7-year-old range I was even allowed to ride up front in the engine area a few times. We rode across the US to visit my father's father and stepmother in California at around that same time. Assuming I do actually get to Peru and Bolivia I believe I will definitely be riding the train from Machu Picchu to Cuzco. Unfortunately, the train from Cuzco to Puno is not currently operating and won't be open until after my travel dates. Too bad.

Enjoyed 'Israelites' but I've enjoyed the song for years, by one person or another.

[[Curiosity piqued, I looked for other peoples' versions of the slice, which do exist, but perhaps only notably by Madness...]]

Well, my eyes are tired (maybe I should do these in the morning instead of at night) so I think I'll end this and go back to attempting to watch 'Eyes Wide Shut'. I'm having a hard time progressing through it.

And at the end of it all, I'll leave you with not anything particularly notable but maybe a little amusing.

<https://bit.ly/3vMrHQO>

From: mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

March 5

Mark Plummer writes:

I am pleased to see the increased stability in Casa Farey. I can now admit that I was a little alarmed by #38 in which by my count you fell off your chair six times -- three times on a single quarter of page 17 alone -- and **Moss Whelan** also fell off his chair making me wonder if it was infectious and we were heading for a pandemic of chair plummeting.

However, you only fell off your chair four times in #39, and so I am optimistic that the epidemic is being contained and it won't be necessary to introduce further restrictions such as rubber matting or perhaps lower chairs.

I wonder if **Steve Jeffery** has already rushed to point out that the *Sniffin' Glue* cover is reprinting the “three-chords” artwork that originally appeared in the first issue of a fanzine called *Sideburns* in January 1977. It was drawn by a chap called Tony Moon as a space filler and wasn't even a cover. You can buy an art print of it for £250.

And I see from the latest issue of *The Zine Dump* (#51) that either **Guy Lillian** or his autocorrect think you were writing about “skittle music”.

[[While I wouldn't go as far as to say that Guy's valuable listzine is redolent with this sort of cockup, I do note both typos and factual errors in every fuckin' issue, suggesting I suppose that he doesn't do any kind of readthrough before punting the ish. The most hilarious to me was an ish last year which referred to a mysterious person named "Ursula O'Brien"...]]

We talked a bit about some of the stuff in this issue before it came out and so I may be repeating myself here. I have quite a bit of sympathy with **Mike Lowrey's** position on his TAFF trip. The fact that somebody you know is prepared to commit to a trip from the UK to Las Vegas in October doesn't mean that everybody should be similarly confident or comfortable with the idea of a comparable journey. There are all sorts of reasons why they may not. I'm not sure I would, for instance. I also think it's different when we're talking about gambling with something other than your own money. I do appreciate that it leaves Mike's trip hanging and yes, at some point he will have to commit. I'm not at all convinced we're yet at that point.

[[The "other peoples' money" argument is a very fair point, and while I understand the Fund is decently flush at the moment that's no reason to potentially chuck that away. I'm still concerned as much about TAFF fading from the general consciousness as I am about anything else regarding it. I also agree that I committed a cardinal sin in drawing a comparison between my mate's planned trip and the potential for Mike taking his, since that's a fine example of the fallacy of arguing from the specific to the general case...]]

At the risk of turning this into a dialogue, I'd like to pick up on a few of your comments to my last letter. I did indeed once write a perzine which was essentially a list of 100 favourite songs. However, I didn't often say much about the songs themselves, but more about where and under what circumstances I first heard them, where and why I bought the record, and other associations. I don't really say much about the music itself. I'm much like that with writing about books too.

[[I remember enjoying that ish quite a bit for its situational approach to the topic...]]

Sorry if my emails are full of line breaks. I blame the email program as I don't think it's anything I'm doing. We do use various word macros to do initial standardisations of letters, stripping out extraneous line breaks, removing double-spaces, changing double-to single-quotes and so on. Part of the reason for standardising on British spelling and punctuation is that we know how to do that. Obviously we are familiar with many American spelling variants and punctuation (to us) quirks but it's simply easier to check if everything is in the same language. I do recognise that many and possibly most people don't do this, and it may even be a conscious choice.

[[Formatting (and I suppose its corollary, spelin consistency) is a right bugbear of the hobby, and I was really just needling you a bit about something I actually accept as part of the business of producing this here fuckin' thing. Yes, it's all rather balls-aching, not least of which are the apostrophes, soon to occupy a full issue of Vita Transplantare, no doubt. The absolute biggest ballsache round here is going through everything to change the font of the apostrophes copied and pasted in - the font I use for This Here... (Palatino) does have a few quirks like not translating apostrophes, and an inability to include accented letters when writing, although they will copy in all right. I live with it, and we can now proceed with a highly scholarly analysis of whether to hyphenate "ballsache" and/or "balls-aching", as I have just essayed both formats...]]

In *Tits, Sausages and Ballet Shoes* you did talk briefly about "Nic Farey stole my bird", with the story of that Novacon -- the airport hotel so 1989 and 1990 -- as well as the 1987 Brighton Worldcon, and the Eroticon 6 "Nic Farey is my bird!" incident which I confess I'd forgotten entirely.

[[Did you even attend that riotous event? All shagging disclaimers were totally out the window...]]

Fair point that "Longevity of an organisation isn't of itself something to necessarily commend". I should have been clear that I was talking about essentially benign organisations.

I don't think letters to fanzines *need* to be "joined up". Claire and I were talking about this over a game of Arkham Horror the other night (obligatory Octothorpe reference) and Claire may well say something on the topic herself, but I think the best letters usually do have a cohesion and function like articles with an overall flow.

[[There's more hay to be made there, I think, and I'm recalling another comment of yours in which you correctly suggest that some locs might just pick up a single line out of any given zine and run with it, in which case that might be considered "joined up" in the sense that it's fully on-topic. Then again there's them as comment more broadly on the

zine as a whole, an equally valid take I would say. One of the interesting things about a well-populated (and after mention of 'Eroticon 6' I wondered whether the drunk spellcheck elf would modify that to "well-copulated") loccol is that we get to see a terrific variety of styles of response, which I find engaging and interesting, being lucky enough to be getting that from the readers of this fish-wrap...]]



From: askance73@gmail.com

March 17

John Purcell writes:

You just keep cranking these things out, Nic. Very impressive. In the process you have created a fanzine with a very active dialog running between producer and readers, which is A Good Thing, as the old saying goes.

Well done, mate, and keep it going as long as you can, or at least until your sanity runs out. On second thought, just continue the zine as long as possible since your sanity left port a long time ago.

[[At least I had some once - it's a fond memory...]]

Hmm. This latest issue starts with discussing science fiction! In a fanzine?? You obviously really *have* lost your mind if you're reverting to this tactic, but that's okay, I guess, as long as it generates comments. All I can say is that I have read very little by Brian Aldiss over the years; the only title I know I have read is *Report on Probability-A*, and I barely remember it. In fact, all I can remember is being frustrated by it, and that's probably because I read it at too young an age to understand it: I was in my teens at the time and the construction of the novel was not my cup of tea. If I read it now I am sure I would get a lot more out of it. Seems to me that *Probability-A* is best suited for a more literate audience, and my 16 or 17 year old mind could not wrap itself around the narrative. Well, there's an add-on to the To Be Read stack.

[[I would have been about that age when I read it, but I take your point about probably being able to appreciate it more these days. "Literate audience" I'm not so sold on, since it's no more "literary" than any other Aldiss really, but its construction is certainly experimental. Apparently some French loons actually made a movie of it...]]

I enjoyed reading your nattering about Skiffle, the FAAn (soon to be announced; I shall be watching once the Zoom link is posted), and Footy, but my favorite section - as always - is the letter column. Very enjoyable reading, full of all sorts of interesting folks. Your opening salvo at **George Phillies** and the N3F's recruitment drive is spot on. George's intentions are innocent enough - reaching out through the interwebs to gather new members and promoting the N3F - but his argument that he's not interested in politics, just in finding sf-interested fans on Parler, Gab, or other social media platforms, is borderline naïve. It seems to me that George is missing the point of the argument, and I need not explain what the problem is to the *This Here...* readership. Now, granted there are a lot of fans I know who are active Neffers, and that's fine: it's their choice. But personally, I have never in my entire fannish lifetime been interested in joining the N3F. It simply does not appeal to me, and that's the bottom line. While I do not mind receiving the multitude of N3F zines that the club produces at a frantic pace - I even reviewed some of them in *Askance* a few years ago - and read (skim and scan, actually) them when they plunk soundlessly into my emails, at this stage the club does not appeal to me. Then again, I have been in fandom for 48 years and counting, which explains why I'm never going to join: the N3F is designed for new sf fans, and I'm now a seasoned, grizzled, grey-beard in fandom. My feeling about membership in the N3F has always been this: if the shoe fits, wear it. Unfortunately, all this recent foofaraw has resulted in the N3F now being viewed as "if the foo shits, step in it."

[[I'm not entirely convinced by "N3F is designed for new fans", since what I suppose we'll call their senior members have been in it for decades, so they're hardly "new", are they? I'm more inclined to Fred Lerner's view that they're the place for people who need some kind of systematic bureaucracy within which to function, the antithesis if you like of the perhaps more general conception of fandom as anarchistic, even though we have significant groups whose prime function is as "organizers" eg of WorldThings. Conversely to that, of course, is the rather odd situation of having an avowed Libertarian (George) running things...]]

Jerry Kaufman's astute observation that "(f)anzines and their audiences are split up into a number of small slices, and maybe some of the zines function as focal points for one slice" makes sense when I think about it this way. I try to read as many fanzines as I can, resulting in some provoking a letter of comment in return, while the vast majority are simply read and enjoyed. I hate the idea of sending an email

of 'RAEBNC' to someone who has taken a large chunk of time to produce a really good issue that I would truly love to respond with something substantial. There are definitely fanzines I prefer writing to and for these days, yet I feel the need to be rather selective. Simply put, as much as I would love to write locs to every fershlugginer fanzine I get via snail mail, email, or weblink, there ain't enough time in the day to do that! Quite frankly, I would go out of my mind if I tried doing that. Oh, well. At least I can still enjoy reading these buggers and if I feel inspired to loc, then I shall.

[[Jerry's opinion mirrors my own...]]

[...]

From: claire.fishlifter@gmail.com

March 26

Claire Brialey writes:

[...]

By writing now I can avoid banging on about either FAAn or Hugo awards, as in both cases we're currently back inside the box with only a cat and some radioactive material for entertainment. Or I am, anyway; obviously you know not only whether the FAAn cat is still alive but also whether there should have been a litter tray in there with us.

[[A litter box might have come in handy, but I'm wondering if that's a sly pre-emptive strike against any potential FAAn award winners and/or a suggestion for a graded catshit scale on which to place them. Trotting out the well-worn "I am inevitably reminded..." I think of Brian Wilson having his piano set on sand so he could wiggle his toes in a faux beach while composing, but of course the beasts of the household seized upon the sandpit with alacrity, if the arse ends of them could be said to have seizing abilities, so one assumes it got well niffy in there - I now expect several scatological puns on Beach Boys titles to arrive...]]

There was a lot of good sense from your correspondents in #38 about the 'focal point' definition - I also like **Leigh Edmonds'** point in #39 about reflecting and perhaps amplifying the zeitgeist - and it's probably the right conclusion that even fanzine fandom is so fragmented that it's not possible to have a single focal point fanzine now. So I think you can indeed be content with publishing a popular fanzine that, partly by being frequent and (mostly) regular, has become a place where quite a lot of people can and do engage in topical discussions. It does feel notable that a fanzine that obviously reflects your own interests with (ahem) a lot of editorial personality is prompting a fair bit of conversation, not just responses to you. **William Breiding** commented that "you have created a buzz with *This Here...* that has turned it very much into nearly a letter-zine"; the connection with another live discussion perhaps emphasises that zeitgeist point.

[[Um, well, I don't entirely agree with W^m on the "letterzine" comment, but the qualifier "nearly" mitigates that. Previous series of This Here... have also had a pretty extensive loccol - I'd contend that rather than just being some sort of round robin correspondence club, the responses tend to be reaction and commentary on what passes for original material in here and, yes, fannish topics du jour, and yes again, reaction to those comments which amount to a chat amongst the pigeons [falls off chair]...]]

Episode 27 of the *Octothorpe* podcast included a discussion of their letters of comment; they have a plan to publish an anthology of letters received as part of a retrospective on their first year (*Locthorpe*. Of course). Liz Batty, discussing their usual approach, mentioned that they felt they need to condense locs for broadcast, I think precisely to avoid the letterzine trap and ensure they still have time to cover lots of original content – although I'd add that they clearly do use some comments received as a springboard for further discussion. Liz also said of *Locthorpe* that they would need to check back with correspondents, since some of them might have assumed the relationship is different from a fanzine response – or not really be familiar with that – and so not have been expecting to be quoted verbatim.

[[The idea of loccing a podcast seems an odd conjunction of archaic and modern, but then again I've never seen any podcasts that I know of and most likely wouldn't know how to since it's in the same category as other Coxon-like whizz-bang jetpack stuff and Twitter. This will shurely incur derision from the up-with-it-all likes of L Edwards, but then again I haven't forgotten how to write...]]

And I was going to write to them about matters arising from all of that, but I was already going to write to you about it so instead I referred the Octothorpies (who potentially have a theme song right there) here. And then I really *had* to write to you.

I've realised that, as you and Mark were discussing in the letter column in #39, I approach a loc as being more like an article than like traditional apa mailing comments, and for me that takes time and effort – not that my mailing comments are precisely speedy either. I appreciate it can make my letters harder to edit (you manage it, of course, but you know what you're doing), although it also creates a risk, for me, that an editor still won't see my loc as a thing of beauty and a joy forever but rather as a set of comments that take up too much space and don't actually need to be connected – and so it'll be fine to hack some bits out that are most relevant to the conversation they want to curate, even if they've lost part of my context and narrative momentum. (How very dare they!)

[[That makes the point that there isn't a one size fits all approach to loccol editing, since different correspondents

require different kinds of attention, some little, some a fuck of a bit more...]]

Equally, I send letters of comment expecting that they *might* be reprinted in full or read out word for word. Obviously enough these are letters to the people who create fanzines – and as it turns out podcasts; who knew? – that I like, to thank them for what they're doing and to continue a conversation with them about some of the content; still, since fanzines traditionally broaden that conversation to their whole audience, I assume that some or all of my letter might be shared more publicly. And as well as the editors who choose not to do that, or who edit and reshape carefully (or just pull out a single line to amuse themselves), as already discussed some instead plonk the whole thing into their next document without editing or proofing or possibly actually reading it themselves either, and so I find it's best not to rely on other people to help me not to embarrass myself. Although it's lovely when they do.

My 'whole story' approach is partly why I can't do what **Steve Jeffery** does, and send a series of shorter letters as I work through a long and elaborate fanzine (or even a little snappy one); Steve is also a much better correspondent than I am, and it's an editorial pleasure to shape a single response from the jigsaw pieces contained in his several locs. He's also, clearly, a much nicer person than I am and more trusting that editors will both make that effort and do it well. When the boot is on the other foot, **Mark** and I take a very similar approach to editing letters as **William** describes doing – and aim for the second of his two techniques when it comes to article content. Although some articles need more copy-editing than others...

[[Jerry Kaufman's long loc in BEAM 15 arrived in several pieces and as even he acknowledged was all over the fuckin' shop, with comment on the same bits of the previous ish appearing in each missive, amongst other challenges. As I noted in comment there, Ulrika and I had several goes at the edit, passing the task between us before we began to see bright lights and hear dead relatives beckon. After we'd crunched all that, I reordered the whole thing so it wouldn't be massively jumpy, which turned out an easier task than I had initially feared. With a currently barely-annual big genzine, though, we do have the relative luxury of more calendar time than I do with This Here...]]

I could have borrowed **Leigh's** approach of letting you know throughout where play had got to in today's England / India (men's teams) one-day cricket match, but it can often take me longer to write a loc than it takes England to lose – and on recent performance that includes Test matches. There was a massive hiccup in the 36th and 37th overs – England losing three wickets in nine balls, starting with the batsmen then established on 99 and 124 – but to my surprise they avoided a collapse in favour of winning comfortably. For all that I'll be unable to look away, I still can't feel that England should

be confident about the Ashes, especially given that Test cricket remains a very different game and the England men so inconsistent. (With rather more consistency, reading **Leigh** here is another reminder that I've let my apa deadlines – two of them now, unhelpfully coinciding – creep up on me again. Less than two weeks to go. The delights that will be on offer at the virtual Eastercon – starting in a week's time – are mostly still obscure to me, but it might do wonders for my apa productivity if I remain uncaptivated when I know what's actually on the programme; I'll probably want to do some sort of fanactivity to make up for it...)

Mr Finger seems to be putting his bollocks about a bit recently. (Is that what happens when he falls off his chair?) I'd almost be worried that people are agreeing with one another so much – are we all getting too cosy and complacent? Answer: almost certainly – if the N3F-related discussions weren't demonstrating otherwise. Apparently there is still scope for disagreement, misunderstanding, and a lack of empathy and comprehension in fandom...

[[Well there again I don't think we're all comity in here either, although points of disagreement may be more trivial, and you might even consider that they're more differences of viewpoint than actual disagreements anyway. Various writers including Mike Glycer and W^m Breiding have firmly taken issue with some of my opinions, and I do believe that some adversarial elements are highly useful in furttherring discourse, and of course I'm going to print them. I've noted before that the editorial combination that does BEAM is adversarial to a notable extent, and while that wouldn't or couldn't work for everybody it does for me, and I believe keeps us from getting complacent - I wonder how other faneds manage to avoid that possible descent into complacency, as the best definitely seem to do...]]

Notwithstanding that, I was about to agree with **Steve Jeffery** about the starting point for Christmas (the Kings College 'Nine Lessons and Carols', on the radio at 3 pm on Christmas Eve) when I realised that, although this is my mental marker for it, I haven't listened to the broadcast for several years. This might have seemed to be an odd approach for an atheist person like me anyway, but I enjoy Christmas carols and the traditional readings (King James version, thanks very much), and it was a good way to kick off official festivities while doing some fresh seasonal baking. However, for a number of years I've also taken to playing Tanya Brown's festive mixtape cds while cooking over the extended holiday period – which, all but last year, has tended to start with a big meal for local friends on the Saturday before Christmas – and at some stage I simply forgot that it was time to switch over to the radio.

Steve also mentioned his musical coding and consequent Tangerine Dream impressions and added: "I may have to recode this in C#." Repurposing Steve's own long-ago joke about Terry Riley, presumably this one go plunk.

And thanks are also due to him for the recommendation of *The Valhalla Murders*, which prompted us to follow up; since then we've also taken in the first three seasons of the British cold case crime drama *Unforgotten* (it's almost beyond parody that my senior-cum-lockdown brain found it initially impossible to retain the title of this series) and the Finnish *Man in Room 301*, which was broadcast in the BBC4 traditional late Saturday evening subtitled mystery slot but which we inevitably binged via iplayer. We started to watch *Spiral* several years ago but paused after the first season; really must pick that up again.

It feels a bit lazy and embarrassing that I can't stir myself to engage properly with your (and **Garth Spencer's**) consideration of whether there's still tension between sf and 'literary' fiction – or between the advocates of each category – which I think does still exist but which I try not to let bother me. I'm still a bit surprised-and-disappointed, though, when I come across opinions *within* the sf community to the effect that yes, most genre fiction is woefully inferior to the prose stylings of the literary greats; sometimes that involves claiming for the genre all manner of arty-farty stories that work rather less well if you're familiar with sf tropes and games previously played with them, and sometimes it just seems to involve looking down on fellow fans who are deemed too uncultured and/or dim to recognise the apparent flaws of our popular writers. I read books, me. And comics. And fanzines. I watch telly too, but not many films. How much more low-brow could it get?

Moving swiftly on, or rather perhaps not moving anywhere just yet: in theory I can quite see the attractions of the planned consecutive Corflu, Novacon and Swecon weekends forming a skeleton for **Michael Lowrey's** deferred TAFF trip, but I wouldn't want him to feel rushed into either arranging or taking the trip. People approach these things very differently, of course, and I'm probably over-cautious compared to many and thus projecting. But I don't think it's just a question of when European countries will let USian visitors in, nor when there will be reasonable certainty that bookings made might be usable (or otherwise fully refundable); it seems to me, and perhaps to Orange Mike too, that there are still too many variables.

DoFBO: with very real risks from mutations of the virus, a trip scheduled for next autumn/winter in the northern hemisphere could indeed be subject to further disruption; but there's also a huge question about what practical restrictions there will still be that would affect the normal social aspects of a fan fund trip – not just legally but in terms of what people feel comfortable with. A fan fund trip would feel diminished, to me, if some fans don't feel able to offer to host a delegate, or to join them for a meal or a tour around, or to attend a convention where they'd be able to meet; so would doing any of those things under some lessened but still necessary restrictions that make everything a bit more

awkward and a bit more worrying and consequently quite a bit less fun. But other people doubtless feel that fan funds, and their traditional role of making connections, can do something to help us move on even if we can't quite proceed in the ways we've been used to.

[[All fair points, but I'm tending to equate at least some of that with the kind of worrywart view that makes you never leave the house because you might get run over by a bus. My concern is still, in part, a possibly equally doomlike scenario in which, whenever the next TAFF race might occur, people will express surprise that the Fund is even still going and question its relevance anew. That's not so likely, though, given that the Funds seem to have a continuing and motivated constituency, and even talking about them (as we do) keeps it all alive...]]

Obviously all the administrators will be thinking about this, and there are plenty of solutions if the rotation were to get out of whack; but actually an eastbound TAFF trip next year, and a westbound race for a trip in 2023, would set that fund up nicely for another eastbound trip that takes in the likely Worldcon in Glasgow the year after that... GUFF, where Alison Scott's trip to New Zealand and Australia was also deferred, has similar challenges but different ideal solutions; and I've not heard anything about Erin Underwood's tentative DUFF trip plans or options now.

I thought I was home free and could shut up and send this to you before it's too late to include, but I was pulled up short by **Dave Cockfield** and his last meal choice – not to mention his list of favourite foods. This is too difficult. For an actual last meal my customary inability to decide what I really most want to eat could stay my execution for years. And although my list of favourites would have to include chicken dhansak, crispy duck with pancakes, beef rendang, smoked salmon kedgeree, really good sausages with buttery mashed potato, and bacon sandwiches, I then start thinking about individual foodstuffs, ingredients and flavours that make me salivate just as much: new season asparagus, baby broad beans, fresh peas; limes, blood oranges, pomegranates; dill, mint, tarragon; borlotti beans, chickpeas, Puy lentils; almost any good cheese and/or bread; parsnips, celeriac, roast paprika potatoes... Perhaps not coincidentally with **Dave's** list, one of my favourite things also used to be the sausage and egg McMuffin and so it's still the menu item most likely to make me crack – but so far I have been clean of McDonald's for nineteen years.

[[Oooh! Kedgeree! Haven't had that in a very long time - I may have to make some...]]

I was struck by your 'Ageless Beauty' picture of Kim Cattrall at the end of #38; I hadn't taken you for a *Sex and the City* fan so I assume this wasn't an allusion to her absence from the forthcoming sequel series. Is Jen (with smile restored) too young to be your Ageless Beauty this time?

[[You're quite right about 'Sex and the City', one of several shows I've never seen a single episode of, despite their seeming ubiquity in popular culture. That list includes 'Buffy', 'Friends', 'Seinfeld' and 'Big Bang Theory'. As far as the "ageless beauties" go, I'm still hewing to the rule that they must be older than me, which does exclude Jen by several years, but here's the new smile anyway...]]



WAHF

Leybl Botwinik : "Nice quote - thanks!" ; **Bill Burns** : "But will [George] Phillies ever write you a LoC (or whatever that was) again?" *[[Not yet...]]* ; **Dave Cockfield** : "The Hornets are stinging tonight"; **Kim Huett** : "Naturally I only put time and effort into projects that interest me. If other people find the results that's a bonus, but not one I demand" ; **George Phillies** ; **David Redd** : "Sorry my fanac is tending to zero all of a sudden; real life getting in the way. Likely to stay that way, unfortunately. Loved your stuff while I could, though, especially your brilliant taxi memoirs. Brightened my life for years." *[[Please keep in touch when you can, mate...]]* ; **Toni Weisskopf** : "Just so!" *[[I assumed that referred to the email body Saint-Exupéry quote...]]* ; **Alan White** : "Thanks for the latest update. I was 39 once too!"

FANZINES RECEIVED

I used to do this as a separate section in the "old days", when zines arrived regularly on paper. Now some of them still do, but I'm also happily getting emailed pdfs and links from sundry sources, and at this point it's making sense to separate those from the general WAHF list, not only because some of the faneds who send stuff also loc. Most of these are up on efanzines. And so...

LOFGEORNOST #142 (Fred Lerner) - full of the expected sparkling erudition, and a continuing pleasure...

VITA TRANSPLANTARE #15, #16 (John Nielsen Hall) - #15 is the typical mix of TV, reading and apostrophes, but the latter as yet without definitive rulings from Falls Church, although **Paul Skelton** does have a go. Quite anxious-making to learn that **Claire Brialey** thinks about us all in the shower, though ameliorated to an extent by the note that due to myopia and steam she can't actually see anything except in her mind's eye. Oh wait, that could be more horrific than reality. *Mea culpa* Unc, I didn't get a loc done. #16 arrives a few days ago (as I write), and I *do* manage to loc that one, since the old sod has (annoyingly or charmingly, I can't decide which) noted my absence from the sterling loccol in which I am but a poor relation to jiants of the craft...

THE OBDURATE EYE #8, #9 (Garth Spencer) - I'm not sure whether you could describe any Garth ish as "typical", but they're often idiosyncratic in fundamentally Canadian ways. I quite like them, meself, not just because **Garth** says nice things about *This Here...* in #9 as part of a commendable fanzine review segment...

PERRYSCOPE #8 (Perry Middlemiss) - part 2 of Perry's massive review of 2020 everything read, watched, and possibly even eaten and/or swore at. I note the cover with a photo of the lad looking all noble and seaworthy, a contrast to my own occasional selfies which more typically reflect drink-related injury...

THE ZINE DUMP #51 (Guy Lillian III) - useful listzine, even though typos and factual errors inevitably crop up, my favorite being a previous ish which named a co-editor of my acquaintance as "Ursula" (as also noted in loccol comment). A longer than usual preamble addresses the **N3F v Burns** court of public opinion case with even-handedness, and also refers readers to a future ish of Guy's zine of opinion *Spartacus* for the *other* AFPIW topic of DisCon, **Toni Weisskopf** and Baen's Bar...

ASKEW #33 (John Purcell) - John's perzine mixes opinion, skiffy, updates on topics of interest which dovetail with some of mine (Corflu, fan funds) and a decent loccol...

VANAMONDE (John Hertz) - several ishes of this weekly single-sheet arrive separately but concurrently with John's FAAn award ballot and comments (see 'FAAnwank'). Contains artwork!...

THE NINE UNKOWN FEN BULLETIN #1 (Garth Spencer) - a fine piece of silliness, promoting eAPA and other suggestions for ostensibly harmless pranks...

TOMMYWORLD 82 (Tommy Ferguson) - Short and sweet, and genuinely a joy that Tommy's shook off the gafia and returned to the fold, making occasional noises elsewhere about a DoMI memo assembling me, him, **Dave Hodson** and **Nikki Basar** for serious drinks and footy bantz - the only issue there (apart from geography) being that Nikki's a teetotaller, but I'm confident the lads will take up the slack while she has a not-so-quiet larf at us, and being sober in

body if not mind, set herself up for writing a 'Footy' column in Tommy's nextish...

ALL NEW OR REPRINT 8 (Paul Skelton) - I could probably be as rude as I like about this, since the only thing Skel reads in this here beermat is Dave Hodson, but it's more of what you love and expect from the lad who could wring a flood out of a damp paper towel, which would have come in handy putting the fire out, as perhaps would uncapping some of that dodgy beer that keeps turning up. Another one with a substantial and solid loccol...

N3F - Oh god, lots, but see 'Indulge Me' for a highlight...

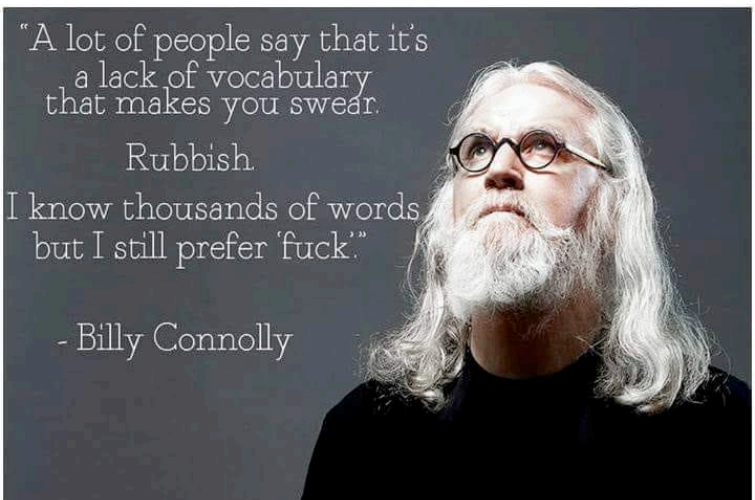
INDULGE ME

✕ **FAANWANK EXTRA (INCL. HUGOWANK)** : Not that I give a stuff about the Hugos (usual disclaimer), but remarks from **Geri Sullivan** suggest that *Outworlds 71* may end up by some arcane process on the Hugo ballot for 'Best Related Work' rather than in the fanzine category in which both she and I consider it clearly ought to belong. Geri's concern was, in part, a worry that because the ish was FAAn-categorized as a 'Special Publication', that might give ammo to the Hugo 'Related Work' definition (if that comes to pass). Not that anyone in Hugoland is going to listen to *my* opinion, but I'd point out that 'Special Publication' is considered (by me, at least) to be a *fanzine* category, and as Geri also correctly points out, *Outworlds* is a numbered issue of a fanzine which has pubbed at least four ishes (Hugo rules), so fuckin' duh, ey? DisCon's motto might well be "we know how to fuck shit up"...

✕ **SFC ON THE RADIO** : An episode of the BBC World Service programme 'Crowd Science' devotes itself to why swearing is good for you.

<https://bbc.in/2OJidFH>

Billy Connolly comments:

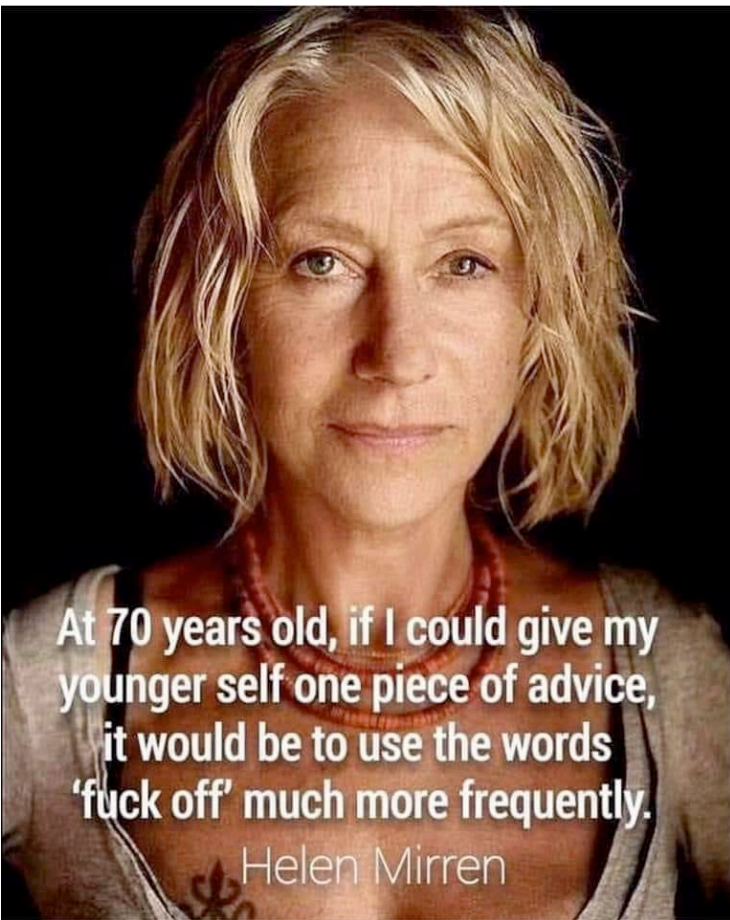


✘ **VAX POPULI** : I did indeed get my second Pfizer dose on schedule, but Gordon Bennett, there must have been a thousand people in line - it took an hour and a half just to get checked in, after which the actual deed took maybe 2 minutes, administered as before by US Army personnel. I was told to have a sit for 15 minutes to make sure I'd be all right, but I pled having to return to work and bolted. Almost nothing in the way of side effects, less than the first shot even - I did have a feverish spell of a couple hours 2 days after, but that was it...

✘ **MORE UNCUT BICYCLE SERVICE** : 'In Conversation', I think it's called, also on the BBC World Service (the local NPR station plays it overnight, which is when I catch these snippets, on my way to work) recently had NK Jemisin and Nigerian editor Chinelo Onwualu on the challenges of getting published as a black science fiction writer. Includes interesting comments on HP Lovecraft...

<https://bbc.in/3c3LMu6>

✘ **SFC/AGELESS BEAUTY EXTRA** : Posted on FBF by Avedon Carol...



✘ **MENTAL HEALTH** : Justin Busch writes a decent zine review column for *Tightbeam*, and in the March issue (#318) he's kind enough to cover *This Here...* #38 and #39, but

it's the latter I'd like to quote him on, reproducing the following paragraph in full so you won't miss any context:

"The focal point for N3F readers is, unfortunately, a confrontation between Nic Farey and a letter from our own **George Phillies** regarding George's attempt, mentioned above, to recruit members from some rather unsavory e-neighborhoods. I won't go into the unpleasantries, but included amidst them is a reprint of a letter from David Speakman, apparently posted to two websites but not (as of this writing) in any N3F publication, withdrawing from involvement in N3F as a result of George's recruitment activities. This reaction seems extreme to me, but if it is not a momentary but repairable surge of anger then this is a serious consequence; we need active members like David Speakman far more than we need higher numbers of uninvolved public members. I have not followed the links, having no available time as I write this, but it is something I intend to do as a result of Nic's comments; it is probably worthwhile for N3F members to check them out."

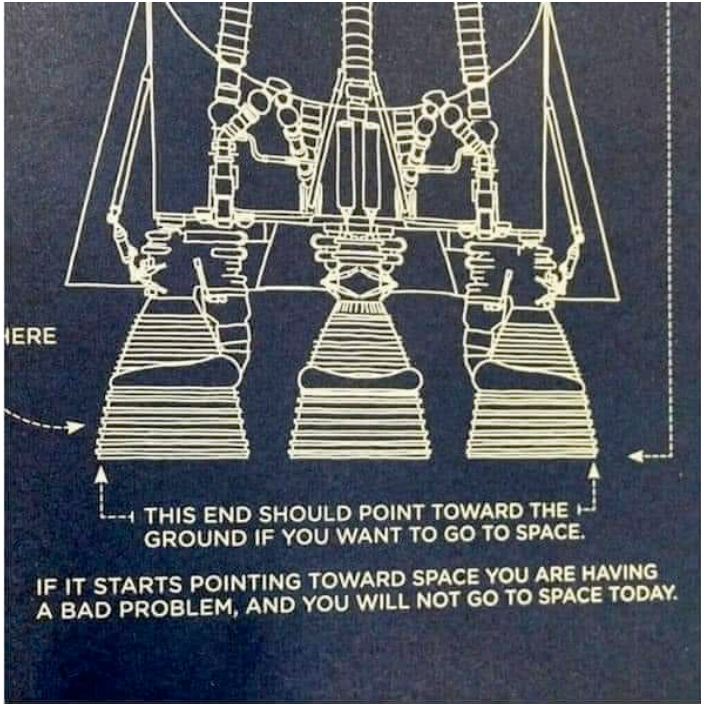
It's worth noting, as DoBFO as it may be, that active N3F members apparently aren't as indifferent about **George's** recruitment efforts as he might have otherwise suggested, but it is fair to give him a nod for actually publishing **Justin's** remarks in a zine he co-edits, clearly sticking to his free speech principles, even though **Justin** does note being unaware himself of David Speakman's exit and outrage due to that *not* being disseminated. Pops to **Justin**, of course, for writing his opinion. Even though I could nitpick some word choices (eg "confrontation"), I won't because he's obviously entitled to call it as he sees it...

✘ **TV GUIDE** : I'm sorry to say that the new episodes of *The Flash* are disastrously bad, bordering on idiot plot levels of badness. By stark contrast, the new seasons of *Black Lightning* and especially *Batwoman* are rather good indeed, the latter perhaps especially since the lead character is now literally a different person since Ruby Rose's exit, but Javica Leslie is doing a magnificent job so far. *Flash* needs to step up a fuck of a lot to keep me watching. There's also a new series on Hulu, *Debris*, which so far (two episodes in) has me well into it. The premise is that a derelict alien spaceship has passed through our solar system, breaking up over the Earth and scattering - er - debris, which turns out to have unusual properties. In some ways it has the lot, being a bit of a combo of *X-Files* and a bit of *Warehouse 13* with the added fun of the expected bad guy conspiracies & that and sub-groups with other agendas in various government agencies. That could have come across as muddled overload but so far hasn't - yeah, there's a *lot* going on apart from the individual episode plots, but so far (3 episodes seen) it's holding up. Made by the same people who did *Fringe*, apparently...

✘ **[FALLS OFF CHAIR]** : Posted by **Liam Proven**, who should probably get his coat now...

A priest, a vicar and a rabbit walk into a blood bank.
A nurse asks them what blood groups they are.
"I'm probably a type O," says the rabbit.

✘ **SCIENCE FACT** : Off FBF, sorry I've forgotten who to credit...



✘ **AMBIENCE** : I've got back into the habit of burning aromatic candles in what we refer to round here as the "man cave", in no small part to cover up the inevitable wreaths of tobacco smoke. I used to do this in the shoddy trailer I was actually paying *rent* to stay in when I was working in Joplin for a while, but this was more as a relaxing sleep aid, since there wasn't a mattress, nor even an actual bed, just scraps of foam material to kip upon. Smith's has these candles on pretty much permanent markdown, and one lasts the best part of a month. I have one labelled 'Caribbean Market' which pleasantly smells like West Indian fruits and not six crates of ganja as might have been feared...

✘ **LONNIE DONEGAN REDUX** : For **Bill Burns**:
I say, I say Les' (yeah?)
I'er, I found a police dog in my dust bin
(How do you know he's a police dog?)
He had a policeman with him

✘ **ORIGINAL MAVERICK** : I love F E Smith stories (not just because he was a legendary pisshead), so here's another one: Smith had been ennobled and made Lord Chancellor (the youngest since Judge Jeffreys), and was consulted by a judge presiding over a sodomy case, who asked "What would you give a man who allowed himself to

be buggered?", getting the immediate reply: "Oh, thirty shillings or two pounds, whatever you happen to have on you."

✘ **REPLY TO LIAM** : A priest, a vicar and a rabbi walk into a bar. The bartender looks at them and says "What is this, a fuckin' joke?"...

✘ **AUSTRALIAN NEWS** : Panting slightly (ahem), Australia seems to have caught up with the global pandemic of politicians being somewhat careless with the knob in various misogynistic ways, inevitably reminding me of two "classic" lines allegedly describing the Ocker attitude. (1) Australian chat-up line: "Ey darlin' fancy a fuck? No? Well would you mind lying down while I've one?" (2) Australian foreplay: [BELCH] "Brace yerself Sheila"...

✘ **EGOTORIAL EXTRA** : I thought I'd better mention this now as a possible future topic before I forget (but feel free to weigh in immediately, and I'd "columnize" the responses, if any). Once again off the Uncut Bicycle Service (I think, but it could have been a regular NPR program), I listened to a discussion on ageism, which led me off on a not atypical tangent of thought about elements of "ancestor worship" in fandom, and the idea that there's perhaps a more substantial group that rejects this for whatever reason (**Andy Porter** has taken some Filers to task over this), and those at the other end of the spectrum whose entire *raison d'etre* is the preservation of as much fanhistory as possible...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY** : Because why not, **Annette O'Toole**...



MIRANDA

THIS HERE... is (mostly) written, edited and produced by:
Nic Farey, published on efanines.com by the Grace of Burns.

Locs & that to: 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, or
Email fareynic@gmail.com

Art credits: Ulrika O'Brien (pp8, 11, 12, 15, 18)

**"And all the creatures born of ink and rage and lies
Crawled from my pen and ran across the page to die."**