

This Here...

"...very much an ugly and uncouth gnome..." (A Scott)

EGOTORIAL

ANOTHER MISCELLANY

Yes, it's going to be one of those Egotorials (very) loosely stitched together from what might otherwise have been 'Indulge Me' snippets, except that they're perhaps a bit too long, individually, for **Jerry Kaufman's** favorite section of this here virtual rag.

Incidentally, that leads me to wonder how we might actually define a "snippet"? Presumably there's some point at which the word count exceeds snippet-like boundaries and becomes... well, what exactly? This is the sort of thing that Hugo™ policymakers ought to leap on with alacrity and clearly (and paradoxically wordily) strictly define the potential "Best Snippet" category, a process expected to take several years, after which the definition will be thoroughly ignored and/or bypassed by some eagle-eyed contender(s) who will argue persuasively to their devoted followers that what they have done, perhaps in the usual satirical medium of interpretive dance, can be deemed a "snippet" because We Say So, and thus the rocket-shaped suppository should be awarded to all the 57 people who made it happen.

Anything that doesn't immediately remind me of a song often reminds me of a joke, and sometimes both, but I expect you'll all be rather relieved that I can't immediately think of a suppository song, although I'm sure there is one, possibly within the *oeuvre* of Kevin Bloody Wilson. However: Bloke goes to the doctor with some bowel issues, and gets

prescribed suppositories for the condition. Returning to check in a week or so later, the doc asks how they worked out for him. Bloke rolls his eyes and replies, "Rubbish! For all the good they did I might as well have stuffed them up my arse"...

Now (for something completely different) here's an absolutely lovely thing: **Jen's** piece on the Little Freezer That Could in #50 was well-liked indeed (see locs, in part), not

least from **Justin E.A. Busch's** review which named it the best thing in the ish, but also from **Bob Jennings** who requested to reprint it in his apazine for SFPA *The Typo King*, with proper attribution (which risibly included a typo in my email address [falls off chair]). One of **Jen's** jobs is being a writer, but that's the one that's sadly been getting the least attention for a while, so it's been my distinct pleasure to get her to pen these little vignettes from time to time to show everyone (and to remind her an'all) how fuckin-A she is at it.

It DoBFO hasn't escaped her notice that I spend the majority of my spare time (see also 'Omphaloskepsis' thish) churning out bollocks which many lovely people (and tempted to add, also some unlovely ones, but

that would be wicked) gratefully respond to. As if she didn't have enough going on, she might, as a result, have been if not thoroughly bitten but definitely slightly scratched by the fanzining bug, and is now going to be outed to encourage her to have at it.

I was going to spring this on her here, but given my sad inability to keep most surprises under wraps, I did have to



make sure this would be all right first, so it's all been cleared at the highest levels.

Jennifer has, for several months, been thinking about doing a fanzine of her own to reflect her own specific interests which are mostly different from mine (and do not really involve footy other than typical weekly commiseration on Watford's latest result), including but not limited to her publishing business, ebay reselling and tabletop card/board gaming. On the latter topic, as seems to be a bit *de rigueur* for some perzines anyway, she hopes to feature a column from the gorgeous, pouting **Cora Elaine Silva**, on the *TH...* mailing list but not known to almost all of you lot whom (for those of you up for the subject) you will find to be witty, charming and highly readable.

I'll be sorry to lose **Jen's** brilliant writing out of these pages, but also well pleased that she'll have her own outlet for it.

Perzine title? Well, *JenZine*, of course...

It's all good.

March 2022

TAFFNESSABOUNDS

FINAL REMINDER!!

Voting closes on April 19, so get in!

This Here... recommends **Anders Holmstrom** for your consideration, but whomever you favor, please do consider participating in fandom's original travel fund. The online voting form is [here](#) ...

Also, **Mike Lowrey** writes:

It looks like (unlike the "lost voyage" of 2020) Spain will not be part of my 2020/2022 TAFF delegate voyage. So: Starting at the Eurocon/Luxcon, popping over to Poland for visits in a couple of places (Warsaw and Silesia), to England for Eastercon/Reclamation, from there to visit Sverifans in Uppsala and Malmö. If I haven't overstayed my welcome in the U.K., I could return from Sweden and spend a few days in the U.K., maybe actually SEE Scotland and Scotfen in

their native habitat? I don't HAVE to be back in the States until 6 a.m. May 2....

Nic adds: further convo from others has suggested a swing through the Midlands and North. I do, of course, highly recommend Leeds in this respect...



RADIO WINSTON

LESLIE KONG



I wouldn't have necessarily said that Leslie Kong's contribution to Jamaican music was underrated, but it might be fair to say that he was somewhat eclipsed (though not in Jamaica itself) by larger personalities such as Coxsone Dodd who presided over the legendary Studio One, Joe Gibbs, who did plenty of good stuff aside from inflicting Althea & Donna on the world, and of course the highly eccentric Lee "Scratch" Perry who tended to slap his own name on everything and was utterly mad. Duke Reid may get a column of his own later, and Prince Buster will be right along in this one.

What, many people not aware of the history might reasonably wonder, was this'un even doing in Jamaica in the first place, but back in the day, as in America, Chinese were also imported by imperialist and capitalist enterprises as cheap (or free) labor for their various enterprises, and in most cases were equally reviled by the pinkskin hegemony, but in several cases, including that of the Kong family, they had a bit of a last laugh.

Leslie had a pretty comfy upbringing at the time, and with his older brothers Cecil and Lloyd ran the family business, the Beverley ice cream parlor on Orange Street (!) in Kingston, and in common with a fair few other local businesses started selling records as a sideline. The shop was

well enough regarded that one lad wrote a paean entitled 'Dearest Beverley' in a blatant but successful attempt to get Leslie's notice and persuade him to record it. That lad, Jimmy Cliff by name, ended up also doing A&R for Kong's newly created 'Beverley' record label, and brought to his attention another local lad, Bob Marley, whose first issued slice '[One Cup of Coffee](#)' was recorded by Kong. That's getting just a tad ahead, though, but noting that Marley's first cut there was from 1962.

Kong had been impressed enough by Jimmy Cliff that he sent him off to hang out with Derrick Morgan, then one of the biggest names in Jamaican music. Morgan had been recording for Prince Buster but fairly swiftly had it on his toes to go over to Beverley, leading to a bit of a not entirely good-natured feud between the two, carried out in the form of "answer records" which were a bit of a staple then. Buster dissed Morgan with '[Blackhead Chineyman](#)', at the time likely considered teasing rather than abusive references - the Chinese immigrants were habitually referred to as "Chinaman" or "Chinawoman", and "Blackhead" was a term simply meaning a bit of a ruffian or troublemaker within the community. Buster laughs, referencing Morgan's new allegiance, that "I didn't know your parents were from Hong Kong", and in '[Praise no Raise](#)' suggests financial impropriety which was very common in the record business then ("The Chineyman get the rest"), a suggestion actually at odds with Kong's reputation for paying well for the best.

The Beverley recordings were a pantheon of the absolute best the island had to offer: the Pioneers ('[Long Shot Kick De Bucket](#)'), Desmond Dekker (the mega-hit '[Israelites](#)'), Delroy Wilson, the Melodians ('[Rivers of Babylon](#)') and the Maytals ('[54-46 Was My Number](#)'), and of course very early Wailers.

The latter add a final twist to Kong's story. In 1970 he decided to put together a compilation of the early Wailers slices he'd recorded, but was told by Bunny Wailer that if he did so there would be a curse put upon him. Leslie issued the set anyway, and the following August died from a sudden and unexpected heart attack at age 37...

CORFLUX

NEWS

An administrative change for Corflu Pangloss: as **Hal O'Brien** is recovering from a stroke earlier this year, the bookkeeping duties of taking North American memberships and holding the dosh have been transferred to **Jennifer Farey** for the duration, and the details of where to please Send Money (oh go on, supporting membership at least, people) have been updated with the usual alacrity by **Bill Burns** at the website, corflu.org ...

OMPHALOSKEPSIS

THINGS AND TIME

Approximately nobody is likely to be surprised that the above subheading is a [song title](#), in this case off the Wailing Souls, for no other reason than it's apposite to the topic, sort of...

"I don't know how you do it, and publish so regularly", observes **Christina Lake** in a side convo mostly about the FAAn awards, referring to my 60-hour workweek and the implied lack of leisure time. **Justin E.A. Busch** also noted in his 'Fanfaronade' zine review column for *Fanactivity Gazette* that *TH... #50* was a bit slimmer than previous issues at 19 pages, correctly deducing that I'd also been beavering away tallying FAAn awards ballots and compiling the 'Results issue' of *The Incomplete Register* (which you all should have got last week, right?).

How, indeed, do I do it, then? Well, accompanied by some overly dramatic delivery and gesturing, I could simply say that other than work and this (and watching the footy), I basically have no life. I highly suspect that my fellow traveller in this regard must be **Bruce Gillespie**, who has just dropped two more honkin' issues of *Science Fiction Commentary*, all the while also having time to contribute to what I understand are the even more honkin' ANZAPA mailings, implying perhaps that the Archbishop's every waking hour is dedicated to fanac and more fanac, with of course sterling results.

Saying that I have "no life" really is ridiculously dramatic, but what with the both of us *chez* Farey working stupidly hard and long (I think **Jennifer** has six jobs now, but all working from home) there isn't much downtime, and that consists of watching an episode of TV over dinner before I have to be off to kip at 5pm (now in broad daylight) and of a Friday night pizza and a movie. Our work hours don't overlap so much, hers tending to be more in the overnight window, and indeed as I write she's toiling at a rush transcribing job which will keep her up until probably 6am and is a right pain, apparently. My prime hours are typically from 1am-ish (on weekends) to the onset of daylight and beyond, and perhaps a bit more in the afternoons, although the typical morning nap on off days does make me fairly useless after.

It does help that, after mulling while at work on what I'll be gobbing off about, I've rediscovered the ability to write quickly, if not always totally coherently, and for that I'll continue to thank **Graham Charnock** for enforcing the discipline of me having to write a taxi column for *Vibrator* for two years, even if some of those were DoBFO a bit rushed and shoddy.

Let's also consider method for a minute, something I'll be typically interested to hear from other faneds about in this "theory and practice of fanzines" context.

As noted above, I will spend workdays concurrently thinking about what's going to be in any upcoming ish (unless it's atypically a very busy day), and so I've got these little essays "written" in what remains of the working parts of my head before I sit down at the keyboard, beer and smokes at the ready, scented candles on the go and Prince Buster Radio (Pandora channel) burbling in the background.

I'll then usually flit between the various bits of the zine, churning out perhaps most of one column, hitting a wall of "what was next?", going off to, say, the 'Egotorial' from 'Omphaloskepsis', adding a quick paragraph I just remembered I wanted to put in 'FaanWank' (actual examples from today), updating 'Fanzines Received' from the last week and compiling the bits of 'Indulge Me' I've noted and bookmarked, copying in locs and adding comment, deciding on whether 'TV Guide' or 'Movie Night' gets an actual column or a mere snippet (qv), and so on, which all sounds very scattershot, but it's how this here construction gets done. The day (or the day before) of publication marks the getting of **Dave Hodson's** 'Footy' column and more often than not the late-arriving loc or two from Fishlifter Towers, and so it goes...

Now if that sounds like utter fuckin' chaos, you're not far wrong, and you might also reasonably deduce there's a decent chance that the 'chaos star' tattoo on my right hand is taken as inspirational and indeed perhaps a life choice.

Somehow, it all comes together...

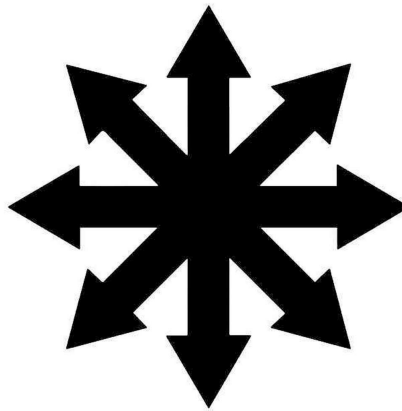
FAANWANK

MEET THE NEW BOSS...

...same as the old boss?

First and foremost, congratulations to all this year's FAAn award winners, including - er - myself, while inevitably having to note, as others might, that the lists may have a little of a "same old" feel about them, more, really, than is actually the case. That having been said, I'll reiterate that the best practitioners of the hobby typically don't turn to ordure overnight, so it's a bit of a given that familiar faces will keep cropping up, despite **Lloyd Penney's** stated wish in his loc to the most recent *Fanactivity Gazette* that a few different breezes might blow into the lists, as they actually do in the top five or ten vote-getters, don't they? The phrase "perch-shuffling" may well come to mind...

In my own award-winning case (and thank you, voters!) I recalled a quote (retold by the sadly missed Molly Ivins) from some admired very lefty sort who had also won recognition for a publication (I think), but assuaged his



followers with (from unreliable memory): "Don't worry, comrades - we shall weather this storm of approval and come out of it as hated as before"...

This year's kerfuffle (does there have to be one every fuckin' year?) has been over the status, "eligibility" (still hate that word in this context) or whatever of *Octothorpe* for the awards.

What started as a joke on one of the podcast episodes about *Octo* (as I think I can call it, since we know each other) really being a fanzine developed, I think with a

twinkle of wickedness, into an attempt to interpret the definition of a fanzine given in *The Incomplete Register* to include it.

A "fanzine", for our purposes, is defined as an immutable artifact, once published not subject to revision or modification. The fanzine might not exist in a physical form. A pdf, for example, is an artifact.

The history of this definition goes back to at least 2018, when, in conversation with originator **Bill Burns**, I ended up adopting it for the FAAns to distinguish fanzines from blogs. The original construction was formulated in a vain attempt to restore some originalism to the Fan Hugos.

Alison Scott has argued that an mp3 is also an "immutable artifact" and thus qualifying. Well, so is Michaelangelo's statue of David, but then that would have to be disqualified for not having been first published in 2021, so perhaps it's not the best comparison. To be perhaps even sillier, a suitably truncated description of the defining characteristics of a swan could also fit a duck-billed platypus.

As stated in the *TIR* Results Issue, my more key word in the given definition is not "artifact", but "published", which strongly if not wholly describes a written (or indeed artistically drawn) work. As someone observed to me, a fanzine is "something you sit down and read, not listen to" (whether on paper or screen), though *that* truncated definition would include blogs and all other sorts, and see next paragraph.

The last thing I'd want to have to do is bury fanzine fandom's only dedicated awards under a rule book six foot thick, much preferring the undoubtedly naive concept that voters know what they're looking at. This is a part of the "good faith" in the process, which I'm also about to get into.

The idea that *Octo* is a fanzine (presumably as well as being a podcast, and for all I know a cookbook, an adjunct of the Marvel Cinematic Universe or indeed a duck-billed platypus) just started out as a bit of a larf, and in my view from there went into being a not atypical fannish wind-up. As one friend remarked (with a sigh) "just fans being fans".

What's disturbed me most about this little teacup-sized storm is that it's got taken vry srsly in some quarters, to the point that it's been suggested that I've acted less than honorably in the matter, a suggestion (not, I should make clear, from anyone directly involved with the podcast) that got my hackles up as far as somewhere in the Oort cloud. The suggestion was that I wasn't even following my own "rules" of definition (and I'd like to think I've addressed that) but that I'd ignored my own statement that all votes are accepted in "good faith".

It seems tiresome to repeat that *The Incompleat Register* listings are supposed to be nothing more than a helpful (and DoBFO "Incompleat") reminder of what's been published in the previous year, and because I can't possibly have seen or read everything, votes received for anything not listed are indeed taken on trust, as are votes in the individual categories for people I haven't seen qualifying work of.

"Good faith" in this case is a two-way street. While of course this administrator accepts votes for anything of which I might be unaware, I must also presume good faith from the voters themselves, even as I'll check ballot entries for compliance to the simple calendar year qualifying period and the categorization of fanzines, in either case where I think there might be some doubt, and detail any rejections in the *TIR* Results issue to show transparency.

As stated in that results issue, I welcome discussion on the primary topic of "is *Octothorpe* a fanzine" (or indeed ancillary subjects including but not limited to duck-billed platypi) in these pages, but being me I'll typically conclude stridently: I don't see "good faith" in votes for a podcast for a fanzine award. Shurely you're taking the piss?...

DON'T MENTION THE WAR...

...OR, APPARENTLY, THE HUGOS

This being - er - 'FaanWank' part the next, I suppose, with added pisttacking and outrage...

S&ra Bond, in modest tones, announced the following in a friends-locked post on Facebook (and thus you can assume that I've got permission to quote with attribution):

Last night I found myself the winner of the FAAn Award for Best Special Publication of 2021.

Quite frankly, I'd almost rather have that than a Hugo. The Hugos are voted on by any old hobbledehoyos who happen to have a Worldcon membership, and are notorious for campaigning and log-rolling. The FAAns are voted on by my peers, whom I (mostly) respect.

Deserved congratulations duly ensued, but then comes the turd in the punchbowl, **Mike Glycer**, remarking that

"Shitting on the Hugo is just a sad plea for attention" (those last three words representing a theme in his thinking, it seems). **S&ra** immediately responds that there was no such intent, others were a little more strident in her defense.

Jonathan Woodhouse wrote:

Saying an award that has had a well known pretty insular system for a while - has something on an insular system isn't "shitting on" anything. Maybe chill down and back up?

Now I'm assuming from this (the quote is exact and unedited) that Jonathan is making a comparison between different "insular" systems, i.e. the Hugos and the FAAns, and while he has a point, I'd be inclined to argue that the FAAns are considerably less "insular" given that, to paraphrase **Justin E.A. Busch**, the voting is fully open to the extent that to vote is to demonstrate one's interest and *per se* the qualification to be in the constituency. The Hugos can only be considered "insular" in that a WorldThing membership is required (at any level), whereas the FAAns can only be considered so by the deliberately narrow range of interest they represent.

Henry Hamilton was more forthright:

Fuck off until you can't get any further, then fuck off some more. If you think you've fucked off enough, you most definitely haven't.

It's perhaps worth noting that **Glycer** got no support for his position, but then again that shouldn't be surprising since he's attempting to preach to **S&ra's** friends list.

Andie Figgins is more measured:

So, Sandra shares good news and says she'd rather win the award she (rightfully) has because it's like being peer reviewed and that means more to her, than a different award that's stodgy, and voted on by people who are insular, and she's shitting on things?



Nope, that's just how she, and others feel, the ranking of awards bodies is. Honestly, I'd prefer to be honoured by my peers too.

And going for the punch down is not cool. Sandra shares great news. Stick to that, not insults.

Glyer responds along the lines of he was about to congratulate, *but...* and proceeds to suggest that this is all denigrating his previous Hugo wins, oh how fuckin' fragile. **Andie** responded, in part: "...throwing in an insult loses your higher ground, and makes you look bad. There was no need for that. She didn't list past winners, call anyone out by name or otherwise insult individuals. You did."

Just when you might think, oh well, storm in a teacup, **Mike's** off his meds or whatever, continue to congratulate a deserved FAAn award winner, off we go to his own playground at *File 770*, and on to another level of bonkers.

Let me remind you all at this point that if there's one thing I consider to be a total line-crosser is being lied about - I mean, ferfucksake, the truth is usually damning enough without having to make shit up, but then again I suppose in this context we've got to consider the fact-free worldview that seems to result from adherence to a party line, any or all evidence to the contrary.

Jerry Kaufman, as mildly as he does, noted in a March 22 Pixel Scroll comment (made on March 23, three days after the award ceremonies) that some readers might be interested in the FAAn award results (also remarking that Frequent Filer Camestros Felapton had received votes for *Debarkle*, getting a thankful reply from the author), which got the following off **Glyer**:

I just used to overlook Nic's attention-seeking efforts like calling Worldcon "WorldThing" and arguing that the Hugo-winning zines by **Chris Garcia** and **James Bacon** were not up to whatever his standards are, but when he and **Rich Lynch** spent part of an issue of Nic's fanzine *This Here* egging each other on about the notion that *File 770's* Best Fanzine Hugos were actually illegal that hurt and I thought I could do with rather less Nic Farey in my life after that.

Well, let's start with noting "attention-seeking" again, apparently a bugbear, and yet I could wryly remark by asking for examples of any faned who isn't, by definition, "attention-seeking". Including **Glyer**. (Achievement unlocked, ey?)

Oh, so much to unpack, but first off **Mike**, here you begin your precipitous descent into being an utter fuckin' liar. I had to have a bit of a look back to find **Rich's** locs to *This Here...* (#45 and #46, for anyone who cares to go and have a look), and the suggestion that we'd stated that any of *File 770's* Hugo wins were "actually illegal" is tincture of pure bollocks. What we had discussed, in part, was the fact that Hugo Award admins had admitted blogs to the 'Best

Fanzine' award structure, but even there only the 2018 win for *F770* (which hasn't even been nominated since, how that must chafe) got in under those circumstances, since every previous rocket-shaped suppository for the title had been preceded by a print (or pdf) edition. You fuckin' liar, **Glyer**. (More poetry to follow.)

Oh, and by the by, I'll be thankful if you'd allow me my own opinions of *The Drink Tank* and *Journey Planet*, if that's all right.

Mike basically says he hasn't covered the FAAn awards because he's got the arse with me.

Dave Langford commented:

Nic Farey has certainly irritated a lot of people, myself included; but not covering a long-standing fan award in the usual F770 news roundup seems a little ... petty? As though you were to omit the Worldcon site selection results because of some personal quarrel with Kevin Standlee.

Very reasonable observation, Fanglord, but here was **Glyer's** response (in full):

Did you know that *Ansible* does not have an online comment forum? Where are people supposed to post the news items you refuse to cover? Like the last 35 years' worth of Writers of the Future Contest winners announced since you and Author Services' Fred Harris threw drinks on each other at the '87 Worldcon? Fred Harris' bad behavior was sufficient justification for you to permanently skip an activity that literally hundreds of professional sf writers have been involved in by now. It's your zine. What you report is your choice.

At this time Nic Farey controls the FAAn Awards — because if not for his efforts they would already be dead. Several years ago Nic started having me (and others, of course) help him publicize FAAn Award voting. Being a fanzine fan, I said sure — notwithstanding that both my publication and my writing are somehow classified as not a fanzine and not fan writing under its rules — because I reacted a little like Thaddeus Stevens in the movie *Lincoln* when he told his colleagues they must "retain their capacity for astonishment."

However, running an award I am not eligible for is a very different thing from saying toxic and false things about my history. I don't owe Nic space. He's not welcome to my hospitality here.

I was inclined to let this bollocks go unremarked as the obvious tosh it is without comment, but here we go again with the fuckin' lies: "toxic and false things about my history"? Get your head out of your arse - none of this is about you, **Mike**, until you made it so, and with all this utter shite you're only contributing to the further Balkanization of the Faniverse, which might well suit you, I suppose. Though I must protest at "controls the FAAn awards" - no,

administers the FAAn awards (including, yes, policy and definition in consultation with others, but mostly simple tallying and bookkeeping, as well as promotion). And “somehow classified as not a fanzine”? You know full fuckin’ well that in the definitions of the awards a blog (or a podcast, **Alison**) isn’t “somehow” excluded, it simply isn’t a “fanzine” by the admittedly old-school constraints we apply.

Langford, not unexpectedly has it dead right, your comparisons with his persistence in not reporting ‘Writers of the Future’ notwithstanding (and maybe that isn’t a great example). Your blog, your news feed, and of course you can choose what you consider worth reporting, but to exclude any mention of what **Dave** accurately described as “a long-standing fan award” because you’ve got the arse with me could legitimately make the casual and non-slavish reader wonder what *else* you might be suppressing? It’s also worth noting that *Ansible*, being a British newszine, will concentrate on local news in the limited space available, although the FAAn winners will get in because of Corflu having been held several times in the UK, and them (er - us) Brits might appear in the listings.

S&dra penned the following, and has generously allowed its publication:

What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?
He’s burning up with a furious fire,
Like a widow cast on a funeral pyre --
What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?

What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?
He’s turned bright red and begun to perspire,
And plainly he’s filled with a righteous ire --
What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?

What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?
His blood pressure’s likely to grow ever higher,
And if he’s not careful he could well expire --
What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?

What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?
His actions don’t seem like ones to admire.
A simple answer is all we require --
What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?

What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?
I really don’t want to preach to the choir,
But he’s certainly baffling this versifier --
What IS the matter with Michael Glycer?

(After A.A. Milne)

And of course I must observe that the only missing rhyme in there is “**liar**”...

I will add that I’m also genuinely and vastly sorry that many years of cordial correspondence and interaction have come to this. Way to kill it, I suppose...

CODA: THE BEAT GOES ON

Ulrika O’Brien punted a couple of comments on the *F770* thread, the primary thrust of which was to disabuse the notion that I “control” the FAAn awards. Her comment (one of two, both subsequently deleted by **Mike**), was:

@Mike Glycer: “At this time Nic Farey controls the FAAn Awards”.

This is factually false. Corflu controls the awards, and multiple different Corflu chairs have, in recent years, asked Nic to administer them. Not least because he does yeoman work in publishing *The Incomplete Register* as a tool for finding or remembering eligible works. Naturally, as administrator of the awards he would pass on the news of the winners and the deadlines to you as you purport to report news of fandom and not just movies and comics. If you have feelings about Nic and how he has handled various decisions you can join a long line, but deciding to black out news of the award because of your personal animus against Nic does, indeed, seem petty. Unless you wish to disclaim an interest in reporting news of fandom, of course.

Those familiar with **Ulrika’s** usual polemic will note an unusual restraint in the above. No, really. I’d take slight issue with the statement that “Corflu controls the awards”, even though that’s true to a significant extent, since the presentations are done via that event for reasons of both convenience and appropriateness, and I’ve always said that I see the admin gig as a mere “staff position” within the current Corflu, yet with the incumbent admin having the remit to “get on with it” with varying levels of input from whoever the current Corflu chair happens to be. So anyway, this was culled from the discussion and replaced by:

Moderator’s Note: I am not going to host sophistries from trolls who pretend not to understand that the meaning of the word “control” encompasses the full range of influence used to dominate something, which can range from running the thing themselves, to making other people who run it so miserable by incessant criticism and well-poisoning that hardly anyone else has the intestinal fortitude to try to run it, to personally rounding up many of the voters who participate (with quite understandable side effects on what wins.)

It’s been pointed out to me that “personally rounding up many of the voters who participate (with quite understandable side effects on who wins)” is an actual libel, although I characterized it (in a response on *F770*) as a mere “outrageous slur”, if that hasn’t also been deleted by now in Stalinist fashion.

Mike carries on with his contention that I've said that Hugos for *F770* were "illegal", without evidence, but I will say that *if* he genuinely divined that somehow, I can only reiterate that not only do I believe that's something I never said (and I've also taken more than one occasion to praise the effort that goes into the blog), but that my criticisms are leveled at Hugo admin decisions (and/or non-decisions) rather than any individual winners, who after all are anointed by a system over which they have no control.

With all *that* shite, and yet given my disinterest in WorldThings (a term **Mike** apparently hates, so of course I'll keep using it) and rockets, let me nevertheless swivel to niceness and again fully congratulate **Sara Felix** on her Hugo win for Best Fanartist, having been a previous FAAn award winner (a rare crossover), and her gracious acceptance speech thanking the fanzines for appreciating and using her art (which is typically terrific), noting that *this* fanned happily purchased the original of the award-winning art from the cover of *BEAM 15*. Graciousness. All is not lost...

CODA 2 : WHY THIS FANZINE IS A DAY LATE

So having been up more than half the fuckin' night dealing with this nonsense and making a substantial dent in the contents of the whiskey bottle, thish that should have been out yesterday now gets hurriedly finished off today, with what's likely to be some truncated bits, inevitably perhaps 'Fanzines Received' and 'Indulge Me', though as I write this bit (at 7:45am Saturday morning after Not Enough Kip) that remains to be seen, I suppose. I've got a few hours of weekend left, don't I?

After failing to follow **Ulrika's** (and others') example of giving up on trying to engage with **Glyer** in any kind of logical fashion, it all seems to have come down to a rutting old goats clash of interpretations, with me being, oo just a touch miffed over libelous thinly veiled suggestions that the FAAn awards are rigged and **Mike** being equally adamant that I must retract the imagined statement that his Hugo wins are "illegal". Mutual retractions apparently needed to be expressed in words of one syllable (or less), which doesn't say much about the comprehension levels of Gen-F, does it?

My 94th attempt at conveying this apparently passed muster and the 2022 FAAn award results duly and finally appeared in the Blog of Record, with those on the traditionalist side of this divide undoubtedly reading condescension in the simple, factual item.

It's well sad that **Glyer**, having got the major arse over what was truly an imagined slight, required genuflection at the altar before what's in the ever grander scope of the Faniverse a rather minor piece of news (though not, of course, to fanzine devotees) gets published.

My other takeaway here is a confirmation of something I've continued to observe, which is that, while pontificating from a position of presumed superiority over the unwelcome

diehard vestiges of What Fandom Used To Be, the language used is typically that of victimhood. If you think about it, it's quite astonishing that, **Mike** having interpreted something I said as questioning the validity of a Hugo win, *requires* me to state that no, it's all good before allowing a little news item to appear. I'd suggest that if you need *me* (of all people) to confirm your rocket win then it's already fragile in your own mind.

Thanks, though, for finally reporting the FAAn award winners, however grudgingly. And yeah, what **Henry Hamilton** said...

FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

Whilst various commentators (the non-sports kind) would have us believe we're on the brink of nuclear extinction as a race, a reminder of personal mortality came in a smaller and more intimate form with the death, on March 4th 2022, of Australian cricket legend Shane Warne at the ludicrously young age of 52. Even the most rabid England cricket fan would have to admit that we've witnessed the passing of probably the finest spin bowler the game has ever seen and he shared a quality that Spurs fans have also ascribed to ex-Arsenal footballer Ian Wright – the player most hated to compete against, but also the player you'd most want on your side in the heat of battle in a big game or test match.



Warne was a “colourful” character; a mix of celebrity ex-girlfriends (Elizabeth Hurley has never quite managed to equal the stature of even Hugh Grant, another of her celebrity ex’s), alleged drug use, and extensive hair transplants, which he advertised on many a shopping channel. He was also what is known in England as “a cheeky chappie”; the twinkle in his eye hinting at mischief close to hand and adventures to be had. The closest we have in England to Warne as cheeky chappie is Phil Tufnell, also a spin bowler (I’m not going to get involved in explaining the intricacies of leg spin, or off spin, or orthodox spin, or flippers; barely enough people read this column already without me introducing such torturous detail and, if I’m totally candid, I doubt I or even most active cricketers fully understand them). Tufnell once told the story of going out to bat one morning in a test match at an Australian cricket ground, probably the MCG, after having survived the previous evening as a nightwatchman (a lower order, less talented batsman sent in at the falling of a wicket late in the day to protect a higher order batsman from embarrassment in low light or testing circumstances). The batsman with Tufnell was David Gower, a talented, blonde haired, ethereal player who always promised more than he delivered. As they walked out of the dressing room to the crease Gower passed Tufnell a hip flask, which Tufnell assumed was filled with water to help with the harsh Australian summer heat, but found was full of gin. It was then that he noticed that Gower was still absolutely pie-eyed from the drinking session the night before. Truly different times.

Warne was also the man responsible for “that” ball; the impossible ball, the “[Ball of the Century](#)”, his first ball in an Ashes Test Match, let alone an Ashes Test Match in England, to bowl Mike Gatting around his legs in 1993. He’d go on to terrorise England until 2006, when he helped Australia take revenge on home soil for the series defeat in England the previous year, where he shared the player of the tournament award with Andrew Flintoff, another well-known “cheeky chappie”. I was lucky enough to attend the final day of the final Test at Kennington Oval in 2005; it was the cricketing equivalent of seeing Pele or Maradona play football live, or seeing Ali fight live, or following Tiger Woods around the greens as he destroys not just the course par, but also anyone remotely hoping to get close to his score.

Lost in the noise around Warne’s death was the news that, on exactly the same day, another Aussie cricketing legend also died: [Rodney Marsh](#). As much as I admired Warne as a player and chuckled at his antics both on and off the pitch, I loved Marsh. Firstly, he came from the period when I started to become interested in cricket; the time when test match commentaries were listened to on tinny transistor radios held close to the ear as their tenuous attachment to the broadcast wavelength became stretched and distorted in the ether, and, secondly, he was a wicketkeeper. Wicketkeepers

enjoy, if that’s the word, a similar reputation to goalkeepers in soccer: they’re all batshit crazy! Only a crazy person is going to be actively diving around the ground trying to get close to a solid leather ball bowled at Gawd only knows how many hundreds of miles per hour that a batsman is trying to smash away from himself with a plank of wood. And you’ve got to be fully up the batshit scale of crazy when two of the bowlers you’re backing up are ripsnorters like [Dennis Lillee](#), “the outstanding fast bowler of his generation” and Jeff Thomson.

Playing opposite Marsh in a lot of those 1970s Ashes matches was another legendary wicketkeeper: England and Kent’s Alan Knott. Both men were not only outstanding keepers, but also destructive batsmen; all-rounders that helped make their club and national teams very balanced – able to bat deep but also include an extra bowling option. Without resorting to hours of research on youtube to back myself up, my impressions were that Marsh was more muscular and brutally powerful with the bat, whereas Knott was a technician; all dabs and cuts, playing across the line of the ball rather than through it like Marsh. To put it in fantasy reader terms for the non-cricket fans out there, if Marsh was hacking opponents to death with a broadsword, Knott was carving them up with a Katana. This is hardly surprising really, England prided itself on being the home of cricket and wanted to at least pay lip service to the game’s full range of skills; Australia, by contrast, were always and are to this day a team of fighters, wonderfully talented of course, but brutally determined to “stick it to the Poms” wherever possible. In a 2008 article in The Daily Telegraph, Michael Henderson compared Knott to the then current Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist. Henderson decided that Knott was, unarguably, the game’s greatest ever wicketkeeper-batsman, whilst Gilchrist was the game’s finest ever batsman-wicketkeeper. I won’t tie myself in any such semantic knot (pun not really intended but kudos accepted anyway); I’d have either Knott or Marsh over Gilchrist any day of this century or the last.

As I mentioned at the top of that first paragraph, the world now watches on as Russia attempts to bomb Ukraine into the Stone Age. I wasn’t surprised when the invasion happened; I have been surprised by the united front put forward by the Western nations to Russia’s aggression. All the sanctions against Russia may be economic (thus far), and the support offered to Ukraine by the Western world and its military organisations may not be of the level that Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the inspirational President of Ukraine, has requested, but they’ve still been more severe than many commentators would have expected.

Football, and, more accurately, its governing bodies, very nearly dropped the ball (another unavoidable pun, sorry!) completely. UEFA, the European governing body, almost immediately banned the Russian national team from all its

international competitions and then rapidly followed this decision by excluding all Russian domestic clubs from the three club competitions they oversee. FIFA, the global governing body, however somehow managed to fudge the issue completely by not immediately throwing Russia out of their World Cup qualifier against Poland due to be played on March 24th in Moscow. Eventually FIFA did exclude Russia after initially telling the Russian football authorities they could only play the tie if the team wore no national emblems, displayed no national flag, and played no national anthem, conditions which one V. Putin was never going to countenance. Exacerbating the situation, Ukraine was due to play its own World Cup qualifier against Scotland in Glasgow on the same night, which was never going to be possible given the circumstances. Scotland and Poland, unable to fulfil their World Cup fixtures, hastily arranged a friendly match at Hampden Park and £10 from each ticket sold was donated to Unicef's appeal in Ukraine. The match ended in a 1-1 drawn when Krzysztof Piatek scored a controversial 94th minute penalty for Poland to equalise Kieran Tierney's 68th minute opener for Scotland.

Russian infrastructural resources in the wake of the collapse of the old Soviet Union, was the immediate target. Abramovich announced his intention to hand the running of Chelsea over to a charity overseen by governors with long-standing attachments to the club, including the manager of the women's football side, which seemed to come as news to the individuals involved and collapsed as an idea fairly quickly. Once Abramovich was personally sanctioned as part of the targeting of the resources of the "oligarchs", Chelsea were no longer allowed to sell tickets to attend games, open their club merchandise shop, or even serve refreshments other than non-alcoholic beverages (somehow required by health and safety law, I'm not entirely convincingly informed). Abramovich then announced his intention to sell the club and donate the "net proceeds" to charities dealing with the fall-out of the conflict, including helping Russian victims, whilst also not requiring the club to repay the £1.5billion of no-interest loans he had made to it over the decade or so of his ownership (Financial Fair Play, anyone?). There were a couple of sticking points in those intentions and, left with no more fences to sit on, the Premier League and the Football Association disqualified Abramovich as a director of the club and started the process of selling the club to new owners, with all proceeds to go to organisations supporting Ukrainian humanitarian efforts.

Ex-Crystal Palace owner Simon Jordan, speaking on Talksport, gave a [scathing review](#) of Abramovich's time as Chelsea owner, and the club certainly hasn't helped itself with some of the [announcements and demands](#) it has made in recent weeks. The immediate thought that crossed my mind was that this was a situation that was going to come back and bite the Premier League and the Football Association even more in the weeks and months to come and, lo and behold, before the ink had even been applied to, let alone dried on, the new ownership forms for Chelsea at Companies House, the UK government jumped on an opportunity to virtue signal about the ownership of Manchester City and its links to [Syrian president and Putin supporter Bashar al-Assad](#). Expect Newcastle United to start appearing in newspaper headlines any day soon.

All of which just leaves me enough space to update you all on the antics of Nic's beloved Watford and my infuriatingly inconsistent Spurs, as tedious as it may be in comparison. Watford is basically fucked; relegation to the Championship beckons. The minute Newcastle United was able to start buying reinforcements with their new ownership windfall, which, to be fair, they did remarkably sensibly – no overpaid Brazilians, just good, solid professionals to see them out of a hole – the die was cast. I finally got to visit the new Tottenham Hotspur stadium recently, thanks to the generosity of one of my fellow admins on the All Things Tottenham Hotspur facebook group. Unfortunately, it was for the 2-0 defeat to Wolverhampton Wanderers. Despite being inconsistent in a win-lose-win-lose-win-lose sort of



Once Western governments, including the UK, decided to impose economic sanctions against Russia, it was only a matter of time until the Premier League was drawn into the drama. Chelsea, owned by one Roman Abramovich, that well-known Putin associate in the rape and pillage of

way, Spurs are still challenging for a top four finish, and Champions League football next season as a consequence. The crunch game could well be the still to be rearranged Covid postponement home fixture against Arsenal. For a Spurs fan, I am oddly confident; although I'm sure that bubble will have burst by the next time we speak. The stadium truly is remarkable; the footprint of the ground is an area well-known to me from childhood and it really does seem bigger inside than out. The acoustics work exactly as promised, the home fans chants are deafening when in full voice. I can't wait to see the ground in gridiron mode later this year when I hope to get tickets for the visit of the New Orleans Saints; I can only dream of seeing a Champions League final or Superbowl there, but there can be no doubt they're going to happen at some point.

Next month, I shall discuss the implications of the discovery of the multiverse following the visit of shape-changing lizards to play an away fixture at Accrington Stanley that I expect to happen any day now!

LOCO CITATO

[[“What other culture could have produced someone like Hemingway and not seen the joke?” (Gore Vidal)...]]

From: fabficbks@aol.com

February 25

Bob Jennings writes:

Well. Here I am, in the middle of yet another of our weekly debilitating Friday snow storms (collect the whole set, I know I am). Sixteen inches or so is expected, more than enuf to completely shut down everything today, even without the official state-wide travel ban, then with the roads barely cleared by mid Saturday, and businesses probably not recovering until sometime Sunday. Two and a half to three days where I am stuck here in the house. Luckily there was a musical ping at the email box to announce the arrival of *This Here* #50.

You are not allowed to chase after a cab fare that tries to stiff you? Couldn't you at least have ascertained who she was from the apartment complex she got out at, and maybe had the company send her a bill or something? Couldn't you make a complaint to the police about the situation? Stiffing a restaurant, hotel, or cab/transit ride is a criminal offense here in Massachusetts, and is dealt with immediately by the local cops. And then your company charges you, the driver, for the ride? Really, maybe you should think again about getting into another line of work.

[[The law is the same here, pretty much - it's either a gross misdemeanor or a minor felony, I forget which. She got out at a hotel property (the Venetian) which at that time of the morning had no security working outside the main entrance,

who would have been able to detain her. I can chase after a customer, but not physically restrain them or go through their pockets for money. The cozzers, nor indeed the Taxicab Authority officers, won't come out for such a small fare, definitely not to a hotel property or even an apartment complex where you're not going to have a specific address. Your remark also assumes I would have had her name as well as address. Er, no. And yes, any such (thankfully infrequent) incidents have to be paid out of my own pocket. It's the nature of the job, innit? As to finding “another line of work”, I'm not giving up the vacation time, bonuses and other benefits I've accrued over the last more than six years working for this company - you say that as if it were easy, and it isn't...]]

Bad news indeed about losing your van in a traffic accident, but good that you didn't get a ticket for the incident. Having a nearly new vehicle as a result is probably a very good thing, since you have previously indicated that the van was already in the process of wearing itself down to mere screws, rivets, and plates anyway. You might have nursed it along for a time, but probably that period of divine grace would have been shorter than you anticipated.

Incidentally, I'm sure I am not the only person to mention this, but you can retire on social security any time after age 62, but if you want full SS benefits, you have to wait until you turn age 66. 65 was the old standard, but that was changed some years back. Also, unlike most unions, SS does not demand you stop working either. You can continue to work if you want, with earnings over a certain amount becoming taxable income.

[[I looked at all that, and while I could have taken my Social Security at 62 (or 63), we would have been massively worse off. Taking it early comes with an earnings limit (\$17k a year) which, if you go beyond that, they start clawing the dosh back. After 65 that limit does not apply (and you get more money as well). I'm likely going to have to hang on at least until age 66 - two more years...]]

I dunno if there can really be any kind of definition for a BFF. In the past when dinosaurs roamed the earth and paper zines were the norm, a really big fanzine was one that ran forty pages or more. Zines were often 24 pages, corresponding to the number of mimeo stencils in a box (a quire of stencils---there continues to be a whole sub-set language devoted to printing). When all the teenage fans grew up and could afford to spend more money on the hobby, the number of pages increased. I recall quite a lot of 32 and 36 page fanzines in the 1979s-1990s period. When computers came along the gloves were off so far as fanzine page count went. I routinely turned out *Fadeaway* issues of forty to sixty pages. I don't recall this ever being a problem with the people who read my zine, and it was certainly never a problem with fanzines I got back in trade.

I think the BFF situation has largely been aggravated, maybe even created, by the fact that so many zines nowadays are in pixel format, not paper. A lot of people, including me, have trouble digesting a fanzine read off a computer screen. I manage by breaking it down into ten or twelve page chunks with an hour or two off before reading more, but I know a bunch of people, (and not just decrepit geezers like myself either) who have enormous trouble reading more than a few pages off a computer screen.

[[See also Jerry Kaufman's loc...]]

With that kind of mind set, even a thirty page fanzine becomes a BFF. Last year or so the editors of the N3F fanzine *Tightbeam* decreed that all futures issues must be 32 pages or less, preferably less. I can only conclude that the I-hate-reading-off-a-computer-screen scenario was directly to blame for that.

If one of the running definitions of a BFF is one that is so large and intimidating that it defies both instant reading and a proper LOC, then I think you are right that content and presentation are primary considerations. Intimidating articles about subjects or people you know nothing about, delivered as tho they were personally addressed to individuals who were already intimately familiar with the people or situation counts for a lot of that.

Massively intimating letter columns that don't directly relate to what a person understands or can infer from reading the letters is most certainly a major factor. More than once I have failed to do a decent LOC because the fanzine's letter column seemed to be a mutual schmooze-fest of close cohorts that would probably not welcome any newcomer to the klatch.

It would seem to me then that a BFF is not really a matter of page count, but of content and presentation. That said, nothing is going to satisfy everybody. There have been some very popular fanzines that I just couldn't get into, and some people (only a few people, thankfully) have written to tell me they found my own fanzine *Fadeaway* wasn't interesting and to please stop sending it along to them. But this is a big hobby with lots of different people putting out lots of different kinds of fanzines, so there is bound to be something out there for everybody, page count or presentation to the contrary.

[[I can rather agree with much, and perhaps all of this...]]

I am completely unfamiliar with

the "Peacemaker" TV series. I watch almost no TV, since I hate & despise the modern TV commercial breaks, but based on your write-up I will seek out the series.

I have to say I have absolutely no interest in British football, but I found **David Hodson's** article about prison reform programs, and the player Kurt Zouma's video abuse of his two cats leading to "Meow-gate" fascinating. From his discussion it is clear that a bunch of other football team players, not just Zouma, are very likely active sociopaths.

I am curious as to how he and his colleagues were able to pick out and separate the genuine sociopaths and violent narcissists out of the prison reform program that he was involved with. Clearly the records of past misdeeds and activities would be of great help, but as I understand it, many sociopaths are past masters are appearing friendly, open and harmless to their potential victims and to the surrounding world. So how were **David** and his co-workers able to recognize these bad apples before they got into the program? I think he could do another long article just about his involvement with this situation and how he came to be chosen to be part of the program in the first place.

[[You've joined the club of those who, despite Dave's ostensible topic of the footy, have noted that his column is typically wide-ranging and always interesting...]]

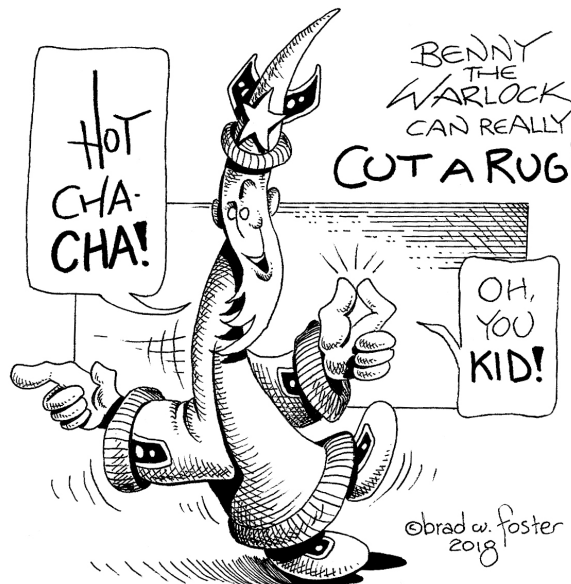
So far as the comments in the letter column about fanzine etiquette, I have always considered it a given that if you are writing something serious in your zine about a person, whether pro or con, you necessarily have to send that person a copy of your zine. That goes for reviewing a person's book, or game, or fanzine too. It's just common courtesy even if you happen to hate everything about the person and the work that person has created. At best it is good manners, and the better is that the individual might send an LOC back

and it could provide a springboard to additional lettercol discussions.

[[Agreed...]]

I was amused by **Jennifer's** nicely written article about the old fridge and its immaculate conception ice cube miracles. I can see why she might not want to correct that. Even a machine can develop a soul, at least in the minds of sympathetic humans anyway.

Another good issue. Congratulations on reaching the half century mark in publishing the title. I look forward to the next.



From: alison.scott@gmail.com

February 26

Alison Scott writes:

I have been egoscanning the last two issues fervently before being forced to conclude that my long letter to 48 never made it off my computer. When I reread the draft I discovered that this is because it started off fairly sensible but then made a right turn into a swamp of foetid introspection that absolutely nobody needs. I have extracted some of the more sensible material to send you.

On the Fan Hugos, buckle up.

Firstly, I always wonder darkly whether fans really like SF at all when they tell me they don't bother joining the Worldcon, because a supporting membership (currently \$50) comes with the Hugo Voter Packet, currently a majestic cornucopia of wonders, fannish and otherwise.

[[That's somewhat persuasive, in fact, and I might just give it some consideration now. I think it's likely that I cling to a mindset of penury, even though a frivolous expenditure of \$50 might actually be manageable, at least for the moment, as much as represents a week or more of food (and beer, and smokes). There is, however, a fanac "budget" of sorts (the larger part of which goes to printing the limited number of copies of BEAM), which covers stuff like the (Anders for) TAFF poll tax (which, I must make clear, I have no objection to), a contribution to the Corflu 50 and a supporting membership (at the very least) for the current Corflu. Whether I might decide to drop a frog on the Worldcon (an amount, by the way, generally considered unlucky by horse racing punters ("bettors" to the Merkans)) is up in the air, but I would say not now utterly ruled out...]]

But even if the people who are active fans and members of a relevant Worldcon were to all get their finger out and nominate, more of the material we like would find its way onto the ballot. That material might not win – a particular risk for things that are not conveniently stored on efanazines but require people to go and get them by email or even happening to be in the right bar at the right time – but I don't think reaching the final ballot is unobtainable by any means.

Besides, the Hugos are unusually open in their accounting, and we learn after the ceremony the items that didn't quite make the ballot. They are great as a balm to the underappreciated and a way to discover things that are often better and more interesting than the material on the ballot.

The fanzine fans' particular poster child, *Outworlds*, was only a couple of nominations off the ballot (in these times of EPH, the relationship between the nominations and the ballot is complicated). We may not have anything quite like *Outworlds* to nominate this year, but there's tons of fantastic things out there.

[[I don't understand what 'EPH' does and likely never will...]]

I was thrilled this year with one of the fan winners – **Sara Felix** – because she seems to me to do what I think we all would like fan artists to do. She provides beautiful, relevant illustrations to fanzines and convention publications out of the goodness of her heart. Also, her heart is very good indeed; in her acceptance speech she said "thank you to all the fanzines for letting me send them art for their publications" which is a remarkably generous emotion.

[[Fully agreed. My experience of working with Sara on the BEAM 15 cover was an absolute fuckin' joy (and it was extra lovely to be able to thank her, again, but in "person" at your Zoom party the other week. I'm majorly happy to have purchased the original from her, which arrived along with a postcard print of the equally wonderful Askance #52 cover. Art (!) should be added to the fanac budget, I think...]]

I did very much enjoy **Ulrika's** 'O, Ghu!' Awards though would point out that it is not common for most of these things to win a Hugo, just to appear as finalists. The solution to that is, I fear, more assiduous nomination. When the Worldcon long list comes out it's inevitably the case that the items that raise the most eyebrows have snuck onto the ballot with relatively small numbers of nominations. If everyone gets on and nominates the stuff that is excellent, they won't.

The Hugo administrators, who are real people not some imaginary figures for you to take potshots at, have a massively hard job to do. In my view they are slightly too lenient in allowing marginal items, but honestly I have zero desire to do their job, so I'd rather someone else did it even if they were not perfect at it. I suggest, however, that you pass a copy of *This Here...* to Kat Jones, who is Area Head Hugos, and Nicholas Whyte, who is Division Head WSFS, for Chicon; I think they'd both be amused even as they cringed.

[[Feel free to pass it along yourself to these people unknown to me...]]

Certainly I'd rather have their slightly over-lenient approach than the alternative; that things people are voting for are arbitrarily deleted by administrators due to pre-conceived ideas about what constitutes, eg, a 'publication'. Ahem.

[[Ahem indeed. When you're done egoscanning have a look at 'FAAnWank' thish...]]

I think we are way beyond the point where 'presence of estrogen' is a good test of gender (assume I have written and then cut a ton of technical detail about (a) gender being a social construct, (b) the absence of testosterone, rather than the presence of estrogen, being the primary reason that causes individual humans to code as female, and (c) did I mention Fuck the Menopause?), though it's good to see that you have so many female contributors. Possibly you aren't

driving them away actively like *Some Fanzines I Could Mention*.

*[[Definitely arguable that I was being not atypically lazy in that “estrogen” phrasing. As Ulrika and I discussed in ‘Eleven Years Later’ in an earlier BEAM, the inclusion, and indeed occasional prevalence of female contributors isn’t the result of a deliberate policy, and could almost be deemed “accidental”, inasmuch as the all-lads #1 could be argued to be equally accidental. That having been said, there’s quite possibly an undercurrent of thought that there’s at least a perception that female writers could be thought of as underrepresented in what we might call “flagship” fanzines. On a purely selfish note, I could be well pleased that this allows BEAM some sort of free shot at getting excellent work (unlike, apparently, *Some Fanzines You Could Mention*), as evidenced by #16 fershure, with terrific stuff from Lucy Huntzinger, Jane Carnall, S&ra Bond and Lee Wood to name but four. At risk of jinxing it, for #17 we’re hoping to score a long-awaited piece of frivolity from Toni Weisskopf (who’s been in before) and an essay from my old friend Allison Douglass, who will be a first-time fanwriter. DoBFO noodge, there, right?...]]*

I do think of the UK as basically having one highly interconnected fan community, that includes amongst it the fanzine fans and also a broader set of convention-going fans, serious lit crit fans and so on. But even so, there’s a lot of people I don’t know. I reckon I only know half of the average Eastercon to have a brief chat to, and the number I’d plan to sit down and have a beer with is way fewer than that.

Chicon 7 chair Dave McCarty said at Smofcon that he thought he had a personal acquaintance of 15,000 people. (“And none of them have a good word to say for him”, said one wag on hearing this, a touch unfairly.) I cannot even, as they say. I have been attempting to keep notes on my friends, acquaintances, correspondents, and bitter enemies since the beginning of the pandemic. My collection is still very incomplete, but even were it not, I think it would top out around two thousand or so, far fewer than Dave’s.

[[falls off chair...]]

I myself have met **Eli Cohen** – at Dublin in 2019 for sure, but I think we were renewing an older acquaintance from perhaps Loncon? Eli is likely to remember better than I do. Worldcons are a massive whirl though; even the virtual ones.

Finally, I was let off the hook by the fanzine I had no desire to loc, by happening to mention to one of its editors that I hadn’t quite finished my letter. At which point he gave me one of his particularly avuncular looks and explained that the request for letters was a special one-off and they were returning to their normal, correspondence-free, practice immediately after the next issue, for which I was already too late. As **Wm. Breiding** writes, “everyone understands that

the tender of fanzines is communication, and every fanzine hopes for a lively interaction with its recipients.”

I am skipping 49, because the desire to catch up trumps completism every time, except to say that I worked for Sue Gray for a while, and even once visited her (very nice) house, for an office party at which I felt I was very much an ugly and uncouth gnome who had been let in by mistake and had no idea How to Behave.

Just a few tiny bits on 50:

Congratulations on reaching 50! **Chris Garcia** said this to *Octothorpe* only a couple of weeks ago, to which Liz archly replied “Only the podcast, Chris, only the podcast”, and I sipped my coffee and Felt Old. Again.

We got a new car in 2020 – almost the only thing we did achieve in 2020 – and it too was ‘nearly new’ and rather more expensive than we’d planned. We have had a year of trouble-free motoring now, and I would recommend it; it turns out to be very nice not to have to worry whether your car will get you to your destination, or indeed whether it will start at all.

[[So far, so good with the new Honda...]]

I too am astonished by **Kim Huett**’s *tour de force* of a loc about Filipino Karaoke Rage. More a perfectly formed article really. I also very much like **Brad Foster**’s Striped Squiggle Fish and have written to attempt to buy the original. And I even understood almost the whole of **Dave Hodson**’s column, because the events to which he alludes escaped the sports pages and were very big news everywhere.

Finally, I never really liked chips much until my first visit to Belgium and the realisation that they were mostly suited to mayonnaise. Gravy, or even curry sauce, makes chips go far too soggy and often lose critical structural integrity. And there is a lot to be said for simple salt and vinegar.

From: kim.huett@gmail.com

March 1

Kim Huett writes:

You find me in a particularly savage mood. All week I’ve been unwell due to having had my covid-19 booster jab on Monday. That however was nothing as to what happened on the way there as while I was walking down to the bus stop I felt a twinge in my left knee. Not especially painful but it stayed with me all day. I wasn’t bothered because this is far from the first time I’ve had a twinge in the knee or ankle.

That night however the knee decided to swell up and any attempt to bend it was quite painful. As soon as is convenient I will go see a professional but there’s little doubt as to what the verdict will be.

Chop. Chop. And now my right toe has decided it's time for another gout attack. So as I drag this crippled carcass around my apartment I would wish nothing more than to be a tiger so I can properly sink my teeth into the neck of something and shake it like a rag doll until it squeaks for mercy.

That's not a casual choice either. I worked as a volunteer at the local zoo for five years and I know which species has style and which don't. Just because an animal can kill doesn't mean they can do it with *savoir faire*. That's why nobody wants to be a victim of homicide, humans do not know how to predate with any class at all.

Oh, which reminds me, I was ever so slightly wrong about the situation in Thailand. I hadn't realised some bloke in Thailand had shot eight people, including his own brother-in-law, because their attempt at John Denver's 'Take Me Home, Country Roads' upset him. Not that I can blame him as that silly line about life being older than trees but younger than mountains always gets on my tits too. And to be fair we can't assume they were locals given Thailand is such a tourist destination. For all we know they were German, Australian, or even Canadian.

Anyway, regardless of nationality I assume you can see what I mean? What a stupidly human way to go!

In fact it reminds me of that whole squirrel incident in Malaysia.

Which caught me off guard when it broke because I must admit squirrels aren't what I associate with tropical jungles. However the giant black squirrel of Malaysia cares little for my bigoted view of the world. A stance I find entirely understandable because if I looked as good as these squirrels I wouldn't care what other, less attractive species thought either. The giant black squirrel is what the young people of Australia would describe as "one hot bag of balls".

Anyway the whole business began cryptically enough with the following short bulletin:

A 23-year-old man was shot by a forest ranger who mistook him for a squirrel at the Pelubung Forest Reserve here last night. A policeman said the man, Shafie Thambit, was seriously injured. He said Mr. Shafie was climbing up a tree in the reserve when a forest ranger who was passing by mistook him for a squirrel and shot at him. Mr. Shafie fell from the tree and was admitted to hospital. He is said to be injured in the face, right hand

and body. Police detained the forest ranger for questioning.

As always in such cases the "Just the facts ma'am." approach is highly unsatisfactory. Just the facts is fine when being told about a traffic accident in Vegas because the basics of the situation is familiar enough that I can fill in all the little blanks. I've no reason to believe the average bingle in Vegas is any different to the various bingles I've seen in Canberra (well maybe not that time some idiot side-swiped a painters' van, talk about instant rainbow).

This however, this is on a whole different plane of existence. For example I've never considered it normal practice to visit any state or federal forest at night. So why did Mr. Shafie not only do that but start climbing trees in the dark? Given it's Malaysia the involvement of drugs is most unlikely so this implies Mr. Shafie thought he had a sober, sensible reason to enter Pelubung Forest Reserve at night and turn arboreal.

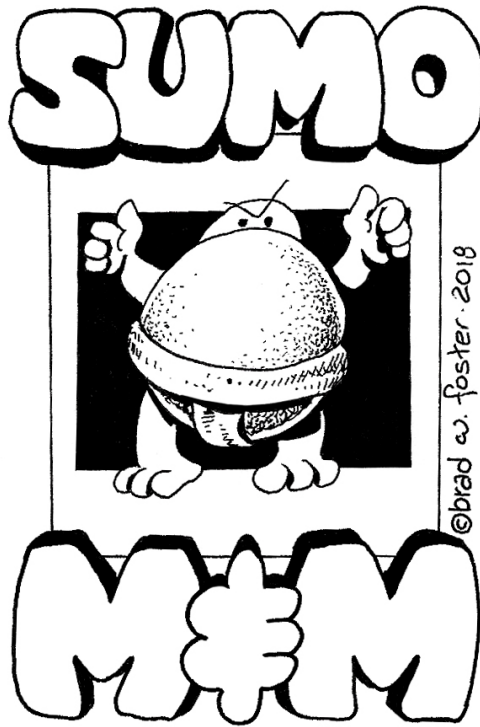
Then there is the question of why the unnamed forest ranger was armed and licensed to kill? Even in the US forest rangers don't appear to be normally armed. I've watched my share of documentaries and news reports and am yet to see forest rangers kitted out like Rambo. What on earth goes on in Malaysia's forests at night that they need to be patrolled by armed rangers with shoot to kill orders?

Consequently the fact that Mr. Shafie was mistaken for a giant black squirrel is the most believable part of the story. It's true that the forest ranger might of been lying but let us not forget there is a long and noble tradition of people being mistaken for squirrels. Even in fandom Ron Ellik was frequently mistaken for a larger

than usual squirrel by fellow LASFS members. And this was in the late fifties, back before drug usage had widely filtered into fandom. So if the members of LASFS could confuse Ron Ellik with a squirrel then I'm entirely willing to believe an unnamed forest ranger mistook Mr. Shafie for a squirrel, while he was up a tree, in the dead of night.

Luckily for my sanity, if not for yours, the Internet exists to fill in the blanks and it paints neither Mr. Shafie or the forest ranger in a good light. For starters it turns out that it's believed our Mr. Shafie visited Pelubung Forest Reserve in order to hunt wild boar.

Now, according to my research wild boar are a protected species in Malaysia, though they may be hunted if a special



license is obtained. There is no record of Mr. Shafie having had such a license. I think we can now guess as to why he was up a tree in the dark then. Still, that doesn't explain why he didn't mistake the forest ranger for a wild boar and shoot him first. Apparently people get mistaken for wild boar in Malaysia all the time and are consequently shot at. Though in the case of Armer Ujan Anak Lalisa, who was shot by his uncle, Panguang Anak Lalisa, it's hard not to wonder if the "I thought he was a wild boar!" excuse might be covering up some sort of family dispute.

Unfortunately the Malaysian Ministry of Energy & Natural Resources is remarkably reticent on the topic of armed forest rangers but given Malaysia is one of those countries struggling with deforestation I'm going to assume they act as armed guards for the trees. Why then one of them can get away with taking pot shots at squirrels remains a mystery. It has been claimed by some commentators that forest rangers get bored and shoot squirrels for amusement. If this is indeed true then it's an act I absolutely do not approve of given preferences for handsome squirrels over Rambo rangers. Besides which, surely forest rangers need to justify the expenditure of ammunition in order to stop them wandering about the forest at night sniping at anything that moves? That sort of behaviour can only end badly, as indeed it did.

And while we're on the topic of things ending badly let me consider the claim that *Doctor Who* plots are nonsense. Only somebody brought up on *Star Trek* could be that easily confused. *Star Trek* after all is built on the premise that every series is a retread of the Captain Hornblower books but with the expensive action scenes kept to a minimum. Why? Because English imperialism was and is considered cheaper to film than US imperialism. Audiences watching plots based upon the later expect every problem to be solved using mass force and shock and awe tactics, all of which requires lots of extras and a significant special effects budget. The image of English imperialism on the other hand, at least in the USA, is that it succeeded by the use of mind games as much as by brute force, and mind games are much less expensive to film. Even stand-up comics like Eddie Izzard have warmed to this particular idea as a means of entertaining USian audiences, see his whole spiel about how the English were able to steal countries by the cunning use of flags.

Consequently all those polo shirt wearing characters that seem to swarm every spaceship in *Star Trek* are the Hollywood vision of what they imagine staff in Whitehall would be like if they were transferred to the future. This is why they rarely seem to do anything other than stand about in little groups and emit pompous little lectures. The idea being, near as I can tell, that Hollywood believes the English system of imperialism was based upon the idea that a superior attitude alone could solve every problem if properly employed. This is why the average *Star Trek* episode is

plotted like the dinner scene from 'Carry On Up the Khyber'. I'm sure you know that one, the majority of the main characters sit down to a meal while under attack. They steadfastly ignore the violence as they eat, because to do otherwise would be to behave in a less than superior manner. Then at the end of the meal Sid James gets up, goes out, and with one simple gesture causes the entire problem to go away.

[[Loath as I am to ever interrupt you in full flow, Kim, I do have a larf recalling the contrast between Kirk's and Picard's captaincy styles, which for the former was encapsulated by the line "I intend to start offending right now", and the latter's satirized as "Don't do that, there will be serious consequences! I mean it! I really, totally mean it! All right then! Staff meeting now!"...]]

Even the endemic bigotry is Hollywood's idea of subtle English class bigotry. The token negro and the token woman are rolled into one and put in charge of the machine that goes ping, the token Scotsman is down in the engine room, the token Welshman is made into a Russian (because it's the future) and given the chauffeur job. There's also a token alien who is given a profile not unlike a fancy eating utensil and a name one letter away from spork. Amazingly they repeated that joke in a later series by including a dog-like alien and giving him a name one letter away from woof.

Watch that sort of Dick & Jane level of world creation for long enough and of course anything which aspires to be anything more will cause endless confusion. Stands to reason that.

I had no trouble responding to *BEAM* but then again I'm not about making a rod for my back. My impression is that those who complain are the sort who have decided it's the law that the recipient must carefully read every single word, cogitate deeply upon what has been written, and only then construct a palace of words in which to sit inside upon a throne constructed of faultless logic and insight. So of course anything longer than two pages becomes a trial for them. I would much rather skim and respond to whatever catches my eye. Works for me.

Can't say I ever had anything on my chips other than salt until a local fried chicken chain began offering chips with gravy about 20/30 years ago. I enjoyed their chips with gravy but haven't had it for many years as they insist on pricing their bags of chips far too high for my liking.

Hoping your ears turn to arseholes and shit on your shoulders as a reward for that inexplicable dobfros *[[sic]]* bullshit.

[[Time, then, for the translation reminder, often referred to as the 'Lichtman Memorial Glossary', that "DoBFO" = "Department of the Blindingly Fuckin' Obvious" ...]]

From: dave_redd@hotmail.com

March 2

David Redd writes:

Thank you for your latest. Congratulations on attaining your 50th, and commiserations on the car/life problems which you have tackled in sterling spirit. Not least, your determination to publish the issue despite everything does amaze and humble me.

Fascinated again by **Dave Hodson's** life experiences: "hero of their own narrative" explains so much about human psychology.

FAAn votes: I may be disagreeing with **Mark Plummer** here. In one category I only had experience of one worthy nominee this year, but that one was very good indeed. So I gave it a vote on grounds of excellence rather than best-of-the-field. Surely denying it my lone vote would have been unfair? Arguable, and had I seen **Mark's** argument first I might have paused.

[[I'm with you on this one mate - you're by no means the only punter who gives a nod to one particular publication which they happened to think was well good, and as far as I'm concerned that's quite all right...]]

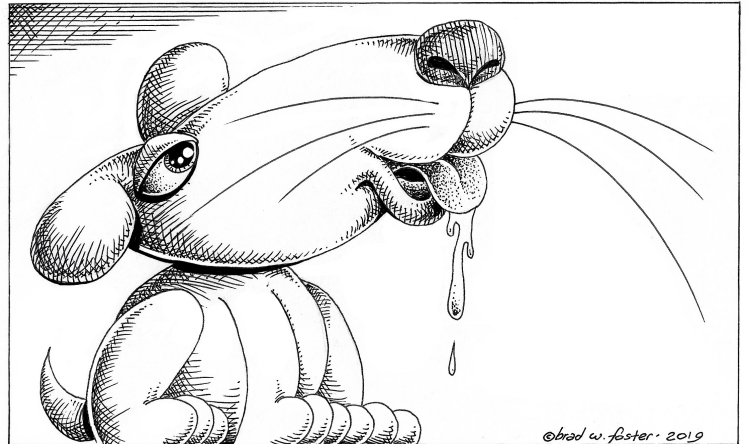
Thanks for another essential 'Radio Winston', very enlightening about a song I love and admire very much, and for taking the trouble to give us everything we could wish for in this issue despite all your problems.

There's a great deal in *TH...* as always, but I don't think of it as a Big Fat Fanzine. Meaty and friendly, requiring dipping in and reading over several visits, yes, but why not? We read as and when we can, and circumstances differ. It's only a problem when pages unread or uncommented upon weigh on the conscience, and *that* has to be resolved by the individual reader.

[[It's also been instructive to hear from readers describing how they typically interact with an ish, in ways that are often as individual as they are themselves. A fair question might be whether any given faned should be tailoring their product somehow to cater to the responding readership, or perhaps even "pander", which is an unkind way of putting it, innit? From the environs of Rungsted Street, that's an "er... no", because I think that a load of second-guessing there would inevitably lead to paralysis, and "you can't please all the people..." and all that. I've at the very least alluded to, and probably outright stated the fact that that we write for ourselves, primarily, rather than consciously to a particular audience, and can only hope that others are into it. That all having been said, and this should probably have been saved over for an 'Omphaloskepsis' column, I do vary the style depending on where the writing is ending up - I tend to think of stuff in BEAM as being more "measured" (recent brouhaha notwithstanding) whereas in here it's more liberally "strewn with fucks and arses" as Justin Busch has

so accurately observed. That's also possibly characteristic of the perzine/genzine separation, the former of which I continue to, I believe accurately, liken to fans talking bollocks up the pub. Not having a handy equivalent of, say, a Croydon Bollocks Central hostelry, this here virtual bollocks is my poor substitute...]]

[...]



From: jakaufman@aol.com

March 3

Jerry Kaufman writes:

I hope you don't have any adventures with the Honda HR-V, even if that would reduce the number of things you can recount in future "Egotorials."

I tried out the different versions of 'Hard Rain' you linked to, and liked them all, though I'll admit that it's one Dylan song that could be a verse or two shorter. I didn't have the patience needed to listen to each version all the way through. (I tried out a few versions you didn't link to, which led me by inexplicable paths to a video composed of short scenes from many musicals all set to 'Uptown Funk.' This was a treat.)

[[I'll grant you that 'Hard Rain' does go on a bit, although it's equally arguable that it's a deliberate structural build. There's been several cases where this, and other slices, have been edited down for any number of reasons, the most inexplicable (to me, anyway) being the verse cut from 'Who Are You' for the single version, and no, not the bit that says "fuck" either...]]

While I'm on the subject of music, I'll report on something new to me: Isolated Vocal Tracks. Listening to KEXP-FM this morning, I heard Marvin Gaye singing 'What's Going On' and Bowie and Queen (really just Freddie Mercury) doing 'Under Pressure.' No instruments, just voices. I don't know whether the station created these, or if they are available to the public from some other source, but I found them amazing.

[[Staying with the “‘orrible ‘Oo” as Daltrey used to describe the band, I’ve definitely seen and heard isolated tracks from ‘Won’t Get Fooled Again’, though in that case it was of Moon’s drumming and Entwistle’s bass, separately...]]

You think *BEAM* is “apparently intimidating”? I’m not intimidated, mate, it’s that I don’t like to read much on screen and print out zines that are relatively short. (And I miss a bit because I usually print in black and white to save the color toners.) So with zines like *BEAM* and *SF Commentary*, which I would read fairly quickly if I had physical copies, I stretch out reading in short bursts over longer periods. (In the past, *Ulrika* has blessed me with print, but not (as yet) this time.

[[Yeah, I get that. I note that you’ve since got your hard copy of *BEAM*...]]

Speaking of printed zines versus unprinted PDFs (or perhaps zines formatted for e-readers?), there’s a small but significant difference that I haven’t heard anyone mention. The PDFs are usually laid out as if they’re going to be printed and read, so they are designed as two-page spreads. Margins are adjusted for gutters, page numbers are sometimes placed in left-hand and right-hand corners, illoes are balanced on opposite pages, headings sometimes spread across pages. This all looks off to me if I’m just looking at the PDFs. Not having read any done for e-readers, I’m not sure if this would be true. How does the art fit into those?

[[Fair points indeed, and yes, *This Here... is laid out as you describe, as if it were a print publication, though these days paradoxically with embedded links. SF Commentary gets punted in both print and screen-friendly versions, and Banana Wings has e-reader versions an’ all. I do look at the pdf “opposite page” layout, but more critically for BEAM which does have a small print run...]]*

The Peacemaker character sounds too much like Marvel’s Punisher. I don’t like these “judge/juror/executioner” types who always seem to know that any person they kill is therefore guilty and deserving of death. (I admit I know the Punisher only from his appearance in the Netflix series about Daredevil.)

In response to my appreciation of Rudner and Benatar, you ask: “Don’t mention the Brits?” No, I didn’t - they didn’t appeal to me. No accounting for taste.

[[Especially yours ey Killer?...]]

Kim Huett talks about the tunes that DJs play at weddings he’s worked on. At weddings I’ve attended or seen in movies, at least the Jewish ones when I was young, the go-to songs are ‘Sunrise, Sunset’ for a slow number and ‘Hava Nagila’ for the high energy tune.

[[You ever meet the dyslexic rabbi? He went around saying “Yo!” (I’ll get me coat)...]]

Nice lot of squiggly **Brad Foster** cartoons this time. Good to know the guy is still playing with lines and odd thoughts.

[[See below...]]



From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

March 7

Leigh Edmonds writes:

Thanks for *This Here... 50* which was, I thought, a nice and entertaining issue. I second (if somebody else hasn’t already) your thanks to **Brad Foster** for the interior art in this issue which I liked a lot.

Strange that **Jen** should write about how places have a particular smell to them. At the moment we have the painters in giving the whole place a fresh going over (to hide a lot of the renovations we’ve had done) and they are also giving this house an entirely fresh new smell. The cats are not very happy about this because, I guess, their noses are more put out by the new smell than my nose is.

Before I forget, my apologies to **Jerry Kaufman**. Not only did he visit us in Canberra back in the mists of time, I'm sure that we would have seen him a couple of other times back when Valma and I visited Seattle back in the 1990s. All I can offer by way of excuse is that it was all a long time ago but, strangely, my mental images of both **Jerry** and **Eli** are as I first saw them in 1974 and I bet they've both become much more interesting looking since then. You were at Discon II weren't you, **Jerry**, or maybe in New York the following week?

For once, and perhaps only once, I'm in agreement with you about the best performance of that Dylan song. You are right about the 'undercurrent of raw emotion' in the Patti Smith performance and, anyhow, it became overshadowed by all the orchestral stuff as the song progressed. There is a kind of Caribbean attitude to life in the Jimmy Cliff, along the lines that all this shit is happening but the sun will still come up tomorrow, which I liked. Having said that, after your exploration I could not resist going back to see an early Dylan version too and I was struck by the kind of youthful optimism in the pessimism of the song. Perhaps as though there is all this bad stuff, but we can do something about it.

One of the themes that seem to be running through this issue is that thinking takes time and effort. As you say in response to something in my letter; 'I continue to contend that lack of critical thinking elsewhere is sadly evident, and perhaps that's because it's work, innit?' Which is relevant to your exposition (if such a word is appropriate) in Omphaloskepsis. For the sake of argument I contend that whether a fanzine is a BFF or not isn't a matter of the intention of the editors or even the physical bulk of the thing, but in the mind of the reader. And this has, I think, to do with what the reader thinks, which relates to what you say about being intimidating. However I'm not sure that intimidating is a word I would have used, the words that work better for me is 'intense' or perhaps 'dense'.

[[As we're seeing in the really widely differing responses, both here and elsewhere ("not a problem I've ever had", comments Justin E.A. Busch in his 'Fanfaronade' review column on the specific topic of finding BFFs "difficult" for whatever reason), it's all very "eye of the beholder" innit? I took your own 'BFF' mild complaints and probably extrapolated them through others' remarks to make a topic, but as always it's been interesting to hear readers' input...]]

In my time in universities in the 1990s I battled my way through some amazingly dense postmodern texts which seemed to me to be exercises in mental gymnastics more than conveying any significant meaning. This may have been because I'm not as smart as the authors but it may also be because I fundamentally wasn't interested in what they had to say. In those days those texts were required reading so I put the time and effort into them that I would not expend on them now. The reason for that is because reading

and trying to understand them was hard work and while I don't consider myself to be a basically lazy person there are limits to how much work I will put into any project, be it writing something or reading something. There is also the matter of how much time (and hence energy) I'm willing to invest in an item of work. So, if I find a fnz like *Portable Storage* mainly intimidating it is in my understanding how much work I will have to put into reading it. Not that the latest issue of *Portable Storage* was very dense - like those post modern texts - but its sercon nature required a level of concentration that most issues of your fnz don't, so it was more work for me than reading, say, the latest issue of *BEAM*.

[[That seems a bit of a backhanded compliment, but we'll take it...]]

The other aspect of this is simply the time it takes to read a fanzine and the level of interest I have in its content. So while I quite enjoyed the content of the latest issue of **William Breiding's** fanzine, by the time I had reached about the half way point I was beginning to do the mental calculation about the time I was investing in reading the issue versus the value what I was gaining from reading it, and my desire to be able to send **William** some egoboo to repay him in part for the work he had put into producing the issue which I would probably have enjoyed reading to the end if I didn't have other things I want and have to do. (Talk about a long and dense sentence!)

Another aspect is that crafting a full and proper response to the latest issue of *Portable Storage* would entail thinking more deeply about the various articles than I was prepared to do, in terms of the value of the time and effort that would be required in relation to repayment of the effort that had gone into preparing that fanzine. Clearly I didn't think that any of those articles was worth the individual effort while the overall package did deserve some level of work. I'm sorry if that sounds calculating, it's not something that I do deliberately but it is something that does govern the amount of work that I'm prepared to put into fanac.

[[“The love you take is equal to the love you make”...]]

An example of that is the amount of work that I'm prepared to put into unpacking the idea of the BFF and what I think about it. If I was more motivated, and had the time to spare, I'd take the few sketchy ideas above, draft them up into an article, let it ferment for a few weeks, go back to massage it, let it ferment some more, do a bit more work and then send it off to someone to see if they want to publish it. It would be such a compelling argument that it would even convince **Bruce Gillespie** to give up his BFF ways. Instead, I leave you with these few half baked thoughts and move on to say that **Dave Hodson's** 'Footy' column was as interesting and entertaining as usual.

[[I'd love to see that article, though...]]

The first part of **Dave's** column reminded me of the times that I've been doing consulting work for an organization while they've adopted some new management fad they've picked up from some place overseas and introduced to their workplace. It usually comes with a mantra that change is inevitable and the only constant is change so things have to change. Oh the chaos. As an historian it seems to me that often existing ways of doing things have evolved over time to suit the circumstances and environment in which they operate and while the new changes might be appropriate to the places where they were dreamed up, they are often alien to their new environment. In most cases I've been relieved that I'm only observer to these changes and don't have to live with them day-to-day.

The letter column was good with some interesting comment hooks, but I have to pay a visit to the blood doctor this afternoon. I seem to have less time to lounge around thinking critical thoughts now than I did when I had a job, and probably less energy too. So that's it for this issue.

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

March 10

Eli Cohen writes:

Sorry about all your car problems -- though I found your car buying adventure interesting. I, having grown up in New York City, have never owned a car. When I turned 18 I took driving lessons and got my license. But up to the age of about 26 I could truthfully say that I had only spent 21 hours behind the wheel of a car, and that included my driving test! When I lived in Saskatchewan, where I had free access to provincial government cars, I took more driving lessons (learning to drive on ice thinly covered with powdered snow) so I could take another test and get a Saskatchewan license without trading in my painfully acquired NY license. After I moved to Vancouver, I shared my housemate's Datsun, a stick-shift, which I therefore had to learn how to drive (generously taught by Dena Benatan, while she recovered from her broken foot, a side-effect of her visit to us).

[[Did you hear about the

airplane incident involving a freight flight of Japanese car parts in which the plane broke up? Apparently it was raining Datsun cogs. (I'll get me coat - again)...]]

And even after I moved back to NY, and the computer consulting company I worked for got a project at Allied Corporation that required me to commute to Morristown, New Jersey daily for two years, the company graciously supplied the necessary car. And since then, while I've done a fair number of weekend rentals, I've thankfully never had to go through the buying process. Not that there would be anywhere to park a car on Manhattan's Upper West Side anyway. (During the Morristown days, I was living in Elmhurst, Queens, where there was actual street parking!) I suppose I shouldn't mention to someone in your profession that I absolutely hate driving.

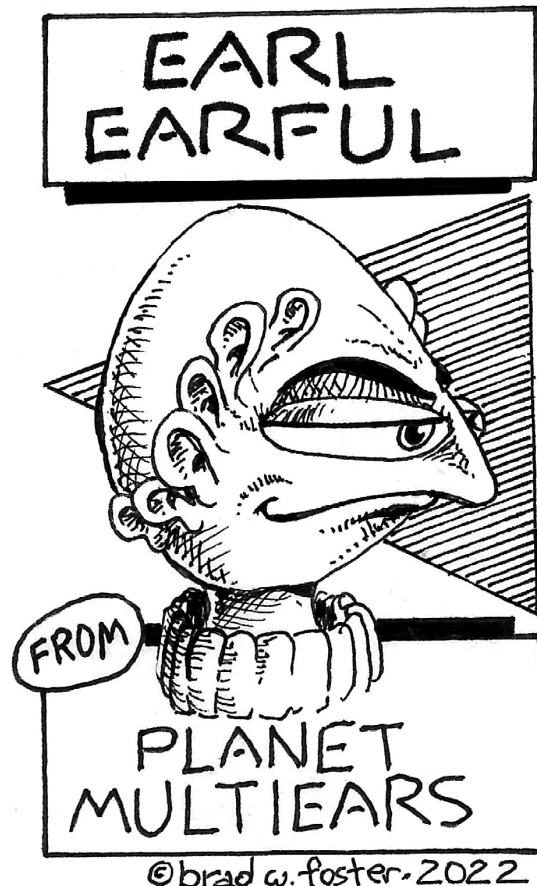
[[Not at all. People who hate driving are what we call "customers"...]]

I'm impressed by **Jen's** tale of your magic freezer, that makes ice cubes out of nothing. Seems like they ought to grant wishes, or something.

By the way, I strongly agree with sending a fanzine to anyone discussed in it; anyone in the "community" that is, which I would define as anyone likely to hear about it from friends. "You are mentioned" used to be a standard checkbox in the Why You Got This section, at least in my fanzines.

[[I agree, as you're aware, but then again (as I must have mentioned) there was a tad of discussion about whether to send a rare (worth more than tuppence) print copy to Mendlesohn out of the usual courtesy, finally concluding "yeah, better had", to our DoBFO subsequent regret. What's salient is the limitation to "anyone in the community", which I see as valid. Harking back to Ulrika's scathing Scalzi editorial in BEAM, for example, while that caused a load of spittle-flecked outrage from his devotees, not a fuckin' one of them engaged with "the community" in terms of loccing or even messaging either or both of the editors directly...]]

And here's another crossword clue . "Burrowing mammals have value for schoolboy (10)". I'm sorry -- I give up. I'm



assuming from your comments that the answer involves some British slang I'm not familiar with. I tried, honest! As evidence of my labor, did you know that biologists call burrowing animals "fossorial"? Neither did I. But I doubt that "pro-fossorial" pets have any more value to schoolboys than woodchucks. Guess I'll just have to wait for next ish to find out the Secret. Gee, I hope your next publication date doesn't depend on any groundhog's shadow...

[[It was, as expected, dead easy for the likes of Steve Jeffery, who responded within minutes, but also Jerry Kaufman who also got it quickly, the solution being 'MOLESWORTH', who you can now look up and discover the legend of the gorilla of 2B. This I've attempted to construct an overtly fannish one...]]

From: srjeffery@aol.com

March 13

Steve Jeffery writes:

Oh. Commiserations on the car. Our little Kia is still sitting on the drive under an off-road SORN notice a couple of years after a missed turn in poor light took half the front away. We decided not to replace it, Vix's eye problems meaning she can no longer drive and I haven't sat behind a wheel for probably 15 years. For immediate needs pretty much everything is within walking distance, and for ventures further afield Vikki now has a free bus pass or her senior railcard and a canny knowledge of the arcane split ticketing system which can deliver some ridiculously cheap journeys. She can get to places on the south coast for little more than it would cost me to go to work and back on the bus. Or it would if I was still actually going to work. I still haven't been there for two years now, and a discussion with my boss the other day suggests he is still quite happy for me to remain working from home for the foreseeable future. Which is fine with me. I always hated the commuting part of that, and I don't see a whole lot of difference in sitting in an office emailing or phoning (or Teams video messaging as it is now) people or doing the same thing from home. I must learn to resist the biscuit tin though. Or take time to get out for a bit of exercise more. I am definitely a bit chunkier round the middle than I remember or am comfortable with.

[[Aren't we all, I suspect?...]]

We were watching a Laura Marling set from a strangely deserted Union Chapel the other night - just her, a roadie to hand her a variety of guitars presumably in odd tunings and a cameraman. I shall follow up on that link to her Dylan cover. She didn't play that, most of the set being taken from 'Songs For My Daughter' (I think - I don't actually have that on CD). And that follow up note is especially reinforced by your comparison of this to Emmylou Harris, who I have considerable time for, and like Joni Mitchell seems to get better and more adventurous in old age, even after starting

out some considerable way ahead of the competition. C&W diehards hated *Wrecking Ball*, but it went straight on my must-buy list after Stuart Maconie played a track from it on his 6music radio show. I was watching a recording of a set by the classic 1970's EH and the Hot Band (ft. Albert Lee) from The Old Grey Whistle Test a week or so back, and she sheer joy in her expression when the band kick in behind her is infectious.

[[Yeah, see your point about the marry-your-cousin crowd hating 'Wrecking Ball', which I hadn't actually thought about but I can see that you're spot-on. In case there was any doubt, I consider that set an absolute fuckin' masterpiece. Apart from that, I always thought that one of the most astonishing proofs of Emmylou's ability was in singing harmony for Willie Nelson, since there's just about nobody else that could match his eccentric cadences...]]

For some reason (I can no longer recall, but then I can't remember what I had for breakfast) I dug some of my toys out from under a pile of stuff in the spare room (initially a study cum library, then provisionally and briefly earmarked in part for a music studio before almost instantly being transformed into the room where we stuff everything else to keep from tripping over it all the time. (Every home should have one, though it's often called the garage). Anyway, the first thing I unearthed was my old, and now classically vintage Roland MC 202 analog sequencer, which I bought round about the same time as my SH101 synth and TR 606 drum machine. I took it downstairs where it now burbles Giorgio Moroder impressions through a bunch of guitar FX and delay pedals and my practice amp while I wobble aimless guitar over the top like a Woolworth's bargain bin version of Ash Ra Tempel, until a voice from the next room plaintively asks "Can it do anything else?". I probably ought to read the manual sometime to find out.

I googled this the other day to grab an image that I could attach to an email to someone else and noticed that these were now going for ridiculous prices on eBay these days. I now feel vindicated for now my old fogey allegiance to analog tech (will VHS still make a comeback? Perhaps that's a step too far). If I ever decide to sell them it might even cover my next electricity and heating bill for at least a couple of months (ouch).

[[Your membership of the legendary yet still factually imaginary fanband 'The Inky Fingers' is assured...]]

From: daverabban@gmail.com

March 15

Dave Cockfield writes:

You must be overjoyed that the boring old codger Hodgson has finally presided over a win for your team. It was close but amazingly you should really have been 4-0 up early on.

[[And 10-0 by the end...]]

I found that contemplating what sauce to have with chips made me hungry and desperate to experiment. The obvious for me is egg yolk because I love fried egg and chips. Chip shop curry sauce, especially if they are also a Chinese takeaway, is great after a substantial bevy. Typically though whenever I have chips they are dashed with Heinz tomato sauce.

A peri-peri or chilli sauce is also good. HP brown sauce is reserved for bacon or sausages.

I like many of the Comic book tv series such as Daredevil, Jessica Jones, Luke Cage, Wandavision, Winter Soldier, Hawkeye, Titans, and Stargirl. However I tend to gravitate more to the quirky shows like The Umbrella Academy, The Boys, and Doom Patrol. Peacemaker had no interest for me but so many people are recommending it that I'll have to watch it. It also seems to fit the quirky mold.

Recently though I have been impressed by Reacher. Tom Cruise is now the Mini Me version.

[[I lost interest in 'Doom Patrol', which isn't a statement really intended to diss it, more an expression of the limited time available for tv watching, and it ended up being one of several shows that didn't make the cut. Totally agree on 'The Umbrella Academy' and 'The Boys'. We also binged 'Reacher' of a Friday night this last month, and were well impressed and all agog for the next season...]]

Best of all though is 1883. I love westerns and this stars the great moustache man himself Sam Elliott.

I take it that it is considered to be accurate with the racist attitudes towards immigrants and the incredibly graphic, yet matter of fact, violence. Billy Bob Thornton is a mean fucker balanced off with Tom Cruise as a kindly General Meade. All this and I'm only two episodes in.

[[We'll find out this Sunday whether Elliott's head explodes when (if?) 'Power of the Dog' wins the Oscar for Best Film - he's slagged it off in no uncertain terms...]]

I guess that our origins as fans come obviously from reading science fiction in all of its forms by many varied and diverse authors over many years. I guess that there is a certain amount of fantasy in there too.

We all seem to have many other interests as well. That is why our interaction is so good.

What amazes me on the likes of YouTube these days is how "fans" seem to have splintered into vociferous groups that are single minded in their obsessions. The Wheel of Time, Malazan, Tolkein, Star Wars, Star Trek, Alastair Reynolds etc. If you are not part of their hero worshipping clique then you shouldn't exist.

[[All part of the general Balkanization which ends up making every fucker whine that they're somehow an

oppressed minority because they like (insert name of some corner of the genre here)...]]

No wonder the World is in such a state.

I have to wonder if Sleepy Joe has ever finished a Sloppy Joe.

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

March 15/20

Gary Mattingly writes:

I'm very, very, very behind. However I did start #48 and did the following and I wanted to send it to you even though it is horribly late. We shall see if I can do something on #50 but I obviously must be quick. Of course, then there's #49, and the rest of #48.

Omphaloskepsis: Interesting but I don't know exactly how to comment or what to say or add. Hm, what is each fan's modality that is seen or envisioned in the creation in your idea and does it vary according to what is being done to what is that modality relative to the person's other modalities? Or does one's modality in print vary from one's modality in person? In action, in print, in voice, in physical presence? The encoding, the symbols, the signs in each modality, the semiotics of the modalities are frequently expressed differently and are not necessarily representational of the other or a whole vision. I must wrap it up simply by saying the idea cannot, in my opinion, be a full picture of all modalities, especially since it is simply that, a symbol, and not the thing itself. And to under what is beneath or builds up those modalities? My goodness, is there actually something there and how could one truly determine what that might be? Now I'm wondering if any of that made any sense.

[[So am I, Gary, so am I...]]

Ah, I should go back for #49 but then here came #50

Egotorial: Very sorry to hear about your accident.

Unfortunately I've been involved in numerous accidents in the past where either I became inattentive relative to the traffic in front of me or inattentive to the general road conditions and slid into the car in front, the brakes deciding the slippery road wasn't good for grasping and holding. I usually don't actually get a ticket but everyone knows when it is my fault and my insurance company pays up. Fortunately they haven't cancelled my policy. Also fortunately it has been at least half a dozen years or more since I had an accident. I did get a ticket for making a lane change without my turn signal. The police in Dublin, CA, who have twice ticketed me over the years, mainly (at least relative to the ones who gave me tickets) have very rude, surly and unpleasant attitudes. Again, fortunately it has been two or three years since that last ticket. The decrease in tickets and accidents is most probably due to retirement and a lack of driving around as much.

[[I'm now replaying Mr. Magoo cartoons in my head...]]

Good luck with the new car! I don't really have a problem getting into and out of cars but I don't relish getting out of a very low-to-the-ground vehicle. Even though I'm healthy enough to do it without problems, it is awkward, and I'm not fond of awkward.

[[So far so good with the HR-V, which is just far enough off the ground for me to arise out of it from what's a more or less natural sitting position...]]

I turn 70 this month and also started my Social Security. After 70 the amount of the SSA benefit does not increase so it was obviously time. The first check in the bank doesn't show up until April. They seem to only pay the month after they are due. So be it.

[[Don't think I'll be waiting until 70 - I had thought about trying to hang on until 67 (when there's an increase in the promised dosh), but I'd really like to be able to be working less hours next year after I turn 65, and we'll need the Social Security to make up the difference...]]

Radio Winston: With respect to Bob Dylan, you indicate you don't like his performances. Does this include his singing in general, that is on albums and such? I think it seems obvious that you like his song writing since you reference covers done by others as being enjoyable. I've probably heard most of those covers in the past. I do have a fair number of Bob Dylan albums. I've never attended one of his concerts. I either chose not to or simply didn't have the cash at the time. Some of his concerts, well, any major artist actually, can be far more expensive than I'm really willing to pay. Anyway, interesting notes on music and links to songs.

[[Yeah, pretty much that...]]

Omphaloskepsis: I wouldn't say for me that my current lack of writing LoCs to longer fanzines is due to a constrained attention span but rather simply a matter of there being many things I want or need to do and whether or not the length of any long fanzine is going to interfere with all the other things I want to do. If it is going to take me several days to actually read the fanzine I may just opt to not read the fanzine. My apologies to the editors of long fanzines but that's just what I choose. I have a hard enough time reading a book these days unless I am totally enthralled by the book. I



just have a lot of things I really would rather be doing or need to do (like the taxes right at this very moment.) BFF = Big Fucking Fanzine? (as opposed to Best Friends Forever). I must note I just didn't finish the rather large issue #48. I kept having to put it down. One of my main issues these days is that my eyes get tired and sometimes I just have a really hard time reading the font. Now I could make it bigger but for some reason sometimes that font also appears to be very light as opposed to a dark font and is also difficult for me to read. At which point I frequently throw up my hands and eyes and move on. I can't say that I mind the confrontational editors. That's fine. If I don't like it, I move on to the next article or lettercol. That alone doesn't stop me from reading the fmz. Lots of people can be jerks in editorials but a) that doesn't mean they're usually jerks) and b) I don't have to read it. My mind wanders and I think of:

What's it all about, Mr and Mrs John Q smith, from Anytown, USA?

Well, It's about this long and about this wide

and it's about this country, which we're singing about.

No, I don't have a clue. I just get bogged down if there are too many pages. It becomes daunting.

FaanWank/Corflux. I did just receive your pdf file with the awards. Many thanks!

TV Guide: I watched the whole season of 'Peacemaker'. I was a little uncertain initially but I do like that people change during the season. Their minds can change. They can act more like a person rather than a cut-out figure. I am not particularly enamored of the Peacemaker's character in general but he does have some personality traits which do seem reasonable. However I still like Eagley the best.

I did watch the title sequence once or twice but beyond that I move right past it. It's all right but not something I can enjoy over and over again.

Footy: I have the urge to write some comments but can't think of any at the moment. Not being a Footy fan might be part of the reason. However the association with criminal mind sets and analysis was interesting.

LoCs:

John Nielsen Hall: I lean more to the left, having actually joined the Democratic Socialists of America but I do believe evil, greedy people can be

part of any political system and screw things over immensely, whether it be in capitalism, socialism, anarchism or whatever.

[[“Capitalism is the extraordinary belief that the nastiest of men for the nastiest of motives will somehow work for the benefit of all.” (Attributed to J M Keynes, although this accreditation is disputed)...]]

Mark Plummer: I have a hard time voting for any award unless I’ve actually seen/read at least half the field. If I’ve read/seen less than that I just feel a little guilty voting “best of ...”. I may be interested but I don’t know that voting is the best way to show my interest.

[[I’m so inevitably going to remind you that (in my opinion) a knowledge of even “half the field” isn’t required, but that having been said I fully acknowledge your personal view on this. It’s highly likely that I haven’t read half the field either, in part frankly because there are zines and writers that I’ll usually ignore entirely, having judged them to be rubbish in the past (or lately, in some cases)...]]

Jerry Kaufman: Sorry, I haven’t started *BEAM* so can't really comment about the editorials, but again whenever I do they won't stop me from reading the rest of it. I watch ‘Doctor Who’, although I haven’t watched it from 1963. I probably have most of the dvds from that period forward but haven’t quite gotten around to watching them. I just like to watch the show. I don’t pay much attention to the “science”, that’s for sure. Some of the writing is good and some is bad, in my opinion. I keep watching it anyway.

I didn’t get anxious watching ‘Don’t Look Up’. I watched the whole thing but got irritated because so much was overstated or the writers were trying to hit me over the head with the character flaws, political flaws, etc. I really am not a big fan of overstatement.

Yes, real politicians do make over statements and I get pissed off at them also.

Eli Cohen: I haven’t had a cold. I got tested a lot last year while I was traveling through Peru and never tested positive for Covid. No doubt I’ll take another test before my trip to Spain (unless it gets cancelled due to Covid and government’s reaction to Covid). A lot more people are going without a mask in stores. They can legally do so now. I still wear a mask in the store. I’d love to actually get a second booster show before I go to Spain. Something about an ounce of prevention . . .

Kim Huett: I cannot recall ever being to a karaoke bar.

My eyes are giving out so I’ll attempt to skim through the rest of the LoCs (sorry) and move on to the last few pages.

‘Something out of Almost Nothing’: I would never have thought an ice cube maker would or could do that. Amazing!

Indulge Me: I read *Portnoy’s Complaint* a very, very long time ago. I don’t really remember what it was about.

[[Wanking...]]

Enjoyable and entertaining artwork by **Brad W. Foster!**

From: perry@middlemiss.org

March 20

Perry Middlemiss writes:

Congratulations on FAAn Awards you picked up this morning. Well deserved. And also for hitting the big half-century, fanzine-numbering-wise.

I look on BFFs s rather like any other large magazine or newspaper: some of it will be interest, though probably not all. And so a response will rather tend to concentrate on those areas of interest, ‘cos, really, there isn't much point telling a fanned that “yeah, I liked this stuff, but the rest was boring as batshit.” **Leigh Edmonds** seems to be attempting to want to make comments on all parts of a fanzine; that way madness lies. Though he does tend to be remarkably good at this activity.

[[As I’ve previously noted, there’s different approaches to loccing from different correspondents - Leigh’s approach (and that of some others) might be described as “cataloguing” whereas an alternative response is to zero in on a particular topic or column which has inspired the fan to weigh in at some length, the rest getting perhaps a cursory mention only or a RAEBNC or indeed fuck all. And that’s all good. One might like to imagine that readers may be stunned into admiring silence, ey?...]]

I was chatting to **Archbishop Gillespie** about similar problems over a beer at a local fannish birthday party last year. I noted that one particular piece that I had written had garnered little or no attention from any of my loccers. I had thought I’d made at least one statement that some people might find a bit outrageous, but no such luck. He told me about an occasion in the past when one of his contributors had castigated him for not publishing, in the next issue, any Locs pertaining to their piece. “I couldn’t,” said the bish, “I just didn’t get any comments at all.” And so it goes.

[[If there’s one area of lack of response that tends to irk me a bit, it’s to the fannish lyric parodies in BEAM, which a fair bit of work often goes into, but I do still enjoy doing them, and will note that others have been inspired to do their own...]]

I do agree with you, however, that some fannish publishing is intimidating. I’ll just have to find a way in, and concentrate on a small section of the overall product.

Oddly enough I’m quite happy with **Edmonds’** description of me as a Western Districts farmer. It’s partly the hat, partly the beard, and partly the weather-beaten skin that gives me

the “farmer” look I suspect. I’ll go with that, and the portrait photos and drawings on the covers of *Perryscope* will continue. What once was an affectation has now become a habit, and almost a necessity. I note that a couple of those covers received votes in the Best Fanzine Cover category of the FAANs. Now that was something I hadn’t expected – W H Chong’s fine portrait of me aside.

[[I’m rather glad you used the word “affectation” so I wouldn’t have to, since it has pejorative undertones that I felt a tad uncomfortable about. Chong’s work is utterly fuckin-A, and I wish we could see more of it, except you appear to have exclusivity? It won’t be much of a reveal to note that a Perryscope cover appeared on my own FAAn ballot (as did the zine itself)...]]

WAHF

S&ra Bond ; **Claire Brialey**, who currently resides in a Fishlifter mansion redolent with Covid - get well soon! ; **Wm Breiding** ; **Brad W. Foster** with Moar Art! (duly featured within) ; **Alan White**

FANZINES RECEIVED

This most of March haul included most welcome print versions of some of these. Up against the wire as usual (and with some of them arriving close to publication of this here bollocks) some short shrift will sadly be occurring in the comments here, also due to the all-nighter of shite and consequent whiskey as detailed earlier. The usual apologies for anything I’ve missed, but I’m in a rush here...

VITA TRANSPLANTARE 24 (John Nielsen Hall) - Owe you a loc of course Unc, but it might be every other issue now I’m afraid, although I think my “dealing with arseness” (not you, and not anything to with with **Tommy “Stavros” Ferguson**) quota for the year has already been exceeded and thus ought to give me a minute at some point...

PERRYSCOPE 20 (Perry Middlemiss) - What I said to **John**...

DANTE’S CARDIGAN 4 (Alison Scott) - In which alleged “Faanfiction” is committed, and I was a bit startled by the character of a future FAAn awards administrator who regally denies supplicants representing new fanac, describing the whizz-bang jetpack Coxonness of it all as an “abomination”. I wouldn’t have said that meself, but then again not having listened to any *Octothorpe* it might well be for all I know, but not for reasons of format. The piece is as funny as fuck, of course...

FAR JOURNEYS VOL 3 #1 (Justin E.A. Busch) - Starting a series on H. G. Wells in good ole sercon tradition from a terrific writer who I’ll continue to admire and recommend...

NICE DISTINCTIONS 34 (Arthur D Hlavaty) - “Nice” (ahem) to hear from the old bugger. I do wish this’un was more frequent...

BANANA WINGS 78 (Brialey & Plummer) - Color covers (!) by **Alison Scott** which are as good as the contents. The zine that makes me late for work as I chase out the squirrels of a morning...

NOWHERE FAN #6 (Christina Lake) - Is it the case that the infrequency of Chrissie’s zines and sterling writing have tended to make her underappreciated? Well not round here, as in my (free, and worth every penny) opinion she’s been one of the best fanwriters of the entire Faniverse for a very long time. Shame her conversation isn’t up to much, though (an oldddd joke that probably only she and I will remember the reason for)...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #40 (Andy Hooper) - It came in the email, and after the Night of Arse (multiple qv) is probably somewhere on page 43 of the inbox, where it may well belong...

PORTABLE STORAGE 7 (William Breiding) - Well since this only got here a couple of days ago, I DoBFO haven’t had time to get past a quick egoscan. Yes, *caveat lector*, I’m in it, but then so are both **Fishlifters** and the aforementioned willowy and ethereal **Christina Lake** among many other luminaries, so don’t let my (mercifully) brief inclusion put you off, ey?...

INDULGE ME

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : Given that I’m going to make a probably erroneous conclusion that **Jerry Kaufman** (locs) doesn’t like British women, I’m going to feature more of them, aren’t I? Especially ones many Merkans (or indeed perhaps also the Strines) wouldn’t know, starting with **Valerie Singleton**...



✘ **WHAT TIME IS IT, ECCLES?** : It’s almost noon, is what it is, and I’ve just got to this section which is typically mostly sorted (apart from pictures) by now, but what with a couple of weeks of laxity about it, and, well, you know what else, it’s just now getting done...

✘ **SCIENCE & NATURE (1)** : Shackleton's sunken Arctic exploration ship 'Endeavour' was found and photographed recently, and was photobombed by a [squat lobster](#), which isn't an early slice by the B-52s, but an actual creature...

✘ **DOES THIS TASTE FUNNY?** : Ahem, well, this isn't actually a barrel of larfs for the genuinely distressed lady in question, but the unrefined schoolboy in me (and probably, admit it, a lot of us) couldn't help but have a snorting giggle at the headline of the month, which you also have to suspect was deliberately phrased for maximum "F'nar F'nar" : '[My Husband's Big Penis is Destroying our Sex Life](#)' ...

✘ **SCIENCE & NATURE (2)** : Just incidentally, no reports on documentaries this go, as the usual Uncut Bicycle Service slot I listen to (2am) has been preempted by news coverage for the duration of Putin's imperialist madness. Octopi, which it now seems have [been around for a very long time](#) indeed, would seem to be preferable as our New Masters, whom I of course fully welcome...

✘ **SQUIRREL MOMENT** : What I love about this picture is that somehow the silhouette of the squirrel manages to actually look disappointed...

In many places it is now unlawful to play Yahtzee with squirrels.



✘ **TV GUIDE IN BRIEF** : So hilarious to see Kirk Thatcher's cameo in 'Picard', reprising his "punk on bus" role from *The Voyage Home*. Also, 'Discovery', well good indeed, and 'Reacher' (as mentioned earlier in loccol comment), utterly, utterly awesome!...

✘ **CROSSWORD CLUE FOR ELI** : As mentioned after Eli's loc, this is an attempt at an overtly fannish one: "Power source in Spanish within a Curt Phillips weekend activity (9)" ...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Sorry Killer, it's the lovely [Aimi McDonald](#), who us Brits of a certain age will remember with great fondness and possibly trouser adjustment...



✘ **SCIENCE & NATURE (3)** : Black holes (and black hole paradoxes) are all wonderfully skiffy stuff, and I do get into some of this mad physics theorizing even as I can't fully understand a lot of it. '[Quantum Hair](#)' is now A Thing, which is causing some excitement that it's a possible resolution to the Hawking Paradox, as well as no doubt causing some fen with thinning pates to wish they had some...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (3)** : I can't be that cruel to Jerry, can I, so here's an American: **Cynthia Rhodes**...



✘ **SHAMELESS FILLER** :



MIRANDA

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**“Like how a single word can make a heart open
I might only have one match but I can make an
explosion”**