

This Here...

"I don't see what the big deal is..." (R Jennings)

EGOTORIAL

PRIDE

[T]raditional Christian teaching nowhere clashes more sharply with contemporary sensibilities than on the moral status of pride. Christians have long counted pride as a sin—indeed, the “original sin” that generates every other and is the vital principle in each. C.S. Lewis speaks for many Christian moralists when he calls pride “the essential vice, the utmost evil.” He asserts that pride “is the complete anti-God state of mind”.

Many people today, however, view pride as a virtue and a key component in emotional maturity and self-actualization. Therapists seek to instill in clients positive self-regard, teachers try to boost student self-esteem, and social movements justify their programs in the name of gay pride, black pride, and



the like. It might seem, therefore, that Christians in the “people helping” professions are caught between incompatible perspectives. As Christians, they have been taught that pride is a vice; as professionals, they have been trained to view pride as a virtue. Which is true?

(Paul Sands, Associate Professor of Theology, George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University)

There you have a typically tangential preamble to what will undoubtedly be an all-over-the-fuckin’-shop set of musings, but part of the reason for it relates to the changing nature of language and the “appropriation” (if that isn’t too harsh and

unfair a term) of certain words by certain groups for ostensibly more positive purposes - see also this’s ‘Proper Rabbit’ column.

It is, of course “Pride Month”, something I can equally admire and partially denigrate in the same way that I would “Black History Month” since both seem to be, while having the best of motives, a compartmentalisation which can imply that their aims can be ignored by many for the rest of the time, when of course neither “Pride” nor Black History stop being relevant during the other 11 months of the year.

I’ve generally (and, as I’ve come to realize, lazily) hewed to what I called the “Bodden Principle”, not emanating from

our dear friend **Bill Bodden**, but rather the stand-up comedian Alonzo Bodden, who, in a routine on a long-ago segment of ‘Last Comic Standing’ was opining on the topic of gay marriage, then something which gave rise to much hysteria from the expected reactionary quarters. Bodden’s comment on the prospect of gay people getting (legally) hitched was “And this affects me

how, exactly?”, the DoBFO point that no-one is trying to force anyone else to do anything they don’t want to (or prevent anyone from doing anything they *do* want to, something the brayers about “Freedom” seem to purvey with no sense of irony.

The very basic point is that *your* lifestyle choices (or indeed, and more relevantly perhaps, the genetic dictates you may comply with) have zero effect on any of mine, so I’ll default to letting you get on with it.

A subtler reading of this principle, however, might suggest indifference to the genuine travails of notably put-upon

groups and communities - but then again I'll tend to resist labeling in the spirit of considering people as individuals, identifications and proclivities notwithstanding.

I nipped off into a not atypical tangent, drawing a possible comparison to Martin Niemöller's famous short sermon, but I conclude that in drawing attention at all, Bodden isn't exactly doing *nothing*, is he?

Reactionary, and what Umberto Eco termed "Ur-Fascist" ideology (if you could even grant that term which implies actual thought) makes much of those considered "other" - those outside the non-existent but wished-for heterogyny of the now beleaguered "Master Race" implied. In his 1995 essay, Eco lists 14 characteristics of "Ur-Fascism", two of which are:

Fear of difference. "The first appeal of a fascist or a prematurely fascist movement is an appeal against the intruders. Thus Ur-Fascism is racist by definition."

Machismo and weaponry. "Machismo implies both disdain for women and intolerance and condemnation of nonstandard sexual habits, from chastity to homosexuality."

"Racist", in the quote, I would expand to include all discriminatory views in this context.

What continues to concern me with the "Bodden Principle" is the indifference it might suggest, even as this clearly wasn't his intent, which was to mock those who would like to prevent any and all deviations from their false "norm". The tack these days is that you must be an "ally" of the marginalized, which suggests engaging in more activism than just expressions of support. There's a kind of extremism happening here, on the progressive side there's diatribes that "You're either an (implied activist) ally or you're not", and that's an Aristotelian construction I'll tend to recoil from.

The "I've got black friends, me" retort to allegations of racism is and has been correctly mocked as a weak card, and yet I'm going to mention that I have friends, several of them long-standing, all over the LGBTQ+ categories - but I don't wear any of them as fuckin' badges of honor.

There's a quote attributed to Will Rogers which applies to any form of discrimination: "Racism is stupid. There are more than enough reasons to dislike people on an individual basis."

There are also plenty of reasons to *like* them. As you do...

It's all good.

June 2023

TAFFNESSABOUTS

Even at this late stage **S&ra's** itinerary isn't nailed on because of some unforeseen with host(s). **Mary Burns** had a fall on the marble steps at the main library in Manhattan and fractured a femur. This got fixed with a pin, and the **Magister** tells us that the recovery is going well, with his Mrs having her usual cheery and optimistic disposition about it all, but she's DoBFO not quite up for the originally planned hosting duties. Best wishes for everything getting back to whatever passes for "normal" as swiftly as possible.

We can confirm a party at ours on July 28th, though, and looking forward to that.

The TAFF group on FBF will no doubt have the full SP...

CORFLUX

41 NEWS



Gobsmacked to note that our mate **Leigh Edmonds** has not only joined up but also booked his hotel room! Oz represents! (Big noodge to World Traveler **Perry Middlemiss** with a loud "Why not, mate?"). Also, how about a Canadian or two?

It makes for an idle aside of a question - the sort of thing the impeccable researcher **Prof. Strummer** could likely answer: which Corflu had the most international attendance, in terms of both numbers and different countries?

Subject to the unforeseen, the Corflu 50 Fund delegate will be **Ted White**, who has officially accepted the honor.

I did suggest (lastish) that PR2 might be out this month (or next), but it'll now be July or August I reckon. There will be an attending membership rate increase before the end of the year (in part given that the Sunday Banquet accounts for a little more than half the current amount, which isn't a massive surprise), although the supporting and virtual rates will likely stay the same. There'll be a heads-up window before any increase goes into effect.

Inquiries to vegas41@corflu.org

MOVIE NIGHT

JOHN WICK



With the buzz about “Chapter 4” of this series dropping this March, I realized that I hadn’t seen any of these movies, and presumably as a push for the new’un, Tubi has the first three on free streaming (with ads), so we binged them the other night.

In many ways, what’s not to like: Keanu Reeves conveys a great deal as you slowly realize how actually minimalist (certainly in terms of dialogue) his portrayal is. Wick’s immediate backstory is conveyed efficiently, and oo my good gawd (Arfer Daley voice) the action sequences (which take up most of the screen time) are quite astonishing, especially when you clock that a lot of them are single shot scenes.

The supporting cast is top of the line, anchored (I’d suggest, anyway) by the always fab Ian McShane in all the movies, but including fine turns by the likes of Willem Dafoe, Halle Berry, Lawrence Fishburne, John Leguizamo and Anjelica Houston.

The most fascinating aspect of it all is the fully-realized detail of the sub-universe inhabited by the protagonists - a subculture of assassins with *very* strict “rules of engagement” enforced by an Illuminati-like “high table” and a mysterious “elder” who sits above them. For the unaware, I won’t spoil much of that which is revealed either explicitly or by implication throughout, but it has to be one of the finest and most consistent examples of world-building I’ve ever witnessed, on a par with (or indeed exceeding) any that I’ve seen in sf.

Yes, though, there is a bit of downside. Although the “neo-noir” presentation was critically mostly well-received, bingeing chapters 1-3 does create a sense of each chapter being two hours or so (the first installment is shorter at an hour and 40 minutes) of a continuous fight scene/car chase, and a sense of ennui starts to creep in, since you know that Wick (however badly injured, and he is) is going to come out the other side somehow and you occasionally wish they

would get the fuck on with it. The style and technique, though, that’s consistently good.

Inevitably poring over the Wikipedia entries for each chapter, I do rather marvel at how many paragraphs they expend on the plot, when what the writer is doing (and this may be a fine distinction) is sequentially describing the action. The “plot” of all three of the chapters I’ve seen could be summarized together on the back of a postcard, although that’s a bit of a cruel diss that could equally be applied to a lot of action movies.

All told, though, this is a classic addition to the action genre, and I must reiterate the astonishment I got from the quite brilliant world-building on display. I’m happy to have clocked it, and yeah, I will be up for chapter 4 and might even pay to see it.

And if you ever actually encounter John Wick, two very DoBFO bits of advice: don’t nick his car, and don’t kill his dog...

HEALTH DIARY...

AM I BORING YOU YET?

I tell you, I’m boring *me* with this, as there’s not much exciting “news” or whatever after the Big Bang of the Disease Reveal.

The ups and downs of it all are more of the same: tiredness, aches and pains (especially excruciating backache lately), difficulty walking very far, occasional nausea ect ect...

The WBC is heading in the desired direction, down to the mid-60s (a 30 point drop - 31% - from May) with still a ways to go to the target of 15-ish. This month we got to see the nurse practitioner Hannah (who is as delightful as everyone else at the cancer center), and she suggested that there’ll be another MRI in my near future to check the state of the spleen, as well as opining that due to the leg problems I should probably get a walking stick as she’s worried about the possibility of a fall. Serendipitously, **Deb Deckert** (who is now also doing ebay sales) had recently acquired some and brought one over as a gift. Thanks Deb!

RADIO WINSTON

WINIFRED ATWELL

The sort of trivia question that **Kev McVeigh** sometimes likes might be: “Who was the first black artist (*and* black female artist) to have a UK #1 record?”, and the answer is the subject of this column, who remains to this day the only solo female instrumentalist to have done so.

Una Winifred Atwell was born, of this there is no doubt, in northern Trinidad at some point between 1910 and 1914 (record-keeping in those days wasn’t always spot on) to pharmacist (chemist, to the Brits) parents and did get trained

up to join the family business. Concurrently, though, and apparently encouraged by her mother, she started learning piano at around the age of 2½, and by some accounts was good enough to be giving public performances of Chopin at age 5, to some local acclaim. It's also said that she became the official organist of her church at age 8.



Skipping forward to 1940 or '41, she was playing to entertain British and American airmen at Piarco base (now Trinidad's airport) for a quid a night, and the story goes that she was either asked by a serviceman to play some boogie-woogie style, or bet that she couldn't. By her next gig she'd written "Piarco Boogie" (later renamed "[Five Finger Boogie](#)") which went down a treat, and served as likely encouragement for her to move to the States in the early '40s where she studied under Alexander Borowsky before relocating again to London in 1945 to continue studying at the Royal Academy of Music.

Potted fast-forward: Winifred met her future husband Lew Levisohn (a former comedian) in 1946, got some gigs, was spotted by Bernard Delfont and was instructed in stagecraft, gradually moving to the top of the bill - although an attempt to break America didn't cut it. A recorded appearance for Ed Sullivan was never transmitted. Segregation & that...

As is often the case with an artist retrospective, a mere Radio Winston column only scratches the surface. Atwell toured Australia several times and eventually moved there (and is buried in New South Wales).

Here's a few highlights: her first major hit, '[Black and White Rag](#)'.

Many performances on variety shows, including another hit (she never had a release that tanked), '[Poor People of Paris](#)',

introduced by a startlingly young Eamon Andrews - most people might recognize this slice without knowing the title...

Apologies for even subjecting you to even a few seconds of that fat racist tub of lard Bernard Manning, but here's her stellar turn on '[Wheeltappers and Shunters](#)'...

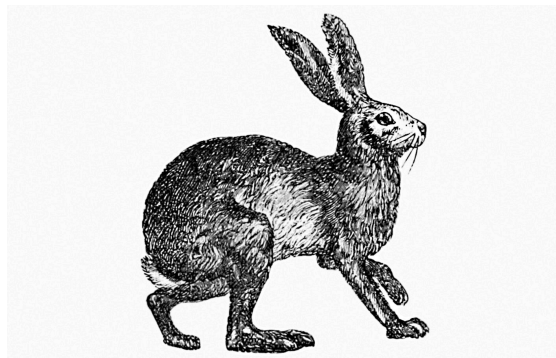
Atwell's speed and precision was admired by a fuck of a lot of keyboardists, including but not limited to Elton John, but also especially Keith Emerson, and you can hear that in spades on this ELP rendition of '[Honky Tonk Train Blues](#)'...

As much as she was skilled in the classical repertoire, much of her popularity came from what she called "the other piano", an aged upright supposedly bought for her by Lew Levisohn for 50/- on which she banged out the crowd-pleasing ragtime and boogie-woogie.

Full circle, though, and for the classicists in the pricey seats, we'll finish up with her rendition of Chopin's '[Fantasie Impromptu](#)'.

And why not, ey?...

PROPER RABBIT



QUEER

From the Online Etymology dictionary:

queer (adj.)

c. 1500, "strange, peculiar, odd, eccentric," from Scottish, perhaps from Low German (Brunswick dialect) queer "oblique, off-center," which is related to German quer "oblique, perverse, odd," from Old High German twerh "oblique" (from PIE root terkw - "to twist"). [...] But OED is against this etymology on grounds of timing and sense.

The meaning "appearing, feeling, or behaving otherwise than is usual or normal" is by 1781. The colloquial sense of "open to suspicion, doubtful as to honesty" is by 1740. [...]

Sense of "homosexual" is attested by 1922; the noun in this sense is 1935, from the adjective. Related: Queerly. Queer studies as an academic discipline is attested from 1994.

Not that you can take that as *entirely* gospel, since I find from other sources that “queer” as a synonym for “homosexual” can be found in the 1800s, but typically that’s not what I’m going to gob off about.

What interests me is the evolution of the use of certain words (and in this context “gay” is a DoBFO example - and if you have a moment, consider that “gay” might be considered to imply effeminacy whereas “queer” perhaps doesn’t?).

Growing up (well, all right, “getting older”) through the 1960s and ‘70s, “queer” was definitely a pejorative, and I still retain that knowledge to the extent that I cringe when I hear it used in any context at all, since I interpret its use as someone being unfairly and unreasonably insulted.

Because what’s laughably called my mind works in mysterious ways, I thought about a bit from an Asian stand-up whose name I typically can’t recall, which went (and I undoubtedly paraphrase): “Black people are amazing, because they *own* their own slur! Nobody else does that. Can you imagine me going into the family restaurant and saying “Yo! Wassup my chinks!”?

And *that* made me think of the classic scene in the Jackie Chan/Chris Tucker movie ‘Rush Hour’ where Tucker is talking to a contact in a black hangout and Chan, in the next room, naively trying to fit in while being eyed up aggressively by a bunch of blokes, goofily grins and says “Wassup my niggas?”, with predictable results. (The fight is offscreen, cutting back to Tucker’s reaction which is priceless.)

Anyway, my point is that, like “nigger” (no matter who’s saying it, and I think Spike Lee agrees with me somewhat since he’s vocally objected to Quentin Tarantino’s overuse of the word) and “queer” (again, no matter who’s saying it) both create a gut reaction in me that finds those terms inherently distasteful, an emotional reaction fershure which tends to override how much I might intellectually accept the actuality of historically and currently discriminated-against groups to seize a term that’s been used to denigrate them and take it on.

In that sense it’s admirable that pejoratives can be reversed, and the activism that’s made that happen deserves a few choruses of ‘We’re Not Gonna Take It’, despite reactionary attempts to co-opt that slice resulting in loud derision from Dee Snider.

As much as we *can* change our thinking when presented with new information, it’s not necessarily an easy lift. I strongly suspect that my emotional reaction to hearing “queer” or “nigger” isn’t going to change much - I’ll almost certainly continue to find those words distasteful, but ey, my queers, my niggers, you keep on keeping on. It’s my problem, not yours...

FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

One would think, if an invisible sky fairy called God existed, that (s)he had punished me enough for whatever transgressions against him/her I may have committed by making me a Tottenham Hotspur fan, but no, (s)he also made me an England cricket fan and that, when an Ashes series against Australia is being played, is a whole other level of pain.

The first test started at Edgbaston, Birmingham on Friday June 16th with England knocking off a quick 393 before declaring on eight wickets so they could have a twenty-minute tilt at the Aussie openers that evening with a fresh Jimmy Anderson bowling. Unfortunately, no breakthrough was made, and the Aussies responded with 386, so England only carried over a seven-run advantage into the second innings.

England’s second innings score was a mediocre 273, so a lead of 280, which would have been accepted if offered to the England team before the innings started, but always felt a bit short. 250+ last day run chases are quite rare, but they do happen, and they seem to happen more often when England are the fielding side. 325+ would have felt like a safe margin, and lo and behold, thanks to Pat Cummings, an Australian cricketer of mind-numbing mediocrity and captain of sigh inducing mundanity (he’s only really captain because he’s a safe pair of hands after various blottings of the copy book, both on and off the wicket, by Stevie Smith) and his 44-run innings, the Aussies won by two wickets. England had been marginally ahead all the way through the game, only to come up short in the last couple of hours.

The press in the UK announced the game as an Ashes classic; one to be rewatched down the ages like the 2005 final test at Kennington Oval or any of Botham’s or Willis’s heroics in days past. The truth is they conveniently overlooked the eight dropped catches (unlike **Lord Kettle**, who frequently takes my knee jerk reactions to England losses to task on facebook) by England fielders and the need for England to find a real wicketkeeper and a different way to wedge Johnny Bairstow into the side.

All bar the traditional final test at The Oval will have been played by the time of the next column, so I’ll either be waxing lyrical or keeping my head down. My guess is the latter; Australia always seems to have the Indian sign over England. By the end of the series, I expect another new England captain, another new approach, another rebuild as multiple players breakdown due to injury (Stokes, Archer), age (Anderson, Broad), or both.

[[Editorial note: regular readers may have clocked that the Hod-me-son's sporting prognostication abilities are usually shite...]]

Speaking of Australians, Spurs have a new manager, and he is one of them: Ange Postecoglou was swiped from Glasgow Celtic after a couple of years putting them back on top of the pile in Scotland. It would be fair to say that Postecoglou was an underwhelming choice with Spurs fans initially, but some poking around into his playing and management philosophies with various Australian club sides, then the national side, and a stint in Japan prior to Celtic has at least convinced most to give him a chance. He likes attacking football, which will be a pleasant change from Jose Mourinho and Antonio Conte even if he isn't ultimately successful, and doesn't seem to suffer fools, of which there seem to be plenty in the Spurs changing room.

Life is taking some positive turns at the moment. The local authority in which I live, Enfield in North London, has offered me a ground floor, single level flat (apartment) because I'm struggling more and more to climb three flights of stairs every day. The property also has a little garden, so that's good; I'll be able to plant some bee friendly raised beds at least. Of course, moving home is a major chore, but this is a beautiful little property in a nice area, and it's only about 150 metres away from a very swanky fish and chip restaurant (yes, there are such things), the French restaurant that many old-time Spurs players and at least one ex-manager use to meet up for various reunions, and several of the area's better pubs, including one called The Cricketers.

Next Tuesday (the 27th), I'm accompanying two classes of ten-year olds to the British Museum to look around the Greek sections. Whilst doing a quick reccy to remind myself exactly where the sections were in the building on Wednesday (the 21st), I ran into Geoff Ryman momentarily. Small old world! I'm going to do some more voluntary teaching in the new academic year starting September, so I'll have to get used to reading journals and site reports again. Reddit, which is where I'm sure **Paul Di Filippo** finds many of his more "interesting" photographs to post on facebook, provided a humorous and actually quite useful example of basic archaeological stratigraphy for me to use in classrooms. I have however been

warned that I'm not allowed to refer to flat Earth conspiracy theorists that claim aliens built the pyramids as "bleeding nutters!"

Right, that's it for this month. There are boxes to pack and white goods to purchase, plus a new sofa bed and sundry other bits and pieces, and more than enough else to do in the next few weeks, so I need all the extra time I can find. Normal service will be resumed next month on the proviso that British Telecom get the new broadband line installed and running by then, which can never be taken for granted.

LOCO CITATO

[[“What matters most is how well you walk through the fire.” (Charles Bukowski)...]]

From: daverabban@gmail.com

May 28

Dave Cockfield writes:

“This ere fanzine was bloomin’ good Mary Poppins” as Dick Van Dyke would say.

Feeling guilty as usual because I never responded to your medical situation.

I’ve lost quite a few friends in the last couple of years and I find it difficult to put my emotions into words that don’t sound facile in these situations.

You are going to get better Nic! And it certainly seems as if things are improving.

Fingers crossed! Knock on wood! Fuck a Black Cat! I'm rooting for you.

[[It's a process, but getting there...]]

Okay ignore the last one. I got carried away or maybe I should be.

‘Ghosted’ was good fun. Nothing wrong with it.

I recently thoroughly enjoyed ‘One Ranger’. Stereotypical and incredibly over the top, violent but humorous, action movie. Thomas Jane and Dominique Tipper (‘The Expanse’) as a Texas Ranger and MI5 agent respectively hunting down an Irish terrorist. It even has John (I’m slumming it for the money again) Malkovich, giving his best dour Noel Coward impersonation, as the Head of MI5.

Gary Mattingly mentions ‘Darby

How normal people see cake vs. how archaeologists see cake

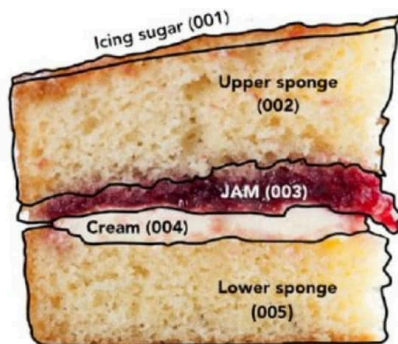
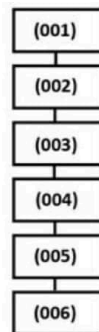


Table top (006)



DigVentures

O'Gill and the Little People' which is forever engraved on my mind.

I was 9 years old when I saw it and the Banshee gave me nightmares for weeks afterwards.

[[I have a vague-ish memory that, for whatever reason, 'Darby O'Gill' was a staple of UK Trek con movie programs in the '80s...]]

None of your tv stuff is familiar to me yet. The Russell Crowe movie 'Poker Face' is well worth a look.

Currently I'm enamoured by the Netflix show 'The Law According to Lidia Poet'. A sexy period piece about the trials and tribulations of becoming Italy's first female lawyer. It is fun and charming.

I have just returned from a few days in Prague. Thanks to a wonderful tram system I got around better than expected. The two highlights were the Czech Pilsner typically costing 46 Koruna (27 to the pound) for a half litre and the 2nd best Beefburger ever. My best was in Budapest.

Watford have had 19 managers in 11 years. Surely a record.

[[Everton have now had 10 in the last 6 years, a similar pace. Football365 notes that there have been 40 (!) different managers of Premier League teams this last season, and in ranking them all Frank Lampard is in the bottom five - twice!...]]

From: kim.huett@gmail.com

May 29

Kim Huett writes:

I see in your thing this time that there has been a change to the structure, you wild and crazy hepcat!

[[A temporary "change", I suppose. It just seemed sensible to separate out (from this here usual loccol) responses on the topics of the "disease reveal" and on 'FaanWank'. That's not likely to happen to the same extent again - ie what passes for "normal service" is resumed...]]

Which naturally leads me to consider *Can Reindeer Fly? The Science of Christmas* by Roger Highfield. At one point Highfield goes into some detail as to the place of hallucinatory drugs in the legends of Christmas. In the middle of these ruminations he offers the following aside:

Witches are said to fly for related reasons. A witch who wanted to "fly" to a witches' sabbat, or orgiastic ceremony, would anoint a staff with specially prepared oils containing psychoactive matter, probably from toad skins, and then apply it to her vaginal membranes.

As I'd long assumed that the riding of broomsticks had a phallic element to it this claim hardly surprised me. The fact that in 'Bewitched', Samantha was depicted as riding her broom side-saddle was my first inkling that there was more to this broom riding business than met the eye. I think we

can assume then that any witch travelling to sabbat was both chemically altered and excessively stimulated even before her arrival. No wonder the church was against the practise of witchcraft if the competition was this much fun.

[[Isn't it tempting to observe that this explains Lilian Edwards? (Also the following)...]]

What I have to wonder though is how did the average witch even make it to sabbat safely? If they inevitably became chemically altered and excessively stimulated while hundreds of metres up in the air does this mean spells needed to be employed in order to ensure the rider didn't fall off and arrived at the correct destination? Should witches in fiction be required to follow a pre-flight check-list similar to the sort used by airline pilots to make the imagined world they inhabit seem more realistic? Perhaps? Maybe? Perhaps you should ask a few fantasy authors to see what they think.

And while we're on the subject isn't it curious how in folklore witches confine their flights to "business purposes"?

[[For tax reasons?...]]

Surely the occasional midnight excursion would be inevitable because what could be more alluring than a little unsupervised and unrestrained night flying? I assume such excursions would have to be at night in order to avoid detection. Given the tendency of medieval society to stay inside once night has fallen and the prevalence of wooden shutters over glass windows I imagine the occasional romantic moonlit flight would be possible. What's more, if there is one thing I've learnt from watching professional cycling it's that the scrotal skin is thin and has high steroid permeability. It's also worth pointing out that like vaginal membranes the scrotum is well designed for maximum contact with an object like a broom handle. It stands to reason then that any psychoactive substance capable of being absorbed through vaginal membranes will also work equally well with scrotal skin. Thus it should be possible for a couple to ride a broom which has had oil or paste containing psychoactive compounds lathered onto it. The possibilities this would allow are well worth considering,

From: fabficbks@aol.com

May 31

Bob Jennings writes:

Interesting reminiscence of your days in college with a repurposed settlement house, your living in very close quarters and the people you encountered. Many of us are now at the age now where old friends and family are dropping off this mortal coil. It happens, and the fact that death is an inevitability event for all living creatures doesn't ease the distress. Take my word for it, it only gets harder the

older you get, as you begin to outlive a lot of people you that were hale and hardy, including people you were certain were in much better shape than you are. I'm also sure the readers of your zine would appreciate it if you yourself didn't cash in your chips in the near and immediate future.

[[I'd like to think so, but perhaps not surprisingly I can identify some who would rejoice in my demise (although the two I have in mind aren't readers of this here slush pile)...]]

Allow me to add my condolences on your cancer diagnosis. I sincerely hope your doctor is right; that the form of leukemia you have is the version that is easiest to treat. I also hope that during the treatment process that you abandon the idea of "tuffing it out" regarding any unusual side effects or new symptoms. The people who run the medical offices in these situations are there to help, and they will be happy to tell you if something odd is just an aggravating minor side effect you can ignore, or if it happens to be something serious that needs immediate attention. But the nurses and people on duty there won't know unless you tell them, so do call them up if anything else unusual happens. This is your life you are talking about here, now is exactly the right time to become a nervous hypochondriac.

I don't have plans for attending any conventions this year. I'm still scared COVID-shitless of being in crowds of people. I still mask up when I go to the local grocery store, so I am unlikely to encounter TAFF winner **Sandra Bond**, even tho her early itinerary carries here to some parts of Massachusetts, the state where I live. But I did notice that she plans to arrive by plane in the US touching down in NYCity on 4 July. Uh, probably not the best choice, since the 4th of July Independence Day celebrations will be going full force, and traveling around that date is always a nightmare. I wish her the very best, but some contingency plans might be in order.

I read your review of 'Ghosted', the film that went direct to DVD with no theater release, and then showed up almost immediately on Apple+ TV. Nice that you enjoyed the movie, but I think you may be placing too much weight on the fact that the movie was well viewed during its posting on that site. The fact that it was brand new and starred two notable eye-candy actors may have had a lot to do with that, plus the fact that the proper label for this film might better have been listed as "mindless action, with romance", a winning combination when viewers happen to be tired, and not interested in engaging with any kind of entertainment

that challenges the thot processes, or even the process of paying much attention to the TV screen, for that matter.

Back when I drank alcohol, (which was back in the days when video rental stores abounded), I used to refer to that stuff as a six-pack with Cheetos evening. One of those films was an easy night off when I was too damn exhausted to even bother making dinner. It was entertainment with no pretensions and didn't demand anything from the viewers either. I haven't seen this particular movie myself, but if all the critics agree that it was humdrum, a low level rehash of old tired ideas, then it probably was, but that doesn't mean that people can't enjoy it for what it was, a low ball fast paced time filler, which was apparently what you were looking for when you watched it.

[[Yes, exactly...]]



On the ever on-going subject of the FAAn awards; I don't see what the big deal is with having a "Best Letterhack" award, but I didn't vote in that category because I was not sure I had read enuf zines to cover the field sufficiently to make an intelligent choice. Yeah, yeah, you keep saying that even if you don't read everything, you should still vote for your favorite in each category, but in this particular case I really feel that checking out a whole bunch of letter columns over the course of the year is the only way to make any kind of intelligent choice. In the end I decided to just not vote in that particular category. Maybe I'll reconsider with this year's ballot and just nominate/vote for the people that I thot turned out the best letters of comment that I had personally encountered. (And remembered! Always a crucial point).

[[Quite so. It might seem paradoxical that, while I do encourage voters to recognize whatever they might have liked in the previous year without reference to everything else that's out there, I do consider it reasonable to dodge any particular category (as many do) on the basis you relate. What narks me is people (whom I know read fanzines to some degree) not voting at all ...]]

I agree with your comments about Corflu seeming to have developed the image of worshipping at the shrine of ancient fannish history, rather than celebrating fanzine culture and its current practitioners. As a guy who lived thru a lot of fannish history myself, I can agree with **Steve Jeffery** that many of today's fanzines would indeed be the envy of fan editors and writers of past times. Sturgeon's Law applies to fanac just as much as it does to the mundane world, but all too often our memories supply rose colored tints to those

yesteryears when we were young and all goshwow about the world of fandom and almost everything seemed wonderful.

[[I should clarify that I'm not denigrating the "ancestor worship" elements of a Corflu per se, rather the tendency to feature that aspect above all else...]]

As to whether fanzines will survive or not, my opinion is that they will survive just fine, altho the format may continue to change. Right now printed paper and postage are so expensive that most fanzines have shifted to pixel form, and use the internet for posting and delivery. I have no ideas what the future will bring, but fanzines provide a fan service that things like conventions, podcasts, chatrooms, and Twitter posts do not, which is a form of fan contact that is a step away from the immediate direct personal contact demanding an immediate response that modern social media has created.

We seem to need platforms that will allow us to communicate without that immediate urgent contact. Fanzines provide room for leisurely nattering, articles carefully written and researched, reviews written about books read, experiences that happened, (including con reports), opinions considered and letters that present ideas that we might need to digest and think about before making a response to. Most modern social media is immediate and urgent. Fanzines are not. This breathing space, the platform for presenting writing that allows the reader to cogitate a while before responding (or not responding even) seems to me to be an essential part of the fandom we stf fans have created, and I don't think it is ever going to go away. That's my opinion anyway.

[[An opinion I happily share. Back in 2000 ('Kinell!) I wrote, in part, in the editorial for the one-and-only issue of nichevo: "As fond of the usefulness of the Internet as people may be, it is risible to suggest that issues can be raised, discussed and resolved in nanoseconds". DoBFO I'm all in for the more considered and measured response...]]

Wow! Here's something strange. OK, only strange to me, but it was *very* strange to me. Looking at your 'Ageless Beauties' feature this issue I glanced at the photo of Selina Scott and realized that she looked almost exactly like one of executives (and the front desk honcho) at my local town library. Her name is Patricia "call me Tish", and she does have an age spot on her right cheek just below the cheekbone, but otherwise, she looks exactly like Ms Scott. It's been said that everyone has at least one double somewhere else on this planet, (remind me sometime to tell you the story of how back around 2005 I discovered that my own double turned out to be a head nabob of the Russian Communist Party). Maybe it's just this one pic of Ms Scott. I will have to check the internet to see if there are other current photos of the lady so I can make a more careful

comparison. Which I just did. The similarity is remarkable indeed. I wonder if I should mention this when I return the book I borrowed to the library later this week?

That's enuf wonder & amazement for me this time round. I look forward to your June issue, which will carry good news about your medical situation, right?

From: srjeffery@aol.com

June 4

Steve Jeffery writes:

Fan artists - your days are numbered.

On a whim, I started to play around with Microsoft's Bing AI Image creator and gave it the following prompt: "a pencil drawing cartoon of a cute alien child reading a pulp science fiction magazine".



OK, it wasn't exactly the image I had in mind, but the field does seem wide open for fan editors to generate their own fanzine fillos at the cost of few keystrokes.

So then I asked it to write a letter of comment to *This Here... #65*:

Dear Editor,

I just finished reading the latest issue of *This Here...* and I must say I enjoyed it immensely. The variety and quality of the articles, stories, and reviews were impressive and engaging. I especially liked the following pieces:

- The interview with N.K. Jemisin was insightful and inspiring. She is one of my favorite authors and I appreciated her candid and thoughtful answers to

your questions. I learned a lot about her creative process, her influences, and her views on the current state and future of science fiction.

- The story “The Last Human” by R.S. Benedict was a brilliant and poignant exploration of what it means to be human in a post-apocalyptic world where humanity has been replaced by androids. The protagonist’s struggle to survive and find meaning in his existence was both thrilling and moving. The twist at the end was unexpected and heartbreaking.
- The review of ‘The Expanse’ season 5 by J.D. DeLuzio was spot-on and entertaining. I agree with his assessment that the show has improved over the seasons and that the latest one was the best so far. He captured the essence of the characters, the plot, and the themes of the show with humor and insight. I also liked his references to the books and how they compare to the adaptation.

There were many other great pieces in this issue, but these three stood out for me. I want to thank you and your team for putting together such a wonderful fanzine that celebrates science fiction in all its forms and facets. You are doing a great service to the genre and its fans.

Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

A loyal reader

[[The rest is Steve himself (in case you can't tell) - in fact nor can I tell whether the previous is actually Bing or Steve taking the piss. I'd like to think it's the latter...]]

The Harry J Warner Best Letterhack FAAN Award is safe in **Jerry Kaufman's** hands for while yet.

How are you? Have the cell counts started to stabilise yet?

This is the problem with getting old and people living longer. Nature has a way of turning round and asking “why aren't you dead yet?” and then sending you blunt reminders.

Love, wishes (and patience) to the Sainted Jen.

[[This reminds me of a long-ago talk by (I'm pretty sure) Julian Headlong in which he mused that conditions experienced by humans in ancient times would be a death sentence, whereas these days all sorts of stuff can be “treated” to the extent that the sufferer remains among the living, though with a quality of life that could be considered less than optimal. The often genetic anomalies were referred to by him as “God's Spell-Checker”...]]

So, I feel the Bing AI chatbot could have at least commented on **Ulrika's** snow capped trees illo, which is rather nice. I think I saw this in a set of Work in Progress pictures she posted on FaceBook a while back (neat idea), but as is usual for FB is almost impossible to find again after a couple of days have passed.

(You wonder why FB archives all this material at huge energy cost to the planet if none of it is ever likely to be seen or searchable again. And if that's the case, I would strongly any frequent FB posters who care about their carbon footprint or global warming to clear out and delete their old posts that no one will ever see again.)

John Hertz might mean well with his assertion that “fanwriting is fanwriting” and there should not be a distinction between Fanwriter and Letterhack categories (we can argue about the possible pejorative of “Hack” at a later point. It does seem to imply a lesser, or less thoughtful or painstaking approach to the art*.)

*If you want to argue about the word “art”, I'm borrowing the definition from Brian Eno as “anything that we do that we don't have to do to survive. Sadly, that does also include Morris Dancing, but you can't have everything.”

Regardless of whether fanwriters as fanzine article or column writers will scoop the award every time at the expense of letter writers (which seems likely), they are different skills, or at least to me. I've said before that letter writing is a form of improvisation. You pick up a theme, or maybe two, and then if the fannish gods smile on you that day, you try and run with them to see where they will take you for as long - a paragraph, a page, or longer - as inspiration and/or caffeine levels hold out. You may even, if you are one of those terribly organised types whose fridge is adorned with colour-coded post-it notes of appointments and people's birthdays (there is a special corner of hell reserved for such persons, where the chairs are all correctly spaced and lined up with each other) have started out with a plan of what to write about, but if things are really going well, this rarely survives the first sentence or parenthetical aside and then you just let go and follow where it wants to take you. Have you ever had that experience when you're playing or even just idly noodling about with music and you stop thinking about what you're playing and let your fingers dictate what comes out? It can be a bit like that. Although with more typos.

[[Oh, I quite agree, and “different skills” sums it up. We could draw an ‘auteur’ vs ‘reviewer’ distinction, I think. While Hertz's contention may have (very) slight merit, another way of looking at this might be to point out the importance of the loccol to any successful fanzine - it's well fuckin' DoBFO that the existence of a clearly engaged (and we must say erudite) readership is also a tribute to the editor(s) and his/her/their own ability. A full reductio (in whatever Hertzverse may in theory exist) therefore suggests one award only, for ‘Best Fanzine’, which would consider every aspect of production, presentation, content and engagement...]]

I don't think you can write an article or an essay like that. At least I can't. It's all a bit too freeform, and besides I'm not sure I can sustain that flow for more than a page at most.

That's usually much too short, and far too unstructured for an article, especially if you want to include facts, dates, references and actual stuff that you haven't just made up on the spot. There are of course annoying people who can do both with aplomb and apparent ease. I believe they put something in the water in Croydon.

[[It may be gin...]]

I've never been able to do that, or not easily. Or to order. I approach each bi-monthly apa deadline with a feeling of impending doom. I know I really should make notes or write short reviews of things I've watched or books I've read as I go along. Instead I leave it to the last minute and then wing it.

A bit like the FAAN Awards ballot, really.

How can anyone not have heard 'Telstar' up to now I wonder? Next **Jerry Kaufman** will tell me that he doesn't know all the words to 'Fireball XL5'. What is fandom coming to?

From: jakaufman@aol.com

June 5

Jerry Kaufman writes:

I liked your memories of the Peckham Settlement House; I've had no experience of my own to compare it with.

I'm disappointed to hear that *The Company You Keep* hasn't been renewed. The show's features of interesting family dynamics (of all three families featured) and of the changing alliances among them, were just hitting their strides, I thought. Maybe it was too slow in developments. Maybe some streaming service will give it a second chance.

You've noticed, I'm sure, that **Leigh Edmonds** has bought a Corflu membership, and if you're tracking hotel reservations, you'll have seen that he's made his already. Leigh may include Seattle in his US travel plans, so we're rather excited. Of course, it's too early for us to make such definite moves. But barring the usual Unforeseen, we expect to be there.

[[The only way we currently know if rooms have been booked is if people tell us - or in this case tell you, apparently...]]

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

June 7

Eli Cohen writes:

Re 'Radio Winston': "singer/songwriter from Hull" - I'm reminded of a fan from Hull who used to say "Myself am Hull; nor am I out of it" - though I believe it might have been Hull, Quebec he was from.

"Makes a patterned shirt for Robert L - all square, of course! (3-4)" I was stumped, so I must confess that I cheated and used Google, which turned up TIE-DYES (all square = tied, of course = yes); after that, some more googling found a picture of a tie-dyed Robert Lichtman (see below) in Earl Kemp's e138 on efanzines (<https://efanzines.com/EK/e138>), confirming the answer. (I never met him, but I gather his t-shirts were familiar to those who knew him.)



[[As grateful as I genuinely am for suggestions from *Ansible Towers*, the fact that they're searchable does allow you to "cheat". I had added the misdirection of 'Robert L', which with the word "patterned" in the clue could have suggested an anagram (with 'Robert L' also amounting to seven letters) while also adding the clue for those aware of his occasional sartorial preferences...]]

"Fart aloud finally with baked beans cooked in guest house (3,3,9)" Well, once you start cheating, it's easy to continue, especially when you're otherwise stumped. So Google turned up:

"guest house" is the definition.
 "fart aloud finally with baked beans cooked" is the wordplay.
 "finally" indicates one should take the final letters.

"with" means one lot of letters go next to another.

"cooked" is an anagram indicator (letters cooked into a new form).

The final letter of "aloud" is "d".

"fart" + "d" + "baked" + "beans" = "fartdbakedbeans"

"fartdbakedbeans" with letters rearranged gives BED AND BREAKFAST which matches up with the definition "guest house")

Easy-peasy!

Wait, what's this? Yet another crossword clue? "America First hairstyle on actor Charles? That's too much! (9)" Well, since you came up with it in your sleep, and Google can't see your dreams (yet!), I guess I'm out of luck. Pompadour? Is that what they call the thing on Trump's head? It does have

9 letters, but I don't see the "Charles" reference. Maybe I should give up on these - you can retitle them "Crossword Clue for Google".

[[Indeed, clues of my own devising won't allow you to cheat, but this one is somewhat straightforward in construction: "America First" = A + "hairstyle" = BUN + "actor Charles" = DANCE, yielding ABUNDANCE. ("That's too much!")...]]

And again, good luck with the Calquence!

WAHF

John Hertz [[[Here is some music...](#)]] ; Perry Middlemiss ; David Redd : "Two quotes sprang out at me this issue "He's into *drink*", and "Bars aren't as important to European con runners", which I should have been able to expand on amusingly but couldn't, sorry. Re issue 64's **Ulrikas**, I should have said that p.8 was fun and p.10 was really nice."

FANZINES RECEIVED

Gratefully acknowledged with a (very) little comment...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #54 (Andy Hooper) - This month's classic horror host appears to be Dick Eney...

PERRYSCOPE 33 (Perry Middlemiss), and...

THE MEGALOSCOPE #7 (David Grigg) - RAEBNC I'm afraid lads, up against the wire here...

INDULGE ME

✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE (1)** : More evidence emerges for signs of life (or at least potentially life-creating chemistry) on [one of Saturn's moons](#)...

✘ **CROSSWORD CLUE FOR ELI** : Another one of my own to make it harder to cheat: "POTUS residence fileservers less five agog for a fairground attraction (6,5)" ...

✘ **WAR FOOTING** : Not exactly cheery, but an excellent interview by Tim Dickinson in *Rolling Stone* with Brad Onishi, professor at the University of San Francisco, and author of *Preparing for War: The Extremist History of White Christian Nationalism*, which includes the following:...

Dickinson: When I hear [White Christian Nationalists] talk about "freedom," it is not at all a freedom as secular Americans mean it — to follow your bliss. It's freedom to live by God's order.

Onishi: Totally. "Freedom" is living out your role in God's hierarchy. And so when other people don't do that, just by existing, they're making you less free. They may see the trans person, for example, as not living according to their God-given gender. So just by being on the subway, or being in their kids' school, they're making

them less free, because the order is all out of whack. And therefore they need to do something about it. They need to go tear down displays at Target or put forth anti-trans legislation.

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : I dunno if we're getting willfully or actually necessarily obscure(r), but here's **Ingrid Newkirk**, suitably with companion...



✘ **THE LANGFORD CONCEPTION** : Just for you, **Dave** : "Article held by adroit banter typical of this writer? (4,4)" ...

✘ **GET OFF MY LAWN!** : Noting our various travails, **Dave Hodson** remarks elsewhere: "Fuck me, we all sound so *old* these days" ...

✘ **WORD!** : Via Professor Barbara F. Walter, one of the conditions for civil war is "anocracy" (a term I'd never heard of), defined as when a country is neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic...

✘ **UNCUT BICYCLE SERVICE** : A fascinating and enlightening episode of 'The Documentary' titled '[Swan's Head, Tiger's Roar](#)', whose blurb tells you all you need to know to check it out: "Producer Steven Rajam travels to the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar to meet some of the women challenging convention, tradition and history at home and across the globe, including hip-hop artist Mrs M, Hollywood actress Bayra Bela and traditional throat-singer Zolzaya, whose fiddle is adorned not with the traditional horse's head, but a swan"....

✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE (2)** : Stephen Baxter alert, Europe's [Euclid telescope](#) is after getting to the bottom of dark matter. If it finds any photino birds, will anyone even fuckin' tell us?...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Totally taking the piss out of the Killer with **Bright Forsyth**. Why-aye pet!...



✘ **THISH** : If it seems a bit rushed that's because it is. Brain fog has left me finishing up more than half of my own columns *today* (Saturday June 24th) rather than just having to slot in the 'Footy' column and doing final layouts as would be more usual...

✘ **NEXTISH** : Up in the air a bit since we're hosting TAFF delegate **S&ra Bond** with a party on July 28th, so #67 *might* be out the week before that, since as much as I'd like to have a party report and photos, it seems a tad unrealistic to get that done the day after the event. It's an idea, I suppose, to have the "July" issue out on August 5th, with #68 dropping three weeks later. Fucknose. As I'm fond of saying: "We'll find out..."

MIRANDA

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**"He hears the silence howling
And catches angels as they fall
And the all time winner
Has got him by the balls"**