

# This Here...

“...made me vomit.” (R-L Tutihasi)

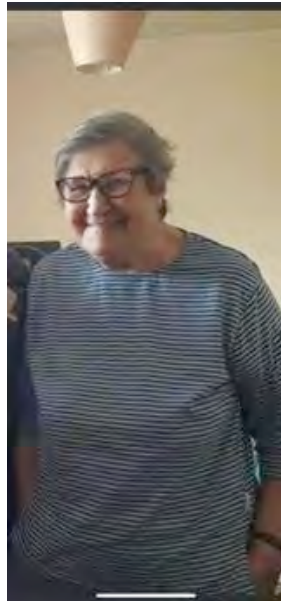
## EGOTORIAL

### HALF A LIFE

It's almost always sad to note the demise of a perennial fanzine title, but one such is **John Purcell's** *Askance*, which he announces has come to the end of its admirable run with issue #55 after a mere 203 or so annishes.

I've gently mocked John in the past for his seeming dedication to the calendar and his propensity to celebrate any given milestone (“Thish marks the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the first time I had a very squirrely crap after a dodgy burrito at a Texas convention and had to send Val out for clean underwear...”), but of course I secretly admire his tenacity of memory whereas mine is largely lost to the mists of drink - **Dave Hodson** readily recalls many drunken sessions at BSFG Novacons past, but ask us for actual details and I suspect we'd both come up short. One of the few I do remember is being upbraided by Iain (M) Banks, with (I think, or hope) mock outrage over a letter I wrote to *Private Eye* pointing out the unoriginality of Gore Vidal's 'Live From Golgotha' and wondering in a PS when that organ's literary reviewer might “have a go” at Banksie. As best I recall I just stood there looking sheepish and stuck my nose as far into my pint as it would go...

Before the final *Askance* arrived I'd been doing some calendar thinking of my own, and I was tangentially reminded that this year (or thereabouts) marks 40 years since I got into fandom - small beer compared to some of the *ancien regime* reading this, I know, but ey, I am a mere stripling [falls off chair] after all.



What I had been considering was the vague thought that I've now spent half my life in the USA, but some elementary sums show that not to be the case quite yet. The tipping point occurs (exact day not calculated) some time in 2029 - I arrived to stay in the States in early September 1993, so 2029 clocks up 36 years, and in January 2030 (Gawd willing and the creek don't rise ect) I'll be 72, so that's close enough for jazz, innit?

### ANCESTRY UPDATE

My son Sean and his apparent cohort of researchers have been very industrious of late, turning up a lot of quite startling info.

My birth mother (Hettie Ansell), it turns out, is still living aged 86 and residing in Portsmouth! A lot of detective work was involved here, I surmise, since she changed her name before (or upon) moving there in no small part to try to leave her past behind, and because of that I'm not going to publish any detail in here, which is also in accordance with her direct instruction to her other kids not to delve into any of it - although I am now aware of quite a lot. Some of them half-jokingly

reckon she might have been a spy because of the historical reticence, and also noting that she's been good in a fight and apparently a decent shot an'all!

“Other kids”, oh yes: turns out I'm the eldest of eight of Hettie's, with six of us still living. Quite the shock to a lad raised as an only!

That's not all, either. My birth father has been identified as William Richards, born in Wigan, died in Scotland some time in the 1970s when aged only around 46, who served in the British army for many years, which is how he met my



mother who was working as a switchboard operator on a military base at the time, and obviously they had a fling despite his being married. He later produced four *more* siblings to add to the clan.

I haven't initiated any contact, but via Sean have let it be known that if any of the lot want to get in touch with me, the door is open. I might be considered an unwelcome intrusion from the past, though, and I understand and respect that, of course. We shall see...

It's all good.

August 2023

## TAFFNESSABOUNDS

According to the attendees (as reported to me later by **Jen**, since I was typically dazed and confused), the party was a success! This was despite the pork shoulder not being entirely cooked after eleven fuckin' hours in the smoker, but thanks to wifely intervention (with a bit of assist from **Brenda** ("Brender") **Dupont**, 45 minutes in the oven finished it off nicely to the point where **Stephanie Zachar** in particular had a practically orgasmic reaction upon tasting it.



L-R : Tee Cochran, Brenda Dupont, S&ra, Jacq Monahan, Dale and Susan Johnson, Deb Deckert, Stephanie Zachar, Ken Vaden. Front: Lulu

Courtesy of **S&ra**, we acquired a couple of new friends whom she'd met in Winnipeg, Vegas locals who were mystified at the apparent lack of fan groups round here. "Making connections", she observed, "Is what TAFF is all about, innit?".

Mission accomplished...

## CORFLUX

### 41 NEWS

PR2 will ideally be published next weekend (September 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>), the main news announcement being an increase in the attending membership price.

That's going to go up to \$120 (£95/€110) on October 1<sup>st</sup>, which gives some of you waverers time to get in at the current rates. Supporting and virtual rates will remain the same, although a slight increase in the former (despite bitching from certain quarters that it's already high) isn't being entirely ruled out, but if a hike does occur it won't be until next year when we'll have a clearer idea of the extent and nature of the con publications and assorted sprack which supporting (and, DoBFO, attending) members will get.

This is the result of some firming up of budget and expected outlay, leavened with a modicum of caution - lest we forget, the previous Vegas Corflu lost money, albeit largely due to what I'd consider an avoidable cockup over wireless fees. The fact is, though, in terms of the conrunning itself, Vegas isn't the cheapest location you could pick, particularly on the catering side, which for us is primarily the Sunday banquet, which as I've noted chews up (ahem) over 50% of the current attending membership fee. In some ways you could consider this reassuring in that you know it's not going to be two Subway sandwiches or a table of cold pizza, because banquetting is something this town does exceptionally well - at a cost.

There'll be more stuff in PR2, of course, including a Discord discourse from **Claire Fishlifter** and some important notes on the smoking policy in particular.

The other important message is a call for bids for 2025. So far the only firm interest shown has been for a swift return to the UK to utilize a synergy advantage with that year's Eastercon in Belfast. This has been met with cries of "too soon" from some, but at the moment I'm not aware of any North American interest or even comment, apart from **Andy Hooper** opining that the event is due to move out of the Pacific time zone where it's been held 9 times in the last 20 years. He may still be thinking back ten years to the time when Corflu took place in the western US five times in six years (2008-2013) - the exception was Winchester, UK.

The pool of the willing may be diminishing, perhaps suggested to an extent by the observation that 2024 will be my own *third* turn at chairing or co-chairing Corflu, albeit with different teams each time.

So who's up for it?

Inquiries/comments (*not* payments) to [vegas41@corflu.org](mailto:vegas41@corflu.org)

## MOVIE NIGHT

### HEART OF STONE

As I'm sure you're all well aware by now, I love a good action movie (vehicle chases! stuff go bang! ect) so we checked out this new Netflix (can't help reading their logo like that, can you?) offering last weekend, and it made for an entertaining couple of hours, although the reviews haven't been entirely kind. The consensus review at Rotten Tomatoes reads: "Gal Gadot remains an entertaining action star, but she's no match for *Heart of Stone's* thinly written characters, generic plot, and rote set pieces."

Now I've got a problem with that analysis in that it's highly arguable that almost every action movie has those exact same "qualities" and relies more on audience engagement with the characters (however "thinly written" by some asshole's lights), some star power and the expectation of, well, stuff go bang ect.

And "generic plot" - don't get me fuckin' started! There's a very limited number of basic plots for anything at all, and action movies (including the skiffy ones) are probably more susceptible to that than most other genres. The fact is that 'Heart of Stone' has more plot than any Roger Moore era James Bond movie, "generic" or otherwise. Christopher Nolan it surely ain't, but that's not why we're watching it - we need a *sufficient* plot, enough of it to be interesting but not so much as to make it hard to follow, because what we're looking for is stuff go bang, and in this case Gal Gadot looking all stylish and that (and DoBFO saving the day).

You can certainly, if you wanted to be a picky git, ref all the reworked James Bond stunts (and tropes) in this movie, which I clocked more approvingly than not since they're mostly done better here.

The critical "meh" is contradicted by the movie being #1 on the streaming service in its first week, with something like 33 million views. A better than average contribution to the field, if you ask me...



## HEALTH DIARY...

### REVISIT & UPDATE

All you lot on the distribution list will, of course, have seen the email I sent out announcing the skipping of a July ish of this here conglomeration, but it occurred to me that some others might only be clocking me off efanazines (or N3F forwarding service, perhaps) so I'm going to reprint it here (likely with a smidgin of editing) and tack on a bit of an update. Responses to this July chunk appear in both 'Loco Citato' and 'WAHF'...

July 15:

### CONSTIPATION

"\*hug\* Hugs not drugs.... no wait, hugs AND drugs!" (Dread Pirate Roberts)

It's been a rough couple of weeks, which may, or more likely may not be related to the leukemia, since the white blood cell count is on its way down, albeit with a ways to go yet - the last reading was in the 50s, the target is 15.

Two weeks ago I was in the process of remarking to Jen that I'd realized I hadn't been experiencing my usual headaches (a constant which I've lived with for years) and of course I should have kept my fuckin' mouth shut. Suddenly, here comes back and (left) leg pain of such excruciating quality that I can't get any sleep. Having kipped for maybe an hour the night of Saturday 1st, I call in to my nice supervisor

Tyree to advise that there's no fuckin' way I can work, and that I'll be off up the Urgent Care asap. I manage a couple hours rest, then Urgent Care it is, where I am X-rayed to determine that my back is fairly fucked (I knew that, having had back surgery as long ago as my mid-20s) and here are some prescriptions: cyclobenzaprine (a muscle relaxant and painkiller), and the dreaded prednisone, a steroid which always affects me badly in terms of general mood. I manage to get through the rest of the work week, knowing I have a scheduled monthly appointment with Dr Gollard at the cancer center on the Thursday.

The prescriptions were working a bit, but the muscle relaxant is yet another of those "May cause dizziness" pharmaceuticals, so I can't take any before or during work, thus it's back to relying on ibuprofen, Tylenol and sheer bloody-mindedness to get through the day. By Wednesday I'm a fuckin' wreck - so tired that I think I *must* be able to sleep, but I'm kipping two hours at the most before the pain wakes me back up, I tuff it for two hours feeling like a central casting zombie, then getting another



two hours Land of Nod, maybe.

Dr Gollard is suitably sympathetic and inevitably on the case. Here's referrals for an MRI, an ultrasound, the inevitable blood work and a followup with nice nurse Hannah in a week. Also *more* (supposedly better) drugs: tramadol for the pain (which of course I sarcastically refer to as "the heroin") and sleeping pills (temazepam). Friday brings no clear improvement, so I reckon the stuff needs to get in your system to start working, and I'm still not sleeping properly. The tramadol is yet another "don't operate heavy machinery, or really anything at all with as much lethal potential as an egg whisk", so I call Ryan, the HR bloke at work, bring him up to speed and ask for the week off because of the expected medical appointments as much as anything. Solicitous as ever, request granted.

I realize that (apart from the Calquence for the leukemia which is on a strict schedule) I've been grabbing meds practically at random, so on Saturday I start keeping a log, as well as going "oh hello headaches, my old friend", as I'm now getting the sort of pains which suggest someone is sticking a knitting needle in my left (left side *again*) ear, or at least doing similar to the voodoo doll. As you might imagine, this isn't helping me sleep either, nor is the temazepam.

The parade of appointments goes: Monday, MRI ; Tuesday, blood draw ; Wednesday, ultrasound (after a call to Southwest medical to get in asap, done of course by the magnificent Jen because I'm crap on the phone), and Thursday nurse Hannah at the cancer center, who has *all* the results in hand in a fab show of efficiency. The conclusion is that my back is a bit fucked (knew that, *passim*), bit of arthritis there and some gapping of the disks. A tad more concerning would be a couple of lumps. There's one on my back, inevitably just to the left of the spine, previously identified by Dr Gollard as one of those fatty coagulations which are benign, but the ultrasound spotted something on my left hip, about where the lytic lesion is that they clocked when I had the bone marrow biopsy. This'un seems a likely culprit for the left leg pain. So here we go with a referral for yet another kind of scan and a visit to an orthopedic specialist.

Seems like no end in sight, don't it? I've previously noted my general reluctance to see doctors on the "never ask a barber if you need a haircut" principle, and it looks well like that philosophy has come back to sink its sharpened teeth into my arse now that all these ailments are coming to light.

All these fuckin' drugs (especially the heroin) come with strictures to avoid alcohol so, believe it or not, I'm endeavoring to be a good boy and comply, although "compliance" in my case comes down to sneaking in one beer a day, and that not every day. A weird thing is that, if the drugs aren't giving immediate relief, what seems to help is coffee, dulling the pain to the point where I reckon I ought

to be able to kip, except now the fuckin' coffee is probably what's keeping me awake, even with a sleeping pill.

Ah yes, the constipation. (You were dreading this bit, weren't you?). Another side-effect of this pharmaceutical cocktail is the kind of glued-shut arseness that makes every bowel movement a Sisyphean ordeal and has you thinking that today's turd couldn't *possibly* be the foot wide monstrosity that it feels like while also having the consistency of long-set concrete. Ahem. However, the constipation is at both ends. Despite having been off work all last week (and having done a bit of the usual research for various *This Here...* columns and having it all rattle around in my bonce) I haven't been able to commit the act of actually *writing* the fuckin' stuff - it's a bad blockage. Writing this has atypically taken me hours.

Hence, no ish in July, which does actually work out all right for other reasons. TAFF delegate **S&ra Bond** is due here at the end of the month and we'll be having a cookout for that on the 28th (I'd fuckin' better be up for it) and Footy columnist **Dave Hodson** is starting the process of the move to his new (ground floor) flat.

I'm going to try to go back to work tomorrow (expected temp 119F, mad dogs and Englishmen ect), which means no tramadol in the mornings so I'll have to get by on ibuprofen and Tylenol. Nurse Hannah tells me, though, that the tramadol is a "baby dose" (50mg) so if I'm in a particularly bad way I could take two when I get home from the salt mines.

It's all good.

*August 3:*

It's a relief (cf constipation in particular) to be able to report some significant improvement round here. A lot less pain the last week (although the debilitating tiredness persists), and extra help in the form of yet *another* pharmaceutical, this'un prescribed by the Orthopedic and Spine center, although we had to chase them up since my pharmacy hadn't got the referral. Meloxicam is apparently some sort of super-Aleve (one a day, good for 12 hours, take with food because it fucks up the guts) and doesn't involve any egg-whisk warnings so I can scoff one before work. It seems to be effective most of the time so far. I've cut out just about everything else to the point where I don't need to keep a drug diary - it's pretty much the Calquence (chemo drug) twice a day as usual, meloxicam before work, and if needed Tylenol, ibuprofen or (now rarely) tramadol after, with the occasional odansetron if the guts are boiling.

It turns out (per the Ortho people) that I have a compressed disk in the lower back which explains a lot. Yet *another* fuckin' referral sees me starting physical therapy this Saturday (the 5<sup>th</sup>) which I'm not looking forward to, but heigh-ho & that. Next week I've got another ultrasound (for something *else* I have yet to reveal - keep your bingo cards

handy) and the August follow up at the cancer center, with an ortho visit at the end of the month (too late for thish).

August 17:

## BINGO?

Well first the good news bit, which is that my white blood cell count is down to 36.6 whatever's per something, still a bit to go for the target of 10-15 but of course steadily on the way there from its peak in the 90s. Nice Dr. Gollard is a happy man because I've apparently reacted well to the Calquence, not having had much in the way of crippling side-effects at all - the implication is that others haven't had such a smooth ride with it.

The physical therapy is ongoing (twice a week at the moment). Is it helping? I dunno, but I suppose it's a "do no harm" kind of thing, the exercises are generally fairly gentle due, no doubt, to my age and perceived frailty and probably do loosen things up a bit. I could equally conclude that allowing the hot-as-I-can-stand shower to spray directly on my lower back of a morning has been just as useful. None of this, though, has really improved my mobility in that I still can't walk very far without getting leg pains, nor get around without the walking stick, although I can get in and out of both my car (Honda HR/V) and the usual taxi (Chevy Equinox) without it since they're both compact SUVs and high enough of the ground.

So, bingo cards at the ready? I'll start with *tinea pedis*, which, mind you, I've suffered with (and medically ignored) for many a year, and is of course, risibly, "athlete's foot" (feet?) which doesn't make me an athlete any more than tennis elbow would make me Andy Murray or Lou Gehrig's disease would make me a baseball legend. Or, come to think of it and be topical, Parkinson's would make me a recently deceased professional Yorkshireman...

Anyway, the *good* one to check off is an epididymal cyst, which for those of you who are not **Rob Jackson**, is a - wait for it - bump in the bollock! This is another one of those afflictions which is benign but more than occasionally quite annoying and sometimes painful (and for some reason quite often itchy, which leads to much shameless adjustment of the tackle in public<sup>1</sup>), so now we've added the urologist to the list of specialists I'm beholden to, with an appointment at the scrag end (ahem) of September.

<sup>1</sup> Note to **S&ra** : Corflu programme item?

# RADIO WINSTON

## A BASKET OF BORROWS

All right, this chunk of slices didn't start out as borrows (cover versions, as per our dearly missed friend Alan Dorey) but ended up with several. Yes, it's another miscellany brought about by not being arsed to do the research for a

single-topic column, and my earnest excuse is that this lot does rather emulate a series of posts to the FBF group like what I might have done of a Friday night, back in the day.

The original sole subject of this here effort was going to be Swingrowers (also styled as "SwinGrowers"), a four-piece electro-swing outfit, whom I was a tad startled to learn hail from Palermo, Sicily. This was a similar reaction to the one I had when finding out that old-school ska revivalists Dr. Ring-Ding and the Senior All-Stars were actually from Germany.

This fairly recent slice (from a year ago), '[Love!](#)' had the video recorded in Palermo itself - all very scenic...

And because they well deserve it, here's a second jolly one with an expanded "Big Band" line-up and Italy's X-Factor finalist Davide Shorty, '[Healing Dance](#)' (also filmed in Palermo, in a rather nice villa, apparently)...



Not sure whether I've noted this'un previously, but if I have, here it is again. (It should be DoBFO by now that I don't diligently or even cursorily maintain lists or spreadsheets of whatever's already appeared in here.) **JoHN Hardin** clued me in some while ago to Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats, particularly this slice, '[S.O.B.](#)', with which I can well identify because drink...

Now, on to the borrows (yet with an intruder).

Joe Cocker was always a fantastic interpreter of, it seemed, almost anything you gave him, making it all his own with effortless skill. So here's his version of Randy Newman's nicely naughty '[You Can Leave Your Hat On](#)', and why not ey?

Nicky Thomas was known more for covers than anything else, including an early version of 'Let It Be', produced by the legendary Joe Gibbs (who **Graham James** will nevertheless deride for having promoted Althea & Donna ('Uptown Top Ranking', although the follow-up 'Gone to Negril' is much better) as well as his more well-known 'Love of the Common People' from the mid-1970s, the success of which precipitated a move to England. An early and self-penned exception is the somewhat satirical '[B.B.C.](#)', about

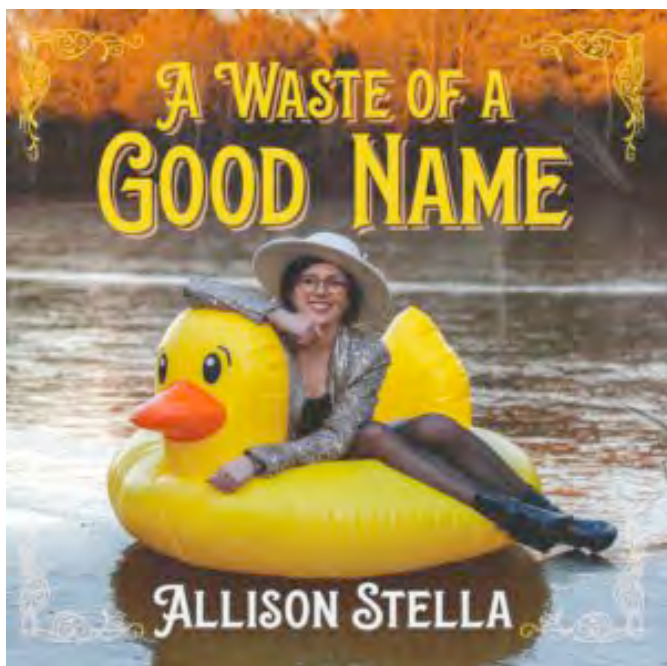


efforts to get on the radio. Thomas' career ended with his untimely death in 1990 in London at age 45 or 46, some say by his own hand due to a broken heart.

Warren Zevon was always a favorite of David Letterman, and here's his appearance with the 'Hindu Love Gods' outfit (aka R.E.M. sans Michael Stipe) and album title, covering Prince's '[Raspberry Beret](#)'. It's a pure rock band version, almost garage-y which kinda sorta gives the impression of being a bit joyfully sloppy but if you listen closely isn't at all. Rather, it's quite precisely done, innit?

Last up: when Errol Brown (the Hot Chocolate frontman) died in 2015 I had some convo with Alan Dorey suggesting a *memoriam* for his radio show which fit his "borrow" category very nicely indeed. Most people remember Hot Chocolate for their string of hit singles (eg 'You Sexy Thing', 'Every 1's A Winner'), not clocking that they were in fact a very interesting album band, as evidenced by this cover of Elvis Costello's '[Green Shirt](#)' off EC's 'Armed Forces' set, an album I mostly disliked on the strength of cringing at 'Oliver's Army' every time I hear it but was well taken with this particular slice, and Brown's interpretation of it is fuckin-A.

Late news: The excellent Allison Stella has a new album out on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 'A Waste of a Good Name', reviewed at length [here](#) ...



## OMPHALOSKEPSIS

### ARE YOU READING THIS?

"...my dirty little secret is that I almost *never* read fanzines" (**Taral** - *Dark Toys* 75)

I had thought that this column, ostensibly about the theory and practice of fanzining, had pretty much run its course,

but I'm spurred back into it by *Dark Toys* 75, in which **Taral**, under the title 'Plausible Denial' analyzes the whys of fanzining from his perspective.

The piece starts with a sadly typical whine about being "disappointed" with the FAAn award results (translation: didn't win one) despite a top five finish in both Fanartist and Fanzine Cover categories, the latter being a fairly competitive set, despite still being woefully undersubscribed to by voters (only 17 ballots had entries for it) - as an aside, I have suggested dropping the category because of this apparent lack of engagement, but a fairly vocal minority would like to keep it, so I've given up in favor of *stet*, not at all influenced by the fact that *BEAM* covers have won four times in the eleven years the award had been given, oh no...

It's worth getting past the whiny bit to the meat and potatoes of **Taral's** piece, since he makes some interesting points (which I nevertheless largely disagree with), wrapped in a not unexpected "why do we/I bother?" weariness.

There's a basic logical fallacy in play with the admission that because he himself doesn't read fanzines, other faneds seem also likely to behave similarly - this is classic arguing from the specific to the general - but you do wonder just a little bit whether he's right to some extent. **Guy Lillian** concludes his review in *The Zine Dump* with "We're not quite as isolated as **Taral** warns, but he's more right than not".

Raking over old coals here, but the Balkanization (while not a new thing by any means) of the fanzine Faniverse is something I've often noted, and contributes to **Taral's** assessment. It's pretty DoBFO that chunks of our lot (perhaps unfair to single out the N3F or *Alexiad*, but there you go) do not engage at all (or, more accurately perhaps, minimally) with the other chunks. Symptomatic of this might be, for example, John Thiel's blocking of my emails (and thus obviating some of the danger of having his failings continually pointed out - one wonders whether he'll do the same to *The Zine Dump* which is, however, more gently critical of his output, as is **Guy Lillian's** style).

The UK scene is really a different story, though. Long, long ago **Claire Brialey** stated that "fanzines talking to each other" was both desirable and laudable (and that's a statement as well as an aspiration which has stayed with me all these years), but the UK is less determinedly regional than the North American equivalent has generally seemed to be, a situation helped by the fact that UK faneds would also reasonably often be "talking to each other" in person with much less derision than tends to exist over here. It could be said that we're talking at each other, inasmuch as we acknowledge others' existences at all.

Personally I do make the effort to at least do a decent skim of zines I'm sent (physically or electronically) and in a plurality if not a majority of cases I'll go well beyond the usual egoscan (of which the late R Lichtman was a master). This column is itself proof of that, although egoscan may have

come into it since *BEAM* gets mentioned a couple of times. (Note to **Fishlifters** and **Rob Jackson**: so do *Banana Wings* and *Inca*.)

**Taral**'s analysis is perhaps rooted in the "proud and lonely" tradition which is perhaps reinforced if you live on a bump in the road in some Northern wasteland, but perhaps more so by a tendency to be socially awkward (if not actually asocial) in the first place. His unhealthy obsession with awards doesn't bolster the argument either, although it does, to an extent, comply with one of my own perennial observations on the "why" of fanzining:

We just want to be told that we're brilliant.

## TV GUIDE

**Jerry Kaufman** wonders what he and **Suzle** ought to be watching on their, I think, limited set of streaming services (mentioned during a "Hal's Pals" Zoom get together the other week), and I strongly urge a clock of 'Harley Quinn' (Max, formerly known as HBO Max), the fourth season of which just started, as violent and foul-mouthed as ever. Harley turned out to be one of the more popular DC characters, having originated in the animated universe long ago before transferring to the comics (and live action eg 'Suicide Squad'), most appearances being generally consistent (ie bonkers x1000).



Like several of the later DCAU offerings, 'Harley Quinn' has its own separate continuity, which in some ways makes it easier to get into from the off for the viewer unburdened by canon, but also for me it's interesting (and rewarding) to note the version differences.

That definitely applies to a couple of older shows I've done some ketchup on: 'The Brave and the Bold', original airing 2008-11 (also Max, which carries all the DCAU product) is one such, and like the original comic book it's a team-up series, Batman and various other costumed heroes. A *lot* of these take place in locations far removed from Gotham City,

including but not limited to outer space and other times and universes. Much of it is played for comedy, especially with Aquaman (voiced by John DiMaggio, also among many other credits, Bender from 'Futurama') as an excessively hail-fellow-well-met simpleton of sorts, obsessed with relating his exploits in overly heroic terms. The final episode is a meta effort with the characters Bat-Mite and Ambush Bug directly addressing the end of the series. Which, as always, reminded me that I really should keep nagging at **Doug Bell** for an occasional article on very obscure comic book characters (I think about this every time Ambush Bug appears), at least before Grant Morrison decides they should be dug up and placed front and center (eg Merryman from the Inferior Five).

The other series I'm now slogging through is 'The Batman' (2004-6), also rated Y7 but a bit more serious in tone as befitting the definite article which usually portends this approach. This is clearly one with separate continuity, given a radical redesign of some of the adversary characters, particularly Joker (dreadlocked and barefoot) and the Riddler (Goth). I'll admit I'm losing patience with this'un (still on season 1), as it all seems very samey from episode to episode (Batman, here early in his crimefighting career) gets knocked out a lot), and there doesn't seem to be the sense of importance to any of his efforts that there should be. Big plus: Alfred (Alastair Duncan) is sarkily excellent. Solid plus: Gina Gershon (who can do no wrong in my opinion) as Catwoman. Big minus: The Penguin (Tom Kenny) is cringingly OTT. The original theme music (by U2's The Edge) is all right.

Current binge watch: 'The Lincoln Lawyer' (Netflix) - we stormed season 1 and currently into season 2. I'm still a sucker for a good courtroom/legal drama ('Perry Mason' *passim*) and this is definitely a good'un!

## FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

A lot can happen in two months...

On a personal level, I've moved into a local authority flat (apartment) in Enfield, which suits my needs perfectly, and as is usual when anyone moves home, some of the boxes of junk/vital personal belongings (delete as applicable) won't be opened for several months as other things (like writing footie columns; attending comic marts and getting seriously hammered with James Bacon, Rob Hansen, and old-time comic chum Will Morgan; watching cricket on the telly) vie for my attention. I've managed to get the PC set-up and I'm pleased to announce that British Telecom finally cobbled my broadband internet connection together; hell, even the A3 Epson printer/scanner with its own postcode survived the journey across the borough.





L-R: James Bacon, Rob Hansen, Footy columnist, Will Morgan

Bizarrely, the last central London comic mart provided an encounter with a guy who runs a comic book stall in an antique centre in North Enfield and is organising small scale local comic marts at the same venue. Along I went last Sunday (August 20<sup>th</sup>), not expecting a great deal, only to run into Bruce Scott, a British comic collector and war comics specialist, who James had introduced us all to at said last central London mart. It ended up being a damned fine day full of obscure information and copies of Roy Thomas' comic book fanzine *Alter Ego* that I've been hunting down. There will be more comic mart adventures in future columns, no doubt. They may never get up to the standards of the golden days of the 1980s Westminster marts when I'd met up with various Pickersgills, Hansens, Carols, Wellses, Harries, etc, for day long sessions at the Royal George, but they're becoming fun.

I know this is meant to be a football column, but we'll start off with a little cricket, shall we?

Australia "retained" The Ashes, after the series ended in a 2-2 draw. Now, England having lost the first two test matches mostly due to their own stupidity and ineptitude (by two wickets and 43 runs respectively) would make the eventual 2-2 draw seem like a reasonable result, but the nature of the three wicket England win in the third test really did suggest that the series could be completely turned around. The current Australian side, despite having Stevie Smith in the batting line-up, is aging and mediocre at best, and Pat Cummins is hardly the most dynamic or inspirational captain. England's 592 run haul in the fourth test at Old Trafford really did set the match up for an England win and a level series going into the traditional series closer at Kennington Oval; Australia responded with 317 runs in their first innings and were 214 for 5 in their second when the heavens opened for two whole fucking

days! Match drawn, Australia couldn't be overtaken in the series, Ashes retained...

England won the final test by 49 runs, but it was a bittersweet victory and, although some England fans will point to a controversial stumping of Johnny Bairstow in the second test as the point at which Australia assured themselves of at least not losing the series, the truth is that the selection of an unfit Bairstow in the first place and 16 dropped catches across the first two tests gifted Australia two results they really didn't deserve. I was tempted to drink myself into a stupor...

The new Premier League season kicked off over the weekend of August 11 – 13. The most notable result so far, a mere two weeks into the season, was the 2-0 home win for Tottenham over Manchester United on Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup>. Spurs appointed the Australian Ange Postecoglou as their new manager after poaching him from Celtic over the summer and many a critic has tipped them to struggle this season, especially given the sale of club talisman and record goal scorer Harry Kane to Bayern Munich in Germany for somewhere around £90million. The truth appears to be that Postecoglou was bought in because he has a broad back and no fears about taking on sacred cows. "Unspecified sources" were quoted as saying that an unofficial players committee of Kane, goalkeeper Hugo Lloris, defender Eric Dier, and midfielder Pierre Emile Højbjerg, had formed in the dressing room to undermine any new boss. The sale of Kane coincided with the freezing out of Lloris and Dier, whilst Højbjerg has played less than one half of football all season, but the crowd at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium could care less as Spurs look to be playing a more dynamic, attacking style of football than they have done for several years.

In truth, the new men's football season has been completely overshadowed, in the UK at least, by the Women's World Cup in Australia. England went into the tournament, that ran between July 20<sup>th</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>, as one of the heavy favourites and, as other fancied sides, most notably the U.S.A. in a 5-4 penalty shootout loss to Sweden after a tepid 0-0 draw in the round of 16, tumbled out of the competition, they managed to scramble past Nigeria in a 4-2 penalty shootout, Columbia in a 2-1 quarter-final win, and Australia 3-1 in the semi-finals. Despite the improvement in results as the knock-out phase progressed, England never looked entirely fluent, and the final against Spain threatened to be a tight affair. Spain's side was missing several key players and had been at loggerheads with their football association since September 2022 over a supposed "lack of professionalism" that was "affecting both the players mental and physical health". Spain won the final 1-0 with a first-half strike on the counter by Olga Carmona Garcia, who was the best player on display for either side, whilst England just seemed to run out of legs and ideas. In truth Spain benefited from some "inconsistent" refereeing in the final and a mastery of the



dark arts, as it's frequently referred to in the men's game. If only that had been where the controversies ended...

Whilst the trophy was being awarded to the winning side, Spanish football federation president Luis Rubiales decided to plant one on the lips of Jenni Hermoso, the forward who had had a penalty saved during the game by England's Mary Earps, who won the tournament's Golden Glove award for best goalkeeper.

Hermoso has since said she didn't consent to the kiss, Rubiales has said he asked the forward for a "little peck" and a "mutual, euphoric, and consensual [kiss]" took place, and the [entire Spanish side has refused to play](#) for the national team again until Rubiales is removed from his position, which he has refused to do or accept.



Now F.I.F.A., the world governing body, is getting involved and women's football is spiralling towards its own MeToo moment which threatens to shine a light on decades of abuses in the women's game around the world. The history of the women's game in England is one of a fifty-year ban after the first world war by the stuffed shi(r)ts at the Football Association afraid of the attendances women's matches attracted.

Of equal gravity, and simultaneous to the Spanish national team's issues with its football association, the U.S.A. women's national side is spearheading a move for female players to be paid on an equal footing with their male counterparts and this is a fight that could probably only take place in the United States currently. The popularity of the women's game in the U.S. has outstripped the male game over the last couple of decades, with at least one genuine superstar player in Megan Rapinoe. The fear is that if the female game starts to command the same player wages as the male game, then, especially in Europe, the powerhouse clubs will jettison the women's sides they have established over the last few years, which isn't really an outcome any of us should wish for. Although Tottenham's women's side is

in the top division in England, they aren't yet one of the truly elite sides, but they have been instrumental, along with the men's side, in putting on "double-header" fixtures where one admittance fee gains access to both sides matches one after the other. The same format has been taking place in the Hundred cricket tournament for the last two years and although initial crowds weren't as large for the women's fixtures, they have now grown to parity which suggests it's just a matter of socialisation that was holding the numbers back. Hopefully, women's football will see the same upturn once the umbrella clubs start marketing the sport in the same universal way.

Skip forward twelve hours...

I had left this final section until early Saturday afternoon (August 26<sup>th</sup>) to complete. I wanted to be able to crow about Spurs being top of the league, if only for a couple of hours until the late afternoon fixtures were over, and, indeed, Spurs are top of the league after a 2-0 win away at Bournemouth, but that Spanish story just keeps getting bigger and bigger and more and more surreal.

Luis Rubiales, the head of the Spanish football federation, has now accused Jenni Hermoso of lying about not wanting to be kissed by him and has accused the player of "lifting him off of his feet" during the trophy award celebrations in something akin to a "she was asking for it, guv" moment. The Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez, and his deputy, Yolanda Diaz, have both called for Rubiales to quit his position, but he has countered by threatening to sue the player for dishonesty.



Rubiales has now been suspended for an initial 90-day period by F.I.F.A. and the statement released by them is also quite telling as it hints at intimidatory tactics being employed by not just Rubiales, but also the Spanish football federation towards Hermoso:

*"The chairman of the FIFA Disciplinary Committee, Jorge Ivan Palacio (Colombia), in use of the powers granted by article 51 of the FIFA Disciplinary Code (FDC), has decided today to provisionally suspend Mr. Luis Rubiales from all*

*football-related activities at national and international level.*

"This suspension, which will be effective as of today, is for an initial period of *90 days*, pending the disciplinary proceedings opened against Mr. Luis Rubiales on Thursday, August 24.

"Likewise, the chairman of the FIFA Disciplinary Committee and in order to preserve, among other factors, the fundamental rights of the national soccer team player Ms. Jennifer Hermoso and the good order of the disciplinary proceedings before this disciplinary body, has issued two additional directives (article 7 FDC) by which *he orders Mr. Luis Rubiales to refrain, through himself or third parties, from contacting or attempting to contact the professional player of the Spanish national football team Ms. Jennifer Hermoso or her close environment.*"\*

One thing's for sure, this story will run and run. More next time, no doubt!

\* Bold italics are from the BBC transcript of the F.I.F.A. statement to highlight remarks that are suddenly raising even more questions about Rubiales behaviour.

*[[Nic writes: and just after the column goes in, we learn that Spain's coaching staff has resigned en masse...]]*

## LOCO CITATO

*[[“Authority is supposedly grounded in wisdom, but I could see from a very early age that authority was only a system of control. And it didn't have any inherent wisdom. I quickly realized that you either became a power or you were crushed.” (Joe Strummer)...]]*

From: gandc001@bigpond.com

June 24

**Bruce Gillespie** writes:

I'm still struggling with the last production stages of the latest two issues of *SFC*, so just in case I write no further words about the excellent *TH... #66*, can I thank you for the music section each issue. Thanks in particular for the piece about Winifred Atwell, about whom I knew little. However, throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s she was still a mainstay of the 'Light Program' music style of one of our ABC stations (Australian Broadcasting Commission). We understood her to be a great British star (and had no idea that she had never been taken up in America), and that she had a vast audience in Australia.

I remember best the "radiogram" of my own Auntie Win. It stood in the living room of my aunt and uncle and two cousins. It was covered in dust, and obviously had not been turned on for a long time. The lid was up, and the LP on the

turntable was also covered in dust. The LP was one of Winifred Atwell's. So I guessed that music had long faded into the background of the busy lives of my aunt and uncle and cousins (or the turntable had broken down and never repaired), but if my Auntie Win ever got around to playing a disc again, she would return to the glorious piano twiddles of Winifred Atwell.

*[[I also have a vague recollection of a radiogram at home in my days as a tiny (early '60s), and a smallish collection of 78s...]]*

I've never seen (so never bought) a Winifred Atwell disc transferred to CD. A feature of my CD collection are two by Ben Waters, a great piano player of broadly the same area of music, whose instrumental tributes are to Stu (Ian Stewart, the greatest Stone, who was tossed out by Andrew Loog Oldham).

Please find attached *SFC 113*, which might be up on efanazines by now. *SFC 112* is still crawling toward completion.

*[[Ta for SFC, of course Archbishop! I wonder why you didn't renumber them, though...]]*

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From: cramynotbieltro@gmail.com

June 25

**Marc Ortlieb** writes:

So it's true. All knowledge is contained in fanzines. I had no idea that Winifred Atwell had moved to Australia in her later years, but I guess that might be because I wasn't particularly interested in her style of music. I'm impressed by the fact that her style inspired Keith Emerson, but less so that her style inspired Elton John.

I find the term "queer" to be less objectionable than some of the other terms used here in Australia and, as you note, it's not such an issue when used by members of the gay community themselves, certainly not when that community reclaims the term. When it comes down to it, words can become dangerous when used in the wrong context.

I'm assuming that **David Hodson's** sledging of Australian Cricket Captain Pat Cummins (no "g") is simply the result of an attack of stomach cramps caused by sour grapes. I guess he's just unhappy that the English team couldn't actually finish the job and that Cummins, despite his mediocrity and mundanity, was obliged to score the winning runs. (Having lived in Australia for 62 of my 71 years, I feel no need to support my birth country's cricketers.) It'll be interesting to see how the rest of the series goes. I note also that, at the time of writing, the women's match is poised on a similar knife edge to that of the men's game. Good to see two sides, in both competitions, fairly evenly matched and returning us to



the five day Tests of yore. (Okay, I know that there were longer tests in the past.)

**Kim Huett's** speculations about witches on broomsticks joining the mile-high club lead me to think that he might have been indulging in a little chemically induced reverie himself. I can't recall any suggestion that Lance Armstrong's enhanced performances related to drugs absorbed via the scrotum even though Armstrong would have had a little more space there for drug storage. (Was it Willie Nelson who was reputed to have been impressed by Armstrong's ability to ride while on drugs, noting that he would have had trouble even finding his bicycle when on drugs.)

*[[Without checking (because I'm not a Fishlifter), I believe that was a Willie Nelson quote...]]*

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From: srjeffery@aol.com

June 25

**Steve Jeffery** writes:

"...but I don't wear any of [my LGBTQ friends] as fuckin' badges of honor." (Egotorial - *Pride, This Here...* 66)

But if someone dissed or attacked them, you'd stand in to defend them. That's part of what being an ally is. You don't have to become an activist, or march or stand around waving banners. It's enough to let them know you've got their back and they can rely on you if they need your help.

*[[Well, yes, part of my point really was that "all in or not at all" is not only facile but impractical - both ends of the political divide seem to be in a permanent state of outrage which must be well fuckin' exhausting. "They also serve...", y'know...]]*

My workplace thought hard about including the Q on their Pride backgrounds and flags and in the end decided against it because it is still a term that arouses different feelings and reactions for different people, both within and outside the LGBT(QI+) community. And if you tried to include all the different groups you'd soon run out of space ("What we need is a bigger banner"). I only learned about demi/demisexual the other day, and there were several other terms I'd not seen before when I looked it up in the lexicon.

That Chat bot review of *This Here...* 65 was all Bing by the way. I wish I could take credit, but that indeed is an example of the current level of accuracy and trustworthiness of these AI bots when you go outside "what is 2+2?" or "when was the battle of Crecy?". Just don't ask it for any medical advice. Sue Thomason, in a recent apa contribution, had asked another of these bots to write a short author bio and discovered all sorts of things she never suspected about her own career.

And yet sometimes, in very restricted domains, they can be surprisingly accurate. I asked one to write me a Python program to calculate the area and volume of a pyramid and the code it came back with worked first time. (Even more so given the number of typos and mistakes I encounter when I copy example code from places like StackOverflow.)

**Kim Huett** has just given a whole new world of meaning to the phrase "jumping the broomstick".

And if you update it to apply to modern cleaning appliances it does explain the manic behaviour of [the woman in the Shake'n'Vac adverts](#).

*[[Funnily enough (or not, depending on your sense of humor) that ad arose as a topic round here a couple of months ago. I had (along with many others, I suspect) assumed that the commercial ended the career of the actress (Jenny Logan) but it turns out that wasn't the case at all, since most of her work was on stage, although one notable TV appearance was as the chief of police (or something) on the 'Two Ronnies' serial "The Worm That Turned". The original ad above first aired in 1979, and a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary version was produced. Logan qualifies as an ageless beauty, shurely. She was 69 at the time of the remake...]]*



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From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

June 25

**Leigh Edmonds** writes:

The latest issue of *This Here...* arrived in my email box less than 24 hours ago so I'm sending in my loc now. I didn't actually ignore the previous issue, I just kept on saying to myself "I'll just do this and then I'll get to *This Here...*" and somehow the other things kept piling up. A week ago it was either send you a loc or get my SAPS contribution written and posted off. I know there is the interweb for that kind of thing but one likes to keep some of the old traditional

fannish skills. Okay, so I no longer cut stencils and run them off, but I still have to collate the pages that come out of the printer and go down to the post office to send my contribution off in the old fashioned way. I like to think of it as my tribute to the old fannish ghods.

I'm led to wonder what set you off with your egoterial on pride and 'Proper Rabbit' on Queer. They both seem to be about the use people make of words and how those meanings change which is, so people say, one of the delights of the English language. Both topics seem to be about how words mutate to deal with deviant aspects of culture which makes me wonder what has brought these cogitations on deviance to mind.

*[[Not much to wonder about there. Pride month set me to thinking, and that also dovetailed with a 'Proper Rabbit' on "queer" which I'd also been pondering for a while, since I'm always interested in the use and development of language. "Deviance", though? Deliberate choice of word by you or perhaps a poorly chosen one?...]]*

Leaving that vague query to one side, I did like your comments along the lines that these days you are easily considered guilty of being against something if you are not actively for it. I have sometimes felt guilty that I have not been actively for Aboriginal (or First Nations, if you prefer) people and rights in Australia. The truth is that my ancestors invaded the land previously occupied by their ancestors but I've done little if nothing to pay them back. I justify this the same way that I did for not actively work for womens' rights back in the 1970s and 1980s. My excuse has been that these matters have been "women's business" and "black fella business" and the best contribution I could make was to not impede them. This led me to go and look up the words for Dylan's 'The Times They Are A-Changin' and realize that once I was one of the "your sons and your daughters, are beyond your command" and now I'm one of those being challenged not "stand in the doorway, don't block up the hall". At best I hope I haven't been guilty of doing that, but I might have been to somebody.

*[[I can't entirely decide whether your argument there is compelling, but I can agree that not standing in the way isn't exactly the same as indifference, and certainly not active opposition. We can't all be Midnight Oil...]]*

I am indeed planning to attend Corflu in Las Vegas next year. Straight after that I expect to be hopping on a jet airliner to fly down to UC Riverside where I plan to spend a week trawling old American fanzines for clues to what was happening in Australian fandom in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As well as that, I want to fit in visits to aviation museums and there looks to be an interesting one in Los Angeles just down the road from the university at Riverside. There is, of course, the Museum of Flight in Seattle so I can't miss that. There's an air force base museum in San Francisco and another just outside Las Vegas that I'd like to visit too.

Those two apparently need special permission to visit so I will have to look into that later in the year.

*[[Very much looking forward to seeing you!...]]*

I'm looking forward to meeting a few fans I've known through the fannish system over the years. To my memory the only two of your regular letter writers I've met are **Jerry Kaufman** and **Eli Cohen**, and that was back in the Stone Age. I've seen **Ted White** twice but I don't recall ever talking to or corresponding with him. I must admit that I'm a little apprehensive about visiting the US which seems to be, from the evidence I'm getting here, rather a violent and rambunctious culture. Somebody told me that the problem with America is that it's full of Americans, though my past experience is that most are just folks like the rest of us, except that they have some mighty strange ideas at times.

Friend **Hodson's** column was, for once, something that I have personal experience of. By which I meant that I listened to the Test Match Special broadcast of the First Test Match in the Ashes series this year. The commentators went on endlessly about what is apparently a new playing philosophy called Bazball, which I had to go and look up on Google because I'd never heard it before. It is apparently a philosophy of being positive and aggressive in playing cricket, an idea carried over from the shorter forms of the game. It might also lead to more entertaining test cricket but, from the evidence I've seen so far, it's not guaranteed to win matches. The shorter versions of the game are set up so that somebody wins the match at the end whereas the point of Test Cricket is not to lose, and then to win if you can. (Is this an idea alien to Americans?) Which is why I thought the English declaration on the first day was silly. It is, after all, a five day game. In any event, the final day's play shows how effective Bazball is when confronted by solid, sensible batting. I did happen to listen to the final few overs when the poor English team could do nothing to wear down the Australian batting. If they hadn't declared on day one the result would have been a draw at worst.

Enough about cricket, thought I was offended (a little) on Pat Cummins' behalf at the description of him as a "cricketer of mind-numbing mediocrity and a captain of sigh inducing mundanity". I have two ripostes. The first is, who won? The second is, a list of English captains who make Cummins look like a firecracker going off. (No, I'm not going to draw up such a list, life is too short.)

*[[If anyone wanted to reference captaincy nonsense off England, 1988's "summer of four captains" (Test series v West Indies) would be the first thing I'd think of...]]*

I don't recall whether I've mentioned previously that I finally contracted Covid. It was about two weeks after I'd had my latest booster injection, which means that they don't add up to much or perhaps I would have been worse if I hadn't had it. Up to that point I'd been very careful so I reckon the only place I could have caught it was at the local cemetery while



making arrangements there. It was only really bad for one day which I occupied by slumping in front of the tv screen and streaming Marvel movies. I told myself it would be an education but really it was just a lot of sound and colour (signifying little) so I didn't think about being so crook. Since then I've been more relaxed about taking precautions though, really, I spend most of my time still staying out of the way of that virus and the annual flu epidemics.

*[[I've tested positive twice (though haven't even bothered to check recently, having rather more DoBFO health concerns), and neither occasion was very debilitating...]]*

I liked **Bob Jennings'** letter and his comments about the leisurely pace of fanzines. Social media is okay in some ways but I also like the way in which my reading his words in your fanzine allows me time to reflect on his idea and come back to it after I've let it wander around in my mind for a few hours. (Is this why I like Test cricket too, it also allows time for reflection?) I am not sure, however, that there is space in our modern world for reflection. Or perhaps it is only older folk who like to indulge in it.

*[[I continue to agree there, but I might quibble over whether a monthly schedule like what this here edifice managed to hew to can be considered "leisurely". I suppose it is compared to internet machine exchanges which are done and gone in minutes...]]*

I also enjoyed **Steve Jeffery's** letter. I've had a play with one of those AI programs and it writes very attractive text that mostly seems to miss the point. When the software improves so it does seem to be on point, which I guess it will, we can all create our own avatars to do the hard work of fanac for us. I agree with Steve that letter writing is a form of improvisation, as are mailing comments on apas. Writing articles for fanzines is a lot of hard work but letting my mind and fingers wander over a topic for a few lines is much more entertaining, for me and hopefully for readers too.

This set me to wondering if there were AIs that could read fanzines and then compose letters of comment to them. If this is so, and perhaps it will be in the future, then you could have a bulging letter column written by AIs talking to each other so, eventually we wouldn't have to read fanzines at all but let out machines do all the work for us. Or perhaps we could have some input by telling them to mention that letter about letters of comment as improvisation and the other one about the necessity of time for reflection in fanac. Of course the AI could do it all in a second or so.

And I think that's enough improvisation from me for now, if it really is me. (Have I been reading too much Dick again?)

*[[That last remark cries out for a Dick joke - suggestions are welcomed...]]*

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From: johnsila32@gmail.com

June 26

**John Nielsen Hall** writes:

Hello, me old mucker!

Thought I had better write and confirm that I am not dead yet, and on the evidence of your pubbing ish #66 neither are you. However, when it comes to Winifred Atwell, my heart and brain did rather sink a bit. Okay, okay, she was technically proficient and could play anything you liked. But the 1950s were a grisly time and I'm afraid I rather associate her with that era. You will be featuring Russ Conway next.

*[[Russ Conway would actually be an interesting subject - he had a lot of health issues related to depression, liked the sauce and smoked 80 a day, also being one of those performers back then (including eg Frankie Howard whom he worked with) who were gay but couldn't be out, no doubt contributing to the depression which Frankie (and also famously, Kenneth Williams) endured...]]*

I have just spent the weekend glued to my TV screen watching Glasto. I clocked Sir Elton supposedly doing his farewell UK gig to umpteen thousand happy onlookers last night. Poor old chap has noticeably got the arthritis and when he got up from the piano stool in his gold lame suit, he did rather assume the aspect of C3PO. But Saturday night gets my super excellence award with a terrific set from Leftfield followed Fatboy Slim. Old Fatboy blew me away really. Absolutely marvellous - sound, tunes, graphics, lights - it felt like I was on drugs - well, as it happens, I am, but not the right sort as far as I can tell. Pics attached to show progress. I hate being hairy but can't shave with this damn collar on and no sign of it coming off yet. I need cheering up... I know, Fatboy Slim on iPlayer!!

*[[“Pics attached” show John in a terrible state with tubes up every orifice and looking like an audition for the Elephant*

*Man, honestly too gruesome to publish, although bearded Unc is safe to view (for certain values of...). I ask “WTF?!?” and am informed that Unc “lost contact with the universe for a bit” at home while taking his coat off and came to well beat up and with a broken neck, which is why he wasn't at the Belfast Corflu as planned. None of*



*our mutual friends saw fit to tell me about this - I assume it was known InTheBar, but I'm having a half-guess that schtum may have been requested. I opine that I think the beard looks all right on the old lad, garnering the response "Nice of you to be complimentary about my beard, but I think I look like some poor old Jap soldier in a jungle who did not know the war was over."...]]*

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From: kim.huett@gmail.com

June 28

**Kim Huett** writes:

Nah mate, you can keep your John Wick crap, give me 'The Dragon Lives Again' any day.

Had a dream the other night in which **John Hertz** was explaining to you why fanwriting must be redefined:

*[[Sounds like a nightmare from the off, but go on...]]*

Hertz declaimed: "If we don't do something and do it now fan writing will be contaminated by the likes of Maoists, Trotskyists, neo-Trotskyists, crypto-Trotskyists, atheists, agnostics, long-haired weirdos, short-haired weirdos, vandals, hooligans, sportsball supporters, namby-pamby cosplayers, apiarists, neo-apiarists, cryto-apiarists, keg bitter, punk rock, glue-sniffing, nudist Finns, What Does the Fox Say?"

You replied: "You realise the sort of people you're going to attract, don't you? Thugs, bully-boys, psychopaths, sacked policemen, security guards, sacked security guards, racialists, sacked psychopaths, liberal-bashers, Canada-bashers, fan-bashers, anybody-bashers, rear admirals, queer admirals, vice admirals, long-haired weirdos, short-haired weirdos, fascists, neo-fascists, crypto-fascists, loyalists, neo-loyalists, crypto-loyalists."

Hertz: "Do you think so? I thought it might just be me and **Mike Glycer**."

*[[Well it's nice that your Dream Hertz has expanded his list of uncontaminated fanwriters beyond himself, though I can't be sure how Glycer will take it - I think he's likely to let me know. You've punted a reductio of John as a knee-jerk right winger and me as an unashamed and equally knee-jerk lefty. In my case that's reasonably accurate...]]*



I have a feeling that the thing you keep sending me isn't performance enhancing...

*[[I have a feeling it's not supposed to be, at least not in the witches and broomsticks sense, although locs as "performance art" could result...]]*

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From: tiki@interlog.com

June 29

**Tiki Leibowitz** writes:

Just got back from massive trip to various places with my guy - Too many to remember... I got hundreds of e-mails while away (we cannot log on unless at home) so I will be slogging through them little by little... And the best part (besides being with my sweetie Charles for the trip was I don't seem to have gained weight... in spite of all the buffet breakfasts in our major hotel, and others too... amazing!

Interesting [email cover] quote about authority... Probably true too.

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From: portablezine@gmail.com

June 30

**W<sup>m</sup> Breiding** writes:

I had an immediate knee-jerk reaction to your Paul Sands excerpt. I kept trying to dismiss it, but it returns to nag me. This morning I tried to get to the core of my response. I doubt it's worth hashing out. But here it goes.

While it's true, yes, that Pride is always at the top of the list while naming the 7 Deadly Sins, and that all other sins extend from this #1, it generally remains true that the sin of pride is theoretical and a conceit among theological thinkers. By and large, in my experience, the religious, particularly in this country, among Catholics, fundamentalist Christians and Christian Nationals, are some of the most audaciously prideful people

I've known, both in a personal way, and as a group. C.S. Lewis and Paul Sands harping on Pride, while perhaps fundamental to original Christian thinking, is both unrealistic and out of step with the common Christian man or woman. Nice in theory but that's about it.

The appropriation of Pride by various groups such as gays and blacks is too obvious, and left willfully unexamined by Sands - that the appropriation of "pride" is taken on by **oppressed** peoples. This circles me back around to



Christians: is the sense of forceful pride I observe among them because they too feel oppressed? That's just my brain talking. Emotionally, I want to eviscerate the proudly Christian in its current incarnation as a nation of slaving oppressors. I have room in my life for folks like **Dale Nelson**, who is both thoughtfully Christian and the least prideful person I've ever met, a man always looking for the path of dialogue, never looking for a conversion, but a discussion.

*[[Brad Onishi (as quoted in 'Indulge Me') could be considered a counterpoint. Sands' full essay (which I think you can only find by Googling "Paul Sands Baylor" as it's a document download) is more thorough than the intro excerpt suggests, but is of course coming from a wholly theological perspective. His conclusion reads: "Is pride a "deadly sin"? Yes. Vanity, conceit, and arrogance disrupt and disorder individual lives, families, and communities. Given common confusions, however, Christian social workers and therapists must try to help people understand the true nature of pride and humility. Self-respect, proper self-esteem, self-love, and feelings of pride must not be labeled sin. Sham humility and self-loss must not be reckoned virtues." I also continue to recommend Adam Serwer's essay collection 'The Cruelty is the Point' which in part also addresses the prideful (and totalitarian) aims of Christian Nationalists. I'll add that my darling Jen is "thoughtfully Christian" too (lovely phrase, that)...]]*

Then there is the 'Proper Rabbit'. While I understand your horrible gut reaction to using the terms chink or nigger or queer, or for that matter, bitch, I only respond to it that way if it is used by those who actually hate these folks (bitch is particularly disturbing to *me*), not by the Chinese, blacks, gays, and women (etc.).

So. I grew up with a mother who surrounded me with all sorts of people of color and sexual orientation. My mom didn't do this purposefully. She did this because she was interested in everything in life and was blind to cultural prohibition. When I was a *really* little boy my mom entrusted us kids alone with a black man with a car; this would have been in the late 1950s and early 1960s (we lived in the country and my dad drove off with the only car every day). Later in life I found out that my fraternal grandmother had called my mom a nigger lover and wanted nothing to do with her. My sister married a black man. One of my longest standing friends (met in 1969 when I was 12, still good pals) is Chinese *and* gay, another is plain old white boy gay. You get my drift here.

I'm pretty comfortable using what I think of as derogatory slang, such as chink, nigger, bitch, fag, whatever, because I know who and what I am, but it must always be taken in context, usually sarcastically or with irony, and never in mixed company among those who might take it wrong or wrongly accuse me when it's so far from the actual truth.

*[[Context is all, certainly, but you've correctly noted what my reaction would likely be. Not many people can pull this off...]]*

One innocent example would be on June 19th this year, Juneteenth, an ex-girlfriend (I tend to stay friends with exes), texted me with some idle chatter, asking me what I was up to. I responded that I was sitting around listening to a lot of Negro Programming on NPR, which was the absolute truth. She wrote back that, didn't I think using Negro was as bad as using the other N-word? And why would I do that? This may have been one of the many reasons we didn't work out as a couple. She didn't get the ironic context in which I was using it, just going down the politically correct party line without getting that it was *me*, hello?, and the satirical nature of its use in re: NPR.

*[[Negro Programming Radio? Remind me to relate the story of my deliberate use of that 'n' word (quoting from 'Pulp Fiction') when I see you next year...]]*

I learned at a youngish age, around 18, about using these derogatory slang words in context. My black brother-in-law used nigga this and nigga that, constantly—even referring to *me* as a nigga—but when I threw it back at him he had an immediate, right-then, serious sit-down with me, explaining why no way in hell I could ever use the word nigga.

I don't know that there is a point to any of this - other than a conversation with you, and obviously you intended that - but it was bugging me, particularly that Sands quote, which I feel is disingenuous to the properties of current culture, because Pride among Christians (and other religious types) is one of the great plagues of the 21st century.

*[[Sands is being all academic about it, I'd say. But yes, the conversation is the point - even while raising a provocative subject, the intent isn't necessarily to be provocative for its own sake (yes, you can all get up off the floor now), but to prise out the thoughts and experiences of others via an honest expression of my own, warts and all. Thank you for engaging, as always...]]*

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From: peterpumpkincat@juno.com

July 11

Cy Chauvin writes:

Belated congratulations for your co-win with Justin Busch for best fan-writer. Although I voted for Justin, I had certain reservations about it; I kept remembering Harry Warner's perennial comment, "Awards are for the living; give awards to people while they're still alive." I guess you can justify it in that fandom is giving posthumous awards as memorials, as an expression of grief, perhaps.

*[[I would tend to agree with Warner. Posthumous FAAn awards are rare. The only two I recall (but as usual, willing*

*to be corrected by more diligent researchers) were both in 2018: Randy Byers for Best Fanwriter (something Andy Hooper campaigned for) and Milt Stevens in a tie for Best Letterhack (with Robt Lichtman)...]]*

I was stunned by your medical news. I'm glad that you have such a good doctor, who was right on it and got the medicine ball rolling. It makes a huge difference to have someone you feel comfortable with and can trust. I've just finished a book called *Why We Sleep* by Matthew Walker, which suggests (among many other interesting things) that getting a proper amount of sleep can help prevent cancer. It seems lack of sleep provokes some unnecessary inflammation response from the immune system. So nod off some more, if you get a chance!

*[[An ongoing effect of leukemia is tiredness, so on my days off I tend to be napping a lot, unfortunately and increasingly interrupted by medical appointments...]]*

Quite a number of issues ago, **Gary Mattingly** made a comment about how he didn't talk long when on the telephone. I assume his comment may have been in response to others who do talk a long time of the telephone? I have noticed since the pandemic that I get a lot of phone calls where people talk and talk and talk. I'm sure it's because they weren't getting a chance to visit anyone in person, but it's difficult for me to listen that long (like Gary, my desire to talk atrophies after ten minutes). Some struggle, and it's hard to have a companionable silence on the telephone. My sister, isolated in a Florida condo where most are elderly, never sees anyone expect the grocery convenience store employees, calls every week for an hour, and mentioned spending three hours or more talking to our cousin. The only fan that ever frequently called and talked to me for a long time on the phone was Howard DeVore in his later years. I really didn't mind it – Howard had a lot of entertaining stories, and I eventually heard enough about his nemesis, George Young, that I could impersonate him in a contest – but Howard always seemed to call when I was about to go up on a ladder to fix something. Perhaps he had some previously never defined psychic ability and a fear of heights, and didn't like the idea of another fan climbing a ladder. This was also back in the days before cell phones, when local zone charges existed, and I think perhaps I was one of the few fans that he could call without any additional fee.

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From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

July 11

Eli Cohen writes:

I can't believe it's July already! Where does the time go? (It can't all be going to watching old episodes of 'Endeavor'! We'd be much further ahead if that were the case. Well, there's also 'Midsomer Murders'...) And I now owe LoCs on two Farey zines! (An aside, as long as British dialects are peripherally in the air, and your Radio Winston columnist



felt compelled to translate "pharmacist" to "chemist" for the Brits: My son the middle-school science teacher was going on about trying to explain the size of space to his students; I immediately thought of 'Hitchhiker's Guide', quoting to him (after looking it up, of course) "Space is big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space." Of course, I then had to explain "chemist's" to him.)

*[[The 'Radio Winston' columnist is - er - me, of course, as is everything in this here edifice except locs and 'Footy'...]]*

By the way, re health postings: I don't find them boring, and a short note indicating the current trend is appreciated, especially if the news is good.

Another crossword clue? "POTUS residence fileserver less five agog for a fairground attraction (6,5)" Well, if we interpret five as the Roman numeral V, and "subtract" it from "fileserver", the remaining letters can be turned into "ferris eel", which is pretty close to a fairground attraction. Why, all it's missing is an abbreviation of White House, the POTUS residence, namely "WH". So the answer seems to be "ferris wheel". I just don't understand what "agog" does in this. Is that the anagram instruction?

*[[ 'Agog' is indeed the anagram instruction. Also 'POTUS' does duty as an indicator that the residence thereof is also abbreviated/initialized...]]*

Science and Nature (2): bottom of dark matter? And I thought it was turtles all the way down...

Lovely **Ulrika** illos, as usual.

OK, now it's **Jen's** turn...

*[[In a weird bit of time dilation, Jen got her loc before I got this one...]]*

\*\*\*



[[Most of the following are responses to my July email (see 'Health Diary')...]]

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From: daverabban@gmail.com

**Dave Cockfield** writes:

Perhaps this should have been entitled, "Still Here..."

Fuck, Nic, the most important thing at the moment is your health.

I've had my own problems in the past 18 months and *This Here...* has been a very welcome life raft to anchor me in the here and now where I can however still forget everything else for a while.

It used to be **Graham Charnock** with his trusty *Vibrator* and when his libido lapsed along came that foul mouthed irreverent bastard Nic Farey to take his place.

I'm rooting for you mate. Get well or I'll fucking turn to religion.

[[I thought supporting Sunderland was a religion?...]]

\*\*\*

From: gandc001@bigpond.com

July 15

**Bruce Gillespie** writes:

Much much worse than anything I've ever had to suffer. We're all on your side, although it's more important to have the entire medical profession on your side.

When I think of the minor stuff that held my fanzines up for months .... well, thanks for all the monthly *This Here...*s, and looking forward to August.

\*\*\*

From: absarka\_prime@comcast.net

July 15

**Curt Phillips** writes:

Two things; if you're not taking a stool softener, you probably should be, so that's something to ask about on your next medical visit. If your constipation is as bad as you describe, that's serious. You could vaso-vagel yourself while sitting on the toilet, straining to get something moving. So you should address that on your next medical visit.

Tylenol is a great pain reliever but it's also pretty rough on the liver. This is a problem because many cancer meds can also damage your liver. I'm not saying to get off the Tylenol, but consider alternatives if you can, and your doctor needs to watch your liver function particularly closely - which I'm sure he or she is. Liz had the same problem during her chemo. She's testing cancer free at present but the chemo and

radiation combined to severely damage her liver, so life is quite a bit rougher for her now.

[[Good news that she's cancer free, at least...]]

Gotta protect your liver as best you can while you still can. You know all this already, of course.

July 15

Your illness hasn't impaired the quality of your writing. Still sharp and impactful. Hang on and keep taking it one step at a time.

\*\*\*

From: keithfreemanrbas@gmail.com

July 15

**Keith Freeman** writes:

My first thought was to suggest I'll help you by skipping the loc - except I've skipped so many of those you'd probably fall off your chair if (when?) you get one.

[[falls off chair...]]

Then the medical update (update - not, unfortunately, upbeat) stopped me thinking of making any quips etc...

Christ - I hope things improve - even if only by a little bit... but by a large amount would be better.

[[Getting there...]]

\*\*\*

From: robjackson60@gmail.com

July 15

**Rob Jackson** writes:

I think I have most to add which I hope may be of help about Tramadol - a drug which quite a lot of my patients had bother with when I was working in drug and alcohol addiction services. Thankfully it's not nearly as bad as Oxycontin when it comes to addictive potential, though I do remember that when it was first launched around 30 years ago the company marketing it tried the same trick as the Sackler people did with Oxycontin, which was to present seriously inadequate research that made out it was hardly addictive at all. This is of course moderate bollocks, and you don't necessarily have to be a vulnerable personality to have trouble with it, either. Like me, my brother is a retired doctor, and his best man was also a medic, a very level headed consultant cardiologist by the time he was a senior doc. This friend of my brother's got a really nasty slipped disc and was given Tramadol. He took only six tablets of it and hated it, but when he tried to stop it even after only six doses he had really serious withdrawal symptoms. He just had to tough it out.

[[I haven't yet noticed any withdrawal issues, though I went through a bit of a spate of taking it quite a bit (up to three a day), but currently on a very sporadic "as needed" basis. As noted in 'Heath Diary' I've cut out a lot of the prescriptions I got earlier on, and so far so good, although there are rough

*days and random worse days (no actual handspring-inducing good days)...]]*

However you may find that at what your nurse calls baby doses – I used to call them little old lady doses - the benefits outweigh the side effects. Let's hope this is so, though the other side effect it has, like any opioid, is one you are all too familiar with – it makes constipation worse. I bet this is DoFBO for you though, as you have both been told it and have personal experience.

*[[Insert Goon Show style groaning noises as required...]]*

\*\*\*

From: fabficbks@aol.com

July 16

**Bob Jennings** writes:

Received *This Here...* #66, read it, made some mental notes, and then got back to my more pressing worries and problems. This weekend I decided to actually zip off an LOC. Jeeze, since you're running an abbreviated quote from me as the under logo header, that means I'm probably obligated to write some sort of LOC on the issue. These fan obligations are crushing the independent spirit out of my tortured soul.

Actually, this is a wonderful excuse from putting in some long hours mowing a patch of the front lawn that has a lot of stumps and rocks and crap that I have been putting off for a few days in hopes that the weather, specifically the humidity, would drop to endurable levels. Right. Fat chance of that ever happening.

So, instead, an LOC.

Not sure I got the gist of your egotorial this time round, which seems to be in two parts, page one/two and then more on the subject over on page 4. What you seem to be saying is, sure, anybody that wants to put on a gay pride event is welcome to it. Same for any other event, Black Pride Month, National Peanut Butter and Jelly Week, Adopt an Abandoned Aardvark day, whatever. And courtesy demands I respect your right to parade and swell with pride in whatever it is you want, but don't expect me to get involved unless it is something that directly concerns me.

But here's the point you may be overlooking, namely, that Gay Pride Marches, and Black History Month and like events celebrate people who were marginalized and ignored for a lot of years, and in addition these folks were not only widely despised, but actively discriminated against in everyday life.

It wasn't that long ago that homosexuality was a jailhouse crime, and the mere suggestion that someone was gay could lead to them losing their job, being kicked out of their apartment, being socially ostracized, and even physically assaulted. I'm sure I don't need to go into detail about all the problems being a black person in American ensued.

These special parades and events are a way of saying to the world, hey look, we are here, we exist, and we have rights same as every other citizen. You don't have to like us, but we are all equal in the eyes of the law, because equal rights and respect are what this country is supposed to be about.

That message seems even more important to emphasize these days when citizen rights, and particularly the rights of minorities, seem to be under assault on the political front.

*[[As always, thanks for fansplaining what I had thought was a given to the readership in here. The point you overlooked was that I was deliberately approaching the topic from an obtuse angle...]]*

In particular the Republican Party seems to have decided to make gays and other marginalized people their political enemy. I think the GOP state governors and reps are ganging up on drag queens and queer lit because it's an easy target that they feel is safe to stir up people again.

Only about 4% of the population is homosexual/gender shifting, so it's a tiny (if vocal) minority that the other 96% of the population don't feel very comfortable about to begin with. Riling up the rubes against the LGBTQ is easy and doesn't carry the negative connotations of Jew baiting or trashing black people, but you can be sure those same themes are echoed for the people who respond to that kind of behavior.

*[[I'm not convinced by your 4% number (though as usual I won't be arsed to research it). I'm interested where you derive it...]]*

It's one of the tenets of the fascist thot process to pick a small socially outsider target and turn them into The Enemy for political gain. Trump and DeSantis are just following in the footsteps of Mussolini, Hitler, and of course, our own homegrown Ku Klux Klan. Bigotry is as American as apple pie, and the GOP has been nurturing that beast for decades.

I don't believe most Republican presidents/politicians of the past were fascists. I think many of them were genuinely motivated by the fear of a sprawling ever expanding federal government that increasingly gave power to bureaucrats to direct the lives of individuals and companies even tho none of those bureaucrats had ever been elected to office and were not accountable directly to the voters themselves in any way.

They were also opposed to the federal government spending vast amounts of money on projects that they did not believe were ever within the realm of a national government. Where were financial grants for the arts and entertainment business mentioned in the Constitution, for example? And should the federal government be spending your tax dollars on studies about preserving crumbling old buildings, or handing out money to tin-plated banana republic style dictators?

*[[As ever, the Constitution gets as cherry-picked as the Christian Bible for their purposes...]]*



However I also believe that in this modern world a fair number of GOP politicians have been motivated by personal greed; a desire to enjoy the benefits of a well regulated civil society without paying their fair share of taxes. Cutting taxes for well-to-do people and businesses directly linked to their personal economic interests seem to be a common theme for most of these people.

In order to get elected so they can cut those taxes and cut back on what they regard as wasteful government spending, too many GOP politicians are happy to play the racism card and appeal to the latent fear and distrust of minorities on the part of their constituents. Nixon started milking that vote cow early on, beginning with dark conspiracies about communists everywhere, then cheerfully moved right along to evil black, brown, and queer people threatening white racial purity by integrating white schools and neighborhoods. The beat goes on to the present day, with the bigotry a lot more open now than it was in the past.

I think that's one of the reasons that marginalized people want to have bigger and better Gay Pride Parades, a more active involvement with the community during Black History Month, some newspaper press for Black Lives Matter, and a publicity spotlight turned on when gays or blacks or trans-gender people are physically attacked just for being who they are.

So yes, in this day and age, those events are important, and they do matter. I agree with you that we as individuals do not have to dedicate our lives to actively or publicly supporting those causes if we don't want to, or even get deeply involved in the political process if we don't want to. But we should certainly be aware of what is happening on the political front right now, and I hope that we would be concerned enough to stand against this blatant bigotry when it comes time to vote.

And then this afternoon I get your new email about even more medical problems. Wow! Downer Deluxe! I hope the medicos can get to the root of your latest wave of ailments. It sure sounds like you have more than enough physical pain & misery right now to fill your quota for the rest of the year. At least there was some good news on the white blood cell count. Best of luck and I look forward to the next *This Here...* whenever it gets done.

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From: grahamcames@gmail.com

July 17

**Graham James** writes:

Thank you for brightening my day with your doctoral and medical tales woven with intrigue, adventure and humour to perhaps make them a little more endurable given their severity and suffering not least a semi drying out on one level.

*[[At this time I am endeavoring to get wet again...]]*

The pharmaceutical industry must be proud of you and its cash registers bulging which of course is one of the main points of the whole medical industry.

I have pull out trays of sympathy, empathy and fraternal love which I can convey, expressions of future well being drawn from an excursion to the local greeting card shop but none of these rally scratch the surface

of what I'd like to say.

I normally grimace at the mention of virtual hugs and plethoras of heartfelt emojis so I can't reach for those.

I could reciprocate with tales of my own cancer journey (it has to be a "journey" ) and convey hope (the essential ingredient of life as we know it) as I'm now 3 1/2 years in remission. One is meant to be joyed by such a state of play albeit the more you think about it the more it sounds like some form of unpleasant stasis rather than a celebratory state of being. There again my dental journey would offer you some comparative crumbs of "at least I haven't got James' teeth").

*[[Of course I have no teeth at all, which comes with its own set of issues. Remission is good, and is predicted for me by the nice Dr Gollard. It's a bit startling, though, to see on my FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) paperwork that under "expected duration of condition" they put 'Lifetime'...]]*

I guess money must be a worry for you and Jen so if you do need some help running an internet scam I'll try to help with advice. How on earth the US medical system shines in all this is a mystery but a beacon to our otherwise dwindling ragged malfunctioning NHS. Sell your story to a Brit newspaper funded by a US businessman keen for the US health companies to take over the NHS.

*[[We're managing (so far), but Jen has also had dental issues which have cost a bob or thousands. Luckily the most expensive meds are being fully covered by the health*

*insurance (\$15 grand a month), but I'm still racking up specialist co-pays and other drug deductibles, dollar by dollar...]]*

Looking forward to the last issue of *This Here...*, .... No I didn't mean I'd not have to read them any more ..... and I'm already thinking of a contribution. After all it'd be a kind of obituary .... whoops pardon the expression ...

Meanwhile Rock on bro and watch an episode of 'Voyager' ... hmm let me think .... 'Mortal Coil'?

*[[Cheeky fucker! Good to hear from you mate! Still hoping we might see you in Vegas next year...]]*

\*\*\*

From: huntzinger@gmail.com

**Lucy Huntzinger** writes:

HOLY POOPLESS GODS what a miserable set of symptoms, ailments and consequences. You have all my sympathy. I hope something gets sorted out so that at least some of the good drugs cut the pain down to manageable and not at the expense of your sleep, either. I note many of them are what we were prescribed for our cats when they had cancer. They hated the side effects, too.

*[[I'm on cat drugs? [falls off chair]. They're working, though...]]*

Well, I will try to entertain you a bit, since you have insomnia so often.

I have been acclimating myself to my new fixed income from Social Security with no more pet sitting gigs on the horizon now that I'm two weeks out from retirement. These days if I don't travel I don't actually spend a lot of money. I paid off the trip to Ireland for Corflu and honestly, although I had a very good time at the con, Ireland itself made very little impression on me. Had I gotten out into the countryside more I think I would have thought more highly of it. But I have a hard time remembering I was even there. Which seems kind of sad. Sorry, Ireland.

To keep my mind off of how annoying it is to still have cat vomit to clean up at other people's homes I've turned to replacing some of the ratty-looking items in the house like our old sofa. The ancient carpet must wait until next year, but 20+ years of dog and cat occupation wreaked havoc on the home furnishings. Getting the interior painted last year (thank god I have a brother who's a house painter) means everything else now looks 100% Ye Olde Highway Motel levels of fug. A new sofa seems like the easiest fix since I bought a large area rug already to hide the carpeting as best I could.

*[[Ratty old sofas are wonderful memory holes, though...]]*

You probably know we're going to take one of our rare Big Trips. The last time we went to a different hemisphere was in

2015 for South Africa and Namibia. This time it's mainland Chile and Easter Island. Being seniors and uninterested in healthful exercise, we're not climbing any mountains, sailing the fjords or whatever. Just visiting Santiago and Valparaiso on the mainland, then a week on Rapa Nui. I find it relaxing to vacation where I can be surrounded by things considerably older than I am. Maybe I should publish a fanzine while I'm there! I'll have free time in the evenings, naturally. And I could illustrate it with my own photos. But it would only be a travelogue, really.

*[[Nothing wrong with a travelogue fanzine. Guy Lillian has done several, as have many others, and it's been a staple for Rob Jackson. I'd like to get your essay for the next BEAM first, though (nudge, nudge)...]]*

July 17 Last month I went up and spent a week with **Ulrika**, which was loads of fun even if I did fall on my ass and crack my head on the railing. I object to people keeping rickety old chairs out on the porch where an unsuspecting person might think they're safe to sit on. It wasn't. The dogs thought it was pretty great, though.

It was satisfying to make some decent inroads on the well-overdue yard work and **Ulrika** cooked us some lovely lunches and dinners. We talked so much all day long. Great for both of us, and she even went with me to visit an old high school friend who lives down the road from her (as it turns out; I was not in touch with the OHF except on Facebook and didn't realize she was also in Kent). Plus I visited the School of Music at my alma mater which is kitty corner from the building where U works. Honest to god, the nostalgia was like a nearly-physical wave when I walked in the building after 40-some years. Some of my happiest days were being a music major at college. And I don't know a single person from that time of my life anymore.

*[[Same, mostly...]]*

Anyway, I'm rambling, but I do read *This Here...* every time it drops into my email box, so thanks for continuing to keep me on the list. And I hope you get better soon.

\*\*\*

From: nigel84@mwpssoft.com

July 17

**Nigel Rowe** writes:

Wow, I'm flabbergasted to read through all this. I feel for you mate. It's definitely been a few weeks (and a year) to remember. Or not to want to remember for that matter.

All I can say is, I'm thinking of you as you go through this shitstorm (no pun intended), and obviously wishing for the best and most pleasant of outcomes, hopefully sooner rather than later.



Glad that you're still keeping your sense of humour alive, and having the odd drink. It's times like this you need some little bit of pleasure. But the pharms need to do their thing!

*[[As does the Guinness, mate!...]]*

Enjoy **Sandra**, we squeezed a little bit of fun out of her, but you're getting her in a more relaxed state of mind I imagine, in the tail end of her trip.

*[[Her visit to Vegas was fleeting, but most welcome, and everyone enjoyed the party...]]*

See you in a few months, well next year.

\*\*\*

From: leybl\_botwinik@yahoo.com

July 23

**Leybl Botwinik** writes:

Sorry to hear about your health problems. On the plus side, you're keeping the pharmaceutical industry floating :)

Take care, and hope to hear better news from you soon.

In Yiddish we usually say "so long/good bye" with a "ZAY GEZUNT" = be healthy/well.

(I suppose the English equivalent - seldom used/heard nowadays - is: "fare well").

*[[Thanks, and good to hear from you. There's always something in Yiddish appropriate to any situation, I reckon...]]*

\*\*\*

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

August 21

**Gary Mattingly** writes:

TH...65:

Egotorial: Interesting personal history. I enjoyed reading it. Pretty much unfamiliar with the lifestyle though.

Corflux: Interesting to see another bid far to the east. Curious if anyone else comes up with a counter bid.

Personally I'm still hoping that someone (other than me) will sponsor a bid in Amsterdam or Havana. Someone mentioned that there hasn't been a Corflu in Australia (or for that matter New Zealand). Of course for total long shots I'd say Montevideo, Uruguay (assuming their current drought situation goes away) or possibly someplace in South Africa. Mafeking? In the middle of the Transvaal or Orange Free State? What about Marrakesh?

*[[Um, yes, well, all very interesting and implausible. There was a bid for Airlie Beach at least once, though...]]*

Movie Night: I haven't watched 'Ghosted'. Haven't even looked at the reviews for the most part.

Health Diary: Sorry to hear about all the ups and downs, lack of sleep, missing work, pain. . . I certainly hope your life and health all get better as soon as possible. Too many fans we know are unwell. Not sure what to say. I'm at a loss.

Radio Winston: Thanks for the words, information, artists and links. With respect to 'It's a Wonderful World' I still think my favorite is from Israel Kamakawiwo'ole

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z26BvHOD\\_sg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z26BvHOD_sg)

FaanWank: I did vote for the Faan awards despite my words about not being as familiar with everything to the level I think would be proper. I haven't a clue what will happen to Corflu after so many of the current attending fans no longer are able to attend due to illness or death. There were a few new people at the last Corflu but certainly not enough to keep it going.

TV Guide: I haven't watched most of the shows you're watching. I am current with 'Foundation' and still find it interesting although not great. I watched all of the current season of 'Star Trek: Strange New Worlds' and enjoy it a bit more than 'Foundation'. I think I enjoy 'Warrior' more than either of those and just watched the season finale this past week. Next season of 'Warrior' is still uncertain. I watched all of this season of 'Witcher' which I also liked but the main actor won't be returning next season. 'Warrior Nun' is supposed to return in November. Looking forward to that. I watched all of 'Secret Invasion'. It was all right but also not great. Had some good moments but a lot of mediocre ones. Started watching the new season of 'Only Murders in the Building' and still very uncertain who the killer is this season although I have several ideas. I'm watching 'Justified: City Primeval'. I don't like it as much as the original 'Justified'. Some things seem a bit predictable. I also liked the original show's setting more than the current setting. I watched a few episodes of 'Strange Planet'. Has some interesting points but not sure if it is enough to keep me watching. 'Ahsoka' starts up this coming week. I'll check that out. I watched a couple episodes of 'Twisted Metal'. Not sure if I will return to it either. I think a new season of 'Ragnarok' starts up this week and I will watch that. 'One Piece' starts the following week. I'll probably check it out. Have been reading that 'The Peripheral' although initially renewed has now been cancelled. Too bad. Ah, I've also been watching 'Dark Marvels', a documentary about devices for execution, torture, war, etc. through history. Tons of fun. Also watched 'Dead Still' on Acorn, "Set in 1880s Ireland in the Victorian-era heyday of postmortem photography", I quite enjoyed that also. It is about a photographer and others around him and photographing the dead. More fun. Watched 'Manifest' through to the end. There was actually a resolution.

*[[We have a few shows in common, but I still don't have the luxury of the amount of screen time that you do. I've never even heard of most of the shows you mention...]]*

Footy: I enjoyed reading the updates on volunteering and also the convention report. Interesting and enjoyable but I'm not sure what I have to add, if anything.

Clerihews at Dawn: Interesting, enjoyable. Rhyming, hmm . . .

Loco Citato:

**John Purcell:** Patty and I have no issues between us relative to determining what to watch. She has her TV and I have mine, in separate rooms. For the most part we watch very different things although I think she has been watching 'Foundation'.

**Rob Jackson:** I don't do crosswords. I may have done a few 30 or 40 years ago.

**Wm Breiding:** I look forward to seeing him at Corflu. I hope both he and you have not been too adversely affected by tropical storm Hilary. We had a very small amount from it today. It is extremely rare to have any rain here in August.

**Gary Mattingly:** Writers' Strike is still on. Actors' Strike is now also in place. I do hope a settlement occurs soon for both.

Hm, don't even remember if I watched any episodes of 'The Gryphon'. Ah, yes, I watched the whole season. It obviously didn't stick too well in my memory but I did watch it. Didn't watch any more episodes of 'High Desert'.

I did tell **Jay Kinney** that he should attend Corflu and that you and a number of others would be interested in seeing him but his attendance seems unlikely.

*[[That's a shame. I'd love to get together with Jay again. Fond memories...]]*

I was just thinking about getting back to *BEAM*. However I decided I really must do this LoC before the end of the month. So I decided to put off watching 'Asteroid City' tonight. Maybe I'll watch it tomorrow night.

Lots of people died since my last Loc: Sinéad O'Connor, Paul Reubens, Astrud Gilberto, George Maharis from Route 66, Robbie Robertson. Rodriguez (Searching for Sugar Man). David LaFlamme and Ira Mitch Thornhill, a fan I knew for a long time.

TH...66:

Egotorial: Hm, not sure what to add. I'm not sure I understand the right's stand on hating things in which they don't believe and thinking that those things and people and ways with which they don't agree simply should not exist. In the news today was an item about a woman in the Lake Arrowhead, California, area who had a rainbow flag flying



in front of her store. Some male obviously didn't agree with it. He argued with her and then shot and killed her. She had no weapon. The police did later chase him and kill him. At the same time in the Bay Area are the indictments of many police officers in a city called Antioch for their similar attitudes and texting those to each other. The FBI arrested them all over the last few days. There are two immediately noticeable issues. Why are there police like this and how can they be allowed to arrest and mistreat people because of their race, etc? However there is a second issue here. With these police all suspended from the force, crime and theft has risen in Antioch. They don't have people jumping up to take a job as a police person. A lot of people who take these jobs are racists and bullies and want an outlet for themselves. I also don't understand all the people who want to take so many books out of public and school libraries because they personally don't like what is in them. Of course, meanwhile, there are gangs of people going in as a group and stealing everything on the shelves in stores. The world is certainly in an interesting state.

*[[It's a dictatorship philosophy which requires lockstep conformity, the imposition of a given set of beliefs (and prejudices) upon those who may not share them. So much for "freedom"...]]*

TAFFnessabounds: I was sorry to hear about **Mary Burns**. She certainly has a sunnier attitude than I do and I haven't even broken anything. I wish her well.

Corflux: Should be an interesting weekend in Las Vegas with several people who don't attend often.

*[[We certainly hope so...]]*

Movie Night: I've watched all 4 parts of 'John Wick' and enjoyed them, even though a lot of the content is action and fighting and mayhem. I found this particularly true in part 4 but I did enjoy many parts of it but maybe not quite as much as earlier parts.

Health Diary: Sorry about the continuing health and pain problems but glad to read that numbers that need to go down are going down. Good luck with the walking stick. I'm thinking of the extras you can get in walking sticks, like a

small cylindrical flask that fits inside the cane, a knife and/or sword, a telescope (don't know exactly why you would need/want one but I bet you could put one in a cane, etc.)

*[[I'm just concentrating on not falling over...]]*

Radio Winston: Thanks a lot for the information on Winifred Atwell and the links to her music. It was most enjoyable. Very interesting



information about her and she certainly is quite the pianist. I've listened to a number of boogie woogie pianists at the SF Jazz Center. They have an annual concert of, um, maybe half a dozen or so different boogie woogie players. That is also entertaining. I've tried my hand at playing some boogie woogie on the piano but I'm only several orders of magnitude below her. In other words I'm comparatively quite bad but maybe you can tell I'm trying to play boogie woogie. No one should ask me to play it since I haven't practiced on the piano in quite some time and would need sheet music anyway . . . and many hours of practice.

*[[Same here. I'm woefully out of practice, but I can still bang out a couple of tunes if pressed, but also not up to Atwell standards by several streets. Of course, the usual problem arises - I recall an Unusual Suspects room party of yore at which (not so unusually) a "secret song" (fannish lyric parody, typically unpublizable for Reasons) was performed, this'un based on 'Song of a Baker' and accompanied by M Strummer on guitar. I was also supposed to be playing keyboards, but after a couple of bars realized that I was far too drunk to manage it...]]*

Proper Rabbit: More interesting reading on the history of and your reaction to the "n" and the "q" words. I don't use either of them. I cannot ever recall using the "n" word but may have said the "q" word a few times in high school but not as a pejorative but rather as being descriptive but even then it just didn't sound like a word I should say. Actually I'm a little tired of the "n" word usage in so many hip hop songs. It seems like some feel they must throw it in dozens of times in the song lyrics along with various and sundry references to male and female genitalia. I mean, surely there are other topics of interest out there about which one could sing. Maybe I'm just desirous of a more convivial manner. To be honest I've become quite too prim and proper. I cruise right by posts on facebook of scantily clad people particularly those in obviously erotic or, I suppose they are occasionally meant to be, comically erotic. I rarely if ever "like" them nor do I leave any comment. There are two initial issues that come to mind. One is, I frequently just don't think they are appropriate relative to the negative connotations that arise around them and, honestly, I don't want to get myself in trouble with anyone for comments that could be taken in an inappropriate way.

Footy: Ah, I'll cut to the part where just general living is discussed. Good to hear about the offer of a ground floor flat. The volunteering all sounds good and interesting too. Gee, no mention of the "nutters" but well, if it fits . . .

Loco Citato:

**Dave Cockfield:** I've had Pilsner Urquell in Pilsen (Plzeň) and probably Prague (Praha) but many years ago before Czechoslovakia became two separate countries. It was fun drinking it there. It was also entertaining drinking Budweiser although I didn't get to drink it in the town of the same

name. It certainly was better than the American Budweiser but still not really a favorite of mine.

**Kim Huett:** There are still recipes for the psychoactive flying ointment around although their authenticity or similarity to the original is questionable. I've tried a little but never placing it in a related area nor did I really use enough to feel much from it. Still tempted to try it again in the future. I wonder if I still have that recipe floating around in one box or book around here. Probably. In the film 'Häxan, or, Witchcraft Through The Ages', I have vague memories of flying for less than business reasons. I have the disc around here so I could go watch it again but maybe not at this moment. There are other "horror" films which illustrate more lewd and lascivious activities in such gatherings. Of course, the proper viewpoint is, what happens in circle, stays in circle.

*[[Interesting that you use "lewd and lascivious" in tandem with horror movies. It's generally accepted that the sexual aspects of vampirism were brought to the fore by the Hammer films with Christopher Lee as Dracula...]]*

Indulge Me:

So when is some space agency flying to Saturn's moons? Oh wait, we haven't even flown to Mars yet. Well, one of these days.

White Christian Nationalists are throwing my order all out of whack.

My mind wanders off to music,

Otyken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hl4qKWELnH0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nD1f1Ian0kA>

The Hu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jM8dCGIm6yc>

Toohot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImqmGmQ99RM>

More nice artwork by Ulrika

Hmm, thought I would include Movies that I've watched. Here's a list:

'The Villainess' (2017) Great, although unbelievable, action film. I enjoyed it.

'How Green Was My Valley' (1941) A classic and enjoyable film.

'The Rover' (2014) post-apocalyptic road film. Okay but not great.

'The Phantom Carriage' (1921) A silent classic with excellent cinematography. I enjoyed it.

'The Bullet Train' (1975) Moderately enjoyable film about a train that can't stop. Supposedly the movie 'Speed' was

based on this film. There were a lot of details about the train system.

'Renfield' (2023) with Nicholas Hoult as Renfield and Nicolas Cage as Dracula. I think Nicolas Cage had a lot of fun but not one of his best films.

'Vagabond' (1985) a classic film by Agnes Varda. I quite enjoyed it and this is the second time I've watched it.

'The Killer' (1989) directed by John Woo and starring Chow Yun-Fat. A classic action film. I liked the film but didn't like the music.

'Hard Boiled' (1992) another film directed by John Woo and starring Chow Yun-Fat. Another classic action film. I liked it slightly less than 'The Killer' but I thought its music was fine. It had a strange shoot out in a setting where exotic birds were being sold.

*[[Whatever happened to Chow Yun-Fat?...]]*

'Z Channel: A Magnificent Obsession' (2004). I found this to be a very interesting film about a seminal LA based cable channel which debuted in 1974. The program director was quite inspired and featured many new and unedited auteur films but he also had issues with depression (manic depressive?) with a very sad ending. I think it is particularly interesting if you're interested in films and film history.

'The Absent-Minded Professor' (1961). I liked it when I was growing up and I still like it. Not a great classic but . . .

'Flight of the Navigator' (1986). Another film I liked in the past and still like. I also was entertained by the voice of Paul Reubens as the ship's computer.

'The Last Starfighter' (1984). Another film I enjoyed in the past and still enjoy. The young star never really did any great things beyond this film. I liked the performance of Robert Preston as Centauri the best. He was in 'The Music Man' and basically played a very similar character. Wil Wheaton had a very minor role in the film and obviously went on to bigger things.

'Dragonslayer' (1981). It was all right. I thought the story and acting were mediocre but the dragon was well done and the film looks good overall. Other people liked it a lot more than I did.

'Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves' (2023). A rather dopey film based on a game. Nevertheless I found the film very entertaining and amusing.

'The Old Ways' (2020), about a bruja and demonic possession in Mexico. Not a great film but I found it moderately interesting and entertaining.

I do believe I beat your deadline.

Hope you're doing better.

\*\*\*

#### WAHF

**Nikki Basar** ; **S&ra Bond** ; **W<sup>m</sup> Breiding** (separately from his loc) with an accompanying photograph of his shattered FAAn Award from Craic (below), and later health sympathies ; **Bill Burns**, letting me know that Mary is doing well ; **Cuddles** ; **Leigh Edmonds** : (post-loc) "It all sounds dreadful. I laughed at the constipation though I'd like to think it's in sympathy. Many years since I had my jaw wired closed for four weeks of so and could only drink in liquids. After a few days the constipation set in and it's still memorable. I hope it all works out well. I'm looking forward to a taxi ride in Las Vegas next year." *[[Which taxi ride won't be off me, since I'll have packed up work at that point...]]* ; **Roy Hessinger** ; **Dave Hodson** ; **Jerry Kaufman** ; **Guy Lillian** : "Yipes! This is worse than the horrors I'm going through." ; **Perry Middlemiss** ; **Don Miller**, recommending a supplement which helps with constipation and also sleep ; **George Phillis** ; **Curt Phillips** (prior to loc) ; **David Redd** : "Enjoyed Winifred Atwell and Proper Rabbit, but find myself unable to compose a proper LoC yet again, apologies. Wishing you good health." ; **Spike** ; **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** : "Tramadol made me vomit." ;



#### FANZINES RECEIVED

Gratefully acknowledged without comment (though see 'Omphaloskepsis')...

**CAPTAIN FLASHBACK** #55, #56, #57 (Andy Hooper) - ...

**SF COMMENTARY** 112, 113 (Bruce Gillespie) - ...

**DARK TOYS** 75 (Taral Wayne) - ...

**ALEXIAD** #129 (Joseph and Lisa Major) - ...

**PERRYSCOPE** 34, 35 (Perry Middlemiss) - ...

**JENZINE** #5 (J L Farey) - ...

**ASKANCE** #55 (John Purcell) - ...

**THE ZINE DUMP** #58 (Guy H Lillian III) - ...



- THE MEGALOSCOPE #8 (David Grigg) - ...
- PORTABLE STORAGE 9.5 (William Breiding) - ...
- INCA 22 (Rob Jackson) - ...
- LOFGEORNOST #152 (Fred Lerner) - ...

## INDULGE ME

- ✘ **CRICKET FUNNIES** : Having mentioned the West Indies’ 1988 Test series in England, I recalled a story told of the 6 foot 8 Joel Garner (although it might have been the 6’7” Curtly Ambrose), who was bashfully asked by a female fan whether, given his height, everything was in proportion, getting the reply “Ma’am, if it was I’d be 7 foot 6” ....
- ✘ **CROSSWORD CLUE FOR ELI** : Another (darkly apposite) one of my own to make it harder to cheat: “What leukemia is able to firstly cause especially randomly (6)” ...
- ✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE (1)** : More forays into dark matter research, but since [this effort](#) is based in Yorkshire. you might suspect they’ll just find out that it’s gravy and they’ll make chips to put it on...
- ✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : One for the *Star Trek* fans, Rosalind Chao...



- ✘ **RADIO WINSTON EXTRA** : Further to my very delayed realization that the female vocalist on Iggy Pop’s ‘Candy’ was Kate Pierson, I subsequently learn that the gig was originally offered to Chrissie Hynde. *That* would have been different...
- ✘ **SPORTS REPORT** : Seriously, go home chess, you’re on crack...
- ✘ **THE LANGFORD RECUSAL** : An ignoral from the Fanglord (and everybody else) over lastish’s clue: “Article held by adroit banter typical of this writer? (4,4)”, which I’m sure he found larffably easy anyway. The solution is, of course, ‘DEAF TWIT’ i.e. “article” = ‘A’ “held by” (within) “adroit banter” = ‘DEFT WIT’. Thought it was quite clever, meself...
- ✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE (2)** : White dwarf stars can apparently change their surface composition from hydrogen to helium (I think I’ve got that the right way round), and one in process (appropriately named ‘Janus’) seems to have been discovered. [This article](#) from the *Grauniad* links to a much more extensive write-up in *Nature*...
- ✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Again tending to moderate obscurity, but if you don’t recognize **P.J. Soles**, the t-shirt is a massive clue...





✘ **A TALE OF TWO TAKEOUTS** : Quite often of a weekend we'll get a takeout and watch a movie (or tv binge), said takeout usually lasting two nights. Thursday we decided to try Farm Basket (chicken and turkey), apparently a beloved Vegas staple which has an outlet near us. **Jen** got her preferred dark meat (leg and thigh), and I tried the "cluckeetos" (ho ho), rolled tacos with lettuce, cheese and salsa. "Fuckin' dire" is actually being kind to this load of flavorless swill - some of mine definitely went in the bin. Next door to this IMAT\* outlet is 'The Great Greek' (a national chain) which we tried the following night, and what a difference a day makes! Their nosebag is utterly delicious!...

\* An expression my old boss Mike Turner used in respect of highly indifferent food: "It'll make a turd"...

✘ **AND FINALLY, ESTHER** : A study of two daft old pals after breakfast...

✘ **NEXTISH** : September 30<sup>th</sup>, or maybe a week earlier...



## MIRANDA

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

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Art credits: **Ulrika O'Brien** (pp 14, 19, 22) ; **Jose Sanchez** (p16)

**"Old man Tyler had a crash in his car  
Down on the fortune highway  
Doctor said it was his cruel sick heart  
Didn't go to church on Sunday"**