

This Here...

“Not much different from a kidney stone.” (J Purcell)

EGOTORIAL

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Why oh why (“almost spells YOYO” writes Mrs Trellis of North Wales) would I use the title of a dreadful example of ‘80s Scandiwegian arena pomp atop any column? It’s wicked, really, because now you’re going to have that fuckin’ earworm all day with accompanying “aargh!” noises, but ey, just one of the many services this here bucket of Odo provides, innit?

Now before you get all worried or anything, this isn’t about the heath stuff, but rather some pontification on my pending “retirement” (however long it may last) from my current employ in a gnat’s cock* over four months time, an occasion to be memorialized and celebrated with fellow recent retirees **Lucy Huntzinger** and **Rich Coad** at COR41U.

It’s been a rough couple of weeks at work (see also ‘Health Diary’) which inevitably led to the thought that I can’t fuckin’ wait for it to be over and adjust to a schedule that doesn’t require me to be up at 1am, although, paradoxically perhaps, the stupid o’clock morning hours are when (on my days off) I do most of the fanac.

With a modicum of positive spin, there are things I will miss (apart from the paycheck and the tips), primarily the general

cameraderie of our drivers’ room, with the typical wry analysis at the end of a day about how shit it’s all been (or occasionally not). Every cab company has their own little uniquely annoying ways of doing things, but in the broadest of terms Lucky Cab treats their drivers generally (and I have to say me in particular given the circs) better than any of the other outfits, as far as I can tell anyway.

I’m wondering how I’ll end up relating to what will be, on the face of it, a much more unstructured existence (although **Jen** has threatened me with *lots* of structure after the fact, ahem), so I have to think about a restructured or *differently*

structured way of life. **Andy Hooper** has wondered (with, I think, some trepidation) what I might get up to with actual time on my hands, given my present output under circumstances where I don’t. “I have *plans*”, I cackle evilly, but meanwhile there’s still this here consortium of cobblers to turn out, *BEAM 18* on the go and COR41U management.

Not to mention (and what a fuckin’ daft phrase that is because I’m about to mention what that implies I’m not

going to) a couple of projects which have been on the back burner for a minute, although I will (only a little tentatively) announce that the ‘Barty’ collection (done except for artwork and final layout) will be out at COR41U.

I might just end up having a rest, though...

It’s all good.

September 2023



* A very small amount - a memorable analogy used by my first boss at Scholl(UK), Les Tofts

CORFLUX

41 NEWS

As this goes out, a pointed reminder that today (September 30th) is the **last day** to get an attending membership at the current rate (\$100 or equivalent). See corflu.org for the how to.

It's been delightful to hear from various (mostly overseas) people who have assiduously been booking rooms and flights. I *think* we're around 50 attending members at the moment, a nice place to be five months out - we might well get to my slightly optimistic promise to the hotel of 70, which will no doubt please them mightily.

Now here's another very early heads-up: I'm planning to include a decent amount of stuff in the convention package, hopefully with various ishes (either current or historical) and to that end any faneds reading this can provide us with a sufficient quantity (to be advised, DoBFO, but it'll be more than 50) of their product and we'll include them.



Inquiries/comments (*not* payments) to vegas41@corflu.org

MOVIE NIGHT

IN BRIEF

A couple of "blockbusters" we've recently clocked are 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3', and for equal representation of Marvel and DC, also 'The Flash'.

I'm not going to say much about the former, since I do believe that the brilliant **J L Farey** intends to write about that one in the next *JenZine*, and I'm not about to preempt what's likely to be a top-notch bit of commentary, but I will note that anyone triggered by animal cruelty should avoid it.

'The Flash' is quite another bag of multiverses, again going to the well of the "Flashpoint" storyline, which I'd contend

had already been nailed down in the animated universe, but seems to be the gift that keeps on giving, as does the concept of multiverses in general (which you'd perhaps have thought had been gloriously capped by the unsurpassable 'Everything Everywhere All at Once').

The wacky life of Ezra Miller ended up unfairly distracting from what's really a pretty decent movie in which Miller is rather good playing two interacting versions of Barry Allen, making it a bit of a shame that they went off the rails and likely doomed their career. Mind you, second chances can occur and be massively successful (cf Robert Downey Jr, Hugh Grant, lest we forget) so there's always the possibility that we might see those skills again.

The other honkin' star here is, unsurprisingly, Michael Keaton as the main incarnation of the various Batmen (not "Batmans" [cringe] **Jerry Kaufman** (locs). The biggest cringe, though, which rather spoils the whole effort for me, was the final scene Batman/Bruce Wayne appearance, eliciting an "Oh Gawd, *No!*" round here. If you've seen it then you know what I mean, and if not, well, fair warning...

HEALTH DIARY...

SEPTEMBER

The good news is that the white blood cell count continues its descent toward normality, although not quite there yet. I was hoping for a number in the 20s from this month's lab work - it's at 30, suggesting that the last few laps are at a slower pace than the initial substantial drops. There's also a lymphocyte count (which I hadn't apparently been paying much attention to) which was also stratospheric but is now just about down to a normal level. The oncology people are all well pleased with me, not only because of those results but also that (to continue to amaze those who have tagged me as "fandom's Keith Richards") my vitals and important organs (eg heart, liver, kidneys and even lungs) are in well good shape.

I've cut out all the relatively dodgy meds (heroin, sorry Keith) and I'm just down to the two: meloxicam for pain (topped up occasionally with ibuprofen) and the ongoing Calquence for the leukemia.

I'm sleeping pretty well for the most part, but still tired a lot of the time (that's a leukemia thing) and still can't walk very far without my legs starting to hurt. It's occasional fun, though, to wave my walking stick at random co-workers and yell "GET OFF MY FUCKIN' LAWN!".

Bit of an issue this last week with returning back pain. I skimped a bit at physical therapy this morning (September 21) but with typical bloody-mindedness only briefly considered skipping it altogether. Mind you, having planned to go and do a bank deposit and get a haircut and beard trim afterwards went out the window in favor of coming straight

home instead. Well, that and I needed a Jimmy fairly urgently.

What might be a partial cause of the bolshy back is having had to sit in a *lot* of traffic this week and deal with more stupid road and intersection closures, due to what I am now modifying a recurring acronym (FBF = "Fuckin' Bloody Facebook") to describe as FBF1 ("Fuckin' Bloody Formula 1") as the work to allow the street race here in November inexorably proceeds.

Still, given my typically high pain tolerance, shored up by forcing myself to read John Thiel editorials, I believe I'll come out the other side of it all tuffer than ever, ey?

RADIO WINSTON

THE LOW SPARK OF HIGH HEELED BOYS

On a Zoom the other week which included **A Phineas Hooper** I got spectacularly more languered than usual (yes, that *is* possible) and got voluble on several topics, one of which was reminding APH that he had (some time ago) idly mentioned that he'd thought about doing a guest 'Radio Winston' column, and I encouraged him by offering up some of the topics I had in mind, many of which end up forgotten for various reasons which do not always include drink.

One such was the concept of the "perfect song" which, according to the venerated John Peel, was one of which you couldn't imagine anything being added to or taken away from the slice which would improve it, his shining example being 'Teenage Kicks' by the Undertones which got played at his funeral as the coffin was being walked in (or possibly out).

The knee-jerk reaction would be that a twelve-minute slice couldn't possibly be perfect, since there *must* be some padding which could shurely be excised, but on the basis that I can happily listen to Traffic's ['The Low Spark of High Heeled Boys'](#) in its entirety and on repeat without getting impatient at any point, this might indicate otherwise.

Jim Capaldi was in Morocco with actor Michael J. Pollard working on a movie project called 'Nevertheless' which didn't come to fruition, but also writing lyrics. He later recalled (from Songfacts, also quoted in Wikipedia):

Pollard and I would sit around writing lyrics all day, talking about Bob Dylan and the Band, thinking up ridiculous plots for the movie. Before I left Morocco, Pollard wrote in my book "The Low Spark of High Heeled Boys." For me, it summed him up. He had this tremendous rebel attitude. He walked around in his cowboy boots, his leather jacket. At the time he was a heavy little dude. It seemed to sum up all the people of that generation who were just rebels. The "Low Spark," for me, was the spirit, high-spirited. You know, standing on a street corner. The low rider. The "Low Spark" meaning that strong undercurrent at the street level.

Needless to say there are other interpretations of the lyric, and here's a (slightly edited) reposted bit from the 'Straight Dope' message board:

Here's the thing. Winwood was 16 or 17 yrs. old when he wrote this. In those days, street slang for heroin was 'boy' and for cocaine was 'girl'.

High heel boy refers to a mixture of heroin and coke, commonly called a speedball.

The 'low spark' is a description of the physical feeling brought on by injecting the speedball.

The man in the suit is the dealer, making profits on the dreams of his customers.

The gun that didn't make any noise is simply a hypodermic syringe.

How Stevie knew this stuff at such a young age is an interesting question.

This is a fair example of tincture of pure bollocks, since of course Capaldi, not Winwood was the lyricist in the first place, and even with my limited patience for actual research I couldn't find anything defining "high-heeled boy" as a speedball unless it's in reference to this song. (Heroin was typically "white boy" rather than just "boy", and there I go confirming **Kim Huett's** contention that we're all junkies except him.) And Winwood was 23 at the time, "16 or 17" my arse. Speaking of the lyrics, the lads confirmed in a 1994 interview that Capaldi wrote the third verse late enough to have to breathlessly nip over and place them in front of Winwood as they were recording the slice!

On a not atypical tangent, I began to wonder whether the hypothetical "perfect song" might be measured by the number of times it's been covered, and thereby hang two schools of thought. One is that if the slice is perfect, no cover could possibly improve it, and a note-for-note version seems like a pointless exercise. The other is that if something is that seminally important, respects are going to be paid by them as come after. I'm minded that I can be feverish about finding every cover version I can of slices I like a fuck of a lot (without definitively asserting they might be "perfect"), and the prevalence of certain of those titles (eg 'Gimme Shelter', 'The Man Who Sold the World', 'Song of A Baker' for three) in the repertoire of many must mean something.

The only one outfit I could find who've essayed 'Low Spark' is the jam band [Widespread Panic](#), and pops to them for having a go really. Do they improve it, though? Fuck no - it's already *perfect*...

TV GUIDE

THE CONTINENTAL: FROM THE WORLD OF JOHN WICK

Just one episode in so far on this three-ep miniseries (on Peacock in the US, Amazon Prime internationally), so it's really a bit early to pass proper judgement innit, apart from noting the possibly unwieldy title, but I'm going to argue that it's proper and not misleading advertising. For those unfamiliar, 'the Continental' international chain of hotels are a fundamental part of, well, "the world of John Wick", being neutral ground in the assassin subculture. The likely problem (one I don't share) is that you need to be familiar with Wickworld (if we can call it that) because in this prequel effort that knowledge is assumed. The plus point is that this tack avoids having to punt a load of exposition, but the DoBFO minus side is that non-viewers of the original franchise might be a bit mystified by it all unless they're dead good at picking up inference.



Like many of us, I'll get a bit of reflexive negativity at seeing the name "Mel Gibson" at the top of the card but he's not in episode 1 that much really (and when he is he's rather good). The basic plot is straightforward enough (again, so far) with Gibson as Cormac O'Connor, owner of the New York Continental and former mentor to Winston Scott (Ian McShane in the movies, here nicely done by Colin Woodell) who is forcibly brought back from London to find his wayward brother Frankie who has nicked an item of significance from the High Table organization. This segues into Winston's plan for revenge against O'Connor, who is truly a nasty piece of work. Wick-ish violent set-pieces ensue, and it's all good. Very worthy of note, Ayomide Adegan masterfully channels the late Lance Reddick as the younger version of concierge Charon.

I've previously praised the John Wick movies for the quite superb world-building, and so far this is consistent with that and even adds to it with the mysterious above-in-shadow character of "the Adjudicator" who, despite her being masked, **Jen** correctly identified as being played by the

always tops Katie McGrath (Lena Luthor in 'Supergirl' and much else).

On reflection the above seems a bit useless to anyone, since if you're already a John Wick fan ("Wickciano"? [*That's enough tortured Wicking shurely, cries D Langford or someone similar?*]) then you're probably watching it anyway, and if not you're not likely to. Oh well. You could just clock it for the superb soundtrack...

Extra points: I do wonder whether we're watching 'Ahsoka' out of a sense of duty rather than anything else. I'm (still) not as versed in 'Star Wars' canon as much as I am in 'Star Trek' or 'Doctor Who' so I rarely see any of these peripheral efforts as part of a whole, and as a result I tend to mock it as some version of 'Bob (hearts) Coca-Cola', or artichoke-a, or something equally ridiculous. It's watchable, though, SFX & that...

Rolling Stone magazine, which has never met a list it didn't like, has punted "20 underrated TV shows to be streaming during the strike(s)", and there were a couple that interested me (and might even try to watch) because they feature actors I love. 'Terriers' (Hulu) has Donal Logue co-starring, and 'Enlightened' (Max) boasts Laura Dern in the lead role. Anybody clocked either of these?...

GIVE US A CLUE

Crossword correspondence from **Dave Langford**, who also mentioned the 'Words Fail Me' bit from *Private Eye* (see **Rob Jackson's** loc, which should appear in this bit really but I can't be arsed to shift stuff around this close to publication) under the impression that it was he who was supposed to pass that along rather than the Doc.

The *i* crossword editor lists their favorite clues of the week every Sunday, and Dave occasionally sends this summary along which here includes a particularly wicked example which I decide I simply must report to thoroughly croggle **Eli Cohen** as a balance to his tagged very easy clue thish.

"What's in magnum? Not, I'm thinking, cheap bubbly. (9)"

I argue that I'm a better compiler than a solver (in my own undoubtedly inflated opinion) but I manage to figure this one out. The wickedness of it lies in the overlap of definition and wordplay, but I did clock it fairly quick.

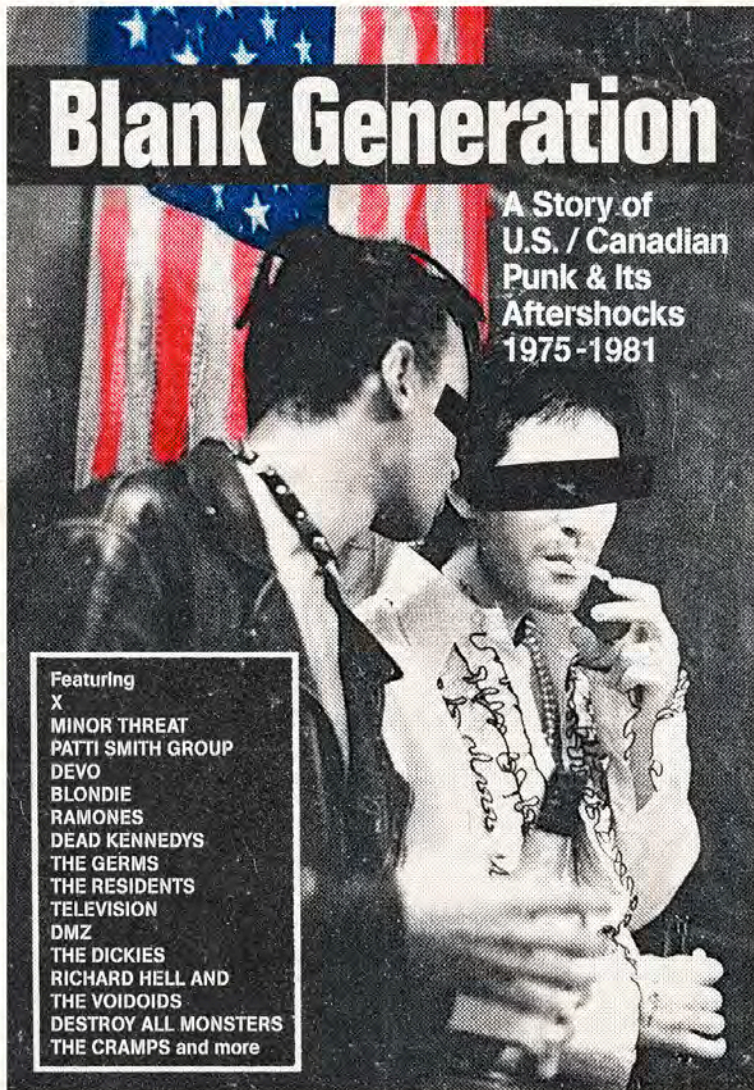
Definition of solution: "What's in magnum?"; Wordplay: MAGNUM "not" (ie remove) "I'm thinking" (= UM), leaving the letters MAGN; + CHEAP, "bubbly" (anagram indicator) gets us to 'CHAMPAGNE'.

This involved guessing the possible solution then realizing that "bubbly" was an anagram indicator for 'CHEAP' and clocking that the other letters needed, 'MAGN', were right in front of me. This is sort of solving backwards, thinking what the solution ought to be, then figuring out how to get there. **Dave** confirms a similar thought process...

FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

It's rare that I start one of these columns with absolutely no idea what I'm going to write about, but here we are. The one-day Cricket World Cup doesn't start until October 5th when England open the defence of their title against New Zealand in the Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, on the Indian sub-continent, and Tottenham played out a comfortable 2-2 stalemate with Arsenal just last weekend at the Emirates stadium in a game that they really should have won as Arsenal benefited from a Cristian Romero own goal and one of the dodgiest penalty decisions of the season thus far. The case of the Spanish World Cup winners kiss rumbles on only in that nearly all the officials involved have been sacked and nearly all the Spanish players have agreed to play for their nation again, and dubious VAR decisions are now so ten a penny they're about as interesting as another Russell Brand denial of sexual misconduct, so I can't claim to be greatly inspired.



Which leaves me with a bit of a void in the theme department. Oh, well, I'm sure something will turn up...

Last Sunday (September 24th), I missed my first London Comic Mart in about a year. James Bacon and Rob Hansen had already warned me that they couldn't make it for various reasons and the final nail in my attendance coffin was the minor hangover I was suffering from after a mini-infant, junior, and secondary school reunion I had attended the day before. Mark Fuller and I spent a goodly time recalling gigs attended at The Roundhouse in Camden Town and The Marquee in Wardour Street as we studied for, in my case, mostly unsuccessful A-levels in 1977/8/9. Mark emigrated to Australia several decades ago and this was his first visit back to Blighty since before covid, so the beer flowed a little more freely than initially planned, and I ended up spending a small fortune on the Cherry Red Records website after our reminiscences on a 5 CD boxset due out in November called Blank Generation and another 5 CD boxset of the first five Runaways albums to save my old vinyl from further wear and tear. Blank Generation features Devo, Patti Smith, Blondie, and The Ramones, who are all artists that Mark and I followed as punk phased into the New Wave, and also X, The Dickies, Richard Hell, and The Avengers; bands that I started following latter. There's also a track by the execrable Destroy All Monsters: Bored, which is what I recall being the one time I saw them at, if memory serves, The Roundhouse, although vocalist Niagara Detroit might be worth an entry in Nic's Ageless Beauty files (along with Gaye Advert – hint, hint!).

(Whilst poking around google for photos of Niagara Detroit and Gaye Advert, I found a photo by Roberta Bayley of Joan Jett, Debbie Harry, David Johansen, and Joey Ramone from 1977 with Johansen clutching a Peanuts treasury edition. I knew I liked Johansen already, but he goes up and up in my estimation, and Bayley is a name that always seems to be associated with quality.)

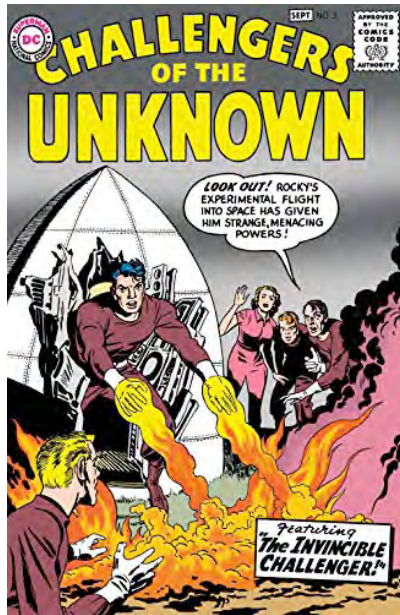


One of the more contentious points of conversation between Rob Hansen and I after marts is my complete disdain for Jack Kirby's artwork. I really do believe Kirby to be the most

over-rated comic book artist ever, whereas Rob argues that he's the most dynamic penciler the field has ever seen (whilst also extolling the virtues of Steve Ditko as the best choreographer of action sequences, which I feel somewhat undermines his Kirby argument).

Part of my animosity towards Kirby is the whole "I created the Marvel universe; Stan Lee was a charlatan showman" narrative. My gut feeling has always been that Kirby drew and plotted the majority of the early Marvel material he was involved with, but was such a terrible scripter that Lee and others had to step in and clean his work up. I have also always suspected that more and more editorial control was exerted over his work as the plotlines became more complex and densely packed in order to rein in his sometimes-erratic pacing; something that would have definitely pissed him off at the least.

There can be very little doubt that Kirby was at least rehashing plotlines from his run on DC's *Challengers Of The Unknown* in early issues of the *Fantastic Four*; *Challengers* Issue 3 (cover dated September 1958) features Rocky taking an "experimental flight into space" and emerging from the rocket capsule shooting flame from his hands a la Johnny Storm and issue 4's (cover dated November 1958) "The Wizard Of Time" looks suspiciously like a dry-run for *Immortus* and *Kang* and that's before we get into the *Sky Masters Of The Space Force* dailies swipes. An issue I have with this narrative is the involvement of Dave Wood as a writer. An unknown commentator in a quickly deleted remark on a facebook comics group once said that Wood was a known alcoholic who never actually turned in his scripts to DC, but knowing National Periodicals business practices of the time it's doubtful he'd have gotten away with that; it's equally unlikely, given later developments, that Kirby would allowed the situation to occur without remarking upon it. DC never used to carry creator credits on its titles until Marvel started the trend, and Wood's involvement with *Challengers* seems to be conveniently downplayed in modern online databases, some of which even claim Roz Kirby as an inker on her husband's work, so I guess I'll just have to keep hunting out back issues of *Alter Ego*, *Comics Journal*, and other comic book secondary sources until I happen across a more knowledgeable commentator.



I will confess that Kirby is someone whose art I find more or less palatable depending upon the inker that worked over him. Over the course of a couple of dozen issues of *Thor*, Bill Everett worked out how to take a lot of the rough edges off Kirby's work without losing his trademark straight line muscularity, culminating in the brilliant cover for *Chamber of Darkness* issue 5 (cover dated June 1970), and Syd Shores work over Kirby on *Captain America*, especially the magnificent full page under water panel in issue 103 (cover dated July 1968), seems to hint at the innovative Steranko layouts to come once he takes over the title on issue 110 (I know Steranko worked over Kirby layouts on *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* in *Strange Tales*, but I'm pretty sure Steranko made radical changes to those layouts; they just seem much more cinemagraphic than Kirby's usual work of the time which tends to suggest the influences travelled more than just one way). The first eight pages of *Captain America's Bicentennial Battles* are inked by Barry (Windsor-) Smith and are probably



the highlight of Kirby's entire mid-1970s return to the title and Marvel, which is ironic given that Smith started out as a very poor Kirby Klone albeit with hints of a more refined sense of layout.

Probably even more ironically, I really enjoy the work of a lot of the Kirby Klones and Rich Buckler, creator of *Deathlok* in *Astonishing Tales*, even started to have his own clones and copiers in Ron Wilson,

Arvell Jones, and Keith Pollard. Buckler's work on *Giant-Size Super-stars* issue 1 (cover dated May 1974) featuring a Hulk vs. *The Thing* battle is regarded as a bronze age classic (klassic? Everything even vaguely related to Kirby has to replace a c with a k it seems) of the genre and is due to be reprinted by Marvel in December as one of its facsimile editions to celebrate 50 years of their giant-size titles.

At the comic mart before last, I scored (I used the term advisedly; buying back issue comics is exactly like scoring drugs when you acquire a particular grail issue or run) a complete run of the DC "implosion" title *Claw The Unconquered* featuring a large body of work by Keith Giffen, co-creator of *Rocket Raccoon* of *Guardians Of The Galaxy* fame over at Marvel. Giffen has been a sometimes-contentious character who hasn't so much copied or paid homage to other artists as completely swiped them

wholesale and, of course, Kirby wasn't too much of a sacred cow to not come in for the treatment.

[[Sakred kow, shurely? - Ed...]]

Komparing, sorry, comparing the splash page of Defenders issue 49 (cover dated July 1977) to that Captain America splash in issue 103 suggests Giffen may have recently acquired a lightbox early in 1977, although there is just enough difference between the panels to raise a little doubt. Giffen went on to write and draw a long run of Legion of Super-Heroes stories that followed on from the Great Darkness Saga, which he provided the art for from Paul Levitz's scripts, and included the Quiet Darkness, called Five years Later. This is regarded as the greatest run of Legion stories ever printed by some (me included) and absolutely hated by others (including my mate Will, a member of various Legion APAs, mentioned last column). Comics do open up some lively debates and, unlike sports, there's rarely the potential for them to degenerate into full-blown fisticuffs; I think I could take Rob should the contrasting views on Kirby spill over into violence, but Will is an ex-psychiatric nurse, so I suspect I'd be pinned to the floor with ridiculous ease, especially after a few pints in the hotel bar next to where the comic marts are held.

Aston Villa, who have made a pretty good start to the new season, are absolutely battering Brighton and Hove Albion, who have also made a pretty good start to the new season and who I had to check are still called "and Hove" before typing this sentence, 4-1 as I finish this column (hold the front page, it's 5-1 now). At 5.30pm, Tottenham kick-off at home to Liverpool in the fixture of the weekend. Both sides are currently unbeaten and a win for either will keep them on the shirt tails of Manchester City at the top of the Premier League table. (6-1) The smart money suggests another high scoring draw like the Arsenal-Spurs game last weekend, but I've put my £1.00 free bet (and a little bit more) on a 3-2 home win; I really do suspect this new Spurs manager, Ange Postecoglou, and his embryonic team could be the real deal. The long-suffering Spurs fan in me hopes so, at least. I'd best go study the odds on that Cricket World Cup...

LOCO CITATO

[[“The miracle is not to walk on water. The miracle is to walk on earth.” (Linji Yixuan)...]]

From: phillies@4liberty.net

August 26

George Phillies writes:

Sympathies again on your medical issues. I hope that you recover, preferably soon.

A FanEd blocking your emails to him seems unlikely to advance Fanactivity, especially when *This Here...*, complete

with your pointed analyses of the FanEd in question, is circulated electronically to large numbers of people, including most of our members.

[[I'm always ever so slightly crogged by your quirk (if that's what it is) of never naming a person who is the topic of any, well, let's call it a "difference of opinion", but rather referring to them elliptically. John Thiel (for it is he) likes his security blanket in his bubble, but even he might have a very minimal pause when he gets criticized by Guy Lillian (in The Zine Dump) who typically tries not to have a bad word for anyone - which is actually fair enough since TZD is a listzine, not a vehicle for critical analysis...]]

On the topic of Fanactivity, The N3F newszine *FanActivity Gazette* has a new Editrix, Mindy Hunt. She and her husband Jason and collaborators also operate *SciFi4Me.com*. Mindy has already given Neffers her first issue, which was far superior my recent efforts. There is some possibility that *FanActivity Gazette* will once again have a fanzine review column, though that requires finding a reviewer.

[[I reply to George that I had intended to send Mindy a complimentary note, and he urges me to do so. The publication of COR41U PR2 gives me the opportunity as I forward it as a (so far unpublished) news item. Whoever might consider doing a zine review column for FG has big shoes to fill (Justin E.A. Busch), but I include George's note as encouragement to anyone who might consider the gig (Guy, perhaps, as an adjunct to TZD?). If I didn't have enough on my fuckin' plate already I would honestly have offered to have a go...]]

From: grahamcharnock85@gmail.com

August 27

Graham Charnock writes:

Hello Nic. Nice to have you back.

Like you I think Unc looks rather triffic in his latest hirsute incarnation, although he has turned into someone I'm not sure I would recognize if I bumped into him in the car park.

I note that footy is back, although I can no longer summon up the enthusiasm for Match of the Day that I had for the last season. I don't know why. Regarding The Kiss (and not Rodin's) while it lacked the sexual connotations of a full tonsil-gargle, it was certainly, in being non consensual, a sexual assault and the Spanish wop should be tried for it, and of course found guilty and castrated. I admit grabbing your own balls in celebration has a sort of Spanish cojoneal heritage, but it is still unseemly behaviour in anything short of a matador, which a football manager surely is.

On a musical note and in the spirit of Who Asked You? I have lately been binging for no real reason on old XTC nostalgia, a band which came from a neck of the woods that

you once inhabited. Whilst marvelling at Andy Partidge's genius and invention, it's easy to see it as an obvious manifestation of his spectrality. I always fancied his songs but recently-watched Youtube stuff has revealed his not immediately obvious guitar inventiveness, and his sometime shouty lyrics conceal an actual singing voice which is quite tasty and pitch-controlled, not like that nasty Dylan bloke with his raspy nasal tones. And you have to be fairly hip to contribute to the most recent (well, this century) Monkees album.

[[Double lush to hear from you, my old and dearly beloved mate! However, I must disabuse the notion that I ever lived in Swindon while agreeing that XTC were well good. I remember buying and hugely liking the first two albums but then for some reason (likely skint) not following up. Mentioning "that nasty Dylan bloke" also allows me to note that XTC did the absolute best cover ever of 'All Along the Watchtower', with no apology to Hendrix. I will die on this hill...]]

From:
daverabban@gmail.com

August 27

Dave Cockfield writes:

Firstly the most important thing. You can still get it up. Looking forward to your 69 position.

[[You might very well think that, but I couldn't possibly comment...]]

Secondly supporting Sunderland is not a religion. It is a form of insanity. It afflicts people who live near shipbuilding yards, have a sexual affinity for Black Cats, and hate Magpies.

I agree with you about 'Perry Mason' and 'The Lincoln Lawyer'. I love legal fiction in any form. I would recommend a tv series called 'The Twelve' with Sam Neill that brilliantly covers a trial from the point of view of the jury.

[[I have also submitted to peer pressure and popular whim and started watching 'Suits'...]]

I may have mentioned this before. Perhaps in *Vibrator*. The only time I served on a jury was related to the attempted murder of a "Batty Boy" (Jamaican patois for a homosexual). The Prosecutor alleged the victim to be wrongly accused of being a sexual predator of black children which is why he

was attacked. There were 3 black guys and 8 black teenagers on trial. Everyone else in Court was naturally white. 11 defence Barristers argued that this was actually a drug related attack. We raised questions about conflicting police evidence and got missing mobile phone records into evidence which gave credence to a drug deal gone wrong involving an Asian led drug gang. The police testimony was very dodgy with no mention of drugs at all.

Unfortunately I never got to the end of the trial. One juror fell ill, another had to go abroad on business, and a rather delightful hippie-like young lady amongst us was caught bonking the Clerk of the Court. We were dismissed. A later trial found only 2 of the adults guilty.

[[I'm naturally curious as to whether you mean that it was discovered that the lady in question was having some horizontal tango with the court official or, as your sentence reads, that they were caught in the act...]]

I have enjoyed watching 'The Witcher' Recommended are 2 seasons so far of 'From', a horror show about people trapped in a strange town Totally compulsive. I just hope they have a satisfying conclusion as it is from the creators of 'Lost'.

Nice picture of you and Sandra. Are you the ageless beauty?

[[S&ra may agree that if you think either of us are,

you must desperately need some new bins...]]

From: srjeffery@aol.com

August 28

Steve Jeffery writes:

Headmaster: Mark my words, when a society has to resort to the lavatory for its humour, the writing is on the wall.

Headmaster: I have never understood this liking for war. It panders to instincts already catered for within the scope of any respectable domestic establishment.

(Alan Bennett, 'Forty Years On')

Forty years before the mast bar. How time flies when you can't remember most of it in a drunken haze.



We are not quite as venerable as you, and a quick tot up on the back of an old envelope (*Ansible*, natch) suggests a mere 35 years since a certain G Pickersgill told us of a forthcoming mysterious gathering called (for obscure reasons we never really discerned) Mexican III. And something called the BSFA.

Is it too late to ask for a refund?

I've lost count of the number of times you "[fall off chair]" but you need to watch that. You'll do your back in.

[[It's already done in, mate...]]

Did Vikki ever tell you about the first time she met my parents? They were running a pub in Maple Cross at the time and she was sitting at the bar talking to my Dad, who was working steadily though a line of "and one for yourself, Dave" freebies behind the bar. At one point she turned round to say something to my Mum and when she looked back again Dad had slid off his stool and was spreadeagled on the floor of the bar. "Oh, don't worry about him," Mum told her. "He does that all the time."

[[That Dave, that's me that is...]]

That's good news about the gradually decreasing white cell count, and I'll leave it to people better informed to advise on the side effects of various pain meds (sympathies). Perhaps I ought to warn Vikki about too much ibuprofen - she is taking it for arthritis in her hip, although given the nearest she's come to strong drink is a sherry trifle in 1992 I suspect her liver is in pretty good shape.

[[Ibuprofen isn't the one that fucks up your liver, that's Tylenol (and also the heroin). The meloxicam I'm on is also an arthritis med, primarily, and also doesn't have notable undesirable interaction with alcohol (yippee!)...]]

Like you and Claire I've always thought that "fanzines talking to each other" was a large part of the attraction of fandom (in the same way that around that same time you could say the same of a number of UK science fiction novels and writers). It doesn't appear to be so prevalent, but that maybe that I don't read as many fanzines as I did in the 1990s and 2000s, or the conversation has moved elsewhere into places like blogs and social media. (Even then though, there were online places like InTheBar and LiveJournal, so maybe it's not as clear cut as that.)

[[We'll use the lines of communication that we have (or are currently trendy, I suppose). I continue to admit to being a recidivist in fairly solely using the medium of this here cold collation as the means of interacting with the Faniverse (or "our" small part of it)...]]

Re **Marc Ortlieb's** comment on Lance Armstrong, I often see copies of Armstrong's book *'It's Not About the Bike'* in charity shops, followed by the inevitable comment, "No, it's more about the drugs, isn't it?"

Jenny Logan. That's the name. Thanks. She still looks a bit wired in that picture, but maybe that's her natural state. Good on her. I remember the original The Two Ronnies' serial *The Worm that Turned*, although I didn't remember she appeared in it.

Leigh Edmonds' comment to me gives me an idea that if AI improves enough I can create my own avatar and send it work during the day (easier when you largely work online from home - all they see is my profile picture anyway) and then I can do something about the steadily growing To-Be-Read pile. So it's not all downside. (Somebody must have written this as a sf novel, surely.)

Kim Huett quotes **John Hertz** writing, "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, crypto-apiarists, keg bitter, punk rock, glue-sniffing, nudist Finns". For some reason, I get the impression Hertz thinks this might be a bad thing. What am I missing? And what about the keg-bitter drinking neo Trotsky punk rock apiarist nude cos players in all this? Forgotten so soon?

[[Kim reported this as a dream, not an actual Hertz quote, as realistic as it might be, though...]]

Re; "SCIENCE AND NATURE (2) : White dwarf stars can apparently change their surface composition from hydrogen to helium." Presumably in tribute to an old van der Graff Generator album.

From: portablezine@gmail.com

August 28

W^m Breiding writes:

A really good issue. Great letters. Not many comment hooks for me, except its excellence, though. I frequently forget about my rants once they've been expunged (witness my *SF Commentary* articles a few issues ago - I actually laughed when I saw **Bruce Gillespie** had finally published those!) so it was interesting seeing our discussion.

[[It's another sort-of similarity between us, except that I mostly don't forget my own "rants" entirely, but I'm happy to let them stand without any hindsight revisionism. The Mendlesohn editorial in BEAM 16 is a recent example where I did rather cock it up...]]

Hopefully you will stay healthy and vigorously fannish!

From: kim.huett@gmail.com

August 29

Kim Huett writes:

I hear you're a junkie now mate. Should we all be junkies now? What's Corflu's position? I'm so busy compiling lists and writing for ANZAPA I won't have much time to be injecting stuff into my eyeballs or whatever it is you junkies do these days. Do you mind if I be excused?

[[Dunno if there's anything resembling a "Corflu position" on this, but if there was I suspect it'd be along the lines of "we'll take anybody's money" ...]]

Winifred is all very Atwell if you're into piano solos but I much prefer Al Bowlly, if only for his version of Blue Moon, which is the only version for me.

I assume you're playing at being coy in regards to **Mike Glycer's** likely reaction. In my experience he hates anything he can't censor. He's certainly censored the hell out of me whenever I've been less than respectful to Ray Bradbury. But then I've long had the impression he'd be happy sucking Bradbury's cock, sort of Something His Way Cums, if you like. (Yeah, I know you can't print this bit. Piss funny though.)

[[I won't censor that, nor do I reckon I'm being "coy". I rarely censor anything in these pages, and your comments are simple abuse rather than something actionable, immit? Mind you, abusive tirades usually turn out a bit dull since nobody except the protagonists really give a fuck, do they? That having been said, if Mike wants to abuse you right back in here I'll give him the shot, but won't allow it to descend into endless to-and-fro. You've both got your own venues for that...]]

Well, I guess that's all I have to say about your thing so how about I finish with a story that's sure to make you feel better about your current circumstances. This comes from a newspaper called *The Sportsman* and is dated Wednesday, 6 July, 1887:

"The New York Sporting World has a weird yarn regarding a jockey named Harris, who rode Mr. B. Pryer's horse, Richmond, at the Washington Spring Meeting in May, when he won a couple of well-contested races. Harris had a mount at the Latonia races a year ago, when his horse fell in front of a field of 13, and dragged the stunned jockey for nearly a furlong. Harris was picked up for dead, placed in a coffin, and kept for a couple of days, to enable his wife and sister to be present at the funeral.

When his relatives arrived they were taken to see the body, and while they were present the attendant raised one of the eyelids whereupon, to the horror of the spectators, the eye was seen to move. He was quickly removed from the shell, and soon gave more pronounced manifestations of life; but when he recovered consciousness and bodily health it was

found that he was insane. He was then placed in an asylum, where he remained three months and his reason returned as suddenly as it had left him; but his memory is completely blank from the time of putting on the colors for the race until he regained his mental faculties in the asylum."

Imagine being left for dead in a coffin and then dumped in a nineteenth century mental asylum for a few months. Puts a bit of constipation into perspective, eh?

[[That's happened to all of us at some point, shurely?...]]

From: jakaufman@aol.com

August 30

Jerry Kaufman writes:

Like many of your readers, I can boast of more than half-a-century of life in fandom, as I started my "membership" in 1966. It's mostly been fun, and continues to be so in part because you and a few others continue to publish your issue. That's one reason I was glad to see *This Here...* pop into my inbox. Another reason is that your health improved enough to allow you the energy to write and publish it.

[[I continue to be a mere stripling at age 65¾...]]

We're looking forward to Corflu next year, but don't have any desire to host one again anytime soon, and I, at least, don't know who to approach. Perhaps we could initiate and convene an international Zoom meet-up for the fanzine universe (maybe monthly) to discuss this and other matters of interest?

[[That honestly sounds like a terrible idea. Who would you include (or exclude), and who decides?...]]

I think we'll watch *Heart of Stone* someday. Our most recent Movie Night was spent watching *The Flash*, with its multiple Batmans (Batman?) and Flashes. Although it seemed to me that the "spaghetti" theory of multiple timelines was a lot of handwaving, it allowed for much more "fan service", which amused us no end. I appreciated that its theme was "Some things can't be fixed."

[[“Batman”. We also got around to watching this a couple weeks ago, and all I really have to say is: totally worth it for the jaw-droppingly magnificent Michael Keaton, the real star of the movie...]]

I will have to try an episode or two of *Harley Quinn*, but I haven't found animated superhero shows much to my taste in the past.

[[If you don't like it, fair enough, but please do give it a go...]]

Rob Jackson and others mention a drug called Tramadol, but I keep thinking of an alien planet and species invented by

Kurt Vonnegut in, I think, *SlaughterHouse 5*. So there's that. Not much use to anyone.

[[Trafamadore was first mentioned in 'Sirens of Titan', ten years before Schlachthof (sp?) Funf...]]

With hopes that you continue to improve on various fronts...

From: perry@middlemiss.org

September 3

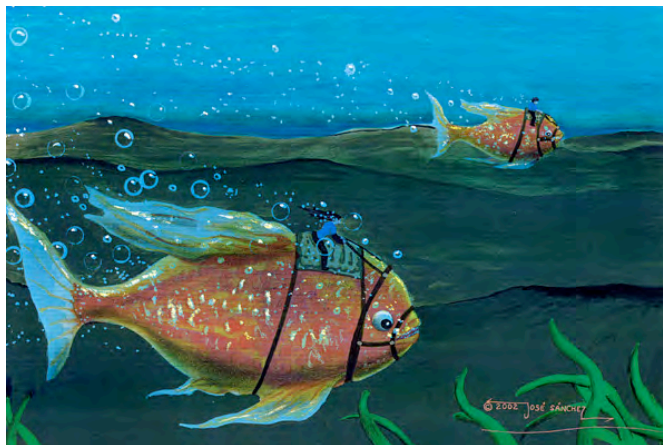
Perry Middlemiss writes:

Many thanks for these issues and all the others that I have spectacularly failed to respond to over the past 6 months or so.

[[I've missed you, mate (but still enjoying the sends of 'Perryscope') and glad to get this. As you and probably everyone else is aware I don't drop anyone from the mailing list out of any kind of strict protocol over loccing - I'd rather it goes out to as many worthies as possible. I will take anyone off the list who asks me to do so (I think the last one, ages ago, was Andy Porter who claimed lack of time to read it and keep up, fair enough) and of course there's the likes of John Thiel who blocked me for Reasons I think we're all aware of...]]

In #66 you sorta ponder why I'm not joining **Leigh Edmonds** at next year's Corflu in Las Vegas. Frankly I'd love to attend, but it's not just me that I have to think about. The missus can only take just so much fannish activity and thinks sitting around in a hotel doing very little for 3 days is rather a strange way to spend a holiday, and an expensive one at that. So unless I win a lottery or I can somehow wrangle a Corflu onto the end of another holiday segment I'll have to pass.

[[I get that, and it leads me to wonder about couples who are only - er - half fannish? (Nigel Rowe comes to mind as one such half), as opposed to what we perhaps more often see as fully involved pairs (eg Fishlifters, Jerry & Suzle, and indeed the Fareys - the list goes on). I have related the tale of a BSGF Novacon at which I was rescued from the 'Star Trek' ghetto by virtue of being asked to run teck, which I did with cohort Dave Liddle from Coventry. The wives came with us for that go, at which they spent the whole weekend in the room while Dave and meself, having had a long day at the beer sound desk ended up sleeping on the floor. I later sarcastically remarked that skilled veterans of 'Star Trek' conventions were DoBFO not



interested in an actual science fiction convention...]]

Re #67: my recent skin cancer adventures pale into insignificance when placed up against your merry lot of ailments, but I was interested to note that you might make of them a piece of "performance art" by way of a panel at Corflu. Seems I had the exact same comment directed at me - well, a panel at this year's Australian natcon - regarding my ongoing skin treatment. And I thought, nah! Attention? Who needs it! I get enough just walking down the street with my face all aglow, rather like Warren Zevon's village idiot who's been up all night listening to Mohammed's Radio. If you haven't been following this on FB then I should have something in the next *Perryscope* which will explain it, hopefully. But at the end of it all I'm glad you're getting the care you need. Just make sure you listen and do what you're told. I've heard it actually works.

I'm writing this LoC as I read through issue 67 and what do I find immediately after the last chapter, but a reference to the late and very lamented Warren. Odd, very odd.

[[Big fan, and incidentally so is Ulrika, which has meant references to the great man have also appeared in BEAM...]]

Note to self: must start mentioning fanzines in *Perryscope* at some time or other. No idea of why I haven't before now. Laziness? Self-obsession? Yeah, probably that.

[[And possibly many other reasons. I like doing fanzine reviews, even if they're only capsule ones, sort of as a community service I suppose, but I don't always have the time to do them justice. You'd possibly find, as I did, that zine reviewing turns into quite the sink...]]

And yes, I do think the stuff you do is brilliant.

I read through **David Hodson's** cricket report and I can only say, from an Australian perspective, that he is pretty much right all of the time; a tad harsh on our Pat perhaps. He's a damn fine cricketer who may just be a prime exemplar of the axiom that fast bowlers do not make the best captains. Way too much to do when bowling to have the calmness and energy to see the game in the wider perspective. I think Australia played better cricket than England in the first two Tests, mainly due to poor selections by England and the fact that we held our catches and England basically didn't - same reason we won the World Test Championship against India earlier in the summer. But Australia struggled in the last 3 Tests and really should have lost but didn't. And so goes sport.

I also note the question about whether fanzines will continue which seemed to crop up a few times. Speaking from an Australian perspective I'm

giving the scene about another 10-15 years and then it will disappear entirely. Few fans in Australia produce anything outside ANZAPA, and those that do are ageing fast. Not to blow my own trumpet but of the four fans on the ballot for Best Fan Writer at this year's Natcon Awards three are **Archbishop Gillespie, David Grigg** and myself. And of those 3 I'm the only one under 70. Hardly grounds for optimism. We just aren't seeing any new fanzine fans popping up. The ones who might get involved are interested in other things. Am I right in remembering someone calling **John Coxon** UK's youngest fanzine fan, and isn't he in his 40s? What happens when all the rest of us are gone and he's left talking to himself? Not a happy thought at all.

[[You may well (sadly) be right, but I could also argue that we're entering a phase where the dinosaurs of fanzine fanac, mostly in retirement from RL, are becoming quite productive - Rob Jackson certainly comes to mind with Inca seemingly becoming relatively frequent. Meself, I've got some projects while not quite on the back burner yet are definitely in the pantry (or freezer) waiting to be dragged out and put in the crockpot. It's conceivable that even a smidgin of uprush in old-school fanzining might appeal to those of a younger generation with retro sensibilities. We'll find out...]]

And on that sombre note, I wish you well, truly.

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

September 7

Eli Cohen writes:

This is what I get for procrastinating on doing a loc on *This Here...* -- the latest *JenZine* fell into my inbox, and now I'm again two locs behind on Farey zines. I just can't keep up with your frantic publishing schedules! Why I remember struggling to produce an issue of my fanzine once every nine months! (My roommate Asenath at the Avocado Pit used to say I was the only fanzine editor she knew who got morning sickness.)

Sorry to hear about all your health issues, but glad that at least your white blood cell count is coming down. (This seems like the place to confess that I'm completely stumped by your crossword clue -- "What leukemia is able to firstly cause especially randomly (6)" -- it seems like it might require some depressing medical research to solve...)

[[I offer Eli the solution before thish goes out, he accepts, and so: Definition of solution = "What leukemia is" ; wordplay = "able to" ('CAN') + "firstly" (initial letters of) "cause extremely randomly" ie C + E + R, thus the solution: 'CANCER'. Dark humor. Eli responds that in hindsight, yep, but he was bamboozled by the inclusion of the word "randomly" which he expected to suggest an anagram. The

I'm sure fairly few (but interested?) followers of the crossword clues will have noted that in my own devised efforts I'll often add an anagram indicator word as a misdirection...]]

Re 'Omphaloskepsis': You ask why fanzining? I myself read hardly any fanzines these days (that is, titles, as opposed to issues, of which a new Farey one seems to appear every time I turn around), which is why I always feel uncomfortable voting in the FAAn Awards; and fanzine fandom itself seems to be a mere sliver of today's fannish universe. Which is way larger and more diverse than back in my day (i.e. ancient times). I blame that on all the blockbuster skiffy movies and TV shows -- when I was a boy, SF meant books and maybe half a dozen magazines (with some spillover into comics; well, there was 'Rocky Jones, Space Ranger' on TV...), and was universally looked down upon as, you know, that "crazy Buck Rogers stuff", so we could unite as a persecuted minority. (As Dena Benatan famously said, "Let's get science fiction out of the classroom and back in the gutter where it belongs!") It was also (barely) possible to keep up with the field, given the much smaller amount of stuff being published, so people could understand your jokes and allusions. But remember, back in the Old Days the only way to keep in touch with people was by trading fanzines or writing letters (besides somewhat geographically filtered conventions, that is). No exchanging invective on Facebook -- you had to carry on your feuds in print! And I suppose at a certain point trading fanzines becomes more cost-effective than writing locs on everything, plus publishing makes you more part of the community. If you want evidence of a world-wide fannish community stitched together by fanzines, I note **Leigh Edmonds'** plan to scour old American fanzines to find out what was going on in 50's/60's Aussie fandom! But if you can keep up with what people are doing via social media, there's clearly less incentive to read their fanzines, and that's when you even care what they're doing. I also think there's a much greater pressure to read and respond when you're sent a fanzine than when you anonymously download it from eFanzines. I'm getting incoherent. What was the question? Oh yes, why fanzining? Maybe for us Old Folks it's just that old habits die hard.

[[See also comments by Perry Middlemiss above, and as with that old larrikin's ruminations, I'll wishy-washily agree and disagree with you simultaneously. No wonder I'm so tired, ey? In one sense you could regard this here mixed pile of assorted detritus to be a small part of some "last hurrah" of fanzining, presented as it is like a printed effort (o days of yore!) yet paradoxically now only distributed in an ethereal online (or onscreen, if you prefer) artifact. I think one point we can take from it all is that there's still a desire from some to respond to and participate in whatever's left of this community for as long as we can keep the beast alive in a form we can recognize to an extent, at least. And as I

almost forgot to add, the UK equivalent of 'Rocky Jones' (for me, anyway) would have been 'Space Patrol'...]]

As usual, I really like **Ulrika's** illos, especially the one on p. 14; p. 22 also -- such lovely skies!

[[I had a convo with Ulrika in one of our Zoom chats, perhaps as much as a couple of years ago now, about how much I disagreed with the concept of "some things go without saying", when they really shouldn't go without saying, and her incredible artistic skill is one of those things. See also your final paragraph below...]]

Now, what else did I want to say? Oh yes: Nic, you're brilliant!

[[Yep...]]

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com.com

September 7

Leigh Edmonds writes:

I have to know, has anyone given **John Purcell** permission to stop publishing *Askance*? I mean, it's one thing for him to say he's going to stop publishing, but *Askance* is part of the heritage of fandom and around here you have to get permission if you're going to knock down or otherwise mess around with something possessing heritage significance.

[[Well, I'm sure John will be grateful for this 'boo, but he is at heart a complete fuckin' bonehead who doesn't listen to anybody. It's his most admirable quality, in fact...]]

Your ruminations on how long you've been in fandom also did not please me. It set me thinking about how long I've been in fandom, which is quite some time and not something I'm sure I want to reflect on. If you've been in fandom 40 years that means it was ten years after I made my DUFF trip in 1974. Happy times for sure, but it also explains why my knees make funny noises when I stand up these days.

[[And speaking of knees, I just got my new hearing aids and by all the fuckin' gods mine are loud...]]

Talking of fan funds, it was nice to read about **S&ra's** visit to Las Vegas. Amazing to think that fan funds have been around since the 1950s for TAFF, 1970s for DUFF and 1980s for GUFF. Having been away from fandom for a few decades and missing a lot of the fannish fun I am actually quite excited that the current GUFF delegate, Alison Scott, will be spending a day in town in the next few weeks. Goshwowboyohboy!! There is still some magic in fandom. I was thinking of taking Alison for a walk up Lydiard Street to show her some gold mining history, but we will see how we feel about a lot of walking after three or four days conventioning.

[[It was a DoBFO massive pleasure to have S&ra in town, even briefly, as we are old friends, even though it's arguably



not really the TAFF intent to just go and hang out with your mates. In this case, though, she got to schmooze with people she hadn't known (or known very well) previously, so all good for the intent of the fund...]]

For once I've seen a movie that you've written about. By which I mean that I found *Heart of Stone* on a streaming service and sat down to watch it. I seem to have drifted off for a snooze in the middle of it because I wondered how I suddenly had two cats sitting on me when they weren't there a minute ago and a lot of blowing things up and shooting was going on, which also hadn't been on the screen the minute before. If I nod off to sleep during a movie it means that the thing didn't hold my attention enough for me to stay awake. On the other hand, the action and plot that I did see were quite respectable for what they were. (Strangely, I watched *Ant Man* last night, which was better than I expected, and I only missed about ten minutes of that one.) (Is the length of time I sleep through a movie some kind of metric for its quality?)

[[I'm beginning to suspect you could fall asleep yards away from a nuclear explosion. As, probably, could I...]]

It also struck me that the plot was quite unoriginal but, as you write, there are only a few plot lines for this kind of

movie and the fun in watching them is to see how the writers, director et al work their way around those basic plots to make something a bit fresh and interesting. On that count I'd say that *Heart of Stone* was at least as interesting and innovative as some of the later *Mission Impossible* movies (and I've done a lot of snoozing through some of them). In fact, *Heart of Stone* was interesting enough that I've been planning to watch it again to see what I missed the first time, and I can't say that for the latest *Mission Impossible*.

If one doesn't read other fanzines, what is the point of publishing them in the first place? Fanzines are written and published to be read, not to be ignored. I will admit to not reading many fanzines these days but I do try to look at whatever turns up on efanzines.com, but I'm sorry to say that most times I have not the time or energy to do a Harry Warner Jr and send off something in the egoboo line to everyone who publishes and posts there. It does seem a little sad to me if **Taral** soaks up egoboo and doesn't dispense some too by way of interaction with other fanzines. Still, it's his business what he does so I'm not going to complain about it.

[[There are actually varying and valid arguments at play. A million or so years ago, I upbraided Lilian Edwards for not locking me (or anybody), to be met with the counter argument that her words were precious and should be reserved for her own publications. I sort of came around to seeing her point, but I recently (in the last few years) have tried to carve out a minute to send something to a zine I've admired, as short as my verbiage is likely to be...]]

Friend **Hodson's** column was good again though I can't quite agree with him in his conclusions about the Ashes Test Series. 'Mediocre at best' he write of the Australian batting line up!! One might say the same of the English line up in the first two matches!! More to the point, I think, was the key role that the weather had on the series, not only with the washed out match which, I will grudging admit, might have led to an English victory, but there was the occasion when the Australian batting line-up was batting along nicely, the rain came and when it cleared up either the Australians had forgotten how to bat or something was going on with the pitch and/or the ball. (I wish I could remember the details now, but sadly not.) And it's English weather, not Australian, so you know who is really to blame.

As for footy, we're not thinking about it in this household. Last night the First Qualifying Final of the AFL was played between Melbourne and Collingwood and Collingwood won by seven points.

Melbourne would have won if they had been more accurate in kicking for goal. (9 goals 7 behinds for Collingwood and 7 goals 11 behinds for Melbourne) and if even one of those behinds had been a goal my nerves today would be a lot better. The AFL Grand Final this year is being played on the same Saturday as the convention being held in Canberra. I've already agreed with young Perry that we will watch it in the bar of the convention hotel but if Melbourne should, by some fluke, make it to the Grand Final I will either put myself into isolation to avoid the stress or make sure there are some jumper leads on hand to get me going again if the match is a close one.

Why do we do this to ourselves? What is it about sport that is so engaging? Why do we (well, at least some of us) get so exercised about something that it so irrelevant to life.?

On the topic of radiograms, the first tv set my parents bought combined the set with a radio and a turntable. However, it seems to be in the nature of television that it fills up entertainment space so that after the tv arrived there was little record playing in our home.

I was amused by **Cy Chauvin's** letter about people who talk endlessly on the phone. I can't say that I have many people who talk endlessly but I have one cousin who can talk for a long time. To accommodate him I've discovered that there is a little speaker button on my phone and when I press it I no longer have to hold the phone to my ear and I can put it down on the table next to me while I do something else. After that the occasional, 'You don't say!' or 'Tell me more,' suffices for my end of the conversation for quite some time before I have to get my brain into gear again to make a meaningful comment. Actually it's not quite as bad as that and I often learn things about my relatives that I didn't know before, so I can't complain and I have to count myself lucky because if we were on Zoom I'd have to at least look engaged.



"PRAIRIE WIND"

Wilbur

All the talk about the pills (and etc) that we are taking these days suggested to me a program item that somebody might hold at a Corflu one of these days. Everybody admits to how many pills they take daily and then the four or five who take the most have to go onto a panel where they say what all those pills are and what they are for. I only take three or four pills twice a day and I have to admit that I have now entirely forgotten why I'm taking two of them, though it was explained to me when I started taking them and the doctors still keep writing out scripts for them when I go to see them. So they must be good for me.

So, tell me again what you are going to

do with your time after you stop driving taxis?

[[Plans are afoot, fanac is involved...]]

From: dave_redd@hotmail.com

September 8

David Redd writes:

Many thanks for *TH...67*. I am in awe of your production as always. Sorry to hear you're having further rough times with the health, and wish you all the best with all of that. Your dedication in persevering with *This Here...* is truly remarkable. Contents fully up to standard, and what a great action-packed **David Hodson** column, informatively illustrated too. **Ulrika** fave pic this time p.14.

I did wonder whether I had a Radio Winston moment for you, but seems not. On a rare glimpse at YouTube I noticed a video of "Saso Avsenik und seine Oberkrainer" and thought, sounds familiar? A quick check on old vinyl revealed the act I remembered was "Slavko Avsenik und seine Original Oberkrainer". Turns out Saso is the original's grandson, who had the happy idea of continuing the family musical tradition. This is Germanic blasmusik we're talking about, pleasant but I suspect Radio Winston would deem it cheese rather than cool, slightly reminiscent of UK "trad jazz" bands c.1960. Personally I was glad to discover Saso and enjoy the music. Anyway, it proves that these days all the nostalgia you could possibly want is out there.

From: paulskelton2@gmail.com

September 9

Skel writes:

It's currently 81.5F in the lounge so today is definitely a day for sitting in the front room, on which the sun has not yet begun to shine, quaffing cold beer and attempting to get another long overdue LoC written. Cas, the Birthday Girl (77 today) has gone upstairs for an afternoon nap. Actually today is a sort of special double celebration, as it also marks the 50th birthday of her birthday card from me (special 'propensity to celebrate any given milestone' response).

Mind you, the card is not exactly 'as bought'. I've had to staple into it extra pages on which I can write her Birthday Poem every year. These started off, in our younger days, full of lovey-dovey sappy stuff, but lately I mainly seem to be trying to make her laugh, or at least smile. I also try to incorporate some significant event from the previous 12 months. For instance, for her 76th this involved some reference to the loop-recorder she'd had implanted in her left

breast, to enable 24/365 monitoring of her heart beat, in an attempt to find out why she has been having occasional 'funny turns' these last few years. Needless to say Medical Science remains baffled, as continuing problems have not coincided with abnormal heart rates. At least now we know it's got nothing to do with her heart. Or do we? There's an echo-cardiogram scheduled next week. I throw this in as my contribution to the 'Old Gits Falling Apart' stuff. OK, so it's Cas and not me, but she never writes LoCs and unfortunately I don't seem to be having any health problems at the moment. Well, marriages are about 'sharing'.

[[I'll DoBFO hope she's generally all right, mate! And despite the seeming inevitability of it all I hope we don't turn totally into "Old Gits Falling Apart" as you so concisely put it...]]

I have just saved this for the umpteenth time, given it's the second time I've typed it. I'd gotten about this far then looked up from the keyboard to suddenly discover there was only a line-and-a-bit of typing on the page. WTF! A possible associated problem is that so far I have been doing a lot more quaffing than typing (well, productive typing, anyway) so I'll probably end up having to park this and continue it another day.

[[I have also been solidly on the piss for the last five hours or so (since 4am ish) - Vegas normal...]]

save (and no, I won't keep doing this).

Actually, I was wondering, when you mentioned having spent almost half your life in the US, how you react to the outside temperature. I mean, here I started complaining about 81.5F being way too hot whilst it seems to me the US response would be 'Yeah, it got to that temperature here yesterday. I was tempted to take my gloves, scarf and overcoat off (Fucking UK wimps!).'

[[The difference between Southern Maryland (where I lived for almost 15 years) and here in the desert is practically chalk and cheese. Maryland summers would be 100F and 100% humidity (fuckin' brutal), whereas Southern Nevada summers, while 115-120F are largely humidity free (except when the monsoon rains occur). Having worked construction in both environments I'll take Nevada all day every fuckin' day. I well recall one day after work in Maryland where my mate Chewie walked (staggered, really) to the end of the fishing pier and off the end straight into the Chesapeake Bay, boots and all. You were guaranteed to lose 15-20 pounds in the summer months, which in my case I attempted to offset by scarfing a pint of Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia every night. How to be hated by dieters part 94...]]

See, I told you I wouldn't.

Anyway, your back history, as chronicled in the Egotorial, makes my staid life seem as banal as to not bear recounting. However, if you read my LoC in INCA 22 you will be aware that my mother's original boyfriend was killed in WW2, so

without WW2 my mother and father would almost certainly never have gotten together, which means I owe my entire existence to WW2. Now bear in mind, as part of the human condition, there are some folk that like us and some that don't. It now occurs to me that in my case, to the latter, my very existence might accurately be described as a 'war crime'. Can you say the same? I think not.

[[Well if adultery is a crime, then I'm the result of it. "War crime" though, well, I suppose not...]]

You finish the navel-gazing section with "We just want to be told that we're brilliant." How does this work when you are someone who... well, all you do is just write LoCs? Nobody tells LoCers that their LoCs are brilliant. OK, very exceptionally somebody will run one in the body of the fanzine as a 'Feature Letter' We LoCers get around this by simply assuming that if our LoCs are printed, then they must have been brilliant enough. Especially if the WAHF section includes names like Shakespeare, Goethe, Steinbeck, etc. – but this doesn't happen much these days. But just how brilliant is 'enough', given that most fanzines seem desperate to print response and to have a chunky letter column?

[[Oh fuck off, you got a Lifetime Achievement Award on the strength of it...]]

Obviously I should now put my keyboard where my mouth is and start looking at your LoCcol. Well, I should certainly do so after noticing belatedly that I somehow managed to accidentally reset that last paragraph to 'justified'.

[[I fixed it...]]

Anyway, you kicked off (not a token aside to the footy stuff, no comment on that this time, sorry **Dave**, but with such a high profile topic here I expect you'll do all right for response) with **Bruce Gillespie**. Now even I wouldn't, breaking it down, describe it as 'brilliant', but I have apparently one big button that it pushed. Back in 1955 my father uprooted us from the mining village of 'Wombwell, near Barnsley', (so insignificant that that was actually it's postal address), where he and his two best mates had worked in a printing company, across the Pennines to Stockport, where he and said mates had borrowed from relatives and bought their own printing company.

Now that may seem a relatively small distance these days, but back in the mid-to-late fifties, with twisty roads and only the Woodhead Pass, the journey (which we would undertake, usually over a weekend, at least four times a year, in order to maintain contact with friends and relatives) could get fraught. We'd stay at my Nana's (maternal grandmother's) place. We are talking gas lamp lighting, an outside toilet, a zinc bath in the parlour, and potties under the bed at night, no TV...by Golly we were going back in time. Had I been older I'd have been painting pictures of bison on the whitewashed walls of the outside washhouse.

There was a radio, but the grown-ups were invariably talking so this was usually switched off.

[[In 'Four Yorkshireman' mode, my grandad's "bathroom" - tin bath - (and the lav) were across the courtyard at 14 Verulam Road, not even in the "parlour". (You had a parlour? Oh, how terribly posh ect). On one occasion when grandad came to stay at ours I was required to give up my bedroom and sleep in the spare. (I know, you had a spare bedroom, posh blah blah). My mum and dad put a po under the bed because that was what he was used to. It was still there two months later, quite full, which doesn't say much for my sense of smell back then...]]

Fortunately there was a front room/best room/parlour that had a wind-up cabinet gramophone, complete with a collection of 78s. So there was the bombshell 'I remember best the "radiogram" of my own Auntie Win.', blasting me back to my Nana's gramophone. There were lots of 78s, but the only two I could really stand to listen to, and which I replayed endlessly, were Joseph Locke's 'Hear My Song, Violletta' and something called 'Whistling Rufus' by someone whose name has long since vanished into the mists of time. I have just Googled a version which, whilst clearly not the original version, definitely triggered old memories. It was very much the sort of thing that an 8-12 year-old might enjoy prior to the hip-60s. These two records helped keep me occupied during boring evenings and I would like to thank **Bruce** for bringing them back for me...though unless you send out 'egoboo express' copies of stuff to your contributors as this is definitely not developing into the sort of LoC you would either expect or wish to print.

[[I think you know by now that I'll print any old rubbish. Most of it mine...]]

In fact I think I should quit now, before this becomes an 800-page manuscript chronicling all the personal highways and byways you and your contributors have taken me down. I enjoyed it as always, Sorry if you are still short-changed.

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

September 12

Gary Mattingly writes:

I see there was flooding in Las Vegas since the lastish. Did you have to drive through any of that? Issues with other bad weather happening down there?

[[That day we had to get the windshield on my car replaced, and got home maybe 45 minutes or so before the deluge. This photo is not far from our neighborhood See photo next page for some of the flooding very near where we live...]]

Egotorial - Gee, I have a bad memory and I can't even blame it on drink. It's just the way I was built. I think I personally discovered fandom in 1969 so that's maybe 54 years ago. I



really wanted to go to St. Louiscon, the 1969 Worldcon. I was in my senior year of high school and my family lived in Overland Park, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City, so a relatively short trip. My father said no way would he let me go off with a bunch of weirdos. So my first convention was Minicon 3 in 1970, I think. Now I can't say exactly why my father let me to go that one since I was still living at home. I had turned 18 though.

Interesting notes about your mother and father, your siblings and related ancestry.

TAFFness Abounds - sounds like a good party for **Sandra** and your pork shoulder seems to have turned out well with some help, and new fans too.

Corflux - Any new North (or Central or South) American bids? Relative to next year's Corflu in Las Vegas, I see there is bowling and a video arcade at the hotel, in addition to the fitness center. I haven't been bowling in a very long time. Admittedly I never bowled very much ever. My mother was in a work bowling league for a year or two. She was working for the IRS at that time, I do believe. I did go to the bowling alley with her occasionally. I probably bowled a game or two. Anyway, I'll definitely check out the fitness center, maybe the video arcade too.

Movie Night - I haven't seen 'Heart of Stone'. Hm, generic plots and action movies. Do films like 'Face/Off' or 'French Connection' have less generic plots? Are they considered action films? 'Police Story' with Jackie Chan? 'Enter the Dragon'? 'Seven Samurai'? 'The 39 Steps'? 'Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon'? 'City of God'? 'Oldboy'? 'Sicario'?

Sort of depends on what you classify as an action movie and whether a movie has a generic plot or not and exactly what does a generic plot encompass.

[[Much of what you list here I'd describe as "thrillers" rather than action movies per se. I suppose it's a fine line in some ways, but the division is that you expect a "thriller" to be more plot-driven, perhaps, whereas a straight up "action movie" might have just enough plot to set up the kinetic set pieces. It could be argued that the best examples marry both

qualities eg my all-time favorite 'The Long Kiss Goodnight'...]]

Health Diary - Wow, a continuing list, a litany of problems, hm, more lists of specialists, referrals and prescriptions. I hope your health improves, your pain decreases, new strange bumps and masses don't appear, already found ones diminish, etc. At least your work seems to be understanding about the whole situation.

Radio Winston - SwinGrowers, thanks! I like them. I've known about Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats for a while. I like them too and I like him as a solo performer also. Enjoyed Joe Cocker - 'You Can Leave Your Hat On' too. Nicky Thomas, Althea & Donna, all good. I always liked Warren Zevon. Errol Brown and Hot Chocolate also enjoyable. Lots of new stuff by Allison Stella appearing on youtube. Thanks for mentioning her too.

Omphaloskepsis - I do read and look at fanzines. I've published fanzines. I most assuredly do not look at as many as I would like to and/or feel compelled to. Time and choices, you know. I'm not brilliant, even if someone says (well, no one has to this point) I'm brilliant. I am probably a bit asocial. I'm not inconsiderate of or hostile to others but I am rather indifferent at times. Well, I don't actively seek social interaction usually. I do actually go to Corflu now and then obviously. I don't call people and say, hey, can we get together for coffee, lunch and conversation.

TV Guide - I haven't watched the animated 'Harley Quinn'. Maybe one day. I also haven't watched 'Batman: The Brave and the Bold'. I don't watch many animated shows these days, particularly ones related to Star Trek, Star Wars, DC and Marvel. I watch 'Rick & Morty' and 'South Park'. That's about it relative to current animated series.

[[I never got the hang of 'South Park' as I typically couldn't understand a word most of them were saying...]]

Relative to non-animated shows, currently I'm watching 'Ahsoka', 'Only Murders In the Building', 'One Piece', 'Ragnarok', 'Foundation' and 'Wheel of Time'. I've watched one episode of 'Changeling' and 'The Horrors of Dolores Roach' and will try another episode or two. I'm tempted to watch 'Invasion'. I don't think I've watched any episodes of it but will refresh my memory by starting with season 1.

Footy - Congratulations [to **Dave Hodson**] on the move and internet connection. Sounds like you had a good time at the comic mart also. I really don't know anything about cricket except that sometimes the games last over a really long time. The Spanish coach situation is very messed up. Mr. Luis Rubiales is a (choose your appropriate negative term)

Loco Citato -

Bruce Gillespie - Speaking of Winifred Atwell, in "The Silent Film Group" on facebook someone just noted the following - > Ragtime American Festival in September 21-24 - "About The Festival - Located in the twin boroughs of Rockhill

Furnace and Orbisonia, PA, our festival features Grammy award winning artists performing America's musical heritage: Ragtime, Jazz, Boogie Woogie, Stride, Blues, and hits from the Great American Songbook." That could be quite entertaining.

Leigh Edmonds - It will be good to see him at Corflu.

I tested positive for Covid in Spain last year after a month traveling around the countryside. The only symptoms I had was a runny nose and a sore throat which I thought was simply an allergy. I talked with another tourist and she said lots of people had problems with allergies. So I missed my first flight back but four days later I tested negative and immediately left the country, well the next day. I've had all my boosters and hope to get the new booster in the next month or two along with this year's flu vaccine and hopefully the RSV vaccine also.

John Nielsen Hall - I didn't watch the Elton John concert in Glastonbury but I'm not sure if it was broadcast here or not, hm, probably on some streaming service. Fatboy Slim I like. I definitely would have liked to have seen that. I saw Elton John once in concert at Kansas State University. I can't remember if I had a ticket or not. I was rather broke at that time. I remember seeing him from a side entrance that wasn't too far from the stage. It was entertaining. That was in the early 70's.

I knew about John's accident and that he wouldn't be attending Corflu in Belfast, probably through In The Bar, if I remember correctly.

I have [this] picture with a much younger me with a mustache and long hair. Someplace I probably have one with me with a beard. I wonder if I can find that.



Cy Chauvin - The only time I can remember having long phone calls was with Denise Rehse after I had met her at Discon II. I was living in Storm Lake, Iowa and she was living in Detroit, Mi. I had a very large phone bill before I finally moved to Detroit.

Lucy Huntzinger - I look forward to a Chile & Easter Island trip report and photos. I hope to make it to Patagonia, Chile and Argentina, in 2024 but that still needs to be determined and planned. I may shoot for October of 2024.

Nigel Rowe - squeezed some fun out of **Sandra**? That immediately sends my mind to Firesign Theater and We're All Bozos on this Bus. "I need to find a gas station, did I just pass one?" "No, but the fox did. Squeeze him right there, maybe he'll pass another one."

Chow Yun Fat is still acting in movies. He was in 'One More Chance' which was released on June 21, 2023 in China. He seems to be in a movie every year or two although there are a few years where he appeared in two or three movies all in the same year. I've mainly seen and enjoyed the older movies he's in but some of his newer ones are fine. I never saw it but one of the lower rated ones he was in was 'Dragonball Evolution'. He's been in some good ones also over the last ten or fifteen years, ups and downs.

Indulge Me:

Rosalind Chao is supposed to have a part in '3 Body Problem' which will tentatively be released next year. She also had a part in 'Sweet Tooth' which I watched. She's been in a very large number of shows, primarily TV series and TV movies although also a number of theater released movies. Her acting career goes back to a part in 'Here's Lucy' in 1970. Gee, she must have been around 13 years old then (born in 1957.)

P.J. Soles - 'Halloween', also 'Carrie', 'Rock 'n' Roll High School', 'Stripes' and numerous other movies.

I enjoyed the photos and artwork throughout. Lots by **Ulrika**. Nice.

From: robjackson60@gmail.com

September 15

Rob Jackson writes:

I have been too busy to pay the attention I should have to the last *This Here...*, but yesterday I managed an utterly horrendous clue in the Guardian crossword. Even when you know the answer, **how** the answer relates to the clue is a fairly horrid puzzle in itself. To enable you to torture yourself at your own chosen pace, I will include only the clue in this email, then send (a) the answer and (b) the explanation in two further emails. If you can solve this without looking at my further emails, you are up there in skill level with **Dave Langford** or **Malcolm Edwards**.

Clue: Angry airmen fly public in prime locations (6).

[[Good as his word, naturally, the Doc provides the solution (IREFUL) and the deconstruction. "Angry" is the definition and the solution is determined by taking the "prime locations" of the phrase "airmen fly public", i.e. the second, third, fifth, seventh, eleventh and thirteenth letters. I considered this truly evil. Rob later adds the following:...]]

Just to let you know that Dave not only did the clue OK, but says he has seen the "primes" idea a couple of times before. Too brainy for words....

And talking of words, he also found in *Private Eye's* 'Words Fail Me' section, this rather good line: "Anagrams don't know their ears from their bowels."

From: askance73@gmail.com

September 16

John Purcell writes:

Well, today is the two-and-a-half month anniversary of announcing the last issue of *Askance*, and I can't think of a better way to celebrate than writing a letter of comment on the latest *This Here...* and to thank you for the gentle cudgeling.

In fact, before another milestone passes - not much different from a kidney stone, in some cases - I hinted at the end of *Askance* #55 of plans for a Steampunk-themed fanzine to appear sometime in the next year or so, and I have already been saving up a batch of Steampunk artwork, and taking notes on what to include in that debut issue. Not only that, the final *Askance* has already generated four letters of comment (gasp!), so I am tempted to put out a letterzine next month to fully wrap up the *Askance* era. Once that is done and out of the way, I can be free and clear of that fershlugginer zine once and for all. Oh! Before I forget, you should know that this is the thirteenth loc I have written this year (lucky you) and I have now used the word "fershlugginer" in either a fanzine or a letter of comment eight times this year. You should see the lists I maintain, Nic. It's time-consuming.

[[Which is probably why I don't do anything like list-making and maintenance at all, as you can probably tell by the occasional repetition (not to mention hesitation and/or deviation) on these here premises...]]

We have a big, honking folder of genealogy here, which is interesting to delve into once in a while. (There's another item to mark off the lists.) My dad's side of the family comes from the eastern County Tipperary in Ireland, while mom's is more from the middle of the Emerald Isle. In fact, when we were actively gathering all this information about twenty or so years ago, the cemetery in New York City where my dad's father is buried sent me a letter requesting payment for

maintenance on his plot. That's the kind of luck I have with family heritage. If you're wondering if we paid off that charge, we essentially ignored it and probably don't have that letter around here anymore. Wonder where it got off to?

Glad to see **Sandra Bond** made her way to Vegas during her TAFF Trip and has now returned safely home. I enjoyed her frequent updates on Facebook and look forward to reading segments of her trip report in fanzines. Speaking of which, my trip report is languishing in the layout and proofreading phases at present. I suppose I really should wrap that baby up. It's all written; just have to get photos and such inserted, make it all look nice and proper, then get the final product out. The format I am using - as a trade paperback - so far is looking mighty fine. It is exciting to see it come to fruition.

[[Eagerly awaited...]]

I believe I shall refrain from commenting on your medical report (pages 3 to 5), but will offer my best wishes that your treatments work well and that everything continues apace.

Jennifer, I am sure, is your live-in saint as she helps to take care of you. Bless her heart.

[[She is indeed...]]

Ah, binge-watching. Always a good comment prod. Valerie and I are essentially caught up on various series we enjoy, and now are in maintenance mode on shows like 'Wheel of Time', 'Only Murders in This Building', 'What We Do in the Shadows', 'Ahsoka', and just learned that 'Upload' is returning in late October. As you are wont to say, it's all good.

[[It seems that several people I know are riveted to 'Only Murders...', but I've avoided since I consider Martin Short in particular about as funny as a dose of the clap...]]

The saga of that "kiss heard round the world" was definitely interesting to follow. Luis Rubiales did finally resign, but I am sure that is not the end of the matter. I am sure there will be some kind of sanction and/or financial penalty applied. Stay tuned, and *This Here...*'s ace sports correspondent, **David Hodson**, will be covering developments in future installments.

[[I never know what the Hod-me-son is going to focus his laser eye on from column to column, so we shall see, ey?...]]

From: mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

September 17

Mark Plummer writes:

This is all rather embarrassing personal time management on my part. The original file name implies I started writing this on 25 June and the original version included an apology for not saying anything about #65 to which I must now add #66. Having started in June I still hadn't finished come your 17

July email with a revised timeline for #67 in late August. That was fatal. I immediately translated that as being Loads Of Time such that when #67 turned up I was thinking, hang on, didn't I have until late August, totally overlooking the fact that it was by then indeed late August and #67 had appeared exactly when you said it would.

Anyway, turning back to #65, I had meant to say something about **Dave [Hodson]**'s idea for a Corflu in the UK in 2025 but then I thought that as I'd been party to some of the discussions I'd see what everybody else had to say about it – and that seems to be nothing much at all.

[[I'm quite disappointed by the apparent collective shrug as well...]]

A Corflu in the UK is considerably more convenient for me than one in the US for all the obvious reasons. Personally, and speaking purely for my own convenience, I'd rather it wasn't on the weekend before the Eastercon. Thirty years ago, maybe twenty years ago, I'd have been all for that kind of concentrated burst of fanac but now a long weekend at a convention followed by a couple of days at home to do laundry and repack and feed the squirrels before plunging out into the fray again feels a bit frantic. Yeah, I know, I'm sounding old in just the way Dave says we all do.

However, for a UK Corflu to work it needs to attract a reasonable number of people from the US and Canada – other places would be nice too, obviously – and if pairing it with an Eastercon helps do that then I can hardly complain seeing as I'm being spared an international flight. Does it actually make it more attractive? About half of the Americans who went to Corflu in Belfast didn't go on to Eastercon in Birmingham. How many of the Americans who went to Corflu and Eastercon wouldn't have come to a Corflu alone? Would a Corflu at a different time be more attractive? I suspect some of the Brits might opt to do Corflu or Eastercon but not both.

[[Personally if we were to take a UK trip in '25 it would likely encompass both that putative Corflu and the Eastercon, since there's mates I know who will go to the latter but not necessarily the former and vice versa. A trip would also involve stuff you'd expect like grandchildren, parents' resting places and such and you can't do all that in ten minutes, so we'd be looking at several weeks and a lot of dosh...]]

I also wonder about the Covid consideration. We're talking about 2025 and who knows where we'll be by then, but a



significant percentage of the people who attended both Corflu and Eastercon ended up testing positive and some had to revise their travel plans as a result. Things may be different in 2025 but does the knowledge of what happened in 2023 influence people's thinking?

Any mention of Winifred Atwell makes me think of that scene in *Fawlty Towers* s2e1, 'Communication Problems', the one where

Basil is trying to place a bet on a horse race without letting on to his wife, Sybil. The Major, the hotel's permanent resident, is telling Basil that he'd been to the theatre with Winnie Atwell and when Basil queries this the Major explains that her name is actually Marjorie Atwell but he calls her Winnie 'because she looks like Winnie'. 'But she's not black,' says a bemused Basil. 'Churchill wasn't black' says a slightly indignant Major.

That episode was broadcast in February 1979 and I had to get my father to explain the reference. I got the Churchill bit obviously but had never heard of Winifred Atwell. (Something similar happened with an episode of *Morecambe and Wise* a few years earlier where they're performing one of Ernie's plays. Ernie is playing Napoleon and due to a misunderstanding Eric turns up as Duke Ellington. I'd not then heard of him either.)

You surely knew that even without tagging me you'd get me curious about the question of which Corflu had the most international attendance. I guess for most Corflus, at least in the last twenty years or so, you can assume a baseline of three: USA, Canada and the UK. A few have added Australians. Eric Lindsay and Jean Weber were at several, and Damian Warman and Juliette Woods were in Seattle at least. Eric and Jean were there last time we were in Toronto as was Pete Young from Thailand so that makes five. No Australians this year, and nobody from the Irish Republic, but there was Pascal Thomas from France and Marcin Klak from Poland so also five. And come to think of it, Vincent Docherty was there too and he's lived in the Netherlands for decades so that's six. Although if Vincent counts as Dutch and Pete counts as Thai then I guess the Harveys and the Mearas count as French, not that the Harveys were along this year but they've been quasi regular attendees for years. And if they (and Vincent and Pete) don't count on the grounds that they're British resident overseas, then in the interests of balance Nigel Rowe counts as a New Zealander and James Bacon counts as Irish by nationality if not residence so Belfast is up to seven. So my gut reaction without ploughing back through all the membership lists is Belfast was the most

international Corflu ever with attendees from six originating countries and seven nationalities. I have a horrible feeling I'm missing somebody blindingly obvious, though.

[[Yep, I knew you'd rise to the bait...]]

(Delighted, by the way, to hear that **Leigh Edmonds** looks to be coming to Las Vegas. I know I've seen him a couple of times in Australia but I don't believe we've properly met.)

I can't speak for anybody else and thus can't comment on whether **Taral's** on to something when he says in *Dark Toys* #75 that "I've begun to suspect that *most* fans who publish fanzines don't read them". For myself, I'm with you in that I at least skim every fanzine that's sent to me and read most, at least in part. Maybe you and I are the exceptions. Maybe I no longer count as a '[fan] who publishes fanzines' as setting aside APA contributions it's been well over a year now.

I should be clear that I'm talking about fanzines that are sent to me, whether that's on paper or electronically. I don't claim the same of material parked on efanzines for the benefit of anybody who might be interested. I get the emails from Bill saying what's new there, and inevitably some of those immediately invoke enthusiasm while others... don't. The extent to which I follow up on any of them is in part down to the extent of that enthusiasm but also timing and personal convenience. I may miss some stuff I'd otherwise like simply because the email comes in at a personally busy time and however much I mean to get back to it I often don't.

[[Some of the mailouts are strangely flaky. Guy Lillian used to email me Spartacus, as did Garth Spencer with The Obdurate Eye, though I mention those two as ones I will check out on efanzines when I see a new ish is out anyway, so perhaps they don't need to. Then again, not getting a copy directly means they don't get mentioned here in 'Fanzines Received'...]]

Taral does often email his fanzines to us and when he does I do at least skim and often read them. We certainly got *Dark Toys* #74. But as far as I can tell we weren't sent *Dark Toys* #75 and so I'm only seeing it now off the back of your reference to it. Maybe some of this should be a letter to **Taral**, especially as by the implication of 'Plausible Denial' he probably won't see your commentary in *This Here...* or anything from me or anybody else you publish in response. **Taral** says of *Banana Wings* 'it has been well over a year since the last issue, and I've yet to see any feedback on the long, ambitious article that I wrote for the last one.' It's certainly true that we haven't published #79 and, yes, it's been over a year and I feel a little guilty about that because we'd really meant to get back to some quasi-regularity. As regards feedback on **Taral's** article, **Bruce Gillespie** wrote a review of #78 in *SF Commentary* #110 (July 2022) praising at length the "brilliant article by **Taral Wayne**" while – and I am not bitter about this – tendering "Apologies to Claire and Mark, but I have to say that this time their usual meandering-but-well-planned editorials pale beside writing of this quality". **Taral**

of course likely won't have seen this because he "almost never read fanzines".

I was going to try to say something about content consumption versus content creation but will waive that in the interests of not missing another deadline. Rather I'll conclude by saying that I was impressed by how up-to-the-minute you and **Dave Hodson** managed to be in #67 over Luis Rubiales and his "celebratory" kiss following Spain's win in the World Cup. It suspect that it could have been cleared up fairly quickly with a genuine apology, saying something about being caught up in the moment of jubilation, but no, he had to try and brazen it out. If I had been equally up-to-the-minute in writing to you I'd have seemed more prescient in saying that surely we all know that he's going to be leaving his job whether through resignation or dismissal and possibly will have done so before I finish the sentence.

[[Or indeed even sooner...]]

WAHF

Dave Langford (see 'Give Us a Clue'); **Don Miller** : "I was the one who first discovered SwinGrowers, and posted on Radio Winston ages ago." *[[Credit where it's due. I should have suspected you because of your known predilection for charismatic female lead singers (eg Imelda May)...]]*; **Jose Sanchez**; **Taral Wayne** : "If you need a wheelchair, the miracle is to walk at all" ;

FANZINES RECEIVED

Gratefully acknowledged as ever...

ALEXIAD #130 (**Joseph and Lisa Major**) - ...

JENZINE #6 (**J L Farey**) - ...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #58 (**Andy Hooper**) - ...

INDULGE ME

✘ **SCENTED CANDLE UPDATE** : Been a minute since I did one of these, but **Smith's** had a half-price sale a few weeks ago so I got some new ones, including 'Lilac Blossom' (Tuscany candle, inevitably) which is super-nice and reminds me of the massive lilac bush in the back garden of the house I grew up in...

✘ **CROSSWORD CLUE FOR ELI** : This'un really should be larffably easy: "SF epic discovered leaderless country (10)" ...

✘ **EGOTORIAL EXTRA** : Yeah, thish ended up being rushed again (imagine that ey?) in no small part to an ancestry update of being contacted by one of my half-siblings, **Peter Honey**, with whom I chatted for a good couple

of hours yesterday. That, and this increasingly cranky 1,000 year-old iMac being even more painfully slow these days. ETA: also heard from my sister Emma, and this morning the Mac, possibly having overheard talk of being replaced, is chugging along rather well. Typos may still occur, though, if not actually abound...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : Lani Hall, a fine singer in her own right but also notably the wife of Herb Alpert...



✘ **RADIO WINSTON EXTRA** : For me and other fans of the Argentine group Eruca Sativa, they recently posted a bunch of live performance videos on their YoobToob channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@ErucaSativa> ...

✘ **THE LANGFORD REFERRAL** : An article, inevitably off the *Grauniad* about how [crosswords aren't just for blokes](#). Is it typical pandering or thinly-veiled sparkling misogyny?...

✘ **TV GUIDE/BEAUTIES CROSSOVER** : Looking at the ad (pictured right) for the new season of 'The Morning Show' (which I've never watched) it occurs to me to ask which of the following best reflects your personal view:

- They are both equally attractive
- They are both attractive, but one more so (which?)
- One of them is attractive, the other not (which?)
- They are both unattractive

I do have a definite view on this, to be revealed nextish...

✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE ROUNDUP** : Plenty from the Antipodes, as the story of the foraging woman who acquired a worm parasite in her brain had its fifteen minutes and more, and I'm sure everyone's clocked it. In a 'Jurassic Park coming soon' segment, a previously thought extinct avian, the tanahe (there's a diacritical mark in there somewhere) has been [reintroduced in New Zealand](#). You do wonder (in proper skiffy tradition) if they got wiped out in the first place because they were [delicious](#)...



Dimethyl sulfide is an exciting compound (no, honest!) because it's naturally produced by some marine algae and is now suspected to exist on a [faraway oceanic exoplanet clocked by the James Webb telescope](#). We'll get there one day, possibly in season 15 of 'For All Mankind'?...

✘ **FAANWANK** : A further September distraction has been compiling (for no immediately urgent reason) the list of the [guilty](#) eminent award administrators since the 1995 revival of the FAAns. **Magister Burns** has added the results to the Corflu history at: <https://corflu.org/history/faan-admin.htm> ...



✘ **BERNIE EVANS, R.I.P.** : Another dear old mate drops off the twig. I got to know Bern' really well at the various Novacons I did teck for back in the day, not just because she was usually running things in one way or another, but also because I had the foresight to designate the sound desk and immediate environs as the "smoking area" of the programme room (those were the days) to which she'd

be a frequent visitor. A couple of salient and enduring memories were, one, her stomping up to the desk as we were doing the usual playing of some music between items, in this case Philip Glass, with the stentorian instruction to “turn that fookin’ roobish off!”; the second would be an overnight stay at Cape Hill where we were shown the important locations of tea, milk, mugs and all with the welcoming remark “You can get anything you like except maid service”. Another one of a kind, she was...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : For the usual dismay of Jerry Kaufman, how about that **Liza Goddard**, ey?...

✘ **NEXTISH** : October 28th, probably, unless *BEAM* or something else intervenes massively again...



MIRANDA

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**“Really don’t mind if you sit this one out
My words but a whisper your deafness a shout
I may make you feel but I can’t make you think
Your sperm’s in the gutter, your love’s in the sink”**