

This Here...

"...regrettable but perhaps inevitable..." (W^m Breiding)

EGOTORIAL

FINANCIAL FUCKERY

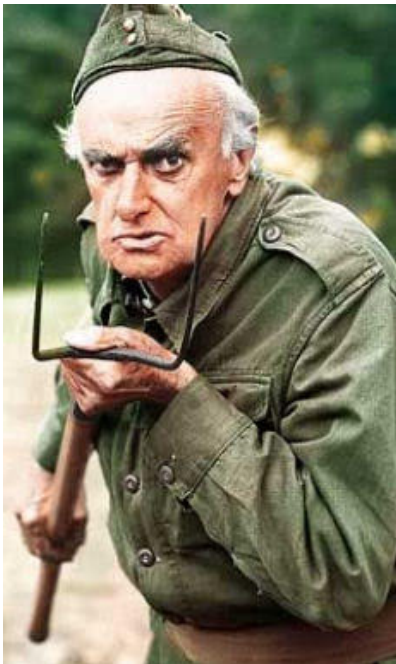
I remember reading a quote/comment years ago along the lines of: "America (or insert almost any other capitalist country here) does not have a war on poverty. It has a war on poor people." Recent experience suggests an unwritten but enforced rule of the powers that be which says: "We believe you may have acquired a little money, and are thus going to remove it from you by any means necessary."

I'm also minded of a somewhat typically dour remark by (I'm pretty sure) **Joseph Major** from an early ish of this here tin of dried egg which went something like: "The acquisition of money will be swiftly followed by an emergency requiring a similar or greater amount of money."

Getting ready to pack up work, I've checked that my health insurance is good until the end of February, at which point I have to switch to Medicare, and I'm as easily confused as ever by all the hoops and obstacles the system places on that path, having naively thought that stuff *ought* to work by the equivalent of "You are 65 years old (or in my case now 66), here is your bus pass".

I managed to cock up the Medicare by not applying for Part B because of what I interpreted as willfully obscure instructions which suggested that because I still had health insurance through work I shouldn't do that, when the truth is the opposite. I end up making an appointment at the Social Security office to provide various bits of documentation so my Part B can get going on March 1st, and the bloke asks me why I'm not also taking my Social

Security. I explain that I was waiting until "full retirement age" of 66 and 8 months (although the system would like you to wait until 70 when it maxes out), because I'd thought there was a big difference in the amount, which it turns out there isn't so much. \$75 a month rather than the couple hundred I had envisaged. So, all right then, I'll start my Social Security now as well and take that \$1600 a month or so. But...



"Are you getting any pensions from anywhere that did not pay Social Security contributions?"

Well, yeah, my Scholl(UK) pension and the pending UK state pension, because, duh, UK...

I am immediately informed that there's something called a "windfall penalty" that applies under these circumstances which amounts to 20% of my expected dosh. So, if I've got this straight, my Social Security (which I've paid into for 30 years) is shorted because of UK pensions (which I also paid into) for reasons that seem to defy all logic.

I'll say this for the lot at the Social Security office, though - while it seems I never get what I want to hear, I always find out what I need to know, stated in terms that even a thicko like me can understand, and must accept under the general principle that I am

not allowed to be near money.

We had another massive scare over **Jen's** health insurance needs, since being all young and lovely & that she's not of an age to also get Medicare, so needs something off the ACA ("Obamacare") for her main needs which are mostly due to the rheumatoid arthritis. After an initial meeting with the (typically very nice) agent Barbet, it seems like we've got her sorted for the startling and genuinely affordable sum of \$2 a

month. Now of course this is income-dependent stuff so we give them estimates for 2024, and all seems well until requests for more information start piling in, including the suggestion that they might quite like to see the 2023 tax return when it's done.

Screams, tearing of hair and rending of garments ensue (all from me, really), since last year I got the upfront pension lump sum from Mercer (who manage the Scholl(UK) pension plan), and if you include the fact that I was DoBFO working all year, the 2023 income looks about 4 times what 2024 is going to be, and if they were going to assess on the basis of *that* number the monthly dibs would be more like \$700 in our worst-case nightmares.

Fortunately it appears that the 2024 estimate will do the trick, so even if the \$2 a month doesn't hold it's not going to end up much more. Because most of **Jen's** income at the moment is off a little bit of Amazon but mostly EBay sales, it was interesting to note that Barbet was surprised she was even declaring her EBay income to the taxman, since they don't as yet do tax reporting (as Amazon does). The expectation must be that even poor people of a certain level of intelligence are expected to cheat.

An aside to that is that, having got **Jen** signed up for her ACA plan, she's (technically illegally) had two health insurances on the go at once. It was explained to us that the system doesn't like that, because in theory you could double up on prescriptions of eg fentanyl and be selling the surplus on street corners.

Not an option we'll be exercising...

It's all good.

January 2024

CORFLUX

41 NEWS

PR4 will be out in two weeks with much information members will need pending arrival.

Sadly the planned Friday excursion to the Ice Age Fossils Park has been kiboshed. In response to my booking inquiry, Dawn Reynoso from the park writes: "Thank you for reaching out about a visit for your group. Unfortunately, we aren't scheduling any group tours, field trips, or off-site presentations until we have a better understanding of our park visitation and are able to determine what our limited staff can accommodate. We are also only open on weekends for the time being and we don't have a date for when we will be opening up during the week yet. We think that by mid to late March we will have a better idea of what our park

operations look like and how many extra activities we will be able to fit in. I'm sorry we can't schedule anything for March 1st."

As attempts at cat-herding have failed to coalesce around an alternative among the many exhibits Las Vegas has to offer, I doubt we'll be hiring a bus for anything, reverting to the more typical fannish ad hoc anarchy.

One other point I'd like to strongly make here is about membership upgrades and actual attendance. I'm imposing a **cut-off date of February 20th** to let us know about either of these, for what should be DoBFO reasons of print quantities for the publications *and* banquet seating numbers - the majority of our expenses. A membership upgrade can be achieved by simply coughing up the difference between the level you're at (Virtual or Supporting) and the level you'd now like to be eg **Alison Scott** who decided this week she'd rather be an "S" than a "V", and who wouldn't?...

FAANWANK

VOTING DEADLINE

A reminder that your FAAn award ballots must be received by midnight PST, Saturday February 24th 2024. It would be nice to see an increase in voter numbers over last year, especially from Corfu attendees whose turnout in most recent years has barely exceeded a weedy 20%...

HEALTH DIARY

PHLEBOTOMY

A new word on me, that, helpfully given the alternative definition by **S&ra Bond** via "I'm Sorry, I Haven't A Clue" as: "Resembling the arse of a biting insect". Also known as "venesection" according to **Chuck Connor** (see locs), which may be the British usage or perhaps something slightly more specific, fuctifino guv...

As mentioned lastish, yes, it's bloodletting (and I've shurely heard *every* joke about leeches on the planet, so please spare me unless you can be startlingly original about it).

So, while the white blood cell count has been descending nicely and is getting very close to the target of 15 whatevers per something, I now have "thick blood", with a *red* cell count about double what it should be. Nice Nurse Hannah has scheduled me for CT scans (February 10th) and a very comprehensive load of blood tests to find out if this is polycythemia vera (oh, just look it up) or worse, or merely ("merely"?) as she suspects over-oxygenation due to 50 years of smoking two packs a day.

Anyway, the first leech session happened in January. **Jen** asked about how long it was expected to take to drain off 500ml (is that half an armful?) as she was deported to the waiting room, and was told "20-30 minutes". But coo er gosh, I delivered the required amount in *nine minutes*, so yay me, I suppose. Next go on February 15th.

If anyone's wondering what happens to all the blood afterwards, my assumption is that it's chucked out, or I should be nicer and say medically disposed of in a suitable manner, because it's no good for anything. In any case (as far as I know this is still the case) I'm not allowed to give blood in the USA due to having been resident in the UK during the Mad Cow Disease outbreak.

Now, on the bollock front, or perhaps more accurately the bollock side, or underside, then again that would still depend upon the position and relative velocity of the hypothetical observer - if you now are considering an image of **Nolly** departing at speed from the prospect of testicular inspection I would suggest you're not alone - the Knacker In Question seems to have retreated to a state of (mostly) good behavior, alighting at a position of occasional mild annoyance.

What's turning into a more literal pain is that my legs have got wonkier to the point where it's a fuckin' chore to have to walk more than a few steps without them aching, and I've had to catch myself from falling down a few times this last week in particular, unusually not because I was langered by any means. I'm hoping, of course, that this too shall pass, at least to the point of being "not too bad" ((c) Bill Bailey) but I suppose we shall see if the legs follow the same path as the bollock, which does sound a bit like an epic of contortion don't it? *Not* a Corflu program item any time soon, I promise...

LAST EXIT

ONE FINAL TAXI COLUMN

Ulrika O'Brien perceptively noted in her first editorial turn on *BEAM* that there seemed to be inevitable musical references in my writing, ranging from the obscure to the overt with perhaps a bit more tendency to the obscure, and this column title is no exception. **Lucy Huntzinger** is another who likes this sort of thing, so I'll meander off into a bit of exposition.

Last Exit (a name also used by others) were a Geordie jazz-rock-ish outfit, reasonably popular on their home turf and these days probably only considered notable because Sting was their bass player. I MCed for them twice at LSE gigs in 1977 before they broke up and Sting went on to his more famous band. The A&R men of the time quite liked them but didn't consider them marketable (1977, remember), although

a few of their slices ended up being reworked for both Police albums and Sting solo efforts. What's that got to do with taxis and the price of fish, then?

Well, fuck all of course, but it seemed like a decent column title for The Last Taxi Column, which I think perhaps ought to have appeared in a special issue of *Vibrator*, since dear old **Graham Charnock** was the one who got me to originate it, for which my continued thanks because that got me on a fairly strict monthly writing schedule, even if some of the results were a bit shoddy due to being rushed and drink...

As I write, I've got two days of work left to get through (Sunday and Monday) after which a life of ~~leisure~~ panicked mostly Corflu-related fanac beckons.

What I find perhaps surprisingly odd is a sense of impending bereavement. Lots of the nice people at Lucky Cab tell me that I'll be missed, and supervisor Mark of our sister company Western cab insists that I'll miss all them too and thus will be back shoveling shit and salt in the trenches of the Las Vegas roadways in a jiffy, or some similar short interval. He's right in the sense that I've had a good relationship with many (but by no means all) of my colleagues, gregarious bloke that I am (at work, anyway, where you need to turn it on), and I'll definitely miss the cameraderie and commiseration which is a staple on most of the cab stands.

Equally, I'll miss working relationships established over this last 9 years with various front-of-house people at some of the properties, a few of whom I now consider genuine friends. There's arseholes in those positions too, and you can tell where I think they are by the properties I've avoided staging at for the most part.

I'm suspecting the biggest adjustment (apart from the DoBFO no fuckin' money) will be attempting to readjust my sleep/wake schedule to something most people might consider "normal". As I write this it's 5:20am on Friday, having got up about 2:30am (sleep-in!) and after coffee and medications I will get sufficiently *compos* to do fanac for several hours before the mental nap time alert goes off. Fighting that off at the moment, because I know that as soon as I submit to the siren song of tea and toast a lie down cannot be far away. Normal workweek bedtime is around 4:30pm, actual alarm set for 1am, and I've only occasionally strayed from that on my weekend, although such straying does occur, typically accompanied by whiskey.

I'm expecting to try to time-shift in the lead up to COR41U, but also have to bear in mind the medication schedule for the Calquence (every 12 hours) which will have to shift along with that. Fortunately there's a window of about 2 hours either way for that drug rather than a strict timing, so I expect that'll help. I do sometimes forget drug time on weekend days, whereas during the work week it's a simple

enough “take one before I leave for work, take the other when I get home”.

With the three day weekend I’ve been enjoying, if that’s the right word, for the last year or so I’ve been prone to utterly slacking off for one or two of those days with the inevitable result of having a sulky guilt because I haven’t Done Fanac the way I wanted to. It’s a genuine worry that after Monday my days will submit to entropy and become utterly unstructured, although *knowing* this might help me to resist that effect. We’ll find out, as I’m fond of saying...

TV GUIDE

’TIS THE SEASON (ENDER)

Sure enough, I must have talked myself into tea and toast (and a bit of red velvet cake), so it’s now a bit over three hours later after a session in the comfy embrace of the bedcovers and I’m not atypically attempting to exacerbate the guilt/panic with beer of the quality referred to as “cheap pish” by some upturned noses of my acquaintance.

Three of our shows ended their current seasons in January: “For All Mankind”, “Monarch: Legacy of Monsters” and “Reacher”. (Undoubted spoilers follow.) Two others have now restarted: “La Brea” (in its final season) and “Quantum Leap”.

“FAM”, as it’s known, since all genre TV shows must be abbreviated as if they were part of a secret language, is known for ten year time gaps between series, so season 4 began in 2003 (after the preview glimpses at the end of S3), managing to have at least some of the older pivotal characters be not dead yet - not only that but still contributing their share of conflict. Given their in-story ages, though (and their arc resolutions), whether we’ll see any of them in series 5 (to be set starting in 2012) is less likely. The show could accurately be described as a soap opera, but without the negative and OTT qualities that term would suggest. By 2003 the Mars base is much expanded and international tensions as well as those between civilian and military residents reflect those back on Earth. The main story centers on capturing a metal-rich asteroid to be mined, originally near-Earth, but in the denouement that doesn’t happen because of critical actions from the main players which is certainly going to end up moving them well offstage for season 5 (if they’re not dead yet). It’s been a very satisfying, intense and thrilling watch.

“Monarch”, I finally came to realize (being remarkably thick at times, it seems), is apparently the *sixth* installment of what’s known as the “MonsterVerse” which goes back to 2014’s “Godzilla” movie. Fortunately for the likes of meself, it doesn’t seem to require MCU levels of watching everything else in a fixed sequence, since I was able to follow

it all well enough. Probably unfairly to the rest of the cast, the main (human) attractions are undoubtedly Kurt Russell and his son Wyatt playing his younger self. The realization of the various “titans” onscreen is stunning and does make me want to check out the previous movies (especially after learning that John Goodman is in one - or more? - of them). The ending is a real “to be continued” cliffhanger, the cherry on top of the icing of a cameo from yer actual Godzilla by having Kong wander in...

‘Reacher’ season 2 is, as you’d expect, a self-contained story, this’un based on Lee Child’s eleventh ‘Reacher’ book “Bad Luck and Trouble”. It’s a good choice, reuniting Reacher with his old 110th Army Special Investigations unit after one of them has died under suspicious circumstances (as I would contend that being chucked out of a helicopter could be so described). For all those of that appreciate a good fight scene and plenty of Stuff Go Bang ‘Reacher’ is sterling. It’s old-school good guys vs bad guys, and you usually clearly know which is which, especially when Robert Patrick is in the cast. I’m sure there’s reams of psychological analysis out there, not only about the character of Jack Reacher himself but also why we root for him so readily. His considerable fighting abilities and deduction skills are coupled with an unshakeable moral sense and loyalty, for all his introversion and essential withdrawal into a nomadic off-grid lifestyle. I read an article, I forget where of course, about how much actor Alan Ritchson *really* embodies Childs’ creation. Nobody wants to mention Tom Cruise’s effort - he can stick to ‘Mission: Impossible’ and be well good there...

‘La Brea’ enters its third and final season with most of its generally unlikeable characters *in situ*, though mercifully having the least likable of all, Eve Harris (portrayed by Natalie Zea) offstage for, we’re told, most of the season. The annoyance of Eve shouldn’t really reflect on the actress, who after all is only working with what she’s given by the writers, but her absence ought to reduce the screaming quotient round here, except that the annoyance gaps will seemingly get filled by others. It’s almost but not quite at idiot plot levels, so a fair question is why are we even watching it? All right, I’m a sucker for just about anything involving time travel and I’m invested in how the non-idiot bits of the conspiracy-loaded plot are going to turn out. **Jen** follows along for the Hollywood landmarks of her home town, even if a lot of them are in 10,000BC. I ask her if this isn’t a bit like “Lost” (which I never watched) with its coterie of stranded misfits, strange intrusions of technology from other time-displaced groups and a big ole chunk of eval government, scientists (and government scientists) and she answers “Well, yes,” adding “But not as good”...

‘Quantum Leap’, which I think is derided by many as being nowhere near as good as the Scott Bakula/Dean Stockwell version, I actually find quite watchable, and it now differentiates itself from the original by concentrating a lot



more screen time on the QL team and their interplay, making this a genuine ensemble effort. My favorites there are Nanrissa Lee as Jenn Chou, head of security, and especially and magnificently Mason Alexander Park (pictured above) as Ian Wright, architect of Ziggy the AI. There's also a love triangle of sorts, well, it's turning into more of a love Venn diagram really which is spread across the timeline(s) - see note above about ongoing time travel goshwow. It's unfortunate, though (and is it physical shaming?) that I find it *very* difficult not to get snarky about the prominent chin cleft of actress Caitlin Bassett which I deem to be of Grand Canyon proportions and am wont to yell "Hide in her chin!" whenever leaper Ben Song (a solid turn by Raymond Lee) inevitably gets in trouble, to **Jen's** continued amusement so far, although I suspect that will wear off...

RADIO WINSTON

MAMA ZU

I believe you'll recall a previous column about Those Darlins, which several of you seemed to appreciate, even though it included much sadness over the untimely demise at 28 of lead singer and guitarist Jessi Zazu in 2017.

Turns out that she and Darlins bandmate Linwood Regensburg had been working on a project right up until her

dropping off the twig (a couple of the slices from that were debuted at her public memorial), but unsurprisingly it took until 2020 for Regensburg to feel able to get back to finalizing it all. From the press release, he says:

After she died, I didn't want to touch it. I didn't want to play the songs or listen to the songs, let alone finish them. It just seemed like such a daunting task with a lot of layers — there was a lot of work left to do, but then there was also this exhausting underlying emotional component that pops in and hangs around the moment I'd open a session. It was a way of spending time with her, and kind of the only capacity in which I could. But then, I was also left with a lot of creative choices without her. Even though I had played most of the instruments, it had still been a totally collaborative thing; if there was a part I played that she didn't like, she was clear about that. If someone's gone, you can still talk to them, but you can only assume what their feedback might be. So I was stuck with a lot of musical choices that I'd be working under the context of, 'I hope you like what I did here.'

The single '[Lip](#)' was released a couple months ago, and oo my good gawd it's a classic Jessi in-yer-face (musically and lyrically) banger, which I listen to with very mixed emotions - utter joy at hearing that voice, of course, overlaid with inevitable sadness that one of the great creatives of my lifetime isn't around to do more of this.

The album 'Quilt Floor' releases on February 23rd, and you can preorder at <https://orcd.co/quiltfloor> ...

MOVIE NIGHT

LIFT

Yes, I'm going to devote some space to a movie with a 28% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and possibly have another bit of rant about ponce-arsed critics lambasting genres as being formulaic.

It's quite true that I can be remarkably uncritical about action movies because Stuff Go Bang (especially if Jason Stratham is present) and heist movies (and TV shows) are another thing I typically enjoy. 'Lift' (Netflix) is one such, seemingly inevitably getting slagged off with the lazy critics' fallback "mindless entertainment", without a clue as to the fact that there's a lot of punters who both want and like the more than occasional offering unburdened by Christopher Nolan-style twists and turns. RT's consensus includes the equally lazy "thinly written characters" and "formulaic, haphazardly written story" disses, both of which in my opinion are dead wrong, especially when you have the amenably charming Kevin Hart as the lead and you've got

solid and not-phoned-in turns from both Vincent D'Onofrio and Jean Reno.

Formulaic? Well *of course* it is. We open with a clever heist establishing the *bona fides* and skills of Cyrus's (Hart) team, after which they're required to join forces with Interpol agent Abby (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) - with whom Cyrus has had a bit of pelvis-bumping previous - to thwart the movement of a massive amount of gold and the nefarious plans of bad guy Lars Jorgensen (Reno). The big wrinkle is that the heist has to take place on a big ole airliner in flight, and you get the typical tropes of having thirty seconds left to do x or the whole scheme goes tits up, and a fun fight scene on a plane that's doing barrel rolls contributing to the kinetic bits you'd expect, and so on. Speaking of the plane(s), a nice showing by Cyrus' team pilot Camila, played with (albeit rather taciturn) confidence and aplomb by Spanish actress Úrsula Corberó who I half expected to say "I fly the plane" (yes, I *adore* Melissa Navia in 'Strange New Worlds', don't we all?) at any moment.

There's a mostly expected twist at the end, the good guys win and yippee. By no means a waste of 107 minutes round here, more like a fun diversion.

Some of us *like* "mindless entertainment" ...



GIVE US A CLUE

Eli Cohen : I think it's highly unfair that you won't let me cheat on your crossword clues -- it's not it's not like I have any native talent for solving them. Well, let's see, "Shaken,

stirred, but his real name in famous fantasy (7)" ... Sounds like a Bond reference, which would make "his real name" Connery, which has 7 letters! "Shaken, stirred ... in famous fantasy" presumably also means the letters are mixed up in some fantasy, and "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" seems to have all the necessary letters, so I'm going with "CONNERY".

[[That's an amazingly convoluted route to the wrong answer! Admittedly the bit of misdirection here was moderately evial, even as the wordplay is rather straightforward: "Shaken" (anagram indicator) "stirred" yields "strider", but since the clue asks for his real name, the solution is ARAGORN...]]

"Larrikin correspondent, an intermediate failure? (10)" -- I don't even understand this one. I am completely clueless. Amusingly, Google gets exactly one hit on it -- some web site called efanzines.com, in something called *This Here...*, so totally useless.

[[Unsurprising Google result, since "larrikin correspondent" is my fond epithet in these pages for a notably Antipodean letter-writer. The man himself solved - er - himself right away, since his name parses to "intermediate failure" ie MIDDLE + MISS...]]

"Uproar when wearing gaudy jewelry that's very bright (8)" At last, something cheatable! Per Google, "Gaudy jewelry" is BLING, "Uproar" is DIN (I never would have thought of that), "wearing" means embedded in, and the result is BLINDING, i.e. "very bright". Not what I would call blindingly obvious...

[[DoBFO, shurely? (ahem)...]]

Finally, "Sick, for example, holy book with no introduction is impossible to read (9)", which is described as "larffably easy for Fanglord-level mavens", and is not cheatable. Since I am nowhere near a Fanglord-level maven, this appears hopeless to me, even though "Testament" happens to be 9 letters, and a holy book with the New or Old introduction removed... But I don't see how it fits the clue or has anything to do with Fanglords, so I give up.

[[The likes of the Mighty Langford would have had no trouble deconstructing the wordplay as follows: "Sick" = ILL + "for example" = EG + "holy book with no introduction" = (B)IBLE, yielding ILLEGIBLE ("impossible to read")...]]

Eli responds: "Thank you for sharing the correct answers. They just prove that I have no chance, without Google, of getting any of your anagrams of synonyms of pseudonyms of acronyms of slang references to obscure media and persona... (By the way, the Google hit on the "larrikin" clue was to *TH...* #71, the actual clue -- so totally useless.)

"Well, the clues plus answers are at least entertaining, so I guess it's all good!"

Nic : This ish's "entertainment", then:

"Squiffily peers at old TV shows (7)"

"A publication like this that's excellent, going round a country down under (7)"

"Special guest (Fifty) absurdly hid tweet (3,5)"

Suggestions that there will be a live crossword clue solving item featuring **Eli** at COR41U are shurely unfounded...

FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

I guess I should apologise; it's my fault this issue is three days late*. There I was on Friday, happily typing away whilst workmen put in kitchen cupboards and front room shelves, when *pumph*, there went the fuses and off went the power. Several hours later, the sparks that the council workmen had summoned got the power back on in the kitchen but the living room and bedroom sockets still kept tripping the fuses, so a weekend of power extension cords snaked through the flat from kitchen to lounge and bedroom and I wasn't allowed to run too many appliances from the limited number of sockets as that would just trip them as well. All finally sorted on Monday afternoon. "What caused the issue?" I asked, "No idea, but it seems fine now," came the reply.

Bemused expressions all round...

Still...

In footballing terms, there's been a lot going on since Christmas.

In late January, Jurgen Klopp announced he was leaving his job as Liverpool manager at the end of the current season. Whilst the announcement was met with a wailing and gnashing of teeth in half of Merseyside, the other half and the majority of the rest of English football fandom sighed a deep "meh" of relief whilst dreading the "this means more" farewell hyperbole tour of the most detested German on these shores since Hitler. I shall say no more about Klopp. I have every confidence that Manchester City will snuff out any hopes Liverpool have of supplying him with a farewell Premier League title or F.A. Cup victory and look forward to the return to mediocrity that awaits the Anfield diving club.

Probably of greater importance than the departure of Klopp were the events at The Hawthorns, the Black Country home ground of West Bromwich Albion, during the F.A. Cup fourth round tie with local rivals Wolverhampton Wanderers on Sunday January 4th. After Matheus Cunha had given Wolves a 2-0 lead in the 77th minute, crowd violence erupted in the home section Birmingham Road end of the ground when a Wolves supporter in that section jumped up in celebration and West Brom fans responded to his goading by trying to assault him. Fortunately, the fan was protected by a steward, but continued to extract the urine from the Baggies around him (Baggies being the nickname of West Brom fans; they're a sophisticated bunch in the midlands) and riot police had to be called in to quell fighting that had broken out between various groups. The confusing thing about the whole situation was, although there were a few other Wolves fans in the home section, the fighting seemed more extensive than those numbers could have caused.

Within minutes, several yellow flares were set off, presumably by Wolves fans, and the referee suspended the game until control of the situation could be regained.

It took 37 minutes for stewards and police to quieten the melee sufficiently for the final twelve minutes to be played and Wolves to progress to the next round, but questions are now being asked.



West Brom and Wolves is a vicious local rivalry which hasn't been played for over a decade due to the sides being in different divisions; it's a game that has, in the past, been flagged for early kick-offs to avoid the possibility of fans spending hours in local pubs beforehand and, indeed, this tie kicked-off at 11.45am, which is even earlier than the usual 12.00 noon early slot, but it seems some local pubs opened, possibly unofficially, even earlier and alcohol is believed to have played a part in the violence.

Six people were arrested for anti-social behaviour offenses and are due to be handed lifetime bans from football

* 10 days late actually, and the other seven of those are *my* fault (Nic).

stadiums and several more people are still being sought in connection to the incident.

It's remarkably easy to present football crowd violence as a symptom of "toxic masculinity" and it's probably even easier to do so with such prime examples of misogynistic stupidity walking around the football field as Joey Barton.

On January 4th, ITV's coverage of the F.A. Cup third round tie between Everton and Crystal Palace was presented by former women's football internationals Lucy Ward and Eni Aluko, who are, fairly universally and in common with most other football pundits, regarded as rather vanilla in their views on and criticisms of the beautiful game. It's just a requirement of prime-time television really: be inoffensive.

Joey Barton, former footballer and football coach and manager of absolutely no talent but a colossally large mouth and matching ego, then decided to earn a little extra money on the side by posting his opinions about female pundits on male football to X (formerly known as twitter, as just about every television journalist seems obliged to remind us these days), knowing damned fine that the right-wing "they should be kept at home barefoot and pregnant" tabloid press would come dashing to his door.

Barton's assessment was that Ward and Aluko were "the Fred and Rose West of football commentary", likening the pair to the notorious Gloucestershire serial killers that were caught in 1994 after two decades of murdering young women between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s came to light.

It's difficult to see what Barton actually means with his comparison or what he hoped to achieve. As I've already written, Ward and Aluko are plainer than still water, a "quality" they share with the vast majority of football commentators and pundits regardless of gender, race, or anything else, so it's unlikely they said anything about the game being played to incur his ire and it has to be purely about the gender of the pair. He must also have realised the kind of backlash such a remark would cause, although that's not entirely certain; Barton is notoriously thick, but surely no one is that obtuse except deliberately.

Aluko has since complained that she has received further online abuse and has been so concerned for her safety that she has spent time outside the UK to escape the furore. ITV have criticised Barton's "vindictive remarks" and Sports Minister Stuart Andrew said the "dangerous comments open the floodgates for abuse." Not that Barton appears to have learned any lessons as he took to Instagram a day later and said: "Cry me a fucking river... I was waiting for the victim card to be played. Eni, sorry luv, you're dreadful as a pundit. Tone deaf, can't count and most importantly you know next to nothing about men's football.

"You should have run off to a desert island after your 'Arteta phoning Pep to put a bid in' nonsense. Everyone is laughing at you. Not just me."

Add to that accusations that her father was a "dodgy" Nigerian Senator that "escaped" to Britain with stolen money, owns three Rolls Royce's (sounds vaguely like jealousy to me), has a massive house in Wentworth, blah, blah, blah, and it's hardly surprising that Aluko has instructed solicitors, which caused another torrent of abuse before someone told Barton to shut the fuck up and take his posts down before any further damage was done. I'm sure the court proceedings will be splashed all over the front pages of the tabloid press at some point in the future, the only question remaining is what vegetable they will use to adorn Barton's head on the colour spreads.

This column being a bit late means I can talk less about Barton and a little about **Tommy Ferguson's** Arsenal beating Liverpool 3-1 at their home Emirates Stadium on Sunday. A result that many myopic football fans would claim "blows the title race wide open". If only. The truth is the victory allowed Arsenal to close the gap to Liverpool at the top of the table, but it really just opened the door for Manchester City, with two games in hand after being away at the World Club Championships during December, to sweep past the pair of them once those games are won. Manchester City came back from a goal behind away to Brentford on Monday evening to win one of those games and move two points behind Liverpool and the usual relentless post-Christmas machine seems to have kicked into gear again. City really will just walk the title from this point onwards as injuries and leggy-ness overtake all other challengers.

Less than a month until I see at least some of you in Las Vegas at Corflu. If you encounter me in the days immediately before the con, bear in mind that I'll be decompressing; I hate flying with a passion and this is the first long haul jobbie I've undertaken since the late 1980s. I have my list of comic shops to visit over the long weekend, I'm packing underwear and toiletries that can be dumped in the bin before flying home just to make room and to stay within the British Airways weight allowances, although I'm already budgeting another £60.00 for an extra 23 kilos if the dollar bins are as plentiful as I'm told. You never know, I may even find enough booty to pay for the trip, which is what my mate Will does on his bi-monthly trips to New York.

Anyone know where I can find some issues of *Mighty Marvel Western* or *Western Gunfighters*?

Maybe even a run of *Captain Savage and His Leatherneck Raiders*? Top dollar paid for John Romita, Gene Colan, or Bill Everett issues of *My Love Story*!

LOCO CITATO

[[“The time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time.” (Bertrand Russell)...]]

From: orangemike@gmail.com

December 30

Michael J. Lowrey writes:

When I’m reading your stuff in *This Here...*, Nic, it’s the next best thing to hanging with you in a consuite or bar somewhere (with no danger of toxic levels of smoke exposure), blunt and foul-mouthed and witty as all get-out. Now of course, to some extent that’s a persona; but it’s a fine persona to have.

[[Unfortunately the “toxic levels of smoke exposure” do come with...]]

With some other fan writers, it’s like hearing them learnedly lecture on the intricacies of whatever (be it Byzantine polemics or what constitutes “militia” for purposes of our 2nd Amendment or the relationship between ska and skiffle in the 1950s and 60s) with the pleasure which can come when hearing anybody holding forth on a topic they have explored in depth.

[[I can do the ska one...]]

From: Tommy@tommyworld.net

December 30

Tommy Ferguson writes:

Good to hear all the health issues are going in the right direction, though it doesn’t sound like you’re having it good at the moment. Still, can walk to the beer fridge – so can’t be that bad, eh?

[[Walking only when required - the chair is on wheels so I can glide it most of the time Stavros...]]

Footy – Jesus what’s happening in the world? Chelsea having a nightmare – both Arsenal and Spurs Up and Down every other week and even Man City having a ‘blip’? Does nothing for my heart rate nor my beer intake – had to have another and a whiskey after that last 2-0 defeat that **Hodson** mentioned. Certainly not title contenders at this rate – back to Wenger’s “a top four finish is a good result”. I can see Liverpool and Man City with Haaland and Kevin De Bruyne back in the team doing their usual end of season storm to the top ...

[[Not ruling out Aston Villa at this point...]]

Corflu – I’m sure we shall talk more of these things in person, and I see some responses in the Loccol – but has no-one stuck their hand up – even tentatively – as wanting to

run a [US] Corflu in 2025? If someone one in the States does – I’m more than happy to help out **Hodson** (with whatever he needs) in 2026 – but as **Jerry Kaufman** states 2024 is a busy year of big cons and Eastercon 2025 in Belfast will limit my involvement in any other con stuff. I think giving [Corflu] a rest for a year – just to show how much we miss it – rather than cobbling something together just to have a con is the better idea.

‘Rebel Moon’ was fucking awful.

[[We’ve definitely been dissuaded from watching that by the plethora of rotten reviews so far...]]

From: celinem@aol.com.com

December 30

Celine Mariotti writes:

Thanks so much for posting my ad for my book and for putting the word out to a possible editor of a magazine who may want to do the serial for book 2 of “Atomic Soldiers”.

Funny you mentioned about doctors. We’ve had a year full of appointments. We drink a lot of water and we eat healthy-lots of fruit and vegetables. Plus none of us smoke or drink - never have.

My Mom had to have a procedure done a month ago to replace the battery in her pacemaker. She’s doing well, thank God. I’ll say a prayer for you that you feel better soon.

[[Just goes to show you - round here (well, me anyway) it’s unhealthy, chimney and fish...]]

I agree about the music of today - the songs all sound alike - same notes and chords over and over with no melody and refrain and no change of key. I’m a musician. I play the guitar and the banjo. My family and I love to listen to Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Tom Jones, Paul Anka, Barry Manilow, Andy Williams, Tony Bennett, Josh Groban, Michael Buble, Marie Osmond and Donny Osmond, Rod Stewart, Johnny Mathis. All the good entertainers. We saw quite a few of them in concert and my sister and I used to run a fan club for Tom Jones. We met him several times.

[[Johnny Mathis popped up in Vegas at the Smith Center doing a Xmas show last year - another one who I thought was dead. As to “same notes over and over”, two words: ‘Hey Jude’...]]

I don’t know which Perry Mason that is on HBO but the old series can be seen on FETV and you can also watch it on MeTV. I love Perry Mason. I like ‘Matlock’ and ‘Columbo’ too and ‘Diagnosis Murder’.

[[The HBO ‘Perry Mason’ is a prequel to the originals. One of Jen’s friends gifted me the DVD sets of all the Raymond Burr series, including the later TV movies...]]

December 31

William Breiding writes:

Gail and I both have Medicare Advantage and have mostly found it good. In 2023 I used it for a dermatology check up (many precancerous cells on bald pate; will be doing a self-applied chemo-cream—three week application and two week recovery—I should be through all that by Corflu. Chemo cream co-pay \$95) and dental visits, and work, too numerous to mention that Medicare Advantage by and large paid for. Gail had numerous doctor visits and tests last year resulting in very little co-pay. (She's fine—biopsies showed lucky false alarms.) There has been some problems recently noted about fulfilling prescriptions with Advantage (which is supposedly inclusive) because Medicare has been fucking around with different types of cards or something, but we have yet to fully engage in this way as both are relatively healthy and prescription drug free (fingers crossed) so we can't verify or complain about that yet. I will be interested to hear what you finally settle for. Good luck.

[[We supposedly have something sorted, but of course I don't really know what it is or how it will all play out until it does (or doesn't)...]]

I had not heard of the Regrettes so I spent some gratifying time perusing both YouTube and their website listening/watching. They are an excellent punk-pop band with the emphasis on pop. It's regrettable but perhaps inevitable that Lydia Night has gotten a rock star complex—she's tall, gamine, beautiful, has really good vocal styling and is a great songwriter—I wouldn't be at all surprised if she goes solo at some point in the near future. Thank you much for the tip.

[[I didn't think Lydia was that tall - Sage is, though...]]

I can't say I've read any of your stuff outside of *BEAM* and *This Here*. . . but I think it was generally noted by myself that you had an excellent serious side to your writing. This should not undermine the importance of the "voice" in this here rag, which over its monthly schedule through the years has showed considerable depth and charm, as well as sheer craft. But—just saying—it would be most excellent to see you do more sercon or "straight" writing, or maybe a roundup collection of that sort of work which is no longer easily available. (I'd buy a copy!)

[[That might be a slim volume...]]

I did want to weigh in on the subject of you (or any actively working fan) administrating the FAAn Awards. That is, it's impossible not to end up on the ballot if you are as active as yourself. I have never questioned your integrity. Ever. I do get why **Andy Hooper** finds it a squeamish slope. But if you were to take yourself out of the running would the voters be voting for what they felt was the actual best? It's a difficult problem to wangle. **Mike Glyer** I outright dismiss. He

appears to have morphed into a mean-spirited alarmist on the faanish level.

[[There are, of course, various strata of what we deem "fanac", but you're quite right that any admin for the awards will have a place in there somewhere, although there are those who tend more to the organizational aspects of things rather than what I suppose we'll call the "creative" side, but then again we have various notables who Do It All. When Claire Brialey took a turn at the FAAn admin, I profoundly and loudly disagreed with her decision to withdraw any Fishlifter product from consideration - a vehement protest which never affected our longstanding friendship, by the way. (We can, apparently, compartmentalize effectively.) Given the apparent limited interest in the FAAns (the voter rolls are still far short of what I feel they ought to be), it's effectively impossible to find a willing admin who isn't a contender in one way or another. Hooper's suggestion back in the day that someone like Curt Phillips ought to have the gig was immediately and effectively shot down by Ulrika O'Brien who pointed out that not only was that a massive insult to Curt, he remains an active if infrequent fanwriter and a loccer of some standing and popularity...]]

Bruce Gillespie's letter was a hoot. The man's got panache! Hoping for the best New Year possible—for us all.

From: fabficbks@aol.com

January 1

Bob Jennings writes:

Got the new *This Here* #71 a couple of days ago and thot I would shoot off a quick LOC. I was reading the Egotorial when I stumbled across a phrase in the first paragraph and fell flat on my face. Wow! Not a good experience! My head is still ringing! What, exactly is: "feliz up your navidads, ey? (Oo-er missus ect.)" supposed to mean anyway?

If the primary purpose of fanzines is to foster communication among fans, then it seems reasonable that those persons producing fanzines should use language that everyone reading them will understand. It is likely that most everybody has a vernacular used in some private hobby universe that is largely incomprehensible to the outside world. I speak fluent role-playing/strategy-board gaming, as well as deep-dedicated-comic-collecting, both of which are likely to be semi-incompressible to people not involve in hard core gaming or comic book collecting. I am still semi-literate in active-military-service-jargon, despite being out of the military for several decades now. But I don't speak computerize, or rap-music, or surfing, or mathematics, for example, and I can't understand comments either spoken or in written articles made by people who are using those

unique languages. And I am having increasing difficulty understanding what you are writing about in your fanzine due to whatever that unique language happens to be that you are using.

[[I'm not entirely sure if you're taking the piss here, Bob. "... persons producing fanzines should use language that everyone reading them will understand"? (My emphasis). That's first-order tincture of pure bollocks, implying as it does that any given writer has to comport to a style that's so bland as to be uninteresting as all get-out. A more analytical response points to cultural differences - references that will be more easily clocked by some than others, a point excruciatingly clear in this case, since it's a very British construction which would be easily interpreted by readers of that background (and of a certain age) who would be familiar with eg 'Round the Horne', 'I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again' and probably the oeuvre of Frankie Howerd, to name but a few...]]

I did get that you've had an interesting and eventful year (in the same sense as the ancient Chinese curse: "May you live in interesting times"), and I am glad to read that you seem to be wining your battles with both cancer and acute body pains. I hope the retirement plans and the efforts to get your pensions and medical coverage have been successfully resolved by this time.

The problem with resolving glitches affecting Social Security is that there seems to be a chronic shortage of people in the SocSec Administration to handle all the people who are filing for coverage, particularly those filing for disability benefits. This problem is likely to get worse in the next five to ten years as a big population bubble is about to hit retirement age right about now. Unfortunately the GOPers in Congress seem to believe that adequately funding any branch of government except the military is something akin to Original Sin and should be avoided any way possible, so the situation may not improve any time soon.

I've pretty much given up going to movie theaters. In addition to my lingering fear of catching COVID, or RES, or cooties, or whatever from exposure to strangers in a closed theater environment, increasingly there seem to be more and more people who feel that talking to the screen, or making loud comments about the film, or otherwise acting like first class jerks while the movie is running is perfectly OK. Hey,

no thanks. I can wait till the picture comes out on DVD and view it in the comfort of my own home.

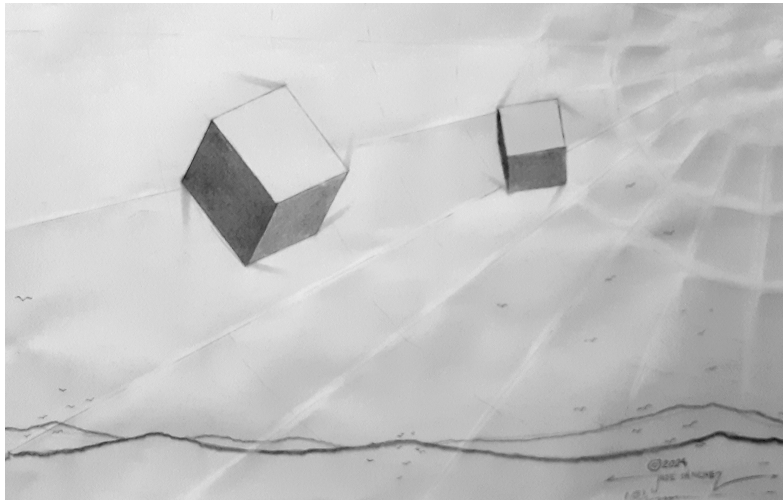
The time frame for films moving from big screen multiplex to internet streaming, to home video seems to be considerably shorter than it used to be. Even pictures that make it big at the box-office run the whole circuit to DVD in six months or less, often much less.

[[I had originally intended to go to the theater to see the latest 'Mission: Impossible', but in the end rented it off the streaming...]]

In my opinion movies shown in theaters may be becoming a special boutique experience, something specifically designed to cater to those old school die-hard individuals who want to experience a film in a genuine theater setting. That group seems to be in decline, at least here in the US. Apparently in other parts of the world, particularly in Asia, theater going is still the best, and in some cases, the only legal way to see a movie. Overseas box office revenue is still important to the companies that make cinema, but I suspect in the long run

the streaming and the DVDs provide most of the profits from the new releases.

Hey, what's going on? **David Hodson's** Footy column is actually about football this time round, and nothing else! I know absolutely nothing about British football or any other UK sport, and have no desire to learn either, so this was a big disappointment to me.



[[And now you complain about a footy column actually being about the footy? It does happen, amazingly...]]

Making massive lists of Important Things That Must be Done seems counter productive to me. That kind of list invariably overwhelms and intimidates most people. Yeah, if there is a Really Major concern, like your auto blew the engine, or a tornado took the roof off your house, then that is a problem that has to be dealt with immediately. But I think it is better to cut things down to smaller easier to achieve bits. At least that is what works for me. I try to assign myself about ten things to do each day, and work at achieve at least five of them. Big, expensive projects have to be planned out in advance, but there are other tasks, some necessary, that can be taken care of in a normal daily routine. The unfortunate thing about living in our modern human civilization is that there is never an end of important things that have to be dealt with sooner or later. The list never ends, but keeping it manageable makes it easier. I am

reminded of the famous quote by Charles Lamb (1775-1834)
“My theory is to enjoy life, but the practice is against it.”

[[I like that!...]]

I need to practice enjoying some life so I'll close here.

From: garth.van.spencer@gmail.com

January 1

Garth Spencer writes:

What you write about American medical care, including Medicare, sounds exactly like the bureaucratic paper chases in Britain and in Canada. I have to conclude that modern industrialized countries reach a climax state where many services are offered, but with degrees of red tape and bureaucracy that not everyone can penetrate.

Maybe the thickness of GovSpeak and hoops to jump through will be why the Great Wars of the 21st Century Have to Be.

From: jakaufman@aol.com

January 4

Jerry Kaufman writes:

I saw your email this morning with the *Incomplete Register*. It's not a total coincidence that I've been thinking about the relatively short time from now to Corflu, and wondering if you'd have much time to get the *Register* out and votes in. Thanks for doing this; it will jog my memory and help me to fill in a ballot.

I wonder if leeches could be a way of transferring blood and other substances, not just of removing blood from a body. But I know you won't want to be a subject in clinical trials of this notion (and it's only a notion - dunno if anyone's ever tested the idea). Meanwhile, my toes threaten to curl in sympathy with your bollocky problem.

[[See 'Health Diary' for thish's bollock update...]]

Yes, the idea that one has to apply for Medicare immediately upon reaching the prescribed age or forever hold your peace (and your bollock) seems mad to us. Possibly there's a reasonable accounting purpose to this requirement, but without dipping deep into the Medicare rules & regs, I'm not going to attempt to discover and explain it. As for Medicare Advantage, I don't understand the complaints about it. So far as I know, the plan we have through United Healthcare and AARP gives us some coverages we wouldn't have through standard Medicare like Renew Active (what was previously called Silver Sneakers - free memberships in participating gyms) and a small allowance we can spend on

over-the-counter health-related goods (\$50 per quarter-year last year, but down to \$40 this time around).

[[I'm coming to suspect that the "penalty" is related to the tax hit for not having health insurance...]]

We haven't watched *Slow Horses*, though I'd like to (it's on a streaming service we don't subscribe to) but I've read the first two books in the series. I recommend them for the range of characters (from likeable to despicable and shades in-between) and twisty plots. I agree with you and **Jen** about *Poker Face*. I especially like the way it introduces the characters and their crime before backing up and showing how Charlie fits in.

I think we may have some duplicates of old issues, including a few one-shot publications, that would be suitable for the auction, as well as some old teeshirts (Corflu and Potlatch). I'll get word to **Sandra** in time, once we've decided.

As for the Friday outing, I'm tempted but afraid I won't be up to the amount of walking required. This is not my final decision. When I was a boy, Paleontologist was one of my dream careers, so seeing fossils *in situ* would be grand.

After my further research into the Doc Lowndes columns in *Outworlds*, I've given up the idea of collecting them. I don't find them interesting enough to want to put in the work, and am not sure enough people would want to read them. If **Bob Jennings** finds Lowndes' writing and subjects fascinating, he's very welcome to produce such a collection.

Leigh Edmonds doesn't have to worry that he doesn't "get" poetry. He's in the majority in English-language cultures, and maybe all modern cultures. I think poetry is now, and has been for some time, a minority interest. I'm in that minority, though I don't understand or like everything I read (currently I mainly read the two poems in each issue of *The New Yorker* and the *London Review of Books*).

Gary Mattingly's plan for retirement is really much like mine, except to him it's a plan while for me it's what I do because I don't have a plan.

[[Me an' you both Killer, I reckon...]]

See you soonish.

From: dave_redd@hotmail.com

January 6

David Redd writes:

Thank you for *This Here... #71*, and wishing you health and happiness in 2024. Nice to see Brenda Lee in *Ageless Beauty*; she was at No. 5 in the UK Christmas singles chart last week with the ageless "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" which I was glad to see there. You mention being out of it as regards new music, but I am even more so, which is why I like seeing these old names re-emerge at Christmas as people

stream the classic songs. The seasonal Top 40 this year included Andy Williams, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra alongside Michael Buble and the moderns - even Bing Crosby with "White Christmas" at 38. Below that, I was astonished to see Burl Ives at 40 with "Holly Jolly Christmas" - never expected to see him reappear in 2023. Acts as diverse as Jose Feliciano and the Ronettes have found the market, but what people were playing most of all was of course Wham's "Last Christmas". Oh well, that's enough nostalgia until next year.

[[It probably signifies something that my own definition of Xmas classics inevitably includes both Slade and Wizzard...]]

Thank you too to **Ulrika** for the Christmas card designs.

From: Kim.huett@gmail.com

January 10

Kim Huett writes:

Well now Christmas is out of the way I have time to write. Christmas is always a bit of a marathon for those of us who work in hospitality.

Admittedly it only lasted six weeks where I'm currently employed but on the other hand my stamina isn't what it used to be either. What's more I get no sympathy if I point out that I've done my share already and should be issued with a get out of December free card. One soon to be deceased individual suggested that what I really need is a Jim membership. Which just goes to show some people only open their mouths to allow enormous slugs of stupid to slither out. Why on earth would I want to be a Jim? For all the confusion being called Kim has brought me, the number of people who have assumed I'm a member of the vag club rather than a card carrying peenie user are legion, at least Kim is a name with a certain amount of style. What does a name like Jim ever guaranteed anybody? I think of Jim and all I can see is a skinny bloke in shorts and a Lacoste shirt wearing socks with sandals. Who the fuck would want to be that bloke? In Australia Jim runs a lawn mowing service, which if you ask me is typical of anybody who wears socks with sandals.

Just to be clear, I don't hate Jims, they do the jobs that the rest of us would rather not. I don't hate Jims but I certainly wouldn't want to be one.

But back to the topic of Christmas since you so rudely brought it up.

The Christmas season at the Canberra Yacht Club was always the worst because not only did it begin in early November but the wave of party bookings ensured October was jam packed with weddings. Like in most parts of the world spring is a popular time for couples to marry but up

here in the southern hemisphere that clashes with the festive season so any Canberra couples who fancy a spring wedding need to squeeze it into October. Down the Yacht Club this meant a month of up to six weddings a week before being submerged by Christmas.

As part of the fun and games many companies would hire the private function space adjacent to the kitchen so whatever indiscretions occurred could be kept hidden from the diners in the restaurant. So one Friday evening, about the middle of December, the function space had been booked as usual. The company in question had requested a selection of nibbles rather than a sit down meal so before dinner service began we pumped a whole lot of spring rolls, samosas, Feta triangles, and the like through the deep fryers and stacked them into a couple of hot boxes. Then everybody forgot about them because of dinner services. In fact it wasn't till nearly 9:00pm that questions began to be asked. An enquiry was sent out to the club manager and after a bit she arrived to explain this particular party was DOA.

She'd been a bit too busy to let us know (typical front of house excuse making) that a couple of hours previously she had received a telephone call to the effect that the company wasn't coming.

Apparently the woman who had made all the party arrangements had come down with a very nasty illness a couple of weeks ago and still wasn't well enough to return to work. Which would be bad enough but what with all the usual distractions of finishing up for the year nobody had thought to check on what party arrangements had been made, in particular when. So it wasn't until sometime after 5:00pm that very Friday when somebody had an epiphany. Apparently they did attempt some half-hearted ringing around of staff but as you've already guessed nobody was available at such short notice. So all they could do was sadly wave goodbye to their booking fee and consider the words of Robert Burns: "The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men gang aft agley."

And now, given your fascination with drugs, or is it a fascination with my attitude to drugs? Hard to tell from this side of the Pacific.

Still, regardless of whatever the fuck it is you're fascinated by, here's a story about drugs at the Yacht Club.

[[“Whatever the fuck it is”, indeed. If either of us finds out we should inform the other immediately, I feel...]]

This happened way back in 2005 when the kitchen there was still something of a mess. The problem was that when the Yacht Club was built in 1966 it was intended to be nothing more than a very basic clubhouse. According to what I've been told the original intention was to build something quite modest. All the club membership really wanted was somewhere to store their boats and enough space upstairs to sink a few cold ones. For this reason the only professional

kitchen facility included in the initial design was the downstairs fish and chip takeaway (which it was intended would only be open during the summer months). Upstairs had no commercial kitchen, only a space which was apparently used for nothing more sophisticated than the making of sandwiches.

This wasn't a problem until 1997 when the Southern Cross Club bought out the Yacht Club. I don't know for sure but I assume the Yacht Club found itself in financial difficulties and the Southern Cross Club took the opportunity to expand. A fairly safe assumption given how many of Canberra's smaller clubs have been hoovered up by the Southern Cross Club, Labor Club, Hellenic Club, and Canberra Raider Club chains since the 1990s.

And with the Southern Cross Club running the show it was decided to insert a kitchen into what had been the sandwich making space in order to increase business. However, this kitchen had various problems including not nearly enough power outlets. Why this wasn't sorted out from the get go I can only put down to somebody being cheap. The various problems were eventually fixed about a year after I began working there when management had the kitchen stripped out entirely and rebuilt from scratch. Prior to that the layout meant the only way to power certain items was to run power cords all over the kitchen. As much as possible these were located underneath fridges and work stations but it was impossible to hide them entirely so in places the power cords snaked across the floor, with only a layer of duct tape for protection.

Anyway, on the day of the incident I was catching up on the lunch dishes about mid-afternoon while several other kitchen staff were getting some prep done before going on break. The crew included a particularly sketchy chef whose real name I forget but who preferred to be known as Tuuk Tuuk. Why? I don't know but he was from South Africa which explains a lot. This bloke wasn't unpleasant to work with for an alcoholic but he did have a rather twitchy manner. After he disappeared a couple of months later I was told the rumour was that our twitchy chef was getting through his shifts by taking a whole lot of speed before beginning his shifts. I can believe this as he did tend to be overly hyped up at the start of each service before getting very quiet at the end.

Anyway, the atmosphere was quiet

and professional this day and in fact sort of drowsy due to it being the middle of summer. Everybody was lost in their work, nobody talking, just trying to get through the shift. Then, out of the blue, there was an almighty bang and a flash of light. That woke everybody up! The sound was so loud it brought staff from other parts of the building to see what had happened. Turns out Tuuk Tuuk chef had been a little more twitchy than usual and the knife he had been using had slipped out of his grasp in such a way as to fall blade down. It then managed to cut into one of the taped down power cords. Blew a chunk out of the knife about the size of a twenty cent piece. Nobody was injured but I don't understand how. Given the twitchy chef was less than an arms length from where the knife bit into the power cord it was amazing he wasn't hurt in any way.

The accident didn't even seriously inconvenience operations as the cord in question was being used for an appliance rather than to power a permanent item like a fridge. However, it was apparently the incident that finally convinced Southern Cross management that something had to be done before they had a serious compensation case on their hands. Rebuilding the kitchen from scratch was expensive but still cheaper than the alternative (not to mention the potential for negative publicity if somebody like Tuuk Tuuk managed to electrocute themselves).

I thought the picture on page five of your thing was of you at first.



It's certainly how I imagine you, down to the expression of "if I don't find the strength to go to the toilet soon I'm going to have a very bad afternoon." Imagine my disappointment, when I could bring myself to read the paragraphs about the photo that is, and discovered it was some bloke I've never heard of. Not that I entirely believe you about who it is. The bloke in the photo looks far too much like the fag end of somebody who spent the 1970s and 1980s playing in one band or another. That's a face that says I did coke with Johnnie Fingers.

[[I am strangely flattered by this. I can confirm that Jay Rayner is an actual person, not only restaurant critic for the Grauniad, but also perennially a judge on the tv show 'Master Chef'...]]

Hoping you are the same.,

From: daverabban@gmail.com

January 12

Dave Cockfield writes:

It was great to see **Gary Mattingly** mention the movie "Poor Things".

This is an adaptation of the novel by Alastair Gray.

Alastair was a wonderful artist and writer with a larger than life personality. The North-East FAN Group, the Gannets, with **Rob Jackson, Harry Bell, Kevin Williams** etc. adopted him as one of us. He was a big hit at Mexicon in Newcastle and of course as our Guest of Honour at Silicon.

I was appointed to be his gopher to look after him and his lady, Morag. He even borrowed my hardcover copy of "Janine 1992" to give a reading. I admired him so much that I forgave him for bending the book in half.

When I moved to London I met him at a number of events.

After one poetry reading for his collection, "Old Negatives" I joined Alastair, James Kelman, and William Boyd for a drink. I presented Alastair photographs of himself and his wife Morag at Silicon.

"She'll love these", he said. "But she wasn't my wife, she was my mistress".

It is a real shame that he never lived to see this movie.

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

January 14

Gary Mattingly writes:

This will be quick, I have to move on to *This Here... 71*. I'll try to add more updates and movies from me to a LoC on #71. It is a rather long list. Ah, January 29. I'll try to do it much faster than that. I'll try.

[You got an unintentional extra week, it seems...]

'Egotorial': Sixteen years old for a dog is, I think, pretty good. We've had a number of dogs over the years and none of them have reached age 16. They have all been mixed breeds. Our current dogs are Pip, five yo, and Cosmo, eleven yo. Cosmo has arthritis and currently a problem with his CCL (rupture?). The vet said if he were younger she would recommend surgery but she's not at all enthusiastic at eleven. So he limps a lot and can't go on long walks or hike. I need to take Pip out. He needs the exercise. However it is difficult for me to leave Cosmo behind. He really wants to go. He isn't going through the excessive barking you describe. Actually Pip barks a lot more but that is his norm. Cosmo sleeps a lot and sometimes he does seem a little disoriented. He also makes sounds, sort of howling but really closer to talking, a lot more than he used to. I have no

idea what he is saying. Sometimes though it is obvious he thinks something different should be done than what is happening or that he should be given something that we're not giving him. He has had issues eating. I've been cooking up a lot more meat in order to get him to eat, also a lot more hand feeding. I don't know if this will continue or not. Having dogs who are your friends not die is good but the changes they go through can be an issue. I wish you luck with Lulu.

'Corflux': I do plan to arrive on Thursday afternoon and depart on Monday.

42 News: Good that someone is taking interest in Corflu 42 however I don't know that I can make it to London in 2025.

'Health Diary': Good luck with your health and insurance.

'Faanwank': Well, um, uh . . .

'Radio Winston': I bought "The Trinity Sessions" when it came out and I still like it.

Then I started thinking about "Sister Sweetly" by Big Head Todd.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsWCxkP2_2A

'TV Guide': I liked "Bodies". Quite enjoyed it.

'Proper Rabbit': Interesting. I don't know much about all of that though. In the US I know lots of newscasters tried to have a more MidWest accent, whatever that is.

'Loco Citato':

Wm Breiding: I like Brendan Benson. I have three of his albums but haven't played them in quite a while.

Then started thinking about other songs. I think about The Civil Wars "Barton Hollow"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooTyuRd9zSg>

Justin Nozuka - "Save Him"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXEDLeZCz4I>

Jennifer Warnes - "Famous Blue Raincoat"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPlpxHhzSp0>

Black Keys - "Lonely Boy"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_426RiwST8

Tracy Chapman - "Fast Car"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIOAlaACuv4>

Neal Casal - "Free Light of Day"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff2x-kOHZ2E>

Holy Modal Rounders - "Euphoria"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8S2hCUVisg>

Ed Sanders - "The Iliad"

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

Perfect songs, not necessarily, just all came to mind at the moment.

Wow, the memory keeps whirling, "Merry Go Round" by Wild Man Fischer, "My Pal Foot Foot" by the Shaggs.

Sorry rambling and too many urls.

[[Er... yes?...]]

Dave Cockfield: Favorite films? No Ozu, Hitchcock, Kurosawa, Tarkovsky, Chantal Akerman, Orson Welles, Wong Kar Wai, Murnau, Varda, Scorsese, Lynch, Coppola, John Ford? Sorry, everyone has their own favorites.

Good stuff by Bob Kane, **Ulrika O'Brien** and **Jose Sanchez**.

From: leighmonds01@gmail.com

January 15

Leigh Edmonds writes:

What, another issue of *This Here* ... already? Your stamina is amazing.

No I wasn't asleep after reading your comments on life in general. I wasn't even tempted because, I think, we agree too much on most things apart from music, what you like about what's on the tv and the movies you watch. Well, the only movies I watch are on my HUGE screen in the tv room so I don't know quite know where they fit into the overall picture of media consumption. So my nodding in agreement keeps me awake, and getting cranky about what you've got wrong also keeps me going.

[[Nodding off, more like...]]

Not that I have any criticism of what you've looked at and listened too, I know nothing about any of it because my mind has been elsewhere these past few weeks. After fluffing around for a while I finally made the mental commitment to get the first part of the history of science fiction fandom in Australia completed. Alan Stewart has edited the text and then I fiddled around with it a little more, selecting images for too much longer than I would have liked, wrote captions and did all the final last minute checking... it has taken more out of me than for any of the other dozen or so histories I've done, perhaps because I'm getting older but probably because I have more invested in this project than most of the commissions I've done.

[[Massively worthwhile project, though...]]

This has left me sort of mentally drained so while I enjoyed this issue it sort of just floated past my numb brain without tripping any alarms. Even friend **Hodson's** column was entirely about football and I know so little about that that it was all new to me and I believe whatever it is that he writes. So no comment there.

A couple of comments from the letter column however. Here **Garth Spencer** says he thinks that fanzine fans have missed

the boat in not reaching out to new fans to convert to the cause. He does not say how he thinks fanzine fans might have reached out to other areas of fandom and I can't think of any that would work and still leave us being fanzine fans. By its very nature fanzine fandom reaches out to others, that is what fanzines do. But we can't force others to read them if they don't want to. Because of where and when they started fanzines are the consequence of converging office technologies of communication in an earlier age that have now been almost completely replaced by new technologies. If we were to adopt those new technologies what we produce would not be fanzines and hence we would not be fanzine fans. What would we be if we used the internet more than we do and started communicating in other ways rather than fanzines? We'd be bloggers of whatever it is that young people do these days to communicate with each other. It may well be true that fanzine fandom will come to an end because our numbers are diminished by the year but unless other fans suddenly take to communicating in the forms that fanzine fans have used since the 1930s, the end is inevitable if we are to remain fanzine fans. I'm happy with that.

[[“By its very nature fanzine fandom reaches out to others, that is what fanzines do” is DoBFO yet astoundingly succinct and perceptive, and perhaps should be tattooed on every faned's arse, assuming there'll be room once they've all got their Nolly tattoo done (passim in joke). As a fundamental tenet of fanzining this is tautological, you would think, but it's also the case that many faneds control their circulation, perhaps limiting it to the like-minded, or just, in the case of, say, Lofgeornost, Fred Lerner simply wants to know who's getting that excellent publication. Fred's policy is only a slight extension of APA rules, innit? I've noticed, as I'm sure have others, that more apazines are appearing on efanzines, sometimes modified for the general audience by eliminating mailing comments (eg Marc Ortlieb's Knot a Fanzine roundup), put perhaps more often not (eg Andy Hooper's Captain Flashback and Heath Row's apazine bundling The STF Amateur). I do find the inclusion of mailing comments vaguely annoying, since they'll presumably have little to no meaning for the general audience (or me), but then again it might encourage some people to investigate and participate in APAs...]]

Young **Perry** is right, my main enjoyment when it comes to grog is bourbon, as Tucker taught us. I routinely listen to a scale modelling podcast in which the presenters talk about what they call their 'modelling fluid' and, since this podcast comes from Kentucky, most often their fluid is bourbon, and more often than not it is Bulleit. The choice of bourbons on the shelves in the grog shops I habit only stretches to Beam (as Tucker taught us), Jack Daniels and Wild Turkey which seem to be, according to what I hear on the podcast, inferior exports. So, reading about Bulleit in this issue I was stirred

into action and find that there are now a few shops that sell it here. Next time I venture in the direction of one of those shops I will see if my credit card can stand the strain. I am also hopeful that Bulleit is cheaper in the land of its origin than it is here, and wonder if there are still duty free shops at international airports and whether they stock Bulleit. There are other temptations too and I still recall with great pleasure from the last time we were in Seattle the great things that **John Berry** can do with a bottle of good duty free gin. Choices, choices ...

[[You should be able to find Bulleit at the duty free all right for around \$35. Certainly at Corfu Pangloss it was the beverage of choice, preferred to the "traditional" Jim Beam, which I wouldn't describe as "inferior", although Bulleit is a higher end (though not expensively top shelf) label. Wild Turkey is also all right, but in my book Jack Daniels is undrinkable (and vomit-inducing) swill. I did end up getting a bottle of Buffalo Trace bourbon on the recommendation of a passenger in the taxi, and I'm happy to confirm it was very, very nice indeed...]]

Archbishop Bruce says that you can't blame me for not liking Tommy James and the Shondells. Too right! Do you know who I blame? I blame Tommy James and the Shondells. What tedious and uninteresting music. There is more talent, innovation and imagination on one side of *Rubber Soul* than there is in the entire output of Tommy James and his mates. (Not that I've heard much of it, but aren't old codgers allowed to be cranky and biased?)

From: chuck.connor@gmx.co.uk

January 21

[[Ed notes: I got an email from Chuck a day or so earlier which was just a file link, so I replied "What's all this, then?", and he responds as follows...]]

Chuck Connor writes:

If even half the software I need to use was available on Linux, it would make my life so much easier... Original email reconstructed:

Well, it's been a while since I last sent an email to you, though when I saw the front of the latest of the Van Gogh Appreciation Society Newsletter, This Ear (and the joys of leeches) I thought I'd get myself together and chat for a bit ?

Attached – Venesection Club passport. Been doing it since the doctors found I have Genetic Hemochromatosis. And in true faaaaaaaanish form, it's apparently not the regular version either, but heterozygotic. When I found that out, I sat down with Den and explained everything as best I could. He, bless him, said that although heterozygotic meant I wasn't totally 100% queer, he'd still love me all the same.

I've also attached a piece from WOOF which I don't think I ever distributed. It was odd doing the piece for CyberTalk, and finding that another of the contributors for that issue was Noel K. Hannan (who did the fanzine Molly Turbine, back in the 1980s if memory serves.) Along with 'Lawnmower' I put in Cutting Edge, about my organic memory upgrade, which never appeared elsewhere either.

Lastly, there should be a Word document with a couple of old emails and a sort of 2023 update that was never really updated as frequently as it should have been. At least we managed to get the Veterans Report published in 2023. Sunak's empty gestures won't bring any of the LGBT 'comrades' back – and yes, we're still pushing for restoration of pension rights (etc) – but it's a start.

Oh, yes, and Murderous Ink Press is coming up to its 4th year (newsletter attached)

All the very best to you and yours, from me and mine.

[[Got all the stuff, for which much thanks and excellent to hear from you...]]

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

January 21

Gary Mattingly writes (again):

'Egotorial': I am sorry to hear about all of your health problems, your various bureaucracy problems, related paperwork problems, etc. I enrolled in Medicare when I was 65 and cannot recall having a problem. I don't think I have Advantage. I believe I have parts A, B, C & D.

I elected to get SSA benefits starting at age 70. Patty indicates she is waiting until age 70 also. She is also on Medicare.

[[I can't afford to wait until 70 for both monetary and the implication that I'd have to keep working 12 hour days for another four years. I'm knackered already...]]

'TV Guide': I still haven't watched "Slow Horses" or "Perry Mason". I watched all of "Echo", "Silo", "Strange New Worlds", "Discovery", "Foundation", "Poker Face", "For All Mankind", "Beacon 23", "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar" (all the Wes Anderson & Roald Dahl mini-series), all the new Doctor Who episodes, "Monarch Legacy of Monsters", "Ahsoka", "Andor", "Blue Eye Samurai", "One Piece", "Only Murders in the Building", "Wolf Like Me" and maybe some others that I forget at the moment. On regular broadcast I do watch "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver", "The Good Doctor", "Rick and Morty", PBS - "All Creatures Great and Small", "Astrid", "Miss Scarlet and the Duke".

[[Gordon Bennett! I'm sure there's some utter tosh in there which could be usefully supplanted by "Slow Horses" and "Perry Mason". Jen, I think, watches "Only Murders...", but I can't stand Martin Short so that's a hard pass...]]

I started watching the new "True Detective", season 4 I believe, with Jodie Foster. I enjoyed the first and second episode. Strange and interesting. I'll watch more.

Movies: I haven't watched the latest "Mission Impossible". I have been seeing a number of movies at various theaters and, of course, I continue watching movies at home.

The best ones I've seen were "Poor Things" (which I mentioned in a previous LoC to you), "Fallen Leaves", "Godzilla Minus One", "Past Lives", "Oppenheimer", "The Boy and the Heron", "Killers of the Flower Moon", "Smoke Sauna Sisterhood" - documentary, "The Zone of Interest" and "26.2 to Life". Included in this group is an older movie, "Wise Blood", which I've seen in the past and watched again at home before seeing it at the theater.

[[This edition of the Gary Mattingly listzine continues... "Poor Things" is on my list since it's been highly recommended by several...]]

I have also seen at the theater some older films by Andrei Tarkovsky, "Stalker", which I've seen numerous times at home and obviously I quite like, and "Ivan's Childhood" which I hadn't seen before and then saw again at home several days later. I'm a fan of Tarkovsky's films. Unfortunately he died after only making thirteen or fourteen movies. The Roxie theater is having a retrospective of his films, still to come are "Mirror" and "Andrei Rublev", both of which I've watched at home, and "Nostalghia" which I will also watch at home. However I find it enjoyable watching his films at the theater, as long as no one is in front of me who sits bolt upright and has a giant head with hair that sticks out. Then I wonder, where oh where are my big pruning shears? Anyway, there are only a couple of films by him that I haven't watched yet, one was a movie he made while still in school. It is on my to-be-watched shelves. I have all of his films that have been released. I also have all the films that have been released by Ozu. There are a lot more of those. I haven't watched all of those yet either.

Another older movie I watched at the Roxie was "To Live and Die in LA", which I also watched at home just before seeing at the theater.

I also saw "Wonka" and "Napoleon" which were good but not as good as the other movies, at least for me.

"Once Within A Time" and "Anselm" in 3D, Wim Wender's most recent film, a documentary about Anselm Kiefer, are also within this second group. They were enjoyable. "Once Within a Time" had a great soundtrack but was a bit hard to follow. "Anselm" was very interesting but the 3D glasses made it very dark and at times I had difficulty seeing everything, including subtitles.

I saw the following at home. I can't remember which I've mentioned before.

"Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves" (definitely amusing), "Where the Devil Roams" just fair - on Tubi, "The Muppet Christmas Carol", "Tokyo Godfathers", "Black Christmas", an interesting precursor movie to the slasher movies, "Stalag 17", "The Naked Island", "The Crow", "City of Angels", "Free Guy", "The Wailing", "The Martian Chronicles" (1980), "The Human Condition" Parts I, II and III, a Japanese movie taking place during WWII and most depressing, "Flight of the Navigator", "The Old Way" "Dragonslayer", and "The Last Starfighter".

My apologies if I have already mentioned any of these in the past. These are all within the last six months.

[[You might well have. Fuctifino...]]

The following I already have tickets for and are to be seen over the next two or three weeks:

"Long Day's Journey Into Night" (2010, directed by Bi Gan. There are several released movies with that title) some 3D in it also, "Mirror", "The Wizard of Oz", "Last Things", "Nostalghia", "Andrei Rublev", "Freud's Last Session".

Some other possibilities for the future includes "The Settlers", "Origin" and "The Beekeeper".

[[I'm likely to clock "The Beekeeper" this weekend, since it's streaming now (for hopefully not too much \$\$, but ey, Jason Stratham...)]

'Radio Winston': I listen to a mix of old and new. In the car I mainly listen to Sirius / XM and to their stations featuring music from the 60s or 70s, plus blues, reggae and occasionally Radio Classics (old radio shows). Whereas at my desk at home I usually listen to Spotify and new music it recommends, also the music list from the New York Times Amplifier, NPR's list of Friday new music. So it is a mix but I should attempt to check out and remember names and musicians for the music to which I am listening.

I'm not familiar or don't remember The Regrettes. Well, just started listening and they sound good.

'On Writing (OMPHALOSKEPSIS)': Well, I wish you luck on your writing. I mainly try to not screw up my grammar and spelling and to not look too much the idiot. I have thought about subscribing to the *Grauniad* but I already am subscribed to numerous newspapers and magazines and I can't even find time to read through them. I don't actually read much about sports nor expensive eateries, well I don't eat in any, or at least, very, very rarely.

[[The dear old Grauniad website is still free for all, no subscription required: <https://www.theguardian.com> ...]]

'Corflux': I really don't know anything about the park, although I do plan to go to it on your bus, but I wouldn't know whether it should be a 2 hour or a 3 hour trip. One should of course take into account the general health of the

majority of those coming along. Some might be tired after two hours. Just a thought.

[[Now cancelled...]]

'Footy': seems to be entirely about Footy this time around so, sorry, no comments on that.

'Loco Citato': Well, starting off with Marcus Aurelius, great idea. I'm a fan.

Ah, there I am. My tastes in food seem to be changing more rapidly than in the past. I'll like something once or twice and then am totally off it. Cosmo the dog seems to be having similar problems. He'll like something one day and the next totally turn his nose up at it.

Relative to "Terriers", possibly I should watch more than one episode. The first episode of "Echo" was not very good but **Alun Harries** said that was true but the later episodes were much better. He was right. I watched the entire short series and, in my opinion, it got better with every episode.

There are some excellent boxers these days but I just don't know much about what goes on behind the scenes these days.

'Indulge Me': Nice COR41U t-shirt design. I have issues buying convention t-shirts any more. I wear them once or twice and, more often than not, they wind up in a box. I have too many boxes. I bought several "Stalker" t-shirts and an Ozu t-shirt for "Tokyo Story". However, times have I worn them: twice. However I did wear it to the "Stalker" show at the Roxie recently and, while waiting for entrance to the bathroom after the show someone actually noticed the shirt and said I must be a fan, yes indeed, I replied. But still, there my t-shirts are. When oh when will I have an opportunity to wear them again?

More nice artwork by **Ulrika**. More ageless beauties. And other interesting photos scattered throughout.

Well, gee, I may beat your deadline. Now I have to go to bed since I'll be up late tomorrow at the movie theater.

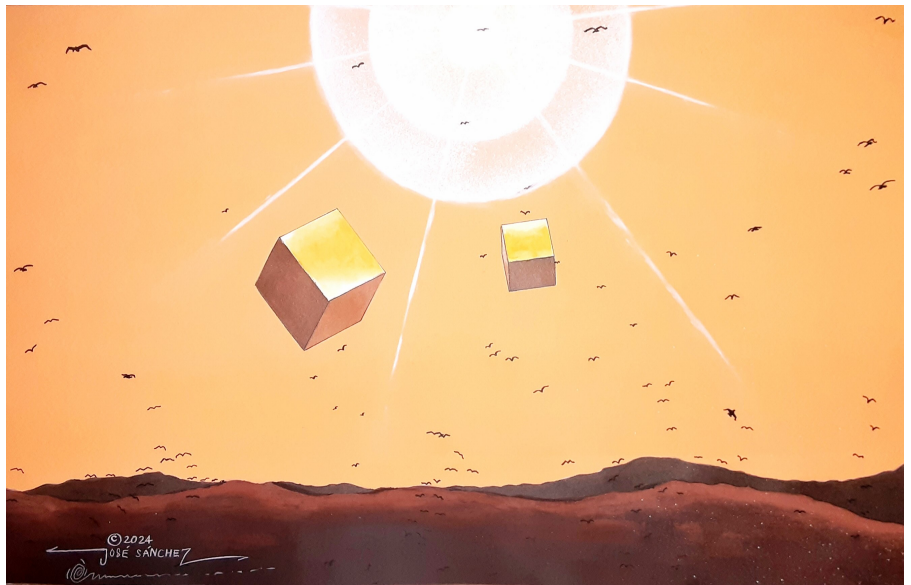
[[After wading through that lot I find it difficult to believe that you ever go to bed...]]

From: perry@middlemiss.org

January 24

Perry Middlemiss writes:

Your prompt about ensuring that any discussion about the future of fannish fanzines in Australia, between **Leigh Edmonds** and myself, should be recorded nudges me towards suggesting this as a panel item for a



future Melbourne convention. Stay tuned. If it gets up I will record it.

In reply to **Gary Mattingly** about a future site for a Corflu: I can't see Canberra being in the mix. The yearly convention there is geared towards writers - getting published, getting an agent etc etc - rather than the fannish side of things. I was invited as Fan GoH because a certain person got into the ear of the con chair and mentioned my name. I suspect the answer to that statement was: "Who?" Anyway, if I'm on a panel at a con it will be either about con-running or fanzines, as I'm basically incompetent to talk about anything else. And even those subjects are a bit iffy. The subsequent reports out of Canberra might have indicated a fannish bias - not the case, unfortunately. This is not to be taken as a criticism, just a statement of my observations over a number of years. What they do they do well, it just isn't overly fannish.

Cheers,

Perry Intermediate-Failure

[[It's a potential topic for the 'Future of Corflu' program item at COR41U, discussing in part who's up for running the fuckin' thing after 2025. There's already been a bit of argy-bargy about the UK hosting again so soon, but unless a competing bid magically arises, there it is. I'm cognizant of the fact that, big bloody country that it is, what sort of numbers might you'd get for a standalone fanzine-related gathering in Australia? Same problem in the USA to an extent. What might have legs is the idea of folding a Corflu (or at least a Corflu-style program thread) into the Aussie Natcon - I don't think it's necessarily demeaning to suggest that this could be a holding plan for 2026 while the USA gets over the inevitable pearl-clutching that would ensue without a credible 2026 bid, although we are all still glaring meaningfully at Rich Coad who is in turn trying to put Jeanne Bowman and Alan Rosenthal in the frame...]]

WAHF

Dave Cockfield : (pre-loc) "Happy New Year mate. I live in hope that it will be a vast improvement on last year." ; **Steve Green** with a lovely little video message full of good cheer ; **John Hertz** : "According to my notes I sent you a *TH...* 69 loc and a handful of *Vanamonde* around 18 November. No sign thereof in *TH...* 70 WAHF or Fmz Received. Nor, for that matter, in *TH...* 71. Happily 71 had artwork by **O'Brien**. Thanks. " *[[I don't recall the loc, which isn't to say it didn't exist - are you sure that it wasn't sent to Jenzine? ...]]* ; **Perry Middlemiss** : (pre-loc) "You sneaked in before the end of 2023 but I'll miss that deadline. I'm hoping to have two issues out in January. I hope you and yours had a good festive season." ; **Cathy Palmer-Lister** : "An article in the National Geographic confirms that adults need play. So, not time wasted if you are having fun. It is necessary to the species."

FANZINES RECEIVED

Gratefully acknowledged as ever and again without comment, as regrettably as ever...

VANAMONDE (John Hertz) - The usual clump of plinths...

THE STF AMATEUR January and February 2024 (**Heath Row**) - ...

PERRYScope #39, #40 (**Perry Middlemiss**) - ...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #62 (**Andy Hooper**) - ...

ALEXIAD #132 (**Joseph & Lisa Major**) - ...

BEND, FOLD, SPINDLE AND MUTILATE INC #1 (**Chuck Connor**) - ...

INDULGE ME

✕ **WHO KNOWS WHERE THE TIME GOES?**

Another musical reference, which will be clocked with immediate approval by Sandy Denny fans. It's now 2am Saturday morning as I resume work on this, flitting between items and columns as is my wont. I got all cream crackered yesterday toward the end of the 'TV Guide' column and went off to slob in front of some classic 'Doctor Who' while waiting for **Jen** to get back from her own busy day bearing cheap takeout for our nosebag, and rather than watching "The Beekeeper" (now streaming) as had been my initial plan, I ended up going off to kip at 6pm. It's this sort of thing which makes a zine a week late, y'know...

✕ **AUSSIE DISS** : As mentioned above, I'm clocking a lot of classic 'Doctor Who' and as of now I'm up to the wet vet (Fifth Doctor Peter Davison) and his motley overload of annoying companions. One character remarks upon the utter dreariness of wherever they are, to which Tegan Jovanka

(Janet Fielding) immediately responds: "Never been to Brisbane?"...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY - WHAT'S IN A NAME? (1)** : **Helen Folasade Adu...**



✕ **HUGOWANK** : And there they all go again, don't they? Even a WorldThing avoider such as meself cannot have failed to clock the latest brouhaha (causing much haha round here, to be sure). One blogger published a thorough [statistical analysis](#) which was mostly beyond my maths skills, but the phrase "The 2023 Hugo Nomination Statistics are implausible and anomalous..." in the conclusions stood out, as did the one bit I mostly understood which was the massive outlier standard deviations of the distribution. This commenter points out, as have many others, that the numbers ought to have been available a lot swifter than the "91 days later" they emerged, typically being published a few days if not mere hours after the ceremonies. I can't help making the usual contrast with the FAAns (expecting much derision from **Mike Glyer**, of course), where the results tabulation will be available *immediately* after the awards are given. Now it's DoBFO that FAAn voting numbers are tiny compared to the Hugos, there's only seven categories and nothing depends on some tortuous algorithm which only three people understand. I'd argue, however, that the scale of each operation is irrelevant - both have a defined process and both have to be all sorted in time for the physical awards to be crafted. The Hugo team is presumably staffed up as

much as it needs to be, the FAAns only need one person to document the voting, which reflects the participation (and perhaps even the relative perceived importance to the wider Faniverse) of each. The fact that the probity of the FAAns (and my own alleged “fixing” of them, a libelous statement to be sure) has been questioned starts to be more of a “but look over *there...*” diversion, don’t it?...

✕ **TV GUIDE EXTRA** : Fab news as far as we’re concerned: a new season of ‘Leverage: Redemption’ is filming! ...

✕ **MORE FOR ELI** : Another article from the *Grauniad* : [Are Crossword puzzles actually good for the brain?](#)...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY - WHAT’S IN A NAME? (2)** : Roza Maria Leopoldyna Lubienski...



✕ **RIP CHRIS PRIEST**: Sad news about the ‘Prestige’ author whom I first encountered in print many years ago in the pages of ‘New Writings in SF’, particularly the original short story version of ‘The Inverted World’ (with different plot and characters) in volume 22. The memorable opening line of the subsequent novel “I had reached the age of six hundred and fifty miles” was rightly tagged by **Paul Kincaid** as “one of the most famous in science fiction”. I met Chris once at a Novacon where I was doing teck, and as usual playing music over the PA between items, at that moment the Wallflowers (feat. Jakob Dylan), and he strolled over to engage in what turned out to be a spirited but very amenable

chat about Dylan *pere*. I much later dropped him into a cleriheiw of which he wasn’t the ostensible subject, viz:

John Carnell
Edited ‘New Writings in SF’ very well
But may have said once, at least:
“Who will rid me of this troublesome Priest?”

I never found out if he saw that - I hope he did and got a larf out of it...

✕ **NEXTISH** : Thereby hangs a “fucknose”. Given that this is a week (ETA plus three days, see ‘Footy’) late in part because of what I hope is a temporary disability in reading the fuckin’ calendar, if there’s going to be a February ish it would have to be out in three weeks, the 24th, since the week after that is (a) March (although I’m bending this’un beyond yer actual January aren’t I?) and (b) in the middle of COR41U. I *might* have time to do the 24th, since all the COR41U pubs should be done and at the printers by then but it does seem a bit of a stretch. 30th March at the latest, then. No doubt there will be drunken convo with the noble Footy columnist about that...

✕ **LATE NIGHT FINAL (EGOTORIAL EXTRA)** : So I’m now actually retired! It does feel a bit weird, although also luxurious since it’s a *Tuesday* and I’ve been napping like I was in training for the world championships, although I suspect I’ve still got a way to go before I get to Grand Master **Leigh Edmonds** status. I shall resolve to train harder, of course.

I confidently predict a hopefully not interminable period of not knowing what day it is, and I’ve got to take a minute to write things on the calendar like medical appointments, although thinking about that what use is the fuckin’ calendar when you don’t know what day you’re in to start with? “Is today”, I may wonder in a haze of sleep and alcohol “the day upon which I must put the bins out?”

Tomorrow is sorted, mind, since the plan all along was to have a few weeks before COR41U to get that all finalized, and I have a 10am meeting tomorrow with the Catering Manager at the Gold Coast after which I’ll nip just up the road to the printers we’ll be using for all the publications and other bits and pieces that’ll be thrust upon (oo-er missus) attendees, subsequently to be thrust via mail or willing couriers upon supporting members worldwide. I can’t quite imagine **Claire Brialey** wearing an OFFICIAL COR41U THRUSTER t-shirt, but we can live in hope...

MIRANDA

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**"We are tired of all the darkness in our lives
With no more angry words to say can come alive
Get into a car and drive to the other side"**