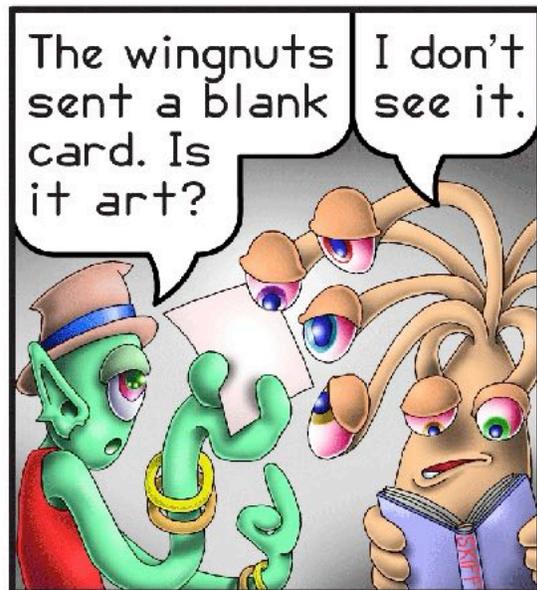
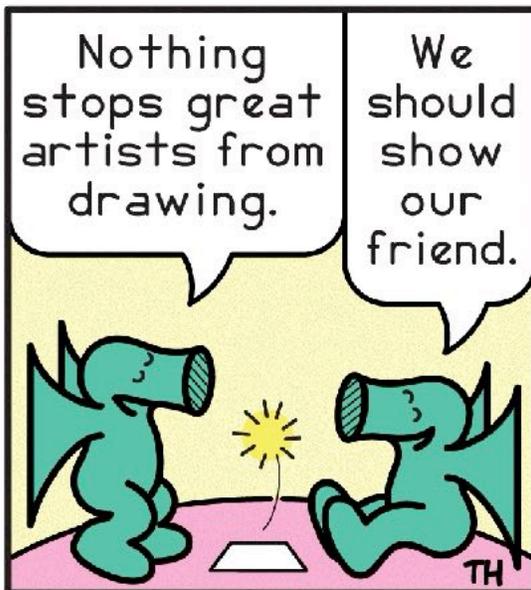
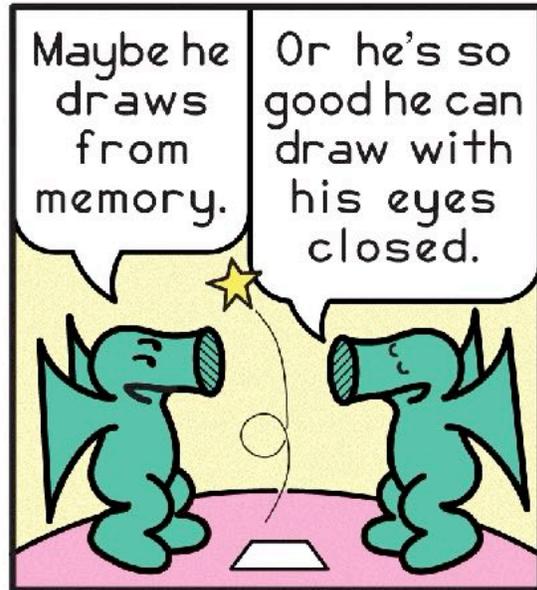


This Here...

"...did no permanent mental damage." (L Edmonds)

WINGNUT LOGIC

TEDDY HARVIA &
BRAD W. FOSTER



EGOTORIAL

A LITTLE BIT POLITICAL?

'Tis the season, I suppose, what with the UK and France in full anticipatory throes, EU parliamentary elections and India just having exercised their democracies, and, DoBFO, my country of residence gearing up for November.

I typically don't discuss politics in this here troupe of cracked actors, even though it's one of my personal and enduring interests, for the two basic reasons of, first, polite avoidance of the topic honed by daily interaction with the unwashed punters in the taxi (and indeed a lifetime of hewing to "never talk about politics or religion"), secondly that I think pretty much everyone knows where I stand (my favorite political philosopher being Antonio Gramsci).

Adjacent to that, I'd be preaching to the choir to no small extent, but I also want to avoid the dreadful nitpicking that so often occurs on the left. It's tended to be the case that the Nazi-like (or Nazi-lite?) marching bands have been more impressive in keeping lockstep, whereas the lefties love a good bicker, don't they?

Anyway, what's prompted me to enter these churning and likely polluted waters? Well, upcoming elections are unavoidable in the news, plus I've got dear old friend **Joseph Nicholas** in the loccol, prompted by **Dave Hodson** opining on voting systems. What really done it, though, was a lead piece in the *Grauniad* about Labour leader Keir Starmer (or "Stammer" as **Dave** amusingly dubs him) saying, in part: "Wealth creation is our number one priority."

Now you'd think that there's nothing wrong with that, it's all lovely and aspirational innit, but to me it's nothing more than fuckin' pablum.

What seems on the face of it to be a "nice for everybody" sort of thing (in that typically wishy-washy lefty-but-we're-really-business-friendly-honest kind of way) who, I might ask is going to get excited over that? In my own cynical view I'd suggest that for those working and still struggling to make ends meet, having to avail themselves of food banks, and those in or close to retirement worrying how they'll get by, "wealth creation" isn't really up there on the list of things that make you go "Ooh! Yes, please, *just* what I need..."

For meself, I've got o interest in "wealth" *per se*. I'd just like to be able to count on a roof over my head and a pie and a pint, thanks all the same.

The legendary cartoonist Steve Bell nailed it long ago in his cartoon strip "If..." with a storyline which had his everyman

character Reg Kipling at the Jobcenter, telling the interviewer (portrayed with a smiley face mask) - and I paraphrase here - "Look, I don't want to be on a 'training scheme' digging holes, I'm not a budding entrepreneur, I just want an actual job with actual pay and conditions", causing the poor functionary to burst into tears at the futility of her efforts.

Likewise, most people at the shit end of the stick aren't thinking that "wealth" is what they've always been missing. The capitalist system *requires* that there be winners and losers, and ferfucksake I've never understood that people still buy into the "rising tide" and "trickledown" myths. So "wealth creation" aspirations are just so much bollocks™, because not only do we have to ask where the "wealth" is going to come from, but under late-stage capitalism, also *at the expense of whom?*

This is the point where I typically run out of steam, or at least lose patience with the unavoidable topic *du jour*, since I abhor lazy and thoughtless sloganeering, even as I can't help being guilty of it meself at times, I'm sure.



It's arguable that the far-right populist elements tend to have catchier slogans - after all there's a brutal simplicity to "Wogs Out!" with which swathes of the populace might identify. UK readers will likely recall the Conservatives 1978-79 billboards asserting that "Labour Isn't Working" with its staged photo of what was supposed to be a very long dole queue - in fact a cut-and-pasted montage of the 20 Hendon Young Conservatives who turned up for the shoot.

Contrast that admittedly stellar piece of marketing with a jump forward to the 1992 general election where the Labour Party, although narrowly ahead in the polls managed to lose, I would contend in part because the country rather balked at the idea of having to listen to Neil Kinnock, a man who never mastered the art of the concise soundbite, blathering on interminably from Number Ten for however many years. Mind you, his lack of support for his own left wing, particularly during the miners' strike seven years prior would have given some of his own expected voters pause for thought. Sound familiar (Keir)?

I remain reluctant to regularly get "a little bit political" in these pages, but ey, in the coming months it might be unavoidable. Then again, there's always pictures of trains...

It's all good.

June 2024

CORFLUX

No new news, but a reminder that room bookings for the Chequers are open (to members), so get in - or *join*, then get in! There will be a limited number of ground floor rooms available for the aged and infirm (as if that wasn't just about everybody) and a list is being maintained for their allocation, so if you'd be after one of them (as we are) it's a good idea to book early (as we have).

The hotel and the organizers get a nice warm glow when the bookings are in early. As usual, everything you need to know can be clocked at corflu.org ...

TRAVEL PLANS (2025)

Apparently I either couldn't be arsed or lacked the ability to come up with a witty column title to talk about our trip to the UK next April. Suggestions welcomed as always...

I'll also be using this here space to divulge info about additional fundraising when we get that started, apart from the already sorted generosity of the Corflu Fifty (and you can still contact **Rob Jackson** in the UK or **Rich Coad** this side of the pond if you're interested in joining that not yet 50 strong group and influence the decision-making) and indeed Reconnect.

At the moment it looks like we'll be arriving at Gatwick on the morning of April 2nd (the flights aren't bookable that far out as I write, so that's subject to a tweak) with a return on the 22nd (same caveat).

Fixed points so far on the itinerary are:

April 3rd : First Thursday Fandom drinks, the Bishop's Finger, Smithfield.

April 10th : Arrive at Chequers hotel, Newbury for Corflu 42

April 11th - 13th : Corflu 42

April 18th - 21st : Reconnect (Belfast Eastercon)

In between that lot, we'll be doing family and friends stuff for me eg grandkids in Kent, gravesite visiting near Hitchin, newly-discovered siblings get-together, LSE mates (the DVs reunion ect) and touristy things for **Jen**, who is already insisting that we must go to the Zoo (as per Brian Cox in "The Long Kiss Goodnight").

It seems like a lot to cram in, even in three weeks, and it probably is, but we're not forgetting the inherent fannish nature of the venture, so we'd like to fit in at least a swingby of old friends who we *won't* be seeing at either of the cons. To this end (so far) my old friend from Trek con days, **Amanda Epstein**, has already kindly offered to put us up for a night or two (tbd) in Finchley, and we're tentatively thinking about dipping a toe into Scotland (oo-er missus ect) between Corflu and Reconnect to see eg **Cuddles** and any others (**Jette Goldie**?) who may not be traipsing to Belfast, also bearing in

mind the many travel options for getting to Northern Ireland from points north of Hadrian's Wall.

All the details are DoBFO highly tentative at the moment, a lot of thinking out loud, but we want to keep everyone posted and invite suggestions - offers of accommodation wouldn't go amiss either, but bear in mind that neither of us are very good with walking much (or stairs)...

More to follow...

RADIO WINSTON

VANDELLAS vs SUPREMES (SORT OF)

I'm not totally sure whether this even truly existed, but there was supposedly a Motown sampler in the 1960s which was sent to DJs, consisting of the first twenty seconds or so of each of their single releases, and it was alleged to be the absolute fuckin' finest thing you could ever listen to, since every single one of them grabbed you by the bollocks™ with inevitable immediacy.

By about 1966 or so Berry Gordy more or less decided to "feature" the front persons of his vocal groups, so the Vandellas became "Martha Reeves and...", the Supremes (more famously, I suppose) "Diana Ross and...". While this was interpreted at the time as a precursor to solo careers, the decision was based on the idea that Gordy could charge separately for the lead singer and the backing group, so as usual it was all about the dosh. "David Ruffin and the Temptations" was also mooted but didn't end up occurring.



You can look it up, as they say, but back in the day Diana Ross' voice was considered "thin", certainly compared to utter belters like Martha Reeves, and that made me think of previous contentions of mine that Bob Marley became the rockstar out of the Wailers since he was perceived as less threatening than Peter Tosh. Likewise, therefore, I might argue that, with or without Berry Gordy's determined promotion of Ross, who he was allegedly shagging at the time, the less "threatening" and arguably even submissive persona of Ross at that time would be more appealing to broader (ie "white") audiences than would more assertive

front persons. (Admittedly assertiveness didn't stop Aretha Franklin from becoming a national treasure, but ey...)

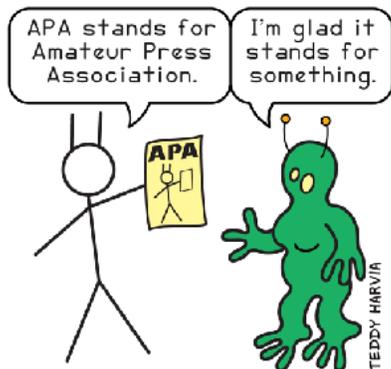
Typically I've got a quirky standard for '60s R&B, which is: "Would it play on a Northern Soul dance floor?", and it's DoBFO enough, I'd suggest, that the easy answer is "Supremes, not so much - Vandellas, fuck yeah!"

[Nowhere to Run](#), baby...

OMPHALOSKEPSIS

APA CHAT: A CONVERSATION WITH W^m BREIDING

Nic : A quick recap on how we got into this topic. After this year's FAAn awards, **Andy Hooper** wondered out loud



what **Mark Plummer** had done apart from one ish of *Banana Wings* to earn his "Best Fanwriter" plaque, and Mark himself replied to the effect of "quite a lot in ANZAPA, actually". This led to your remarks that there must be a lot of apa writing which is essentially "lost" to the wider fanzine Faniverse.

I'm confident that you're factually correct in noting that a great deal of fanwriting (and fanart, no doubt) is unseen by substantial numbers in the wider community, but before you lamented this, had you considered Sturgeon's Law?

W^m : I wouldn't expect just any apahack to be interested in the larger scope of fanzine fandom. The weekly chatter of Apa-L is not likely conducive to creating stronger, standalone essays, or lead to the urge to reach out to a larger part of fanzine fandom and do a genzine, or write/draw for one. Apahacks tend to be a breed apart, not paying much attention to the larger picture of fanzine fandom. And sure, in any given apa whether weekly, monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly you are going to have a substantial amount of tripe being written - it may be all very well for the conversation on-going in the apa, but unlikely to rivet a general reader. So yes, Sturgeon's Law is in full effect, just as it always is.

Nic : I note how carefully you've couched that - saying "apahacks *tend to be a breed apart*" (my emphasis). From my perch I suppose all I see are the generally notable exceptions to that.

W^m : There are dozens, possibly hundreds, of fans among various apa rosters who have absolutely nothing to do with the fanzine fandom with which you and I are engaged. Those who also participate with wider fanzine fandom are most certainly the exception. Some of this has to do with

club fandom I think - various regional fan clubs have apas, or are at least adjacent to the club, or the region.

This would actually make for good historic copy, researching why and how some apas came into existence. Maybe we should pull **Ted White** into this conversation since Harry Warner is dead!

Nic : I don't think we have enough pages to include Ted! (Sorry, old friend!) As something with a factual basis I'm going to be interested to see **Heath Row's** upcoming apa directory which is going to tell us who's on the ball here.

W^m : Yes, if Heath can get a lead on 90% of extant apas it would be a herculean effort. Many, at this juncture, are hidden, like Apa-50.

Nic : My conception of apas is that they are (or were?) intended for the private audience of their members. The contention therefore could be that apa members wanted to keep their apa-specific work under those wraps. If they wanted to reach a wider audience they could (and did) write for a more "generally available" title. (eg R Lichtman in the past, **Fishlifters** in the present.) What's your response to that?

W^m : The reason I initially declined to write further about apas siphoning away from genzines is for this very reason. Apas are a chosen community and guarantee substantial privacy and it's unlikely any apa members would be willing to leave that behind. Your examples of apa writers who reach out to a wider audience by doing other stuff simply makes them actifans. You can't force someone to participate in something that doesn't interest them.

Nic : Let me quote **Steve Jeffery** from thish's locs: "Really have to disagree with W^m. Breiding on apas and his contention that they are draining talent out of genzines. That makes as much sense as saying that conversations in the bar at conventions are wasting words which could be used in fanzine articles or locs. In fact, they'll more likely be recycled (after a bit of creative recall and embellishment) into one or the other. And the same can be true of apa contributions (a lot of mine get adapted as parts of locs because currently I'm the only member with a foot in both camps.) Beside, if you want to be part of that great apa conversation that you feel you're missing out on, then there's a simple answer: apply to join the apa."

I'd say Steve makes a fair point about the arguably "apples and oranges" qualities of apas and genzines, wouldn't you?

W^m : I'd like to see Steve prove his theory that apa members are recycling their work for a "generally available" audience. I think he answers his own argument when he says "because I'm the only member with a foot in both camps." With the stress on only. I am a low energy kinda guy - always have been. So I either put my energy into doing an apazine or

publishing a genzine and lochacking. I think we can safely assume which camp I am in.

I'm grateful for folks like **Fred Lerner** who share what they are doing in an apa. I'd call Fred's *Lofgeornost* probably the single best long standing personalzine going. I'd've never known about Fred's FAPA zine if not for his decision to share. This leads to your next question:

Nic : Circling back to the FAAns for a minute, **Hooper** (him again, inevitably) suggested that apazines (I vaguely recall he may have mentioned FAPA in particular?) should be listed in *The Incomplete Register*, and I pointed out that this was not merely a Herculean but a truly impossible task, and again leads me to ask the question whether apahacks *want* such contributions publicized. I formulated a nebulous "generally available" standard for *TIR* listings, but of course nobody is prevented from voting for unlisted titles or individuals who have contributed to them.

W^m : There's no way to vote for an apazine for an award unless it's "generally available." It would be senseless for someone in an apa to nominate a fellow apahack for an award, except as extra egoboo. This means a zinester must either have a hardcopy mailing list outside the apa or post to eFanzines.com, or both, to be "generally available." For all I know there are potentially award winning zines being produced in ANZAPA and FAPA or Lil Apa; likely there are.

Nic : Philosophically you're arguably correct that, whatever the award, voters shouldn't favor a zine that isn't "generally available", but as far as I can tell, and I'll use the term "legislatively", there's nothing that prevents them from doing so.

You'd have more traction with me by calling that a "wasted vote" for several reasons including that (I'm assuming this still goes on) apas typically have their own internal egoboo poll. It's possibly worth noting that if every member of FAPA decided to nominate one of its constituent zines for the Hugos it would have a fair chance of getting on the final ballot. Mind you, I suspect the same goes for "zines" with multiple editors who, we might guess, would favor their own product.

W^m : Because of **Andy's** comment about **Mark** winning the FAAn based on one piece of writing at Cor41u, it would be interesting to see who voted for Mark and how many are ANZAPA members. I doubt that's relevant though - I figured most people were voting for Mark out of habit, and because he's a damned fine writer.

And yes, "wasted vote" is technically a better way of putting it. I was never in any apas that did egoboo polls, though I know FAPA, and other older apas used to do such things.

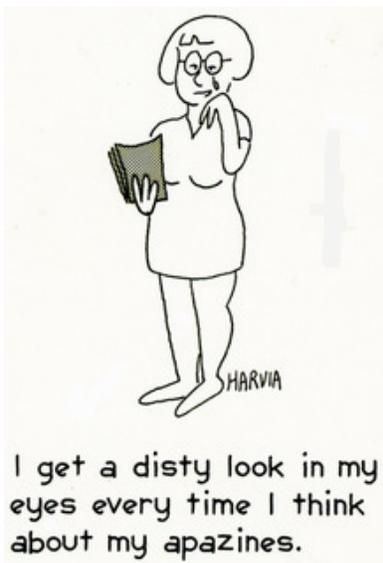
Nic : I could, of course, go over the 2024 ballots and make that determination, but I'm not going to, even out of our own curiosity. While the voters' names are listed, the actual content of their ballots properly never is. Individuals might choose to reveal their own choices, or implicitly do so by advocating for individuals or titles.

As the current administrator, I've always been willing to reveal my own ballot *in toto*, although the consensus from others is that I probably shouldn't. For the record (again) I will state that I record my votes typically the day before voting officially opens in an email to myself (thus date and time-stamped) to avoid any creeps that I might directly influence any winners in a close contest. I'm happy to reveal that I'm sure it's no surprise to anyone that **Mark** appeared on my Fanwriter ballot, and I'm not an ANZAPA member. I also notice that I've drifted off-topic...

It might be considered a fairly recent development that some apazines are more "generally available". **Fred Lerner**, for example, mails out copies of *Lofgeornost* to a controlled list, and others, perhaps notably **Andy Hooper's** *Captain Flashback*, appear on eFanzines, as does **Heath Row's** bundle *The STF Amateur*. Andy doesn't edit out mailing (dusty) comments, which suggests two questions: first, how useful are such comments when we might presume the general reader hasn't seen the titles being commented upon, and secondly, do we therefore assume that permission has been granted by the other apa members to allow

these comments to appear publicly, given the implied "private" nature of the original endeavor? (I'll note that **Marc Ortleib's** *Knot a Fanzine* is a compilation of his ANZAPA contributions which excludes them.)

W^m : You're back to the privacy issue. Let's deal with both that and what it means to the general reader to leave MCs in your "generally available" apazine. I assume that **Andy Hooper** has the implicit permission of his fellow Turbo Charged Apas to post *Captain Flashback* to eFanzines.com so privacy is not an issue. Same with **Heath Row's** *StF Amateur* bundle. I'm thinking by and large most apa members won't mind a more general distribution of a zine that is only responding to their zine, so privacy is less likely to be an issue. On the other hand what does it mean to the general reader to have a slew of MCs presented to them? 1): they can skip the MCs or 2): they can read them. I choose to read them. If I am already reading an apazine by a particular



writer I'm likely to be inclined to be interested in their opinions as expressed in MCs, even if it means some initial prognostication on my part. In a recent loc to *Captain Flashback* I commented upon some of Andy's MCs to other apa members; in essence I was writing an MC to the apa participants, giving further interesting texture to both the zine and the apa. Of course the obvious thing to do is eliminate the MCs like **Fred Lerner's** *Lofgeornost* or **Henry Grynsten's** *Wild Ideas*. (I believe **Perry Middlemiss** was also doing this with *Perryscope* until he stopped using it as his apazine altogether.) But in order to eliminate MCs you have to do some other sort of substantial writing aside from those MCs. It's possible to turn MCs into essays, which is my favorite kind of apahacking, but that's another subject altogether.

Nic : Returning to that "generally available" metric, how would we define *Banana Wings* (a DoBFO genzine in structure) since it's also "only" available to a controlled list, albeit one about double the size (I think) of the email list for *This Here...*? The same question might be asked of John Thiel's (largely) fictionzine *Pablo Lennis*, or anything else which doesn't appear on efanzines. (cf *Lofgeornost* as previously mentioned.)

Wm : Oh, that's an easy one. Any hard copy fanzine that is available by sample, the usual, or whim is "generally available." I find that most hard copy fanzine editors want to control who it is that sees their fanzine, and know who they are, and have some sort of "relationship" with that reader. *Banana Wings* has both a hard copy mailing list and a PDF mailing list; they have absolute control over who is reading their fanzine. I totally get that. I had it both ways with *Portable Storage*.

My primary was a limited hardcopy mailing list. Almost anyone could get a copy. A few months later I would post it to eFanzines.com where it could be anonymously viewed. My original intention was hardcopy only but Gail convinced me it was important to have it posted at eFanzines.com (thanks, **Bill!**). (Caveat: there are some fans that won't, under any circumstances, get a hardcopy of my zine; conversely, there were fans that should have been on my mailing list but weren't because I had no way to contact them. I retrospectively feel bad about not making more of an effort to track these folks down. After his untimely death I later found out that Martin Morse Wooster had been printing out *Portable Storage* from eFanzines.com when he could have more cheaply ordered them from Amazon, or just emailed me and ask to be put on my mailing list and gotten them for free!)

Nic : Do we need a Venn diagram now?

Wm : Very Funny. No, I don't think it's necessary. For reasons, see next question.

Nic : Fundamentally then, we might ask of the participants: what is the attraction of apahacking rather than (or in addition to) writing or submitting artwork to "generally available" zines? Is it possible, or even likely, that the controlled frequency of apas provides a spur and/or a guaranteed outlet for fanatic?

Wm : When I started grouching about the whole apa-genzine problem I was initially thinking about folks who had prior experience with producing genzines like **Jae Leslie Adams** and **Jeanne Gomoll**. Wouldn't it be awesome if they started applying the energy they are expending to do apazines on generally available genzines?

But I know what the answer to that is: too much work! It's much easier to hack out an apazine. And then you get caught up in the milieu of apas and see no reason to write or draw (or layout a zine) outside the apa. But contributing to a generally available fanzine doesn't mean that you need to write/draw new material. If you wrote a bitchin' essay or did some great artwork for the apa why not reformat it and repurpose it by sending it to a zine that's generally available, a zine that is probably dying for you to send them something! If you are out of the general loop you can't expect a zine editor to contact you. Having just come off the train with nine issues of *Portable Storage* I'm a little sensitive about this issue, maybe. There are so many great writers and artists hiding away in apas and I would have loved to have presented and highlighted them for a much larger readership. *sigh*

Nic : In thish's locs, **Leigh Edmonds** suggests a very salient reason for apahacking rather than engaging in the ballsaching task of doing a genzine: "I don't know that I agree with Wm Breiding on the idea that apas are sucking the lifeblood out of the genzine field. Well, maybe he is right, but what of it? I might observe that I have, in the past nine months or so, published three genzines and made them available through efanzines.com. The response, apart from letters of comment from the current LoC writing champion, has been next to zero. On the other hand, an equal number of pages contributed to SAPS and ANZAPA has generated lots of egoboo for me. I don't know what others think the currency of fandom is but to me it's egoboo, and I know where I'm getting my hit from. So I'm not encouraged to produce genzines or write for them, but I am encouraged to keep up my involvement



Egoscanning the apa,
I see. Just think - if
you were a nameless
being like I am, you
would see egoboo
between the lines.

in apas.” As a drunken Corflu GoH once observed: “It’s all about the ‘boo’”. And there we might leave it?...

W^m: . . .not quite! **Leigh** is, of course, absolutely right. You have to have the desire to do a genzine; it has to be in your blood. Silence is a huge, frustrating issue with genzine production. In order to avoid it you have to be actively engaged with your mailing list. A faned’s silence is not golden either. Silence is especially a problem with digital fanzines where it is far too easy to forage, shrug, and then go back to watching the TV show of your choice, unless you are **Lloyd Penney**. One of the reasons I didn’t want to continue this topic was because there is no solution for this problem. I only ask for more participation. Because indeed, it’s all about the egoboo, drunkenly stated or not!

MOVIE NIGHT

UPGRADE and FREAKS

Browsing the “news” feed on my phone (as you do), one of the sections calls itself “Science Fiction” and is typically full of sites like Inverse, Gizmodo and what seems like approx 8 billion others of similar stripes. There’s a lot of lists (and readers of my old title *Arrows of Desire* may recall that I love a list as much as *Rolling Stone* does), and one of the perennial subjects is a list of “what’s on”, for example a recent one of “Seven SF movies on Netflix that you should watch”, five of which I had in fact seen but two I hadn’t, both of which looked interesting enough to check out.



‘Upgrade’ (2018) isn’t anything to do with the Blake Crouch novel which came later. The basic setup is auto mechanic Grey Trace (Logan Marshall-Green) becoming quadriplegic after a brutal car crash and mugging in which his wife is killed. Tech guru Eron (Harrison Gilbertson, and not

misspelled) offers him an AI implant called STEM which doesn’t just allow him to walk but gives him some wicked enhancements, allowing for the pursuit of vengeance against the miscreants, who unsurprisingly turn out to have had an agenda beyond yer basic assault.

At a 100-minute runtime it doesn’t drag, and the action sequences are, fair warning, gory and brutal yet not devoid of a bit of humor, although it does all get considerably darker as the plot is revealed. I’m not going to spoil it with any reveals, but I’ll note several critics pegging the effort as a ‘Black Mirror’ type cautionary tale, a not inaccurate assessment. 88% on Rotten Tomatoes, and the box office was around \$17 million, which you might think weedy until you learn that the budget was a tiny \$3 million. Recommended.

‘Freaks’ (also 2018 for its initial premiere at the Toronto Film Festival) might also cause confusion in making people think of Tod Browning’s rather legendary 1932 (pre-code) effort, to which it bears zero resemblance. The basic plot here is sort-of ‘Firestarter’ in that you’ve got 7-year-old Chloe Lewis played by Lexi Kolker (actually aged 9 at the time) in a quite riveting turn, kept under wraps by her paranoid father Henry (Emile Hirsch, also a solid performance). Chuck in some X-Men subtext in the sense of broad social and governmental anti-mutant sentiment (although the “m” word isn’t used here, they’re known as “abnormals”) and you’ve got the premise. There are some slightly draggy bits in the 105 minutes of this, but I’d say it gets going with the appearance of Alan (Bruce Dern, being thoroughly and engagingly Bruce Dern-y) as - mild spoiler - the undercover ice-cream man and/or priest who, it turns out, is Chloe’s grandfather. (And the point of the ice cream cone in the poster will be made clear to you, as well as the drop in the ‘R’ of the title, come to that...)



Another spoiler, I suppose, one I hope won't affect your enjoyment too much, is that we find Chloe's mother Mary is not dead as originally thought by Henry, but a prisoner at yer basic nasty detention camp from which they decide to rescue her. I'm not going to spoil the denouement for you or how it comes about.

This'un also clocks 88% on RT, the critics were full o'gosh for the performances (especially Kolker's), and yet it made fuck all money (sigh). Also recommended.

Speaking of those lists of stuff, I've noticed that a number of the compilers thereof have chucked 'Coherence' (2013) in theirs lately, which I had lauded in a previous ish. It's currently streaming free on Peacock and on Amazon Prime if you have that subscription. Do clock this'un if you haven't yet...

TV GUIDE

DISCOVERY, DOCTOR AND WOKERY

As promised, season-ending review and comment on 'Star Trek: Discovery' and 'Doctor Who', and no doubt there will be spoilers, which in the case of 'ST:D' (*hugely* unfortunate abbreviation, shurely?) I'm going to assume that anyone who's been following it will already know what's been revealed, and as far as the Doctor goes, a lot of people are already in the "can't be arsed" camp for differing reasons.

Despite the 'Discovery' story arc being basically "The Key to Time" from Tom Baker's 'Doctor Who' stint, it's perhaps fairer to call it yer basic quest plot, with the identical nipping about from planet to planet allowing a fuck of a lot of fan service in clocking the futures of races (eg Betazoid, for one) from the 22nd - 24th century timelines of previous series. It was a pretty good choice, I'd say, to make the Breen the main antagonists, although I reckon a lot of us may have been left wondering where their implied snouts went, as after their initial actual appearance in 'DS9' (only having been mentioned a couple of times in 'TNG') led to the suggestion that physically they might resemble arctic wolves, or something.

One other thing I noted about the quest story arc (both here and elsewhere) was what I've always called the "One Tree" phenomenon, referring to book 2 in Stephen R. Donaldson's "Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant", a 500-page brick of a tome detailing the attempt to replace the Land's destroyed "Staff of Law" with a new limb from the titular tree. After the usual tribulations that occur in such endeavors, the quest ultimately fails, which after wading through all that is a massive fuckin' letdown.

So it is when the Federation *don't* end up with the progenitors' McGuffin (which spellcheck wants to change to "McMuffin", ahem), but then again you could argue that this has more in common with the ending of 'For Your Eyes



Only' : "You don't have it, I don't have it", a supposedly Solomonic resolution.

What people will tend to remember, however, and inevitably bang on about for ever and a day, is the ending coda which wraps up the entire series. Filming for the series concluded in November 2022 (yes, *that* long ago), but Paramount didn't announce until March 2023 that season 5 would be the last, so everyone was hauled back in a month after that to create a firm conclusion. In contrast to the justified pissing and moaning that greeted the series finale of 'Enterprise', this'un did it right, albeit using the bog-standard "where are they now?" method while making sure everyone got face time (Who! Jet Reno!) as well as tying the bow with a couple of frankly goshwow reveals which, if you've seen them I don't need to describe, and if you haven't the chances are that you wouldn't be arsed anyway, right?

Speaking of "can't be arsed" I now wonder *who* exactly I might be writing for when it comes to 'Doctor Who' since it seems that a review or summation is well fuckin' pointless given that if you're a dedicated and possibly even properly "critical" fan you'll already have formed your own conclusions, and if not you're possibly or even likely in the chorus of "it's been shite since 1793 and cannot be redeemed".

I hemmed and hawed about whether to wait for the grand finale before gobbing off, but then I considered some other

things like, oo I dunno, daily fanac quota and thought, actually it might be worthwhile to jot down some tosh before "Empire of Death" closes out the season.

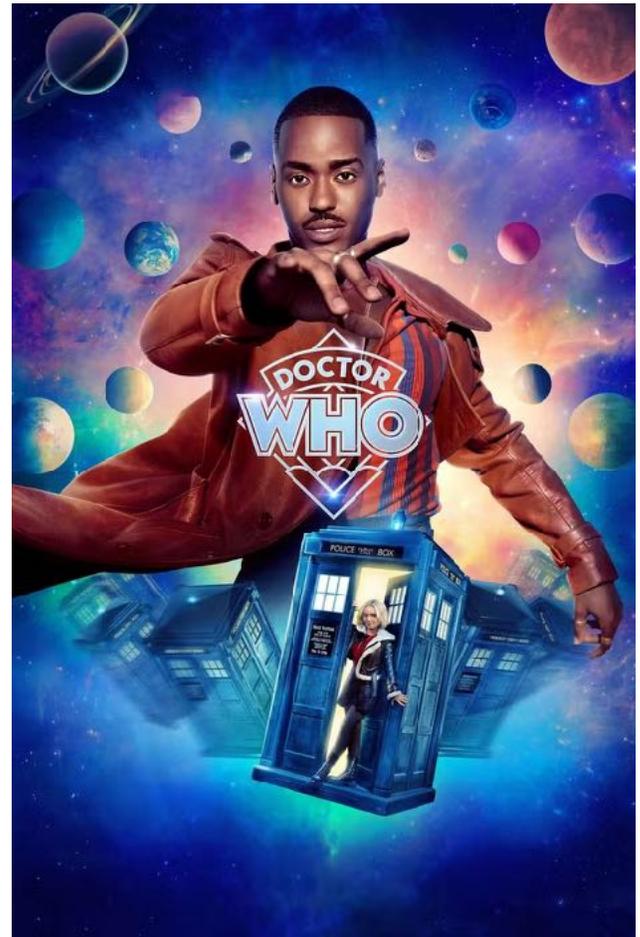
Having cogitated a bit, I've come to the badly stated conclusion that the Doctor himself seems MIA so far, which apart from the DoBFO "Doctor-lite" episode '73 Yards' shurely cannot factually be the case, especially seeing as how Ncuti Gatwa fair lights up the screen every second he's on it. So I Thought About It Some More (© Pam Wells) and then realized what others have noticed, which is that this Doctor is actually pretty crap at the saving everybody bit, having to rely on others to pull the fat out of the fire because so far he's been mostly fuckin' useless, mega-rizz and bouncy Garcia-style energy notwithstanding.

I've also been carrying some oo-er over the Ruby Sunday mystery (presumably to be sorted at least somewhat in the finale) with groans of "Please don't turn into something resembling 'The Clara Show' that we had before", although you might argue that it already has.

We are getting a more heart-on-the-sleeve emotional Doctor, but a fundamentally (or is it all veneer?) *joyous* one (despite crying a lot), in contrast to the darker undertones of the Blessed Eccles, and Capaldi when they figured out how to write for him. The other contrast has to be with Jodie Whitaker who, the egregious Chibnall's writing notwithstanding, was an actual problem-solver, albeit without the Machiavellian long game of the often underappreciated Sylvester McCoy.

Ahead of the finale, fan theories abound, of course - including round here from both **Jen** and **Chris Clay** - but (and I won't edit this out, so I must accept mockery if I got it all wrong), I'm going to predict that the universe will be saved by the women: Mrs. Flood ("Flood" might make you think of "River", but that's probably classic RTD misdirection), Ruby's mysterious mother, Kate Lethbridge-Stuart, Mel Bush and probably Ruby herself, with the Doctor looking on and going "gosh, thanks then"...

Then just as I got into bed the other night I conceived a fanwank theory so possibly bonkers that I had to get back up and share it with **Jen** : within all the blather of 'Legend' about Sue Triad possibly being Susan Foreman, the Doctor mentioned that he didn't have a daughter yet *that he knew of*, but could still have a granddaughter because timey-wimeyness, so, and bear with me, what if Ruby's mother turns out to be River Song, implying that Ruby *is* the Doctor's daughter (Jenny notwithstanding) and then if Mrs. Flood is Susan Foreman, *she* could then be Ruby's future (and past) daughter, slyly named in honor of her grandmother and possibly even hiding under a chameleon arch (hinted at in the episode), although if that were the case how would she recognize a Tardis? Then I went back to bed...



And after all that... [grimace], bit of a letdown I thought.

So the answer to dealing with the top all-powerful evil deity of the pantheon is "Walkies"? **Mark Eris** (on FBF, and quoted with permission) sums it up better than I could:

Russell T Davies 'Doctor Who' always seems to have a slowburning season arc - often quite some way in before you even realise it's happening - which builds and builds in fascinating ways that leave your mind fizzing with the possibilities of how it will resolve.

And the way it resolves is ALWAYS with bollocks^[TM], gibberish, deus ex machinas and saccharine sentiment. Can he not just ONCE write a finale that doesn't shit all over the build up to it?

So yeah, all a bit "meh" after the "fizzing" lead up really, especially since I was looking for a bit of chirrup after the disappointing news that my expected surgery date had to get postponed (see 'Health Diary'). Even following the Doc with the latest episode of 'The Boys' didn't quite do it since that's starting to look *very* hamfisted in its satire - or has it always been that way? More on that in a future column, probably.

At least in part, though, the 'Doctor Who' finale's damp squib got the "fans" going on more about that than about the wokery accusations which have also been consistently lobbed at 'Discovery'.

Now while I can quite understand criticisms of the tiresomeness of heavy-handed moralistic lectures in stuff purported to be “entertainment”, I will always deem it a Good Thing that there’s increased representation of all sorts, perhaps unfairly singling out having a nonbinary character in ‘Discovery’ (portrayed by an actual nonbinary actor), prompting vast outrage from people whom I might suggest have no fuckin’ clue what “nonbinary” even means but have been well schooled to bang on about how they don’t like it because - er - Jesus, probably.

I’ve come to the conclusion, though, that the final straw for the anti-woke twats, something occurring in ‘Doctor Who’, ‘Discovery’, and I will also note ‘The Boys’, is BLOKES SNOGGING.

I reckon it’s envy, meself...

BIRTHDAY BASH

Jen turned what I might cagily describe as an unmentionable age, one of those divisible by 10, on June 20th, and that ended up getting celebrated by a week’s worth of events, all but one of which I managed to weasel out of.

A lovely gesture by our man at the Gold Coast, Douglas Gardner, who had learned that it was our wedding anniversary on the first day of Cor41u, meant that we’ve been sitting on a nice credit voucher for the Cornerstone steakhouse, and we decided we’d like to book that for her actual birthday and drag along our usual “dinner crew” consisting of **Jacq Monahan**, **JoHn Wesley Hardin**, **Chris Clay** and **Lorraine (“Toes”) Forbes** for an early evening of shameless gluttony - for us, anyway, I’ve no fuckin’ idea what *they* do of a Thursday on a regular basis, except of course for our First Thursday SNAFFU get-togethers for nosebag, which the last couple of times have occurred at restaurants I’ve chosen meself, both of which inexplicably (a) didn’t serve alcohol and (b) I initially failed to find my way to on the day.

As good friends and dining companions of the blokeish persuasion will do, a certain amount of pisstaking occurs. We’ll typically endeavor to get anywhere before **JoHn** does on the basis that if we’re late there may not be any food left. His approach to any menu, we jest only a little, is much the same as mine when it comes to the drinks list, the response to the question “What would you like?”, being “Start at the top”...

Absolute champion pisstaker, though, is **Chris**. He claims that his *bon mots* are entirely extemporized, but I’ve always had my doubts. This is because in my case I’ve got a store of remembered (and typically nicked) comebacks that I’ll wheel out, and I’ve always thought he was the same, but he’s pretty forceful in denying it and honestly I *am* inclined to

give him the benefit, and not just because he’s well bigger than me...

He nailed it this time an’ all. Knowing that it was **Jen’s** birthday, and despite us also having ordered dessert, nice server Gary brings out a substantial slice of cheesecake with a candle in it.

Jen : [blows out candle]

Chris (immediately) : “Where did Nic go?”

Nic (dissolves into larffter) : “Oh, you bastard! That was top class!”

Relating this later to “Hal’s Pals” **Matt Powell**, **Terry Karney** and the **O’Brien** hisself, I could see from the blank looks all round that I would have to explain the joke, but y’know what, not going to do that here. Shurely you can figure it out?...



Slightly blurry photo by nice server Gary. Standing L-R : Chris, Toes, Jacq, JoHn. Seated: Jen, Nic

HEALTH DIARY

VARIOUS TYPES OF BOLLOCKS™

After telling a reasonable fraction of all and sundry about the impending bollock™ surgery (“Excision spermatic cord mass”, it says here) scheduled for the 24th, it turns out that I fucked up (not uncommonly) and have had to reschedule. The inevitably nice surgery coordinator Marisa calls me on the Friday, checks that I’ve had the pre-op quiz (which I have, the day before) and quizzes me about blood thinners, which I have got All Wrong by not stopping my usual intake of ibuprofen ten days before surgery day. Pleas that I have

thick blood which is why I have to be phlebotomized fall upon deaf ears. Arg!

So I've been rescheduled for July 8th and have made appropriate notes on the calendar. I'll have to have another blood draw for clearance, as I am informed that results are only good for 30 days, but I might be able to use the usual lab work ahead of the oncologist appointment with nice Nurse Hannah on the 28th. We shall see.

Let's move along to fuckin' American healthcare system bollocks™, shall we?

I feel bound to reiterate that, despite the dire arrangement that passes for healthcare in a supposedly First World country, all the medical professionals (and their support staffs) that I've been dealing with are absolutely top-notch, and I continue to wonder why and how they manage to be so fuckin'-A in a system that has to be as frustrating for them as it does for the rest of us.

You might recall that my prescribed leukemia medication is (at full price) a croggling \$18,000 a month, but that was covered by my work health insurance. Now, however, I've changed over to Medicare so it's all had to be rejigged - and don't even ask about Jen's travails in having to rearrange hers under an ACA plan, not helped by the fact that her regular rheumatologist and his assistant both just upped and left. A tale of woe possibly coming to a *JenZine* near you.

The first refill of my Calquence from the Optum specialty pharmacy post-work insurance informed me that I now had a co-pay of a tad north of \$3,500, DoBFO not at all doable. Via the oncologist, we applied to the pharmacy's own financial assistance program, which as it turns out is based on last year's tax return amount. That fucked us up because I took that lump sum payment from the Scholl(UK) pension plan so the 2023 income showed as being about 3 times that of a normal year. Nevertheless, they granted us \$8,000 which covered two months worth of the drugs (and a bit, I suppose).

I let nice Nurse Hannah know that the grant money would be running out, expecting to be asked to cough up the three and a half grand per month after that. So she puts us in touch with the inevitably super-nice Cindy in their office, who sorts out an application to the drug manufacturer

(AstraZeneca) to see if *they* can help. The AZ application asks for current income so, all right, we could be on to something, and indeed AZ will indeed supply the Calquence at no cost, and they punt two months' supply over pretty swift. Sighs of relief and the impression that all is now sorted.

The week after that I get a notice from the specialty pharmacy (I'll remind you that they're a separate entity from the manufacturer) that my automatic refill is being processed and will be on the way in a minute with a co-pay of \$0.

Now we're at "Oi, wait a minute, what the fuck is goin' on?"

I contact Cindy again to tell her about this (in DoBFO less swearsy fashion), and she says she'll contact the pharmacy to find out, who come back with an "Oi?" of their own suggesting that I might be engaging in some kind of insurance fraud.

You might half understand that given the exorbitant cost of the meds in the first place, but as I point out the presumed



street value of Calquence is pretty much \$0 - it's not exactly fentanyl, is it?

Cindy now suggests we call the insurance in an attempt to determine whether the stated \$0 co-pay on the pharmacy notification is both correct and, importantly, ongoing. We're assured that we're good for the year, so we get back with Cindy and arrange to stop the deliveries from the manufacturer because they're apparently not needed now, as seemingly confirmed by the *next* refill

notice from the pharmacy with \$0 co-pay. As a result of all the largesse I now have about \$70,000 worth of Calquence sitting here in the FanCave.

What we have deduced (but we're frankly too fuckin' scared to make calls to attempt to confirm) is that the \$8,000 of financial assistance from the pharmacy ended up covering the out-of-pocket deductible for the year, a dollar amount beyond which coverage becomes 100%. If you don't understand how any of that bollocks™ is supposed to work, you're not alone - I've *never* understood it meself. Best we can figure out, I'm all right for the meds for 2024, but in 2025 when it all resets we'll probably be on the hook for co-pays until we exceed that annual deductible, so we'll have to repeat the process of applying for financial assistance, albeit with a more normal income number.

And they ask me why I drink...

GIVE US A CLUE

Lastish:

"Gloomy trade unfortunately dealing with acne, perhaps? (11)"

Eli Cohen : 11 letters seems like it would be an anagram of "gloomy trade". And it looks like DERMATOLOGY fits the bill, including the "acne" reference.

[[Quite so. "Unfortunately" is the anagram indicator, "dealing with acne, perhaps" is the definition...]]

"Finding Nemo gutted with a Fantastic Fourth gets fuck all (7)"

Steve Jeffery : Nothing for this, I'm afraid (smirks).

Eli Cohen : I'm going to assume that "Nemo gutted" means its insides removed, leaving "No". Adding a 5-letter member of the Fantastic Four (the Thing) gives us NOTHING, 7 letters of fuck all."

[[Spot on...]]

"Superman villain I bring to account for Anderson's space pilot (6)"

Steve Jeffery : Zod i ac ?? (I'm guessing Zod here, because I know little or o about the Superman universe.) My first guess at villain was to try Lex Luthor but that didn't suggest anything, so then I went to work it backwards from the clue to Fireball XL5.

Eli Cohen : I'm stumped here. Too many skiffy references for me. Luthor is a nice 6 letter Superman villain, but there are too many Andersons, from Poul to Gerry to Wes; I don't even know if "space pilot" means someone on a spaceship or a pitch for an SF TV series...

[[Steve gets it, of course. "Superman villain" = ZOD + "I", "bring to" implies "+", "account" (AC), yielding ZODIAC, Gerry Anderson's Fireball XL5 spaceman...]]

Nic : Thish's efforts:

"Sheldon Cooper, for example, in dinner debacle (4)"

One observed and gratefully passed along by **Dave Langford**, who accurately notes it's "a bit chilling": "Even in prison, Donald's heading for President (9)"

And, as I like to do, one tailored to that nice Mr. **Cohen** : "Borg Eli gets my unusual description of my old man's trousers (9)"

I previewed that last one to the omniscient **Fanglord** who predictably solved it immediately...

Bonus entry I thought of the other day and will forget if I don't use it: "Following the study of algebra, perhaps, a period of unpleasant consequences (9)"

ANORAK

BY PETE YOUNG [[& NIC FAREY]]

The Class 40s, known as 'Whistlers': it ain't just me who liked the unique sound of their engines. A Class 40's whistle was what gave this cumbersome loco a rather elegant character, and distinguished it from the near-identical Class 37s. It was very rare to see them on the Great Western Railway where I did most of my spotting and I had to make frequent trips up to London to visit Kings Cross in order to see any. This was how I ended up copping the lot, plus of course the Class 55 Deltics. I came to trainspotting too late (early-to-mid 1970s, aged 10 and upwards) to hold much romance for the previous generation of steam engines and grew up with diesels, although a steam engine chuntering its way through the GWR's Sonning Cutting near my place was indeed a rare treat. But even today, on my commute from Liverpool to Euston, I get a kick out of seeing something like a Class 47 Brush (call 'em 'Duffs') or any other diesel or electric loco pulling a Heritage train. There are only two active (licensed to run on the national network) Class 40s of eight which are preserved. That's out of the 200 that were built (compare this with the sixty-two preserved or active Class 37s today), and since I've been commuting regularly through Crewe for the last four years I've seen neither of them, and probably never will. If I do, Facebook will certainly know about it.



[[The distinctive "whistle" of the class 40 was the sound of the turbochargers going, which were well needed - by 1976 these locomotives were underpowered compared to subsequent diesel-electrics. The most famous, or infamous Class 40 was D326 (later renumbered 40 126) - some railwaymen considered it jinxed because of a couple of accidents and mechanical failures. It's best known as the loco which was the target of the Great Train Robbery in 1963. Wikipedia adds:

40126 was withdrawn from service on 15 February 1984. Upon withdrawal the locomotive was offered to the National Railway Museum at York as an exhibit loco regarding its past history. However, the NRM declined and it was scrapped at Doncaster Works with indecent haste, no doubt to stop any pillaging souvenir hunters.

Here's a nice link to video of three units in which you can hear that distinctive whistle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5BqLoefqLE>]]

We used to frequently see the original test APT-E (at the time the only Advanced Passenger Train) visit Reading General and it was a beautiful sight, but we all knew at the time it was a one-off that needed to be redesigned before development into a small fleet of APT-Ps. There is an ex-service APT-P now sitting idle in the Crewe Heritage Centre alongside a couple of the far more successful InterCity 125s, and I get quite close up to them every time I pass through Crewe on my way to or from Liverpool Lime Street. They all look a bit threadbare and could do with sprucing up, especially the APT. [photo below taken this month]



THE OLD SOD

BY DAVID HODSON

It's been a bit of a crappy week...

Last Sunday I was happily drinking beer and shooting the shit with **Rob Hansen**, **James Bacon**, **Dave Cockfield**, and Will Morgan at the London Comic Mart discussing Adam Strange stories, Matt Baker artwork, the various rights issues involved in trying to collect the SF adaptations Marvel did in *Worlds Unknown*, *Supernatural Thrillers*, and *Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction* back in the 1970s (including some spiffing use of Bob Shaw's slow glass concept for framing sequences in the latter title), when the beer started to hit a tad too heavily it seemed and we all wandered off home.

Twenty-four hours later I was running a temperature and coughing and sneezing my lungs out. I did a test, it wasn't (isn't) covid; just a summer cold mixed in with a hangover and four days of 30°C temperatures driving the pollen levels through the roof. In other words, I've been feeling like shit!

Nic had given me an email nudge last weekend that *This Here...* was ready and all he was waiting for was my column, and I had indeed begun writing said column at various points through the sneezy, coughy, headachy week, only to re-read said beginnings several hours later after sleeping through another smorgasbord of psychedelic delirium (the Glasgow Worldcon was under attack by an army of "Marvel Zombie" fanboys, complete with corporate t-shirts, organised by a shadowy underworld alternative government intent upon giving back access of Donald Trump's golf courses to the orange one after the concom had somehow lobbied the Scottish government to nationalise them. My role in this drama will have to go undisclosed... Official Secrets Act and all that!) and finding it even more unreadable than it usually is.

I'm feeling better now, but everything smells green and tastes slightly wrong. It's the smelling colours bit I don't like.

It might have been hoped that, whilst I sweated into the fabric of the sofa, the various international sporting events currently going on would have kept me entertained and distracted. No such bleedin' luck...

England's men's football team has been stinking the place out in Germany during the group stages of Euro24 with a streaky 1-0 win over Serbia in their first game being followed by two dire 0-0 draws with Denmark and Slovenia (no, I don't know where that is either). Harry Kane looks a shadow of the flat-track bully he previously was, wunderboy Jude Bellingham is seriously off-colour and not performing in the white shirt of Ing-er-land the same way he performs in the white shirt of Real Madrid, and manager Gareth Southgate's negative tactics seem to have finally worn thin with the travelling barmy Ing-er-land army as he was pelted with plastic beer glasses after the Slovenia game.

Tomorrow (Sunday June 30th), England play Slovakia in the first knock-out round of the competition and I'm anticipating a loss on penalties, so I can go round telling everyone I told them so six years ago after the World Cup semi-final loss to Croatia because I did indeed tell everyone I knew that Southgate would never win anything with England after that game. Having watched every side at least once and most at least twice, I'll stick my neck out for Spain to win the tournament, beating the Netherlands in the final.

Whilst Southgate and Kane were exposing England's international footballing limitations, head coach Matthew Mott and captain Jos Buttler were doing exactly the same thing with the England short-form cricket team in the T20 World Cup being jointly hosted by the West Indies and the

United States. A rained-off first game against Scotland was followed by a loss to Australia. It took two wins against the powerhouses that are Oman and Namibia to see England get to the Super Eights round on their higher net run rate (a rather complicated equivalent to goal difference in football as a way of separating teams on the same points total in a league).

In the super eights, England started with a good win against the West Indies that suggested a corner had maybe been turned, only to lose narrowly to South Africa in a game that exposed Buttler's rather dodgy grasp of cricketing tactics. The final game, against the U.S.A., was a decisive 10-wicket win and meant a semi-final against unbeaten India. As rivers of snot and mucus ran from my head, and limbs and joints continued to ache despite near overdose levels of paracetamol, any hope of distraction was lost as India made England look like a bunch of rank amateurs.

England's cricket teams in all formats of the game are facing a period of significant rebuilding. Too many players are either well into or entering their thirties and have been in the side too long. Johnny Bairstow is frequently held up as a stalwart of both the one-day and test sides, but I forget the last time he made a substantial score. Buttler has never been a convincing captain and can't even claim to be a lucky leader like his predecessor, Eoin Morgan, frequently was. I am a long-term fan of spinner and vice-captain Moeen Ali, but, like Bairstow, he's gone on too long. There are good prospects for the future in batsmen Harry Brook and Phil Salt, and with Jofra Archer now looking injury free, the pace attack can be frightening given the right pitches, but the fear has to be that 36-year-old Adil Rashid, another long-term favourite and probably England's best bowler at the moment, decides to hang up his international boots, which would leave the spin attack pretty threadbare.

The final of the T20 World Cup between India and South Africa, both sides unbeaten to this point, is being played as I write this column. Both would be worthy winners, but India should have the edge.

If it's decided by the time I get to the final paragraph, I'll be sure to drop the result in.

I totally forgot whilst writing the last column that the Olympic Games is taking place this summer from July 26th to

August 11th in Paris. In years past, the Olympics has been a highlight, but I haven't really had much interest since 2012 when London, with it's Danny Boyle directed opening ceremony, truly was quite spectacular.

Next week, on Thursday July 4th, the general election takes place in the U.K. It's also the day of the Bishop's Finger meet in London, so I expect the pub to be pretty empty of standard punters. I'll have to remember not to drink too much because I'm bound to be up all night watching the results come in. The closer to the date we get, the more nervous I get that the Tory party will pull off some miraculous win at the last minute and we really don't need that, just like the U.S. doesn't need a return of the orange buffoon. Fingers crossed!

Then, from August 8th to the 12th, we have the Worldcon in Glasgow. I'll be flying up on August 7th and I'm in the Holiday Inn Express Riverside Hotel on Stockwell Street, which is about a twenty-minute train journey away from the SEC after a short yomp to Argyle Street station. The hotel also looks pretty good for getting into the heart of the city, so I'll make sure to get into Forbidden Planet for a poke around and maybe even arrange to meet up with Kenny Penman, the owner of FP Glasgow and the old Science Fiction Bookshop that preceded it. Needless to say, if anyone's in the area on Wednesday evening, I'm happy to meet up for a meal or a beer.

Dave Lally has arranged a meet-up in London for Tuesday August 6th for anyone flying into the capital a little early and looking for something to do.

Details are on *File 770* ([London Experiences for Those Heading to the Worldcon](#)); I'll make sure I'm around to save anyone from the Lally should it be needed, he is a boring bastard!

Okay, India have just won the T20 World Cup by 7 runs and Switzerland have beaten Italy 2-0 in the first of the Euro24 knock-out games. India have been the best side all the way through the T20 tournament; the BBC pundits are praising Switzerland to the hilt, but the truth is Switzerland are bang average and this incarnation of Italy are woefully bad. Germany is playing Denmark shortly, but I'm going back to bed...



LOCO CITATO

[[*"Sometimes lions really do lie down with lambs, though you can see why lambs tend to have very mixed feelings about it."* (Gaby Hinsliff) ...]]



From: Kim.huett@gmail.com

June 3

Kim Huett writes:

As always I wrote to amuse myself, as always you're just a fucking bystander. I think the Frankie Howerd reference fits anybody who has just retired. There you are, no job and innocently thinking you can park your arse and enjoy a prologue only to discover stuff keeps intruding in the most inconsiderate manner.

The fact that living in a hell-hole like Las Vegas must feel like being gang-banged in a clown orgy is actually beside the point. The question is a matter of expense because city living ain't cheap. I think it's a valid question for anybody to consider once they are no longer tied to town by work. In your case you've banged on about money so much it seems reasonable to ask if you can afford to stay where you are. I know I'm already giving some thought as to whether I can afford to remain in Canberra once I'm fully retired.

[[*That is a very valid question, the answer to which really requires some analysis. You seem to presume that rural (or at least non-city) living would be cheaper than in that city, and I'd contend that's not necessarily the case at all. A little bit of research finds a fuckload of conflicting data on average rents, but broadly suggests that ours (about \$1200) is very*

reasonable indeed, even though it exceeds the typical benchmark of 30% of household income, above which you're considered to be over-committed. City living has the advantages of convenience in that everything you need is close by and less subject to supply chain issues. Being out in the sticks often means that everything is a bit more expensive and you'll likely have to travel to get to the shops. When I was living in Southern Maryland, Saturday was the day to both take the trash to the local dump (there was no collection) and later go up the shops - WalMart for paper goods & such, Safeway for general groceries, local Italian butcher for meats. Even though Prince Frederick was only 7 miles from Saint Leonard, this all took half a day or more, and I can well imagine it being an all-day job if you're really out in the sticks. The final score might end up being swings and roundabouts, ey? Cheapest rents in the USA are apparently in North Dakota, which I imagine might be like living in, oh I dunno, Birdsville, Qld?, except with ten feet of snow for half the year. Then there's the cost of moving somewhere else in the first place innit?...]]

So onto the letter column.

Gobbledock might like to consider that the hits of the 1950s make it clear just how much popular music of that decade was influenced by cinema. Film themes released on vinyl clearly did very well during the 1950s, but peeking ahead to the 1960s it looks to me as though music from films stopped making it to #1. At least I can't see anything I associate with a film until 1970 when "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head" made it to the top in January. I assume film music was still charting, just not as high as before. Music from films did begin making it to #1 again after 1970 ("Ben" - 1972, "The Entertainer" - 1974, "Convoy" - 1976) but the film revival really didn't kick off until the disco era began.

[[*I don't think you can include "Convoy" since the movie was inspired by the song and came out two years later...]]*

I have to agree with Snurt and Monsieur Poopslurp that 'Dead Boy Detectives' is one of the better new shows on Netflix. Didn't find out till after I'd finished the whole season that it's part of the Sandman universe which is totally GuNToV in my opinion. In other words I know next to nothing about the Sandman universe. Despite which I do hope 'Dead Boy Detectives' is granted a second series and that the show delves a little deeper into the bureaucracy of heaven.

It's not surprising that dogs get a lot of screen time in films but this is only because a lot of people find dogs cute, not, as Skinhead Skippy would have it, because dogs make better actors than other animals. Dogs aren't better actors Skinhead, they just aren't smart enough to disobey orders. That's why police around the world use dogs to oppress the masses rather than cats or ferrets. If you really want to know how far dogs will go to mindlessly debase themselves then I

suggest you and Nic go and watch the 1982 film, 'Deadly Eyes'. In this horror film the menace is suppose to be mutated rats but due to a shortage of mutated rats they used 35 dachshunds dressed in rat suits instead. What other species would allow so many of their members to be humiliated in such a fashion? Mind you, from a human perspective the film is pretty GuNToV but once you get past the slow start (par for the course with such films I know) the mutated rat dachshunds are worth a laugh.

Anyway, so much for your other correspondents. As Artie used to say, "Verrrry interesting, but shtupid."

From: 236 S. Coronado St., No. 409, Los Angeles CA 90057

Received June 5, dated May 25

John Hertz writes:

"Dear" for BEAM, for your valiant work with the FAAn Awards, and for - I must give this to you - pubbing your ish with TH...

"Blockhead", because what other mentality would be so furious about DoBFO?

In TH... #73 the truth comes out. You can't stand that I don't like your fascinating electronic gadgetry. So much for diversity.

[[Wrong (again). Personally I don't give a flying fuck whether you "like" email or not. I simply and factually pointed out that your staunch refusal to engage with it puts you at a communication disadvantage. This observation has been expressed by several (if not many) others I'm aware of who have had to deal with you on sundry matters. Trying to cloak that behind "so much for diversity" is shameless, ignorant and solipsistic bollocks™...]]

I suppose I shouldn't have sent you a waxwing (the carrier pigeons were off duty). You might never have heard of "Pale Fire".

If I write it is to amuse myself or correct the more egregious fantasies some of your other correspondents are wont to indulge in. Why should I want to get a rise out of you when I can be better employed enjoying my own flights of fancy?



From: portablezine@gmail.com

June 6

W^m Breiding writes:

Congrats on being recipients of Corflu 50! That should be a blast for the both of you.

I had been hoping to write something about your testicular situation (actually, about my own) but the writing mojo is eluding me. I have three pieces I want to write but just can't seem to settle into any of them. I was alarmed to hear that the scarring from your vasectomy could be causing such major discomfort. I had a vasectomy back in the early '90s in which everything that they say could go wrong post surgery, but probably won't, did so in my case. It was not a fun six months, (but I made up for it later!). Hearing that surgery scars could create problems for me decades later is disheartening. I have been told many many times that I should write about my vasectomy because it was both a funny and disturbing experience. This seemed like a good time to finally do it. I will continue to seek my mojo on this topic.

[[I vaguely recall you having told at least part of that story. We're snip contemporaries - mine was also about 30 years ago...]]

You published two enjoyable pieces of fiction in #75, your own and Mr. **Huett's**. I don't know what either of them meant, except that they perhaps reflected back on your essential personalities.

I watched the first season of "Outer Range". I found parts of it quite annoying, but over all enjoyed it. Will Patton's performance is so over the top you can't do anything but love it. I'm currently on hiatus from watching anything, but may give the second season a try at some point.

I have fond memories of listening to The The. Back in the early 80s I worked in the mailroom of a large law firm (150+ attorneys) as a foot messenger in San Francisco. In the mornings we'd come in early (7:00) and sort mail to distribute to the secretaries by 9:00. We had a stereo system set up in the mailroom and there was constantly disparate types of music on the system. And The The played a big part. Of the links you provided, "The Beat(en) Generation" was my fave. Both the song and the amusing homoerotic video. I'd recognize Matt Johnson's voice anywhere.

I found both Denis Villeneuve's *Bladerunner 2049* and *Dune* to be a bit sludgy but visually stunning. *Arrival* I quite enjoyed. When *Dune 2* arrives for free at Amazon I will undoubtedly view it. You seem to be indicating that *Dune 2* was already a free streamer but it's going for \$5.99 on my subscription. I can wait!

[["Sludgy but visually stunning" seems very accurate...]]

[...]

And finally, I was really sorry to hear about David Redd. In earlier days I really enjoyed his long locs. When I started sending him *Portable Storage* he seemed startled but always wrote engaging notes with a few specifics that reflected he was actually reading it, and that was enough for me. Another good one bites the dust.

From: kevinwilliams48@googlemail.com

June 6

Kev Williams writes:

LO... a second loop from a regular, if largely silent follower. I have read *TH...* with interest and growing astonishment at its/your prodigal production rate, from issue 17 in 2019 to 75 a mere 5 years on!

[[Always a pleasure to hear from you mate, however sporadically, and I share your astonishment...]]

No. 75 provided a few links, that I felt the need on which to comment.

The first being 'The The'. I too am a fan of those fantastic mid-80s records. I was taken first by the extraordinary 'Sweet Bird of Truth', with that great brass and those vivid lyrics "all hands on deck, this bird is sinking", and that great art by Andy Dog, whomever he may be. Looks fab on the 12" vinyl EPs. Then there was "Slow Train to Dawn", adorned by Mr Dog again, and as you so rightly highlight: "Infected". Sadly, I don't have the vinyl 12" though I have both "Mind Bomb" and the (IMHO) disappointing "Soul Mining". "Dusk" was pretty good, but then in 1994, "Hanky Panky": surely the greatest Hank Williams tribute. It totally embodies the desolation and despair of the man. Then Matt J seemed to disappear. But thanks for the reminder. I've dug out my copies and am enjoying them again.

[[“Andy Dog” is the pseudonym of Matt’s brother Andrew, in fact...]]

Dave Cockfield and I got together last month for an uncharacteristically not-very-boozy weekend (has was "on tablets"), which took in a great gig in darkest Hampshire with Steve Wickham (the ex-Waterboys fiddle-player) with his guitarist Ray Coen from his Sligo band NoCrows. Both brilliant musicians - but the really impressive thing was the quality of the songs, and the atmospheric, emotional performance. I've been following the career of Steve W for 35years since he joined the Waterboys. We chatted and I shook his hand tonight and thanked him for a lifetime of enjoyment.

Dave C. told me that he'd bumped into **Dave Hodson**. I hadn't realised that they'd worked together. Anyway, Dave and I and sundry other aging Britfans (**Harry** and **Pat Bell**),

The **Skeltons**, **Mearas** and hopefully **Roy** and **Kathleen Kettle**, will be attending **Corflu** in Newbury next April. With **Dr Rob**, this will be the largest con-conglomeration of Gannets since the Corflu in Newcastle in 2014. Be good to meet up with you all. As you may know, I plan to lead the 'War of the Worlds' walk in Woking. There can't be many places where you can walk through half of the plot of an SF classic (if we added a further 15 or so miles - we could do the whole book).

[[I reminded Kev that he'll not be getting me to fuckin' walk anywhere - my limit's about ten steps I reckon, and that's with the walking stick. He replied with the kind offer to drop me off at the Wells-themed pub in Woking (the Herbert George) and scoop me up (scrape me off the floor?) after the fitter (or dafter) individuals have had their perambulations. Sounds like a plan!...]]

Ta muchly for *TH...* . Keep proliferating.

From: srjeffery@aol.com

June 9

Steve Jeffery writes:

That's a dream? It's a lot more coherent than any of my dreams, most of which feature a sequence of events that make no logical sense when I try and recall them. And I don't remember any of them having any real coherent narrative or conversations.

[[It's more accurate to say "based on" a dream, taking the gist of it (including bits of conversation recounted) and working it into something coherent...]]

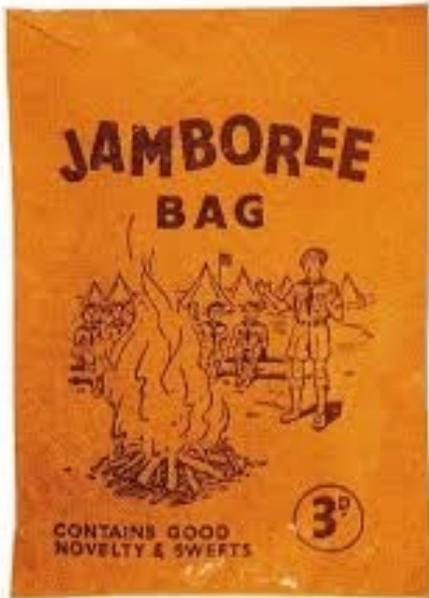
Looking at that photo I assume (hope) that the name "bollock dagger" is more from the design of the hilt than any intended use - certainly for any upcoming testicular surgery. Good to read that the CT scan came back clear. As for sperm granuloma, I think I'll stick with Jordan's Maple and Nut (no pun intended?) Country Crisp.

[[I heard from my GP that there is a cyst in the bollock™, and relayed this to rockstar Dr Finkelstein, who replied "Yes, a 3mm one - that's not the lump you can feel" (I can't help imagining that line spoken by Obi-Wan). I wasn't questioning his diagnosis, just wanted him to know what the other doctor had said. In non-medical terms I would suggest that a 3mm (benign) cyst = "fuck all" ...]]

romanroadlondon.com gives a number of other rhyming terms for various denominations, including Commodore for £25, Gordon Moore for £20 and Bullseye for £50. I assume the last comes from darts where the bull is worth 50 points, but the derivations of the other two are completely opaque, though another source claims Gordon Moore for score (itself derived from old Norse skor, for a notch or tally mark,

although I'd have thought it more logical to make such a mark for each ten rather than 20. Perhaps Vikings counted on their toes as well. Although if you've seen the film "The Vikings", Tony Curtis probably used it for 15 rather than twenty.)

[[I figured "score" right away, but the usual minimal research pegs a "Commodore" not as £25 but £15 ie "Three Times a Lady (Godiva)"...]]



JAMBOREE BAG 3d.
Finest value of all lucky bags

For those of us of a certain age, thruppenny bit has more associations with sweets, being the cost of a Sherbet Dip or a Barratt's Jamboree Bag in the mid 1960s.

[[Gawd! Jamboree Bags! Not thought of those in forever! My usual recollection is of a Cadbury Bar Six being 6d, my daily pocket money...]]

Really have to disagree with Wm. Breiding (locs) here on apa and his contention that they

are draining talent out of genzines. That makes as much sense as saying that conversations in the bar at conventions are wasting words which could be used in fanzine articles or locs. In fact, they'll more likely be recycled (after a bit of creative recall and embellishment) into one or the other. And the same can be true of apa contributions (a lot of mine get adapted as parts of locs because currently I'm the only member with a foot in both camps.) Beside, if you want to be part of that great apa conversation that you feel you're missing out on, then there's a simple answer: apply to join the apa.

[[See 'Omphaloskepsis'...]]

I'm glad someone else (Eli Cohen) has adopted "furlongs per fortnight" as a favourite measure of speed. I forget when I first heard this, although it may have originally been "fathoms per fortnight" in which case the most likely culprit would have been my grandfather.

From: excellenceingardening@gmail.com

June 9

Joseph Nicholas writes:

"The one thing that Stammer must absolutely deliver," says Dave Hodson, "even if it means the Labour party can never, ever win an election outright again, is electoral reform and a proportionally representative system to replace the current first-past-the-post race with a majority of seats out in the countryside." I am just as much in favour of electoral reform as he, but the Labour leadership (and in particular Starmer's closest lieutenants) is as wedded to First Past The Post as the Tories -- the Tories because they know it splits the anti-Tory vote and allows them to take power on a minority of the total vote, and Labour because of its dog-in-the-mangerish attitude to co-operation with other parties, even though FPTP has excluded it from power on far more occasions than it has helped it to victory. (Indeed, Labour has actually expelled local councillors for even talking of entering coalitions with other forces to keep a council out of minority Conservative control.)

[[You might draw some small comfort from the observation that the American electoral college system is far, far worse, even though it has similar results in disproportionately favoring rural (usually more right-wing) areas in Presidential elections. There's always a lot of yak about the "popular vote" ie total votes cast nationwide, which no Republican candidate has won in the last 20 years, and prior to that you have to go back to the 1980s when they did actually win the decade (Reagan, Reagan, George H.W. Bush, which sounds like a dystopian alternate universe "Trumpston" don't it?)...]]

Dave and I have discussed the prospect of electoral reform, both on Facebook and in person, and by the time you next pub your ish the election will be all over bar the inevitable post-election analysis, but the only real hope of Labour embracing electoral reform (which many of its MPs and party members do actually want), even if it's just the Australian system rather than the more complicated proportional system that the LibDems prefer, is if it emerges as the largest party in a hung Parliament, and thus dependent on others to get its programme through. That seems to me far more likely than the excited talk about the Conservatives being reduced to a rump and Labour gaining a 1997-like majority, mostly because the current opinion poll lead of 20-27 percent (depending on which pollster you're reading) isn't enough to overcome the deficit of 80-odd seats that it had in the last Parliament. Just to do that will require a percentage swing in its favour larger than that achieved by Attlee in 1945 and Blair in 1997; but 20-27 percent won't deliver the kind of majorities that both then enjoyed.

[[I'm all in favor of a system which might likely result in some sort of broad left coalition which perhaps

paradoxically might be more able to Get Stuff Done than a single party. I was going to say "center left" but these days what gets described by that term is unrecognizable to me, the dial having shifted in the direction of abomination. Over here, for example, Bernie Sanders is greeted by screams of "SOCIALIST!" (which he even self-identifies as) whereas to the likes of me (and possibly also you) he's a leftish centrist per the European Social Democratic tradition. The assumption, I might suggest, as that a coalition government might better represent the "national characteristics" a term which is a rickety construction at best. The USA used to be considered a "center right" country before everything got so fuckin' fractious, and at one time that might have been fairly true. The UK would have been deemed broadly "center left" except that's not accurate in the details, is it? While very arguably socially leftish, there's a dominant strain of small-c conservatism on the economy and - er, well - "wogs". I've personally always thought of the UK as fundamentally xenophobic rather than racist (as is the USA), but it's a fine distinction since the results are the same on the surface...]]

Of course, not only will the foregoing be of only academic interest by the time you next pub your ish, but my prognostications could be shown by the actual results to be a complete load of old woobery and my role as some sort of pundit at a decisive end. But that's the in-built risks of such commentary!

[[Well, no as to timing, your election is next week as this is expected to go out...]]

Meanwhile, you have the prospect of President Trump to, er, look forward to later this year....

[[One fervently hopes not, but the Orange Wankbucket is beatable in ways which just about any other Republican candidate (eg Nikki Haley) wouldn't have been - if she were the candidate Biden would be toast...]]

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

June 11

Leigh Edmonds writes:

[#75] made me rather cheerful. I don't know whether it was your fun little stfnal story at the front or the news that you are doing alright healthwise. Do we get pictures of your operation on the 24th which, by the way, I hope goes well and improves your lifestyle.

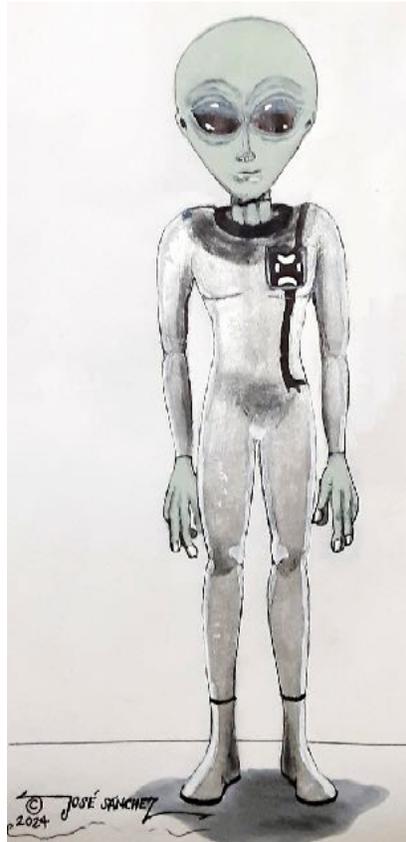
[[I doubt there'll be photos, no doubt to the gratitude of all, but I'll see if I can turn up one of those nice medical diagrams for your edification...]]

I reject as a complete falsehood the suggestion that I am asleep all the time, or at least through all the interesting bits of whatever is going on. This is only true for movies, books, music, football and cricket matches and much, much more but not, sadly, after I've had about five hours sleep in bed. Thusly, I did not sleep through any of the tracks you included in 'Radio Winston' this time. If I said they were pleasant you would probably think I didn't pay much attention to the words, which might be true because I usually

don't. It's probably a habit I picked up in the days when I listened to a lot of Italian and German opera, not knowing very much of either of those languages (and what I did learn I actually picked up from those operas). Nevertheless I did find this column interesting because I had heard of The The so now I know something about where they (he?) came from and went to. Not a complete waste of my time and it did no permanent mental damage.

Good news indeed that Jen and you will be going to Corflu next year. As you may have gathered, I have plans to get there and it will be a pleasure to spend more time in your company than in Las Vegas where you had other things on your mind. As I recall, it was your bottle of Bulleit that I was photographed in the company of at Corflu and I will see if there is a bottle of it in the duty free shop on my way there. Unless you can recommend an interesting alternative. (The bar at the recent Melbourne convention only had Beam and something else in the bourbon line that I can't recall now. I wonder why?)

[[Indeed it'll be a pleasure to share the bourbon with you again mate! And we're looking forward to being at a Corflu where we have Nothing To Do (except possibly a bit of singing for our supper in the metaphorical if not literal sense. Had a nice one of my irregular Zoom chats with the Fishlifters a few weeks ago, remarking then that with all the to and fro of managing 41 I ended up spending a lot less time with old friends like them (and Ted White in particular) than might otherwise have been the case. Although a lot of that is also because I'm nipping out for a smoke so often. Mark Fishlifter will, I'm sure, recall our days running teck for Novacons in which the immediate environs of the sound desk was designated "smoking area" in defiance of usual non-smoking programme room policy. Thus we got to see a lot of Bernie Evans during the event...]]



Whether I actually get to Corflu next year is somewhat problematic and depends on the property market in Ballarat in the coming few months. I am not enthusiastic right now because the market is very slow. It has been my plan since the middle of last year to sell this house, which I only use about a third of, and buy a smaller place that will be cheaper to run and leave me with a surplus which I can fritter away in the coming few years on visiting fannish friends and events overseas and visiting aviation and contemporary art museums in far off lands.

I put off doing anything serious until after the most recent Australian national convention - which was quite a lot of fun - but I can no longer put off the business of selling and buying houses and getting rid of fifty years of accumulated stuff to make that possible. This process is not guaranteed to put one in a positive frame of mind. The opposite in fact, which is why I have so much enjoyed this issue of your fanzine (and the latest *Perryscope* that arrived around the same time). I've got a real estate agent coming this afternoon to talk about selling this place and I am thrilled, thrilled you hear, at the prospect. I've also been keeping an eye on the local market and getting into training to actually buy something when the time comes, and it is all fairly depressing.



I was cheered up somewhat by 'The Old Sod'. It had entirely escaped my attention that **Dave Hodson's** football season had finished. The AFL season is in full swing but the Melbourne Football Club has shown its usual weaknesses and so we don't talk about football around here lest we fall into the pit of despair. I know that it's all a game and not really important but it might be something in the water here in the southern half of Australia, but it really does upset me when Melbourne turn in one of their worst games in many years.

Anyhow... **Dave's** comments on the coming British General Election were interesting. You'd hardly know it's happening from the news we get in the far off colonies, but then it's the footie season so a one week suspension given to a star player for rough play is far more important than anything happening outside the footie bubble. I consider myself lucky to live in the land of compulsory and preferential voting. It doesn't always give the results that I like, but I can blame the Murdoch Press for that. So I agree that the voting system should be changed in Britain to something a bit fairer and, of course, it is needed even more in the United States, but that would be too much to hope for.

I had heard that the T-20 championship is on somewhere on the other side of the world. The most I hear about it is during the half-time chats during the footie broadcasts. I heard the shock and amazement when the United States beat Pakistan, but then the Pakistan team isn't what it used to be and T-20 is something of the luck of the draw anyhow.

[[We were at our First Thursday friends' dinner outing when I heard about the USA v Pakistan result, and filed it under "things I wish I'd known yesterday" since I believe you'd have got 100-1 on USA winning that...]]

I don't know that I agree with **W^m Breiding** on the idea that apas are sucking the lifeblood out of the genzine field. Well, maybe he is right, but what of it? I might observe that I have, in the past nine months or so, published three genzines and made them available through efanzines.com. The response, apart from letters of comment from the current LoC writing champion, has been next to zero. On the other hand, an equal number of pages contributed to SAPS and ANZAPA has generated lots of egoboo for me. I don't know what others think the currency of fandom is but to me it's egoboo, and I know where I'm getting my hit from. So I'm not encouraged to produce genzines or write for them, but I am encouraged to keep up my involvement in apas.

[[Agreed about the currency, certainly...]]

I saw the train that **Cy Chauvin** mentioned that runs, more or less, on regenerative braking. I was up in the Pilbara at the time doing research for a history of Main Roads Western Australia and I can tell you the train is impressive, even from a distance. It runs from iron ore mines in the Hammersley Ranges inland from the West Australian coast across the plain to Port Hedland where it is shipped off to places which make things and money from the raw material. Not only is it downhill all the way from the ranges to the coast, it is remarkably flat all the way so the huge trains would build up an immense amount of kinetic energy from the run to the coast. I also assume (because I haven't done the research) that locomotives do a lot of work pulling the carts through the ranges to get to the plain, but don't quote me.

There's a few other comment hooks that I will have to ignore because I should do a little to make this place marginally respectable before the real estate man shows up.

By the way, if I had to draw a comparison between you and a well known British film actor of an earlier age it wouldn't be



Frankie Howerd as **Kim Huett** suggests, it would be Sid James.

Are you still talking to me?

[[Why wouldn't I be? Our dear Sir Sidney was a much loved if somewhat tormented soul (but not as tormented as his former professional partner Tony Hancock), and though considered as British as all get out, he was actually South African by birth...]]

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

June 16

Eli Cohen writes:

I guess I have to tear myself away from the Hugo packet and write a loc on *TH*...#75 before the next one drops. That also means I can't watch another episode of "Midsomer Murders" now, but that's less of an issue, since I usually watch those with my wife. For our recent anniversary, I got her a book called "Your Guide to Not Getting Murdered in a Quaint English Village", by Maureen Johnson & Jay Cooper. Example: "In English Murder Villages, vats exist for the express purpose of drowning people - in beer, in pickling brine, in whiskey, in jam. This is doubly true if the vat was built by fourteenth century monks. If anyone offers to show you their vat, say you need to get something from your car, start the engine, and run them over. The constable understands this sort of thing. Tell him about the vat."

So: Congratulations to you and **Jen** on being the Corflu 50 delegates for next year! Well deserved. And good luck with your surgeries and health issues.

Re 'Proper Rabbit': I'm always fascinated by British slang ("two countries divided by a common language", as they say about the U.S. and the U.K.), so thank you for your discussion of money words. Though, for some reason, I'm now visualizing someone trying to hand a monkey to a hotel clerk to pay their bill...

I confess that discussions of old-time British currency always remind me of my first trip to the U.K., in 1970, when somebody gave me a "Jersey thruppence" in change, which

of course nobody in England would take when I tried to spend it; I suppose as a New Yorker, I should understand why there was such disdain for something that came from Jersey...

[[Although the currency of the Bailiwick of Jersey is sterling, it's indeed not legal tender in the UK (though banks will change it for you). TIL that rather than the "three pence" denomination stated on the dear old portcullis design coin in the UK, the Jersey one says "One fourth of a shilling"...]]

OK. Back to my formless sludge of idleness.

From: daverabban@gmail.com

June 28

Dave Cockfield writes:

There is so much entertainment on tv these days that it is difficult to know what to watch.

Given the state of the World, the Election shit on both sides of the Atlantic, and the fucking heat wave turning me into a sweaty quivering jelly I just had to darken my mood with two beauties.

'Manhunt' is a fictional account of the hunt for John Wilkes Booth after the assassination of Lincoln.

The series is from the point of view of Edwin Stanton, Secretary of War. A fascinating and contradictory character. In this he is a handsome, brooding, anti-hero. Not at all a realistic portrayal and there has certainly been a toning down of his relationship with the likes of General Sherman. The scenes with Lincoln however are mesmerizing as is the depiction of the tactics he uses throughout in his investigation.

This series is superbly acted, beautifully filmed, with an incredible feel for recreating that period of history. The depiction of slavery both physical and verbal is totally uncompromising.

It is seven parts and suffers from some slow pacing but it is essential viewing.

'The Tattooist of Auschwitz'. Another delight.

It was based on a fictional biography written by Helen Morris that was a Worldwide hit.

A love story depicted against the backdrop of the Concentration Camp, it was condemned by the Auschwitz Memorial Museum for inaccuracies in its portrayal of life in the camp. However I think that much of this has been corrected in the tv series with modern day scenes perhaps giving reasons why this happened.

It is still a love story but the everyday matter of fact depiction of brutality and horror of the camp is horrifying. Also quite numbing.

[[Haven't seen either of those. I don't reckon I was aware of 'Manhunt', but I have seen a couple of ads for 'Tattooist'. Like many people, I suspect, I'm not going to be enamored of the setting, and I'm getting less and less inclined to engage with "thoughtful" efforts, tending to prefer mindless "stuff go bang", I'm afraid...]]

I binge watched these in four days and I'm struggling with ideas of what to watch next.

Perhaps some episodes of 'Tarzan' (1966) starring Ron Ely or 'Lawman' (1958) with John Russell as Marshall Dan Troop. Both from much simpler times.

Until 'Perry Mason' season 3.

[[If you're thinking about the Matthew Rhys 'Perry Mason' reboot/prequel, they cancelled it ages ago...]]

The heat in my flat is unbearable. Probably because of the sun bouncing off the lake.

It is 9.55am and it is currently 27.9C. Consequently not really in the mood for reading.

However on YouTube there is an event amongst Booktubers called "June on the Range" which is devoted to reading westerns during the month of June.

As a film fan I read all the classic novels that they were based on. Shane, Warlock, Northwest Passage, Hombre, etc. The books were universally better and rightly considered classics.

So I decided to read "The Trail to Crazy Man" by Louis L'Amour. The original 120 page 1946 Pulp magazine story that was later expanded into "Crossfire Trail".

It is full of all the usual tropes. Fistfights, gunfights, corny romance all at a super fast pace.. L'Amour was a seaman, miner, lumberjack, ranch hand, construction worker before writing for the Pulp where he sharpened his skills. He seems to have hit the ground running so it is no surprise that he is the biggest selling fiction writer in American History. My paperback is a 46th printing since 1986. A great palate cleanser.

In my youth I read a dozen or so of his 95 novels. Fun easy reads so I'll probably explore more.

[[I was definitely aware of L'Amour in my yoof, but never got into the western genre despite a pretty regular diet of it on the telly eg 'Bonanza', my mum's favorite 'The Virginian' and mine, 'The High Chaparral' - in later years with the plethora of over-the-air tv channels in Las Vegas which played tons of oldies, I got into 'The Rifleman'...]]

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

June 28

Gary Mattingly writes:

'Egotorial'. I found the dream story entertaining. The photo is nice too.

'Corflux': Glad to hear you and Jen are looking forward to going. I haven't decided yet whether I'm going or not.

'Health Diary': Sorry to hear you still aren't in total remission but good to hear that you're doing okay and that you got that parking ticket dismissed and you got a disabled parking placard.

[[Oncologist follow-up yesterday (the 28th), and my WBC is up a little to 24 point something - the red cell count is too high as well, still - but nice nurse Hannah says this is still quite all right, apparently, as long as she can send me down the hall to have another 500ml drained out...]]

Good luck with your surgery. The bollock dagger is also, um, entertaining.

I have a ganglion cyst on my right wrist, basically a bump or whatever. I think it hurts but the doctor says, oh no, they never cause pain. Well, admittedly the other wrist hurts too and I suppose it could just be arthritis but it hurts more in the wrist with the cyst. It isn't horrible, just unpleasant. I've had it for a year or two. When I first mentioned it to him he said it could be surgically removed but the latest visit he said it could have a lot of places it had gone and there might be some digging to get the whole thing out. So?

[[The surgical consensus I've been getting over the occasional cystic masses is that unless it's very annoying you can leave them be. I had one above my eye removed several years ago which was about the size of a chickpea at the time...]]

TV Guide: I watched the entire first season of 'Outer Range' when it was initially presented. I've only watched the first episode of the current season but I'll probably eventually get around to the whole thing. As a side note, I watched every episode of 'Lost' but don't think I've ever watched an episode of 'Yellowstone'.

I don't watch 'CSI: Vegas', 'Tracker' or 'The Equalizer'. I have watched all of the current 'Doctor Who' although I haven't been impressed with each and every episode. I did watch and enjoy all of 'ST: Discovery'.

[[We'll see if you've agreed with my reviews of the latter two thish, then?...]]

I've been watching the new season of 'House of the Dragon' and the new show 'The Acolyte'. Watched all the final season of 'Sweet Tooth' and the recent season of 'Beacon 23'. May check out 'Supacell'. Can't immediately think of any other series that I'm watching.

[[Haven't seen any 'House of the Dragon', and reviews I've clocked don't encourage me to do so. Mind you, I never watched 'GoT' either. 'CSI: Vegas' has sadly been cancelled...]]

'Radio Winston': I only have "Hanky Panky" by The The. I thought I had at least one other album by them. Can't seem to locate it. It seems "Mind Bomb" and "Dusk" have vinyl versions at \$299 each but I think I'll pass and get the much cheaper CDs. "Infected" CD is a bit more expensive than the other two but the vinyl is cheaper than the other two. Hmm ... Listening to "Time Bomb" at the moment via youtube.

My most recent music purchases were two albums by Norma Tenega and a four albums by Ludovico Einaudi.

A couple of songs by Norma Tenega:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cw2uF3Ckuc0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPZVrmJ2HH8>

Oh I have ordered a bunch of new vinyl since I just bought a new turntable (mentioned near the end of this LoC briefly) Sort of expensive though, 180G and 45 RPM releases.

'Proper Rabbit': Familiar with a few of those words but no idea as to the history of any of them. Probably similar slang for things in the US but none immediately come to my rather sleepy mind.

[[The US also has many slang expressions for money and denominations thereof, perhaps worthy of a future column...]]

'Movie Night': I watched 'Dune: Part Two' at the theater. I thought it was okay. Of late I've seen 'Kinds of Kindness' at the Roxie theater, a new film directed by Yorgos Lanthimos. I liked it. It was odd, which is fairly normal for his films. It received a number of good reviews but also some not very good reviews. Hm, watched a 4K version of 'Wall-E' at home that I hadn't previously gotten to, 'Lola Montes' which I enjoyed but don't consider it as one of the top films by Max Ophüls, at the local Dublin Regal Cinema watched 'When Marnie Was There' and 'The Secret World of Arrietty', two Studio Ghibli films I hadn't seen. Enjoyed both. At the Roxie I saw 'I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang' starring Paul Muni. It was interesting and fairly entertaining. Oh, almost forgot a documentary I saw at the Roxie, 'Copa 71', about a women's World Cup in Mexico in 1971 which FIFA totally condemned. I thought it was a very interesting movie and my opinion of FIFA decreased even more, even though it

already was pretty low. Can't remember where I left off from last LoC so I'll stop there with respect to films.

[[Dave Hodson can wax endlessly (as can a lot of footy fans) about the corruption and failings of just about any administrative organization of the sport. And he's right...]]

'Anorak': Interesting and enjoyable.

'Loco Citato':

Me: I actually have to do the colonoscopy test a second time. Seems the prep on the first try didn't sufficiently clear things so they couldn't get a good view. So I have to do a more thorough prep next time (no appointments until near the end of September). That more thorough prep should be really entertaining . . . I also had an endoscopy. Seems I have some ulcers in my stomach so they gave me a prescription to try to get rid of them. Will have to have a second endoscopy to check status. Will do that again at the same time as the colonoscopy.

[[Not fun. Jen and I both have recently done the Cologuard (shit in a bucket and send it off) test which is DoBFO not invasive, and we both got favorable results...]]

I've played cribbage on my phone and computer for ages and ages. I've played some cribbage with Patty but mainly I'm perfectly happy playing against the phone.

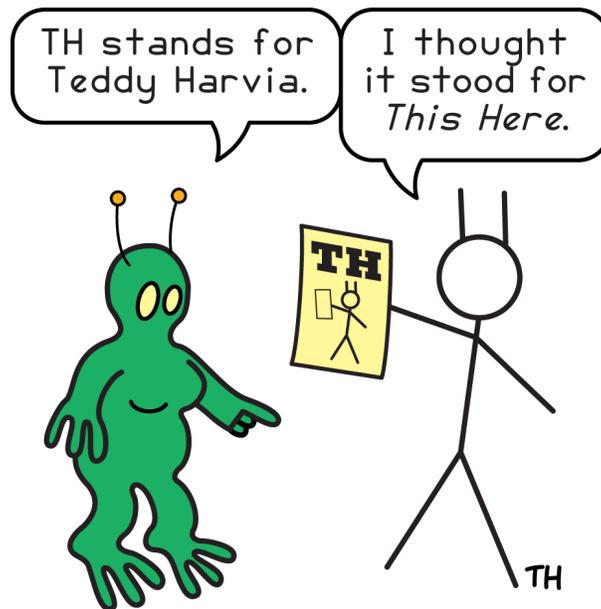
Wm Breiding: I just add money to my Clipper Card on my online account. Actually it is set to add more automatically if it gets below a certain dollar amount. I also just switched to using my

phone instead of the Clipper Card. I just have to remember to open up the Clipper app on my phone before trying to get through the turnstiles and pass the phone over the detector.

Enjoyed the artwork by **Teddy Harvia** and **Jose Sanchez** and the various photos throughout.

This is a bit short and quick. Trying to get it done before the clock says it is June 29.

Why do I do this late? I don't know. Too many things I want to do. Actually I should be in bed now since I plan to get up early to go on another hike tomorrow morning. Went on a fairly short one today, about 4.75 miles. Tomorrow is around 6.75 or something like that. I am actually going with a group to see if I can contend with a group hike. Way too many people have signed up for it though. 40?!?!? That's too many. Unfortunately going on a hike tomorrow morning means I'll miss bikram yoga in the morning. Oh well.



[[I'm at the point where I expect your loc the day before (or the day of) the ish going out, so it's only a moderate pain in the arse to allow for it. I was up early this morning (2:30am) because I crashed out early-ish last evening (before 9pm) but this wasn't specifically because I knew I'd be finalizing thish today - more because of the round of medical appointments and such yesterday with left us both in a state of knackered. My Finest Hour as far as late locs go was inducing extreme crogglements in Skel (I think it was) who was fairly gobsmacked by having sent me a loc in the morning, then receiving the zine with his loc in it mere hours later...]]

What I really need to do is finish setting up the new record turntable I bought. That will take a couple of hours probably. Too late tonight. I need my eyes to be in better working condition to do that.

Anyway, Pip and Cosmo think it is time for bed. So do I.

WAHF SPECIAL (BLOODY JACKSON!)

Rob Jackson immediately advises me that the file he receives is missing most of the illos and photos. Mystified, I check my "send" folder - everything looks all right, so I ask **Jen** to have a look at what she received, and that looks ok too. I bung a note on the FBF 'FAANEDS' group mentioning **Rob's** complaint and asking if anyone else has had the same problem. I send the 8Mb unreduced pdf to the Doc and do the same for everyone else on the email list shortly thereafter, just in case. A little later **Rob** writes: "I should have made it clear that in the small version I got, there were 13 blanks but 5 real illos/photos. Which deepens the mystery, I think!" I hear from various & sundry readers as follows... ; **John Purcell** : "I got your latest issue intact the first time around, and it looks splendid. I shall give it a proper read later but I wanted you to know it arrived complete with illos and pics and everything else in place." ; **Joseph Nicholas** : "The version you sent earlier today has all the illustrations present and correct. At any rate, I didn't spot any gaps where an illustration might have fallen out." ; **Curt Phillips** : "The first version opened with the photos just fine for me." ; **Rich Coad** : "First version looks fine to me. I suspect it was something on Rob's end." ; **Taral Wayne** : "I saw no problem with the unreduced copy. All the illos came out fine. The problem must lay elsewhere. Maybe you Hillary Clinton faked your vote so that appear to have voted Democrat, and Trump has a hit squat out after you?" [sic] ; **Keith Freeman** : "I'm sure I'm one of many who was quite happy with the 1.4Mb issue with all the illos and pictures safely in place..." ; **Wm Breiding** : "Everything came out okay for me in the first pdf, just so's ya know." ; **Eli Cohen** : "Looks like I see the same pictures in the original file as in the unreduced file (except for the secret treasure map, that is). Is the U.K.

blocking pictures thinking they're trying to immigrate?" ; **Perry Middlemiss** : "The original was all fine here." ; **Bill Burns** : "I checked the reduced file and all the images are present." ; **Bruce Gillespie** : "[T]he first version sent also showed all pics to me." ; **Harry Bell** : "Both versions show up fine" ; **Andrew C. Murdoch** : "My first version still had all illustrations intact and in place..." ; **Claire Brialey** : "You didn't ask for nil returns but your original file was fine here, thanks!" ; **Dave Langford** : "[W]orked for me first time." ; **Leigh Edmonds** : "I had no trouble with the first version of *This Here...* 75 that you sent me but I will keep the second copy, you never know with computers do you?" ;

WAHF (REGULAR)

Sean Carey ; **Amanda Epstein** (deducing my "Lazzaro" and offering accommodations for 2025) ; **Tommy Ferguson** (confirming comp Eastercon memberships coo er gosh ta) and suggesting other Oirish plans may be afoot - something I later learn is indeed already well-shod... ; **Christina Lake** (see 'Indulge Me' below) ; **Barbara Ann Lipscomb** ; **Heath Row** ; **Jose Sanchez** ;

FANZINES RECEIVED

With gratitude as always and this time actual reviews coo er gosh...

PERRYSCOPE 44 (Perry Middlemiss) - It's rare that I find little to intersect with in **Perry's** ish, but in this'un I only really engage with **Julian Warner's** column on magazines clocked in his relative youth. The cover, though, (a portrait of the instigator by Chong) is astonishingly fine...

MY BACK PAGES 30 (Rich Lynch) - Almost like having *Mimosa* back. Rich reprints essays he's done for *File770*, welcomed by me and perhaps others who don't have a permanent campsite over there. A Conrep of the 2019 Dublin WorldThing *almost* makes me wish I'd been and includes remarks I can agree with about the Fanzine Hugos...

BANANA WINGS 80 (Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer) - Including what will sadly be the last published article by the departed David Redd (and it's as good as you'd expect), but otherwise all about Cor41U, including **Mark's** well-received if highly scurrilous GoH speech. I was so knackered after the egoscan that I had to have a lie down. I learn from the locs that **Alison Scott** has created an egoscan app of some sort, which does seem like a *very Alison* thing to do...

IDEA 14 (Geri Sullivan) - This is both a marvelous and sad thing, the latter adjective not being for some of the reasons you might think. The ish is 164pp of impressiveness via the current trend of printing by Amazon, but my problems (which are, I must stress, faults of mine and not of **Geri's**) start at the page 15 mark. It's all chocker with people I not only don't know but also *have never heard of*, which includes

the subject of the bulk of the issue, Deb Geisler. That possibly seems astonishing to the many who have contributed their memories of someone who was clearly adored and respected, but despite long-ago contentions in the UK that “Nic knows everybody” there are substantial circles of the wider Faniverse with which I’ve had 0 interaction, me being firmly ensconced within the womb of the fanzine microverse. The significance of “page 15” is, DoBFO I think, that the preceding bits are by **Pete Young** (who I consider a mate but I believe I have never actually met) and **S&ra Bond** with whom I’ve been close friends almost as long as I’ve been in fandom. Unfairly skipping over the rest of the content to the locs, I did a swift checklist which determined that I know twelve of the esteemed correspondents within, nine of them in person to greater or lesser degrees. I find this humbling since it shows that there’s a greater part of the Faniverse which many of my friends have happily engaged with (and continue to do so) while I’ve staunchly stayed in a ghetto of, arguably, my own making, but frankly it’s a place I’m comfortable in. To mention again the well-regarded and multiple Hugo-winning Best Fanzine *Mimosa*, this is also how I felt when getting copies of that ish back in the day (wedges of fanhistory about people I’d almost always never heard of) - which adds to (faint?) hopes that **Geri** might scoop a deserved rocket for this’un...

INDULGE ME

✘ **ADDITIONAL THANKS** : Apart from my regular and rightly revered columnist **David Hodson**, much ta thish for additional and very welcome contributions from **Pete Young** (‘Anorak’) and **W^m Breiding** (‘Omphaloskepsis’)...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : Brits again, and the usual snark at **Jerry Kaufman** whose indifferent strolling in the general direction of “away” may well have increased in speed. First up: **Suzi Ronson**...



✘ **WOT? AN ACTUAL COVER?** : I know, I know, breaking the habit innit, but **Teddy Harvia** sent me the collaboration with **Brad Foster**, which he said had been done for *File 666 770* but apparently didn’t fit with **Mike Glyer**’s formatting, so I ended up with dibs, and as any fule kno I’m shameless about nicking leftovers, especially when they’re this good...

✘ **DREAM WEAVER** : The usual churn of weird dreams continues, but they’re mostly bog-standard anxiety stuff, usually involving either being lost and getting even more lost, having to achieve some task like moving (with a hard deadline) or trying to escape the consequences of an occasionally criminal act. Nothing new to see here. The other night, though, a recognizable actor appeared, a rare thing for me. Typecast, perhaps, I encountered Clancy Brown as a gruff, by-the-book but not unkindly cop. No idea what it means, if anything...



✘ **KIM HUETT MAKES SENSE SHOCK HORROR!** : Going on about the costs of city living in his loc thish, I now see that **Kim Huett** does deserve some credence, as I find a list of the top ten “impossibly unaffordable” world cities, three of which are in Australia: Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. I’d say the metric for this is pretty fuckin’ crude though, seemingly just based on income vs house prices, but there y’go. The article is here: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/14/business/house-prices-impossibly-unaffordable-intl-hnk> ...

✘ **TV GUIDE EXTRA** : As you do, I fill up a lot of TV watching hours with revisiting stuff I’ve already seen multiple times, recently bingeing (again) the original series ‘Mission: Impossible’, and as I reach s7 ep4 (“Leona”) I realize that guest star Robert Goulet belongs in this here somewhat thematic ish since his name translates from the French as “Bobby Bollock™”...

✘ **CLOSURE** : Sad news that local favorite Carlito’s Burritos has shut its doors. Their statement reads: “After a lot of consideration and in the facing headwinds of increased occupancy, product, and labor costs, we have decided that it is time to move on. It has been our pleasure to provide New Mexican food to Las Vegas and we hope you enjoyed eating it as much as we enjoyed making it.” Although we haven’t been as regular there lately as we used to be, typically going

for breakfast every Sunday with **James Taylor**, **Tee Cochran** and others (until Sunday became a workday for me) starting at the old hole-in-the-wall location which couldn't have had more than two dozen seats, having them cater me & **Jen's** wedding 8 years ago, and making it a point to take visiting fans there, most recently **Andy Hooper** & party during Cor41u. The huevos will be sorely missed...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Here you go again, **Killer**: Brits Of A Certain Age, though, will undoubtedly recall **Mary Hopkin**...



✘ **GONG SHOW** : The N3F announces this year's Laureate Awards in *TNFF* for June 2024, and congrats from me to fellow faneds **Guy H Lillian III** who still owes me \$20 (Best non-N3F fanzine, *Spartacus*) and **Heath Row** (Best Fanwriter). I hope there were more voters than last year, having deduced that the ballots submitted back then might have only been in single figures, but we'll never know because that data isn't made public. Also noted, the added category "Best None of the Above" which goes to the 2023 Hugos for "Best example of how not to run fan awards" ...

✘ **WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?** : As a (very) occasional contributor, usually in a satirical manner, I

inquired about this year's iteration of *WOOF* (World Order Of Faneds), the WorldThing apa, and in due course I hear from **Christina Lake** as follows:

WOOF 2024

We will be collating *WOOF* – in its 49th year – in the fan[zine] lounge at Glasgow 2024.

For 2024, we'll need you to bring 25 copies of your zine, and it should be A4. We'll distribute in person to contributors, and a pdf version of the apa will also be uploaded to efanzines.com. To get a feeling for what *WOOF* involves, you can see some previous year's editions at <https://efanzines.com/WOOF/index.htm>. If you need help printing, we can direct you to local copy shops. We may be able to provide a limited amount of printing at the convention but cannot guarantee it. Alternatively, if you get your pdf to us by the 25th of July, we can print it for you in return for a suitably generous donation to GUFF (the Going Under /Get-Up-and-over Fan Fund). If you're a supporting or virtual member of Worldcon but would still like to participate, the same applies but you'll also need to cover postage if you'd like a physical copy of the apa.

This year's Official Collator is **Christina Lake**, and you should contact glasgow2024woof@gmail.com for more information.

Not sure I'll be punting anything this year meself, much as I might like to (for the benefit of GUFF as well) since we ought be scrimping toward next year's UK visit, but we'll see...

✘ **BIRTHDAY BASH EXTRA** : Having been forcefully enjoined to do so by **Dave Hodson**, while at the Cornerstone I do collar Famous Bartender Jeff (see *oXLLip*) and pass on a warm 'ello from **Dave** and **Tommy Ferguson**. It would be funnier if Jeff had said "Who?", but I must faithfully report that he smiled broadly at the mention of those two reprobates...

✘ **TRAVEL PLANS EXTRA (FOOTY)** : Tuesday April 8th - Watford v Hull City...

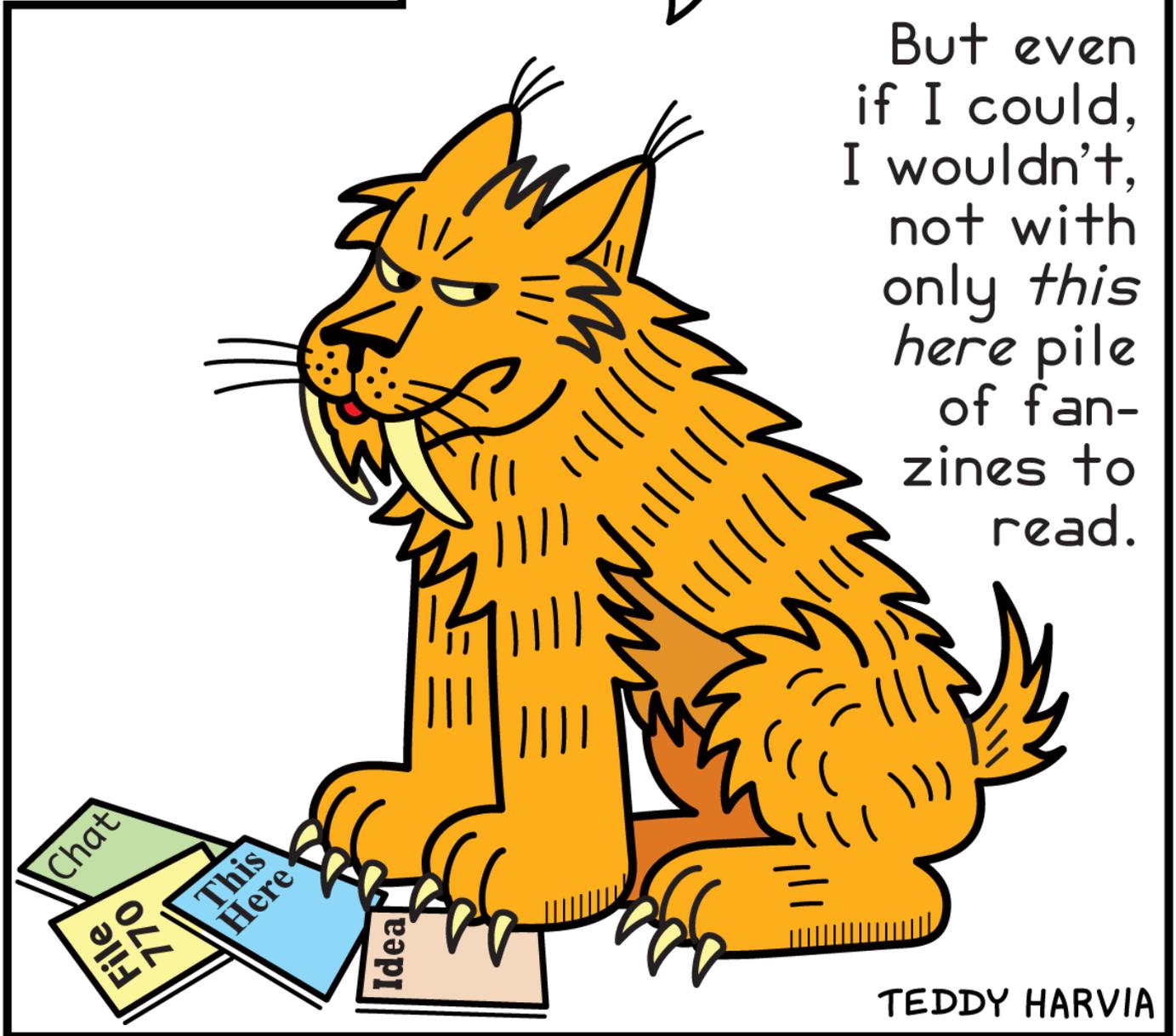
✘ **ONE LAST BOLLOCK™ UPDATE THISH** : I'm imagining the use of rather large protractors to measure "splay" - defined as the distance between the knees while in a seated position. Rather than being an example of unwarranted male presentation behavior it's because the area of scar tissue, having been given a two week reprieve (see 'Health Diary') has apparently decided to have a last hurrah of being really fuckin' sore...

✘ **NEXTISH** : July 27th I expect...

Chat

Big cats don't purr.

But even if I could, I wouldn't, not with only *this here* pile of fanzines to read.



MIRANDA

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**“And the man in the back is ready to crack
As he raises his hands to the sky
And the girl in the corner is everyone's mourner
She could kill you with a wink of her eye”**