

This Here...

“...socially disastrous...” (A Scott)

EGOTORIAL

WHITE ORANGE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

What’s going to be more ridiculous? Me commenting on the topic *du mois* or me not saying anything about it?

Being ridiculous either way (which you could have a few larfs about me doing anyway) and yet being in two minds (cue dreadful jokes about not even knowing I had one), I shall, if not actually plunge, at least dip a reluctant small toe into these murky waters.

The problem I have is that I really don’t want to say anything about the topic at all, much less wax on at length, since, surprisingly to many of you I’m sure, I get into panic attacks over it all. As an immigrant resident, albeit a legal one, I’m nervous about my status, despite a chorus of derisive reminders that of course I’ll be all right because I’m a white man. Realistically that’s probably true, but it doesn’t necessarily feel like it.

You could also argue that I must have a highly inflated sense of self-esteem to even consider that, even though I’m clearly on the far left end of the political spectrum, I’d be worth bothering about at all. That’s also undoubtedly true, but it hasn’t prevented me from being unreasonably fuckin’ nervous.

Anent more practical matters, I’m worried about my Social Security, and both our healthcare provisions: Medicare for me and ACA for **Jen**. It’s not so much about feeling hopeless as feeling helpless, and on that sour note let’s talk about something else instead.

DEPARTMENT OF MAD IDEAS

Something I heard decades ago for a good news/bad news situation is that you should lead off with the bad news so it

may then be tempered by the good, and I subsequently learn that the origins of this concept are found in the Christian Bible.

It’s all highly arguable, I’m sure, which (if any) parts of the DoMI memo giving my proposed fanzine schedule for the rest of the year might be tagged as “good news” for fans of - er - me, but if that *is* the case, then I suppose “bad news” could be that the proposed “Almanac” parody looks likely to fall by the wayside, perhaps partially due to time constraints but mostly for lack of contributions. Is it possible that this’un could be jump-started and rushed out

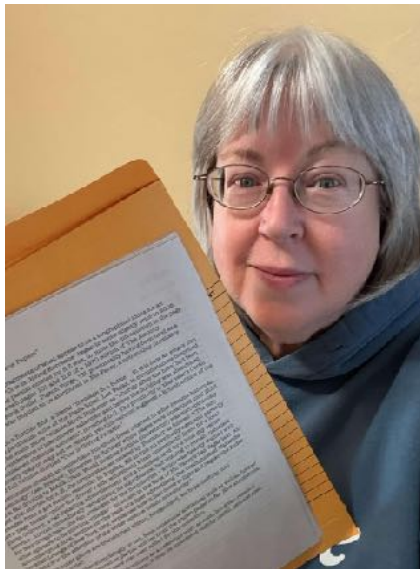
by the end of December? That’s a very slight “maybe” at this point. But ey...

And a week later I must revise that as some asked-for *Almanac* contributions have trickled in, so it seems I shall be getting out the jumper cables after all...

The “good” news is that both *BEAM 18* and *The Kerosene Papers* have got done. The former is already up on [efanzines](#) and has gone out to the direct email list, contributor print copies to get sorted in reasonably short order (ie the next week or two).

The latter is a zebra of different striping, appropriately given the subject matter. Some physical copies of the documents have been received by a few fans in the

USA, with one apparently sneaking over the border to Canada and another to the Antipodes. Others may have tortuously made their way to Europe by the time you read this, or if not will do so soon. I’m happy to include a more than cromulent cover girl in the person of **Lucy Huntzinger**, with an expression she describes as “early morning pre-coffee what do you mean it’s not early morning? bafflement”, but I interpreted as more like “yeah thanks but WTF?”, with which **Lucy** immediately agrees. There will be a pdf version of *Kerosene* distributed to the



mailing list in December. Early responses appear at the end of thish's loccol before the WAHFs.

It's all good.

November 2024

TAFFNESSABOUNDS

2025 RACE: CALL FOR CANDIDATES

As **Sarah Gulde** takes over North American admin duties, next year's East-West race to the Seattle WorldThing is out of the blocks with the call for candidates.

Newsletter: <https://efanzines.com/TAFF/Taffluorescence-06.pdf>

Nominations are now open, closing on December 20th, with east-west candidates as usual needing three nominators from Europe and two from North America. This is the bit where I note my willingness to be someone's nominator, with the DoBFO provisos that (a) you think I'd approve of your candidacy to that extent and (b) you must be fuckin' desperate, since my record as a winning nominator is remarkably weedy (1/4).

CORFLUX



42 NEWS

We hear from **David Hodson** about eval programme planning which now seems likely to include an interview with the Corflu 50 delegates which he intends to do himself, and thus will likely be rated "R" for language and violence if not, thankfully, any nudity. **Dave** adds: "...my rather left-field suggestion I admit, we were thinking of a having a trouser press relay race in the garden after the group photo between teams led by yourself and **James Bacon**. We are currently investigating insurance liability for [that] item." I respond that we'll be identifiable as the team on fuckin' crutches, musing to myself that we might as well concede by immediately sneaking off to the bar and letting the Oirish mob get on with it. I am later advised that a second-hand trouser press has been spotted in Enfield for "A mere £20.00"...

corflu.org

F3S*

DIETARY ADVISORIES

Typically well previous, I'm going to punt some notes here about nosebag requirements. Many years ago now, **Mike Ford** came to stay in Southern Maryland prior to BucConeer (1998), the 56th WorldThing, and *his* diet sheets ran to about 6 pages. Ours won't be as extensive but are just as important.

Most of you already knew that I don't eat red meat, and really you all should now thanks to recent correspondence in these pages. I'm quite all right with chicken and pork (and seafood). That's more or less the extent of my dietary foibles, though I'll also note that I don't scarf as much as I used to either, although I *have* moved on from the single meal a day schedule of the taxi years and now have an early sandwich or some such as well as an actual dinner (and a little later, dessert).

Jen's requirements are a bit more stringent. Because of her medication intake and diabetic considerations, she'll need to eat (in smaller quantities, DoBFO) about 6 times a day - a breakfast intake of protein is especially important.

Also, sadly for me, she doesn't tolerate spicy food, particularly from Indian cuisine - lightly spiced Mexican is all right, or zero spiced Thai which she's managed in the past, but for some reason she's never got on with specifically Indian spicing. That does kibosh any yearning I might have for an entirely curry diet while back in the UK, though darling wife that she is I expect I will be allowed to get a couple in, I'm sure. On the occasions that we're out at a restaurant she's got quite good at finding something off the menu that she can at least tolerate, albeit with a grimace or two.

On the plus side, she *loves* British-style fish & chips as well as a nice steak or burger, albeit having to leave most of the carbs (chips, bread) aside because A1C ect...

Jen adds: Nic did a great job summing up my weird eating habits. One thing that I should add has to do with my teeth. Since I have a 6-tooth upper bridge, I can't actually bite into some foods, like apples, hamburgers, corn on the cob, ribs...that kind of stuff. It's not a big issue, just something to mention. As long as there's a knife and fork around, I'm fine.

Nic again : On the topic of teeth I, of course, don't have any, so that's a thing. I am planning, however, to attempt to get my old dentures refitted before the trip, so we shall see...

I also, surprisingly to some perhaps, need to be specific about what cover girl **Lucy Huntzinger** terms "strong drink". **Jen** *very* rarely indulges in alcohol - we've discovered over a couple of Xmasses that less than half a measure of port has her flying. *Most* people, I think, are aware that, in the words of the great Dame Judi as 'M', "I prefer bourbon". The thing is, I'm picky about it. Some may recall my

preference of Jim Beam (Black label or even Jim Beam Rye, if you can find it). On one long-ago trip to the UK (likely to a Novacon) I proudly produced a bottle of Jim Beam Rye only to be angrily accused by some twat of faking the label (and presumably the contents) because it didn't exist.

Anyway, like the cornucopia of whisky / whiskey produced in the British Isles, not all American hooch is the same. "Kentucky bourbon" is generally acceptable (my current favs are Bulleit and Buffalo Trace) as are rye whiskeys from the same distillers. "Tennessee whiskey" (most famously Jack Daniels, I suppose) is emetic swill, and when I say "emetic" there, in my case I truly mean it.

In the spirit (ahem) of **Mike Ford's** list, my consumption of proper booze can be divided into the categories of "Any time, anywhere", "Occasionally" and "Never", thus:

"Any time, anywhere" - Kentucky bourbon or rye.

"Occasionally" (also interpreted as "Oh all right then, if that's all you've got") - vodka, tequila, brandy, John Power Irish whiskey.

"Never" - Tennessee whiskey, gin, scotch whisky (and no I don't give a fuckingmonkeybollock about how it's the finest single malt evah ect). All those are genuinely, graphically and copiously emetic.

Oh, I didn't mention wine! A nice Chianti, please...

[* "Far-Flung Farey Safari", of course...]

SIGNS & SYMBOLS

I think it's been about ten years since I got a new tattoo, the chaos star on my right hand, and I've been thinking, in no small part due to my leukemia diagnosis early this year, about getting another, specifically an hourglass which would also be visible without requiring any clothing removal.

With this in mind I got tickets to the Las Vegas Tattoo Festival at the World Market Expo for Friday November 8th, the first day of a three-day bash for artists both local, national and international to ply their trade.

We had a little wander around (after I'd paid an extortionate \$12 for a can of Stella to slake my thirst), and it wasn't hard

to get the impression that these days you have to be tattooed head to foot to even get noticed, usually in a very integrated manner.

I remembered crashing a birthday party for Paula Yates in the late 1970s which was after a gig at a venue I can't even recall (or who we even saw) by the simple expedient of hiding in the lavs after the show. I struck up a convo with a woman who had a very impressive and detailed full sleeve (though again I can't remember exactly what it was of), and she, a tattoo artist herself, told me (a bit pretentiously I thought at the time) that she didn't really do individual little tats but preferred to work on "a whole arm as a concept".

My own collection of ink, by contrast, has been acquired very much "as and when" and all of the (currently 9) pieces are unrelated, apart from the forearm kanji characters which are a pair. All of my tattoos, though, have a bit of personal history behind their acquisition, and no, I'm not going into all them here (although I might later).

What we might call "classic" tattoos are often rooted in a particular symbolism, and the hourglass motif is one such. Primarily it represents the passing of time, also mortality. The hourglass itself (as an instrument) dates back to at least the 14th century (although some say ancient Greece had them), and fairly swiftly became a motif in art, for example Hans Holbein's 'Dance of Death' woodcuts (1523-25), as in "The Monk" shown here.



I'm at a point where I've begun to consider my own mortality (DoBFO, shurely?) and I've therefore been keen to get the symbol for that as a reminder to me and, I suppose, others.

We'd only got around to the second aisle at the Expo when, solely on the basis of me stopping for a couple of seconds to see what hourglass designs might be available, I was essentially waylaid by the front man for one stall who



practically dragged me in to talk to the artist Benzo, who turned out to be happily local (with a shop at Tropicana and Eastern) and showed me a design which I liked immediately. Not being one to fuck about looking around when I've found something I'm well good with, I said "All right, let's do it!", and so we did.



Benzo's FBF page (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100073081309071>) has a couple of plaudits about his precision and light touch, both of which I can confirm. At our writers' group monthly meeting the following day, **Cora Silva** solicitously asks me if it hurt a lot, and I'm happy to confirm to her that it didn't at all, although it's all very YMMV depending on the individual and, of course, the artist. Benzo asked me if I was doing all right as the work was in progress, and I truthfully answered that I hardly felt a thing. Mind you, the fact that I was helping consume a stiff glass of Jameson might have helped.



Here's the other thing, though. Although you may notice that my hourglass doesn't have much left in the top half, a tattoo is permanent and unchanging. So it never runs out, does it?

HEALTH DIARY

LIFE GOES ON...

I'm about to have my head examined [write in your own dreadful old jokes here, or see **Chris O'Shea** who has a stock in reserve]. We shall see if the results are in before press time for this. If there is anything to report it'll be in 'Indulge Me'.

Last week I had one of the infrequent GP visits (once every 4-6 months) in which it was agreed that I'm actually in fair shape for someone who has consistently and jubilantly indulged in bad habits for over 50 years. About all jolly Dr Tichman has to suggest is that I up my daily vitamin

supplement intake to include B-complex (or, more specifically, Thiamine (B₁) because of my alcohol intake). Indeed, that's now been added to the current roster of B₁₂ and D₃, which I'm happy enough to choff since I don't consider those "pharmaceuticals" to which I'm still generally averse. The GP goes through my checklist of prescriptions to confirm what I'm still on : Calquence for the cancer and ibuprofen for the general aches & pains. When I'm asked about the ~~heroin~~ tramadol I respond with a firm "fuck, no", advising that I took one and didn't like it, so no thanks. Next followup with them is scheduled for March 31st (the day before our planned travel to UK) and will involve a *lot* of prior blood tests as well as possibly a chest X-ray / scan which I'm told will be an annual thing. There's a couple of quite tiny "nodules" (I think that's what he said) on the lungs but apparently nothing to get excited or alarmed over for now.

The mobility isn't improving any, and is mostly a bit worse as we trundle along, I think. There again, some days are a *little* better than others, but none are much good. The bizarre situation we find ourselves in when eg going up the shops is that I'll need to stop and lean on something (or sit), whereas **Jen** doesn't do at all well with standing still since her pains have got a *lot* worse to the point that (bombshell alert) her recent MRI shows that she needs hip replacement surgery. The next referral for that is in process (at least we hope it is) and we'll find out at some point when and if surgery is going to occur - the "if", of course being whether we're going to have to cough up \$\$ for the procedure which she really does need...

MOVIE NIGHT

MORE FROM THE BLIND SPOT

Idly browsing the SF/ Action genre sections on Netflix I once again alight on movies of around a ten year old vintage, apparently all stuff I missed around that time (see lastish).

'Predestination' is a 2014 Australian production led by Ethan Hawke and Sarah Snook in what's been (accurately, I'd say) described as a "star-making turn" by the latter, for which she would win her second AACTA award. As I settle in and we get to the framing location of a bar and a convo between Hawke and Snook's characters, I start to think "Oi! This looks well familiar", and indeed it's an adaptation of Heinlein's '-All You Zombies-'. And a fuckin' good one an'all. It's nice to clock a more thoughtful (or you could say mind-bending) sf effort which isn't whizz-bang all-action (although there's nothing wrong with that), which brings me to...

...'Anon' (2018), starring Clive Owen and Amanda Seyfried. This is one of those efforts at taking a different genre (in this case the police procedural murder mystery / serial killer) and



slapping it into a skiffy setting. This sort of trick doesn't always work. When it does (eg 'Fatherland') it can be well good, but not so much in the case of 'Anon'. Its fundamental weakness is well described by Nick Allen (RogerEbert.com) thusly: "Anon can be as much fun as listening to someone explain every single rule of a board game, when all you want is to just start playing." In other words, writer/

director Andrew Niccol spends far too much time spelling out the near-future dystopia's absence of any and all privacy and not enough on the frankly pretty thin plot. That can be passable if it's accompanied by some whizz-bang all-action, but when it isn't, what you end up with fails to engage, despite the reasonably solid efforts of Owen and Seyfried. Which in turn leads into...

...'Oblivion' (2013), a Tom Cruise vehicle also featuring the DDG Olga Kurylenko, Andrea Riseborough making the best of having to channel season 1 'Space:1999' vintage Barbara Bain, and not quite enough Morgan Freeman (who gets second billing nonetheless). 'Oblivion' gets it right where 'Anon' doesn't, in that the info dump explaining the post-apocalyptic situation is bare bones and got out of the way, which I expect is fair enough because you can get straight into Tom Cruise running! Tom Cruise rides a (futuristic) motorbike! Tom Cruise looks grim/wistful! Although largely absent are the Tom Cruise 1000-watt grin mega-rizz bits, appropriately enough for this'un. It's perhaps notable that Cruise followed this skiffy effort with another (the very good 'Edge of Tomorrow') the following year, again playing somewhat against type. 'Oblivion' plays out nicely over its two-hour runtime with the various reveals (which I won't spoil for you) dropping in a very well-paced fashion.

A quick mention for the not-ten-years-old flick 'Deus' aka 'Deus: The Dark Sphere' (2023, Amazon Prime) which got comprehensively slagged off, but at a mere 90 minutes isn't that rotten of a time sink. Premise: A mysterious black sphere appears in Mars orbit and a crew is sent to investigate. Claudia Black ('Farscape', 'Stargate SG1'), David O'Hara (loads of supporting roles since 1985) and Phil Davis (latterly Dickie Bow in 'Slow Horses') are all actually quite good in this, but Richard Blackwood ('Supacell') as the mission commander sleepwalks throughout, looking like he'd *much* rather be somewhere else. Still, this'un isn't utterly irredeemable, if you've got an idle hour and a half to fill...

RADIO WINSTON

NEWS & NOTES



Early heads-up : The great Paul Thorn's next album 'Life is Just a Vapor' (Perpetual Obscurity records) drops on February 21st. The first single off the set, "[Tough Times Don't Last](#)" is out now...

Speaking of Paul, someone on his FBF fan group asked the question: what

singer(s) are so identifiable that you know who it is immediately with the first couple of bars of any given slice. As you might expect, lots of answers of "Dylan". My contribution was Ian Anderson which did get one like. That gives me a nice segue into a seasonal, if early annual link for "[Ring Out Solstice Bells](#)" as I do for Our Sal, **Sarah Mooring** every fuckin' year! This'un is off Top of the Pops, December 1976...

Trying to keep up the segues, I was put in mind of Seattle indie-folk outfit Fleet Foxes and their 2021 set 'A Very Lonely Solstice', their most recent release before this year's 'Live on Boston Harbor'. I mention them not only for their undoubted soporific effect on **Leigh Edmonds** who needs to sleep through the rest of 'RW' anyway...

<https://www.fleetfoxes.co/music>

Tenuously, perhaps, any mind then wandered off (as it does) back to thinking about the Regrettes, now officially disbanded as of a year ago. I had mentioned in a previous 'Radio Winston' that I reckoned they were nowhere near as good after bassist Sage Chavis left (or was booted?) In 2018. The dodgy skittering of thought from the previous paragraph occurs because of their banging (if a little scruffy) 2018 AV Club cover of "[Fox on the Run](#)" (originally by the Sweet), before Sage was off on her toes. This also affords me to shout "Sage on the Ricky!" in the general direction of **Steve Jeffery**...

Only following on here by virtue of the fact that this little video appeared in the YoobToob listing after watching the previous, I alight upon a rather American take on "[1960s bands that vanished without trace](#)". The Tremeloes? All right, arguable, but the Hollies? The Small Faces? The Yardbirds? Also, you can have a good larf at how the narrator pronounces "Beau Brummells". This little selection did' however, send me off in search of the authorship and

history of the slice “Midnight Confessions” after clocking it here by the Grass Roots (of whom I had never heard), still active on the ‘60s nostalgia circuit, albeit and unsurprisingly with no original members. The first recording was a demo by songwriter Lou Josie and his Evergreen Blues Band. The horn section was noted and referred to the Grass Roots, supposedly looking for a West Coast version of the Motown Sound”. Judge for Yourself [here](#).

My knowledge of what’s a well-written slice indeed was hitherto limited to the goddess-like [version by Phyllis Dillon](#), noting at the time that substantial bits of it bore a strong resemblance to a song I wrote about twelve years later called ‘Mascara Streaks’. Be grateful, perhaps, that I don’t have a link for that’un although it’s a slice I’ve always been rather pleased with. There used to be a decent version on Bill Mills’ old website which was recorded in his little home studio in the days before he concluded that I was Satan incarnate crossed with the Wendigo. I’ve trawled through several goes at the slice so you don’t have to, and for serious kitsch-nostalgia buffs I shall, for a finale, regale yer with the *very* 1980s video and production (which I suspect Jim Steinman may have had a hand in) [by Karla DeVito](#) (no relation to Danny).



You can wake up now, **Leigh**. Or not...

TV GUIDE

THE DIPLOMAT

I do enjoy a political thriller, and the list there has included ‘Designated Survivor’, ‘House of Cards’ (both versions) and even, I will sadly admit, ‘First Among Equals’, although perhaps paradoxically I’ve never clocked a single episode of ‘The West Wing’, most likely because it wasn’t available to watch wherever I was at the time it aired. I had a quick check and yes, 1999 would have been during a period living on Chestnut Street in Kenwood Beach MD when we didn’t have a TV at all, until one of the lads decided we should steal the cable feed (and knew how).

‘The Diplomat’ (Netflix) is something that I should have got into sooner due to strong recommendations from others, and perhaps especially because, well, Keri Russell who did such a trific turn in ‘The Americans’ and is equally fab here. Adding to the attractions are some equally good performers and familiar faces: Rory Kinnear channeling Boris as UK Prime Minister, Celia Imrie as his string-pulling former campaign manager and a sweet turn by Pearl Mackie as the

US embassy receptionist, as unfair as it is to single out any of the ensemble cast who are uniformly good. Parallels with present and past incumbents of the various offices are well DoBFO, and there’s more twisty intrigue than you can shake a stick at.

Like ‘The Lincoln Lawyer’ season 1 ended on a massive cliffhanger and audiences then had to wait *eighteen fuckin’ months* for s2 to drop, and to think I moaned about the mere 14 between ‘Lincoln Lawyer’ seasons with their equally fingertip cliffhanging endings. The other “problem” with ‘The Diplomat’ is, I suppose, that you can’t go describing any of the plot without spoilers, inadvertent or otherwise, so I can only wholeheartedly recommend clocking it and then shut up.



NEW STUFF

‘Silo’ season 2 is just a couple of episodes in and still looking fab so far, as is the final season (almost over, as I write) of ‘Star Trek: Lower Decks’ (Paramount+). While cast and fans are all sad that ‘Lower Decks’ is soon to be all done, I might suggest that the timing is pretty good, as some of the running gags are starting to wear a little thin, although the drop-in fan service nods to other Trek shows tends to be as fun and clever as always. We continue to enjoy ‘Tracker’ (s2) and ‘The Equalizer’ (s5), also CBS/Paramount+.

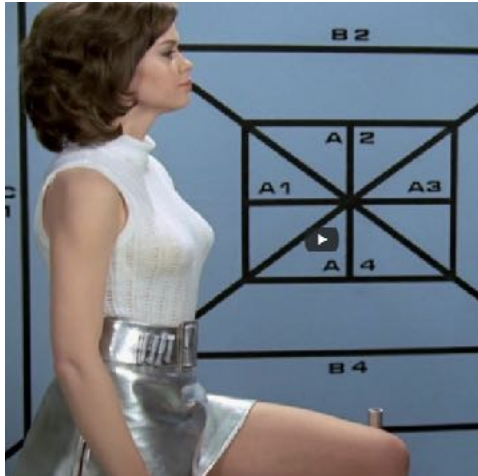
Incidentally, we’ve had continual problems with the Paramount+ app on the smart tv wherein the feed freezes and then crashes out so that in several cases it’s took us *three days* to get through a single episode of eg ‘Matlock’. We appear to have solved this by canceling the original subscription and adding Paramount+ to the Amazon Prime package. Speaking of, we continue to be devoted to both Kathy Bates (‘Matlock’) and Carrie Preston in ‘Elsbeth’ who are both now playing glitch-free.

A couple of other new’uns: I’ve kind of stalled on ‘Cross’ (Amazon Prime) since it isn’t quite the Morgan Freeman take on the character, although I will persevere to the end since we do like lead actor Aldis Hodge in just about anything. Just the other night I piled into ‘The Day of the Jackal’ (Peacock) and have binged the first 6 episodes (of 10) - the finale drops on December 12th. My substantial enjoyment of

this'un has been seriously tempered by learning that it's been renewed for a second season, with all that implies for the presumed survival of the main characters. Arg!

OLD STUFF

Like with the occasional reading of an actual book, I'm often reverting to ancient tv shows, at least for background perusal of an evening, and thus I alight upon 'Space:1999' (Amazon Prime). Most fans are shurely aware that this'un was morphed from the proposed second season of 'UFO' which,



at the request of Lew Grade, was going to be set mostly on Moonbase, since that location had proved the most popular with audiences, undoubtedly nothing at all to do with Gabrielle Drake (purple-haired or otherwise) and the

rest of the pulchritudinous staff, honest guv!

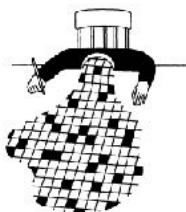
The main takeaway from the rewatch is that, despite the general criticisms of the acting from season 1, season 2 is much worse because, perhaps, of the general abandonment of the more philosophical (and moral) aspects of s1 and - er - Fred Freiberger, brought in as a sop to the American cohort of execs, avoiding the necessity for transatlantic script approval. Freiberger is well enough known to fans as a series killer, having helmed s3 of 'Star Trek'. He was also sacked from 'The Wild Wild West' after 8 episodes there and could be by all accounts an intractable twat. About the only decent chunk of s2 is the two part "Bringers of Wonder" which just about manages to surpass the risible true appearance of the aliens therein. Still, nostalgia is a powerful thing, innit...

GIVE US A CLUE

Lastish:

"Roughly nothing with intent that the survivor takes all (7)"

[[Apologies to those (three?) of you who follow this column, since I fucked up mightily by saying the solution here was 6 letters instead of the actual 7. Steve Jeffery did manage to get it, albeit noting what the solution ought to be except that the number of letters was wrong. After realizing about the cockup I sent Eli a correction...]]



Eli Cohen : Seems like it should be some anagram of "nothing", but frankly, I've got nothing. I wonder if Google would be any help? Hey, I got a hit! Some web site called "efanzines.com", inside a pdf called "ThisHere80". But it doesn't have the solution! Useless Google...

Definition: "*the survivor takes all*"

Wordplay: "*Roughly*" (anagram indicator), "*nothing*" = O + INTENT, which rearranges to TONTINE...]]

"Close study of broken nails, say (8)"

Steve Jeffery : Ok, we can at least do agramams [*sic*], courtesy of daily episodes of *Countdown*. Though we always seem to miss the 8 or 9 letter ones that Dictionary Corner come up with. So [this] indicates remixing "nails say" into "ANALYSIS".

Eli Cohen : Google has multiple hits this time! Well, we can ignore that efanazines thing, but who knew Wikipedia had an article on cryptic crosswords, which actually uses this as an example of "misleading clues", and has the answer! ANALYSIS (synonym of "close study", anagram of "nails, say").

[[Quite so. There is a deliberate misdirection in this'un, since "say" in a clue usually points to a homophone...]]

"Randomly occasional fanzine? (8)"

Steve Jeffery : ...could realistically describe half the titles in e-fanzines. Guessing some sort of synonym - I'm thinking sporadic, episodic, slapdash though none of those suggest a fanzine I'm aware of.

Eli Cohen : Well, we know from last issue that "fanzine" is totally irrelevant, just one more attempt (that's not too many) to make us think a clue is fannish... And Google only finds efanazines again, with no answer. Maybe if I attach a pillow over the dent in the wall it won't hurt as much when I bang my head against it...

[[Double definition: "Randomly occasional" / "fanzine". You would have needed to be aware of Bill Plott's title SPORADIC...]]

Thish's efforts:

"Golden Age editor like John Inman with Harry or Doug (8)"

"Insert Eli acrobatically - hanging in there! (9)"

"Nasty uneven endless debts (6)"

ANORAK

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Here's a triptych of locos that, at a casual glance, would probably look identical to all but the most dedicated anoraks. Yes, all right you pedants, I *know* three photos isn't

strictly a “triptych” which has a specific arrangement, I’m just having an excuse for a posh word. As you fuckin’ do.



These are, from top to bottom, British Rail classes 44, 45 and 46, all built between 1959 and 1963 and thus engines which a lot of us will have grown up seeing. The last of the lot (both class 45s) were eventually withdrawn from service in early 1989. D113 (45128) unofficially named “Centaur” was yanked in April after the previous holdout D106 (45106, “Vulcan”) had, massively ironically considering her name, caught fire on the 07:12 Derby to St. Pancras run on February 3rd.

What I wanted to do, though, was concentrate on the 44s. I think it’s always a bit more interesting to look at the first passes at any given design, since that’s where the “teething troubles” get worked out, and sure enough the 44s had them.

Only ten of these were built (at BR Derby works), but their nickname of “Peaks” carried through the 45s and 46s - a moniker acquired because these locos were all given actual names of British mountains, starting with D1 (44 001) “Scafell Pike”.

What we might call the “cab with snout” profile which is so familiar to loads of us really originated with the class 40 of which 200 were built between 1958 and 1962. Due to the wackiness of BR class numbering, whereas non-anoraks might assume that the class 37 preceded these but *they* entered service in 1960, with over 300 being built 1960-65, quite a number of which are still operational!

The 44s, as mentioned, did have their problems, and quite a few of them. The bogies were getting frame fractures, as were the water tanks for the steam heating boilers (used for carriage heating among other things). The power backup batteries were pretty weedy and ran out of juice at a clip. The vacuum exhausters proved troublesome an’ all. These are part of the braking system (so yes - er - quite important), and on the 44s a rather daft design had them mounted in the center of the engine room blocked in by truss girders on the sides. That meant replacement units had to be craned in via the roof which took over 8 hours to achieve, sometimes as many as 12. Much of this was sorted in the 45s, and once they started entering service the 44s were bumped to freight duties (mostly in the East Midlands), allowing the heating boilers to be removed.

You might, and accurately, consider the 44s an example of how loco engineering and construction worked in an era of nationalized rail. It’s certainly arguable that design and development could be, to an extent, speculative in the sense of “let’s see how and if this works”, leading improvements in the machines which were incremental rather than great and complete technological leaps. Thus you can get a situation where only 10 of the class 44s are built before being quickly superseded. In a way you could consider them as “prototypes” which nevertheless were put in service despite their weaknesses. Perhaps also worth noting that the 1960s were a bit of a boom town in terms of locomotive construction and development, including of course the beloved class 55 “Deltic” (1961-62).

Withdrawal and scrapping of the 44s began in July 1976 with D3 (44 003) “Skiddaw”, with the last three, D4 (44 004) “Great Gable”, D7 (44 007) “Ingleborough” and D8 (44 008) “Penyghent” ending their runs in November 1980.

“Great Gable” is preserved and operational at Butterley for the heritage Midland Railway, “Penyghent” at Peak Rail in Derbyshire where she’s in regular use on Peak District passenger trains. I wonder if they fixed the heating?

THE OLD SOD

BY DAVID HODSON

For fuck's sake!

I'll add an entry to the files of Nic's DoBFO: You didn't really want to do that, didja?

On Tuesday, November 5th, a date synonymous to Brits with trying to burn down authority, the U.S. re-elected the greater golfing orange buffoon, Donald J. Trump, as President. Instantly, overnight, 100 million racists were proved right.

Make no mistake, the re-election of Trump, much like the Brexit vote which took the U.K. out of the European Union, was a purely racist vote when viewed from the standpoint of the average voter in the average redneck, bible belt, or rustbelt state. British Conservative politicians bang on about "sovereignty" and British laws made in the British parliament, but the truth is Brexit was an exercise to protect the project of transferring wealth from the poorest to the wealthiest wrapped in fearmongering about all those swarthy skinned foreigners coming over here raping our beer and drinking our women, whilst undercutting the wages of hardworking Brits who slaved away day after day as brain surgeons, nuclear scientists, and rocket engineers.

It was difficult not to notice the endless numbers of U.S. voters having their interviews shown on British news programmes saying they would vote for Trump because he'd bring back all those jobs lost to overseas workers; things like coal mining, steel working, car making, etc. Invariably these were jobs based around old, largely redundant technologies, and global economics was always going to ultimately make them viable to only those economies with the cheapest manpower and the laxest regulation, including for the protection of the health and safety of that manpower. For a nation like the U.S., with some of the poorest workplace protections of blue-collar workers, to lose those jobs to the far east, China, and the Indian subcontinent, tells you something of the perceived cheapness of human life in those places.

Now, I don't really know what the election of Trump will do to affect the day-to-day lives of the residents of Shitsboro, Tennessee, or Pukeville, Alabama; probably very little actually, because, at the end of the proverbial day, there's precious little that can be done to affect these banjo playing backwaters, much as there's not a lot that can be done to change the fortunes of places like Southend or Clacton, which elected the orange turd supporting Nigel Farage at the last U.K. election. There are places and technologies that are destined to be superseded eventually, and this is the process in action, but the lack of awareness in so-called "progressive" politicians about the reactionary forces that these processes unleash continually astonishes me.

During the U.K. election the seaside town of Clacton was a favourite media soundboard, largely due to the presence of Farage on the parliamentary ticket. The Beeb and other news channels would rock up there and go interview the locals: "what are your voting intentions?" "Why are you thinking of supporting the U.K. Independence Party rather than one of the mainstream parties?" "Why do you think UKIP would have any greater success stopping the small boats and illegal immigration?" (note: for any American readers who aren't aware, the "small boats" are the rubber dinghies and other small boats not designed for use on bodies of water like the English Channel or the North Sea, but that are being used anyway to cross the channel after being sold to asylum seekers by people smugglers predominantly in France. There are pretty much daily news stories in the spring, summer, and early autumn months about drownings and other fatalities of people, including extremely young children, trying to cross the channel in such flimsy vehicles. Makes crossing the border from Mexico to the U.S. sound pretty tame in comparison really.)

The answer to these and a lot of follow-up questions usually boiled down to one of the following statements: "We're full up." "Too many people live here already." "The housing is full up." "My kids can't get a house." "The hospitals are over-run." "I can't get a doctor's appointment." Whataboutism run rampant!

I was asked to leave an Age UK event in Enfield recently. We were talking about climate change and the man from the Enfield Climate Forum made a pretty good fist of explaining, in an extremely dumbed down sort of way, why climate change of the type we are now noticing more and more is bad and is predominantly manmade. The consensus around the table, not including me and a very few others, was that manmade climate change wasn't real, and what's the problem if things get a bit warmer in the winter anyway? When I explained that global warming will reach a point where the mechanism will actually cause a new ice age and is, in fact, already well on the way to doing it with a large patch of the North Atlantic now developing a cold, stiff spot due to the amount of fresh water from polar melting being dumped into the salt water of the ocean, I was heckled as a know-it-all and thinking I was better than everyone else.

I lost my shit!

There is one particular woman that grinds my fuckin' gears. She's in her seventies, owns a nice large house on the edge of Trent Park, one of the swankier parts of Enfield, which her family bought in the 80s under Thatcher's right to buy, and has several children and grandchildren. She is constantly moaning that her children or grandchildren can't get on the property ladder because of all the immigrants taking housing (and, for some reason, these immigrants always seem to get the most desirable housing in areas that I

thought were pretty much exclusively owner-occupied), her grandchildren can't get the jobs that pay really good money because, you've guessed it, immigrants, and she is steadfastly against any new social housing building in the area because it'll potentially blight the value of her house. She's also a proud Brexiteer.

This woman is a prime example of the senses of middle-class privilege and entitlement that blight both the U.S. and the U.K. As she sat there telling me and the rest of the room that climate change is nonsense and just an excuse to make us all pay more tax (presumably to support immigrants) and not allow her to drive her car, I decided to tear her a new one about all the attitudes she'd shown over several months including how she'd prefer to see her neighbours, several of whom were also in the room, die so her kids could take their houses rather than see new homes built, how she was constantly surprised that more Indians and Pakistanis hadn't been sent home after Brexit, and how she was horrified that there weren't enough care workers to come to her home to help her with her ablutions without taking into account that all those Europeans that she wanted to go home were actually the ones helping her wipe her shitty arse at times. We'd already heard several times how her grandchildren, etc, were all far too clever and talented to take such menial jobs and are presumably the leading intellectual lights in the U.K.'s race to beat the U.S.A., China, and Russia to Mars.

Now, it would be very easy to turn this entire column into a rant against people that I actually do regard as beneath me; that I regard as lacking in both intelligence and empathy, but...

The re-election of Trump is a cautionary tale. For months, when people have criticised Kier Starmer, the Prime Minister in the still relatively newly elected British Labour government, for not saying what he would do when he got to power, or not being open and above board about his plans for tax rises or spending cuts, etc., I've told them I think he has played a blinder in the couple of years leading up to the last election. He learnt the lesson of Margaret Thatcher.

When, in 1975, in the wake of the October 1974 general election, Thatcher became leader of the Conservative Party in opposition to a minority Labour government, she understood that challenging parties rarely won elections, but they were frequently lost by the incumbent government. For four years, up until the 1979 general election, Thatcher said nothing about her prospective plans, seemingly content to just watch as the Labour party imploded. She understood

that it wasn't a matter of convincing supporters of opposition parties to instead vote Tory, but a matter of getting her own support to turn up at the polling booths whilst suppressing opposition support by saying and doing nothing that spurred them into action. Let their dissatisfaction with their own party beat them. So, she gave away no plans that might stir up the natives. This is what Starmer proceeded to do once he was invested as the leader of the Labour opposition in 2020.

By contrast, Kamala Harris shot herself in the foot at every turn in this year's Presidential election in the U.S. With all those red necks, and rust belters, and evangelist whatever they are looking on, she proceeded to wheel out a shit ton of celebrities to endorse her run for President and appeared to be completely out of touch with those millions of voters. Trump may have had potential voters holding their noses whilst putting an X in the box on the ballot, but he appeared to be saying and doing the right things to make them think he was on their side. An old, white guy who has lost his job to a cheaper overseas alternative doesn't want to see Oprah

Winfrey, a pretty odious character to rival any of Trump's supporters in her own right, telling him who to vote for. Beyonce doesn't cut any mustard with a redneck, and, as much as I've admired the Boss for decades since I first heard *Born To Run*, the days when Bruce Springsteen was able to pass as a representative of blue-collar workers have long, long since passed.

The annoying thing is, as the final election numbers are tallied, it has

become clear that Harris did as much to alienate her own support as not giving the opposition support a reason to feel secure in her leadership and just stay at home. Trump's support over three elections has stayed fairly constant, whereas Democratic support has yo-yoed alarmingly, abandoning Hillary Clinton in 2016, returning to support Biden in 2020, but abandoning Harris again in 2024. Maybe these so-called progressives aren't as progressive as they think; they certainly don't seem to like women as candidates.

Oh well, it's only four years, the climate can survive that and it's unlikely Mexico will really need to be invaded, and I'm sure Trump will happily and willingly step aside once his term is over, but, just in case things take a turn for the worse, maybe I'd better provisionally rebook the Chequers Hotel for 2027 so the lamb shanks in the readership have an opportunity to come to the U.K. and claim asylum. It'll be Musk's turn to run by then...



LOCO CITATO

[[“If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance.” (George Bernard Shaw) ...]]

From: phillies@4liberty.net

October 26

George Phillies writes:

Once upon a time, I went to Crete for a scientific conference. It ran about ten days. The London *Times* was locally available, usually on every other day, but once on two consecutive days.

I bought a few copies for the news. I tried doing the crossword puzzles. After all, I had seen them in movies. Well, one movie, ‘The Little Girl who Lives Down the Lane’ with Jodie Foster as lead actress (I saw the American cut, without the shows-more-or-less-all nude scene).

The heroine, at age 12, is shown solving one of them. In Ink. Starting from the top, with some number of lines completed.

I completely failed. Finally I had a solution, and tried to understand the clues by looking at the solutions. I failed again.

I was able to figure out how one and only one clue led to its word:

Trooper. Medicos. (7 letters)

[[I write back to George that (as is often the case) I am mystified by what he’s trying to convey here in his typically elliptical manner, receiving the reply: “Trooper. Medicos. (7 letters) ... paradox.”. I am, I inform him, none the wiser, nor better informed, though I realize that this alleged clue consists of a certain amount of the wordplay but no definition and is thus woefully incomplete. Like George’s locs? In further correspondence George claims that the clue he relates is exactly as originally printed. I remain dubious...]]

From: necronaut13@gmail.com

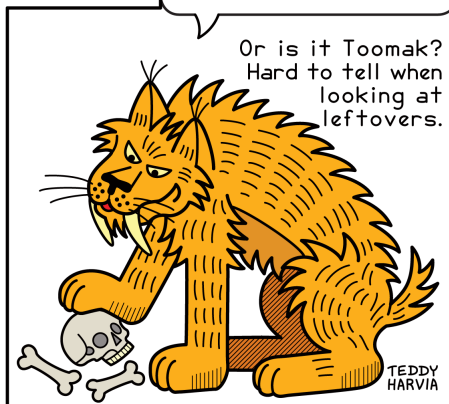
October 27

Steve Green writes:

Relieved as I am to hear Gary Mattingly has survived his quarter-century abstinence from meat, not everyone fares as well. Perhaps it’s a failure to replace certain vital proteins and vitamins with plant-sourced substitutes, but it can impact heavily upon the immune system and general health (as, of course, can excessive meat intake).

Chat

Alas, poor Yorick,
I knew him well.



What’s this about “Insurrection, Chapter 2” in January? To be honest, I wasn’t terribly impressed with the first instalment, which mostly appeared to be bewildered tourists wandering up and down corridors before indulging in inappropriate sitting down behind expensive desks (although one of them getting shot dead was a surprise plot twist). Are you suggesting Harris and Walz will come up with a big-budget sequel when it’s their turn?

[[If they did, that would be a plot twist, wouldn’t it? I’m writing this sentence in late October, so we shall see, ey?...]]

From: Alison@kittywompus.com

October 28

Alison Scott writes:

I too skipped a school year at my parents’ insistence. It would have been extremely complicated had I not, because we were living in the US for four years and they argued (successfully) that if I skipped a year when I arrived I could do four years of US high school and return with a graduation certificate. The alternative was to return at 17 with no O-levels, a part transcript and only one year left to A-level.

As a typical fannish child with high academic achievement and terrible social skills, skipping a year at the same time as experiencing massive cultural change was socially disastrous for me and nobody gave me any sort of help with this. To make matters worse, we then moved between two states after 18 months, part way through the school year, and the cultural change was if anything more extreme between Pennsylvania and Texas than between the UK and Pennsylvania.

I suppose it gave me some useful life skills.

[[My gap year was my own decision, in no small part because I was well sick of being the baby of the class. I understand the “typical fannish child” description, although I never considered myself a high academic achiever (as I described lastish) and my social skills were and are decent, so I’m atypical? My problems arose largely from having money that year (I worked at BAe) and then being dumped into the situation of having none at LSE. My grant just covered the rent at Carr-Saunders Halls of Residence for a term, with less than a tenner left over. My old man sent me seven quid a week to live on...]]

On creating physical objects, I’m currently the administrator of a physical apa (*The Women’s Periodical*) and so have had

the thrill of creating a physical object every couple of months this year. I do still like that feeling; and I have a Very Expensive Printer that facilitates the process. But posting these things is prohibitive for most of us; the reason that Print on Demand has taken hold is that postage costs Amazon far less than it does us mere mortals.

I don't really like the social media block process; I don't block anyone except rampant spammers. My view is that blocking is very quick and it makes it easy to curate your associates to the point where you never hear the word of anyone not in your own echo chamber.

[[I've been blocked rather than blocking for the most part. The few I have given the boot to are either outright trolls or others who are merely exceptionally dull...]]

Having said that, I'm not sure that Don D'Ammassa's "it's not a fanzine unless you cut the stencils" approach is materially different from your "immutable object" (er, but not an mp3) view – you're just trying to holding back the tide from a different standing point. Meanwhile, I have concluded that my disenchantment with most web-based fanzines is due to their lack of an engaged (and edited) letter column rather than their format.

[[I disagree with your comparison (as you might expect I would). But yes, fair point that the "immutable object" definition was subject to much derision, despite being a genuine if flawed and doomed attempt to define "fanzine" for the purposes of the FAAn Awards, and I do cringe a bit every time it's brought up. What you're doing here is addressing the "old v new" argument by lumping a lot of really dissimilar arguments into the "old" bucket. I'll continue to maintain that an mp3 (or indeed anything that's not formatted in such a way as to be printable) isn't a "fanzine" for the purposes of the FAAns. After the 2020 category cockup, I realized it was most important to concentrate on defined categorization in the three fanzine awards, which is what The Incomplete Register has done since 2021. So you can argue all day whether Octothorpe or something like it ought to be represented, but for the moment there isn't an actual category for that. "Holding back the tide" hasn't ever entered my thoughts - the FAAns remain a very niche set of awards, except perhaps for 2019 when everybody got one...]]

I'm thinking at this point that I should have made a column out of this reply, but I'll plough on anyway. I'm in full

agreement with your "lack of ... letter column" remark. That's something firmly in the "old" bucket though, innit? The titles I list in 'Fanzines Received' here are those which have been sent to me directly via email and occasionally yer actual print copies. There's a few more that I will otherwise clock on efanzines when notified of their appearance therein.

It used to be a truism or at least a generally held theory that you'd get more response from a printed zine either sent in the post or handed out at a con, although in the latter case the ish might just as likely be abandoned in a puddle of beer - and I can cite a recent example of that from the BEAM 17 giveaway at Corflu Pangloss two years ago. Direct email does seem to elicit response, and that's DoBFO true for this here troop of monkeys. 'Boo is our currency, and locs are the main delivery mechanism for that. This Here... wouldn't and couldn't have carried on for so long in this third series were it not for the interaction...]]

We really enjoyed 'KAOS' and were sad to see it being cancelled – critically, before the airing of the final episode that made everything else make sense. I guess nobody was watching it. I heard that Hugh Grant was originally cast, and you can see that Jeff Goldblum's Zeus was a very different – and probably much less likeable – take on the character.

I'm glad that Mark Plummer (and others) wrote about Octothorpe at the Hugos. We often express sentiments of that kind to each other (though not that particular one I don't think) but our public practice and also our reputation is for nuanced takes so we'd not ever do that in a speech.

Although I was not paying a great deal of attention to Adri's speech, I thought at the time that it must be nice to be certain that you will never do something so stupid in your life that your community turns against you. That way you have no need to consider whether adding your voice to a chorus of admonition might not be the best use of yours – or anybody's – time.

As to Rose's comment, one of the nice things about winning an award is that you do get to say some things that nobody cares about on a big stage. (One of the nicest things we heard about our win was that a massive cheer went up over in the fan bar; thanks guys).

As an apahack, I feel that I can bash out a contribution that consists of a chunk of rapid mailing comments (of much the standard of this letter) and then a few paragraphs of 'What I have been up to lately' and a couple of photos, and it will do perfectly well. I have put some solid pieces of actual fan writing into apas as



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well, one of which saw 'real' publication in *Idea 13* and one of which I will probably reuse next time I do a fanzine. But it never feels *necessary*.

[[Steve Jeffery has also mentioned repurposing apa writing for a broader audience, which appears to be A Thing...]]

Hitler's genitals? I know a song about that.

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

October 31

Leigh Edmonds writes:

You will doubtless be delighted to read that you are right on target with this issue's 'Radio Winston'. I did not go to sleep while reading it but I did have trouble keeping my eyes open through the whole long diatribe about a band that I never found interesting. It was, however, a worthwhile exercise because it revealed to me something that I had never known before, which is that I really don't like "power pop". Usually I listen fully to the slices that you include but this time I did not get to the end of any of them. So, you have now found the range to the things that I dislike most and I expect you to keep it up. Next, Little River Band, if you've ever heard of them.

[[Indeed I have, and a cursory lookup determines that they're still going, but with zero original or even any Australian members...]]

While I'm on the subject of music, **Marc Ortlieb** might have misunderstood or misheard me if he thinks that the only Jefferson Airplane album I like is *Bless its Little Pointed Head*. I also have a copy of *Surrealistic Pillow* which may be almost as old and worn as Marc is. (He can't be that old, can he?) The band really lost me when it became Starship and I have a couple of their albums that might have only felt the needle once, and then only partially, to prove it. Also from **Marc** I was pleased to read that we agree on the decline of the early Divinyls. Their 'Boys in Town' is well in my top ten all-time singles but he is right that they went right off when they disappeared into crass commercialism. That's happened to too many musicians, but I can't say I blame them because making money out of music must be tough work.

I hope the *Octothorpe* people have forgotten or forgiven (and hopefully both) the confusion about what was published in *Ornithopter* about who said what about somebody during the Hugo award ceremony. I'm glad that a couple of your correspondents picked up the error.

[[I believe the confusion was all at my end, and no fault of your fine publication at all, mate...]]

Your comment to me about the quality of writing, fannish writing anyhow, set me thinking. Perhaps there are two

aspects to such writing, the way in which words are strung together which might be a micro kind of thing and what the complete package of those words adds up to, which may be a macro thing. In other words, the skill in which words are assembled to create a pleasant reading experience and the overall structure of a package of words into an interesting/informative/entertaining whole. The former, I think, takes an ability to use words well and the latter requires a more analytic or aesthetic sensibility, the former can wander from topic to topic easily and quickly - as in mailing comments - but the latter has to be focused to make a larger point. For example, having hit on this idea I could now go off to do some research to find examples of what I'm thinking, draft up an article with a beginning, middle and conclusion and then polish it a bit until it makes a cogent point. Instead, I toss off this idea and note that the kids outside my window are all dressed up in fancy dress and wonder what's going on. Oh yes We didn't do that when I was little.

[[I went to have an actual look at mailing comments (which I'd normally skip entirely) in Captain Flashback, which happened to be the most recent apazine I'd received at the time of writing this. I agree with your analysis that such comments are the "wandering" equivalent of the to and fro in a loccol, but without the benefit of being able to see exactly what is being commented on. The following remarks by A Phineas Hooper are, however, salient (reprinted with permission):

Pat Hario: You ask, "How do y'all do over ten pages every month?"

Comments and correspondence usually take up 5 or 6 pages, but I find I can't really start on them until I've found some topic that catches my imagination and engages my enthusiasm for publishing the issue. You could think of it as a search for trivia - certainly most of my essays are based on trivial subject matter and include details that might be more accurately described as minutiae. But once I've written about these things, they stay firmly rooted in memory. Thus, if we get a question about Tarantula Ghoul or Ottola Nesmith, I'll be all over it.

Another explanation is that the topical matter usually occupies a week of research and composition and the rest of the material gets done the following week. It took decades to develop the habit of starting the zine early enough to have 7 to 10 days of composition time before the deadline, but it was well worth doing.

I find here an interesting contrast of method, particularly that Andy doesn't do the mailing comments (the equivalent of loccol comment in here) until the body of the ish is done - apologies to him if I got that wrong, of course. I, on the other hand, tend to write these comments more or less as the locs arrive, although I do also revisit them a bit as the

month trudges along. As far as the zine content, I'll typically be working on the various columns at the same time, sort of. I'll have something of an idea about what's going to be in each then write a paragraph or two to lead them off. Throughout the month I'll return to them, often then churning out the rest of each piece almost one at a time. Stuff needing research is often left to the final week or so, but not always, and yes, I know that sounds very scattershot, but I don't expect readers to be surprised. It's apples and oranges (DoBFO) to attempt any direct comparison with Andy's method, since Captain Flashback is single topic, single essay more often than not, but I remain quite fascinated by the "theory and practice" aspects of fanzining (ie 'Omphaloskepsis'), which I have in fact noted as a potential programme topic in my filling out of the Reconnect participant form...]]

I think this might be a matter of the amount of mental energy any of us are willing or able to put into our writing. Right now my mental energy battery is feeling rather flat - moving house is not a recommended activity - so this is all you get.

[[Good luck and smooth running for the move...]]

From: srjeffery@aol.com

November 3

Steve Jeffery writes:

Re D'Ammassa - "There is a difference between having a third party create your physical copy and doing it yourself. If you have never done so, it might be understandable that you do not recognize the difference."

If he did write that *[[he did, it's an exact quote...]]* then it was patronising in the extreme and by the same token I'd hold the view you can only write something like that if you've made your own paper and ground your own ink. And it would not surprise me if someone out there in fandomland has not already done just that. I suspect one of our artists.

How far does "create your physical copy" go? Spending morning collating double sided copies into A5 booklets? Check. Double feeding printed pages through the copier to get double sided sheets. Double check. Removing helpful cat(s) from the piles you've just assembled Triple check.

And I suspect that pretty much describes the path of nearly every fanzine editor whose introduction to fandom predated the millennium.

[[Indeed, I recall doing all that (without cat(s)) with stencils in 1977 at the LSE Student Union for the little gossip/satire rag "Saunders Skandal" (shamelessly modeled on Private Eye) that I did back then. Come to think of it now, that would have been my first actual fanzine, I suppose. Wish I'd

kept copies. Most of it was done by typing stencils, but there was also a stencil scanning device which I used to create some of the covers...]]

OK there's a certain satisfaction to have done this, but once office copiers did double sided booklet printing automatically then it's a no brainer. And if misusing the office copier is a possible disciplinary offence and your local copy shop offers the same thing at reasonable rates then why not. And what is Amazon POD if not an online version of a copy shop? Is anybody seriously going to argue that neither *Banana Wings* nor *Idea* are fanzines because they don't still smell of mimeo? I thought not.

[[Geri Sullivan's comment (see WAHF) is apposite...]]

Personally I blame Gutenberg. It all went downhill when we went from hand-carving our own letterforms to this new fangled hot metal casting.

This seems to be the same muddled argument I just heard on the radio in an interview with someone who described themselves as a "Pro-Lifer" but then stated that they fully supported the death penalty and were opposed to any form of gun control or free medical care. So pro-life, but only in certain rigidly defined areas that may not apply to someone of a different gender and socio-economic background.

[[Indeed. One from years ago, it was noted that they're all "pro-life" if you're a fetus or in a coma (remember Terri Schiavo?) but otherwise you're on your fuckin' own...]]

Badfinger. Now there's a name from the past who I've not thought about for years, but still fondly remember for the crunchy chorused (Leslie?) guitar sound on "No Matter What". I can't remember if I ever saw them live around the time I was haunting the Saturday evening gigs at the Woodville Halls Gravesend. (I may be mixing them up with Blackfoot Sue who I do remember seeing round about that time.)

I don't know why, as it's normally more Vikki's thing than mine (although she may be rather more interested in what sort of buses are on the rail replacement services), but I'm quite enjoying your 'Anorak' forays into railway history and archaeology. Plus, the pictures of old locos are pretty cool.

I rather like the idea of living in a converted old railway station. Lots of room for books. There is (or was) a second-hand bookshop in an old station in Alnwick which I remember from a trip there in the 90s. It's probably a Primark or Tesco Express now.

Looking at that photo, I'm wondering how they get their green bin emptied, and how often.

[[Steve next refers to my response to part of Leigh Edmonds' loc lastish: "...you suggest apa writing requires substantially less quality control. I can't personally imagine eg the Fishlifters lowering their standards for any of their product..."...]]

"Perhaps other apahacks would like to weigh in on this contention?..."

While I've not read their contributions to ANZAPA, my memory of *Acnestis* would confirm your contention that the **Fishlifters** treat everything they write and edit with the same meticulous attention to detail. In fact I think the same was true of just about everyone in that apa. I suspect much the same would be true of *TWP*.

I don't think I differentiate between different formats or put less time or effort into one than the other. I certainly don't "dash off" my apa contributions. That implies a typing/ thinking speed I'm unable to attain. It usually takes me a 2-3 days to write a 6-9 page contribution for *Prophecy*, involving much running up and down the stairs to check publication detail for books I've just read or other titles that I want to mention but can't remember if I have a copy on the shelves (which are across four different rooms, hence the exercise). I could of course just use Google, but somehow that seems like cheating (and misses out the cryptic notes I've scribbled on sundry makeshift bookmarks). I revise and edit as I go, which is bad practice and means that even writing the opening paragraph can take most of the morning.

Then Vikki will sit down, having composed her entire contribution in her head beforehand and write a 2-3 page book review plus mailing comments in one sitting. With a lot less typos than are littered through mine. Annoying that.

From: garyhubbard969@gmail.com

November 5

Gary Hubbard writes:

Sorry that I haven't sent any comments to you till now, but my old computer died back in Spring and it's taken a good, long while to get a new one. Technology has moved on a bit since my XP died and I'm struggling with learning how this new OS works. Seems like things that were care-free on my old computer take a bit of hunting to find on this one, and there's no guarantee I can make 'em work. What I need is to find a fourteen-year-old who can figure these things out for me. This is the only time I regret never having had kids.

Sorry to hear that among your other health problems you suffer from tinnitus now. I've had it since I was twelve (or at least that's when I first noticed it). Sounds like you have it pretty bad; mine not so much, since I'm long used to it. I've also had optical migraines for years. Every once in a while I have these jagged, bow-shaped visions appear in front of my eyes, which can last anywhere from a few minutes to an hour. Not painful, but can be irritating when I'm trying to read.

[[I've had tinnitus for decades now, in fact, as well as associated hearing loss. I may be catching up with the original Deaf Twit quite soon...]]

So, the old question of what a true fanzine is rears its head again. I used to be in the curmudgeonly camp that a true fanzine was a stack of twilltone paper held together by a couple of staples. But I've since broadened my outlook. In fact, since I lost all my files and addresses when my old computer died, I wouldn't have been able to write this LOC without the help of efanazines.

I believe it was Walt Willis who wrote *The Enchanted Duplicator*, which discusses the various methods a fanzine could be produced back in days of Yore (before my time even) and concludes that the Enchanted Duplicator was the one with the Trufan at the handle.

[[Willis and Bob Shaw in tandem. Perhaps we can update the definition to now say something like "If there's a Trufan sitting at the keyboard..."...]]

Note my new email address. I lost the old one to this current mess.

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

November 19

Eli Cohen writes:

Re fanzine process and whether these new-fangled publishing techniques mean fanzines are dead, it's obvious that the only real fanzines are those that are hectographed! None of those fancy mimeographed things should count! (And everybody knows a "spirit duplicator" is a *Geistetner*.)

[[Groans...]]

Re TV, I've been watching 'Judge Dee's Mystery' on Netflix. One advantage of it being in Chinese is English subtitles; I should look into that for some of those British cop shows with their unintelligible accents...

Gary Mattingly mentions his high school math teacher throwing an eraser at him. My college math teacher (Serge Lang) used to throw chalk at students who weren't paying attention in class. But he was very friendly with students outside of class. In fact, in the summer of 1968, I was in Berkeley for Baycon with two of my college roommates (who were both also math majors who had been in Lang's class with me), one of whom had an uncle who lived just a few blocks from the con hotel (providing us a place to stay - that ends the fannish content in this anecdote). Prof. Lang was teaching at Berkeley that summer (when he wasn't helping to bail out arrested student protestors), and we met up with him, and he drove us down the coast to Point Lobos, an absolutely wonderful trip! No chalk, just amazing tide pools!

Your chemistry joke reminded me of **Jon Singer's** chemistry jokes (he was, at one point, a chem major). A number of them were visual -- molecular diagrams which I can't easily reproduce, but which you can perhaps visualize (oh, wait, Google can find them!), such as "mercedes-benzene" and "di-methyl chicken wire".



Anyway, congratulations on reaching #80! 80 issues, that's not too many!

[[It occurs to me to ask, given that we often say "that's not too many" in various contexts, how many is too many, then?...]]

From: katster@retstak.org

November 20

Katrina Templeton writes:

So first of all, I must be the nobody who can't recite the line, being as I don't know who Philip Larkin is. A quick google suggests I must be either too young or too American to catch the reference. Just didn't come up in my English classes, I suppose.

[[Too American is my take...]]

While I can't necessarily speak to parental expectations -- my folks did the best they could by me, although they managed to fuck me up in their own ways. But I can speak to the pressure put on a smart kid to go out and be something. My parents required grades consummate to my intelligence, what on the American scale became more A's than B's.

School was one of those things that just came easy to me. I started kindergarten when I was four years old, so I didn't have the grade skipping that you did, but the rest of the story of being the smart one feels about on point for what I experienced. The pressures came from my folks, a bit, but it was everybody else in my life who were certain I had the potential to Be Somebody. This pressure, of course, gets internalized and it served me no good once I finally got to college and found that I was no longer the big fish in a small pond...

[[When I was about 20, I think, I did visit the by then retired headmistress of Pirton JMI, Molly Farris, who contributed to the weight of expectations, not that I blamed her for it. We had a pleasant chat of which I can remember nothing,

but my memory of her being stern and serious but fundamentally kindly was reinforced. She was rather pleased to get a visit from an old pupil...]]

Short of all that, Nic, is that, while I had my own particular challenges, there's probably something universal in being the smart kid that ends up doing them no favors in the end.

(The thing I kick myself about to this day is not taking calculus during my first semester at Berkeley, but that's its own kettle of fish. Maybe I'll write about it sometime.)

[[Our mad Welsh maths teacher, Emlyn Hughes, schooled us in calculus which was then an optional section in the maths 'O' Level exam, because at that introductory level he deemed it dead easy (and he was right)...]]

Well, hey, it's a Corflu in my neck of the woods-ish. Saves me a bit from having to plan a party for y'all here in Sacramento, because I was scratching my head trying to figure out why y'all might want to come here. I guess we do have a train museum, so that's something in my favor. But given that I'd have to plan a shindig when I have no idea where to start, it's probably better that somebody else nearby-ish has planned something. Anyway, I'm going to do my best to free up enough money to actually go. If it happens. We'll see.

[[I will admit having strongly suggested to the 43 team that they tap you for operational assistance...]]

Hope you have a great time in the UK next spring! Sounds like it's going to be a fun trip.

To be honest, I don't know if I'd be in fanzine fandom back in the bad old days of mimeo and stencil -- pdf production is much more my speed, allowing me to get my thoughts down and out in the world in a fairly organized sense and word



processors are much more forgiving in composition, both in the speed and the ability to correct my stupid typos. Short of it, if it weren't more accessible to get into the hobby than it was back in the day, I'd probably not be here. I'd like to think that would have been a bad thing.

[[Agreed! One of my others contentions is that fanzining was (and still can be) a pastime for the relatively well-off, requiring either possession of or access to contemporary duplicating technology (not to mention money for postage). The advent of efanazines (All Hail Magister Burns!) has made it all fundamentally more egalitarian, and I've always strongly suspected that Don D'Ammassa and others resembling him don't like that at all. The same attitudes used to prevail around Corflus. When I ran my first one, Corflu Valentine (Annapolis, 2002) and afterwards we had a bit of a cockup over the money (later happily resolved), we were informed that "You shouldn't be running a Corflu if you can't afford it" ie with the expectation of running a loss and the implication that it was a rich person's playground. Thankfully that attitude has all but disappeared. I see little point in exhuming that beef in any more detail over two decades later, but if anyone's that curious I'm happy to tell you privately which little shit said that...]]

Writing their fanzines straight into the ish... uh, I wouldn't know any fans like that. Um, definitely not me. I even, back in the day when I actually used a layout program, was notorious for typing the issue into the layout program instead of in the word processor. Nowadays, when even Word allows you to save/print to PDF, I'm generally typing up the issue and then dropping the pictures in the actual word processor. So, I guess you're not the only one.

[[Well, yes, because layout and word processing are all lumped together in the same program now, aren't they? Both BEAM and This Here... originated with Apple Pages templates which I still use...]]

What happened to **Chris Garcia**? He had kids, man. :) He still produces *Claims Department*, and I need to write something for him...

[[Chris who?...]]

Anyway, this letter has been sitting in a file for weeks now waiting for me to finish. Finished or not, I'd better send it off before you go and produce the next issue.

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

November 25

Gary Mattingly writes:

Hard to do this on my phone.

Sorry to hear about your issues with parents, tests and schools. My father always wanted me to do better in school and have a lucrative career. My mother did too but to a

slightly lesser degree. I did okay in both although no doubt, not as well as my father would have liked, TS.

[...]

'Health Diary' - Best of luck with your health. I've discovered that my knees, left in particular are not fond of walking 10 to 20 miles uphill and downhill with a full pack. My back also isn't much appreciative. Too much in the pack obviously. Hmm...

'Omphaloskepsis' - Sounds like you had an interesting on-line conversation with Don D'Ammassa. I think I missed it. Sorry to hear about the less than pleasant situation.

[[Well I thought it was interesting up until the point where he got the major arse, then it became interesting for different reasons...]]

Movies - Definitely don't think I've seen the action movies you mention. I may have seen 'Elysium' but if I did I have no immediate recollection of it. I haven't seen any movies while on this trip. I'll go see 'Wicked' when I get back, maybe also 'Gladiator 2'. I think I have a ticket for 'Totoro' sometime in December also.

'Radio Winston' - Interesting information about Badfinger. I only have a best of CD sitting on my shelves. Haven't listened to them for a while. I've mainly been listening to new vinyl re-releases in Atlantic 75th anniversary series, plus some other vinyl I've bought over the last three or four months, mainly 180/200 grams, most 45 rpm. Of course, nothing but Spotify and saved tracks on my phone while traveling.

'TV Guide' - I haven't watched any of the shows you mentioned. Only thing I can get in English down here is CNN. I plan to watch 'Dune Prophecy' when I get back, plus some PBS mysteries, 'Ghosts', etc.

'Anorak' - More interesting writing and photos. I plan to ride the End of the World Train in Tierra del Fuego National Park when I get down to Ushuaia, Argentina, in, hm, 8 or 9 days.

[[Oo! Worth a link and a photo...]]

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g312855-d552780-Reviews-The_End_of_the_World_Train-Ushuaia_Province_of_Tierra_del_Fuego_Patagonia.html



'The Old Sod' - I think I watched all of 'The Leftovers' but I doubt that I will ever watch it again. I watched all of 'Manifest' but wouldn't watch that again either. It certainly had its issues. I didn't watch it continuously when it came out but would return to it when nothing else was on. However there are a number of new series and films which I find quite enjoyable.

Enjoyable artwork by **Brad Foster** and **Teddy Harvia** plus enjoyable photos throughout.

Sorry for the brevity of this. I should be back home by December 7th. It will take me a while to go through all the snail mail.

From: daverabban@gmail.com

November 25

Dave Cockfield writes:

Sorry I have not been in touch.

Not been too great lately. I think that *BEAM* fucked with my mind.

This Here... as great as ever.

In the last issue you had a picture of the wonderful Jacqueline Pearce. Many years ago when I worked at Mt. Pleasant, near Sadlers Wells Opera, I travelled from Charing X Station on the 9 or 38 buses.

More than once Jacqueline Pearce got on the bus. Eventually she saw me looking at her and invited me to sit with her.

No! I was not ogling, just looking.

She suddenly laughed and said, "Yes dear boy I am who you think I am. Servalan from 'Blakes 7'."

I had to correct her. "I know, but I was actually thinking about you in *White Mischief* when you asked the men at a party a rather raunchy question."

She grinned mischievously and asked what my answer would have been. Naturally I said "Yes" while blushing from head to toe. Jacqueline was highly amused. We met a few times on the bus over a few weeks and she was terrific company.

[[Any old excuse for a smoldering photo...]]



I take it you have seen the film. She stands naked and asks the likes of Charles Dance and John Hurt, "Doesn't anyone want to Fuck me?"

I've just finished watching 'Lincoln Lawyer' and loved it. Waiting eagerly for the next season of 'Bosch Legacy'.

Like yourself I like books and films about Lawyers and their cases. I've recently finished reading John Grisham's YA novels with Theodore Boone and found them to be very entertaining.

Perry Mason is obviously the main man, a favourite of mine but obviously American.

As is Matthew Hope by Ed McBain. I've never read them even though I'm a big fan of the 87th Precinct novels.

The best UK series I have read is by Simon Michael. 'The Brief', Charles Holborne, is a Jewish East End guy with a rough past. There are 9 novels set in London in the 60s when the Krays were in charge - really good.

[[I may have to add that to some list or other. When I lived in Peckham there were plenty of locals who had fond memories of when the twins were at their peak. "You didn't have to lock your doors" ect...]]

Well both of our teams are having mixed fortunes but are hanging in there. Hopefully we'll still be well positioned in April.

[[Your lads aren't doing so bad. My Hornets have been so here & there we're starting to call them "Spurs". Hope you keep getting results that make you feel better, mate...]]

RESPONSES TO THE KEROSENE PAPERS

[[Editorial note: As of the time of writing (mid-November), only 15 copies of The Kerosene Papers are known to exist, although more may yet be discovered. (Later) As proves to be the case...]]

John Purcell : "[I] had a good giggle over those pages. I especially enjoyed the multiple fannish references throughout the fragments of the index, especially the "wanking parrot" notation at the end of the section for *Askew*. Nice touch. Although, the aforementioned dead bird (Sunny was the deceased avian's name) actually was a cockatiel who around here is infrequently referenced as "the bird that shall wank no more". Yes, I enjoyed *The Kerosene Papers*, especially how these documents looked like aged mimeographed paper."

Lucy Huntzinger : "I'm delighted but slightly baffled. Honestly, though, I was delighted by the envelope! And the zine is giving big "I just discovered fanhistory" vibes. Such a neat project. *The Kerosene Papers* is the sort of recursive, clever zine that reminds me of my early days in fandom. Not my early zines, mind you, just the general sense of discovery. Plus I

love a personalized envelope."

Wm Breiding : "Dude, that is wildly esoteric!"

Jerry Kaufman : "How puzzling they are. Shall I mail them on to someone else, do you think?" *[[Yes...]]*

Paul Di Filippo : "I feel privileged to get *The Kerosene Papers*. A brilliant construction!"

Fred Lerner : "A well-wisher (?) sent me a 12-page document purporting to describe and explain "The Kerosene Papers". As you are mentioned in it perhaps you can tell me what the hell this is all about." *[[I advise Fred that I can say little other than what's already in the documents, and suggest he passes the papers on...]]*

[[I also hear that the papers were "the subject of some discussion at a recent beer gathering with the SF Second Sunday group that once included Bruce Townley." Pleas for further details remain unanswered thus far...]]

WAHF

Claire Brialey : "So many comment hooks! Just not sure whether to start with the corrections and clarifications or the 'this made coffee come out of my nose' selection. Doubtless the opportunity to do either will once again be overtaken by events. But thanks!" *[[An actual fuckin' WAHF off Claire, and thus I have fell off me chair (peotry)...]]* ; **Lucy Huntzinger** ; **Graham James** ; **Jerry Kaufman** verbally requests a WAHF since he claims to be a bit busy for a loc this month. I tell him I shall opine that he's in a snit because we lost his loc on *BEAM* (again!), but then it turns out that several other zines have done the same. Thus we deduce the common factor is the Killer himself... ; **Christina Lake** ; **Celine Mariotti** : "I enjoyed your newsletter. A lot of good articles. Kept me reading." *[[Celine also plugs her home business website which I am happy to include: <http://crmenterprises-homebusiness.com> , offering word processing, proofreading, translation (French and German) and much else ...]]* ; **Perry Middlemiss** : "And I slip further into the mire..." ; **Mark Plummer**, mostly to and fro about *The Kerosene Papers* and narked (or perhaps just nervous) that his name was originally first in the credits ; **Jose Sanchez** ; **Geri Sullivan** : "Don D'Amassa confirmed my general impression of him in his rigid view on fanzines in the 21st Century."

FANZINES RECEIVED

With gratitude as always...

THE STF AMATEUR #14 (Heath Row) - The continually crogging monthly "bundlezine" of **Heath's** apa contributions. Herein he now also puts out a call for contributions, moving this'un into genzine territory, as is his stated intent. Duly noted for FAAn award categorization...

BANANA WINGS 81 (Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer) -

Solid as ever, and with no disrespect to the **Fishlifters** themselves, the DoBFO star attraction here is Chapter 1 of **S&ra Bond's** TAFF Trip Report (the **Geri Sullivan** section). We also learn from the locs that **Lloyd Penney** channels "The man who mistook his wife for a hat" (or in this case someone else's partner and a cardboard box), and that **Chris Garcia** does not expect to attend a Corflu anytime in the next five to ten years. Take a moment to appreciate the restraint involved in not commenting upon that latter item...

THE TYPO KING #91 (Bob Jennings) - As with #90, **Bob** sends a Word document which, when it got here, was missing all the photos and illos when opened on either of the Windows and Apple machines. This time around no subsequent "corrected" version is sent. Shurely it's little effort to convert to pdf?...

LOFGEORNOST #157 (Fred Lerner) - Waxing upon alternate histories and world-building (so I am immediately engaged), prompted by the acquisition of Simone Zelitch's 'Judenstaat' ("the novel of a Jewish state in Germany") at ReaderCon, which largely disappoints him. This is followed by **Fred** finally getting to visit Orkney and the Shetlands, then the typically erudite slate of correspondents...

CRM ENTERPRISES E-NEWSLETTER (Celine Mariotti) - cf *The Typo King*, this rather bafflingly arrives in two parts with the plaint that the file was too big to transfer to a single pdf largely because of clipart images. Since the files are a mere 210 and 208Kb respectively I am mystified. Anyway, this'un contains a plug for **Celine's** books and a lot of input from others including poetry (almost all in part 1), commentary and short-to-medium essays on various topics...

BRUTE!

BY RICH COAD

The turquoise door opened and a blonde child of about three, and about three feet high, confronted the pair on the porch. She quickly scrutinized the duo with a child's eye for details. "Oh no!" cried the adorable moppet, "Two Bruce!" and the turquoise door slammed shut. The porch bound pair looked at one another. The taller one rang the doorbell again...

It was, I suppose, inevitable that Bruce Townley and I would become good friends for we were alike in many ways. It was not only an adorable moppet who thought we looked identical. When we worked together at what Bruce always called "the big ass corporate law firm" partners would often ask Bruce about my assignments and vice versa. This despite the fact that Bruce was some three inches taller than me.

The last thing I wanted to be doing this autumn was writing another in memoriam piece for a long time friend. But Bruce died on October 17, 2024 several weeks after being found

nearly unconscious in his tiny Polk Gulch conapt. A neighbor heard some moans and called the fire department who promptly got Bruce to the Emergency Room of a nearby hospital. We all expected him to get better, after all Bruce was only 70, scarcely old at all these days, and had generally been healthy, if overweight. The optimism seemed warranted as Bruce went first into an ICU room where he gradually improved to the point where he was moved to a long term care facility. We chatted a bit by phone and he was lucid and as cheerful as it is possible to be in the circumstances. So it was a shock when Stacy and I went to visit and found that Bruce had been moved back into the ICU after two cardiac events that required resuscitation. Still, his nurse said he was tough and there was every reason to think he would recover. We visited again a week or so later and this time Bruce, still in the ICU, was awake and talkative, although it was difficult to hear what he was saying through the oxygen mask. We chatted and joked and told him about plans we had to get together after he was released. Sadly that day was not to come and Bruce was unable to overcome the stresses and systemic issues that had sent him to the hospital.

As was common back in the day when scores of fanzines were being produced every month, I knew Bruce quite well, long before I met him in person. His fanzine at the time was *Phiz* which he edited using the pseudonym Brute Tornley. He had previously produced *Le Viol* which had a reputation. It's hard to say whether it had a good or a bad reputation. As with his artwork, *Le Viol* had its fans and its detractors. It was before my time but I do recall Simon Agree, who produced *Abba Zabba*, liked it and so Bruce was added to my mailing list for *Spicy Rat Tails*. He sent a LoC, I responded directly, and we began to correspond fairly regularly, and eventually even made phone calls. A typical fannish long distance bromance. We traded fanzines and realized we shared a lot of common interests: rock bands that were more loud than sophisticated (Bruce often mentioned that he had been to see The Stooges at, of all places, The Lincoln Center in DC), really bad SF and horror movies from the 50s and 60s, cartoons, a lot of general pop culture material that was not terribly popular at the time (later much did become popular). We also shared a disdain for a lot of what was popular at the time, finding it dull and anodyne. Around the time he finished college, Bruce came to San Francisco for a visit.



He fell in love with the city and within a couple of years he moved across the country. He arrived at the airport looking like a Fordham Baldy from the movie "The Warriors": a big guy in jeans, t-shirt, and leather motorcycle jacket with a completely shaved pate. Fortunately, he didn't carry the heavy chains the movie guys had so when fellow passengers on the bus referred to him as Kojak all he could do was glower and no GBH ensued.

"Bruce Townley was a pain in the ass." was how W^m Breiding began his memorial for Bruce and he was right. At times. Bruce could be irascible, surly, irritable, and touchy - more characteristics that we had in common. He could also be generous, kind, funny, and insightful. He was those more often

than not during the time he spent as a roommate of myself and Stacy in a large apartment across the street from the Golden Gate Park panhandle. At the time, early 1980s, San Francisco was considered expensive by most standards (little did we know just how expensive it could become) but rents were still affordable enough that temp office jobs and roommates made staying housed, fed, and entertained possible. Few of us had a car but, unlike most Western cities, public transit in San Francisco was good enough you could do without. Bruce soon became a Muni aficionado, with knowledge of obscure lines like the 37 Corbett, the 52 Excelsior, the 66 Quintara, and even the sinister 56 Rutland. Getting around was easy - Muni provided a good paper map overlaying the routes on the city streets and a Fast Pass, good for unlimited rides during the month, was only \$25, maybe less. The Fast Pass, in those days, had a new, unique, design each month. Bruce soon had a growing collection. All things considered, Bruce was a good roommate, certainly far better than a previous, red-haired, Bruce whom I had as a roommate in Oakland. But roommates are a pain in the ass and there came a time when Bruce hied himself out to Concord and a job at the Westland Foods bacon bits factory.

The bacon bits factory is at least semi-legendary amongst some subset of Bay Area fans. Bruce worked there and complained bitterly about the dime an hour raise he was granted after a year. Lynn Kuehl was there in a semi-managerial role along with his high school friend John Wisyanski, who became the front man in a band with Lynn, W^m Breiding, Larry Reese, occasionally Gary Mattingly, and myself that used the bacon bits factory loft for rehearsals. Bruce was never in the band, we may have stopped by the time he moved to Concord, but he helped get me a job that I needed for a few months, cooking bacon on the graveyard

shift. He lived with Lynn and his wife, Cheryl Cline, getting more interested in the obscure music Lynn was finding at the flea market and the rubber stamp decorations of letters, envelopes, and, eventually, fanzines that Cheryl was into. Bruce could also help around the house but in a sensible way. When Lynn asked Bruce to hold a ladder steady, while he, Lynn, climbed to the top to stand on the “This is not a Step” platform at the pinnacle so he could chainsaw some branches from a tree, Bruce simply shook his head and went back inside. Eventually, in yet another harbinger of Bay Area gentrification, the bacon bits factory moved to Stockton. So Bruce moved back to San Francisco, inheriting his “tiny Polk Gulch conapt” from Jim Jones, another Bay Area fan.

The apartment was not actually that tiny. It was a one bedroom with a modest living room, a truly tiny kitchen, and a bathroom, in one of the more desirable neighborhoods of the city. Polk Gulch was full of nightlife, restaurants, even some good used book and record stores. It had good transportation connections and Bruce spent the rest of his life there. Bruce, of course, was a collector and soon enough his apartment was full of art, records, magazine, and books. A floor to ceiling bookcase stood next to Bruce’s bed leading him to speculate on how many books he would get buried under in the event of a large earthquake. Ultimately it proved to be not so bad in the 1989 Loma Prieta quake. I was able to repay Bruce for the Westland Foods job by getting him a temp position at the “big ass corporate law firm” where his interview consisted of telling the hiring paralegal about his, Bruce’s, favorite movies.

Back in the city, Bruce soon started a new fanzine, *Oblong*, which is available on eFanzines.com. Bruce was quite well known for his fan art. Bruce had studied art history and art at Virginia Commonwealth University and really knew his stuff. He could explain techniques and reference artists with a breadth and depth of knowledge far beyond my own “I know what I like” ability. The art he did for fanzines was an acquired taste which some never acquired. Initially he did a lot of odd creatures, heavily influenced, I would say, by Basil Wolverton. By the time of *Oblong*, he was doing much more realistic drawings, always with a style that made it unmistakably a Townley drawing. The cover illustration on *Oblong 5* is unmistakably Jack Nance in his

Eraserhead guise. A far cry from when Jackie Franke (Causgrove) complained about Bruce’s art in *Scientifriction*: ‘I simply cannot understand how this (splutter-splutter) person’s work keeps getting printed! My kids did better work in the second grade!’. Mike Glycer defended Bruce in his response.

But Bruce could also write very well. He did a number of mini reviews of various SF artists for my fanzine *Sense of Wonder Stories* and often posted keenly observed vignettes of city life on Facebook. He could also write very funny pieces. One of my favorites is his article about personal ads in *Oblong 1*. He begins with what he calls “Truth In Advertising”: ‘40S OVERWEIGHT BALD WHITE GUY, WORKS IN LARGE DOWNTOWN SF OFFICE, INTERESTED IN TEX AVERY, SURREALISM, JUMP BLUES, MST3K, WESTERN SWING, *FILM NOIR*, THRIFT SHOPPING, MICROBREWS, STEAM LOCOMOTIVES, BOOKSTORE BROWSING, LOOKING FOR SIMILARLY INCLINED WOMAN.’ (Now you can perhaps see just how much in common Bruce and I had, for that same description could apply almost exactly to me.) Bruce realized this was not the type of prose, however, that stood out in the small ads at the back of weekly papers. What seemed to be needed was something more akin to “Sensitive Snugglebunny”:

‘Gentle caring creative nurturing intilligent `handsome` `fit` nominally `drug free` straight white man from Mars seeks spirited lady from Venus to share our own solar system, Garden of Eden, moonlit strolls.’ Just to make sure that nobody mistakes satire for reality, an even bigger problem today, Bruce ends the ad with ‘No fat chicks please.’

It’s not possible in 2,000 words or so to summarize a close friendship that stretched over 40 years. I saw less of Bruce after moving out of San Francisco but we kept in touch and it was always a pleasure to meet up with him at a party or going out for drinks or whatever. Occasionally he came to the far North Bay to visit for a few days, where we would watch cartoons or bad movies, or sometimes good movies, and listen to music that was more loud than sophisticated.

Bruce being gone will leave an immense hole in my life, and many others lives too, that won’t easily be closed. He will be sorely missed.



INDULGE ME

✕ **WORD!** : A post I found rather amusing defined academia as “fan non-fiction”, and of course I could not help but think of alleged painted bollock™ expert Ms. Mile End in this context...

✕ **GREETINGS FROM NOVACON** : Some old friends saying hello from, inevitably, a bar: L-R Undecided voter, Jim de Liscard, Tobes Valois, Noel Collyer...



✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : A bit of a cheat, I suppose, since this photo is about ten years old from when she was only 77. If you can remember where you’ve seen **Vitina Marcus** without resort to Google I shall be suitably impressed...



✕ **ALLEGED SCIENCE “JOKE” FOR ELI** : How to tell what high school class you’re in by the nature of the experiment in progress:

If it’s green and wiggles, it’s biology
If it stinks, it’s chemistry
If it doesn’t work, it’s physics...

✕ **QUOTABLE** : **Mark Plummer**, as wonderfully as always, with a perfect analogy for those who actively reject modern forms of communication (eg the steam telegraph) in the Faniverse: “If you insist on traveling by horse and carriage you should not be surprised to find relatively few destination hotels offering stabling facilities.” (*Banana Wings* 81)...

✕ **WOKERY SHOCK HORROR!** : Spotted by the Grate Aitch **Harry Bell**, the *Mail online* has a gloriously outraged “Mail wail”, no doubt penned by the revered Polly Filler: “Now Gen Z are waging war on our sandwiches! How younger Brits are ditching English classics like ham and mustard in favor of fancy woke fillings.” Holding my nose to go and clock the “article”, I learn that one of the specific offending filling is (gasp, clutches pearls) “continental cheese”...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Because she happened to be in an episode of ‘Elsbeth’ the other week, **Gina Gershon**...



✕ **WORD! (2)** : A golden oldie I haven’t heard in ages: *Grauniad* columnist Emma Brookes describing Zuckerberg as “uxorious”...

✕ **SPACE STUFF** : Emily Calandrelli recently became the 100th woman in space yet sadly but predictably got trolled over her goshwow reaction. Good for her, though, she firmly responds “I refuse to give much time to the small men on the internet.” She is to be greatly admired for giving us a giggle over the multiple possible meanings of “small” in this context. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/25/science/emily-calandrelli-100th-woman-space-intl-hnk/index.html> ...

✕ **DRINK!** : This should have gone at the end of the 'F3S' column after the drink summary, but I really can't be arsed to re-do the layout...



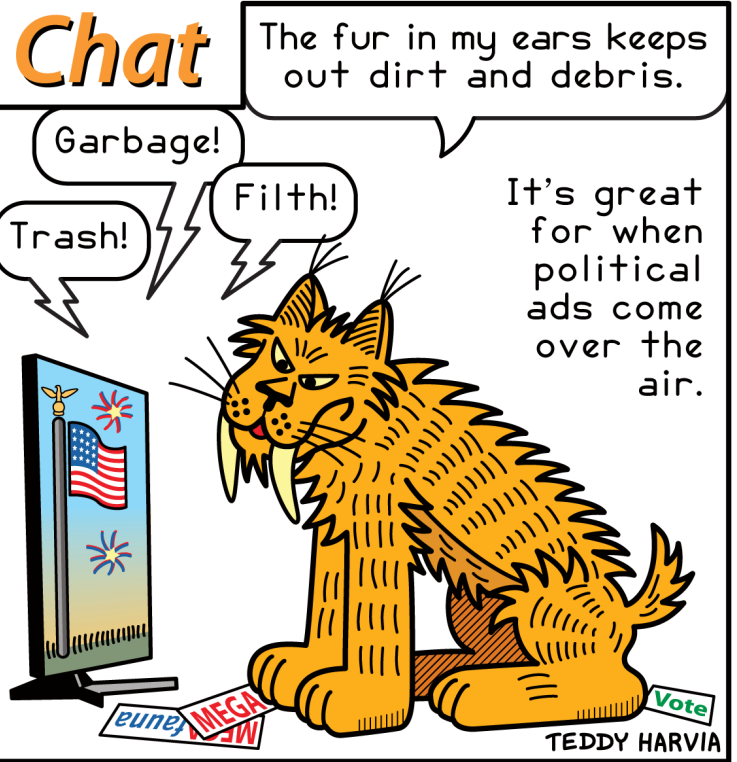
✕ **NEXTISH** : December 28th I expect (or maybe a day or two later)...

MIRANDA

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"I finally got to see a game from a box seat
But I ain't say a lot because talk's cheap
I had to take a step back and tell 'em "Not me!"
You can do what you want but you can't knock me"