

This Here...

"...a number of red herrings..." (S Jeffery)

EGOTORIAL

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND?

I know I've written previously and perhaps tiresomely about how disorganized I tend to be round here, although paradoxically that doesn't quite apply to an actual project such as, oh I dunno, running a Corflu, the next issue of *BEAM* ect, or some might even argue that includes getting this here melody of harpers out on a steady monthly basis for (checks efanzines) coo er gosh over *six fuckin' years* now, prompting wails of "and no end yet in sight?" from Curmudgeonly Vodka Top of Haringey, and insert another **John Purcell** annish "joke" anywhere you like, ey?

But cue here some kind of description pertaining to the formless primordial sludge that is the calendar of retirement, in which I am now definitely at the stage of not always or even often knowing what fuckin' day it is...

But suddenly it all changes, and I realize that the reason is FOOTY!

The EFL Championship division season began on August 8th with the usual Friday night opener, and for me the next day (at 4:30am) with Watford away at Charlton FC which was a dismal 0-1 loss in which we mostly looked liked 11 blokes on the field who had never previously met and were assigned their positions at random. (See **Dave Cockfield's** loc, quoting his mate Matt who is, like me, a Hornets supporter.)

And thus the calendar takes shape and form for the next eight months or so, although the league does like dicking around with not only kickoff times shifting to 12:30 far too frequently (4:30am round here, as noted) but also bouncing

around Friday evenings and Sundays as mostly whim would appear to have it. Tomorrow (August 16th as I write) is our first home game in the division - we've got QPR at the Vic, and one fan sarcastically remarked on 'The Hornets' Nest' FBF group: "A 3pm Saturday kickoff, how unusual!". 3pm Saturday *used* to be the standard start time for every fuckin' game in all tiers until the demands of TV contracts instigated a more "American" schedule with games spread across the weekend. This also means that fixtures (in terms of timing) are subject to change during the season itself, for example if Arbuthnot Wanderers and Clagfield United are both challenging for, say, a promotion playoff place later in the season, Sky TV (who have broadcast rights) will decide that their meeting should be one of their featured games and can mandate a date and time change to fit their schedule.

We're actually more fortunate than those on home soil, since here in the States more games are on TV (if you have the channel subscriptions). Premier League games are on NBC sports, the rest of the Football League (and Carabao Cup) on Paramount+ / CBS with most games usually available. I've also renewed my season pass for the EFL's "ifollow" streaming service, but I'll be keeping track of how much I actually use it this season what with the games being on telly. However, with Paramount+ in

particular the feeds have been as jumpy as fuck - by the end of the second half v Charlton I ended up almost *twenty fuckin' minutes* behind real time.

We're wondering if this bollocks is related to our internet speed, but first **Jen** is getting us a Roku stick (yes, I don't really know either) which will supposedly, or perhaps more



accurately, hopefully, fix this problem by means of some technology indistinguishable from magic.

Anyways, page one picture is my granddaughter ("little monkey") Ava at training day with her dad and our goalie, Norwegian international Egil Selvik. She got her shirt and a football signed by all the lads (and the manager) and thus is well made up...

It's all good.

August 2025

TAFFNESSABOUTS

ITINERARY

By the time this goes out the Seattle WorldThing will be done and dusted, but TAFF delegate Mikołaj Kowalewski's travels continue into September, with the following stops (as reported in *Taffluorescence* #9 at <https://taff.org.uk> :

27 August-2 September: Atlanta (Dragoncon).

2-7 September: Chicago.

7-12 September: New York.

12-15 September: Albany (Albacon).

15-21 September: Boston and environs (IgNobel ceremony).

Administrator **S&ra Bond** writes:

Hope he's got a holiday booked to recover from all that, eh, kids? If you want further details from Mikołaj – especially, I would imagine, if you are willing to provide him with accommodation, hospitality, guided tours or meets-greets-and-partying with local fans – his email is m.kowalewski@ava.waw.pl

CORFLUX

PICKLED LATEST

According to the website, there's currently 28 attending members + 11 supporting and 2 virtual.

PR2 is out, with lots of good info, and PR3 is promised for "after Thanksgiving". You can and should clock PR2 here:

<https://corflu.org/Corflu43/CorfluPickledPR2.pdf>

Other relevant links:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/corflu>

<https://corflu.org/>



HEALTH DIARY

MAN ON FIRE BUMPER FUN EDITION

Well, in "good" news (depending on your opinion) my plan for physical immortality is so far, so good, although I wish it didn't fuckin' hurt so much...

I had that regular (once or twice a year) review visit with my Primary Care Provider (GP to mah Brits) last month, the inevitably very nice Dr. Park, addressing the horrible state of my feet among other things, and she referred me to an as yet undetermined podiatrist, who apparently wants to wait until I've finished the 90-day regime of the anti-fungal pills terbinafine before they see me, and also requesting CT scans of (1) abdomen and lower body to check circulation and (2) chest just because (as a 50+ year tobacco smoker). The imaging is set up with Steinberg Diagnostics at their handy location just up the road, but they call back to inform me that they don't do the chest one for which I must make arrangements with SouthWest Medical. Under the mistaken impression that I can get the chest done on a walk-in basis, I nip off to the location at Eastern and Harmon (where I regularly get my blood work done) to find that, while we still think X-Rays can be done as a walk-in, CT scans can't and I'll have to make an appointment. Which, predictably in this tortuous system, I *cannot do* there and then - I have to call their scheduling department. I ruefully note to the lady at the desk that this just seems like a job creation scheme, but ey...

So I now have half an appointment at Steinberg for the abdomen and lower bits and I turn up at the requested noon on August 7th to be told that I'm not wanted until 12:45 and probably won't get in early because the technicians are all at lunch. Also, that'll be \$175 copay, please...

I eventually get in about 1pm and go through the usual basic questionnaire where they ask, in part, if I'm allergic to the contrast spoo (iodine based) that they IV into you for the scan. Having had contrast scans before, I reply in the negative, and I am invited to take up position (feet first) for the doughnut scanning device.



All is well with the scan until I get the “all done” from the technician and am slid out on the gurney, at which point the left side of my face suddenly feels like it’s on fuckin’ fire! I really should be screaming my lungs out, but amazingly I’m not as I proceed to describe what’s going on to the tech who immediately provides a cold compress to alleviate things as I continue the match commentary, internally marveling at the specificity of the location of the reaction. It’s like you could have drawn a line straight down my face from brow, through nose to chin on the left side of which all merry hell was breaking loose, yet on the right side, nothing!

I’ve got a bit of dizziness as I try and stand up, but that, and to an extent the rest of the on-fire area starts to ease a bit (but not a lot) - I’m ambulatory to the point where they can usher me to the little waiting room and summon a physician’s assistant to look me over. I’m still valiantly and outwardly coolly trying to describe what’s happening, now dialed down somewhat from “Jesus Fuckin’ Christ!” level but still incredibly unpleasant. The PA determines no DoBFO allergic reaction signs - we’re all starting to think this is some rare and peculiar neurological thing.

After 20 minutes or so, now at more or less dull pain level, I extricate myself from their ministrations with assurances that I can drive home all right (it’s only just over a mile) which I do after having to negotiate my way past a fuckin’ great truck whose arse is partially blocking me in at right angles. One 17-point turn later I’m on the road and back at Rungsted Street to relate this weird tale to Jen. Bed rest immediately occurs, and I do actually manage to kip. I’d estimate 6-8 hours before the effects all cleared up, but I’m still tending to think there’s a bit of residual numbness on that left side, which might be neurological or even psychosomatic, fuctifino guv...

Naturally I’m now more than a bit trepidatious about the upcoming Monday appointment for the chest CT scan, which as it turns out is unfounded since that’un is in fact a no contrast effort and goes off without a hitch (after *another* \$175 copay ferfucksake).

The health care providers round here are using an online message/ appointment/ test results system called “MyChart” which is actually rather helpful and good. I get notifications of all interactions, direct messaging to doctors ect and detail of test result reports that I can look at, and here’s a bit of the one from face-on-fire day:

On the right, noncalcified and calcified atherosclerotic plaque within the right common iliac artery and right internal artery without flow-limiting stenosis. The right external iliac artery is occluded. There is multifocal mild stenosis of the right common femoral artery.

There is multifocal moderate stenosis of the right superficial femoral artery with severe stenosis of the distal right superficial femoral artery. [My emphasis]

There is multifocal mild stenosis of the right popliteal artery. Multifocal atherosclerotic calcifications and stenosis of the right anterior tibial artery which appears relatively patent into a patent right dorsalis pedis artery. The posterior tibial artery appears occluded. The right peroneal artery appears patent into the right foot and provides collateral branches to vessels of the right foot.

What I’ve highlighted there is the potentially serious bit, and as an aside it’s all sorts of fun copying medical phrases into Google to find out Wot Do It All Mean, ey?

What I’ve got is potentially blocked iliac and/or femoral arteries, which does explain a lot of why I can’t walk much without leg pain, so I’ll expect to hear back soonish (you would think) from Nice Dr Park about whether it’s serious enough to warrant surgery, which these days seems to be an in-and-out in two hours procedure to bung in a stent of some kind. That’s if, of course, the insurance consents to cough up for it. The more drastic endgame, should this get more “severe”, is actually amputation, which almost engenders relish as the ultimate expression of “I’ll get a fanzine article out of this”...

You may have divined that this column is being written as we go through the month in genuine diary fashion, so you and I all await the next paragraph after that cliffhanger...

I hear back from Vegas Vascular Specialists to whom I have been referred, and I’ve got an appointment for August 25th, after which I shall report anew...

And so it came to pass, as I learn what *isn’t* passing, which is my bloodstream through various arterial byways like iliac, femoral and more seriously I suppose, aorta, which is going to require surgery to fix, says the inevitably nice Doctor Peter Lee, whose name causes me (and undoubtedly others of A Certain Age) to suppress a giggle while recalling 1970s “easy listening” singing duo Peters & Lee.



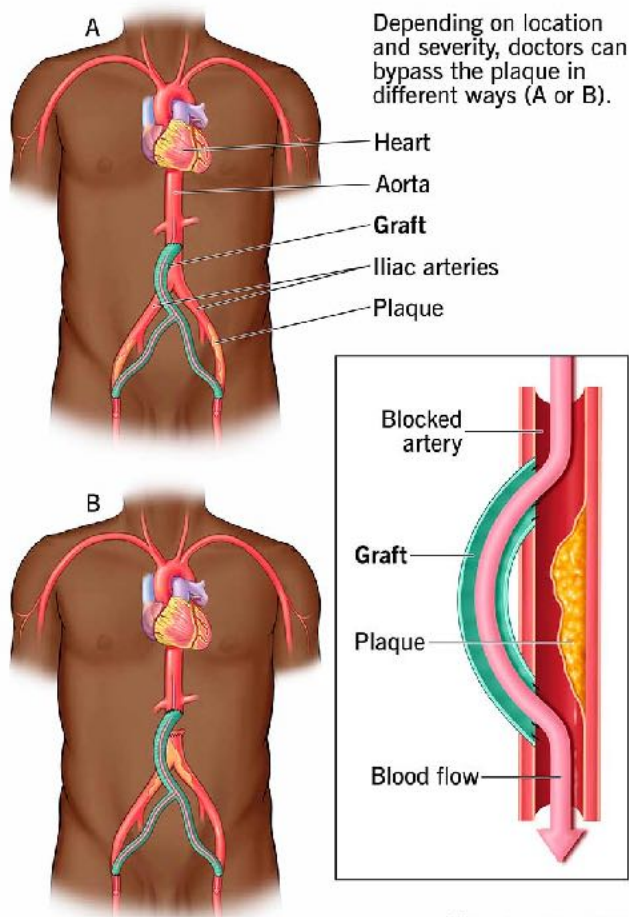
This sort of sclerosis is apparently pretty common in us over-65s, but if left untreated it’s a serious life-shortening condition. Various reliable medical sources suggest life expectancy of a mere 2-3 years if nothing is done. Oo-er ect...

Because I'm medically weird, at least according to **Jen** who is highly envious of my 4.9 A1C (yes, really!), while I have some of the symptoms like leg pain if I walk much, shortness of breath & that, although the latter is undoubtedly contributed to by 50+ years of smoking, I *don't* have a couple of the major indicators - high blood pressure (if anything, my BP is typically low) or elevated cholesterol, go figure...

So we're about to have - er - dueling surgeries round here, since **Jen** will be getting scheduled for her knee replacement soonish an'all (opposite side to the hip replacement) and that's DoBFO going to need me to be able to Do Stuff while she's in recovery from that, a recovery which will take a bit longer than the hip did. Depending on exactly what surgery Dr Lee performs on me, it seems I might need 4-6 weeks before I can more or less resume "usual activities" and 2-3 months for "full recovery", although after that first month I ought to be able to care for **Jen** well enough, I would think.

I fire off a quick email to Peters & Lee (sorry Doc) to ask what's the actual surgery, and he replies almost right away - well, it was early - telling me it's "aortobifemoral artery bypass" which is major, although I think pretty routine these days. Here's a nice picture off the Cleveland Clinic which shows it.

Aortobifemoral Bypass



Cleveland Clinic ©2023

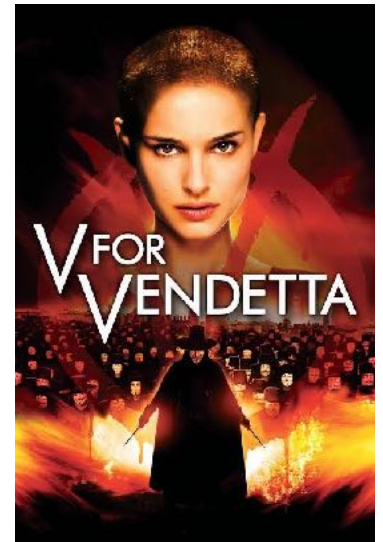
So now we wait for a cardiologist appointment and fret a bit about when **Jen's** knee replacement will occur, although she has conveniently contrived to delay that by turning up with an A1C of 7.2, and that needs to be under 7 to proceed...

No updates as of press time...

MOVIE NIGHT

V FOR VENDETTA

Idly browsing Netflix (or was it Apple TV?) the other night I notice this'un tagged as "leaving soon", so I clicked on for a rewatch, and as it turned out **Jen** had never seen it at all - that, and I don't think I'd ever rewatched it since it came out almost 20 years ago (Blimey!). Noted at the time for Alan Moore having a grump and ordering his name taken off the credits without having even seen it, having got the arse over his experiences with 'LXG' and 'From Hell'.



In some ways I can see Moore's point that the transition from page to screen is less than fully representative of the original work, but then again with almost any adaptation it *can't* be - you just have to hope that the compromises and alterations made don't fuck it all up too badly. Illustrator David Lloyd had no such qualms, complimenting the Wachowski's script but also saying that Moore would only ever be happy with "a complete book-to-screen adaptation". Fucknose how long that might have run, though, with the movie over two hours as is. There's no doubt some of the nuance (and stylistic tricks) of the graphic novel didn't make it to the screen, but it's perhaps a question of *which* nuances you leave out innit?

I think I'll argue that, while entire chunks like the Adam Susan (Sutler in the movie) backstory and mental decline are out, and he's reduced to a caricature - with no disrespect to John Hurt really, who does what he can with what he's given - the *big* beats in the story are still in place, as simplified as they are in the movie context. Present are the first meeting of V and Evey Hammond (under slightly different circs), the Larkhill origin framing of the year between blowing up the Bailey and then Parliament and V's testing of Evey with the letters from Valerie and her transformation into "next V".

Now then, I definitely preferred the original ending confrontation between Finch and V. Stephen Rea really conveys the detective inspector very well in the movie but seems to be left behind as a bit of an afterthought. Creedy

(Tim Pigott-Smith) is also pretty much reduced to a cardboard cutout fascist, absent *his* arc in the book. Like just about everyone (and Alan Moore very loudly) has noted, the flick misses most of the moral ambiguity preferring, I suppose, to portray V as the clear “hero” rather than a soulless-when-required anarchist agitator as written by Moore - the extreme opposite of the fascist ruling class.

Anyway, enough blather, this is late already. I can and do enjoy both versions of the story, so there...

THE THURSDAY MURDER CLUB

I haven't clocked any of Richard Osman's original books (typically), but I was well up for checking out this'un on Netflix with its DoBFO top-of-the-line cast of Helen Mirren, Pierce Brosnan, Ben Kingsley and Celia Imrie, as well as the participation of David Tennant (doing sleazy at its best), Jonathan Pryce and Richard E. Grant.

Some mixed reviews, but mostly positive. You've got that load of big names showing exactly what effortless A-game looks like, and we enjoyed it immensely round here...



TV GUIDE

THE LAZARUS PROJECT

Prompted by a laudatory gush from possibly *Inverse* or a similar genre website, I hie me over to Netflix to check out this'un, the attraction being the time loop aspects of the

setup, shades of Ken Grimwood's 'Replay' with perhaps a heaped tablespoon of Graham Joyce's 'Dreamside' stirred in.

The basic form is that the titular Lazarus Project is a secret group which works to prevent extinction level events with the ability to reset the timeline to the previous July 1st. Reminiscent of '7 Days' there as well, innit? A *very* small number of people have recall of the the reversions, others can apparently be granted this ability by chemical means. Yer big plus for this'un is (DoBFO) Paapa Essiedu playing the lead bloke George who is, it turns out, in the former group and gets recruited to the Project. Not to downplay anybody else in it, because they're all well good.

If you've not clocked the series at all, I don't want to give any spoilers, perhaps least of all about the *massive* season one-ending cliffhanger. If I've got a beef with the show, it'd be a fair bit of over-reliance on repeat scenes, although they do properly convey what's occurring when you have a fuck of a lot of reversions needing (or being forced) to occur.

Season 2 picks up right where s1 left off and gets very timey-wimey indeed as the tension racks up. At a mere 8 episodes per season this is well set up for bingeing, and by and large I'd suggest that you won't regret a shufti. Essiedu is front-and-center most of the time and did in fact get nominated for Best Leading Actor in the 2024 British Academy Television Awards on the strength of it. The show copped a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and some glowing reviews eg: "Though a little under-explained and occasionally simplistic, *The Lazarus Project* has a bright concept behind it with satisfying bursts of action." (Nicole Vassell, *The Independent*). Predictably, then, it was canceled in March 2024...



A SPY AMONG FRIENDS

On Amazon Prime, I easily binged this 6-episode effort which dives into the Cambridge Five story, but especially Kim Philby. This is an adaptation of Ben Macintyre's nonfiction book with, apparently, more to come from the same team. Contemporary reviews (December 2022) were kind of mixed to lukewarm, and you can pretty much see why - a lot of talking heads in darkened rooms and a ton of flashbacks to salient points in the Philby arc.

Now for meself, I find all this stuff fascinating, and I was a bit crogged to realize that I hadn't known much, if anything, about MI6 officer Nicholas Elliott, around whom this all revolves, especially since he'd also been involved in the Buster Crabb cockup in the 1950s. What's portrayed here is the long friendship between Elliott and Philby dating back to World War II, and the effects of Philby's betrayal on them both. With either or both of them on screen most of the time, you can't help but admire the absolutely fuckin-A turns here by Damian Lewis as Elliott and Guy Pearce as Philby.

Identified as the "glue" of the story, the adaptation has a fictional character, MI6 debriefer Lily Thomas, played with steely determination by Anna Maxwell Martin (who we'd also just recently clocked in 'Ludwig'). Yer actual historicals are interesting to observe an'all: Edward Baker-Duly as Ian Fleming in a cameo, Stephen Kunken channeling a properly paranoid James Angleton of the CIA, and a bit of a creepy Sir Roger Hollis (Adrian Edmonson!).

Reviewer Jay Skelton deemed this "frustrating to watch", and I can see the point. If, like me, you're a reasonably knowledgable devotee of this shaky period of history for the intelligence services, then you'll definitely be into it. All others, YMMV...



RADIO WINSTON

PYLON

Once again I'll perhaps foolishly venture a contention that if I provide the cues "indie" and "Athens, Georgia", just about everyone is going to come up with R.E.M. aren't they?



When *Rolling Stone* named R.E.M. as "America's Best Band" in 1987, their drummer Bill Berry demurred, citing Pylon as deserving that honor.

Formed in 1979 (a year before R.E.M.), Pylon's first couple of gigs weren't immediately showered with worship, but their third public outing was attended by the B-52s (some of them, anyway) who proceeded to lead the crowd in a manic dance-along, and subsequently both Fred Schneider and Kate Pierson became cheerleaders for the band.

Their first single, "Cool" came out in 1979 (two years before R.E.M.'s 'Radio Free Europe', I might remind you) which got good notices, by and large.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj8NXWkqcqI>

In 1980 (the year R.E.M. were only just forming, I might also remind you) they released the album 'Gyrate', also opening for the B52s at Central Park.

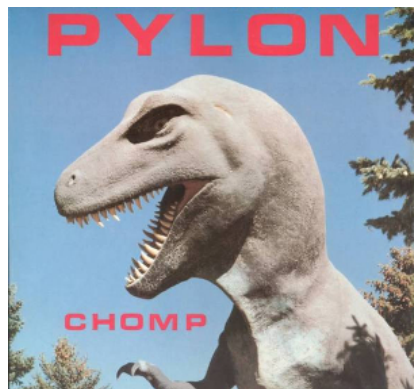
Now bits of comment above might suggest that I'm being very down and/or dismissive of R.E.M., which isn't entirely the case. They're just really in that contentious bag of artists who I thought were good (and sometimes very good indeed) but nevertheless ultimately overrated. I really consider their finest hours to be 'Radio Free Europe' and 'What's the Frequency, Kenneth?' Since you might wonder.

Here's "Danger" from the 'Gyrate' set which is described as "dance music", likely to the utter crogglements of **Leigh Edmonds** who may now comment that I've Got It All Wrong

just to be bolshie. Vanessa Hay's movements remind me a lot of Fay Fife from the Rezillos, albeit at slower speed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjXnFqZIJ64>

Pylon toured for almost three years, supporting the B-52s again as well as luminaries such as Gang of Four, Mission of Burma, Talking Heads and U2, as well as - er - the suddenly mega-popular R.E.M. Their second set, 'Chomp' came out in



1983, but by then they'd got a bit of the arse about the dodgy reception they'd got off U2 fans on the American bit of the 'War' tour.

The 'Chomp' set was considered more accomplished and even "poppier" to extent and "less anxious" by *Trouser Press*.

"No Clocks" is a good example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTkIRMQ5utQ>

So they decided to pack it all in. Hay recalled to Brad Cohan of the *New York Observer* in 2016:

We were like, "Let's just quit while we're having fun."

That was kind of the idea in the first place. We were just going to perform as long as it was fun. So we broke up and it was a decision we all made together.

They did play a few occasional gigs but officially reformed in 1989 at the urging of R.E.M. and just about everybody else in the Athens subculture. They ended up playing on part of R.E.M.'s 'Green' tour, also releasing a third set, 'Chain' in 1990. They played some more shows including a set at SXSW, but the following year guitarist Randall Bewley decided he'd be off on his toes, so that was that again. Here's "Look Alive", the opener off the 'Chain' set:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kB-W1YsT9U>

All three albums are available in their entirety on the ol' YoobToob, in fact.

After more than a decade, the band emerged from retirement again in 2004 and gigged around for five years, in part noting an extended re-release of 'Gyrate' in 2007. Sadly, then, Bewley suffered a major hear attack while driving in Athens in February 2009 and died (aged 53) two days later. Vanessa said "Pylon died when Randy died".

You might wonder (as do I) why R.E.M. went on to mega-rock-godhood while Pylon, majorly revered within the Athens scene, did not. Bassist Michael Lachowski says this in that 2016 *New York Observer* piece:

R.E.M. became so successful and successful in a different way. They were true musicians and had all kinds of

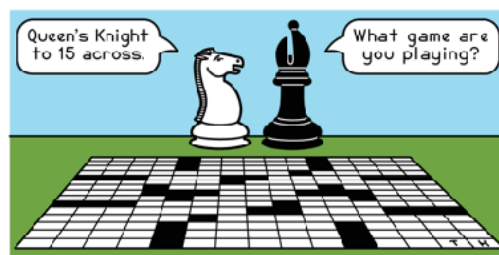
historical knowledge about musical forms and different kinds of music. They were just very adept and confident and had so much more range. We were truly just art students assembling things with sound and instruments.

Just some students having a larf, a creative good time and most definitely the objects of local adulation, then? Or as Brad Cohan's *Observer* article is in part subtitled: "America's (Other) Best Band"...

GIVE US A CLUE

Lastish:

"Kipling enthusiast heartlessly fired by student without the winning card" (4,6)"



Definition: "Kipling enthusiast"

Wordplay: "heartlessly fired" = remove a letter from the interior of the word, in this case the 'T' = FRED, "student" = LEARNER, "without the winning card" = remove the A, yielding FRED LERNER

"Frequently featured lastish, her matrimonial tossed out an old penny, first entering Yale (7)"

Definition: "Frequently featured lastish, her..."

Wordplay: "matrimonial" = BRIDAL, "tossed out an old penny" = remove the 'D', + "first (letters of) entering Yale", yielding BRIALEY

"Recent Hugo winner confuses Hooper with Colorado bike race (10)"

Definition: "Recent Hugo winner"

Wordplay: "confuses" is the anagram indicator; HOOPER + CO ("Colorado") + TT ("bike race") rearranges to OCTOTHORPE

Alan Rosenthal is again 3/3, correctly deducing all the wordplay, and noting re: BRIALEY as being "Frequently featured lastish" by pointing out "...and the ish before..."

Steve Jeffery is also in early: "Your last one is HOOPER + CO + TT, shaken and stirred, to give OCTOTHORPE. Nice one."

Eli Cohen is mostly confused: "[A]s soon as I saw "Kipling", FRED LERNER sprang to mind -- and then a heartless "fired" is FRED, and a student, i.e. learner, without an "A" is LERNER.

"Well, lastish did frequently feature Claire BRIALEY. If "matrimonial" is equivalent to "bridal", given that "d" was the old symbol for pence, tossing it out leaves BRIAL. So what does "first entering Yale" mean, and how does that yield EY? Something to do with Eli Yale? Or does the

matrimonial bit somehow only get “bri”, with the “aley” somehow “yale” with the first letter moved to the end? I dunno...

“Finally, I initially thought “Recent Hugo winner” was going to be Farah MENDLESOHN, but her Hugo win for Best Related was 2005, which is hardly recent. Scrounging through Hugo winners looking for someone else with a 10-letter name, all I found was T. KINGFISHER, who doesn’t seem like a “fannish solution” as promised. In either case, I have no idea what bike race or Hooper confusion is involved...”

Thish’s efforts (medical special - I judge one easy, one easy-ish and guessable and one more difficult - you can decide for yourselves which is which...):

“Say, Doctor Smith! ‘Ello sailor! (7)”

“Doctor Rob is hopefully holding religious leader (6)”

“Nausea pill from Doctor Morning (Morning!) in ecstasy (9)”

ANORAK

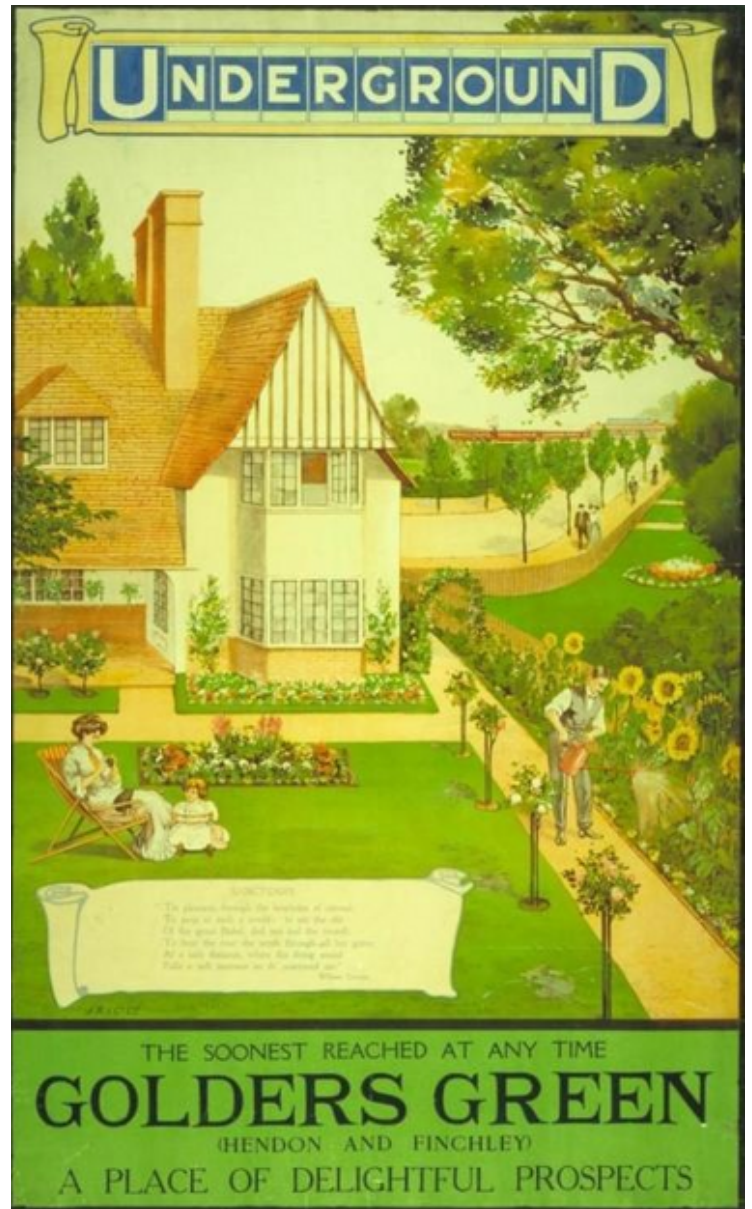
FRANK PICK

There were two potential topics on deck for thish’s column - with due deference to my brother **Peter Honey**, I’m going with Not The One I Talked to Him About (tokens, which will likely be nextish now), but instead I am going with Frank Pick, the source of the email cover quote for #89 reprinted atop thish’s ‘Loco Citato’.

This is perhaps a disappointment to readers who expect anoraking in general to feature various types of coo er gosh locomotives, or impressive infrastructure like viaducts and tunnels, or frequent lamentations about now disused lines accompanied by the usual wails of “Bastard Beeching!”™

We are, though, going to laud an actual administrator, the bloke who was (among other things) Chief Executive and Vice Chairman of the London Passenger Transport Board from 1933-1940, but whose defining career really kicked off in 1904 when he became assistant to the North Eastern Railway’s general manager, Sir George Gibb, following him two years later to the Underground Electric Railways Company of London (UERL) when Gibb was appointed their managing director.

Pick was a very meticulous sort of bloke, and thus not always (or often) easy to get along with, but he was also a firm believer in a recognizable corporate style and identity, commissioning a series of posters from 1908 onward which displayed the “UNDERGROUND” logo design. Poster sizes and display locations were standardized throughout the UERL network rather than the higgledy-piggledy “any available



surface” slapping up that previously existed.

He also had a play around with the station name signage, and in 1908 went with a backing red circle, then called a “bullseye” - the predecessor of the “roundel” used to this day. The one pictured here at Ealing Broadway is, in fact, still in place.

Post-WW1, line extension plans which had been on hold were vigorously pursued by Pick, hand-in-hand with residential development of what had been relatively inaccessible more



outlying areas. Although, one project in particular was sorting out Finsbury Park station, an interchange between main line, Underground, buses *and* trams which was notoriously shit. LNER (successor to GNR) stood firmly in the way, claiming that the proposed Piccadilly line extension to Cockfosters would fuck up their main line passenger traffic, but Pick eventually got his way with Parliamentary approval finally granted in 1930.

Pick also had a hand in station building design, wanting all the new ones to be “welcoming” as well as efficient and modern. In a 1924 letter, he wrote:

I may say that we are going to build our stations upon the Morden extension railway to the most modern pattern. We are going to discard entirely all ornament. We are going to build in reinforced concrete. The station will be simply a hole in the wall, everything being sacrificed to the doorway and some notice above to tell you to what the doorway leads. We are going to represent the DIA gone mad, and in order that I may go mad in good company I have got [Charles] Holden to see that we do it properly.

The modernist architect Charles Holden was preferred by Pick over the Underground’s own bloke, Stanley Heaps. The first of Holden’s designs to be built was Sudbury Town on the Piccadilly Line (1931).



As you can see, the original “bullseye” logo has by now become the familiar roundel of today, and the overall building design is indeed welcoming and efficient - there’s no doubt at all about what this structure is *for*, is there? Architecture historian Nikolaus Pevsner immediately called at a “landmark”.

London’s transportation network got consolidated under a single authority via the creation of the London Passenger Transport Board which eventually began its work in 1933. Pick became its CEO and vice-chairman and from there embarked on the next go at improving the services and co-

ordinating them, until war planning took over the agenda in 1939.

Having previously suggested a reorganization of senior management at LPTB, it was a surprise to a lot of people when that happened in 1940 that Pick, who had hoped to continue in a managerial role, was basically booted out with a cover story of “failing health” - although he would die the following year aged 62, so there *might* have been some truth in it. He was hugely influential in his time (while almost inevitably rubbing some people up the wrong way), and it seems only recently is that influence being recognized anew.

There’s a lot more to Pick’s life and career - this only scratches the surface in specifically dealing with London Transport. I’ll leave you with something he wrote in his 1922 book ‘This is the World that Man Made’:

One day the ice will descend and blot out all traces of man's works. The earth will grow cold. Nature will return to her kingdom and spread her snowy pall over the last man, and there will be nothing but barren rocks again ... Man will have disappeared from the face of the earth with the world that he had made. His day will be done. And the evening and the morning were the eighth day. Will man be able to say: “and, behold, it was very good?”

THE OLD SOD

BY DAVID HODSON

We here, in the U.K., are under a constant barrage of information about the various shenanigans and fuckups of the U.S. President and his cadre of brown-nosing minions. Every action of the senile, orange buffoon, his every social media release, every action of his cabinet of imbeciles, and every garbled utterance from the (at least) partially worm-eaten brain of Robert Kennedy are examined in minutiae; “surely, this can’t really be happening,” is the refrain, “it has to be a Marx Brothers skit...” Then some smart arse comes out with “and don’t call me Shirley!”

(And, in a single paragraph, your heroic correspondent fucks entry to the U.S. for at least four years and, if the conspiracy theorists are to be believed, for the rest of existence. At least I’ll be able to get into the West Coast Free United States under President Newsom via his golden TRASH TRUMP visa scheme due to be introduced any day now.)

Of course, even the most casual scan of the British press, especially the right-wing tabloids, would have you believe things aren’t much better over here (Most of the British press, even the likes of The Guardian, have a right-wing slant, which is disappointing). Currently about to bring about the heat death of the universe is Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves, who is systematically stripping

old age pensioners of their winter fuel allowances, cutting benefits left, right, and centre, and about to tax everyone heavily for having the temerity of dying at some point thus stripping the treasury of future tax revenues. The truth is a little more nuanced, but Reeves isn't doing a lot to help herself; there always seems to be another fiscal black hole to fill and, as true as it was that the Tory governments from 2010 to 2024 imposed a heavy-handed austerity on Britain in the wake of the 2008 financial crash, not all of the holes were dug by Tory chancellors (the caveat being that, with Prime Ministers like Johnson, Cameron, and Truss, no Chancellor, no matter how talented or insightful (and none of the Tory chancellors were THAT talented or insightful), could be expected to save the day vis-à-vis Brexit).

I do some voluntary work for Age UK Enfield on their Tech Tuesday sessions, helping people who struggle with problems on mobile phones, laptops, or other devices. Most of the issues we deal with are mobile phone related, and those problems fall predominantly into two categories: online banking and shopping, and G.P. and other medical services. The NHS has a quite well organised app, available for both Android and Apple phones, which can be used to ask basic questions, request repeat prescriptions, access general medical records, etc, etc, and it should also be able to access your G.P.'s surgery to book appointments. As I have found in the last week or so, all those complaints we see about the app being unable to do this basic function are 100% true.

The NHS is a bit of a sacred cow in the U.K. and even the most dyed in the wool Tory racist in the shires, hurling froth and spittle into the outer void as they read Daily Mail stories of illegal immigrants raping our beer and drinking our women in that, there London, will start screaming class war should their diabetic foot checks be threatened with abolition. The problem with the NHS, as with much of the British government and its bureaucracy, is that the left hand doesn't just not know what the right hand is doing, it's barely connected to the same body.

At the Tech Tuesday sessions, my colleagues and I are frequently asked to help set-up passwords and access to the NHS via the app, but we can only do so much before encountering confidentiality barriers. We're not allowed any information that might lead to a breach of someone's bank or other more personal accounts. But, frustratingly, we also see the same people coming back to see us saying that what we've put in place still doesn't work. I've been fighting a losing battle with my own G.P. surgery recently which finally came to a head in the past week.

Following my close encounter with sepsis nearly a decade ago now (tempus fugit and all that...), I should have been having regular tests for things like kidney and liver function, thyroid function, and neuropathic problems, but that all fell apart, not unreasonably, during the height of the covid pandemic (not that it's not still an ongoing pandemic, but like all the pandemics in modern-ish history, there's a petering out in intensity).

Recently, I've been experiencing more pronounced issues like shortness of breath, severe aches and pains in the legs, night sweats and cramps, and minor chest pains when walking around or doing more than moderate exertion. I was warned by the specialists at North Middlesex University Hospital when I was discharged all those years ago to not take any of these symptoms, should they develop, lightly, and, over the last few weeks, I've tried repeatedly to make appointments with my G.P. to follow-up on these issues. First port of call, the NHS app...

The NHS app doesn't allow me to make appointments directly with my surgery, despite telling me it can, so, in a fit of pique, I follow the advice of one of the Age UK health advisors and write a letter to the surgery and hand it in



personally (A physical letter handed in over the counter always gets a response, I'm told). The receptionist that I hand the letter to reads it before it is taken out of her hands by a doctor who just happens to be in the reception as I explain what's in it and the receptionist then explains that I

have to book appointments through the surgery's website at exactly 8am in the morning; not 7.59am because the appointments part of the site opens dead on 8am, and not 8.01am because, by then, all the day's appointments will probably already be gone.

I wander off in a bit of a blue funk and arrive home in a bit of a confuddled daze, but I set the alarm for the next morning for 6am with a vaguely optimistic tingle (oo-er, missus!) (Now, I know what you're thinking. If the website opens at 8am, why am I setting an alarm for 6am? I will tell you: I have to take Levothyroxine first thing in the morning and it should ideally be taken an hour before food and coffee (especially coffee), so 6 am gives me time to get up, take the thyroxine, get a shower, wake up properly, have breakfast and coffee (multiples thereof), and feel vaguely ready for an argument with an inanimate object and/or a virtual location). The Age UK health advisor is right; the letter does get a response, but's a generic "Sorry you've had a disappointing experience" email. Is my healthcare being outsourced to bloody McDonalds or somesuch?

8am comes. I've been lurking on the G.P.'s surgery homepage ready to click on the appointments link since 7.55am. I click on the link, having already logged onto the G.P.'s website with my NHS number to be able to access the appointments link, and...

I must log onto the NHS website before I can continue because all communication is done through the NHS app on my phone!

Argghhhh! Mutha-fuckas!!!

Fortunately, all the dithering about and extra logging in time didn't lose me my place in the appointments queue, but this is indicative of just about everything in the U.K. at the moment. Everything seems to be duplicated. Why does this G.P.'s surgery NEED another website to do exactly the same thing the NHS app already does? Why was that money spent that way when it might actually have contributed to the hiring of an extra G.P. to actually, like, GET THROUGH THEIR FUCKIN' WAITING LISTS?

—

Okay! It's 6.06pm Monday afternoon, September 1st. I've just had the appointment, and it was very productive. The doctor was very attentive to my concerns, and I've got a battery of blood tests to undergo, a chest x-ray to check my heart size (?), a referral to a chest clinic for tests, a urine sample bottle, another daily pill to add to the already bulging bathroom cabinet for blood pressure (whaddya mean? Maybe I should chill out about apps?!? Bloody cheek!), and a guaranteed follow-up appointment once we get all the results to these tests to discuss other issues that I raised that can only be addressed once we know what's going on. Bottom line, my blood pressure is definitely a little too high. It's likely I'll also be put on medication to help reduce my weight, which is great, I'd love to be back to my old 95 kilos (unlikely I know), plus I already know that hip and/or knee replacements are likely off the menu should I ever need them because I can't be given a general anaesthetic, so reducing the wear and tear now might be a good idea.

Sigh!

I'm now off to watch something mindless on the idiot box to take my mind off all this medical shite. I may be some time...



LOCO CITATO

[[“The test of the goodness of a thing is its fitness for use. If it fails on this first test, no amount of ornamentation or finish will make it any better; it will only make it more expensive, more foolish.” (Frank Pick) ...]]

From: phillies@4liberty.net

July 27

George Phillies writes:

As always, *This Here...* was entertaining.

Sorry to read about your dog. I had to go through that with my cat a few months ago. She reached almost 20, and apparently had several strokes. She had reduced use of her rear legs, and one day she went totally blind. She could not find food or water or litter box, so there was nothing else to be done.

[[Sorry for your loss. We suspected Lulu may also have had at least one stroke...]]

Age ID to use internet services...? I have had to deal with places (Facebook) that went to two-factor ID for people with large contact lists. They insisted on sending a code via text message to verify. So far as I can tell, none of my push-button land lines, nor the rotary dial landline, respond to text messages. Apparently the system had been designed by computer nerd electronic gadget buying addicts who assumed that everyone had a device that receives text messages. With great inconvenience, a workaround was found. However, Facebook is certainly not a company in which I would now consider buying stock.

[[The tyranny of the majority, I'm afraid, although it's somewhat difficult to conceive of too many people like John Hertz who are uncontactable electronically. I access several websites, typically health or banking related, which use two-factor ID, and they all provide options of how you'd like to receive the code, one of which is email - I'd hardly term that a "great inconvenience"...]]

[N3F Laureate Award] Policy has not changed. The vote counts for the Laureate Awards are not announced, only the names of the winners.

[[You don't notify the winners either, do you? (See loc from Fred Lerner below). I recall Andy Hooper also being completely unaware of his own win previously...]]

N3F has launched another fanzine. *A Gentle Stroll* is an APA, focused on role-playing games, notably D&D. As an experiment, subscription is by opt-in; you are only sent *A Gentle Stroll* if you ask.

From: fred@fredlerner.org

July 27

Fred Lerner writes:

I don't try to solve cryptic crossword puzzles, not since the time (many years ago) when I failed to identify "Stalky" as "Kipling's literary company". And though I'm the textbook example of a Kipling enthusiast — I've been a member of the Kipling Society since 1962, and now sit on its governing Council — the first definition in this issue's "Give Us A Clue" column utterly defeats me. "Kipling enthusiast heartlessly fired by student without the winning card? (4,6)". I can think of one Kipling enthusiast whose name has the requisite number and arrangement of letters, but the rest of it...

[[I advise Fred that he is indeed the solution to that clue...]]

Later in the zine I learn that I have received an N3F Laureate Award. I didn't know that *Lofgeornost* had been nominated for this, nor have I received any notification (or any laurels!) from the N3F. All in good time, I suppose.

[[Don't hold your breath. See replies to George Phillies' loc above...]]

Will you be attending the Seattle Worldcon? I'll be there, and I'd love to meet you face to face.

[[Cost and lack of interest preclude WorldThing attendance, as usual. Our next convention will be Corflu Pickled in Santa Rosa next year, and I'd love to see you there...]]

From: jabberwocky2000@hotmail.com

July 28

Brad Foster writes:

Like clockwork, newest issue of *This Here...* has arrived in the inbox.

Or, maybe that should be "like calendarwork"? I mean, the schedule is based more on a monthly thing rather than an hourly one, clearly using the calendar more than a clock to track the arrival of new issues... is it time for a new word to be introduced?

Okay, so of course now I had to look that up, and no, no such word as calendarwork. There is, however, the term "calendarizing", which is "the process of organizing events and tasks over a set timeline."

Close enough for me.

So...

Like calendarizing, the newest issue of *This Here...* has arrived in my inbox.

(Doing the business end of stuff, two fillos used, so two new fillos attached.)

So sorry to read of the passing of Lulu. I always hate knowing I am going to outlive the wonderful little furry friends that come into my life, but also so happy to have been able to share their lives with them for however long they are around. It has been a while since we had to have the saying goodbye experience ourselves, but several of our little buddies around the house are showing signs of their age, and have been trying to mentally adjust to what I know is coming up again.

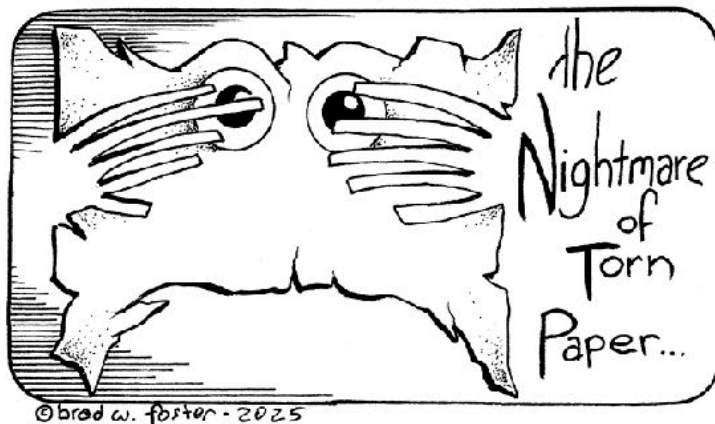
But, no matter how much the goodbyes hurt, would never give up having had them. And all my past little friends still live in our hearts, just like Lulu now lives in yours.

The 'Radio Winston' column reminds me to note that this past weekend I took the last half dozen boxes of old lp's to a local Vinyl Collectors Convention to see if could find homes for them. Never done one of those, and is amazing how, no matter the subject (comics, sf, records, whatnot) a dealers room will always be a dealers room, so I felt at home sitting behind my table there.

Actually did better than I had hoped. Took around 360 lps, and with my super-low price points, managed to sell about 200 of them through the day. Then in the last hour, through deep negotiations, whining and pouting, did a deal with one of the other more professional dealers to pick up the remained at bulk rate, and have now succeeded in clearing all of that out.

Moving to this smaller home has meant selling off a lot of stuff there is no longer any room to properly display (mainly those lps, thousands of books, hundreds of toy robots), but nice to know most of them have all gone to people who were overjoyed to have them. And, of course, less boxes stacked up here taking up space.

[[I also would like to shift a bunch of stuff, mostly books and magazines (many issues of Private Eye dating back to the 1970s) but also a dresser full of t-shirts. As usual, I am procrastinating mightily...]]



Regarding all the movie and tv news you have, I realized I see less and less of the new things, but seem to have an endless appetite to just keep watching old episodes of Mystery Science Theater 3000 and the same nutty old movies being made fun of. Our satellite feed recently added a 24 hour MST3K channel that runs episodes from the first to the latest in that series, along with Riff Trax, Cinematic Titanic, and others, and it has turned to my go-to channel when want something to semi-watch in the background while working on other projects.

Almost forgot to mention, loved the toon by **Teddy** on page 6. That boy has a future ahead of him as a cartoonist, I can feel it!

From: portablezine@gmail.com

July 28

Wm Breiding writes:

There's been some discussion by you and **Jerry Kaufman** about the practice of homeopathic medicine. While **Jerry** may be a scifi fan and all that and want some veracity rather than hoodoo all I can offer is personal anecdote.

I had a rather unfriendly problem about ten years ago. I went through a period of intermittently bleeding from the penis. As you may no doubt expect there was some alarm. I saw several urological specialists who could tell me nothing specific about why this was occurring or if it might be related to some larger issue. The closest they could come to a diagnosis was that it might be related in some way to my enlarged prostate. In which case there was nothing they could really do about it. And told me to expect this to happen now and again if I remained sexually active, which I did. So essentially, they told me nothing.

I sent an email to a friend back in West Virginia who is a homeopathic doctor (and **Jerry**, he had a thriving business--in West Virginia, a bit of a backward state, so he must have been getting results) and explained to him the problem and symptoms. He wrote back immediately and said he not only knew what I was talking about but had suffered from it at one point and that he could "cure" me. I can't remember what all he said at this late stage with my coot brain and all but his explanation of what was going on made sense to me. Shortly thereafter I received a package via Priority Mail with a tincture. He advised me to take five drops in herbal tea daily for a week.

I started doing this and within three days I felt like I was getting sick. I emailed and told the Doc I was feeling sick from his tincture. He emailed back and said that was exactly supposed to happen, just sooner than he had expected. He said my body was responding to the tincture and my autoimmune system was getting kick started and that my body would now do the rest and heal itself.

I know. Sounds like hoodoo, right? Except it worked. After that I never bled from my penis again. Western science told me nothing and offered no advice or solution, didn't even know what the cause was and told me just to live with it. And charged me an arm and a leg. Doc Negri knew my symptom and how to cure it. And he cured it.

[[This'un is right there in the pantheon with my bollock surgery tale, innit?...]]

Some people also consider acupuncturists and chiropractors to be hoodoo doctors but I think they are as legit a healing process as the science of western medicine.

I might follow up with more loccing, but I needed to get that off my chest!

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

July 29

Leigh Edmonds writes:

I was shocked when the latest issue of *This Here...* lobbed into my inbox. Has it really been a month? I can't believe it. Thinking back on it, it's been one of those months in which I seem to have achieved very little and yet been distracted from doing useful and fun things like fanac. Perhaps I slept through a lot of it?

[[I know I did - two long naps a day is becoming the norm...]]

It may also be that I was trying to get my thoughts together about your editorial comments in 88 which I did not sleep through and, in fact, read twice. It seems that you and I, and probably others, have been going through the same reevaluation - shall we say - of what we are doing in life. Why

am I publishing a couple of fnz, writing letters of comment, researching a history, sorting fnz at Monash, and that's only in my fannish life. Being a bit slow in the brain it took me a couple of days depressing introspection to come to the conclusion that I was being negative about things. I'd been thinking about all the significant things I could be doing, for example writing the Great Australian Stf Novel, rather than



what I like doing. That was more positive. There are a couple of things I can think of that I'd probably prefer to be doing rather than fanac, but one usually involves too much exercise and the other leaves me feeling rather crook in the morning. So here I am banging out this letter of comment and being happy to do it. It's either that or go to sleep in front of the box and I am not too happy about that, really.

[[I'm trying to get a bit more disciplined on stuff that isn't this here smack of jellyfish, with limited success...]]

Along this line of thought I mention that I haven't followed up on your visual recommendations. This is because I'm rewatching *Star Trek Enterprise* for probably the third time. This isn't because it's great television but because I will see all of it if I watch it enough times. Part of the problem is that the streaming service automatically starts the next episode whether I'm asleep or not so last night, for example, one minute I'm watching lots of ray gun shooting action and the next second there's T'Pol taking off her clothes for the engineer person. A rather startling switch so I will have to go back to watch the show again to see what happened between those two scenes.

I'm pleased to see that there will be a Corflu in Canada the year after next. It is on my list of things to do if I can afford it, money and energywise. It seems that Canada is the place to be because there is an Aviation Cultures conference there next year and I would dearly love to get to that too. They are pretty much like Corflus except at them we talk about various aspects of aviation and, as you know, I like aeroplanes as much as stf. I've only been to Canada once before and it seemed okay, so who knows.

[[Well, Vancouver is nice, the locals are friendly. It's doubtful we'll be in attendance for that one - I'm increasingly leery about crossing the border and attempting to return, then there's always the money issue. My Green Card is up for renewal next year, so we'll also have to see how that plays out...]]

Moving between issues 88 and 89 there's **Bob Jennings** in the former loathing lawn mowing and **Brad Foster** in the latter enjoying doing it. By the way, It's great to see **Brad's** work appearing in *This Here* ... He's been one of my favourite fanartists for decades.

[[I'm also pleased that I'm back among the beneficiaries of Brad's artwork, as well as (DoBFO) that of Teddy Harvia and Ulrika O'Brien. Long may they all reign...]]

I found it very hard to read your story of your loss of Lulu. While I write this little Izzy, one of my cats, is sitting on the bench next to me looking out the window at the birds in the trees with her head and eyes

flicking around. A little while ago a bird came so close that she forgot there was some glass between her and it and jumped up, banging her head against the glass. It gave me a good laugh and she looked more puzzled than hurt. Our pets do a lot for us, don't they?

I enjoyed most of the tracks in 'Radio Winston' this time. Particularly the Tuxedo track which was very cool and reminded me of driving along the wide boulevards of Las Vegas and Los Angeles last year. In fact, the theme of most tracks seemed to be 'cool' in the old jazz sense of the word. And, being July, it really is cool here in the antipodes.

[[Falls off chair...]]

I was amused by your comment that you will be 76 in a decade. You realize, of course, that some of us have already passed that mark but I will thank you not to remind me that I turned 77 a few weeks back. I wouldn't have noticed if my sister hadn't rung to remind me, after which I felt compelled to go over the road to the posh restaurant in the shopping mall and have a meal and a glass or two of something bubbly. I was also amused at the various comments for and against lawn mowing since it is winter here so the grass isn't growing so it doesn't need mowing. However, **Gary Mattingly's** comment about pollen reminds me that spring is just around the corner and the Wattles will start turning yellow with all their pollen soon. So it is a trade off between the warmer weather and the pollen. Life's like that.

[[Less than a decade until 76 now, you and I are a mere nine and a half years apart...]]

From: srjeffery@aol.com

August 3

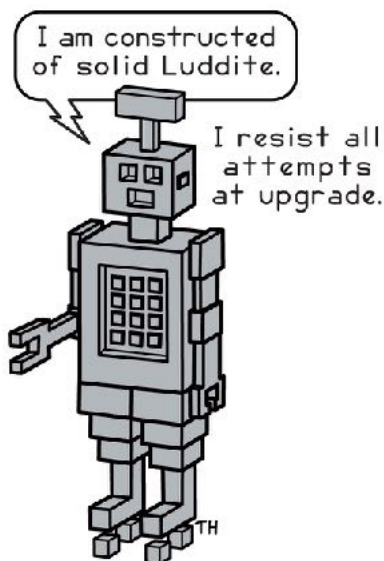
Steve Jeffery writes:

Thanks for *This Here*... #89 and apologies for non response for the last couple of issues. Life - real and possibly

imaginary - seems to have got in the way, in addition to several weeks of generally sapping temperatures (listens for distant laugh from Las Vegas).

Sorry to hear about Lulu. Our sympathies to you both.

I will return the Strawbs 'Autumn' in response to your nudge towards Third Eye Blind's "1000 Julys" ("hotter than July") because (a) I have always had a soft spot for this album, and to make up for the fact that Dave Cousins' passing, being unfortunately close to that of both Ozzy Osbourne and Cleo Laine, appears to have been generally overlooked by the BBC. The Strawbs were one of the first bands I saw live, probably with a tall flaxen haired whiz kid virtuoso



on keyboards who I would later see with Yes on their 'Fragile' tour. (Chatham Town Hall both if memory serves, although Google has already proved it wrong on several occasions where I seem to have rewritten my own personal memory of the 70s)

Coincidentally, actors who had played the US President (plus a number of red herrings, though not an orange buffoon) turned up a couple of nights ago on an edition of quiz show 'Bridge of Lies'. I was lost after they got past 'Escape from New York' (and no, it was Donald Pleasance, not Kurt Russell as any fule kno - except the one who stepped on it as an answer).

[[A due cue to note that Pleasance's brother (whom my father knew when he was working for the railways) was the stationmaster at King's Cross London, and apparently looked just like his more famous sibling...]]

Sinners does sound like an odd pitch or even a blatant attempt to tick all the go-to boxes for the commissioning suits, so it's quite impressive that they managed to pull it off.

Ludwig didn't sound our thing, despite the crossword element. Perhaps too close to the idea of Professor T. I'm not sure why we also passed on *Death Valley* unless it completely escaped our attention at the time, as Timothy Spall should have been a draw among the countless other odd-couple detective duo series on offer.

Looking at the pantograph on top of Class 76 loco 'Stentor' I am forced to wonder what it did when it got to tunnels. Or maybe it just didn't.

(I'd ask Vikki but she's just gone out to the chemists.) Ah, read on Jeffery. All is explained later on. I'd thought (for no other reason than ignorance) that regenerative braking was a modern thing so surprised to read it was developed that early.

[[Dating back to 1886, in fact! Here's the timeline: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regenerative_braking#History ...]]

I'm with **Dave Hodson** on the creeping (and indeed creepy) encroachment of AI "assistants" into computer programs despite the evidence that AI has a tendency to spew back factually incorrect information from the web or just make things up. A couple of colleagues lean on CoPilot with varying degrees of success but I am getting tired of hitting the "Not Now" popup prompts to set it up on both my work and home PCs, and now scroll straight past the first AI Summary page on Google. The other current bugbear is Multi Factor Authorisation which now not only asks for password but then wants to send a one time code to an email address or a phone before you can continue. Given our phone is with Vikki at home and I'm at work, and

Microsoft isn't even connecting to the server to download the email message with the code, it sometimes takes me three restarts on my work laptop in the morning before everything connects and I can log in, by which time I'm on my second cup of coffee and contemplating pouring the third into the laptop and handing it back to IT.

[[Yeah the AI arseness is definitely A Thing at the moment innit? Jen had to spend a bit of time figuring out how to remove it from Word on her laptop. I don't get quite so much of the arse over the two-factor authorizations, just a bit of mild annoyance, since when I'm clocking stuff that requires it (usually medical or banking), I'm at the Windows PC in the FanCave, and my phone is right here next to me. See also other locs mentioning this topic...]]

Still stuck on the crossword clues to last Friday's paper so I'll add yours to the list and maybe come back later.

[[Thanks for the 'boo for the OCTOTHORPE clue...]]

In the meantime, BTCC Touring Cars at Croft is calling (first race in 15 mins, enough time to fix us both a coffee).

S'all gude, still...

From: paulskelton2@gmail.com

August 6

Skel writes:

You're going to think me awfully naïve, but the mispronunciation of the town's name 'Penistone' never occurred to me until a few years back when driving Mike Glicksohn and Susan Manchester through it (or by it which, if you know the general blahness of the town, you will excuse my inability to remember anything other than the one specific incident) when Mike, on spotting the town's name on a sign, exclaimed in shock and awe "I can't believe there really is a town in England named Penis tone!"

Obviously we cognoscenti know that it is 'pen' as in the thing you write with or, if you are that way inclined, keep your sheep in, the 'is' as in 'mist', and the tone is as in 'leave a message at the'. There is a slight stress on the first syllable whilst the second two just dribble away as you lose interest which is, as I alluded, basically par for the course regarding Penistone.

[[I had thought that the last syllable was pronounced "stun", so ta for that correction...]]

My only excuse is that I learned the correct pronunciation at a very young age. I was, I think, seven-coming-on-eight when the family upped sticks from the mining village of Wombwell, near Barnsley (so insignificant



that the postal address had to carry the extra line 'Nr Barnsley' below it) to move across the Pennines to Stockport. Father had been considering a post working in Tanganyika for the Government there, teaching modern printing techniques to the local workforce, but the opportunity came up to buy a failing printing company in Stockport which he and his two best mates/workmates jumped at. They begged and borrowed and between them, bought it, ran it successfully until it eventually took over several other companies.

[[Thing in common: when I were a mere squit, our address was "Pirton, near Hitchin"...]]

Anyway, what this meant was that 3 or 4 times every year we would have to drive back over Woodhead and through Penistone, via Barnsley, to Wombwell in order to visit relatives and friends (and then back again, of course). This is when the pronunciation of Penistone imprinted on my memory. In those days I was too young to have heard the word 'penis'. In fact I don't think even any adults in small Yorkshire villages had heard the word 'penis' prior to the late 60's/early 70's.

The only other thing about these trips I remember is on the eastward leg passing through Hyde or Hattersley. A side-road forked off to the right and on the junction sat a truncated wedge-shaped building which bore the sign 'Broadbottom - 1 1/2 miles', which always raised a titter.

All of which explains why, whilst never having any interest whatsoever in rolling stock, I was fascinated by your 'Anorak' piece this issue. You see I also suffer from **W^m Breiding's** problem of reading and enjoying fanzines whilst also feeling that I have nothing to add that isn't banal and which would also be said better by anyone else. Here though is a comment nobody else could make. Of course I can't really believe it's of interest to anyone else, but that's the row I am hoeing these days.

[[I could be tempted to regale ye with a piece on Broadbottom viaduct, would you like that Skel?...]]

From: wombat.soch@gmail.com

Kevin Trainor writes:

I'm honored that you saw fit to quote me but regret that it fits the Egotorial so well.

[[It's a dubious "honor", but any out-of-context quote which might appear deprecating is up for grabs. In bygone days some correspondents, I suspect, deliberately tried to include one in their letters...]]

On the other hand, sad at the (necessary and merciful) end of Lulu. Obviously I never met her, but your periodic comments reassure me that she was indeed a Good Girl.

I daresay having someone predict the imminent death of Corflu should be enough reason to persist with it. Spite is, after all, a powerful motivating force, at least for us Irish and

Spanish types, and I daresay for quite a few Brits as well. Cf. the chapter in [Quartered Safe Out Here](#) where Fraser's Borderers steal vast quantities of goods from a Quartermaster Sergeant after being warned he's got his eye on them.

The swollen legs sound like an edema problem, which you may want to consider compression stockings/garments for. I've been having to use those for over a decade thanks to ~~worthless and weak~~ veins, and they seem to do a good job of keeping the insides of my legs where they belong.

[[I do have those socks which I wear occasionally, pending further medical advice...]]

I hadn't even been aware that someone was continuing the Cerebus comics. I liked the ones I

read but not enough to go buy the rest of them, especially since the quality seems to have fallen off the cliff toward the end of the run.

Ooo, Edge. I was addicted to those in high school and probably have the first 50 or so. Somewhere in these damned boxes.

Thanks for the advice on the perzine. Missed seeing you and/or the missus at Son of Silvercon, but under the circumstances I completely understand. We're doing it again next year in our original hotel out in Henderson.

[[I'm a tad ashamed to say I forgot all about the dates for Son of Silvercon - maybe next year...]]

From: daverabban@gmail.com

August 10

August 9

Dave Cockfield writes:

My response has been limited due to illness but thought you would be interested about my thoughts of the music in the movie, 'Sinners'.



The young bluesman Sammie evokes the past, present, and the future when he plays. Could the Irish vampire have the same power? There are two major Irish songs sung in the film.

"The Rocky Road to Dublin" is from the 19th Century which suggests how old the vampire may be. The other main song is "Wild Mountain Thyme (Will You Go Lassie Go)". Often thought to be Scottish and about Bonnie Prince Charlie. It was very loosely based on an 18th Century Scottish song. The lyrics of the version here were written in the 1940s by Francis McPeake, a Scotsman, and recorded in the 1950s. It is however considered to be both Irish and Scottish.

Sinners is set in the 1930s so did the vampires invoke this song from the future? More likely it was chosen without that thought in mind.

[[I express sympathy for travails, and Dave responds as follows by way of explication...]]

I fucked up my leg and was stuck in my flat for 3 weeks. Bloody painful.

Heatwave here has me knackered all the time and generally feeling bored out of my skull and totally listless.

Starting to recover. Three days running now I've been out walking about 2 miles each time. So improving. Calling in at the pub helped too.

Shame that your guys lost your first game. My mate Matt saw it and said that it was shite.

[[Shite with occasional flashes of promise, but he's fundamentally not wrong...]]

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

August 19

Eli Cohen writes:

Your bit about yardwork and tree care made me glad I live in an apartment, where the building staff and various noble volunteers take care of the trees and flowers growing on the sidewalk outside. When the prices of some New York apartments started going into the millions, I used to joke that for a million dollars you should at least get a tree! (I was also thinking about Anna Russell's analysis of Wagner's Ring Cycle, where she describes Hunding as having "a tree with a sword stuck in it growing through his living room floor".)

My sympathies on your Medicare spam calls. It feels like we get hundreds a day -- I think they're mostly trying to sell Medicare Advantage plans. They're extremely annoying, and unless you're willing to humor them to the point of getting transferred to a human agent, they're just stupid robots that it's no fun to annoy. What really pisses me off is that their programmers couldn't even be bothered to code a funny response to "open the pod bay doors" -- that generally just

results in a long silence and/or a repeat of the previous question. Too bad we can't get them arrested for violating the First Law...

[[I kept a log one day in which only(!) four calls came in. The first was at 6:06am, though...]]

Oh well. I guess I should finish off with a bad physics joke:

How do you know a board will be faithful to you?

Answer: Plank's constant.

From: kim.huett@gmail.com

August 23

Kim Huett writes:

G'day GuNToV,

The film clip for Funk Soul Brother *[sic]* has certainly kept me up at night.

Why does everyone in that video have such different hair? Don't you find that inexplicably weird? It's not like zebras come in multiple colours. It's not like some lions have straight hair manes and some curly. The pattern of spots on each giraffe may be unique but they're still similar spots to other giraffes. Go ask David Attenborough and he'll tell you it's normal for a species to pick a fur/hair design and stick with it. Well if every other species is content to stay in their lane why are humans so all over the place? Yes, dogs and cats come in a variety of colours too but that's only because we spent centuries messing with their genes via selective breeding. I don't want to say it was aliens who spent centuries messing with our genes, but clearly it was aliens. But why? Do they find the variety aesthetically pleasing? Do alien hairdressers need a wide variety of options to practise on? Is it important to have choices when lining their alien nests? Makes you think, don't it...

[[I doubt that will keep me up of a night tbh...]]

As to the question of why I drink Carlsberg pilsener rather than an Australian brand, it's actually for patriotic reasons. The wife of King Frederik X of Denmark is Australian and so I drink Carlsberg in honour of Queen Mary and the bond between our two countries. Besides which once multinationals bought most of the regional brewers the local product steadily decreased in quality. Victoria Bitter in particular now tastes like they electroshock baboons into drinking nothing but vanilla coke and use the resulting urine to flavour the beer. There are plenty of smaller brewers of course, a couple of which produce drinkable beer, but most of the rest are into craft beers and you already know what I think of beer made by hipsters.

[[I'm with you there, to an extent anyway. Too many of the "craft brews", at least on these shores, are akin to being grievously assaulted by a large sack of hops being beaten around your bonce...]]

On the whole I think Australia would be a better place if we had fly agaric growing here rather than death cap mushrooms. In CAN REINDEER FLY? the author, Roger Highfield, quotes a Patrick Harding of Sheffield University on the topic of fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*).

According to Harding once upon a time shamans in Lapland (that's the really fun part of Finland) would dry and eat fly agaric. These shamans knew how to prepare the mushrooms in such away as to remove the most potent toxins so they were safe to eat. Not only did this allow these shamans to go on the best intergalactic voyages ever but apparently the majority of the hallucinogen, called muscimol, would pass through unused. This meant drinking the shaman's urine was supposed to get any human or reindeer that drank his urine as high as the shaman himself. Yes, reindeer, because according to Harding reindeer were fond of drinking human urine containing muscimol.

Harding doesn't mention whether drinking the urine of a reindeer high on muscimol will pass on the buzz but since he does claim the muscimol could pass through five or six people before losing its effectiveness I'm betting that if we imported some reindeer and fed them fly agaric their urine might make Victoria Bitter actually drinkable.

The other day I noticed 'Carry On Screaming' was available on Tubi so I thought why not and put it on while I worked on some art. I would call this one Carry On light as there was no Sid James, Charles Hawtrey only appeared briefly on screen in a very minor role. The film also suffered from a complete absence of memorable jokes. I'm pretty sure

13 year old me would of liked it but it's no longer something I can sit down and just watch. It's okay to have on while I'm doing something else but that's all. It's not a badly made film but it's very much of its time. Which in this case doesn't mean there are jokes of dubious providence but the exact opposite in that the sex and violence is barely hinted at. These days I prefer a show like 'Helluva Boss' which is full of blood, decapitations, bigoted penguins, cultist goats, and rampant demon horniness. Now I enjoy material such as that going back to the gentle titillation of 'Carry On Screaming' no longer entertains to the degree that it once did.

[[Fair points all, really. Our Sidney was unavailable due to a panto commitment. Hawtrey was a last-minute addition, apparently at the request of the American distributor. He was by that point considered "difficult" due to being pissed the whole time...]]

And since Ivar Plank asks the obvious question let me tell your GuNToV correspondent that yes, there is a set number of years a body must be in the ground before it's considered archaeology rather than grave-robbing. However, that number can vary depending according to a number of commonly agreed upon circumstances. However I think it's about time that lazy little twat Plank got of his arse and

looked things up for himself rather than expecting the rest of us to spoon feed him the answers to everything. And so I'm not going to tell him what that base year is or what circumstances can cause it to change are. Hah! I'm a Right Utter bastard.

[[I had a shufti on the topic, and it seems the cutoff is variously quoted as 50 or 75 years, but the actual difference between archaeology and grave-robbing is delineated more by motive than anything else...]]



From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

August 24

Gary Mattingly writes:

'Egotorial' - Sorry to hear about Lulu. Losing a dog, a best friend, is really hard. We've had a number of dogs in our house that have passed on, and it never gets easy. They should live longer and live better as they age. Our 13-year-old Cosmo has arthritis and a knee problem. He now gets Adequan and Librela injections once a month. This seems to help a lot. He can no longer jump up on the bed, but he walks much better, although definitely slower than he used to. Pip, 6 years old, doesn't have any aging problems so far, although he could lose some weight.

[[Thank you for the commiserations...]]

'Corflux': Things seem to be proceeding. I'll keep watching. And, oh yeah, I guess I have been to Vancouver.

Worldcon: I have a membership but I didn't go. Too many people.

[[I assume, then, that you only join to vote in the Hugos and/or business meeting stuff? Seems like a waste of dosh to me, still...]]

'Health Diary': Sorry to hear about your continuing health issues. Hope things get better. Other than some increased pain in my thumbs due to osteoarthritis, and my occasional muscle spasms in my legs, no significant problems. I may actually get a fatty lump on the left side of my chest surgically removed. It isn't that large and can be done in an hour or two. I just don't like its existence, and seemingly no amount of exercise will make it go away. The left side has no lump. I dislike being lopsided. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity".

[[I had one removed from above my eye some years ago. It was also benign, but well annoying...]]

'Radio Winston': Enjoyable tracks. Actually, our August seems a bit hotter than July. In the 90's the last few days.

Meanwhile, listening to Antone's 50th Allstars.

'Movie Night': Haven't seen 'Heads of State'. I have seen 'Sinners'. I enjoyed it, although the music parts more than the vampire parts. I have seen a few people on facebook that didn't seem to like/get it at all, but I think they're in the minority.

'TV Guide': I watched a few episodes of 'Duster', but haven't returned to it. Of late, I've been watching the new season of 'Wednesday', 'Alien: Earth', 'The Institute', 'Nautilus', 'Star Trek: Strange New Worlds', 'Foundation', 'Peacemaker' (only first episode of new season available so far), a couple of episodes of 'Code of Silence' on BritBox, a couple episodes of 'Interior Chinatown', the final episodes of 'Resident Alien', hm, I think that's it.

[[Got a couple in common there, viz 'Strange New Worlds' and 'Foundation'. I'm holding off on 'Peacemaker' having read that it refers back to events in the latest 'Superman' movie which we haven't clocked yet (For \$25 they can fuck off for now). I believe our watching tastes may well be exemplified by the fact that for a current fill-in I am

rewatching classic 'Thunderbirds'...]]

Yesterday I watched the first episode of 'Strong Girl Nam-Soon' on Netflix. It is pretty stupid, but I actually was quite amused. There are sixteen episodes.

'Anorak': More interesting and educational information and photos. Caltrain, a commuter train in the Bay Area, recently went electric. Still lots of talk about the high speed train that they are taking forever to build in California, about funding problems, delays, etc.

"Caltrain completes launch of all-electric fleet":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UmdY2L-qZo>

'The Old Sod': Changing to a new computer is always a pain and time-consuming. Good luck with that. AI is everywhere. Even the latest 'South Park' episode was about AI and its agreement with everything the user says. I've read recent stories about people being told they have superhuman capabilities by AI and people having psychotic breaks with reality due to AI. Tons of fun.

I also read a lot in Reddit, also Quora. I love (well hate, actually) all the stupid questions about aging. People are different. People age differently. Making generalized statements about age, exercise, weight gain, health issues, etc., can really be stupid.

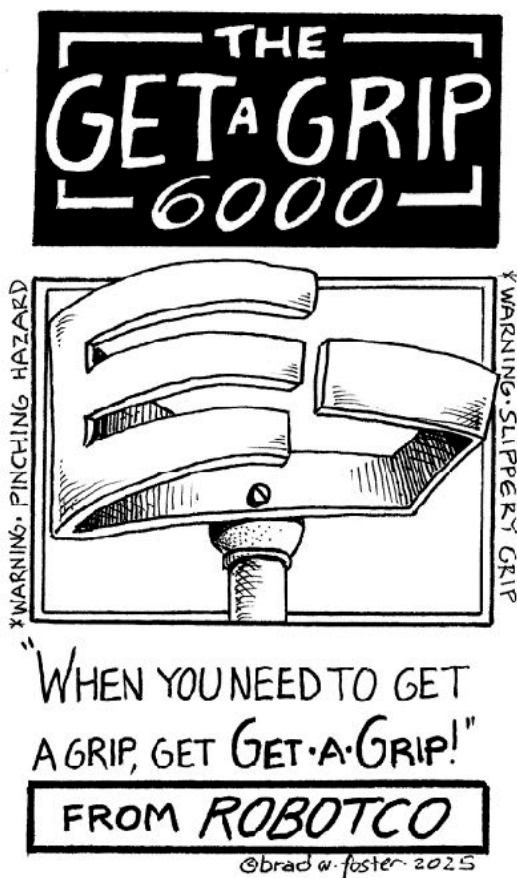
I get things from Kickstarter also. However, what I get is mainly restorations of old films, particularly a lot of old silent films. I don't get many books or graphic novels

through Kickstarter. I have too many already, and I haven't a clue when I will get to them all.

Although, to be honest, the same is true for all the movie discs I have.

'Loco Citato':

Jerry Kaufman - New Relationships - Are we talking strictly social relationships or more than that? I talk to a few people at yoga. Some people are aware of me and I am aware of them since we have seen each other at yoga for 5 to 10 years. Most of the people at yoga are women. One Asian woman comes to yoga on Mondays and Thursdays, and we usually talk. She mentions "our age", but I'm going to guess she's in her 50s, although she easily looks like she could be in her 30s or 40s. Her husband is 62, so I suppose she could be in her low 60s. Anyway, she visits her daughter in San Francisco. She knows I take BART usually, but has suggested she could drive me over



one day when she is also visiting her daughter, and we could even go somewhere and talk. She likes to talk. I'm not really known for talking, but so far I haven't had much difficulty talking to her. I talk to a few people at the Roxie Theater's discussion groups, but they're only once every couple of months. There are definitely regulars. I talk to some people at the East Bay Regional Parks Volunteers' occasional gatherings. So that is about the extent of my meeting new people. Just talking, nothing more than that.

Oh, I do have some pagan friends, but haven't gotten together with them for a while.

Kim Huett - I have never been a big fan of Weird Al Yankovic. I like some of his songs, but I don't believe I have any of his albums. I guess my weird likes are in other directions, like the Tiger Lillies.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvA8NPAl2Dg>

Patty & I saw them with Jay and Dixie many years ago in San Francisco.

If I remember correctly, I also saw them do their Two Penny Opera.

I'm also a fan of Throbbing Gristle. I've seen them several times.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fih-xzWGKPA&list=RDFih-xzWGKPA&start_radio=1

[[You have surprised me with that'un, Gary...]]

Whitehouse, another interesting but rather weird band. It is an English noise music band. I haven't had a chance to see Whitehouse

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVtWcQOWWmE&list=RDIVtWcQOWWmE&start_radio=1

I saw SPK once. I like them also. I wasn't entertained by the gelatin that splattered into the audience off the sheep's head they had obtained earlier in the day. They had obtained it to hit it for the sound qualities (?). I guess from an abattoir. The concert I saw was in the Oddfellows Hall in the '80s.

Gary Mattingly - Yes, I would be a terrible historian. Obviously I didn't even recall that I had been in Vancouver.

At work, I never went out to lunch with people regularly. Actually, I rarely went out to lunch.

True, I could still watch the episodes of 'The Residence' that already exist.

Enjoyed the artwork by **Brad W Foster**, **Teddy Harvia**, **Lucy Huntzinger**, **Craig McCracken**, **Ulrika O'Brien**, and **Gilbert Shelton**, plus the various and sundry photos..

From: kevinwilliams48@googlemail.com

August 29

Kev Williams writes:

Coming in - just under the deadline wire, a few obs and comms:

Reading the letter column in one sitting (as have I just) is like being at a con - or in a pub with many engaging folks, bantering back and forth. It really makes you want to join in, which by writing this I suppose I am.

[[I get a warm glow of the 'boo reading that appraisal, mate - much ta!...]]

I'm glad you defined **DoBFO**, and I could have lots to say about the Yardbirds (was a fan from the beginning - seek out a fine doc called "The Yardbirds In their own words" - which appeared here on SkyArts - an increasingly good place to see music stuff). It takes their story from the beginning to the transition to the New Yardbirds and then Zeppelin. And as for Homeopathy, I will only say that if it works by using the "space" left in water by enormous dilutions of a solution of the bad thingie, thereby removing it when applied (a nonsense theory in the first place since water reasserts its structure in picoseconds), what about all the shit that it has contained? I would guess that most water molecules have aided the transport of shit more than anything else.

[[That just reminded me of the Dread Days of Thatcher when water utilities were privatized, and cartoonist Steve Bell (in his "If..." strip) satirized this with a cackling Margaret opining that the shit in the water would be "something else we can charge them for"...]]

I hadn't realised that the Brighton electric railway (The Volks) was the oldest such in the world. I recently rode it with my granddaughter.

[[I learn quite a lot meself doing research for the 'Anorak' column in particular...]]

Regarding the movie 'Sinners'... I tend to avoid horror movies but the lure of the recreation of 1930s Clarksdale and a Mississippi Juke joint drew me in. I read that Ryan Coogler is a big fan of Irish folk music and believes that there is an affinity in the history of the Irish and the Negro that is reflected in their music of sadness, death, persecution, and rebellion. I guess that is why both the young Negro Blues singer and the lead Irish vampire are linked in the love of music that also has a form of power.

The Vampire plot seemed almost superfluous (particularly with lots of Rednecks around to provide the mayhem and killing) and it was a bit odd to see beautiful Irish Folk songs sung by red-eyed vampires! But hey....We get traditional Irish dancing, an 18th century folk song, *The Rocky Road to Dublin*, and also *Will You Go Lassie Go/Wild Mountain*

Thyme which was probably written in the 1940s and did not reach America until the 1950s when it was first recorded.

Miles Caton looks about 16 (he's 20) but had the voice of an old man who's gargled with Bourbon most of his life, and is some technician of the dobro. I've listened to the whole soundtrack album and there's some great stuff on it - all I think featured in the film. Caton doesn't seem to have released much other music. Interesting to see Cedric Burnside, Rhiannon Giddens and of course Buddy Guy involved and the reviews heap praise on the music coordinator Ludwig Goransson, of whom know I not. There's a film of Caton and Goransson on youtube doing "I lied to you". Goransson is a very good guitarist too!

[[Caton did have a solid vocal resume before being cast, and is the scion of gospel greats. Good article here: <https://www.essence.com/lifestyle/miles-caton-mother/>. I read that he only learned blues guitar for the movie...]]

I also spotted Christone Kingfish Ingram (he's difficult to miss - since he appears to have eaten all the pies) as part of Buddy Guy's band in the film. I saw him last year at the Love Supreme festival. Brilliant blues guitarist whose sound and style remind me of Peter Green in his pomp. The brilliant barn sequence shows the development and evocation of their music in both the past, present, and future.

I wish that I had seen this in the cinema.

From: garyhubbard969@gmail.com

September 1

Gary Hubbard writes:

I know it's been a hideously long time since I've written anything, please forgive me. The fault lies not in us Dear Nic, but in Youtube. I've been hooked on it now for the longest time. You probably know how that goes: Something interesting on the site catches your eye: a cooking show, historical feature, a political diatribe, suggested nudity, so you decide to take a look. You've got something more meaningful to do with your time, but-what the fuck?-it's only ten minutes long. But when it's done there's another one-and another and another. They're all real short, so no harm done right? Then, without thinking, you stumble across one that's fifty minutes long and there goes your morning... or afternoon... or evening as the case may be. They don't call it the Net for no good reason. But I've decided to rebel, do my own thinking again and start a personal Jihad against Youtube... right after I find out what this business with Neil Gaiman is all about.

[[With me it tends to be news stories and genre tv/movie stuff, but yeah...]]

Sorry to hear the sad news about your dog. Owning pets is fine, but inevitably tragic when it's time for that last visit to the vet's office. I've never had a dog, but always thought it would be fun to: you know, like a Boy and His Dog, bravely traversing a post-apocalyptic world or Timmie and Lassie or Scooby-doo and Shaggy. But Mom never allowed us to have any pets when we were kids. Having grown up on a farm, she had a distaste for animals and already had five small, unruly animals on her hands anyway. However, Bess, my wife, loves every living thing in the world and especially cats. She's a cat person and I became one too through osmosis.

So, we've seen a lot of cats in our time: a lot of hairballs and lots of little tragedies, but one stands out for me, a tiny black cat dubbed "Resin" by a doper friend who declared she resembled marijuana resin. How Res came into my life is an interesting story. I was working in a hobby shop at the time and one night, after the store had closed, a bunch of us were sitting around in the office when this black kitten walked in nonchalantly, looked around and jumped up on the couch and snuggled in next to me. Someone must have forgotten to close the back door.

Animals like me, sometimes embarrassingly so. Maybe I smell edible. But I've never been bitten.

We kicked her out, but she kept coming back and attaching herself to my side, so my co-workers decided I must be the Chosen One and since that was the case, my problem. But, what should I do? Find out if she had a home nearby, take her to mine, to an animal shelter, or drive her far away and dump her alongside the road? I tried to wish her off on a couple of kids who came into the shop regularly, but after about a week she returned, purring like crazy. Well, I know when the Goddess of Fate is waving her panties in my face, so I acquiesced and decided to take her home. (The cat, that is, not the Goddess).

But we, Bess and I, already had three cats in the house we shared with her parents: There was Tommy, a corpulent tabby who was Bess's mom's symbiote and who resembled Sydney Greenstreet. He was the top cat at home, dominating the others. He was also a mutant, with six toes on each of his front paws. Second in command was Beastdom, younger, but ambitious. and, like any good Klingon subaltern, constantly trying to overthrow his superior. The two of them seldom came to blows, however. Mostly they engaged in pissing contests, marking my bookcase, which had a fibreboard backing, excellent for picking up odors. Beastdom eventually won out by simply outliving Tommy.

Kittle was a part Siamese / part something else, rescued from a hippie household where she was implicated in the disappearance of a hit of acid. She was a *crazy* cat, full of eccentricities. She would frequently sidle up to me on the

couch, all nice and affectionate, and the next thing you know there's a buzzsaw chewing up your arm. Ever the iconoclast, Kittle eventually took to sleeping outdoors in all kinds of weather under a tarp in the yard, only coming inside for meals and to rip my flesh.

[[I was a cat parent for some while, long ago, and my best was also a Siamese mix, but jet black, called Lenin...]]

So into this environment, I was introducing a new cat and I was prepared for the worst. But it didn't turn out too badly at all. At least I can't recall any notable conflicts happening that I can turn into any amusing stories in these pages. Res, it seemed, was a very good-tempered cat who got along with anybody. Bess' folks liked Res. Her mom fed her liver (her favorite) every day. Sadly, Res wasn't meant to be with us very long.

As I noted above, she was my favorite cat and was her favorite human. We were inseparable, except around liver time. She was very helpful too. Whenever I was at my desk trying to write something, she would jump up and drape herself across the keyboard, thus allowing me time to ponder my next sentence. In all my years, I've never had an editor as good as Res.

But then one day she tried to jump up onto my desk and missed it. I didn't think much of that at the time; I just laughed (sympathetically, of course.) But it happened again...and again. And after a while, it became a regular thing. She just couldn't make that leap anymore and it annoyed her something fierce. At first, I thought she was just getting old. But she wasn't. She was literally still just a kitten. Then I noticed how gingerly she held her back leg on the left, as if she was reluctant to put her full weight on it.

When we took her to the vet, the prognosis was bad. She had cat leukemia, it turned out, and the cancer cells had pretty much taken over her leg. Our only option the vet could offer was to cut it off, or let the cancer spread to the rest of her body. But amputation? How would she get around?

Well, there was a dog our neighborhood who only had three legs (due to some mishap or other) and he got along just fine, which is not to say that the decision to clip off Res' leg wasn't approached with a good deal of anguish on our part. But we did it and all seemed well (considering that we had a cat who wasn't too happy about having a missing limb. How would you feel?) for a while, but ultimately it was to no avail, the cancer had invaded the rest of her body, and that was that.

So, here again, sorry to hear about your loss.

I see a lot of stuff about Corflu in *This Here*...

Nice, but I've never had much to do with Corflu (I don't get out much), except for that one time in Vegas when **Ted White** and Frank Lunney roped me into giving a speech.

However, but I recently got a request from **Geri Sullivan** to write a little something for a collection of GoH reminiscences she's putting together. Frankly, I think the bit I wrote in *Trap Door* was already pretty good, but I scribbled out a few lines anyway.

[[And renewed thanks for allowing me to reprint your bit for the 'Fabulous!' Fanthology. Did I ever send you a copy? I like to think of the readership here as being mostly "Corflu constituency", hence the news updates within...]]

Well, I'm done. I'm sorry this has been such a long-winded LoC, but as I said above, it's been awhile since I've used my brain to any good purpose and I feel pretty pent up.

WAHF

Chuck Connor ; John Hertz ; Dave Langford ; Perry Middlemiss : "I gave a talk to the Nova Mob in early July and another in concert with Leigh Edmonds to the Special Collection people at Monash University and now realise I'm due to give another chat at the next Nova Mob at the beginning of August. Time just seems to disappear. Such is life. I must learn not to volunteer. *P55* seems to be getting closer." ; **Jacq Monahan** (on *APA-V* business); **Cora Silva** (also on *APA-V*); **R-Lauraine Tutihasi** ;

FANZINES RECEIVED

With the usual thanks, and an attempt to provide at least a tad of comment...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #80, #81 (Andy Hooper) - Elvira in depth! Then comes #81 with an account of eight days of apparently glorious fanning (TurboCon 2 + Seattle WorldThing). **W^m Breiding** (locs) disagrees with me on the inclusion of mailing comments, which he likes. Fair enough...

TWO CHAIRS IN PRINT #7 (Perry Middlemiss and David Grigg) - Opening with reminiscence due to the 50th anniversary of Aussiecon (the first Australian WorldThing), a fair bit of approving chat about Adrian Tchaikovsky's novel 'Shroud' and more. I remain grateful that this is available for the likes of those of us who remain mystified by podcasts...

PERRYSCOPE 55 (Perry Middlemiss) - And here's the old larrikin again! A bit of a Bumper Fun Ish (42pp!) playing ketchup with two months' worth of reviews. Movie-watching ranges from 'The Quatermass Xperiment' (upon which we agree with each other and Nigel Kneale that it's really a bit shit) right up to the latest 'Mission: Impossible' (which I have yet to clock) and 'Sinners' (reviewed here lastish an'all) which we agree is well good. Plenty o'loccage from the cheap seats...

P.H.U.Q #1 (Kim Huett) - For those of you who may consider what your life is missing is more **Huett**. Includes the naming of Canberra suburbs, fannish stuff, analysis of LotR ("Gandalf is a lazy old fart") and "a long untold tale" arising from a visit to the National Library of Australia's 100th anniversary exhibits...

THE OBDURATE EYE #54 (Garth Spencer) - Hoax bids, fannish news of a generally Canadian nature and a loooong list of book releases via White Dwarf/Dead Write books of Vancouver...

LOFGEORNOST #160 (Fred Lerner) - Leading with a fine obituary for John Boardman, followed by recent reading. Typically all exceptionally well-written and with the usual erudite correspondents...

INCA 26 (Rob Jackson) - On the wire for getting this out, so only time for a glance I'm afraid, sorry Doc. As you'd expect, contains copiously photographed Corflu 42 and Reconnect reports, and a double dose of **Kev Williams**...

THE STF AMATEUR #24 (Heath Row) - A whopping 77 pages off the 2025 N3F Laureate Award Best Fanwriter (have they told him?). Again only just under the wire, but I did take a minute for a swift egoscan, as this'un includes Heath's APA-V contribution. Fancy cover from **Alan White**, whom Faneds may have noted is on his annual summer cover giveaway spree...

INDULGE ME

✕ **AN ECONOMIST WRITES (WORD!)** : I do hesitate to describe myself as an "economist" in any sense implying expertise, but as the holder of a bare pass grade BSc(Econ) from the LSE, I think I might be allowed to pontificate occasionally, especially with the resurgence of a word we all hoped never to hear again: "stagflation". The term was supposedly coined by (later to be) UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Iain Macleod, and he correctly described it as "the worst of both worlds" - a combination of stagnation in terms of GDP growth accompanied by inflation - and it served to fuck up the terms of both Edward Heath and Jim Callaghan in the UK as well as the Carter presidency in the US, having inherited it from Ford and Nixon. As I said, this situation isn't good for almost everybody (the very rich will, as usual, ride it all out), but here we are...

✕ **FIRST FANDOM AWARDS:** Announced at the WorldThing opening ceremonies, DoBFO congrats to our very own **Rob Hansen** for copping the Sam Moskowitz Archive Award, and also to **Vince Docherty** for his election to the Hall of Fame. I once embarrassingly walked in on Vince changing into his kilts, you know. Full awards story (with acceptance speeches) at [https://file770.com/first-fandom-awards-given-at-seattle-worldcon-2025-opening-](https://file770.com/first-fandom-awards-given-at-seattle-worldcon-2025-opening-ceremonies/)

[ceremonies/](#), with thanks to **Cuddles** for posting the link on FBF...

✕ **HOW TO FUCK OFF SEVERAL DAYS WITHOUT EVEN WATCHING FOOTY** : Wake up at some point between 4am and 5:30 after the usual approx 6 hours of kip; coffee, doomscrolling, emails, daily sudoku ect, rabbit holes for 2-3 hours; go back to bed; 2 hours later, get up again, tea (or beer), ham & cheese sandwich; go back to bed again; 2-3 hours later, get back up, realize it is now pm, slob in front of tv until bedtime. The sequel, "How to Fuck Off An Entire Fuckin' Week" will be out shortly...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : My original qualifying age for an "ageless beauty" was "older than me", but that's DoBFO slipped a bit. So, happy recent 60th birthday to my longtime crush **Susie Dent**...



✕ **WHAT THE CLUCK?** : **Ian Sorensen**, on Zoom, delivers a creditable rendition of next door's rooster vocalizing. My suggestion that the bird may be reading aloud from **James Bacon**'s latest book is met with general mirth...

✕ **RIP GUY H LILLIAN III:** I receive news via **Ulrika** that Guy dropped off the twig this last week aged 76, having suffered a couple of strokes recently as well as having Parkinson's. Never met the bloke, although we maintained a very cordial correspondence for many years. I enjoyed his perzines *Spartacus* and the somewhat error-prone *The Zine Dump* - the latter of which caused him to joke more than once that upon publication of a new ish he always awaited my swift loc-of-corrections with great trepidation. It's sad that he'll likely be remembered for twelve consecutive nominations for the 'Best Fanzine' Hugo for his genzine *Challenger* without a win. I don't suppose we'll see the planned "Sturgeon issue" of that title now, unless some determined person acquires and finishes that work in progress...

A much longer, knowledgeable and heartfelt memoriam by **Mike Glyer** is here: <https://file770.com/guy-h-lillian-iii-1949-2025/> ...

✕ **BURN IT DOWN** : Flag burning is back in the news as yet another weedy distraction from other things. Now this is a DoBFO difference from an act of protest, but the US Flag Code section 8 subsection (k) reads as follows: "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. (Disposal of Unserviceable Flags Ceremony)". Nobody ever seems to make that distinction, do they?...

✕ **TERRIBLE "SCIENCE" "JOKE" FOR ELI** :
Q: Why did the pirate go to Proxima Centauri?
A: He wanted to spend four years at C...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Susanne Freytag...




✕ **FOOTY CHANTS** : Chanting and singing is a big part of team support, especially from the hardcore home support end (the Rookery at Watford, for example). Individual players often get recognition, as with our forward Kwadwo Baah who, when he gets one in, is rewarded with a chorus of "Baah will tear you apart again" to the Joy Division song. Quite a few new lads have arrived for the current season, including 6 foot 6 Danish striker Luca Kjerrumgaard (on loan from Udinese) who scored both goals when we beat QPR the other week. This feat DoBFO required some recognition, and the Rookery end came up with this amusing chant: "He's big! He's Dane! We can't pronounce his name!"...

✕ **DOSH** : And the rent goes up again, by \$60 on October 1st for a new total of \$1400, which still isn't madly high for a property like ours here in The Meadows. The rep did say they wanted a \$100 increase, but given that we just paid to have the big tree in the front yard cut back quite a bit (and had the carpet cleaner in) they gave us the lower increase. Recent emails suggest a possible change in some of the management at the agency that manages it all for the actual owner, so we'll see how that goes an'all...

✕ **HUETT HISTORY CORNER** : Post-loc, Kim writes: "You like polls so when I discovered a card for a 1946 LASFS poll I scanned it because I knew you would want to see it. Nice to know the grand old tradition of polling to decide who we all hate goes back as far as 1946". I am, as a result, pondering adding a "Worst Fan" category as a joke addendum to the FAAns next year. The results of this poll, for anyone interested, are in *Shangri L'Affaires* #31 (ed. Burbee) from July 1946 and available at fanac.org ...

SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES POLL



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Charles Burbee
1067 S Normandie Ave
Los Angeles 6
California

Top Fan Post	Fan Humorist
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
Top Fan Editor	Top Newsline
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
Top Fanzine	Best Fan of Year
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
Top Fan Fiction Writer	Worst Fan of Year
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
Top Fan Article Writer	Top Fan Artist
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____

✕ **HAPPYS BREAK** : Happy 55th birthday this week to my kid brother **Peter Honey**, who shares it with Glen Matlock, among others...



✕ **WARP SPEED, MR. SULU** : The Initiative for Interstellar Studies (which is A Thing) ran a design competition called "Project Hyperion" for starship design, the results of which are here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/aug/06/spaceships-design-stars-craft-interstellar-travel-project-hyperion>

The winning design (pictured) may be the least exciting to look at, though I think it might have been the one with the most knobbing planned for on board ...

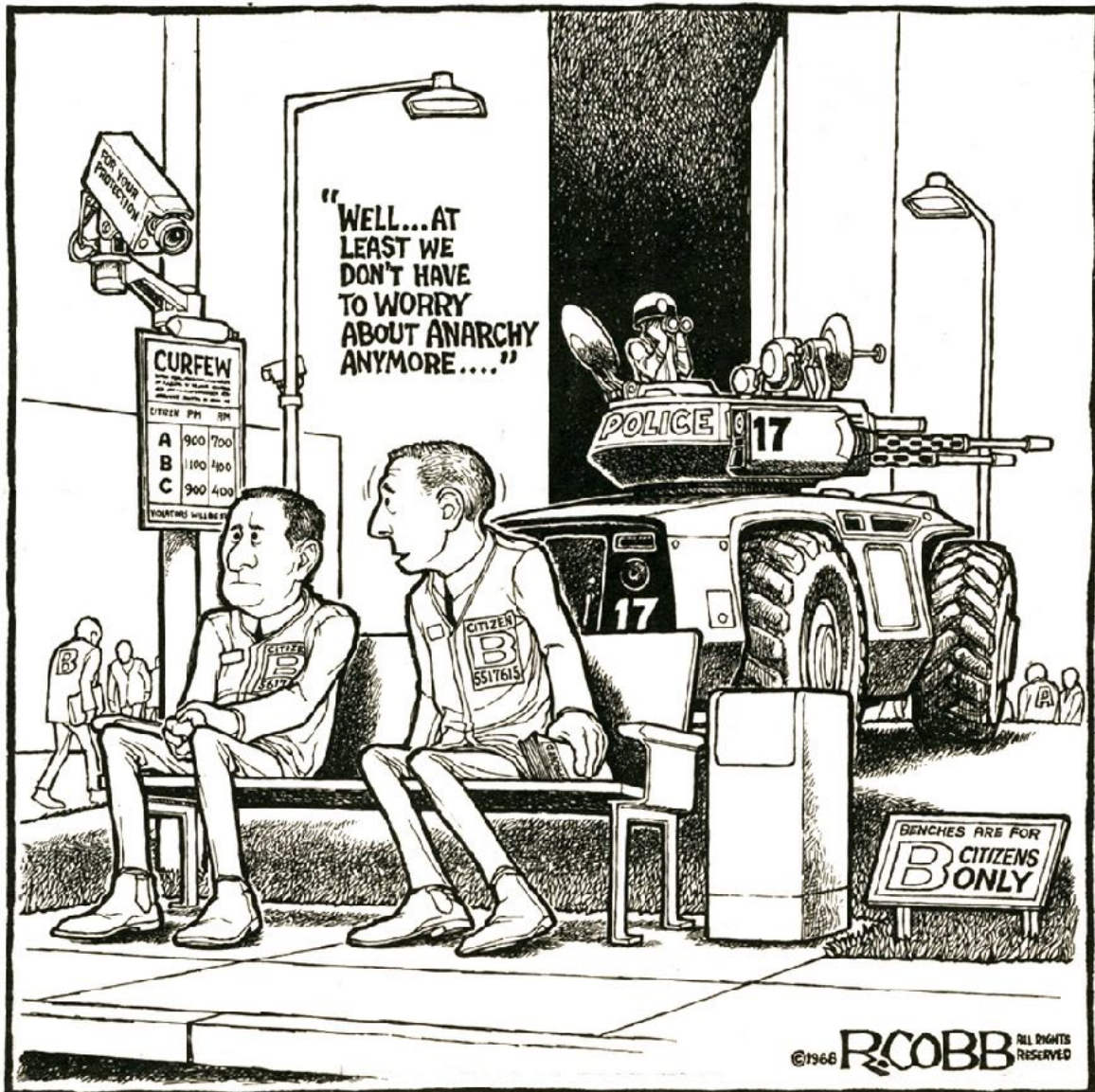


✗ **SCRAMBLE** : Once again, some content this may seem a tad rushed. Because it was (see "How to Fuck Off...")

...

✗ **SHAMELESS FILLER** : *Plus ça change* ey? The Ron Cobb cartoon below is from 1968...

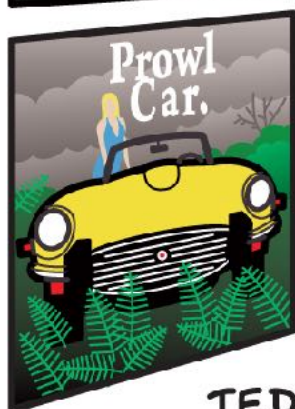
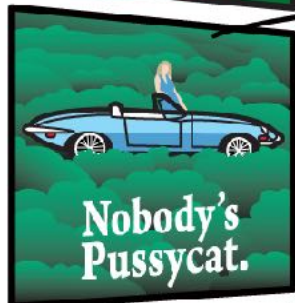
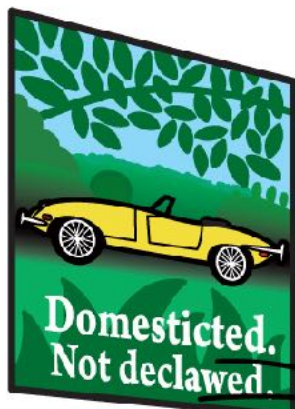
✗ **NEXTISH** : Shall we say September 27th? Surgeries permitting, of course...



Chat

Had cars existed in the Pleistocene, the sabertooth would have owned Jaguars.

We were apex predators after all.



TEDDY HARVIA

MIRANDA

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Ulrika O'Brien (p13)

"My girlfriend's run off with my car
And gone back to her ma and pa
Tellin' tales of drunkenness and cruelty..."