

This Here...

“Not top class...” (Archbishop B Gillespie)

EGOTORIAL

BASENJI

Some of you might have a small start of recognition on that there ‘Egotorial’ title, and if so you’ve probably read Spike Milligan’s war memoirs in which it’s mentioned.

For the rest of you, no, it’s not an unproduced sequel to ‘Jumanji’. The Basenji is an African hunting dog, notable for several reasons, one of which is that it does not bark. The breed *can* vocalize, but its oddly shaped larynx means that it sounds more like yodeling than anything else. “The elite of fandom”, however that’s defined by **Leigh Edmonds** as his target distribution for *The Chatter Box*, will doubtless have by now deduced that the subject of this slice of gobbage is therefore WOOF.

The Worldcon Order of Faneditors was founded by Bruce Pelz in 1976 (if you don’t count three similar efforts produced in the 1940s), and he would later say it was his “second dumbest idea”. It’s a collation of fanzines, nominally an apa, but latterly I’ve come to think of it more as a fanzine sampler of sorts, perhaps *pour encourager* ect, and thus, despite my known aversion to WorldThings, have been minded to contribute the last couple of years with a one-sheet specially written squib titled *Mustn’t Grumble*. I’ve had to inquire, as the convention has approached, as to who might be the given year’s “Official Editor” who is tasked with the collation of the “apa”.

It seems that WOOF has no official standing or recognition within the WorldThing organization. You might think that it would come under the remit of the Fanzine Lounge, which according to the LACon website is being run by **Joe Siclari**, but according to **Joe** himself, no it isn’t (I asked). He’s just going to be there with the scanning team from Fanac. Then again, these days we hardly expect the Big Fat Conventions

(with a nod to **Leigh Edmonds**) to promote what *used* to be fandom’s core. I noted with much distress that the programme for the Belfast Eastercon we attended last year was conspicuously absent of the word “fanzine”.

For the last six years **John Hertz** has been credited as “Organizer-in-Chief” for WOOF (actually “Unseen Master” in 2020). He is famously uncontactable by email or online messaging, and does not appear to take “Organizer-in-Chief” seriously enough to preemptively organize anything, despite what I believe is consistent habituation within the WorldThing milieu.

As July toppled into August this year I once again thought I would like to contribute an issue of *Musn’t Grumble* to the collation, so began to inquire who this year’s OE might be, contacting Apparently Not Running The Fanzine Lounge **Joe Siclari** (as noted above), punting a couple of emails to previous habitual contributors and planting an ask in the FAANEDS FBF group, only to be met with general denial of all knowledge, if I got a response at all.

Geri Sullivan (canonization of cotton socks pending) took it upon herself to telephone **Hertz**, who, presumably thus

stirred into action, apparently called **Chris Garcia** to inform him that he shall be the Official Editor this year. Why not, since he’s done the gig twice before, in 2012 and ten years later in 2022 when he contributed a 112-page ish of *Claims Department* [falls off chair].

By the time you’re reading this the submission deadline will likely have passed, so I can’t encourage you to contribute, but I am pleased it’s going to happen. I can’t help but wonder whether there would have been a WOOF this year if I hadn’t gone a-knocking. I expect there might, but it all seems so dreadfully *ad hoc* don’t it?



It seems to me that it would be minimal effort for a WorldThing team to designate a responsible party, whether it's **John Hertz** or someone else. There is already, I know, discussion about the Fanzine Lounge for Montréal in 2027 (from which **Garth Spencer** has already resigned - sigh) and perhaps for *next* year, since I've raised the topic, *WOOF* might even be part of that conversation.

I guess we'll find out...

It's all good.

August 2026

CORFLUX

GOOD STAVROS?

We cannot possibly infer that **Tommy Ferguson's** announcement of his firmed up VanDeux plans (as related in issue #102 of this here snuggle of sloths*) represent any kind of cause and effect here, but hotel room booking details have now been announced!

The salient info is at corflu.org, of course, and there's a *lot* of it an'all...

- * Animal trivia: "Snuggle" is the generally used collective noun for sloths, which never in fact applies since they are solitary creatures except during knobbing season...

2028 BID ANNOUNCED!

No longer a mere whispered rumor, **Johan Anglemark** sets out his stall to host Corflu 45 in Uppsala, Sweden, likely a week or so before (or perhaps after) the UK Eastercon, presumably to allow visitors from far-flung forn parts to attend both if they'd like.

The pitch, plus a quirky list of places to visit in Vancouver by **Jerry Kaufman** (including ones he's never been to) are in the just-released VanDeux PR2 which is here:

<https://corflu.org/Corflu44/PR2/Corflu%20Van%20Deux%20PR2.html>

HEALTH DIARY

INCOMPETENCE & OTHER STORIES

As previously mentioned, I got eye-tested the other month for new lenses for the bins, and nice Dr Kasden at Costco optical said I've got cataracts (though not bad, fairly typical for my age) and gave me a referral to Shepherd Eye Center for them to have a shufti. When it turned out that Shepherd doesn't subscribe to my insurance, I did get back to Dr K's office for a different mob, and Nevada Eye Doctors duly went in the frame.

I called them and got an appointment for July 30th at 7:20am, with instructions to bring dark glasses because they'll be

dilating the peepers. You might think that's in the realm of stupid o'clock, but although I do sleep in a little bit these days it's not that mad for me - I like early appointments, especially in the summer months when it's a tad warm out. In fact, their office was busy with nearly a dozen people waiting by the time I got called up to the desk.

I am then informed, not particularly impolitely but in a very matter-of-fact tone, that my appointment had been canceled the same day it was made because they don't like my insurance either. The phrase was something like "we are not contracted to this provider". No socialized Medicare for you today. They had not, DoBFO, seen fit too inform me of this beforehand. I wearily return to the car, at least mildly thankful that their office was only 20 minutes from home and not way across town. I shall, I think, now definitely send a message to nice Dr Park (who I had in fact seen the day before for my regular six-monthly appointment) and see if she can sort this out, since I'll be confident that her referral department will know who's in the system and willing to sort me out.

The final insult arrived later that day when I get a machine-generated text message from Nevada Eye Doctors asking me to reschedule my appointment and not seeming to understand why they'd canceled it in the first place.

Back when I were a wean, if you needed to go see the doctor for any reason you simply went to the doctor's office / surgery and sat in the waiting room with everyone else of varying debilitated conditions until you were seen. Dr Michael Gilbertson was a mostly genial tweed-clad gent with very plummy tones and a decent enough but businesslike bedside manner. And he did house calls! I also recall he had a remarkably red nose, undoubtedly caused by the quaffing to the supposed many (*many* _(c) **E Gunn**) bottles of whisky he got for Xmas from his patients. I know we got him one...

Yesterday (August 6th as I write), I went to Steinberg Diagnostics for the CT scan with contrast that Dr Peters & Lee had ordered to properly determine if we're doing needle & groin anytime soon to deal with ongoing arterial blockages, since I'm back to getting leg pains (most specifically in the left calf) if I do much walking, although it's by no means as bad as it was prior to the bypass surgery. Dedicated followers who weren't entirely driven away by the Bollock Saga™ will recall that I've had a weird neurological reaction to the contrast on previous occasions ie left side of face on fuckin' fire. (No leopards were involved.)

Nice Monica at Dr Lee's office puts in a prescription for a Benadryl equivalent + (ugh!) Prednisone



(which I never react well to) which I'm supposed to choff the night before the scan, and duly do, only to be informed by the nice technician at Steinberg (who remembers me!) that taking meds that far ahead of the procedure is worthless - it should have been about an hour before to do any good. In any case, because my reaction isn't an allergy response, I'm not expecting it to make any difference anyway.

And so it is. I get the half-face-on-fire and immediately apply the cold pack wot I have been provided and am already holding (thank you, nice technician), and that fights it out with the inferno for a few minutes until it starts to abate. This'un seems at least as intense as the first time I got that reaction, but it's mercifully shorter in duration, I think. After five minutes or so the associated dizziness has gone away, I can stand up and balance, and am left with a bit of residual pain and numbness. All right to drive home - it's only a few minutes away, the reason I choose this location to get the scans done. A beer, sandwich and nap later I'm more or less ok, although there's still some numbness.

So now I await the follow-up call...

...which arrives as a voicemail from Nice Monica since I inexplicably failed to notice the phone call (the ringer is typically off but it does vibrate), even though it was beside me at the time. I am scheduled for a telemedicine call (arg!) on "Monday afternoon" which apparently is deemed to begin at 10am with Dr Peters & Lee to go over the CTA results and to schedule an angiogram (more fuckin' contrast - more fuckin' arg!) which, we're assuming is the required prelude to the needle & groin procedure.

Dr Peters & Lee ("Quit smoking!") calls earlier than advertised, which I am quite all right with, and delivers the good news/bad news. The good bit is that last December's bypass surgery (aorto-femoral, you may recall) really did go swimmingly in terms of the blood flow there which is tip top. The bad is that I have severe blockages in both legs between the groin and knees. Pending insurance approval (DoBFO, because Merka) he's planning to start with the worse left leg and that needle and groin thing to try to open the arteries up, and assuming the ok I should hear from his scheduler about setting that up. Presumably the same thing on the right leg will follow. If that doesn't work, there will be more bypass surgery in my future.

I am enjoined to walk as much as possible, and "QUIT SMOKING" even though I've been on the vape for over six months now, as Peters & Lee contends that "it's the same thing". Time to seriously open the box of nicotine patches, then...

After the earlier fucking about with non-compliant eye people, I asked nice Dr Park (PCP) if she could sort out a referral for me, which of course her office does with alacrity, and I shall be off to the Center for Sight (also Jen's provider) for a cataract evaluation on August 31st which will, I'm told,

take three hours! I'll be all right to drive home with the shades on, cos I asked, just as well since Jen will be in Mexico.

One more appointment to come this month, nice oncologist Dr Gollard on the 27th, and any salient reportage from that will undoubtedly get tacked in to 'Indulge Me'.

TV GUIDE

Oo mah good gawd (Arfer Daley voice) there's *loads* of new and returning stuff to gob off about, so erewog ect...

SURVIVING EARTH

This'un is a documentary series done, in part at least, by the same mob responsible for the original 1990 version of 'Walking With Dinosaurs', and aired on NBC over here (so, streaming on Peacock). Each of the 8 episodes concentrates on one particular extinction level event (ELE) in Earth's history, ducking and diving in non-chronological order from 444 million years ago (Episode 6: "When the Oceans Shrank") to a mere 12,000 years ago (Episode 8: "When America Flooded").



Naturally you get "When the Asteroid Fell" (Episode 3) from 66 million years ago, which we elsewhere learn from 'Star Trek: Strange New Worlds' was caused by Martians and allowed to happen by a time-displaced starship Enterprise. Well, that's one theory anyway.

What was interesting to learn was that climate crises which are responsible for almost all the ELEs tend to happen because of varying levels of oxygen and CO₂ in the atmosphere. The former creates conditions favorable to widespread forest fires ("When the Forests Collapsed", episode 5), the latter typically causing serious planetary cooling. Major outbreaks of vulcanism will also play a part.

The other takeaway from it all is that the Earth is essentially self-repairing, albeit over loooong timescales of tens or hundreds of thousands of years at least.

Each episode features a mother and offspring facing the changing world, often quite tragically, but it's all very well conveyed with plenty of goshwow creatures and apex

predators (the latest of which are (DoBFO) us). A one-sentence warning slips in at the very end advising us not to fuck it up...

TOO EARLY?

New seasons of highly watchable shows have entered the fray, which we are enjoying, but as **Jen** quite rightly points out I really should leave the reviews until their seasons have concluded, so that's 'Strange New Worlds' and 'Silo' set aside for now, although I can't help noting that 'Silo' in particular is densely interesting. The slow reveals and fill-ins of what got it to where it is might be frustrating for some, but are must-watch round here.

Hard to believe it's been a two-year wait for season 2 (10 episodes) of 'Batman: Caped Crusader' (Amazon Prime), the Bruce Timm/JJ Abrams noir animated version of the dark knight. Well worth it, though, with intelligent reimagining of several characters. Having had a gender-swapped Penguin in season 1, there's now a gender-swapper Mad Hatter an'all, a much different Riddler (with a highly revised naming story that I won't spoil, but pay attention because it's given in a practically throwaway line), a *much* changed version of Jim Corrigan's Spectre, and so on. I'm 5 episodes in as I write (they're all available) and the Joker is teased with a brief appearance in every one so far. Definitely living up to expectations...

THE ARK

All right, I *am* going to weigh in on this'un, even though I've only just clocked the first episode of season 3 which dropped on SyFy on July 29th, which is all right if you have the channel available, which we don't easily, and finding it on streaming was a right fuckin' performance I can tell you...



As is common with most network or cable shows, there's a live broadcast one day, then it's available on streaming the next, in this case on a previously unknown to me app called ElectricNOW which looks decent in that it's mostly genre and includes creator Dean Devlin's *other* major TV franchises ie 'Leverage' and 'The Librarians'. So far my experience with it hasn't been at all fab, since it took me two days to even fuckin' *find* 'The Ark' and its previous seasons, because I DoBFO wanted to rewatch the last episode of season 2 before

embarking on the new'un. It buffers like an utter bastard, the picture randomly seems to freeze while the audio goes on, and commercials are dropped in seemingly on a clock timer rather than at natural breaks. I must like the show to put up with all that, ey?

Anyway, despite all this getting the arse (which isn't the show's fault, is it?) I feel a bit compelled to pre-emptively mount a defense of a show which has attracted its share of derision from sterner critics (<koff> **Ian Sales** <koff>) for trifling stuff like scientific no-nos, and probably the lack of marquee name stars as well as unoriginality, I'm sure.

Really, though, it's a throwback to '70s or '80s skiffy fare, relying heavily on "disaster of the week" stories, but with DoBFO better SFX. On that basis 'The Ark' might be usefully compared to some of the ancient Irwin Allen offerings of our yooof, and *also* on that basis I find it enjoyable entertainment, so there...

ALSO BRAND SPANKIN' NEW...

'Reacher' season 4 (Amazon Prime) dropped its first three episodes on August 12th, surprisingly with Alan Ritchson actually getting a bit beaten up in the fights. Now I suppose you either *love* Ritchson's interpretation of the character or you don't, so I'm either preaching to the converted or not preaching to the indifferent who will have skipped this bit. "More of the same" seems like it's a diss, but not when it's what the fans want ie Reacher's intelligence, stoicism and, yes, dry humor (eg "What's this? Good cop, stupid cop?") Is on the usual full display. Unmissable round here...

The first episode (of eight) of 'Lanterns' (as in Green Lanterns from DC comics) aired on August 16th on HBO Max, and ummm...

Since it seems inevitable that the characterization will be fucked about with, this version's Hal Jordan (Kyle Chandler) is presented as an arrogant flyboy rather than the stiff-arsed establishment type original, and that put me off a bit. Although I will concede that test pilot Jordan *did* have some Top Gun sneer about him before he got ringed. They've got John Stewart (Aaron Pierre) more or less "right", although rather than being contemporaries, Stewart is being trained by the older Jordan in the ways of the ring. It's all a bit pedestrian to start with, seriously overdoing the conflict between the two with Chandler going full-on arsehole for almost all of it, but some plot kicks in and the end of the first episode does start to get interesting. More next month, no doubt...

MOVIE NIGHT

PRESSURE

I am here in the unusual position of punting a movie review of a flick that isn't even out in the UK until September, which strikes me as well peculiar given the fundamentally British

content of it all - oh all right, and American content I suppose given the pivotal presence of Dwight D. Eisenhower (Brendan Fraser) and the DoBFO less well-known Col. Irving P. Krick (Chris Messina).

Who'd'a thunk, though, that there would be a movie about D-Day wherein the hero is the fuckin' *weatherman*, RAF Group Captain James Stagg (Andrew Scott).

This'un is billed as "a true story", and mostly is, but there's a few "historical inaccuracies" (it sez here) which you can clock at the Wikipedia page for the flick if you can be arsed.

It's a talking head story for the most part, but very well done indeed since there's a ton of palpable tension, a lot of it from an increasingly desperate Eisenhower after the abject failure of the D-Day "rehearsal" Exercise Tiger. In the movie Stagg is brought in only shortly before the planned D-Day (originally June 5th) whereas in the real history he'd been on the job for over six months.

The American meteorologist Krick is gung-ho for the go-ahead whereas Stagg is much more cautious, so they're butting heads all day. Eisenhower *wants* to believe Krick but the Tiger cockup holds him back a bit. I won't spoil how it plays out, but then (DoBFO) we know D-Day got to happen on June 6th - what's interesting to see is the *how* and the *why* it ended up on that day.

In 1961 JFK talked with Eisenhower about the reasons for the success of Operation Overlord, and Ike's response was that we "had better meteorologists than the Germans". And so it was...

RADIO WINSTON

BRYAN ANDREWS

"Outlaw country" was a sub-genre moniker which arose in the 1970s to describe a few artists who wanted their creative freedom outside of the Nashville rhinestone factory and included the likes of Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash and even the really-out-there racist David Allan Coe, the man who penned what he called the ultimate country song whose last verse beings "Well I was drunk the day my mom got out of prison"...

"Outlaw" then didn't infer political leanings, merely the strong intent to be free of what was then mainstream country music and do their own, rootsier thing. As with a lot of punk by the beginning of the following decade, many of the artists



were slowly folded into the establishment, and while not exactly neutered became a part of it, with luck on their own terms.

The "Stand by your Man" ethos (and I'm not about to denigrate that slice since it's actually quite subversive) inevitably catered to the right-wing cowboy fantasies perpetrated, at least visually if not thematically by the approx 297 Western TV shows where you'd never see a black cowboy and native Americans were either outright villains or comic relief. Thankfully for advocates of actual history the likes of Dom Flemons (who I genuinely had as a passenger in my cab once, lovely bloke) formerly of the Carolina Chocolate Drops have done a lot to de-whiten the story.

"Outlaw" turned into a descriptor for the music of white victimhood of certain Southern States, a culture that persists to this day. Some alleged "intellectuals" claim to find it less than credible that poor white folks would consistently vote against their own interests in terms of welfare payments, when the simple explanation is that they don't want black people to get anything. The "Southern strategy" is alive and well.

The entrenchment of white, right-wing "Christian" attitudes was exposed thoroughly by the reaction to Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks saying to the crowd at a concert in Shepherd's Bush that the band didn't support the invasion of Iraq and were "ashamed" that George W. Bush was from Texas. This inevitably resulted in death threats and led to a feud with über-patriot Toby Keith. Bollocks to the First Amendment ect, reminding me of a comment I made years ago (which still applies) that when the right-wing nut jobs bleat on about "left-wing bias", what they really mean is "lack of right-wing bias". Not that the lefties haven't been guilty of the same, but ey...

That's a long preamble to get to the ostensible subject of this here 'RW' column, who is (as it sez up there) Bryan Andrews, an artist only recently clocked by me who's been active for eight years or so but only got actual music releases in the last couple of years. It won't surprise any of you lot to learn that Andrews is "progressive" in his views, so any Red Hats that might have inadvertently wandered in should leave now.

Andrews' slice "The Older That I Get" went viral for him. Originally released late in 2025, he later updated the lyrics after the DoJ claimed that the Epstein files didn't exist. Here's that version:

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

Surprisingly perhaps, but encouragingly, that'un went to the top of the *Billboard* digital sales chart *and* the Country Digital Song Sales charts, which might tell us something about a shift in perceptions coming from a younger country music audience.

Next up on the list is this year's "Yeehaw", which got described as, wait for it, "outlaw country", not a massive stretch since it specifically asks "Where my outlaws at?" And namecheck "Willie, Waylon, Johnny Cash, they gonna want them records back".

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

Just before that he dropped the intense, heavy-riffed "Are We Great Yet?", I think around the time he did a short Midwest series of gigs, just *slightly* provocatively titled the "ICE Out of My Country Damn Music" Tour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqynD9woWLs>

His latest release, also with a thumping riff, is "Not See", and that slice is as musically and lyrically in-er-face as the rest:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Z7i-fsC4ZI>

A sort-of album, 'Independence Day', dropped last month, although at only just over 19 minutes (eight slices) he calls it a "mixtape". That's had it's share of lousy reviews, predictably from outlets identifying the artist as "Trump-hating", but you can get it off Spotify and other outlets.

<https://open.spotify.com/album/0bfYh8mawgr8vuXofdJq69>

Andrews has announced a "Taking the Flag Back" US tour for this November and December, sadly no Vegas date yet, but a fair few near some of my Merkan readers:

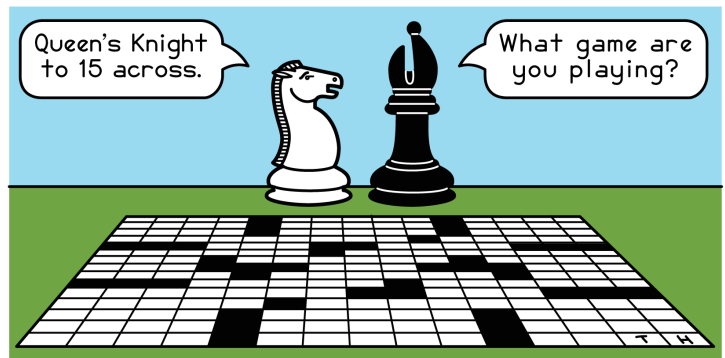
<https://laylo.com/laylo-bryanandrews/m/FRrdXe>

Needless to say, he's received death threats...

<https://www.bryanandrewsmusic.com/>



GIVE US A CLUE



Lastish's weathered clues:

"Dust storm has shortened knocker (6)"

Definition: "Dust storm"

Wordplay: "has shortened" = HA + "knocker" = BOOB yielding HABOOB

"Cascadia weather, it might conversationally wag nothing, all right? (7)"

Definition: "Cascadia weather"

Wordplay: Something that might wag in conversation is CHIN + "nothing" = O + "all right" = OK yielding CHINOOK

"Chauvin duplicate, a lot of hot air? (7)"

Definition: "a lot of hot air"

Wordplay: "Chauvin" = CY + "duplicate" = CLONE to get CYCLONE

"It's a breeze as I get out of a faulty legal process (7)"

Definition: "It's a breeze"

Wordplay: "faulty legal process" = MISTRIAL, remove the I ("get out of") for MISTRAL

Alan Rosenthal is in and all correct, remarking "Sure is windy today!", and also noting re: MISTRAL, "a word I heard for the first time while I was in France last month."

Steve Jeffery also clean sweeps: "I fear I may have had to cheat on a couple of these, if sticking guessed endings into an online crossword solver is cheating.

[HABOOB]. Who knew that was a word? Well, you did, obvs, or you wouldn't have been able to set that as a clue.

[CHINOOK] I assumed an ending of O+OK which came back with a list including Chinook which I learned was also the name for a dry wind as well as that of a Native American people.

[CYCLONE] Doh. Took a while before that one clicked.

[MISTRAL] Damn. It's just come to me as I was typing "No, you got me on this one".

[[I note to Steve, as I had earlier done to Alan, that the word actually new to me in this set was HABOOB...]]

Eli Cohen returns 3/4, missing the one I thought might have been the easiest (but apparently not): "[Chauvin

duplicate..."], — for this one, I've got no idea, and a growing dent in the wall. Some obscure joke on **Cy Chauvin**? I give up."

S&ra Bond writes: "You know I don't do crossword clues because they make my brain hurt, but I just stumbled over this one and it made me laugh as well as impressing me with its cleverness: "Cock-up on the catering front? It cost an inheritance." (4,2,7)"

[[I'll just leave that there and try to remember to give the solution nextish. I learn from Jen, though, that Americans are unlikely to be able to solve this, and I may also remember to tell you why...]]

Thish's efforts, themed again:

"Bird Sorensen defines as a Renaissance Italian (6)"

"Never me, erratically hiding 17th century Dutchman (7)"

"Nightmare artist to meld Caesar's fifty-one (6)"

"Bob the poet and James the driver get William the Pre-Raphaelite (6,4)"

And a non-theme extra (easy, I think):

"Unusual lead narc on a day-to-day schedule (8)"

DIGGING FOR VICTORY

AN OCCASIONAL GARDENING COLUMN
BY JOSEPH NICHOLAS

As any Brit will know, "Dig for Victory" was a WW2 Ministry of Agriculture campaign to encourage the public to grow their own, reducing dependency on food imports (and food shortages due to naval blockades) by turning gardens, lawns, public land and even royal parks (St James's Park and Kensington Gardens, to give two central London examples) into vegetable-growing allotments. The campaign spawned several iconic posters, including one of a happy pipe-puffing man carrying home an armload of vegetable produce, including a cabbage of a rather implausible magnitude. Although the campaign was officially discontinued after 1945, the fact that the war effort had pretty much bankrupted the country meant that the pressure to grow your own continued well into the 1950s -- but in the 1960s the allotment idea declined to what it had been before WW2: the domain of retired elderly blokes (always men, again) finding something to do on their weekends while their wives went shopping.



That began to change again from the 1980s onwards, for various reasons. One that particularly struck home was the health scares (BSE and nvCJD, salmonella in poultry and eggs, eColi 501) associated with the industrial model that the food production system had become, which prompted a slow upsurge of interest in allotments by a younger cohort, more concerned than their parents to know the source of their food and (often) to ensure a healthier diet for their children. Which is where, in 1996, things stood when I came home from work one summer afternoon to have Judith greet me with a pleased look and the announcement "I've got an allotment."

I was very dubious. We'd only been in our house for a couple of years and were still creating a garden for it (we had a plan, of course, but things take time to grow); surely we didn't need another, bigger garden as well?

It was indeed a much larger space -- 8.5 metres wide by 19 metres long, or 8 poles long in the medieval measurement system used by the local authority to calculate the annual rent. (Brits of a certain age may remember the primary school exercise books of the early 1960s, the back covers of which listed the imperial weights and measures then still in use: rods, poles and perches; stones and hundredweights; guineas, shillings and pence -- all now consigned to the past, apart from a bonkers attempt by Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg to resurrect them post-Brexit.) The plot had been neglected for at least a year beforehand -- there was a ratty old shed, provided by the local authority, and the vestige of a terraced bed layout at the west end; but grass, grass and grass everywhere else. To dig over the entire thing in one go would have been impossible (had we tried, we'd likely have decided that allotmenting was beyond us); as we were both in full-time employment we could only work on it at weekends anyway; in consequence, it took us some five to

six years to bring it all under cultivation, advancing from west to east in a series of discrete, permanent beds. In the second year, we dug a big pond in partial compensation (we told ourselves) for the smaller pond in the back garden, which had been shoehorned as an afterthought (inspired by a visit to Eve and John Harvey's garden in Hertfordshire, where they were then living).

We went for discrete, permanent beds -- rather than the old-style dig-everything-over-in-the-spring approach favoured by some of the longer-standing plottolders -- because we thought that would better organise our use of the allotment. Setting out permanent beds also meant scouring local skips for discarded fork-lift pallets, to be broken up and repurposed for bed

edging, and tossed-out lengths of carpet to lay down on the paths between the beds, to suppress the grass and weeds. Inevitably, the carpets gradually disintegrated in the rain and the wood rotted where it was in contact with the soil, and both had to be replaced every few years.

Finding replacements, and doing the heavy digging (such as turning over an entire bed) was my job. Judith took care of the actual gardening-related tasks, because she knew more about plants: seed selection and sowing, planting out, watering, weeding and harvesting. We mostly grew stuff which either took up a lot of room or didn't require much attention, or both -- for example, cabbages, broccoli, kale, beans (climbing and broad), leeks and parsnips, plus some fruit bushes: raspberries, gooseberries, blackcurrants. (What allotments are most suited for, really.) We also grew things we particularly liked: for me, it was (and is) peppers and chillies; for Judith, it was heritage tomatoes -- varieties which couldn't be sold commercially because the seeds didn't meet the EU criteria for "durability, consistency, and stability" but which were circulated to private growers "for a consideration". (Although it was a mystery to both of us why green zebra tomatoes aren't a commercial crop. Perhaps the malign influence of some EU agricultural trade association striving to eliminate competition for bland tasteless watery supermarket tomatoes.)



Retirement from full-time work in early 2014 meant that we were no longer struggling to keep up with the planting, growing and harvesting cycle: we got ahead of it, and stayed ahead. A few years later, we replaced the falling-apart council-provided shed with a larger, bespoke one of our own, placed at the back of the plot where it overlooked the pond and which we facetiously described as our waterside property. We then began to replace the wooden bed edging with plastic planking (made from recycled plastic) which (obviously!) wouldn't decay in contact with the soil, thus saving a lot of future time and energy.

Judith's diagnosis of breast cancer in autumn 2020 brought gardening to a halt while the chemotherapy ran its course. In the summer of 2021, however, we learned that a fragment of the rogue protein had survived the chemo and was attacking her liver and spine. The doctors considered her immune system too compromised for another round of chemotherapy; palliative care was all they could offer. In her final days, one of the things she said to her sister Zena -- who had flown over from Sydney at short notice to be with her -- "I think the allotment will be a source of great solace for Joseph".

For the first few months after her death that autumn, it wasn't, and I did begin to think of giving it up -- but in view of the money we'd spent on the new shed and the bed edging, I decided to carry on. However, I reduced the amount to be dug over and planted out each year by expanding the space devoted to soft fruit. Roughly a quarter of the plot is now occupied thus: lots more raspberry and blackcurrant bushes, a couple of new gooseberry bushes, and (not grown before) two beds of redcurrant bushes. As I then quipped to my fellow allotmenters, I'd soon be producing industrial quantities of jam and forcing some on them whether they liked it or not -- but there were indeed takers for my jam, and they shared some of their produce with me in return. (Although my first jam-making effort was an utter failure: I boiled the gooseberries for a few minutes too long, and when decanted into jars the preserve set so solidly that I had to use a sharp-pointed knife to get the stuff out.)

There have been some other changes. Judith liked globe artichokes; but they disagree with me, so the plants were dug out and composted the year following her death. I don't grow as many varieties of tomatoes as she did; and while we rarely grew potatoes, I now grow first and second early as well as main crop varieties. (In most years, anyway -- last year, from a sowing of 2kg of main crop tubers, I harvested 20kg of the things, so haven't planted any main crop potatoes this year.) I made a mistake with this year's order for early potatoes: instead of first and second, I have two varieties of second early. But one of them is best for potato salads, and (as Zena will confirm) I make a pretty damn good potato salad.

There have of course been various successes and failures during our thirty years of allotmenting. Attempts to grow sweetcorn were always aborted by the local squirrels biting through the base of the cobs before they were ripe, thus killing them. (The bastards.) Courgettes have always been hit or miss -- in some years, when left for a few days, they grow to the size of marrows; but in other years the seedlings die within a few days of being planted out. Parsnips ditto: utter failure to germinate in 2024, for example, but last year I had so many that they had to be turned into soup. (Especially yummy when blitzed with

garam marsala or ground nutmeg.) Sprouting broccoli usually does well; but last year, instead of going dormant for the winter and coming back to life in the spring of this year, they flowered in late autumn instead. This year has been even worse: four heatwaves this spring and summer, plus a prolonged drought, prompted them to start putting out their florets in July. That may also be a response to anthropogenic global warming (the allotment site used to be something of a frost pocket, but it's years since we had any frosts) and may mean that we gardeners will need to reconsider what we can grow -- especially if the south of England becomes too warm for such "cold weather" crops.

Growing stuff on an allotment has a cost, of course. The annual rent payable to the local council; seeds; liquid feeds for the growing plants; slug pellets (the only pest control used -- we rely on the birds and frogs to keep others down); nets to keep the foxes and cats out and bamboo canes to support them; tools (which do need replacing from time to time); and so on. A couple of years ago, *New Scientist* reporter James Wong, who then had a monthly column on the science of cooking, calculated that the cost of growing your own exceeded the price of the same items in any supermarket -- probably true but, as I and others pointed out in letters published in a subsequent issue, his purely economic calculus ignored the incalculable benefit of knowing just where your food comes from and the food miles saved in growing it. Never mind the enjoyment to be derived from the allotment -- not just the satisfaction of growing your own, but also the satisfaction of sitting down with a cup of tea or coffee after an afternoon's work to survey one's acreage and watch the birds hopping about snapping up insects and caterpillars.

A source of great solace, as Judith said.



ANORAK

BOW CREEK

Before the London Underground got going (1863) there were of course *other* railways ducking and diving in and around the capital. The Eastern Counties and Thames Junction Railway opened in 1847 with the termini of Stratford in the east and North Woolwich in the south, but on the north side of the Thames across from the Woolwich dockyard.

The line acquired some extra bits and bobs in fairly short order, including a drawbridge over Bow Creek for the East India Dock Company branch to Pepper Warehouses, and in 1855 a swing bridge over the entrance to the newly opened Royal Victoria Dock. You can get an idea of the layout from this 1872 map:



Back in that there day the railways were a spankin' new addition to transportation - you can see from the dock placement (and the presence of the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding company) that water transport was still dominant, and would remain so for decades. Also perhaps worth noting that this area (now Canning Town and a bit of the Greenwich peninsula) was described by the mapmaker James Wyld II as being merely "in the vicinity of London".

The trains had three DoBFO options for Bow Creek: over, under or around, and ended up applying all three, all of which still exist, not necessarily in their original form.

The Canning Town railway bridge, built in 1848, was variously described as a drawbridge and/or a swing bridge before being converted to a permanent iron girder structure which allowed passage of river traffic underneath. Better researchers than me might be able to advise when that occurred, but the single-track crossing was closed in 1967. Here's what I reckon must be a fairly recent photo (top of the next page) from the interesting website done by social history author and photographer Paul Talling which I could spend fuckin' hours clocking bits of, especially the railway stations, yards and rolling stock section:

www.derelictlondon.com



By the late 1960s and early '70s the docklands area was having closures of various facilities and getting a bit dilapidated and deprived. The old London & Blackwall railway which had connected the area to the national rail system closed in 1966 for lack of traffic, and the final nail in the coffin was likely the opening of new container docks at Tilbury in Essex in the 1970s, leading to the closure of the Royal Docks in 1981.

Various plans were considered for a revitalization of the docklands area, and part of what was derided as "yuppification" included new and better transportation, which ended up being the oh-so-modern Docklands Light Railway (DLR) with its fully automated (ie driverless) trains, opened by Her Maj QEII with great fanfare in 1987. A lot of the initial route used previously disused (or underused) infrastructure, and turned out to be well popular, accruing extensions in fairly swift order.

The Beckton extension required a new bridge to get across Bow Creek and that was built in 1994. A further elevated pedestrian bridge was also put in above the DLR tracks but that was swiftly closed due to unspecified "safety concerns" but more likely yobboes chucking shit off it onto the tracks below.

We're almost certainly due a photo of a train in here at some point, so here's #38 (B90 stock) at Canning Town, with the roundel unusually on a red background.



And now, tunnels!

The Connaught tunnel is one of London's oldest, built in 1878 for the North Woolwich branch of the North London line using cut-and-cover to go under the Royal Docks, which meant that the docks needed to be drained to construct it. Here's a photo from around 1935:



The Connaught became disused with the closure of that line in 2006 to make room for bits of the DLR, but ended up substantially refurbished and reopened in 2022, serving the Crossrail/Elizabeth line project. The refurbishment had a fair few challenges, including removing silt (and apparently cars that had - er - drowned) which was initially done by divers, converting the original twin bore into a single tunnel *and* having to partially drain the docks again, shore up the floor with modern materials and all sorts of other stuff.

Rather than copy out a load of info, I refer you to (and leave you with) this article from *Railway Engineer*:

<https://www.railengineer.co.uk/reusing-the-connaught-tunnel/>

THE OLD SOD

BY DAVID HODSON

Beside a second wave of “You took the wrong eighty-year-old!” memes, the death of Tim Curry just a few days ago, in the wake of the death of the universally beloved Dolly Parton, seems to have stoked a new wave of questions about the potential “difficulty” of the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* to modern day viewers, so what better opportunity will there ever be to discuss the concept of “difficulty”.

Now, without wanting to sound like some reactionary old scrote who likes nothing more than screaming at the local children playing outside to “get orf my feckin’ lawn!!!”, I have to say that I have absolutely no truck with the concept of “difficulty”. To my mind, and as someone that was telling everyone nearly forty years ago that Neil Gaiman was not who he presented himself as being, the boundaries between who or what is right and who or what is wrong are fairly clear cut and, quite clearly, I have no issues with *Rocky Horror*. It was a play that was first produced in a country where homosexuality was still illegal a mere six years prior to its hitting the stage at The Royal Court in the summer of 1973 (it’s worth noting that Scotland and Northern Ireland lagged a long way behind England and Wales in decriminalising homosexuality; Scotland waited until 1981 and Northern Ireland was a year later still, so us Anglo-Saxons might want to lay off the criticism of the U.S. federal laws mess), and should always be accepted as a piece of art in its historical context.

And, a mere five years after the play’s launch, in the late summer of 1978, when I and a group of sixth-form friends rocked along to the King’s Road to see a live performance for the first time, our head of year went to great pains to ensure we knew that, given the subject matter, “this was not a school arranged or approved trip”. Mark Fuller and I, along with several others, laughed out loud at that insistence given the open knowledge that we were regularly out late on schooldays (not a term I ever recall being used back then) at the Marquee Club, or the Hope & Anchor, or the 100 Club, or the Vortex, for various punk gigs. It was also odd considering the head of year was quite happy to drag us all along to the cinema to see an underage Olivia Hussey go topless in Franco Zeffirelli’s quite brilliant adaption of *Romeo and Juliet*. On a previous



school trip, sometime in 1974, when the weather wouldn’t allow us to do what we had originally planned, the teachers accompanying us allowed us to spend the ticket money for whatever attraction we were supposed to be going to on cinema tickets. I recall Kevin Davies, he of HHGTTG and Doctor Who fandom fame, was at least one of the other people with me in the screen showing Woody Allen’s *Sleeper*, which is now supposed to be “problematic” on so many levels that I doubt even Dante Alighieri himself could keep tally (it was where I discovered that I wanted to one day visit New Orleans and Preservation Hall though, so I’ll hear no criticism of the movie, and it’s probably lucky that callow me had, at that point, not encountered Timothy Leary yet. There were also a great many other goings-on in that sixth form building that will never, EVER see print anywhere from me).

No, I have never had a problem with working out, to my personal criteria (serious caveat there), what is “difficult” and what isn’t and why. Where I have had and continue to have a problem is with the people who tell that I should find something or someone “difficult” or “problematic” and why; far too often there seems to be an ulterior motive and, far too often, both sides of the argument have ulterior motives.

So, let’s use the Woody Allen situation as an example.

I used to be a big Woody Allen fan and still have a lot of affection for films like *Bananas*, *Sleeper*, *Play It Again, Sam*, and *Love and Death*; my issue with him, and more particularly with his films, is he just stopped being funny, which is why I liked him. *Play It Again, Sam* is the perfect proto-nerd movie, and I’d say it even represents a great many of the personality types I’ve encountered in various fandoms over the decades, but *Manhattan*, and *Annie Hall*, and *Hannah and Her Sisters* just didn’t hit the same way for me. By the time all the controversy about his relationship with a woman thirty years younger than him started appearing in the press I was barely paying any attention to him at all anymore.

Not long after the “revelations” about Allen and his partner appeared, the same “news” sources started printing stories about Mia Farrow and her accusations against Allen. Now, don’t get me wrong, I can understand Farrow having reservations about a man she had previously been in a relationship with suddenly becoming involved with one of her adopted stepdaughters, Soon-Yi Previn, adopted whilst she was in a relationship with the conductor André Previn. I can also understand she may have harboured some feelings of rejection against Allen, and it’s likely she worried that Allen might have been grooming Soon-Yi whilst they were together, but there’s never been any real evidence presented that that was the case. What there is is a long history, or so it has been “reported”, again in *those* “news” sources, of mental health problems on Farrow’s side and her rather “problematic” previous relationship histories tend to

support that mental health story; her marriage to Frank Sinatra in the 1960's rather mirrors the relationship between Allen and Soon-Yi and ended when Sinatra, again reportedly, filed for divorce in the wake of his failed attempts to stop her starring in the movie *Rosemary's Baby*, which was, in turn, directed by Roman Polanski, who, should anyone have forgotten, is a remarkably "problematic" figure himself, although his conviction for sexual assault whilst drugging and raping the 13-year old Samantha Geimer lay another nine in the future in 1977. I've wondered in the past if the murder of Polanski's pregnant wife, Sharon Tate, in 1969 by the Manson family didn't actually drive him mad as there have been other accusations made against him by other women since the 1977 case, but they all, to my knowledge, post-date the murder of Tate. I can think of lesser events that might drive me 'round the proverbial bend!

Of course, being a wee bit touched (to use an old-fashioned term, I am being deliberately provocative with some of my language in this column before anyone tries to cancel me... (unlucky, muthafuckers!) in the wake of a traumatic event doesn't excuse drugging and raping a minor and, although it's doubtful that Polanski has ever fully recovered from the loss of his then-wife and unborn child, nine years would seem a reasonable amount of time to have maybe taken the rougher edges off his feelings of grief and loss, so I can't really make a case, and indeed never would, for them causing him to do what he did.

What this does illustrate though is the rather warped and strange environment all these characters – Woody Allen, Mia Farrow, Andre Previn, Frank Sinatra, Roman Polanski, and sundry others in their orbits – inhabit(ed) (with so many of them being actors or involved in the movie business, calling them characters is probably quite accurate). And, to a lesser extent, I can sympathise with Farrow's likely feelings about the attempts at control by an older partner given her experiences with Sinatra, and her likely fears about the potential controlling nature of the relationship between a fifty-something man and her early twenties adopted daughter, even without the baked in familial soap opera.

My first partner, who I got together with when I was twenty years old, was five years older than me, and the majority of trysts (another quaint old-fashioned term I'm using to disguise the rather more sweaty reality of the encounters) that I'd had prior to becoming involved with that person, who a large number of British fans met in the 1980s, were also with women that were older than me, and I can tell you from personal experience that, although five years might not seem like much, at age 20 it's an experiential chasm. By the time we split up when I was thirty-nine and she was forty-four, I still always felt as though I was on the back foot in the relationship and that

my opinions and feelings didn't count for as much as hers. In retrospect I can see that I really shouldn't have got involved with her, but it was 1981, AIDS/HIV wasn't a thing yet, at least to the wider, uninformed, heterosexual public, and it was still quite common, in a 1960s/70s kind of way to go jumping into bed with someone you barely knew but fancied -hey, we had birth control and penicillin – and that kind of immediate intimacy could rather fool you into thinking you knew the other person better than you really did.



The Allen-Farrow miasma is one of those situations where I don't think there are really any "villains", at least initially, although Farrow subsequently weaponizing her other children against Allen is pretty inexcusable (again, I can provide at least a modicum of a voice of experience). It is also likely that Allen's nerdy, geeky screen persona is a smokescreen for a passive-aggressive control freak, otherwise how else did he become a film director that largely scripts all his own movies, which is surely the equivalent of moving chessmen around on a board. What it does illustrate is the complicated mental processes at work with all these people and even more so the frequently batshit crazy mental processes of distant onlookers through the frequently tainted media who think they know what's *REALLY* going on in this mess.

And so, my message to anyone who finds any situation they are following through the media "problematic", regardless of how invested you may feel in the psychodrama that is being played out, is you weren't there, you didn't see anything, and your opinion is probably fuckin' worthless, especially if you weren't even fuckin' born at the time!

Here ends the sermon...

LOCO CITATO

[[“None of the things one frets about ever happen. Something one’s never thought about does.” (Connie Willis) ...]]

From:
gandc001@bigpond.com

“Did I remember to loc?”

July 26



Bruce Gillespie writes:

I find it hard to read on screen, so will have to print 102 before commenting. But I did spot quite a few comment points while fast-scanning.

To **Leigh Edmonds** on jazz: “Never exclude; only include.” Not that my wife Elaine will accept that dictum, so I can’t play my jazz records (including the box of the complete Miles Davis on Columbia Records) while she is around. And, like me, she doesn’t go out often. Therefore I don’t know my jazz history the way I know my classical, rock and roll, and country histories. A bit too late to catch up, I suppose.

[[I inquire whether the Archbishop possesses a set of headphones, and he replies as follows...]]

I hate listening to music on headphones, especially as I have a decent amplifier and speakers. Not top class, but just right for the acoustic space of our living room. I have to wear headphones late at night, which is the only time I can watch movies. (Elaine dislikes movies as much as she dislikes jazz.) But I turn down the sound and turn on the subtitles. It’s all household negotiations. Elaine is catching up on *Messeian*, but only when I’m up the street or taking a nap. So I play Willie Nelson or Miles Davis when she’s shopping. We both listen to a lot of radio, on the classical music stations.

From: julian.warner@aussiebroadband.com.au

July 27

Julian Warner writes:

Much as I hate to correct **Joseph Nicholas** (ooh, one *hates* it, one *does*), Melbourne’s tram system grew just as organically (or inorganically) as those of Britain. It started off with small local lines which may or may not have eventually joined up with similar lines or may have faded into disuse. The train system also started in a diffuse manner, with northern lines not connected at all to southern/eastern lines in the early days.

Thanks for giving us credit for being more organised than we really were though.

Ribena is popular in Middle Eastern stores locally.

Something to do with it being non-alcoholic I suppose.

On the personal health diary, I don’t recommend “Holmium Laser Enucleation of the Prostate (HOLEP)” unless you really need it. It’s a lot of time and effort to be able to pee normally. Thank goodness for a reasonable hospital and friendly nurses.

[[It would seem that Tamsulosin does help with the not getting up 5 times during the night, unless, apparently, I’ve had many pints of Irish beer...]]

I like a bit of first generation ska but lean more toward the rocksteady and early reggae years - as evidenced by a few hundred CDs of such material. Although ska was popular in Britain and affected the early Mods with people like Georgie Fame playing ska tunes, it didn’t really travel to Australia. I suspect that the only reason that early reggae made any impact in Australia was because of British migrants (like me) who had heard “Double Barrel” and “Love of the Common People” and such on the radio. **Leigh Edmonds** can be forgiven for this minor lack in his cultural acquaintance. Personally I’m interested in the period when ska was being formed out of a slight mutation of the New Orleans R&B that was drifting over from their big Western neighbour. It’d be nice if there was a local band which played both New Orleans R&B and early ska/rocksteady.

There is of course, Mallard the band (pic attached). Basically Captain Beefheart’s band without Captain Beefheart. Not quite as disturbing as the Captain’s output but listenable nonetheless.

I suppose that with Airfix 1:72 armies of fans, one could enact the fanfeuds of yore in desktop battle scenarios. Might be popular in Sweden I hear.

The stuff about dying jazz performers reminds me that I should do more to treasure the remaining elder practitioners we have here. We have really good jazz clubs where we can see them. Due to my op I missed out on seeing seasoned New Zealand pianist Mike Nock performing locally. I just have to do a bit more work on researching who is playing where and when.

Congratulations on the green card renewal. I have heard horror stories of irrational refusals of same.

Keep the freak fnord flying,

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

July 28

Gary Mattingly writes:

This is earlier than usual, but shorter than I want it to be. I just felt this urge to try to finish this up and get it off to you. And I’m up late for me. I’m finishing this up around 11:15 PM.

'Egotorial': Exercise is good. Boring, frequently unpleasant, but good. Are you aware of compression shirts?

[[Compression shirts always sounded very uncomfortable, and in any case the object should be to shrink the beach ball belly rather than merely conceal it, shurely?...]]

'TAFfnessabounds': With respect to the travel miles, that is a lot of miles. I started thinking about how long that would take to walk.

'Corflux': Yes, I am also awaiting the ability to reserve a hotel room. I probably should reserve a flight too, but I've been thinking about taking the train, despite the layover in Seattle.

'Dream Weaver': The Taj Mahal?

'TV Guide': Ah, I missed all of the FIFA games. Hard not to hear about them in the news, though. Of late, I've started watching 'Spooky In Love', a new Korean series with Park Eun-Bin. I also watched the first episode of 'Hyper Knife', also with Park Eun-Bin. I thought it was good and she definitely portrays a very different character than her usual fare. However, I've read that the first two episodes of the series are the best, and it goes downhill. There are eight episodes and I will probably watch them all, nevertheless. The new season of 'Silo' has started, so I'm watching that. 'Stuart Fails to Save the Universe' series has started. I wasn't that impressed with the first episode, but will watch for a while longer. I watched the complete Korean mini-series 'The East Palace', which I enjoyed. It had ghosts and spirits, palace intrigue, fighting, and all that kind of stuff in feudal Korea. It was no classic, but I found it entertaining.

[[Jen is watching 'Stuart Fails...' since she was a fan of 'Big Bang Theory'. I'm peripherally paying attention since I do like alternate universe stuff, though it's clearly the case that you need to be familiar with the characters for it to be (allegedly) funnier than it may at first appear...]]

'Anorak (1)': Interesting article this issue from **David Hodson**. I don't think I could travel around the world, except maybe a piece at a time. I'd miss the dogs.

I'm trying to decide if a couple of photos are missing.

[[Not "missing" so much as "unused"....]]

'Movie Night': I liked 'The Sheep Detectives', as I previously noted.

'Radio Winston': I hadn't heard the Skabratts or the Testarudes before now, but I just listened to a number of their songs, and they sound good to me.

'Anorak (2)': And more interesting train information and photos. Plus some interesting sounds.

'The Old Sod': And more interesting reading about cons, present and future. Again, I can't say much about soccer. I really don't have any knowledge of it. I'd like to go to a Corflu in Sweden. We'll see if it does happen and if I make it there. I do plan to be in Vancouver next year.

Then I get sidetracked into Kickboxing, Muay Thai, and MMA by this young Swedish woman, Smilla Sundell. She was born in Sweden, lived in Thailand, but now seems to be in Vancouver. Hm . . .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itO3d71KhH4>

Hm (again), Mona Kimura has a lot of hype, but I have a feeling Smilla would win.

Some say Mona just gets unprepared opponents, some older, etc. I don't know. She looked interesting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqA1q4oXGzc>

However, I think Smilla would take her quickly.

Sorry, I'm wandering.

Anyway, another fan not coming to the US until Trump is gone. Gee, I wish Trump wasn't here at all. I have this feeling he's going to try to fix future elections. What to do. . . . what to do...

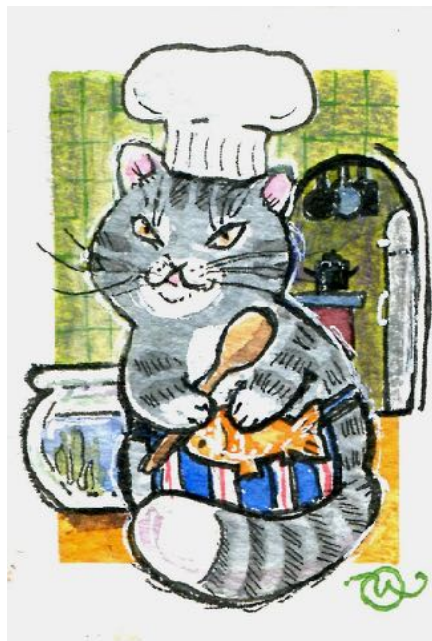
'Loco Citato':

Brad Foster: Congratulations on losing some weight. I've had to not exercise for a week due to some dental surgery, but today I was back at Bikram. Unfortunately, the room wasn't as hot as it should have been, and I didn't cut calorie intake as much as I should have over the last week or today. I really have to do that. I need to cut my sugar habit.

Mark Nelson: Well, that's one thing I don't have to worry about. The likelihood that I will ever win an award, or even be close to winning one, is pretty minimal. I don't worry about it. I also don't get very involved in promoting anyone. I do vote, even if I don't think I really have enough knowledge to do so properly.

Pills, mostly I take tons of supplements and vitamins. Now, excluding those, I just take pseudoephedrine and Advil, plus Tamsulosin Hydrochloride. I don't have to take it. It has helped a little in the past, but its help seems to be decreasing, or I'm just drinking too much fluid.

Then my mind wanders over to "Fenceline" by mildred



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89-it4BSiSQ&list=RD89-it4BSiSQ&start_radio=1

and 3-MMC. Yeah, the song isn't about 3-MMC. I just read an article about it. Even though it supposedly makes one very sociable, I'll pass.

Leigh Edmonds: Well, you may not be interested in jazz, but my mind has been turning more to it than almost anything else of late. Lots of Blue Note and Verve reissues appearing. **Rich Coad** listens to some, but I think he said he has difficulty getting into the mellowness. That seems weird, since he likes to meander and I like to whiz right through on walks and such. What's going on?

Anyway, I do plan to see and listen to the Vienna Royal Orchestra playing Mozart in the Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco in October.

Joseph Nicholas: Gee, he could have been 'Anorak (3)'.

Dave Cockfield: I will undoubtedly see 'Supergirl' but probably at home and not in the theater. Ah, mention of Russia and then thinking about Supergirl, then I start thinking about Natalia Diachkova, Julia Berezikova, and Yana Santos.

Ah, Smilla beat Natalia Diachkova, Strawweight Muay Thai. Julia Berezikova is older, and I don't think she has had many recent fights. I wonder if Yana Santos will fight Smilla. Smilla has moved up to Bantamweight, which is Julia's weight class.

Gary Mattingly: I wasn't being dismissive about Prince Rogers Nelson. I just haven't listened to him in a while. There are so many musicians out there, I just lose track and can't keep up. You and **Wm Breiding** both seem to have phenomenal memories about music. Of course, as previously noted, my memory, more often than not, sucks.

Kev Williams: Gee, maybe I should watch 'Star City'. TBD.

Ah, I've seen those two photos of the Jazz greats. Time and death.

I have several albums by Abdullah Ibrahim. Must be time to go back and listen to him again.

'Indulge Me':

Ageless Beauty: I did like Alfre Woodard in 'Boroughs'.

Green Card: Good to hear that you got a new Green Card!

Roundup Latest: Good luck with getting money due to the settlement.

Enjoyable photos throughout and artwork by **Harry Bell**, **Brad W Foster**, **Teddy Harvia**, and **Ulrika O'Brien**.

Sorry about my Kickboxing, Muay Thai, and MMA meanderings.

From: jabberwocky2000@hotmail.com

July 30

Brad Foster writes:

Well, before even getting into the new issue #102, that quote you put on the email sending it out to everyone caught my attention:

"None of the things one frets about ever happen. Something one's never thought about does."

Now I want to make a list of things to fret about each day, in order to keep them all away!

Ack! Your Corflux notes reminds me that, while we have actually gotten passports together (and I love how the b&w photos make Cindy and I look like European immigrants planning some mischief once we get across the big blue, I have yet to make our hotel reservations. I can't keep up with all of this! Ack!

[[As noted in 'Corflux' hotel booking is now up and running...]]

After about a month now of trying to monitor the sodium intake, my first discovery was that I must have been pounding a ton of that stuff every day before I started measuring it. And that while it is work to get the numbers down, it would seem a lot of the problem was I was simply eating so much of so many things. By cutting back to reasonable portions, I cut the salt way down. Still tough, but seems doable, and I can still eat things I like, just not have those third and fourth helpings.

Time will tell.

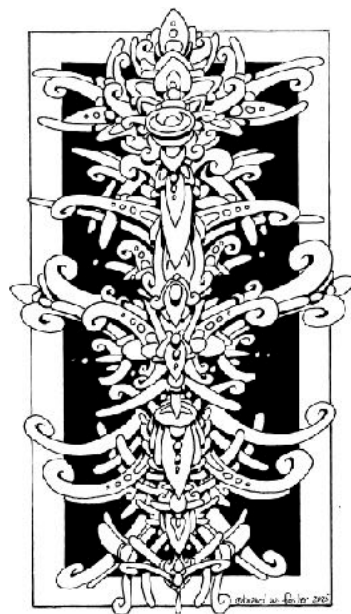
And, apparently, although the issue read and enjoyed, I have only the boring personal stuff above to send as a comment. But, I guess that that is, sometimes, the fannish way.

From: srjeffery@aol.com

July 31 & August 7

Steve Jeffery writes:

Talking of "gangster power trip fantasies" as you were in Dream Weaver, Vikki and I watched a re-run of one of the UK classics of this genre, with Bob Hoskins, Helen Mirren, Derek Thompson and a very young Pierce Brosnan in *The Long Good Friday* last night. One of Vikki's favourite films, although I suspect I've watched it more times than she has,



although not as many times as I've probably watched *Get Carter*.

Seen again in 2026, it does rather show its age, with some rather desperate overacting and scenery chewing on almost everyone's part (and some very odd plot holes - when Hoskins staggers off his yacht, covered in blood, nobody seems to ask whose blood it is. Which is followed by a lingering shot of Hoskins in the shower, washing away the blood, while Mirren burns his clothes, ignoring the fact that the body is still on the yacht and the cabin resembles an abattoir. Some great set pieces, but that, on second or third viewing, sometimes seem strangely disconnected.

Had forgotten that the music was by Francis Monkman, of Renaissance, then the Strawbs.

I must get round to watching *The Crying Game*, which has been sitting on the Freeview recorder for several years.

[[Yeah, upon a think about it, I can definitely see 'The Long Good Friday' aging much less well than eg 'Get Carter'. With no disrespect to Vix, because we all have our own favs after all, I suspect it would rarely occur to me to put 'Good Friday' in a rewatch list, especially since Guy Ritchie more or less redefined the genre...]]

We are both experiencing our own health adventures, which seem to come alarmingly thick and fast this side of our 70s. An X-ray revealed Vikki has three or four fractured vertebrae after a particularly bad fall at the beginning of the year. Meanwhile we have both had separate visits to the John Radcliffe for upper body CT scans, being rolled into a machine like a small version of the *Stargate SG1* interdimensional portal. I seem to have emerged back into the same world (although how can I tell, when the sky is as green as I remember and the frjils still merp in the tendrils of the trees?*) although one that now seems distinctly hotter than when I went in. Or maybe not, as my appointment was at the start of July and I remember it being a pretty hot journey from there back into work.

(* I'm sure I've nicked this from a story I remember re-reading in an anthology of old sf, but it's totally defeated Google AI, which apparently doesn't know the difference between 'a science fiction short story, possibly from the 1950s' and a novel (suggesting *Schild's Ladder*, by Greg Egan, published 2002.) Fear our new AI Overlords. Perhaps the Mighty Collective Brain of Fandom can help?)

[[No luck with my Google-fu either, which of course put me in mind of search terms that return 0 results, one of which I was able to relate to Terry Karney after he contributed a piece to BEAM, the search being: "Terry, thanks for the peacock"...]]

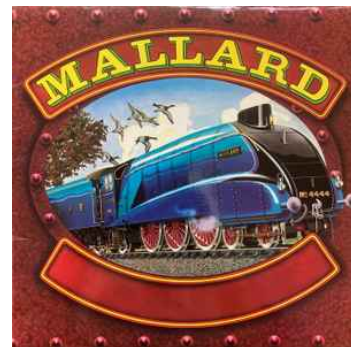
Clear for both of us on the CT scans, which is reassuring. And now the post this morning delivered a small package for a bowel cancer screening test (or "poo sticks" as they've

come to be known here after we send off the last ones a couple of years back). Yay for old age.

[[Happy to hear the all clear...]]

As an aside, the direction to various departments posted inside the entrance to the John Radcliffe resemble the coloured split level maps of the Hauptbahnhof and Alexanderplatz U stations **Dave Hodson** used to illustrate his 'Anorak' column in this this issue, and proved just as confusing and unhelpful. Easier and faster to find the League of Friends cafe and ask directions.

OK, I get 0 points at all for identifying Mallard straight off. It's the only train model in the house, sitting on top of the cabinet in the living room next to a Burago 1970s JPS Lotus F1 car. I've forgotten where it came from. Vikki, of course, immediately identified Deltics and "The Green Howards" but had more trouble with the 1959 DP1 prototype.



There may even be space between the two for one or two 3D printed fan figures.

I remember playing a board game called Zombies or Zombie Attack with our friends Chis and Glenda some years back, but it doesn't sound like the one Mark Nelson describes. I don't remember and experimental time machine, but I think there was a helicopter pad you had to reach to escape.

From: mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

August 10

Mark Plummer writes:

As you decided to take a low key approach to #100 I thought I'd enter into the spirit of that, and resist commenting until now. Anyway, happy one hundredth. You don't look a day over etc etc.

Your centenary had me looking back at that first issue from December 1999.

You start off by explaining why you've decided to retire the earlier *Arrows of Desire*, one reason being "that it might actually be time to find out whether "Nic Farey" does in fact have a genuine writing identity." I think we can conclude, DoBFO, that he does. And I'd totally forgotten that the inspiration for *This Here...* was a Ray Charles track. And trivia point, the title was *This Here* in the heading for the first four issues although it was always *This Here...* in the colophon. #5 had a new logo and there the heading transitioned to *This Here...*

[[As I've often noted, that first series of This Here... (27 years ago! 'Kinell!') really was very transitional in terms of "writing identity", but yeah, I think I've got the hang of it now...]]

The main feature was a report on Novacon 29. Your report tells me that I was "more absent than usual (less plausible), causing me to have a mild case of the snits", and similarly I have no idea why that was but belated apologies. I just checked in an old apazine and I said at the time:

The convention was, I thought, pretty good although it's interesting to note that the current venue – which has been in use for a whole two years now – already seems comfortable and familiar, invoking the feeling of Same Old Novacon. Ian Stewart was, I'm told, an entertaining guest but I didn't actually see any of his programme appearances. I did catch: a game/panel featuring Liam Proven, Yvonne Rowse, Andy Sawyer and Pat McMurray in which Pat achieved the truly remarkable feat of saving the world through WSFS; a discussion on three books that might be suitable for recording as Talking Books For The Blind where Maureen [Speller] rather unfortunately identified Tanya Brown as Tanith Lee; and a truly wondrous Pete Weston 'monologue' (it was theoretically a panel featuring three other people) about 'The Myths of Fandom'.

Your (much longer) account and mine combined don't really serve to bring the convention to life in my mind. I'm not saying that's a failure of the report but rather at getting on for thirty years remove it's likely something to do with repeated uses of the same venue – that was the third of four Britannia Novacons – causing them to blur. The Britannia was followed by eight years in the Quality Hotel, Walsall, eleven in the Park Inn/Mercure in Nottingham, and this year will be the sixth in the Palace Hotel Buxton.

Anyway, I just checked to see if I'd written on TH...#1 and if I did you didn't print it. So 27 years later I'll say that, no, I wasn't drinking Swan while I was in Australia in the summer of 1999. Our beer discovery was Coopers from South Australia, and especially their Dark Ale. Haven't had that in years.

[[It's most likely that you didn't loc that ish, since then (as now) I tend to copy in responses if not the minute they arrive, then quite shortly thereafter, often inserting my own comments at the same time...]]

I do remember that programme item, not at that Novacon, "Tobes discusses with himself". It was either at Incon 5 in 1996 or Lazlar Lyricon II in 1998, both in the Scotch Corner Hotel ('It's not Scotch and it's not on a corner'). As I recall,

the item had been added as a humorous programme item at midnight or something like that with no expectation that it would happen, but at the scheduled time Tobes duly turned up to argue with himself, changing seats to counter his own contentions.

Looking down your 'Loco Citato' list, "people who said nice things about *Arrows of Desire* 8, sent me fanzines and so forth", I see four people who have since died, but at least eight who will almost certainly be at Novacon *this* year and several more who remain otherwise fannishly evident. I think it's only really Helena Tudor and Tony Morton (and FOSFAX) who, so far as I'm aware, have dropped off the map entirely.

Still, onto more current matters, **Kat Templeton** stayed with us for a couple of days at the end of her TAFF trip before decamping to a hotel near Heathrow for the night before her (very early) flight back to Dublin and then onwards to SFO. I went over to Heathrow with her on what turned out to be the evening of the England v Argentina World Cup semifinal.

As I was making my way back to Croydon on the Elizabeth Line it was pretty obvious from those watching the game on their phones that matters weren't going well. After a bit I checked my phone and sure enough England had lost. When the train got to Farringdon I needed to change to the Thameslink service. The escalators are pretty long, and as I was going up, the down side was pretty solid and easily the majority of travellers, male and female, were wearing England shirts. And in the middle of them was one courageous chap in what even I knew was an Argentina shirt, and a few yards behind him a woman with an Argentina flag draped over her shoulders. They didn't seem in a particularly celebratory mood but then the subdued England fans didn't seem hostile either.

Remarkably, there is a 3D model of one SF fan. I can't recall how it came about but **Tony Keen** ended up being the model for a figurine designed to help populate model railway layouts where he is described as "man with bag". He's quite recognisable.

[[I remember that!...]]

My Fancyclopedia 3 senses were activated by **Cy Chauvin's** mention of 'Roger De Soto'. ISFDB has him writing "The Revolving Fan" for about two years from May 1955, his only credit. In *Oops! 19* Gregg Calkins said:

There has been considerable speculation in recent fanzines concerning the identity of the new fanzine reviewer for *Amazing*, one "Roger De Soto." I haven't



bothered to think very much about it, but now I'd like to know if anybody has come up with an answer. Reason for my asking: in the May 1955 *Amazing* he reviewed an issue of *Oops* that I didn't send to him. I wonder where he got that copy? Did he borrow or buy it from a different source? (if so, where?) Or is he – the only other possibility – one of my regular subscribers in disguise? An intriguing thought.

And *Eclipse* 12 had a letter from Dean Grennell:

By the way, should you hear any rumors that I'm Roger de Soto, kindly skowh them. If you think back, you'll recall that I used to use the name of Rene de Soto, but Roger is someone else altogether. A surprising number of fans seem to think I'm him, however, and I don't especially like to take the blame if he happens to pan a mag I like, such as *Eclipse*.

So does anybody know who he was? We're likely running low on people who might have known, if indeed he really was somebody other than Roger De Soto.

London remains parched. We are now entering our fifth heatwave of the summer, or so I'm told; I think I missed the fourth but really they all blur. I only mention this because everybody in the south east of England is contractually obliged to mention the weather. I'm guessing you're fairly high on the list of people likely to be least sympathetic to groans that it's too damn hot around here.

[[As a True Brit, however long expatriated, I am still contractually obliged to check the weather forecast every morning while settled, often with straining noises, upon the throne. Even though, this being Las Vegas, I already know the answer, but then again since we're in August and what's allegedly "monsoon season" we do expect occasional interventions of the rare wet stuff, flooding ect...]]

From: 236 S. Coronado St #409, Los Angeles CA 90057

(Dated) August 6

John Hertz writes:

Thanks for printing my poem.

Of course you found a way to attack a compliment.

If I feel like applauding you, I will. If you can't take it, too bad.

If you thought that note was "fansplaining", all you had to do was leave it out.

[[No, because (a) I think others should see (and perhaps sympathize with) the tiresomeness I sometimes have to deal with, and (b) you should own your own words...]]

I defy your scorn.

[[Overreact much?...]]

What a treasure that we have phonograph records, CDs, and like that from people who have gone. Sonny Rollins, since you mention him. Miles Davis and Trane, since it's their centennial. Oscar Peterson, Jr. (whose piano was a Bösendorfer, gosh). John Fahey - I guess he wasn't a jazzman.

Fine **Foster** and **O'Brien** fanart.

From: daverabban@gmail.com

August 11

Dave Cockfield writes:

I have good memories of my only trip to Berlin about 10 years ago.

The people were friendly and did not mind speaking in English to linguistically challenged individuals like myself. After all I was usually buying something.

I found a great used record / cd shop that could have bankrupted me.

I collect film soundtracks and picked up 11 rare cds.

One was of a film called 'The Deceivers' starring Pierce Brosnan as a British Officer infiltrating the thugees in India during the time of the Raj. The soundtrack was by John Scott. Someone I met a few times through the late Norman Warren the horror film director.



Months later I asked John to sign my CD and he was astounded because he had never seen a copy ever.

At the famous SF bookshop I bought 22 U.S. paperbacks (12 by Robin Hobb) that I had never seen in London and they were cheap.

Upon leaving Berlin for my flight Airport Customs Officials x-rayed my bag. Had it opened and were very suspicious of the solid block of paperbacks. I was questioned for 15 minutes, then released as someone who was obviously a nutter.

[[There's a T-shirt to be made there, shurely...]]

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

August 13

Leigh Edmonds writes:

I try not to be an old musical stick in the mud and do like your 'Radio Winston' columns because they remind me that there is more music in the world than the music I like. So I mostly give the pieces you give links to a listen, as I did this time. Well, I suppose I should be happy that somebody likes that music, but I am not one of them. There seemed nothing of much interest in any of them so I didn't get to the end of any of them. I did like the harmonizing and timbre of the voices at the beginning of your final selection ["Amore (La Previa" by Les Testarudes], but it went downhill fast after the rhythm section kicked in.

On a happier note, I regret that I'm going to have to report that Comrade **Nicholas** is in error when he writes, in reference to the London underground system, that "...the system was never designed and built (unlike Melbourne's tramlines and suburban railways) as a complete unit". The Melbourne transport system was, in fact, cobbled together from the works of a series of competing railway and tramway companies, but the privately run railway companies were taken over by the government in the 1860s and the tramways in 1919. You can trust me on this. I was once commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to research and write a detailed thematic study of Victoria's transport system - it's around here somewhere but I just can't seem to find it at the moment. Anyhow, writing from memory is much more on the edge, and *This Here ...* is an edgy fanzine, it is not?

The result of earlier private enterprise was that, like London, Melbourne's early public transport system had its duplications and idiosyncrasies. One of which is that initially Melbourne's city centre had three railway stations that were not connected to each other. Spencer Street station had its lines, mainly the northern ones, Flinders Street station had the lines to the south and east and Princes Bridge had the lines to the north and north west. Flinders and Princes Bridge Stations were on opposite sides of the road to Princes Bridge crossing the Yarra and to get from one to the other you had to join the throng going up from one station, over the road and then down into the other. That was still happening in the 1950s but at some stage the land under the road was excavated and all the routes of the two stations amalgamated into Flinders Street which became one of the busiest stations in the world. Spencer Street Station was linked to Flinders Street by a huge viaduct running around

the edge of the city in the 1880s (I expect, that's when Melbourne was built on gold from the Ballarat and Bendigo goldfields). The first tunnel was the City Loop which was completed in the 1960s. It linked Spencer and Flinders Streets going around the other side of Melbourne and introducing three new stations. The nice thing about the loop was that you got onto it from platforms at the two existing stations, not having to find your way through rabbit warrens of tunnels linking the various London stations. A new tunnel was opened earlier this year running down the

city which opened two new stations which, unfortunately for us folks who are not keen on walking long distances, can only be reached from existing stations along tunnels and banks of escalators. I'll get used to it.

I guess that the main difference is that the London system was built when the city was big and well established so the only place to build new infrastructure was below street level whereas Melbourne was only thirty or so years old when railways started so everything was built on the ground and was easily rerouted or closed when the system was nationalized and rationalized. So it might look planned, but that's only by accident.



[[The first proposals for what would become the London Underground emerged in the 1830s as the capital was starting a surge of population increase which went from around a million in 1801, rising to 6.5 million by the end of the century. The Metropolitan railway running from Paddington to Farringdon, seven stations in all, opened in 1863 and was built using the "cut and cover" method which sounds exactly like what it is. The first deep tunnels weren't opened until 1890. The current population is 9.1 million or so, although if you include the wider metro area that becomes more like 15.4 million...]]

Mark Nelson's idea of making scale models of fans would be easily achieved, with the application of money. The companies that make scale model figures are already using 3D scanners of people in period costumes to create scale models. Apparently you just stand in a machine for a while while it scans you, feed the resulting data into an appropriate machine that drives a 3D printer and the job is done. I can imagine one of these machines turning up at a Corflu and all the members taking their turn to be scanned and being given a model of themselves in whatever scale they wanted. I don't know how well this would go down because most of us have body images of ourselves that are much more flattering than the real thing. The scale of 1/72 might be okay because that means the models would be less than an inch tall. I might like my model in 1/144 so I'd only

be half an inch tall so I wouldn't be so offput by how much I don't look like I think I do.

[[Only lacking the money - that sounds familiar...]]

Gary Mattingly's comment about implants reminded me how much the process has changed. I got my first implants more than a quarter of a century ago and that involved going down to Melbourne and staying in hospital overnight after a procedure done under full anesthetic. The most recent implant I had about four years ago was done in my local dentist's chair in about three stages under local anesthetic. (One of my engineer friends described getting an implant as having a three inch titanium screw jammed into your jaw. Which doesn't sound like fun but is accurate.)

[[I couldn't afford the cost of implants, even at Mexico prices. Not that I'm about to cross any national borders under the current regime anyway...]]

I also noticed the mention of a possible Corflu in Uppsala. Valma and I spent a week there in '92 or '93 to attend a History of Technology conference. We really enjoyed our time there and I wouldn't mind revisiting that city. That depends on finances and the weather. No way I'm going there in February and if I get to Vancouver in February next year I'm bringing my full armament of Ballarat winter woolies and trying not to go outside as much as possible.

From: garyhubbard969@gmail.com

August 17

Gary Hubbard writes:

A little while ago, Bess and I were watching the movie 'Arrival' for the second time. B liked it so well the first time that she got me to buy it from one of those places that sell old DVDs online. We don't have any streaming services and, besides, over the years we've spent a fortune on tapes and discs, which we intend to keep on doing as long as we can (so there Disney!)

But getting back to 'Arrival': it's one of those First Contact stories wherein one plucky linguist must decipher an alien language to avert a global paroxysm. It involves an idea known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis which teaches that learning a different language changes your worldview, which I first heard about in 'The Languages of Pao' by Jack Vance. I don't know how seriously Sapir-Whorf is taken among linguist circles, but I do recall Susan Wood of sainted memory explaining that once you truly learn a language you start thinking in it, and a guy I knew who was bilingual in English and Japanese who said when he spoke Japanese, he was a bit more polite than when he spoke English. However, in the movie when the protagonist, Louise, starts to understand the

language of the Heptapods she starts having visions of the future. Because, you see, the Heptapod language is nonlinear, which gives them the power to see the future and they pass this along to Louise through the power of grammar. I recall something similar happening to Billy Pilgrim. It's a bit far-fetched, but the kind of High Concept that drew me to science fiction in the first place.

[[We enjoyed 'Arrival' - it's interesting that something that's mostly talky rather than Stuff Go Bang (see also 'Movie Night' thish) can be quite riveting. 'Arrival' does benefit from a top-notch cast (incl. Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker ect) and that undoubtedly helps...]]

In the end credits, I noticed that the movie was based on a story called: "The Story of Your Life" by Ted Chiang and I thought I *might* look it up someday, but not really meaning to - you know how that is. However, due to the kind of insane serendipity I seem to encounter all the time, it turns out I already had this story in an anthology I'd bought long ago. You see, even though I don't read the stuff anymore, I still collect SF anthologies out of pure nostalgia; they were my first introduction to SF. You know, titles like 'The Best of Science Fiction', 'Adventures in Space and Time' (usually collected by Groff Conklin) or Judith Merrill's 'Best of SF' annuals. But don't ask me how I discovered I had this story already. Who knows what lurks in the depths of the infinity of a man's mind? Anyway, I read it, liked it and noticed the inevitable differences between the movie and the print version. For one thing, the appearance of the Heptapods doesn't result in an international incident in the text version. Merely a lot of consternation and speculation among the humans trying to understand why they came. And while trying to understand the alien's language, Louise sees flashes of the future. Notably of the tragically short life of her unborn daughter, which she can do nothing to change. The future in this story is immutable, and - if I'm reading this right- implies that every event in a person's life is predetermined, but not knowing that is what gives us free will, or at least the illusion of it.

In the story, unlike the movie, the aliens withdraw without leaving an inkling of why they came to us. Apparently they were just passing through. In the movie, however, there has

to be a reason, so one of the aliens explains they are leaving us a weapon or a gift, because in three thousand years they will require the aid of the Human Race. Seems like a bit of handwaving, but I've been speculating on it for a while now and, based on the description of the aliens in the story: "...a barrel suspended at the intersection of seven limbs" I've come to the conclusion that the Heptapods are none other than the Rigellians described by E.E. Smith. So that must also mean that in three thousand years the Eddorians will invade our galaxy, but we



will have Lensmen equipped with precognitive powers able to fend them off.

[[We must now initiate a dialogue naming notable fen who would be considered as Lensman candidates, yeah? And possibly point out those who are DoBFO in the pay of Eddore...]]

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

August 19

Eli Cohen writes:

Well, I managed to extract myself from the rabbit hole of the newly uploaded Jay Kay Klein photos on the Eaton site. (Nothing like 55-year-old pictures to make you feel old!) Anyway, must get this loc done before you pub another ish...

[[You're in good time since it's a five week interval between #102 and this'un. Back to four weeks on the next, though...]]

'Movie Night': the only movie I've seen recently is 'The Odyssey', which we saw on a regular old movie screen, as all the local IMAX theaters were sold out. I liked it. Don't know what seeing it in IMAX would add; the cyclops was creepy enough on a regular screen. Parts of it were very loud, which would make it hard to sleep through — is that what some critics meant when they said it was "too woke"? I suppose everybody already knows that the movie is not at all faithful to "Homer's Odyssey" -- the Simpson's episode I mean...

[[I've heard (see what I did there?) that it's loud, which is a problem for me on the rare to non-existent occasions I might be dragged out to a cinema. That's an odd complaint from a sufferer of Deaf Twitness, innit? I got cajoled into a friends' outing to clock the re-released 1999 version of 'The Mummy' a year or two ago, and I ended up taking out my hearing aids, it was that fuckin' noisy. I thus managed to doze off a bit in approved Leigh Edmonds tradition...]]

Gary Mattingly, responding to Leigh Edmonds re Wagner's Ring Cycle, wants to know more about what is going on in it -- I'm sorely tempted to recommend Anna Russell (who I've mentioned before), but he might get the wrong impression from her (though I think she's actually surprisingly accurate in her hilarious descriptions, e.g. "She's his aunt, you know"). Anyway, I found a link to her analysis on YouTube, for anyone who's interested:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM33rgC2Fek>

Just to finish off, a bad math joke: Who started the Round Table? Sir Cumference.

[[Don't forget his Jewish half-brother (no punchline required, shurely?)...]]

WAHF

Bill Burns ; Kim Huett ; Steve Jeffery (pre-loc): "Hmm, exercise or invest in "hide the flab" shapewear? Decisions. Neither are overly appealing in this current heat alert." ;

Jerry Kaufman ; R-Laurraine Tutihasi ;

FANZINES RECEIVED

With the usual thanks...

INTERMISSION #169, #169.5 (Arvid Engholm) - ...

THE OBDURATE EYE #65 (Garth Spencer) - ...

THE CHATTER BOX 23 - 27 (Leigh Edmonds) - ...

LOFGEORNOST #164 (Fred Lerner) - ...

TONOPAH ELUCIDATOR & LITERARY REVIEW #7 (Kevin Trainor) - ...

SF COMMENTARY 125 (Bruce Gillespie) - ...

TWO CHAIRS IN PRINT 18 (David Grigg & Perry Middlemiss) - ...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #93 (Andy Hooper) - ...

PERRYSCOPE #59 (Perry Middlemiss) - ...

INDULGE ME

✕ MORE GENUINE SLOTH TRIVIA : I also learn that sloths, which are entirely tree-dwelling, do actually descend to the ground about once every week or so to have a shit...

✕ AGELESS BEAUTY (1) : Normal service is resumed chez Kaufman, as we return to British shores with Jacki Piper...



✕ **TITLE SHOT** : The **Sainted Strummer** notes in his loc that he'd forgotten the source of the title *This Here...* (then being reminded of it), so here's the occasional repeat of the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0P5YPvcBiQ>

✕ **THREE DOORS DOWN** : In case you felt like starting a fannish congregation in this neighborhood, 2681 Rungsted Street is up for sale after a thorough refurbishment, which according to my neighbor Oscar was well necessary because the previous old lady occupier had several dogs but also approx 19 cats which meant it was seriously fuckin' whiffy in there. Yours for a mere \$419,990...

https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/2681-Rungsted-St-Las-Vegas-NV-89142/7055570_zpid/

✕ **ROUNDUP LATEST** : The St. Louis, MO state court has continued the hearing *again* to mid-September...

✕ **OUCH! [GROAN]** : Tripped over **Jen's** bra in the bedroom the other day. It was a booby trap...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Still stunning (and singing) at 74, **Susan Cadogan** ...



✕ **ARCHBISHOP v GRAVITY** : *The Chatter Box* 26 reports on **Bruce Gillespie** taking a bit of a nasty tumble, bashing his bonce in somewhat and breaking his left wrist which is now in a cast after concerned citizens managed to persuade the stubborn old sod that he *really* ought to be

carted off up the hospital. Normal service will be resumed eventually when he's not limited to the use of only one hand, although I'm sure there's several activities still available [snert, giggle ect]. Get well soon, yer eminence...

✕ **PERVERTS' CORNER** : Having a table games evening with our friends the Forbes-Clays last Saturday, the convo turned to extra moneymaking via eg TikTok or such, and they claim that there apparently people who have a thing for feet *like mine*. No pictures, because my feet are disgusting, swollen and big to start with. There's actually not much in the debauchery lists that oogs me out, but the thought of that does. The fact that my plates are so 'orrible possibly also explains why I've always been charmed by the well-turned ankle of another...



✕ **HEALTH DIARY EXTRA** : Nothing to report from the oncology visit (blood numbers ect all good) but I also hear from Dr Peters & Lee's office to schedule the angiograms which have apparently been approved to occur. The left leg will be attacked on October 29th and the right a week later (to allow for recovery time) on November 5th ...



✕ **NORMAN WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU** :

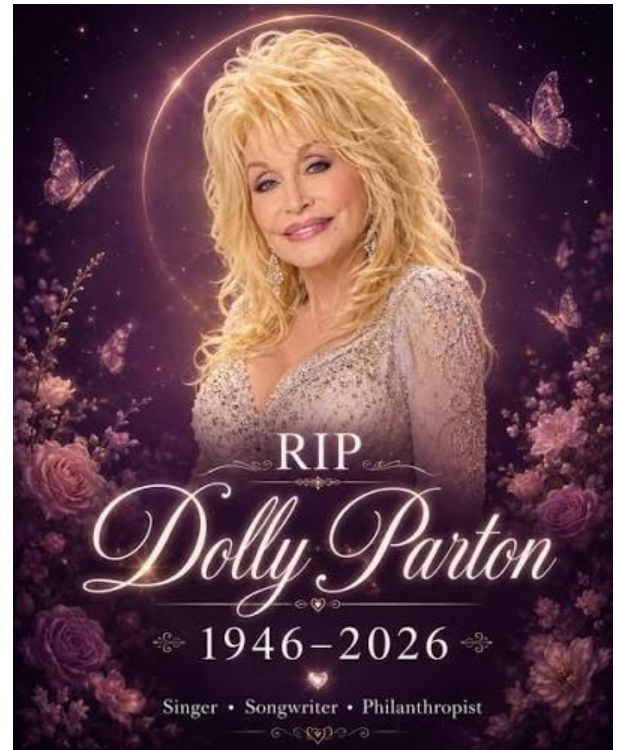
Norman Spinrad, as you may already know, suffered a nasty fall last November and was hospitalized for that, since when it's been more or less all downhill. He's currently in a care home (and giving them hell!), suffering from some dementia, although his ex **Lee Wood** says he still remembers the "deep past" as she put it, but isn't always good with names. All that

notwithstanding, she suggests that he'd welcome cards and letters from friends and fans which can be sent **c/o Passerelle des Arts, 5 Av. Rouget de Lisle, 94400 Vitry-sur-Seine, France** (photo from 2018) ...

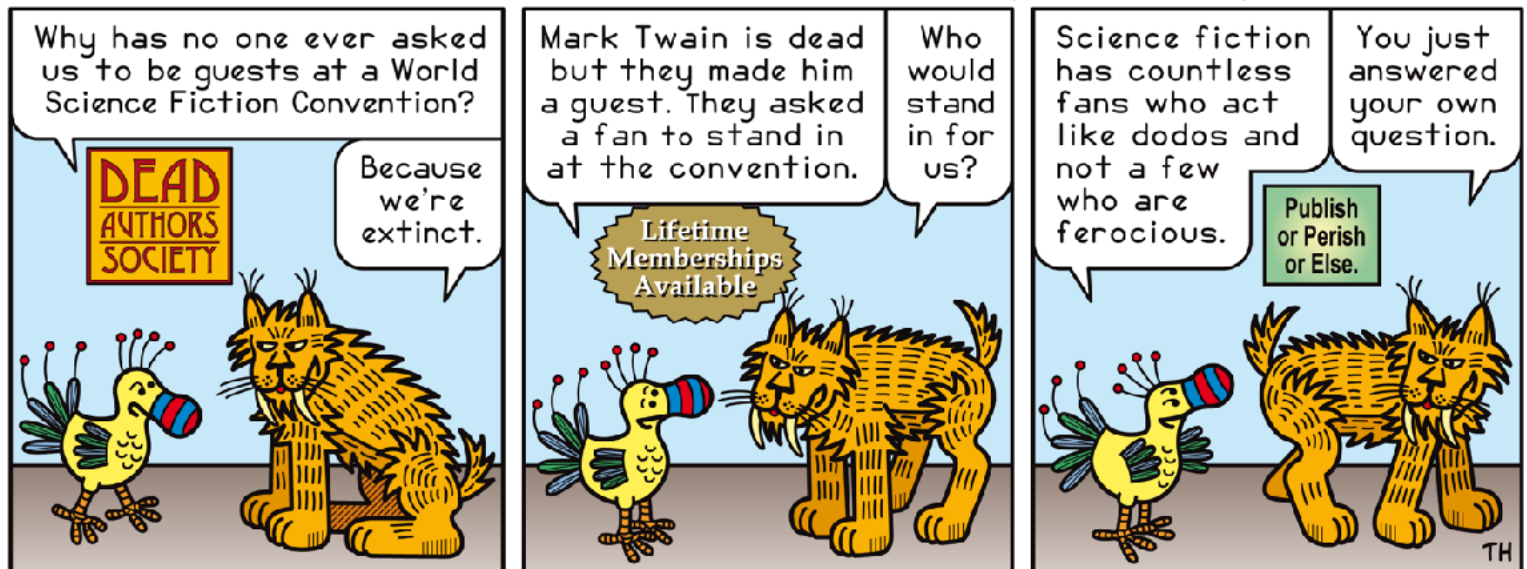
✕ **RADIO WINSTON EXTRA: RIP DOLLY** : There can't be many people who are not orange wankbuckets who are not pretty fuckin' gutted about the death of a genuine national - nay, *worldwide* treasure. There goes one of the few icons who can just be identified by their first name, and

everyone knows who you mean. As well as her DoBFO songwriting excellence, she always had a fine ear for a cover song, with some left-field but fuckin' awesome picks. I'm going to offer up one of those, her (bluegrass!) version of Collective Soul's "Shine". Singularly appropriate ey?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plUD6vN80dg> ...

X NEXTISH : September 26th I expect...



Chat, the 4th Fannish Ghod by Teddy Harvia



MIRANDA

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Locs & that to: 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, or Email fareynic@gmail.com

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"Another hope feeds another dream
Another truth installed by the machine
A secret wish, a marrying of lies
Today you find is true what common sense denies"