

This Here...

“...the material manifestation of enthusiasm” (A Gilliland)

EGOTORIAL

I suppose issues #8½ onwards of this fine rag will be known as the “second series” of *This Here...*, since that seems to be the preferred nomenclature for similar titles which have also had something of a hiatus.

I’ve made a conscious effort to duplicate the format (and the spirit) of the original run, although I know the *Tunes* column is so far MIA, primarily because I haven’t really been getting into any new music the last few years, and anyway between John Purcell, Steve Jeffery & myself reminiscing about old concerts there’s still some musical content here.

Also missing, and a source of a bit of disquiet to me, is the *Fanzines Received* listing/review section. Now of course I’m well behind the curve in bemoaning the fact that fanzines now seem to consist of points of light rather than pieces of paper, but there’s definitely been a huge change in the years between the first and second series of *This Here...*

Since I have issue #7 to hand, I note that there are 21 zines listed, all of which were received on paper. Two can be kicked off the field at the off since they’re not true “fanzines” as we define them: *Batteries Not Included*, a fanmag for porn films and sold rather than traded, and *the Nova Scotian Hermit*, Rodney Leighton’s dreary letter substitute for actual fanzine trade which some of us were unlucky enough to get. Some of the rest are certainly defunct: *Jackpot!* (A Katz), *Smokin’ Rockets* (J Katz), *International Revolutionary Gardener* (Hanna/Nicholas),

Twink (Frohvet), *Stet* (Dick & Leah Smith), *Barmaid* (Yvonne Rowse) and *Gloss* (Edwards/Gonzalez). Some continue in online form: *Ansible*, *Plokta* (at least I think it’s still going?) and *The Knarley Knews*. One hopes that *Wabe*, *Raw Goof*, *Head* and ...and stuff might yet reappear, phoenix-like, after the sort of gap you only expect between issues of *Trap Door*.

Of the rest of the list, the only titles that I’ve received paper copies of in the last year or so are Ned Brooks’ *It Goes On The Shelf*, the inevitable *Banana Wings* and a clutch of *Vanamonde*. I suspect Alan Sullivan may still be cranking out the occasional *Mongolian Jird* from time to time, but I’ve no way to tell, really.

So it would seem that Randy Byers is right when he terms paper fanzines a “dead form”, while still being happy with the mileage still available in such a form. I suppose I’m just being Old School with this, but getting a notification my email that, say, *Visions of Paradise* or *Steam*



Engine Time has a new issue available for my viewing doesn’t seem to count as a “fanzine received”.

Cutting back on the print run of *This Here...* perhaps makes me semi-guilty of the same cybercrime, and of course the reason is cost. *BEAM*, which now seems likely to be more or less annual, had a pretty decent circulation worldwide, and with the color cover wasn’t exactly cheap (although #2 will also have a full color cover - I figure with the zine coming out just once a year the quality should stay as high as practicable).

The *Miranda* for *This Here...* #9 was a little shorter on detail than in the first run, but I remedied this with #10. To clarify

on my criteria for sending out a paper copy, my usual number one consideration is loccers, followed by people who do actually still use the papernet, though admittedly there's considerable overlap there. Apart from that it's more or less a combination of whim and nostalgia. I mean, who but *Banana Wings* ever gets anything resembling a loc from Fortress Pickersgill, but he still gets the real deal copy not least because I still feel fondly toward him for past conversation and encouragement. Back in the day, the fact that Greg was willing to talk to me *at all* was a sign that I couldn't have been totally useless.

It's all good.

Nic Farey, April 2009

I finally figured out why my Tennessee address doesn't come up on any of the usual map searches - rather than being in Chuckey as I had thought, Pritchard Road (as Google Maps et al define it, although the actual street sign has no 't' in it) is, according to their wisdom, in fact in Limestone TN. I need to check that with the USPS I suppose, not that I'm keen to start getting scads of junk mail, nor do I have a post box installed at the property yet. The next trip there is likely to be in April, since March travel plans are already full of Westerly (Corflu Zed and LA), but here are the details of my February sojourn...

MOCKINGBIRD II

So, back I have to go to appear suitably contrite at court in Jonesborough on February 18th, once again facing the possibility of jail.

Washington County, as I was to be told later by one of my Tennessee neighbors, is much more lenient than Greene County (actual place of residence) would have been. My lawyer Lindsey turned out to be worth the money, since she had county contacts and knew the ins and outs of things - and it apparently helped that she had the male DA to deal with. Rather than the process I've seen here in Calvert County MD, where any deal worked with the DA is still subject to the whim of the judge, Washington County TN follows the enlightened procedure of making the deal, putting it *in writing* for you to sign off on then following the formality of standing before His Honor

then getting your ass outta there. The deal dropped the lesser charges (driving without tags or insurance) and slapped a \$25 fine (plus costs, which bumped it to \$240) on driving without a license, though admittedly this came with 6 months unsupervised probation, which just means that if I'm daft enough to get caught down there doing something I shouldn't before mid-August I will be seeing the inside of the pokey. All in all, a result.

I'd traveled down Monday (Presidents' Day) having booked a Greyhound a couple weeks before which gives you the best price (\$52). I checked the commuter bus schedules assiduously, finding that the last bus up to DC at 6:50am ran on federal holidays, but in a typical "fuck this" start to the trip the fucker never showed. BB hates driving, so a quick call to my local friendly airport taxi scored me a ride in time for the 10am departure, albeit at a cost of \$100 for him rather than \$5 for the bus.

Greyhound buses are not ideal forms of travel (there's less seat room than a coach class airline) but at least the driver usually gives you a couple minutes at most stops to have a smoke. We were delayed a bit at Wytheville VA (coldest stop en route, consisting of a shed, a parking lot and a McDonald's, and inevitably the 40 minute "dinner" layover) waiting for a connecting bus transfer passenger, so didn't arrive in Johnson City (nearest stop to Jonesborough) until 9:15pm or so, about a half hour late. Being the prepared type (on a good day), I'd Googled up hotels near the bus station, and was pleased to find a Hampton Inn within a block or two. Although they're a bit pricier than a budget place like Days Inn, their service is usually well good and, more importantly, the beds are really comfy. Resigned to missing most of *Heroes* for the week, I presented myself at the Greyhound ticket counter to

confirm my earlier research, enquiring in which direction the Hampton might be. Upon getting the pointer, I turned to head out and a local bird who apparently hangs out there remarked "Are you *walking*?". Well, yes I am, since it's less than a mile, right? "More like two or three miles..." Ah, another happy "fuck this" moment. Turns out there are *two* West Market Streets in Johnson City, and of course the hotel is off the *other* one. So, a four mile walk with luggage later I drag my sorry ass



Jonesborough Courthouse

into the pleasant confines of Paris Hilton's legacy, ameliorated somewhat by the fact that my trek has at least taken me past beer & liquor stores, and I will thus be suitably fortified for the days ahead. Forgoing a shower til morning, I head for the kip which is my just due after almost 13 hours of travel, glad that I decided to come in a night early so I wouldn't have to get straight up & go to court.

Tuesday is pretty uneventful. I'd brought a bunch of paperwork, intending to work on my taxes, but of course didn't get anything done there. I scope out the area which is on the other side of Johnson City from all the good stuff like the Mall and Bailey's Sports Bar, get a haircut to look presentable for the Beak and notice that *all* the eateries around are fast food - there appears to be one of just about everything. I'd figured on selling the scooter, since if I can't ride it I don't need it, and my lawyer has advised me to get a bill of sale showing this. My putative buyer, however, has had to leave town for a family funeral in California, so this does not come to pass. A taxi is booked for the morning, and I fail to catch up with the previous night's *Heroes* since the laptop OS apparently doesn't like the NBC website, either running Firefox or Safari. Bah! I catch up with some online rasslin' news and work on my backgammon. Nice though the Hampton rooms are, the TV doesn't carry MSNBC so my usual nightly viewing is also busted.

Court results detailed in the opening couple paragraphs, and I stand and wait in the rain for 40 minutes or so for the taxi back to the Hampton, texting BB with the good news. I can now adjourn to the caravan the next morning secure in the knowledge that Maryland's MVA are due to haul me in for an interview any time soon, hopefully to grudgingly grant me some kind of driving privilege, so my *next* slated Tennessee trip planned for April sometime will find me carrying tools in a nice lil work van so I can build a storage shed.

Nice day, Thursday. The Troy-Bilt generator with the nifty electric starter kicked off first go, and I duly ran the cords through the window and threw out food which had been sitting in the fridge for a month. Not sure how scary this is, but the only thing that didn't have mold on it was the bacon - even the eggs had collapsed under the weight of something I don't think I wanted to find out about. Google maps, which after the West Market Street business I should have viewed with more cynicism, tells me there is a gas station only a mile or so away, so I duly bungee the can to the pushbike and pedal off, heading into the town of Chuckey proper. Gas station? Was there bollocks, and not knowing any better at the time chugged 2 or 3 miles down the highway to get a fill up and some ice for the beer. A lot of push, coast, and not much pedal later I arrive back at the 'van, fill up the generator and consider whether I really

want to try plugging the bastard in now, given the way things are going.

The way the weather is going is, as usual, downhill, with the overnight forecast for a low of 15F. So (gulp) as it is now about 4pm and starting to get a bit nippy, I better see if I can get things running. Through the simple expedient of failing to return it, I have an extra medusa cord, so one runs through the window with the phone charger hooked up to test for power, the second (after finding that the adaptor cord won't plug in directly to the generator because its end housing is too big) is off to the side as I prepare to hook up, which I do. A quick eyeball at the phone charger reveals no power is getting to it - arg! here we go again, unplug the 'van quick! Mindful of not putting too much draw on the generator, I flip off all the breakers in the electric panel for the 'van and try again. OK, phone charger is working so the generator isn't fucked, now is the time to experimentally cut on a breaker or two. If this was a text message it would now say: OMG OMG OMG! as lights come on, I hook up the lappy lead to a socket and that works too. Atomic batteries to power! Turbines to speed! Yay!



My actual Tennessee home from home, and stuff...

I peruse the 'van owners manual and assorted paperwork looking for a clue as to how to fire up the furnace for heat, but find it all about as useful as a chocolate fireguard, so I walk around the 'van a few times, opening various panels looking for something that says "furnace" that I ought to be lighting, and finding only the water heater. It is starting to get dark and *very* nippy at this point. Seized by a sudden inspiration, I check my phone and happily find I still have the number of the bloke I bought the 'van off, so I call him up to be informed that the starting of the furnace is, well, larffably easy, since it's pretty much automatic. "Just crank the thermostat all the way over", he says, "It should cut on after about 20 seconds, then set it back to the temperature

you want". I'm on a roll here - this actually works and warm air is soon blowing into the interior! Quick, shut the windows, top up the generator and settle in.

You are, of course, waiting for the "Fuck this" moment, which occurs about 11:30pm when the vent starts blowing nothing but cold air. I light the stove to see if I'm out of propane and need to switch tanks - no, apparently not. With a sigh of resignation and inevitability I cut off the generator to save gas, light the tinytown camp propane heater and hunker down for a coldish night. Luckily the interior retains some heat, so it isn't actually as bad as it might have been, but still less than ideal.

The morning mocks me with another beautiful sunrise. I fire up the generator again to get power, and whatever was wrong with the furnace now seems to have fixed itself! To quote my grate friend Tony Berry: "Bastard!" I can actually cut the thing off before too long, since the sun on the metal shell of the 'van warms the inside to the extent that it's doors & windows open for a lot of the day. I've been told of a back way to a couple of local country stores where I can buy general supplies and gas (but not beer), and it will be safe enough to ride the scooter around these unmarked lil streets. I need to see if the thing will run anyway, and my expectations are fulfilled when it takes a good 15 or 20 minutes to get the fucker to turn over, but it does for about half a second before I deduce there's no gas.

The pedal bike gets me around the back way, but not having a small gas can I'm hoping I can get one when I get there. Or not, as it turns out, but one of the stores provides me with an empty milk jug which soon contains a gallon of the finest with which I toil back to the 'van, thinking that it really *is* uphill both ways. The scooter, suitably refreshed, runs like a charm, so I remove the back carrier and the busted wing mirror, strap the 5 gallon can to the back and off to the store - joly d! Everything actually appears to be working for a change, so I am trying not to radiate gloom by thinking it can't last.

I'm invited over to the neighbors for a couple beers that evening to meet this bloke who has actual work going on and will likely need some experienced help (ideally me), since for various reasons he is short-handed. We go over the possibilities, coming to the conclusion that it will all depend on Maryland MVA sorting my license out (sigh), at which point I will be more than well available - and of course I have a place to stay. Neighbor Billy has earlier brought over an electric heater, so if the furnace decides to go cold on me again I have backup, and of course knowing this, it doesn't so I spend a happy comfortable night.

Saturday morning, and another gas run so I'll be good through the next day. I've determined by this point that 5 gallons, judiciously used, will carry me through a whole day, at least it would if the generator hadn't now seized up, most probably due to lack of oil. Bastard! So this trip seems

fated to end as did the last at the welcoming confines of the Hampton Inn, Greeneville, and more futile efforts failing to score a bus ticket.

Billy offers to run me over to the hotel later, and on the way there just happens to mention, useful bloke that he is, that he can fix the generator while I'm away, so I give him a padlock key to unchain it from the 'van and am, if not well pleased, feeling a bit better about things.

Greyhound buses, if a bit uncomfortable, are wonderfully cheap if you can book a couple weeks in advance, and fucking useless if you need to travel quickly, so once again it's gonna be a flight back. *This* time I decide to book the mid-morning departure I ended up on last time anyway, and once again first class is to be had from Atlanta to National for only another 20-spot. Staying over at the Hampton Sunday night means I at least get to watch the race and the Oscars, which overlap, but not much excitement to be had either way since both are predictable.

The rest is dull travel, but I do pick up a nice little tip from the guy sitting next to me on the flight out of Tri-Cities, who turns out to be a Carpenters Union top man! I relate the story of the flight delay from Tri-Cities back in January, and he knowingly nods. "Mechanical problems? Yeah, happens a lot. If they don't have many passengers on the early flights they often develop 'mechanical problems'". I shall bear this in mind for the future, though hopefully I won't have to be flying on future trips. This does cause me to wonder a little about the flight to Seattle, the first leg of which departs BWI at 6:15am. As I write these words, I shall know in less than 24 hours.

CODA: As I may have mentioned, Maryland MVA informed me that I must attend an interview with doctors from their Medical Review Board to "[evaluate] your physical/mental ability to operate a motor vehicle". I was told that I should hear something "in 6 weeks or so" (a stock phrase) back at the beginning of December. Twelve weeks later I get the letter - my interview is scheduled for the day we fly out to Corflu. I duly inform them by letter that this needs to be rescheduled, their usual glacial progress possibly ensuring that it will be another 12 weeks until I can get in, and the usual "six weeks or so" after that to get a final decision, meaning that I might get my dam license back mid-July. That would be 13½ months after they received my reinstatement request paperwork, and almost two years since I got out of jail.

RASSLIN'

Not much of a breaking news deal now, but while many of us had assumed that Jeff Hardy's mystery stalker would turn out to be Christian Cage, the culprit was revealed to be brother Matt, a nod by WWE to the great brotherly feuds of yesteryear (well, OK, Undertaker vs Kane anyway). As usual Arnie Katz and I disagree somewhat about this

swerve, which he thinks is a bad idea and *I* think actually makes Matt Hardy slightly interesting for once, and indeed puts me on his side, although he needs to do much better than just getting cheap heat by insulting the fans. Christian, by the way, turned up in ECW and looks to be working an extended program with Jack Swagger for the title there, which will give a pretty decent boost to the frankly crappy level of talent at that brand.



Randy Orton

WWE often gets a bad rap for some of its angles, but the latest groan-inducing complaints have been over the heel we all love to hate, Randy Orton, who, in putting the boot literally and figuratively to members of the McMahon clan, is claiming to suffer from the (kayfabe) mental illness “Intermittent Explosive Disorder”, or IED, which is supposedly why he kicks people in the head when they piss him off. Surely the writers could have been sly enough to come up with something which could have abbreviated to “IUD”, which would have been much more knowing since Orton is such a cunt. (Remarks like that are why you won’t be seeing me writing a column at Online World of Wrestling anytime alongside the Kingfish Katz any time soon.) Arnie told me back at CfAg that Orton was unpopular with the rest of the boys in the locker room, and I wouldn’t be surprised if that was still the case, since he is such a thorough heel that I’d think there have to be shoot elements in his in-ring character. Comparing his style with others,

JBL, while himself a thorough heel, plays more as a stereotype cartoonish figure, while the likes of Levesque (HHH) and Kevin Nash, both accomplished heels when required, always seemed to manage a wink at the audience with their portrayals. HHH, Nash, and the always excellent Chris Jericho have all had successful heel *and* face runs, but it’s next to impossible to imagine Orton being anything other than a bad guy.

Over at TNA (which despite their failings I *still* like better than the other guys, probably because I root for the underdog), the “Main Event Mafia” faction led by Kurt Angle and comprising Kevin Nash, Booker T, Scott Steiner and Sting is finally having its long-telegraphed implosion, as the egomaniac Angle and Sting (the world title holder) come to blows. This may seem strange, but their confrontation match, staged in an empty arena with no ref, gave TNA it’s highest ratings ever! Angle is another monster heel like Orton, although he’s had very successful face runs in the past, and once again you can’t help but think there have to be shoot elements in his portrayal. The storyline of his wife Karen leaving him, although the element of a supposed affair with A J Styles was kayfabe, was reflected in real life (their divorce was finalized last October).

As Arnie has perceptively pointed out in the past, when TNA thinks they’re onto something (although the “something” can change on a weekly basis, and even, it sometimes seems, within a show), they tend to blanket everything with it. This perhaps has its worst showing in their habit of throwing as many wrestlers as possible into any given match - the clusters are getting a little tiring, although TNA does do these better than WWE in terms of ring action. So, since the MEM is having an internal feud, let’s also mess with the “Kongtourage”, since Sojourner Bolt is now the #1 contender for Kong’s title. Well, at least in this case SoJo and Rhaka Khan are at odds with their erstwhile leader, and as we all know you can never get enough Rhaka. This infighting theme even extended to having a major beef between commentators Don West and Mike Tenay.

Perhaps TNA is thinking of firing West, or perhaps turning him. WWE has pretty much gotten itself out of the habit of having a face/heel commentator team since Jonathan Coachman left for ESPN, and to be honest I prefer a more or less straight “play-by-play” and “color” setup. Let’s face it. a lot of the angles are already pretty stretched without also having to throw the commentary team into the mix. If TNA makes West the heel half of the commentary it’s hard to see how this would integrate with the rest of the storylines, nor what any resolution might be. Over at WWE the heel commentator (always the color man) would be the apologist/cheerleader for whatever the current top heel faction would be. West’s apparent beef is primarily over the fact that at a meeting where his future was supposedly

being discussed, Tenay did not stick up for him, so it's not the case that Don has suddenly decided that he should be kissing up to Kurt Angle for whatever reason. Kind of difficult to see where they might be going with this.

Of course, what happens on TNA that night? West becomes a heel apologist and walks out on Tenay again halfway through the show. Bah!

TUNES! (REDUX)



Not much on TV Saturday night, but channel surfing landed me on VH1, which was a little ways in to their viewer voted "Top 100 Hard Rock songs", with their usual listing format of video clips, live footage and a bunch of talking heads, who were mostly actual rock luminaries but also included Chris Jericho, captioned "WWE Superstar / Author", and inexplicably failing to mention his own long-time band Fozzy.

It's always fascinating, sometimes in the watching-a-train-wreck sense, to see who comes across well in their sound bite comments, and without exception it's almost always the old-timers, exemplars in this particular VH1 set of shows being the likes of Iggy Pop, Ted Nugent and David Coverdale (!), probably because these guys at least have a set of anecdotes, while all the newer heads can do is mumble semi-coherently about how "Crazy Train" changed their lives when they were twelve. The Nuge gleefully remarked that "now people come to the concerts to toast marshmallows on the flames that are coming out of my ass", while the Ig noted the changing times by observing that back in the day before a show he would hear "I'm nervous - I need 20 White Russians before I go on" while nowadays it would be "I'm nervous - I need to do some Tai Chi".

Although the results would undoubtedly have been different in a European poll, the number of Brit bands in the higher echelons is all as it should be. Just outside the top ten, for example, are Deep Purple ("Smoke on the Water"),

Judas Priest ("Breaking the Law"), Def Leppard ("Photograph") and Iron Maiden ("Run to the Hills"). The top ten counts down like this:

#10: MOTÖRHEAD ("Ace of Spades")

As Lemmy knowingly observes, "If you listened to this not knowing who we were, you'd think it was a punk band." In 1980 when this was released, it jumped out as a huge kick in the bollocks to all that New Romantic doodly noises and was undoubtedly responsible for bringing metal back into the public eye.

#9: VAN HALEN ("Runnin' With the Devil")

As any fule kno Pete Townsend is the greatest pure rock guitarist, but Eddie Van Halen may be rock's greatest musician in the sense that no-one else can do wot Eddie do. "Hot for Teacher" also appears further down the list (#36). I'd probably have rated the latter much higher, possibly above "Devil".

#8: AEROSMITH ("Walk This Way")

Like Van Halen, I the problem I have with this is that the voting methods would seem to have picked up a band's "signature" song in a lot of cases rather than a possibly better one. Run DMC's cover/collaboration of this brought Tyler, Perry & Co right back into the limelight, but half of their catalog is better than this. "Draw the Line", "Mama Kin" and "Train Kept A'Rollin'" all come instantly to mind.

#7: NIRVANA ("Smells Like Teen Spirit")

Never been a big fan, to be honest, always thought they were hugely overrated, but I do like almost everything Dave Grohl has done since. (The Foo Fighters made #26 with "Everlong" - a great song!)

#6: THE WHO ("Won't Get Fooled Again")

Undoubtedly great, and of course my #1 band, but again the victim of "signature" disease. "My Generation" appears at #37, but where is what has often been described as the perfect rock riff, "Can't Explain"? It's been said that *all* of the truly great rock songs are just reworkings of the "Can't Explain" riff, including of course the #2 greatest band of all time by a whisker and "Clash City Rockers".

#5: METALLICA ("Enter Sandman")

Once they went global with this, the inevitable accusations from the diehard metal fans that the band had sold out began. If there's anything worse than a whiny metal fan it's probably a whiny sf fan. Again an excellent song, but "The Unforgiven" is still my Metallica favorite. I almost count them as a Brit band since they were influenced so heavily by the likes of Motörhead, Black Sabbath, Budgie and Led Zep.

#4: BLACK SABBATH ("Paranoid")

No doubt about this one, is there? Ozzy was one of the talking heads on the show and was occasionally coherent.

#3: LED ZEPPELIN ("Whole Lotta Love")

Iconic, dirty, thumping, and not even close to them at their best. "Ramble On" from the same album (II) is better, and "Black Dog" from IV knocks spots off almost everything. The scarily great "Kashmir" made #21 on the VH1 list.

#2: AC/DC ("Back in Black")

Bon Scott was thought to be irreplaceable as the front and off-center of AC/DC. but then... "Where *did* they find this guy?" asked, I think, Nugent, referring to replacement Brian Johnson. From the glam band Geordie actually Nuge, we all knew that. While never about to eclipse Scott, this rowdy chunk announced to the world that the band were still up for it, and still well good. And they still are, judging by the latest release "Black Ice". Brian Johnson is 62.

#1: GUNS 'N' ROSES ("Welcome to the Jungle")

Well, I suppose an American show had to have an American band as their #1 pick, and the hagiography of Axl Rose that accompanied the song clips was pretty sick-making, although Slash noted that the band as a whole were all top-notch players. describing Rose, as one talking head did, as "the best rock singer - ever- no question" is really bollocks when you've just listened to the likes of Daltrey, Plant, Tyler et al. "Paradise City" is better anyway.

LOCO CITATO

[[Editorial comment looks like this. I swear Alexis has a Backstep facility, because he seems to get a loc to me (by snail mail) almost before I've sent the zine out...]]

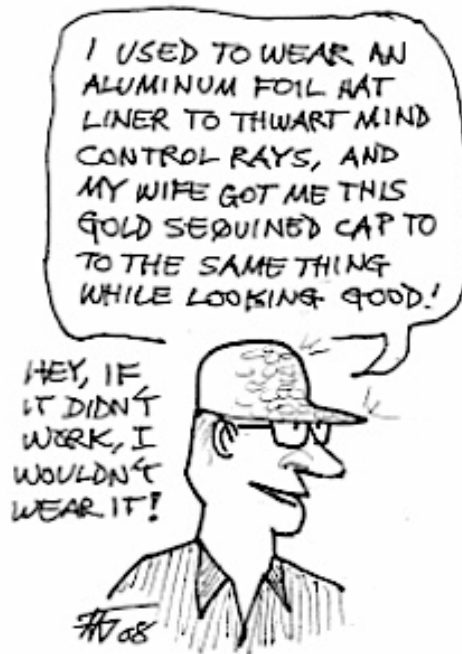
From: 4030 8th Street South,
Arlington, VA 22204

February 9

Alexis Gilliland writes:

Thank you for *This Here...* #10 which has at last moved into the double digits and will surely reach the magic number of "thirty" realsoonnow. Uh, what's a Brit like you doing with a place in Kentucky? Did I miss something?

[[Evidently you did, since it's Tennessee and not Kentucky. I bought 8½ acres in Chuckey (which is near Greeneville) last year with an eye to future development, which with things as they are is getting more and more future as we speak. I suppose This Here... reaching double figures is worthy of a modest fanfare. If I manage to carry on punting an ish every couple of months, should hit thirty in five years or so...]]



There are two aspects to the idea of a fan, first the enthusiasm, and then the interaction with those sharing that enthusiasm. The act of collecting stuff is the material manifestation of enthusiasm, while going to cons and participating in fanzines are the most common forms of interaction. In the old days, the stuff available to collect would have mainly been books and magazines, with fanzines for the cognoscenti. Fans were defined by what they read. In these modern times it is also possible to collect DVDs of movies and TV shows, so that many fans may also be defined by what they watch. Since sci-fi spills across media boundaries, the sci-fi fan of the printed word has become a subset of sci-fi fans, with those sci-fi fans of movies and TV becoming an increasingly large majority, even as e-zines displace the eotechnic paper zines. (Eotechnic? Hey, Red Boggs used to right justify his fanzine by retyping his text on stencil while now a click of the mouse will suffice.) Today, fanzines are composed on computer and printed at Kinkos, modern and hypermodern, but sending the hard copy out via the post office instead of electronically is the essence of old technology. Thus does fandom evolve, leaving the unhappy print fans as a small minority of sci-fi fandom, just as they used to be a small minority of the mundane world.

[[Two dedicated papernet fanzines I'm familiar with are Opuntia and Banana Wings, neither of which has any online presence I am aware of, and more power to 'em really. I made a conscious decision with the current run on This Here... to restrict the number of paper copies somewhat, but never to eliminate them entirely. Fortunately for me the Sainted One offered to run UK copies (nicking work facilities, natch) which allowed me to expand the paper circulation of #10. I like to allow a week or so for the print versions to reach their destinations before I send a PDF to efanzines...]]

Sheryl Birkhead nails Lee's Cop Magnet license plate very nicely. When Lee first proposed the idea I was dubious. on the grounds that

teasing the animals (as with the bumper sticker "Bad Cop, No Donut") is never a good idea. So she asked a cop friend of hers, who told her that it was not only funny, but that no cop was going to give her a ticket if they could avoid it, because they'd get laughed at in court. So the other day Lee is doing 70 in a 55 zone, and a cop pulls her over. He walks around to the passenger side, and she rolls down the window and offers him her driver's license and registration before he can say a word. Cop: What's this? Lee: My

driver's license and registration. Isn't that what you were going to ask for? Cop: How did you know that? Lee: Experience. I'm a blonde driving a red convertible with license plates that say Cop Magnet. The cop goes to look at the license plate and comes back to give her a warning.

[[Which is why the rest of us get twice as many tickets - we're all having to pick up Lee's share...]]

From: garcia@computerhistory.org

February 11

Chris Garcia writes:

Nic Farey rides into my mailbox on a white paper horse. It's got a ring to it, I'll say that.

Lillian Edwards as Blossom? I guess that makes sense. Interestingly, I first thought of Lillian as Blossom from the classic 1990s television abattoir of the same name. That she would not fit. Max (who I refer to as Steve) as Buttercup is interesting, though I'm not 100% sure I'd agree. Perhaps Flick fits the bill? As for Bubbles, I'm not sure. Claire Brialley, perhaps?

[[Forecast: shitstorm! Kind of glad now I wasn't asking for recastings of The Golden Girls, though the ubiquitous Lillian is clearly Blanche, Eve Harvey is Sophia, um, Geri Sullivan or Yvonne Rowse as Dorothy, er, OK I give up...]]

Most states have taken to requiring tags on scooters. I never realized it, but scooters are far more dangerous than motorcycles. Neither offer any real protection in a crash, but the scooters tend to present a wider target and because of the height of the ride, are slightly harder to see. Sadly, there's nothing I love more than a Vespa, and since I would outfit it with dozens of mirrors, it would be impossible to not notice me.

Oh man, that sucks. Genevieve, the mom of The Little One (aka Evelyn, the kid I babysit) has gotten dinged for that twice. The first time, she merely had to pay a fine and everything was groovy. The second time she had to spend the night in County and then had a huge fine. It was a bad time for her.

Wrestling of late has been rough. I'm not a big fan of what RAW is doing (though I do like watching Randy Orton punt guys in the head) and ECW is hardly watchable. I like The Hardys. I think that Jeff has no business at the top of the card, but Matt's a better promo (remember the Matt-Edge feud that made Edge a star?) and he has more interesting matches. Yeah, they certainly over-sell. I don't know why Jeff's so popular, especially with that awful face paint.

The Knockouts aren't bad, I like ODB's character. Sadly, Kong's hurt and her latest match was pretty bad because she was very limited in what she could do. I have to say that I was unhappy when they got rid of Salinas, the lovely Miss Shelley Martinez, since she was the sexiest woman ever to step foot in a ring. I love Beth Phoenix, and Santino

with her is hilarious. Interesting, Rosa Mendes is a fine character too, though they've used that exact same entry for other women in the past. I dig Natalie Neidhart, who let me interview her, and I think that when they finally do do the Next Hart Foundation, she'll be a big star.

And I'm not sure how I missed Mornington Crescent? I'm pretty sure I haven't gone through that station and it looks like Tubewhore has, but she didn't give it to us to run.

[[I was, of course, referring more to the legendary game of 'Mornington Crescent' rather than the station itself...]]

From: j_purcell54@yahoo.com

February 14

John Purcell writes:

[...]

I agree that Awesome Kong is, well, awesome in that finding credible opposition for her in the ring is getting very hard to do. ECW *[[sic]]* had a bit of a line on this with Christy Hemme, but I haven't watched the show for the past couple weeks so now I'm a bit out of the loop on this. Like you noted ODB is probably the best opponent for Kong, which would be a great match-up. The "Kongtourage" last night was pretty laughable on TNA (2/12/09), but it did set up ODB as the number one contender to Kong. We shall have to, as they say, stay abreast of developments *har-har*.

[[The Hemme program TNA was running vs Kong was, as I had mentioned, a bit of a surprise since Christy's rep was much more that of a diva than a knockout. Credit to her that she put a hell of an effort into it, but all the training and dedication in the world can't make up for the experience the others have. I'd say it's fairly certain that her in-ring career is pretty much over...]]

Your trip report was something straight out of a "Vacation from Hell" collection of stories. I have yet to suffer through a trip like yours, although we came close back in July 1999 when my family went camping at Indiana Dunes Park on the shores of Lake Michigan. That trip didn't go completely as planned since the trailer slid backwards down a very sandy incline and schmunged into a tree, leaving a nice dent in its back left side, and we started running out of money. However, things weren't all bad because the weather was decent - only rained a little one night, and when you're family's in a big tent, that's a very good thing - then I found a \$20 bill in the parking lot at a WalMart just across the Indiana-Michigan border, but the really good stuff was visiting the Chicago Museum of Art, the Shedd Aquarium, and Chicago Museum of Natural History. Very cool, indeed, and interesting.

At least your harrowing travails will serve as a warning: DO NOT BUY JOHN DEERE GENERATORS UNLESS

YOU'RE SUPREMELY STOOPID. I shall definitely keep that in mind. Talk about a string of bad luck... That was just insane. Thankfully you survived to tell the tale.

[[Actually that should be more like: "Do not buy ANY generator IF you're extremely stoopid". It was definitely my fuckup (or mine and George's if you want to spread the blame) due to ignorance, not really the fault of the Deere. In any case, as with a lot of "John Deere" products you're really paying for the paintjob (although this was a sale item and a great deal at the price). In common with many American-made generators the guts of the thing is a Briggs & Stratton engine. Hm, having just written that I now wonder whether "the guts is..." is proper construction...]]

Great write-up of the rasslin' babes. I had not realized how much my little comment spurred you on, but I am glad it did. You certainly know much more about this than I do. so thank you for sharing your insights. I almost forgot to mention earlier in this loc the NWWL, which is truly a unique sporting event. I assume that you know all about it, Nic, but if any of your readers don't know of this, all they have to do is google in "NWWL" and click on it. That is all I am going to say.

[[Ahem. Indeed. But in the interests of work safety and all that jazz (or in this case jizz?) I feel rather duty bound to point out that John refers to the Naked Womens' Wrestling League. Thanks for the hook in your loc on #9 tho: I had intended to write about TNA anyway, but concentrating lastish's column on the knockouts did seem a good place to start...]]

And I believe that is all I am to say in this loc. Enjoyed the zine mightily, Nic. If you do make it down to this neck of the woods, make it over the weekend of August 7-8, 2009. Here's their website: www.navasotabluesfest.org.

This year that is the weekend before Armadillocon (Aug. 14-16) over in Austin, so maybe I can hit both this year. Keep your fingers crossed.

[...]

From: 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield HD5 8PB, UK

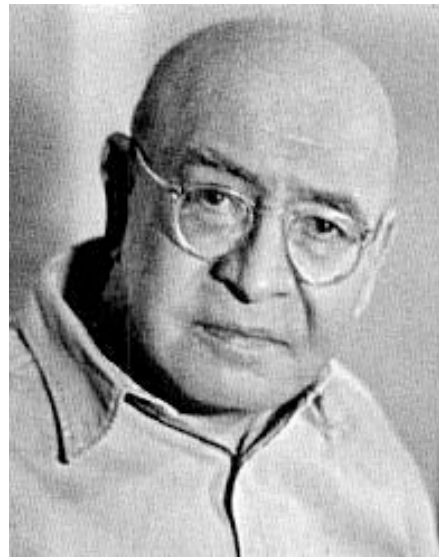
February 18

Steve Sneyd writes:

[...]

Mark Plummer, to abbreviate "with glazed eyes", cd've used a lovely acron came across somewhere recently - MEGO - My Eyes Glaze Over.

The Platonic etc discussion causes recall of great Count Korzybski, Van Vogt's guru, & his Null-A comment "the map is not the territory", essential advice for any rambler. Kent is to get a 33x lifesize white horse statue at Ebbs Fleet, apparently, so that'll be, not a real, but a hyperreal horse.



The map is not the territory...

[[I read about that (or rather inferred it from Private Eye, and all I could think was that it provides another Plummer MEGO moment. Thus does reality, slightly panting, catch up...]]

Cassell's Dict of Slang gives copacetic/copasetic/copasetty, 1) "excellent/1st rate 2) confidential/secret" & a feast of poss etyms, from Chinook, Ital, French, or Yiddish, or the crazed

"the cop is on the settee" ie asleep/not noticing, so the crooks can get on with their aims & objectives - folk etymology at its most OTT.

100fers - Pablo Lennis was up to 252 in Nov '08. Last dead tree *The Mentor* I have is 95, but I've a feeling Ron Clarke did some more online-only ishes? Brazier's *Title* ? got to 100 or thereabouts.

[[Steve, you raise a point here I think. When we're talking about 100-ish veterans, is it implied that we're talking about dead tree? For me, that answer has to be yes. With the general shift to online publishing, 100+ runs of actual paper fanzines are becoming the fannish equivalent of Cal Ripken's Iron Man streak (but let's also bear in mind that John Hertz' Vanamonde will probably break 1,000). The gorgeous pouting L Edwards has undoubtedly consigned 100 zines worth of stuff to the ether of LiveJournal, and will perhaps be highly annoyed to be mentioned in the same sentence as Emerald City (which is of course why I did it), but does that count? Now we start getting into the more contentious area of value judgements - is, for example, an 80-issue run of Apparatchik intrinsically better than a 12-issue run of Attitude simply because of sheer weight of numbers?...]]

Thoughts of such antiquities reminds me of an utterly trivial personal anniversary - '69 is when I 1st came across fanzines - Ordrey Walton's *Wadezine* and *Free Orbit*, so've notched up 40 uncore years. "Where does the time go" type clichés apply?!

[[On a personal note to you, Steve, I'm happy to mention that Grate Magister Burns now has the complete run of Arrows of Desire up at efanzines, along with an author index I compiled. Of interest to you will of course be the

occasional bits of poetry, including a contribution by one S Sneyd in #7...]]

From: nickgrassel@yahoo.com

February 19

Nick Grassel writes:

Have to agree with you and Alexis Gilliland about Phil Foglio. I ran across his website a while ago and have been hooked on *Girl Genius*. Of course I've been a fan of his work since his fannish days but it is nice to see his current work.

As I looked up his web page I was reminded of an NPR story I heard this afternoon about William Katt's (Greatest American Hero) Motion Comic and Googled that also -- being too lazy to run back out to the van where I had jotted down a note to myself to look the comic up when I got home. Googling Motion Comic gave me 7,900,000 references and didn't include the 128,000 blog references. And everything seemed to refer to "Warner" (DC) and Marvel's motion comics. So I decided that the note in the van was probably going to be necessary. With Motion Comic and Sparks (the title) there were 1,250,000 references which was easier to work with since the first link got me going in the right direction.

I haven't been reading too much new sf/fantasy except for some of the magazines. Budget and access are the main drawbacks. Hamilton Alabama is not even in the middle of nowhere -- it's off to the side. You have to travel 50 miles to be nowhere. But I am lucky that my son -- who still lives with us -- is an sf reader also and he picked up a couple dozen old books a while ago that had some that I hadn't read or I wanted to re-read. And my wife is a book addict also -- though NOT SF -- and we got (groan) several boxes of books from a friend of hers who had the good sense to unclutter herself of these books. The next day I immediately set up a triage area and sorted through these boxes to hopefully regain some of the space they represented (of which we have NONE -- this house is much smaller than anything we've lived in for years and I've got more than half the cubic space in this back room consumed with stacked boxes and the other half computer stuff). It was foolish of me to expect that plan -- like any good battle plan -- would survive the first skirmish. The hope of getting rid of ANY of the books disappeared when my wife got home that evening. She was glad that I had sorted out the sf, thrillers and mysteries and she claimed the rest -- no matter what it was.

[[BB likes to read, but ver-ry slo-owwly, so we're not exactly competing for shelf space. In any case the greater part of my library (and fanzine collection) is still in storage, where I hope the mice aren't being prevalent. I can sympathize with being in the middle of nowhere, although I rather like space & privacy myself. Chuckey is about as far

from the nearest decent town (Greeneville) as Saint Leonard is from Prince Frederick. Calvert County, Maryland, is however the fastest growing county in the state in terms of population (although the smallest in area). Prince Frederick has started to get a lot more development in terms of chain restaurants and such (Outback type of places) just in time for them to start closing down because no-one's going out to eat any more. I like the "travel 50 miles to be nowhere" crack. We used to say things like "When you get to the end of the universe turn left and keep going", or my personal favorite, "If (name of county) is the asshole of the universe then (name of town) is five miles up it"...]]

George Carlin knew what he was talking about when he divided the world into MY STUFF and your (her) junk.

But among those books was Barbara Hambly's Sun-Cross, the SF Book Club omnibus one volume version of The Rainbow Abyss and The Magicians of Night. It was a very good read with a couple nice (and bad) surprises. And I thought that it warranted a third book.

[[Never read any Hambly, possibly because either I only knew her name from the Star Trek and other media novels, but perhaps also because her name sounds like she's writing bodice-rippers...]]

I like when I discover (or actually in this case re-discover) a writer like this that I may have read some few things by before but now it opens up a couple dozen books to try and follow-up on. I've been doing that with some mystery/thriller writers (Lee Child and John Sandford, etc) recently and it's fun until you catch up to their current level and then you have to WAIT all of a sudden for their next book. Takes me back YEARS ago remembering waiting for the next Heinlein or Clarke novel.

Current Wrestling leaves me cold. Though I never was a big fan I watched some wrestling back in Detroit while my Grandfather was watching me while my parents were at work. I remember Dick the Bruiser got in trouble for throwing some money on the sidewalk outside his hotel then stepping on the fingers of the kids/fans who tried to pick them up. Bad guys were bad and good guys were good. (Though some played reverse roles in different regions -- Bobo Brazil was good in Detroit and bad down south). Now the difference is that the good guy is the one who gets the wooden chair outside the ring to clobber someone and the bad guy uses the metal chair.

[[Can't remember the last time I saw a wooden chair (at least one advertised as such) on a rasslin' show. It seems the ante keeps getting upped so much with foreign objects (I mean, if Triple H really laid into someone with that sledgehammer you'd hardly be seeing them again later), I fully expect to see some WWE heel come out with a working chainsaw any day...]]

From: pamelaboal@westfieldway.fsnet.co.uk

February 20

Pamela Boal writes:

Thank you for the paper copy of This Here as my eyes won't let me read more than a paragraph at a time on a monitor I can't cope with zines on line thus I seemed to be gradually losing fandom of today.

I opened up the envelope and just laughed out loud. Husband Derek rushed in from the kitchen wondering what on earth was wrong with me. I have showed that first page photo to several people and every one has laughed, even those who would normally give only a polite smile. Good one Nic.

[[There are actually several versions of that pic to be found, and of course they're all photoshopped, but I did favor the Connecticut one...]]

Well it must be at least thirty years since I saw wrestling on TV. Indeed I think it may be years since it was available on any UK channels. Thus, that article was above my head.

How ever I could well and truly empathise with the caravan story. Reminds me of the day we went to collect our cabin cruiser. A friend drove us to the boat yard with our stock of bedding, food and basic necessities for our intended bank holiday cruise up river to our mooring. Loaded the boat, waved good bye to our friend, signed the bits and pieces of paper and set off. We got all of ten yards before a red warning light started to pulse on the control panel. Managed to get back to the boat yard. "Oh dear yes, this looks like a serious problem with the engine the engineer we use won't be back until after the bank holiday. No you can't stay on board here, we have no overnight or residential mooring. I can call a taxi to take you back home" The start of what was to be nearly two years of similar incidents. Take heart though, eventually we had sixteen wonderful years of cruising before health forced us to give up.

Your LoCs are a bit like coming home. All the usual suspects featured there. Thanks again, look forward to more.

From: earlkemp@citolink.net

February 20

Earl Kemp writes:

Nic, I'm getting behind in my email and my reading. Lots of rain and dark days gobbling up my photovoltaic energy. Any excuse will do.

And then there's *This Here...* 10. What a fantastic photo on the cover. "We Apologize" indeed, as well they should.

I've also enjoyed your generator story. Up until this year I've been going through generators at a rapid pace. The first most significant thing I learned was to NEVER buy a generator with the Coleman brand. They are terrible people to deal with and their authorized repair service is worse. I could tell you nightmare stories about them but a simple warning should do the trick. AVOID Coleman!

Actually I've been going through, on an average, three generators a year for the last half a dozen years, and each one of them in the \$500 to \$700 range, and from various manufacturers.

[[Holy crap! Three a year? What's been going wrong with them? I would have thought they would be under some kind of warranty...]]

What I eventually found that suits me best, of all things, is a Chinese made, Champion imported and branded generator. In fact, I'm using it at this moment to write you. It cost \$325 new at Checker Auto Parts and I've been using it daily now into the 13th month of life and working great. Knock wood! I will not hesitate to replace it with a similar model, same manufacture, whenever this one finally dies. Even the spark plug was guaranteed for one year.

Anyway, so much for the recommendation...

Keep up the good work

From: brithistorian@gmail.com

February 22

Jason Burnett writes:

Your account of your (mis)adventures with the caravan were thrilling and horrifying simultaneous. Like a bystander a crash site, though, I can't wait to see what happens next. It seems odd how this sort of thing happens quite often to fans yet never to SF heroes. Fortunately Luke Skywalker apparently wasn't an SF fan because otherwise the first *Star Wars* movie would have come to abrupt about half an hour in, when Luke is unable to sell his landspeeder because the title is in the burning remains of his aunt and uncle's house.

From: penneys@allstream.net

February 27

Lloyd Penney writes:

Not sure who could possibly be the fannish Bubbles...well, I have some names in mind, but the Atlantic Ocean may not be a sufficient barrier to keep the young lady away, so as I have been saying these days, I am an experienced husband, so I shall wisely say nothing. An aside to Connecticut... apology accepted, but don't you ever, EVER let it happen again.

Gasoline's gone down in price, but we all know that it won't stay there. I can only imagine how many gallons per mile a motorhome gets. There's plenty of dealerships around here...perhaps I should check them, and see how many have gone away in the 'global economic downturn'. We should know better than to trust the weatherman and whatever he says. Sometimes, it's about as accurate as casting runes and charms. Temperatures are supposed to drop like a rock this afternoon here, so I dressed for the ditch, and I think I won't regret that.

Your adventures with generators and the law... you've got the worst luck.

Living in an apartment in a city means you don't usually need such machinery, but if I needed a scooter, and it has crossed my mind, I'd probably buy a new Vespa. I think with even those little things, I would need a licence, and I do not have a driver's licence. Never have; buses and subways are usually enough to get me around where I need to go, and I could always use more walking.

[[When I lived in London (1976-1982), I got by without personal transportation most of the time, though I did have a couple of old Minis while I was living in areas Sarf-east (Hither Green, actually). Living in Hitchin during the years before I moved to the States was also mostly worry-free in this area. Though needing a car to get to and from work, mom etc., I was living in a flat right in the center of town (which the Sainted One & others will remember well), so on weekends I could easily walk to the pub, grocery store, pub, Indian restaurant, pub and so on...]]

I finally did check out Phil Foglio's *Girl Genius* website, or at least I tried to...most of the links I clicked led to the near-ubiquitous internal service error screen. I'll try again another day when Phil's got things cleaned up.

Shelvy Vick speculates that Walt Willis was just another Carl Brandon? Nope, 'taint so. I met Walt Willis in 1992 at the Orlando Worldcon, and he told me he liked my writing and my letters. I wasn't sure my feet were touching the floor for the rest of the convention.

Every time I go onto the London tube website and call up a map (curiosity, nothing more), I see there's construction of some new tunnels and new stations. the tube expands like its alive. Expansion of the subways here is glacial speedwise, and the subject of endless screaming matches. I keep reading about subway extensions to the north and northwest, but I think I'll be long gone before these projects are finished, if they ever get started.



Claire Brialey, perhaps?

Work life and personal life are definitely separate for me. Based on past observations and experiences, socializing at work is a no-no. It's an end to a means, a place to earn a paycheque, and nothing more. It's place where you must stay professional because when that pretense is dropped, who knows what may happen? I've never been all that comfortable in an office setting; give me a con full of crazy fans any day.

I have to say enjoyed the local, but no hooks to catch on...and so, off to the egress. Thank you for another issue, and I am enjoying the past Fareyzines Bill Burns's been putting

up. I even locced a couple of them long ago, if I recall. See you next zine, whatever title you choose.

[[Thanks to Magister Burns, efanazines.com now carries a pretty much full set of what you charmingly term 'Fareyzines', and thanks are due to the Sainted Plummer for scanning issues I couldn't lay hands on. I added an author index for the eight issue run of Arrows of Desire (and there are some fine names there, including but not limited to Di Filippo, Greenland, Joyce and Langford), and for those who haven't seen this good ole stuff or perhaps just feel like commenting anew, I invited locs to the This Here... address, and will likely publish any I get...]]

From: john.sila@virgin.net

February 28

Uncle Johnny Nielsen-Hall writes:

The horror story in Tennessee was immensely entertaining. But why did you want to move the van to the plot in Tennessee to start with? What happened in Jonesborough? You cant have gone to jail, else we wouldn't have got this ish - would we?

[[Of course you would have you daft 'ap'orth, because I did say that my court date was February 18th, so plenty of time to get #10 done and out. If you're like me and egoscanned thish first, Mockingbird II tells you how Jonesborough went, and it wasn't a massacre. Moving the 'van to Tennessee in the first place, and sorry if this wasn't clear, was basically to give me somewhere to stay while working there, either on my own bit or, as it turns out, possibly for someone else...]]

Would that I could share your Rasslin' enthusiasms - and I could for some of those women I expect, but I don't want to see them wrestling other women, dark pervert that I am, just some poor weedy male who hasn't got a hope. Well,

there you are, now you know. I hope that doesn't come as too much of a shock or disappointment to anybody.

[...]

[[Ah, Johnny old chap, I suspect you'd have loved Chyna (Joanie Laurer) who used to rassle for WWF - who actually beat all the guys there (notably one of my perennial favorites Jeff Jarrett, who reportedly asked for and got \$300,000 for a clean loss to a woman) and held the Intercontinental Championship for a while. Mind you, most of those blokes weren't exactly weedy. She was the real-life main squeeze of Triple-H for several years, but has later said that her decision to leave the then WWF was made easier by the fact that he decided that knobbing the boss' daughter (Stephanie McMahon) was a better bet...]]

From: srjeffery@aol.com

March 1

Steve Jeffery writes:

Belated and apologetic thanx for This Here 10, which arrived - and was read - a couple of weeks back now, but not relied to while Vikki and I struggled (and do still) with passing each other colds and other assorted lurgies like a viral fueled game of pass the parcel.

[[I did kind of wonder, since you're usually pretty quick of the mark with a loc, but no apology necessary...]]

OK, surely that photo on the front page has to be Photoshopped. Given the reception to the Dixie Chicks and to Neil Young's 'Let's Impeach the President' on the last CSNY reunion tour from rabid Republicans, a sign like that adorning Dubya's own birthplace would probably last about 5 seconds before being torn down or vandalized.

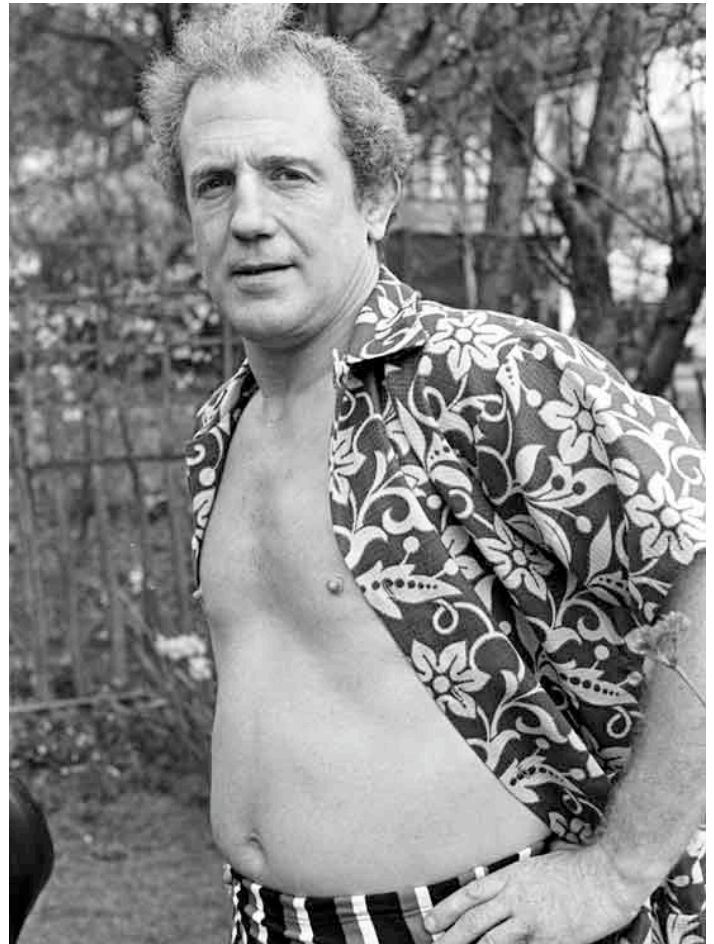
[[Got it in one Steve-o. As I mentioned earlier, there are several versions of this pic...]]

I was trying to work out where you were in Mockingbird. If Bristol refers to Bristol, VA, it's sort of familiar, from some trips I did for work for a company there around 10-12 years back. (There's another Bristol in PA, which has the tiniest airport I've ever seen, which is smaller than even the Oxford bus station in Gloucester Green.) I think I may even have stayed in the Bristol, VA Days Inn for a week or so, although I can't recall if this is the one we arrived at in February and were promptly snowed in for the next three days, having to negotiate with the company we'd come to visit via the hotel phone and fax since we couldn't even get the car out of the car park, never mind the five miles down the road to the factory. But again, assuming this is the place, I remember the Cracker Barrel, and some of the biggest and most calorific and cholesterol-rich Sunday breakfasts I've ever encountered.

[[Bristol straddles the Virginia/Tennessee line. The greyhound bus driver likes to remark as we pull in and out

of the Bristol stop "You're now in Bristol Tennessee, you're now in Virginia, you're now back in Tennessee" in the space of about 100 yards. The Days Inn I stayed at was on the TN side, so no Cracker Barrel...]]

Like others, I'll pass on the wrestling articles and discussion. I haven't watched wrestling since the 70s, with people like Big Daddy (Shirley Crabtree) and Giant Haystacks, Jackie Pallo and the Royle Brothers on TV. (My granny was an avid fan, for some reason). And US wrestling is a different, more brash and showbizzy thing altogether, although I suspect no more real.



Jackie Pallo

[[I love the way a lot of the old Brit names I'd forgotten keep coming up, in this case Jackie Pallo, who was a great heel in the mold of Curt Hennig...]]

You were talking with John Purcell about impressive music festival line ups. I'm jealous that I've never seen Floyd live in their heyday, though I have a video of their *Dark Side of the Moon* show at Earl's Court, which is hugely impressive, especially the spectacular lighting.

Apart from a couple of Reading Festivals (when it at Reading, and not, for some obscure reason, not half in Leeds, and when it was a proper "Jazz, Blues and Rock" festival

(Rory Gallagher, the Faces, John Martyn) from which I came back covered in mud and reeking of woodsmoke and cheap cider, one of the first - and in hindsight, most impressive-sounding line ups I saw was around 1972 at the Oval Kennington, with Wishbone Ash, Focus, Genesis and ELP and a couple of others (Medicine Head?) all on the same bill.

I think Genesis were fairly unknown then, except to devoted prog-rock heads. (I think they opened with *Watcher Of The Skies*, which would suggest *Foxtrot* was the latest album, rather underlined by Gabriel appearing in a fox's head and fetching red frock, to a certain amount of barracking from bedenimed Wishbone Ash fans). Although not quite as unknown as when I saw them play about a year earlier to about two dozen puzzled souls at the Woodville Halls, Gravesend (possibly supporting Van der Graaf Generator).

It is something of an achievement to explode two generators with the one caravan. I think after the second I would have rather suspected the caravan's wiring was at fault, rather than having purchased a run of faulty generators.

[[Not in fact the case, as Mockingbird II relates...]]

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

March 4

Gary Mattingly writes:

I like the Connecticut highway sign apology. Also many thanks for pointing out that Michael Dorn is now making appearances in Heroes. I had not noticed that.

[[As of the current episode (March 2) Dorn hadn't actually appeared other than in the season-ending teaser from last year, so he's been easy not to notice. On a personal note though Gary, great to hear from you & give me this opportunity to extend my personal and public thanks for what Earl described as the "finger-lickin'" photo from CfAg, which as I'm sure you're aware has gained wide currency...]]

With respect to your obviously entertaining sojourn in Tennessee, I have a question. Why were you doing this? Obviously I missed an earlier chapter detailing the reasons. Gee, you seemed to have a ton of fun. If karma is anywhere near you're due for exceedingly good times soon. Your whole journey seemed to, um, suck. Destroyed generators, snow, cold, multiple tickets, pushing a scooter. A well told tale of most unfortunate times. I look forward to the next episode of your exciting adventure.

Very interesting article on Rasslin'. Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on how anyone might want to look at it, I don't watch wrestling although the whole female Knockout thing sounds very inviting. Maybe another life.

Most of my sports viewing falls to professional boxing, such as the recent match with Juan Manuel Marquez vs Juan "Baby Bull" Diaz in which Marquez claimed two vacant world lightweight belts after he knocked out Diaz. Now will Marquez get his rematch with Manny Pacquiao? I hope so. That should be a good fight. This one was great, in my opinion. With power punches galore and a small amount of blood flowing in the ring it was an enjoyable fight, although not so much for Diaz. I think he did well in the early rounds but Marquez' experience and capability did him in.

[[I think I may have mentioned this in response to some long-distant loc, but I haven't watched boxing seriously in some years, although I used to be a big fan, to the extent of keeping my own scorecard during big fights. I think the last actual fight I watched was the infamous Tyson/Holyfield ear-biting debacle, which to me was the final nail in the coffin of what was once a fine sport, although from what I've heard from various correspondents, there may be something of a resurgence going on, despite what seems to be a saturation of MMA...]]

The Tao of Ray Gange proved to be more enjoyable reading. The Who and The Clash are both marvelous but I've never seen them live (well, at least I don't remember seeing them live. Occasionally Rich Coad has to remind me about the concerts we went to and some of them were really good, or so I'm told but well, my memory isn't always so good for various and sundry reasons.) Growing up in Kansas kept me from most of the fervor of the times. One would have thought I would have seen some of that having been in high school in the late 60's and college in the early 70's but such wasn't really the case. *The Rude Boy* DVD sounds like something I should watch. I don't really have that many concert DVDs although I did recently pick up a number of Ramones DVDs, including *End of the Century*, which I actually saw on TV and then decided I needed to have. It covered a somewhat earlier period and of course dealt with the mid-70's disharmony the band went through, per imdb. I liked the movie.

[[I still think one of the best concert DVDs ever is Prince's 'Sign O The Times', although it does include a music video segment with Sheena Easton duetting on 'U Got The Look'. BB, never a huge fan, was blown away by his Superbowl halftime show, allowing me to sit smugly and remark "I told you it was gonna be good"...]]

On to Loco Citato and Alexis Gilliland. I have not read Foglio's *Girl Genius* but did see him last year at the California Steam Punkconvention. The whole convention was a most interesting event and although I'm not particularly a costume type of guy, I did enjoy photographing all the people there that were.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsmattingly/sets/72157608553149341/>

I think I will not touch Platonic chickens.

Geez, Garcia didn't mention *Yandro's* run of around 259 issues, ah, but you do. It's been a while since I thought about Arthur Hlavaty's

Derogatory Reference. Must admit to greatly admiring your photo of Rhaka Khan. I must go seeking more views of her.

[[Rhaka (Trenesha Biggers) is also a model of Jerry Hall-like stature - she is billed as 6 feet 2. As far as actual in-ring skills go, that's still an area that could use work, but gosh, yes, isn't she nice to look at...]]

Does Sheryl Birkhead really take armadillos to lunch? Although I've received many LoCs and much artwork from her. I've only met her once many years ago, or was it twice? I think she could publish a most interesting fanzine!

[[I'll let Sheryl weigh in with her own "in defense of not pubbing", but "take an armadillo to lunch" was printed on the envelope of her loc. Liked it, used it...]]

With respect to Mr. Purcell's LoC I feel obliged to notethat I find it almost impossible to nap. I have tried. More often than not it just doesn't happen. Should I ever become able to retire (present financial times make that look not very likely in the near future) I will give it another try or two. And I read on that you were a vegetarian in the past and am curious why you seem to have stopped being one.

[[Cue line: "Well, it's a long story..." but actually it isn't. I packed up eating meat (and fish) in 1977 when I was at college largely due to reasons of high levels of skint. I did add fish back into the menu after 6 months or so, I think, mainly because I missed it. Didn't really miss meat at all. On moving to the States in 1993 it became pretty clear pretty quick that if I was going to persist with this dietary regimen I could be in imminent danger of starvation on a daily basis. Calvert County, the smallest in Maryland, is not generally gifted with vegetarian choices (the nearest Indian restaurant, for example, is probably an hour away). I reintroduced chicken to my guts, and at some point my (then) brother-in-law introduced me to the delights of Scapple, and it was downhill from there. I still eschew red meat, apart from the occasional venison & lamb maybe once a year - I did always kind of miss lamb...]]

Obama reminds Shelby Vick of Jimmy Carter? That seems like a stretch to me. As far as my understanding goes Carter was quite a micro manager whereas Obama, although he does seem to have his hands on most things at

the moment doesn't impress me as a micro-manager at all. Time will tell, I suppose. There are a number of other aspects in which they seem most disparate although they do have a few similarities. I just don't see it.



Perhaps they are related...?

[[Carter was described by British parliamentary sketch writer Simon Hoggart as "the school swot". Hoggart revealed that he even used to read the list of who had used the White House swimming pool every day...]]

Mark Plummer brings my brain onto the fact that *This Here...* is a perszine and I was just reading an article by Randy Byers in *Chunga* about such things. However considering over half of this issue is LoCs, there is a lot of writing by other people that I seem to be viewing. No complaints though. Most enjoyable reading.

[[Well, it is a perszine innit? Everything here (other than the locs) is all me, pal. Well, OK, or stuff I've read or seen & nicked. I'm not sure if you were familiar with the original run, but the conversation in the loccol, once it got going, was often a good half of the zine (pause for obvious joke about it being the good half of the zine), and I am well pleased that this seems like it's going to continue. I'm actually a rather poor loccer myself (though I often like to send brief comment & thanks), definitely not up to Lichtman or Penney levels, but This Here... gives me the opportunity to perhaps mitigate this...]]

I enjoyed the artwork and photos throughout although I must note that some of the text in the artwork was causing my poor aging eyes to wonder if they or the text were out of focus. I'm still not 100% sure.

[[You can be sure, Gary. The couple of Alexis' cartoons didn't scan quite as well as I would have liked, but I think I've figured out how to fix that, hopefully better results thish...]]

From: dave_redd@hotmail.com

March 4

David Redd writes:

This is a thank-you for *This Here...* issue 10 which I received in its lovely paper-and-staples incarnation. I don't quite understand your printing-distribution arrangements, especially since the Sainted Plummer apparently didn't get TH#9, but I'm sending him some UK stamps and hope they or their equivalent get to you eventually.

[[All donations well appreciated. As far as UK distribution goes, see my comment to Alexis' loc above. I'll remind Mark to deduct whatever you sent off my tab...]]

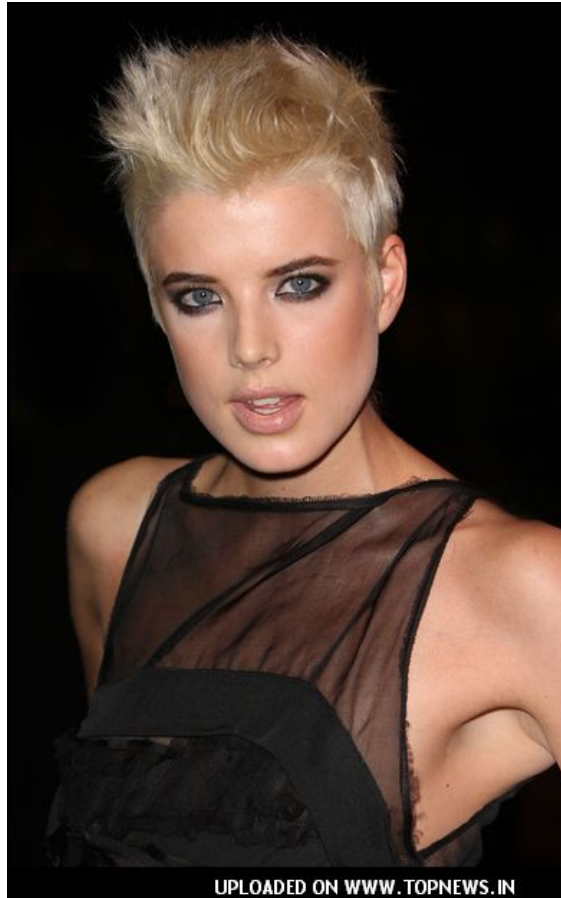
The wrestling-etc piece is very well done but the wrestlers seem far too modern for me; when we had teen/twenties boys in the house the old WWF was everything - people like oh, Randy Savage, Big Boss Man (I'm sure that was the cop with a night stick), British Bulldog, the Bushwhackers and the sadly inevitable Hulk Hogan. When Stone Cold came in the lad we fostered loved him but he was too psycho for me. Anyway the only wrestlers I watched in person were the British ones like Les Kellett and later Big Daddy (all right, I probably saw better actual wrestlers than those, but the guys with the silliest scripts are the ones whose names stick.)

[[One of the upsides (at least for me) of the wrestling correspondence is that I get to be reminded of a lot of the classic names from the old World of Sport programme, as in Jackie Pallo, mentioned earlier, and now you come up with Les Kellett! I think there are some DVDs available from these old shows, and I'm definitely going to have to get them now, not only for my own entertainment but also so I can yell "Nyah Nyah!" at Chris Garcia...]]

Such nostalgia extends to current reading too - have read my way right through the 1934 *Astoundings* at one a month, recapturing the vibes of a zine on the up, and similarly went through mid-fifties Sexton Blake thrillers to savour the remaking of Blake (first story 1893) into a modern hero. The advantage is that the old stories are short enough to finish in one pillow session and unchallenging enough to lull me to sleep. With all this backward thinking

at least I KNOW who people like Groff Conklin are... or were...

[[Re: Sexton Blake, I'm the same way with Perry Mason, though I keep thinking about trying to find the old "Jennings" schoolboy novels by Anthony Buckeridge, over which Sandra Bond and I are wont to occasionally reminisce. For some reason I particularly recall the explanation of why one of the boys (Charles A. Temple) is called "Bod". Since his initials are C.A.T. (in one of those odd congruities, also the initials of my father's christian names), he is obviously nicknamed "Dog", but in schoolboy logic this becomes "Dogsbody" for short, but since that's too cumbersome to use all the time, it's truncated to "Bod"...]]



Perhaps not Claire Brialey?

From:

claire.fishlifter@googlemail.com

March 8

Claire Brialey writes:

Since we were talking about fannish identity, I feel the need to hand over to one of our regular characters:

It is 1997. We are at the Year of the Wombat convention in Nottingham. Jim de Liscard arrives in the bar to announce that he has become glue during his panel on comics. 'Meike said I was Araldite,' he explains. 'Erudite,' murmurs Meike, in case he's being just a bit too strange this time. 'And the thing about being glue,' Jim elaborates, clearly still in fine form,

'is that glue... Glue is *cohesive*.' The last time Jim was described as cohesive was at Inconceivable in 1994, when Pam Wells made the mistake of complimenting his fan writing at just the point in the convention when Jim traditionally becomes unglued. The beer that came down his nose at that point was very cohesive indeed.

I mention this partly because I was struck by the erudition of 'The Philosopher's Song' in #9 - including the way that you made me sound far more erudite myself than I deserve - and any use of the word automatically makes me flash to that anecdote now, but also because I read Mark's letter in #10 and thought it might be a new rule that any letters you receive from Croydon fandom have to contain a Jim

anecdote. Although not necessarily that they then have to be accompanied by a photo of a naked woman.

[[Coo, ta ect, but I'll paraphrase what I mentioned back then that in the great spirit of cognitive dissonance erudition must be counterbalanced by a page of rasslin', or at the very least by photos of naked women on horses. Or on Jim. Actually I really only used that rather quite tasteful photo to embarrass Mark by implying that his loc had suggested it...]]

But, well, I just referenced what you wrote in #9 in my own editorial in the new issue of *Banana Wings* and thought it would be wrong to reserve everything I had to say in response to you for our own fanzine. Because I really am a firm believer in the idea of fanzines talking to one another, and it would be particularly wrong and ungracious not to respond when you started it this time.

I quite see what you mean about fan writing being a way of fixing identity, although I also stand by my own opinion that it gives us an easy platform from which to present, at least, other facets of that identity or to try to reinvent it. In fact it's not just fan writing but fannish presence – exhibited by those identified as 'content providers' which applies as much to our oral tradition of anecdote as it does to written history and story – which can lodge ideas of us too firmly in one another's minds, fixing one image from a particular time and place to the enduring concept of a person. And it is interesting to see the different ideas of people that emerge from overseas fandoms; some people have returned from fan fund trips having been in a happy state from their win and thus generally on their best behaviour throughout, having thus planted a more positive idea of themselves in the minds of their hosts than is shared by the compatriots who sent them away in the first place, while others travel in a state of homesickness and gloom, feeling misunderstood and unappreciated, and thus acquire a reputation for being difficult and unfriendly which seems equally mystifying to their home fandom. Or sometimes not.

[[Concerning the mutability or otherwise of our "fannish identities" (or in the terms of 'The Philosophers' Song' the theory of the singular or multiple idea) I would venture to suggest that we're both right. To take This Here... #9 as a perhaps trivial example, is 'Philosopher Nic' a different idea to 'Rasslin' Nic'? Back to the gee-gees, both Plato and

Aristotle would agree that there is a single, universal, eternal idea "horse", of which Arabians, Lippizaners, Clydesdales and Shetland Ponies, for example, are all imperfect versions while still being recognizable as "horse". So now we're into a discussion of simple vs complex levels of the idea. At risk of explosions of hilarity, let's term "Bye-o <ping>" Bacon as a clearly simple idea, as is, say, 'Rasslin' Nic', or Convention Jim. Logic, if not observation, suggests that these ideas are in fact the person stripped of all data which does not support that given idea. The best, or worst, example of this in recent years would have to be the idea Iraq/Saddam that the Bushies sold the world. I realize that we're entering philosophical territory not really covered by the original brief, developing questions of idea vs identity, and in fact we've strayed quite a bit from the original definition. Perhaps we're asking the question of whether idea becomes identity or vice versa. However, I still like the Platonic/Aristotelian concepts as a means for developing the argument. I think this one might have some legs...]]



I do have some difficulty with the different ideas of me that different people have in fandom, due partly to the fact that I found fandom when I was 16 and thus did some of my growing up in public. So I've said and done some things that were naïve or born of inexperience or just plain daft, and sometimes they were written down and sometimes they just lurk in people's memories. Oddly, given that I was once the Embarrassingly (and

sometimes embarrassing and quite often embarrassed) Young Person, one of the ideas of me that seemed to lodge in people's minds early on was that I was old before my time; what it says about the friends and acquaintances I first made in fandom, who were all in their twenties when I met them, that I was the one marked out as displaying responsible behaviour or at least worrying that someone should, may not be edifying for any of us. As I head towards my fortieth birthday next year, finding old acquaintances and even some enduringly close friends commenting that I've always been forty, ha ha, strikes me just as increasingly lazy-minded and unobservant.

[[Yeah, well, I'm not touching that one...]]

Returning to the *idea* Jim de Liscard about whom we write and who we often see even in normal social circumstances as compared to full-on fannish performance, Meike has

often commented that he's not like that at home. We all still believe, however, that James Bacon is.

Steve Jeffery may well have hit on the reason that Mark and I don't use one another as characters very much; in further demonstration of our accord, and in response to Mark's own letter in #10, I will note that I am very happy to continue our fruitful partnership of bringing more little fanzines into the world rather than anything else. In this context, though, I would also note that many people who have children tend to refute the claim that the main part of the fun is actually making them, rather than dealing with the end product or anything that happens after that; I wonder how many people who produce fanzines enjoy the act of creation more than engaging with the response? Equally, I wonder how many people really do produce fanzines – as some used to assert – in order to have something to trade and thus avoid having to write letters of comment. In these days of efanzines there's no longer the risk for most titles of being struck off mailing lists, but the question does remain – as you quoted Lilian Edwards as stating – of whether people want to keep their own writing, and indeed control over the editing of it, for their own fanzines.

Mention of Lilian makes me also wonder what a world of hurt you may have visited upon yourself for trying fannish casting of the Powerpuff Girls. I'm staying out of this.

[[I'm not the one who pegged you as Bubbles though...]]

One more thing before I move on entirely from the broader topic, and indeed before I forget: your comment about the idea of horses, and indeed Mark's response, also put me in mind of both Shakespeare and Flanders & Swann, so you're all right by me. As you will doubtless have surmised, Professor, I refer to the Chorus – itself an uncharacteristically Greek concept for Shakespeare to deploy, of course, for all that his Chorus here appears to be a single voice – in *Henry V*, commenting in the prologue: 'Can this cockpit hold / The vasty fields of France? ... Think when we talk of horses, that you see them / Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth...' I can listen to that sort of thing for hours and frequently do whenever we get some decent early modern drama in the London theatres; which is one reason among many that I am amused and beguiled by Michael Flanders' introduction to their show 'At the Drop of a Hat':

'We feel we're following this trend towards simplification in the theatre, as you know. There have been reviews without scenery; there have been reviews without costume. This is a review without scenery, without costume ... even without a cast, which does make everything very much easier, we find; also cheaper. ... Eke out our imperfections with your thoughts, to coin a phrase. Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them printing their proud hooves in the

receiving earth. I don't think we do actually talk of horses, mind...'

(In his introduction to their subsequent show 'At the Drop of Another Hat', Flanders comments: 'The purpose of satire, it has been rightly said, is to strip off the veneer of comforting illusion and cosy half-truth; and our job, as I see it, is to put it back again.' Which I think the more critical commenters among fanzine reviewers would complain is what's wrong with our more whimsical tendencies in *BW*. But I'd always rather be on the same side as Flanders & Swann, not least because in that very same introductory ramble Flanders went on to make a fishlifter joke.)

[[Always loved Flanders & Swann, even though at the age I first saw them on TV, I didn't have too much of a clue what they were on about half the time. Sadly, or perhaps typically, I best recall one of their latter efforts, best described as 'The Swearing Song' where the chorus was a gleefully shouted: "Pee! Po! Belly! Bum! Drawers!"...]]

Once again I realise that all knowledge is contained in Dave Langford, and that everything in fanzines is interconnected if you only know where to look. I had no idea until I read his letter in #10 that this year is the centenary of *The Blue Bird* by Maeterlinck, a play from which I can not only remember disturbing amounts of dialogue given that I've never read the whole thing nor ever seen it performed, but for which I also spent a number of ultimately wasted hours in my childhood trying out different inflexions, all because it is extensively quoted in Noel Streatfeild's *Ballet Shoes* and the two characters between whom I spent much time oscillating in terms of deciding who I would most prefer to be have to play and thus rehearse the lead child parts.

Obviously, Streatfeild chose to make tits and sausages less of a major theme in her story than you did in your UK trip report, but somewhere on the internet there's probably a version I don't want to know about.

This was all a typically long-winded way of saying welcome back, and sorry it's taken three new-style issues before I actually responded or anything – and, accordingly, that I'm still failing to engage with so much of the conversation that got going without me. (My recent record of response is so lamentable that this is virtually prompt, but that's no consolation and indeed no excuse.) Indeed, cutting it so fine before Corflu makes me suspect that I'll be another issue behind by the time I've finished this, but wotthell archie wotthell. Admittedly I am one more correspondent who's probably never going to be able to engage with the subjects of wrestling or NASCAR, but if you want to get going on the subject of cricket then I'll be with you all the way.

[[It's next to impossible to follow the cricket here, so I'm totally out of it at the moment (baseball is my summer substitute). In fact I'm so far behind that my most recent

favorite player was probably Graham Gooch! I did find a local league (95% expats) and played for a couple of seasons, until Dee Ann's cancer starting getting really nasty, although I probably spent as much time scoring as anything, since my pub cricket level of skill wasn't cutting it with the other blokes who took it all quite seriously. the usual national rivalries were to be found, with the West Indian team pretty much feared by all for good reason, although our lot (Bowie CC) was a mix of England, India, New Zealand and an actual American or two. My old wicket-keeper pads, gloves & protector are still in storage, I think. I always found it rather odd that the wicky pads were endorsed by David Gower...]]

Finally, then, I see your Max Miller chicken joke and raise you this, quoted in Guy Browning's rather splendid piece of what would be fan writing if only he were a fan, *Maps of My Life*: Why did the illegitimate chicken cross the road twice? Because it was a double-crossing bastard.

[[Re-raise: Why did the pervert cross the road? Because his dick was stuck in the chicken...]]

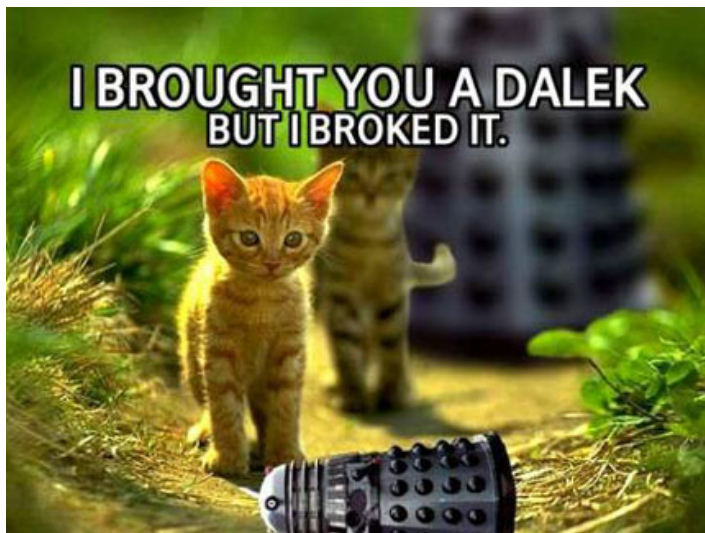
WAHF

A guilt-ridden **Brad Foster**, bearing fillos; **Arnie Katz** (with *Idle Minds* #2 pdf); **Bruce Gillespie** (with *Steam Engine Time* #10 pdf); **Robert Sabella** (*Visions of Paradise* #138 link); **Robert Lichtman** ("I owe you locs up the wazoo..." - ouch!)



INDULGE ME...

“A stoner kid goes to his grandma and says “Grandma, have you seen my pills? Can’t miss ‘em, they’re marked ‘LSD’”. His gran says “Never mind that, have you seen the dragon in the kitchen?”



“ Note to Steve Jeffery: song in my head (March 5) is “Reward” by The Teardrop Explodes.

“ March 12: now it’s “Soylent Green” by Carbon/Silicon.

“ Recently renewing my *Private Eye* subscription (that and recent equine loc threads) reminded me of one of my all-time favorite cartoons from that venerable organ: a young horse is being attached to some kind of conveyance, while the older & wiser horse in front of him warns: “Careful! It may be a trap!”

“ Must now start getting ready for Corflu Zed, otherwise known as Czechoslovakia to the cognoscenti. *Not* looking forward to the packing process - BB’s, not mine - she’ll be more than usually insane about clothes since we have to deal with cold & wet Seattle, then balmy Los Angeles (with a side jaunt to the venerable E Kemp and scorching Arizona).

“ There you are, then.

MIRANDA

THIS HERE... is written, edited and produced by: **Nic Farey** Published by **Seven Views of Jerusalem** in the US and **Fishlifter Press** in the UK.

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“They dedicate their lives to running all of his. He tries to please them all, the bitter man he is...”

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