

This Here...

“...over-dramatized physical soap opera...” (J Purcell)

EGOTORIAL

Why do I feel, a little sullenly, that April 1 is an appropriate date to begin writing for the first issue of *This Here...* to appear for a little over a year?

Most of us, I'd say, don't really enjoy having the piss nagged out of us, but I suppose in this case, where various sundry worthies on a secretive yet gregarious discussion list have told me in no uncertain terms that I need to get the product out, I can only capitulate to the inevitable with as much grace as I can muster.

Now this section is normally the bit where I punt the brief update on what's been going on, or comment on something I recently saw / read / whatever that I feel deserves more than a sentence in *Indulge Me*. A year's worth of goings on is probably a bit much though. The summary goes about like this: March 2010 - sucks being skint. April 2011 - sucks even worse.

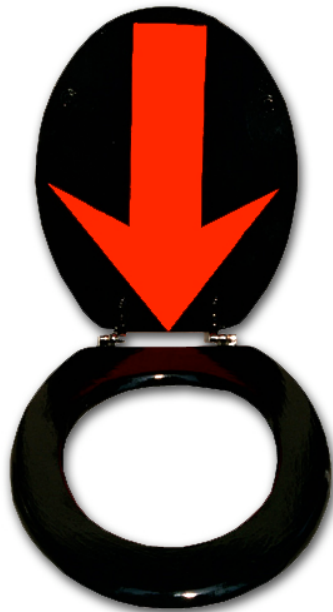
We'd anticipated a nice chunk of dosh from the tax, courtesy of that nice Mr. Obama's homebuyer credit, which was giving \$8000 for a house purchase, within certain restrictions. Once again, as per Farey usual, this got fucked up. The rules for getting the credit said you had to be a first-time buyer (fairly obviously) or you had to have not owned a home for three years. I bought the Vegas joint in July 2009, and having sold the old Kenwood Beach house in 2006, figured that it was, as they say, all good. However, the tax return engendered some serious and formal-looking correspondence from the IRS, who accurately noted that I'd paid mortgage interest in 2006, and could I please explain this. A bit of further to-and-fro established that when the

rules say three years, they mean three years to the dot - it does not mean that because I was a non-house-owner in the years 2006-09 that I qualified. Needless to say, once the numbers were nailed down, it transpired that the time between the sale of 2046 Chestnut Street and the acquisition of 3345 Cape Cod Drive was *two years and ten months!*

So, no 8 grand windfall, and like a proper cunt I'd broken one of my own rules, and counted chickens to the extent that stuff had been done, and monies obtained, on the basis that the homebuyer credit would be forthcoming. This predicates a location somewhere along a waterway of ordure with no obvious means of propulsion.

And of course, we're "underwater" (as the term has it) on the homestead, although just barely in the sense that we owe perhaps a little over what comes up as the likely valuation on some of those possibly dodgy free internet realtor sites. Even according to that, the place is possibly worth about 2/3 of what I paid for it - stories abound in the press about the mad decline of house prices in the Valley, some claiming that they're now at something like 1994 levels. Still, perhaps a modicum of comfort might be drawn from the fact that all those herberts who got into \$300,000+ houses during the

building boom are lucky to be able to sell 'em for \$125,000. The other potential positive is that my lienholder (the rather nice and very understanding lady I bought the place from) has offered me a short-sale discount (of almost \$20k !!) to buy the note. Bad news there being that with my still dodgy credit score, traditional methods of finance are a bit out the window, and while work has been picking up somewhat (I have a new employer, check 'em out: homerhandyman.com), it's variable and not as yet describable as lucrative, although if I wasn't behind on a bunch of shit, I could probably live on



what's coming in, helped by the fact that we rented out the spare room and that hopefully BB might be working too, soon, though possibly only part-time.

Enough misery for yer?

Hell, let's find the silver lining - it feels well fuckin' good to be writing again, despite my ingrained misgivings about not doing paper copies, and the usual worry that little to nowt will be forthcoming in the way of locs, which have always been a very, very big part of *This Here...*

As a piece of loc whoring, if the conversation in *Loco Citato* falls below a certain level (or, God forbid, disappears altogether), does *This Here...* retain its identity, or should I retire the title for something else and consider it a piece of the paper past? Series 3, anyone...?

It's all good.

Nic Farey, April 2011

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON



An interview with Sean Carey

Nic: Quite a lot, most, probably, of my long-time UK friends knew about you (well, that you existed, anyway) - for example, when I posted your pic on Facebook, Amanda Epstein for one twigged who is was right away - however, for those who didn't know that I had a son lurking about on the old soil, you want to give 'em the backstory?

Sean: Well, I was born in Islington on the 27th May 1983 and was raised by my mum in Hackney. Throughout my younger years and up until last year i wasn't in touch with my dad, but regardless enjoyed life and was raised well (so I'm told). Im now 27 and have a younger sister (Charlotte, different dad though) who is 21, and I live at home. Yes, OK I may not have moved out just yet but what can I say? I'm currently engaged to be married next year to my beautiful

fiancée Holly and am very happy. Thats about it in a nut shell!

Nic: What made you decide to try to get in touch?

Sean: Well, I've thought about it for a long time but never knew how I could find you or what to say. My main reason was to find out your side of things but also because I didn't quite feel whole without you in my life. So yes it was a hard decision but one I'm glad I made.

Nic: You said when you sent me the first message that you'd been stalking me online for about a year. (Fuck!) How did that play out - what leads did you get, and what was the trail you followed?

Sean: Well the thing is I'd been looking for a good few years with no joy. All I had was your name on my birth certificate. For someone young it was hard to get any info, but one day I stumbled upon a record of marriage for you not long after I was born (1986 i believe). I got in touch with the relevant people and managed to get a copy of the marriage certificate, on which was a name and address for both you and the bride. Knowing I wouldn't find anything from your details I pursued the lady's (I can't remember her name). And behold: she still lived at the address listed. After calling her neighbours (yup neighbours had no number for her) they kindly dropped her a note and she called me. She told me she knew you lived in the States but that's it. I told her my story and she told me to try searching "Nic" instead of your full first name as she knew that you never used it. And what did I find but a whole load of fanzine posts by you. Emailing people you knew from previous visits to the UK I got a hold of a phone number and in turn an address! Too scared to call or write, I thought I'd search you on fb. There you were and I messaged you. And thats how I came to find you. After all that, a simple fb search!!

Nic: Skipping back there a bit, you mentioned finding out "my side of things" - although I know I wasn't around, me & your mother still got on pretty well, I thought. She even clued me in about your confirmation so I could sneak in the back of the Church for it (I remember you telling me you didn't know that!). As far as I know she never really bad-mouthed me...

Sean: No she never did bad mouth you but she didn't really sing about you either. It was quite a grey area for me for a long time. I was curious of what happened as I was only really told that you left after I was born. I guess in some way it wasn't spoken about to make it easier for me as a kid but as I got older the curiosity kicked in and i started my search.

Nic: Yeah that was your mum's plan, to not really talk about me one way or the other. Not quite true that I left after you were born though - we found out that she was pregnant after we'd broke up, and it got a bit silly at that point as you might guess. I was actually at the hospital the day you were born & saw you at an hour or so old! (I remember it was the

weekend of a SOL III Star Trek convention, which I rushed right off to!)

"My side" I guess was told in the piece I wrote for *Arrows of Desire* #4, "Killing A Child" - you read that, right? What did you think?

(<http://efanzines.com/Arrows/AoD04.pdf> for those who feel like reading it.)

Sean: Yes I did, and the words moved me in a way I never thought possible. The emotion and events in that piece were overwhelming. I must admit that the first time I read it I cried. Not because I was sad but because even though you weren't around I knew I was loved and missed and it made me happy knowing this.

Nic: If I remember right, I asked a good fan mate of mine (Kev McVeigh) if he'd read it over for an edit, since I wasn't at all sure I could do that myself - he told me not to change a word. I think that bit kind of paved the way for *Arrows of Desire* #8 (about Dee Ann's cancer and death) and *Tits, Sausages and Ballet Shoes* (about my mum) in the sense of being able to do that kind of really personal writing.

Eh, so let's be more cheerful, what about some positive shit since we got in touch? Now that you know your old man is just a fuckin mad old fannish drunk?

Sean: Lol! Maybe you are a drunkard but I have to admit disappointment that you weren't loaded!! Well let's see, most positive thing is finding out have a half brother Thomas. Along with a whole new family so to speak. Not only this but the great news of my lovely girlfriend Holly accepting my marriage proposal on Christmas day. The girl must be mad but hey, I'm happy!

Nic: Well, you like a bit of the sauce an' all kiddo, but hey, that seems like a happy note on which to finish, yeah?

Sean: If you're happy with it, then sure!

TUNES! (REDUX)

In common with a surprising number of people I know, some of my first gig-watching experiences (not counting Knebworth festivals) were at a folk club - specifically the Hitchin Folk Club, which put on shows at the now long-defunct Talisman pub up by the train station (named, of course, after a famous steam train, and inevitably known as "The Tally"). In a society that too often seemed defined by racial and ethnic stereotypes, folk music conveyed the kind of "Englishness" that we could get into - yes, we had a heritage, yes, we had songs, yes, a lot of them came from the working classes and yes, a lot of them tended to be either quite rude, satirically sharp, or both.

I barely recall any of the specific acts I might have seen lo, those 35 years ago, but I'll always remember one aside from a northern performer between songs. (Yorkshire accent): "Ere's a traffic warnin' for people goin' north on the

A1..." (pause). "I'm goin' 'ome that way and I'm pissed out me 'ead..."

Apart from the usual prog-rock record reviewing amongst us Grammar School sixth-formers, there was inevitably a solid cadre of Steeleye Span fans - although I'd been introduced to them earlier via my semi-distant cousin Anna and her husband Tony (after whom I would later name a recurring fanzine character) and their album *Ten Man Mop* (1971). Interest only increased after the release of the *Now We Are Six* album in 1974, since this marked the official addition of drummer Nigel Pegrum, who was, we were reliably told, from Hitchin. *Now We Are Six* was considered to have built well on the then more hard-edged *Parcel of Rogues* from the previous year, but in my opinion, the spot-knocking never-a-duff-moment album was to follow in 1975: *Commoner's Crown*.



The opening track "Little Sir Hugh" is in many ways perfectly placed to set the tone for much of the album, with its juxtaposition of styles from what is in fact a plaintive cry from beyond the grave to a moment of extreme violence. The opening verse:

*Mother, mother, make my bed, make for me a winding sheet
Wrap me up in a cloak of gold, see if I can sleep...*

is the title character, a child, letting his mother know that he is, in fact, dead, rather than malingering as she thinks (in the original story) when he hasn't come home. Steeleye's version deliberately omits the intent of the original song, which is specifically anti-Semitic, referring to Jews' supposed ritual killings of Christian children.

These considerations aside, the track is stylistically superbly done, with, if not an actual change in time signature, a change in timing and attack from the more prosaic elements of the tale (boys playing ball) to the violence of the killing.

And that's just a taster for the even more violent "Long Lankin" which will be right along after the next track...

Clearly we'll need to lighten up a little here, and the only item in the set listed as written by the band themselves (the rest being by that prolific author "Traditional") is "Bach Goes to Limerick", starting out with was sounds like a modest progression from one of the Brandenburg Concertos and then taking that progression into a furious jig, presumably on Maddy Prior's tea break.

"Long Lankin" clocks in at almost nine minutes, and is somewhat complex not only in structure, but also, as with many folk tales and songs, in backstory. Ends with just about everybody dead, too. The opening sequence with its slow lilt conveys the concern and love of the Lord of the Manor for his wife and child, exhorting her clearly to make sure the place is shut up tight while he's away to London, then the call and response between Lankin and the false nurse is told in a driving rock cadence. The manic glee of the killings that follow (and the subsequent hanging of Lankin and burning of the nurse) gets a nursery rhyme tune which only emphasises the otherworldliness of it all.

The original story of Lankin (there are actually divergent versions depending if you're from Scotland or Northumberland) suggests that he was a mason, and there are ritualistic elements to the killing of the baby, with the nurse holding a basin to collect the blood. Both versions, however, agree that it's a revenge story at heart, and aren't we glad *most* fan feuds don't get like this?

"Dogs & Ferrets" starts out like it might be "Join Together", but quickly (*very* quickly at under 3 minutes) turns into a typical vocal tour-de-force - it's a good old English poacher's song - nip out of a night, catch a hare, have a beer. The hare end up dead, the knifing of the beast lovingly described.

If there's a "throwaway" song here anywhere it might be "Galtee Farmer", which is nevertheless a jolly little romp about a daft Irish farmer & son taken to the cleaners by a conniving (presumably more sophisticated) Dubliner, buying his old mare for a pound and selling it back to him for five. If this track seems at all lightweight it's only in comparison to the comparative seriousness (of subject) of most of the preceding material. No fatalities.

"Demon Lover" follows, a fairly standard bloke knobs bird and fucks off type of deal, except he comes back full of stories about getting rich (and he'd wooed her away from a husband and child), and - er - the lover & the bird end up dead. This one is rather poppy, showing the skill and variance of styles which made Steeleye such a tight band.

"Elf Call" kicks in with nothing so much as a slowed northern soul beat, and in fact this has always been one of my favorite songs off the whole set, and I'm not even a fantasy fan, particularly! Once again, even though the overall

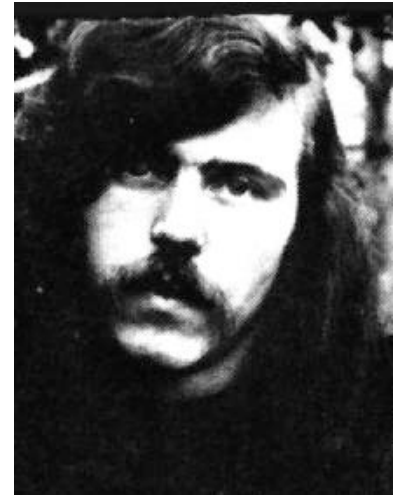
tone is upbeat, as the Elf King recruits a nursing mother for an elf child and the music implies happiness, a mid-verse:

*Who do you moan for?, the Elf King said to me
I'm moaning for my own child, far across the sea*

The immediate rush into the "Come and nurse an elf child" chorus suggests a degree of "you'll love it here - we'll make sure of that", and adds a dark motif to what's an otherwise ostensibly happy tune, with no corpses...

The nautical conclusion begins with "Weary Cutters", an a capella piece about press gangs, and "New York Girls" which boasts an unusual guest musician. This mad little ditty about the perils of shore leave required a ukelele, and the band didn't know anyone who could play it. Someone remembered that Peter Sellers was known to play the instrument, and somehow an invitation was contrived, and surprisingly, accepted! Sellers' interjections in character as various Goon Show stalwarts were not appreciated by everybody. (Henry Crun: "Ahhh Minnnnn... play that modern banjo..."), and in fact his aside at the end of the song ("I say sir, are you a matelot?"; "Be careful what you say, we're on board ship here...") was excised from the CD release, though later reinstated in various compilations.

I can still listen with joy to every dam track on this album, and continue to marvel at how Tim Hart always reminded me of Mike Abbott...



RASSLIN'

Oh, don't worry, I'm not even gonna *try* to recap the last year, since those of you with glazed eyes (Plummer) would find it all a bit much, and those of you who are into it anyway (Katz, Garcia et al...) already know pretty much what happened.

My rasslin' watching for quite a long time now has consisted of TNA Thursday Impact and the TNA PPVs - I've pretty much abandoned WWE, and nothing I've heard has given me any reason to regret or rethink that decision. WWE's supposedly top-card PPV *Wrestlemania* played last month (March), and I'd heard it described subsequently as "a bad episode of RAW" on one of the chat/blog/news sites. This was confirmed by the Chief, who actually bought the dam thing (\$64.99, compared to \$39.99 for TNA's big PPV *Lockdown*, of which more later) and recorded it for mine (and BB's) possible delectation. In a happy development of the

last several months, Arnie & Joyce now tootle over to ours and we (yes, even BB who is now into it) watch the TNA PPVs together and split the cost. At our *Lockdown* watching party, the Chief reiterated a statement made in an earlier email that, despite having recorded *Wrestlemania*, and having intended to pass it along for us to watch, given what he & Joyce had seen of it so far, he'd decided that to subject us to that show "would not be the act of a friend".

I've been known to describe the rasslin' in the past as essentially "soaps for guys", though of course there are also plenty of female followers. In many ways, despite some of the outlandish (and occasionally unpleasant) plotlines that have occurred in various promotions, it more or less comes down to the good guys ("faces") vs. the bad guys ("heels"), although there is a curious group, often consisting of some of the more talented performers, who are really neither. These are the "tweeners" (as in "in-betweeners") who are usually considered as faces when wrestling a top heel, or heels when wrestling a top face, although as Randy Orton has proved in the past over at WWE, no matter how nasty and deranged you get, there will almost always be a section of the crowd rooting for you.

A lot of storylines are the result of, or end up in, a turn from face to heel or vice versa of one or more of the rasslers. TNA has suffered, in Arnie's opinion, from too many swerves like this, which are often ignored after the fact as if they never happened, retconned, even. This can also result in some fairly unbelievable (and unpopular) character changes, for example AJ Styles as a heel doesn't work that well (although not nearly as badly as the Chief thinks). Some of the best performers have worked both sides of the divide very effectively, and are usually also great on the mic, as regular readers (not you, Plummer) will know one of my requirements for greatness. WWE's best in this respect was Chris Jericho, lately of *Dancing With the Stars*, and TNA has probably my favorite guy of the moment, Ken ("Misterrrr") Anderson.

Ken's played heel, face, and currently tweener in TNA, seeming to keep pace pretty easily with the perceived power structure realignments. In my last rasslin' column, the bid news was Hulk Hogan's arrival in TNA (erk - was it *that* long ago) along with his point man Eric Bischoff, evoking worrying thoughts about a WCW-style demise. Their heel turn, at the same time arranging for the former face Jeff Hardy to acquire the Heavyweight Championship, including

a frankly unlikely alliance with flabby tits Ric Flair (who has never been on friendly terms with Hogan in real life), set many others on the roster in different roles. Flair's reinvented Four Horsemen group ("Fourtune") consisting of AJ Styles, Kazarian and the Beer Money tag team (who, incidentally, have also handled repeated face/heel turns with alacrity). Company owner Dixie Carter is relegated to the sidelines and seemingly interminable lawsuits, currently rarely seen, if at all.

But that's old news - "Fourtune" subsequently breaks with Flair and does a face turn, making the old coot more and more demented and, as unlikely as this may seem, even less entertaining. Jeff Hardy mysteriously disappears after a squash loss to a returned Sting in a Championship rematch, although the "mystery" probably has a lot to do with his pending drug trial which involves some very serious charges. Hogan and Bischoff's "Immortal" group now consists of jobbers Gunner & Murphy, Abyss, Rob Terry, and a recently signed Matt Hardy, who might likely be the most credible contender for the strap from that faction.

More contemporary commentary next issue, hopefully, if the Chief doesn't grab it all for a possible wrestling sheet he's suggested that we do together...



LOCO CITATO

[[Editorial comment looks like this. It seems I can always tell when a new ish has gotten back from the printers because that's when I get a loc from Sheryl on the previous one, in this case swiftly followed by John Purcell (twice)...]]

[[Additional: comments are contemporaneous to the locs, so I left 'em that way... All dates quoted are 2010]]

From: 25509 Jonnie Court,
Gaithersburg MD 20882

February 15

Sheryl Birkhead writes:

In the proverbial nutshell - I killed off both of my computers - bought the new iMac - all peripherals and software are less than compatible. For now, trying to figure out a way to get into my files (all set to go for TurboTax) for taxes... then getting all the software to work... and finally to see if the older G-3 is fried as totally as the desktop G-4 was.

[[This will be grist to the mills of my Apple-hating acquaintances I'm sure. I must say though I've never had any compatibility problems with the Mac, it happily deals

with files from Gates-based rubbish, whereas of course the reverse is not at all true...]]

Okay - what else - um, the almost 4½ feet of snow still firmly ensconced on the “gently sloping” roof - and the weather advisory is in effect for the next day or so for a bit more snow.

Well, that is a very truncated version of the trials and tribulations of what has been going on. When this ribbon dies I will be forced to write letters the old-fashioned way... Let us all pray I get the computers working before that happens.

I'm still not sure I understand exactly how (why?) you ended up in Las Vegas. If memory serves me aright that is not at all where you were intending to alight? Yes? No? Ah well, nice fannish center to be a part of.

[[The short version is that after 7 months of unemployment in Maryland I needed to find work somewhere, and Vegas looked likely (despite Nevada's overall high unemployment rate). The “fannish center” argument, plus the fact we'd be much closer to BB's Dan (then in LA) also weighed in on the decision. The original plan was to relocate to the wilds of East Tennessee, where I'd bought land which has subsequently had to be sold...]]

My nephew-in-law does cabinetry / carpentry work in Las Vegas, so keep hunting. The work is out there... somewhere. [...]

[[At least you could give me his fuckin number, Sheryl...]]

Bosstone - RIP.

Yeah, I know about the generator. I did my homework before deciding what to do. I had an electrician put in a separate box and bought a 7500 watt generator that can essentially run the whole house if need be. The big catch is that it needs gasoline and I tend not to keep a lot of that around. Also, it is housed in a small shed that has electricity, but right now, with the snow, should I need it I cannot even get to it with the almost waist-high snow between here and there. BUT, I did find out about all my options. I would have loved the tied-in version that is permanently connected and housed but, if memory serves me, that would have cost almost \$20,000. I am supposed to start it up once a month, and the electric starter is a nice touch for the checks, but I find even that difficult to remember. I was going to do that right before the snow(s) hit, but managed to forget it. I managed to get on the road one day between the last two storms and went directly to the gas station to fill up my largest container... just in case...

I am trying to remember the once-upon-a-time popular - I think it was (I never read it) 'Stalking the Wild Asparagus' or something along that line.

For Chris Garcia: I have always prided myself on **not** saving to hard drive!! I have been saving to three (count 'em, 3)

different peripherals - floppies (which I knew would not be around too much longer as technology leaves them in electronic dust), zip disks and thumb drives. Um, that gave me three copies of the files I need. But now the software is incompatible and it doesn't matter **how** many copies I have. Oh yeah, the new iMac will not recognize either floppy drive, zip drive or... well, it will see the thumb drive but is creative about what it sees. So, now I am down to one inaccessible copy (if that is the right word - I can see it but cannot open it). I called Apple to ask about the thumb drive and sure enough - they had me read the back of the Sony package and it says “Mac OS 10.4” and the new one is 10.6. So, I naively asked what I was supposed to do. They said start saving to the hard drive and get an external hard drive as backup and get newer thumb drives. The iMac has Time Machine - once I get an external hard drive as backup it will back up the whole system and do it on an hourly basis. (Yeah, then I looked into the external drives and at their reviews - amazing how many of them say they failed within 6 months, so you lose everything anyway.)

[[Hm. I have an old flash drive which is still usable, although I got it a couple of years ago and its capacity is quite small - they're a lot better now. For my Time Machine setup I have an external iomega drive which works great (so far), unlike the previous lumpen WD external which never really worked properly at all (hence the losses of a bunch of stuff as previously documented in these pages). You still have multiple options Sheryl, including manually saving important files/folders to CD, or getting a subscription to one of the online backup services such as iDrive or Mozy, which cost about 5 bucks a month. If you begrudge paying that, you can attach important files to an email and send it to yourself (or someone else, even), and if you're using the inbuilt Mac Mail the files will be stored along with the emails on the Mac server...]]

Hey, we haven't talked about being able to pay for the iMac - I was going to put my tax refund toward property tax, but now... um... er... but I first have to figure out how to file the friggin' 1040!! Can we say Catch-22?

[[I'm not sure if this implies that you need some of the inaccessible files to get your taxes done, or that you have a software version of TurboTax, or both. I also use TurboTax (have done for years and highly recommend it), but I do it all online...]]

John Purcell: I actually called a repair guy to see if there was any way to repair the 19 year old over-the-stove microwave - he said he could take a look, but felt it was not worth the trip as he could not get the parts. So, now I have a lovely desktop ornament (the iMac) and an equally lovely over-the-stove microwave ornament. Some day I will **have** to get the microwave replaced, but that means tearing out the overhead cabinets since the new ovens are about 6" taller than the one in there now. When the carpenter came to look

he gave me an estimate of his part at about \$600, to turn the cabinets into a very narrow bookshelf, and that an electrician might have to be called since he had no idea if the (pardon the expression) current outlet could be raised that same 6". Then the over-the-stove units start at about \$200 and go up to \$700. That all comes to about \$1500, realistically. Nope, not gonna happen. Others suggest taking the oven out. Uh, if I did that I would still have to have a stove hood installed and would **hope** the wall is already covered with the tiles of the rest of the kitchen, or at least some sort of covering. If not, then add that all in. So, either way it will not be cheap. I **like** having the microwave up and out of the way over the stove, but do I like it \$1500? We'll see.

From: j_purcell54@yahoo.com

February 20

John Purcell writes:

Well, I am not sure if I located this particular issue, Nic, so here's one for you anyway. Feel free to use this one, too, if there was an earlier letter. Or choose the better one. Either way, you've got a loc from me again.

Starting right off with the Egotorial, I do hope your financial situation gets turned around right quick. Lacking funds is never any fun, and it helps to have some of it to pub yer ish and get it off in the mail. The interesting thing about money is that sometimes you really don't need much to have a good time. That 3-day Vegas Non-Con in July sounds like fun, and reminds me very much of being in Minn-stf back in the 70s. There was always something going on that drew a good number of folks, which turns anything into a bit of a party. At least you're ensconced, as you say, out there in Vegas where the fen grow thick and hairy. Man, that sounds ugly...

[[If you think that sounds ugly you should see some of the guys (Waaa!)...]]



Anyway. My family has had its share of moving woes, especially when moving cross-country. Moving from

Minneapolis, MN to Marshalltown, IA wasn't that bad; it was the major move from Marshalltown to College Station, Texas that was insane. In fact, that's fodder for a fannish article for some day, so I guess I can thank you for the reminder to record that event for all posterity. Either that or shoot you for making me remember that traumatic experience. This requires some mulling over time.

Mott the Hoople was a fun band, especially their look. That top hat on Ian Hunter was comical and their music was solid. My favorite song of theirs was "All the Young Dudes", which they played on that great TV show *Midnight Special* back in the 70s, but other songs escape me. I guess I never really heard many other songs by them since I never owned one of their albums. *Hoope* sounds like the album to get, judging from your description. I may have to rummage through the LP bins at the Half Price Bookstore one of these months.

[[I'd happily recommend 'The Hoople' obviously, but also the previous album 'Mott'. The classic 'Mott the Hoople Live' has been reissued in a 30th anniversary edition in much expanded form (on 2 CDs), now containing the full sets from both shows featured (Uris Theater, Broadway and Hammersmith Odeon, London). I originally had this piece of early 70s awesomeness on vinyl, and as live sets go it's probably second only to 'Live at Leeds' as a concert album. The Uris Theater gig is predictably heavy on the singles. At the line from 'All The Way From Memphis' which goes "You look like a star, but you're still on the dole", Ian Hunter can be heard to helpfully remark "That's the Welfare", to his American audience. The Hammersmith gig was legendary, resulting in some serious fisticuffs when the safety curtain was brought down, but Morgan Fisher pushed his piano under it to prevent a full descent, Hunter, Watts and Grosvenor ducked underneath and kept playing! (The huge ten-minute version of 'Walking With A Mountain' was the show-stopper.) There's also a hammering version of 'One of the Boys' which shows why Mott as a live attraction were so revered. Liner notes in the special edition are by Brian May of Queen, who only ever played support on tour to one other band. No prizes for guessing...]]

I have not been watching much wrestling on the tube recently, especially with the Winter Olympics on. Hockey (of course) has taken center stage, along with Speed Skating, Downhill Skiing, and the snowboarding competition, so the Games are usually on during the evening. Still, I did catch the announcement of the upcoming replacement for ECW on Tuesday nights on the SyPhylis channel, WWE NXT. Chris Garcia described the essentials of this on his LiveJournal last week, so I may have to check NXT out next week. It sounds interesting, but given Vince McMahon's penchant for over-dramatized physical soap opera, it may turn out to be really stupid. We shall see.

[[I hadn't known a thing about this, so I looked it up. Seems to me that Vinnie Mac is trying to compete with UFC Ultimate Fighter with this one? Who knows? Fail!...]]

Assorted comments from your loccol now follow.

I agree with you that Nirvana was terribly overrated, and Guns 'n Roses was hyped out of existence. Too much ego in both bands to make them work, IMHO.

In your commentary to Mike "Oldphart" Meara you mentioned that you've abandoned LiveJournal. Likewise I have meandered off that course quite a bit, but I still duck in there once a week to see who's commenting on what and use it as a notebook to record events that I can return to for developing into a fan article, such as recent cons attended.

Haven't joined trufen yet since I find fmfzen and the SouthernFandomClassic groups active enough; the SFC, in fact, can be mega-active, so just skimming the postings can eat up a large chunk of time, therefore I minimize my contributions there. All in all I guess we can say that the age of the e-fan has arrived full force. Aside from the occasional con, that's where most of my fanac occurs. It definitely keeps me in touch with my peeps, to quote ECW's champ Christian.

You and Steve Jeffery talk about quitting smoking, which I did for good back in October of 1988. Good luck in doing so; I think that right now I'm in the best physical condition since my early thirties, and I attribute a large part of that to kicking the cig habit (which wasn't that much in the first place, I must admit) and getting some exercise in recent years. Trotting around to cons doesn't help much, but if you do a lot of walking at a con, that really does make a difference. Can you just imagine a physical activity track at an SF con? Naaawww.....

[[BB is currently on the patch, which has been working pretty well for the most part, although she has a minor lapse or two here & there...]]

Sure wish I could attend Corflu Cobalt coming up, but I'm getting my supporting membership off in the mail within the week - tax refund due in 5 days - so that shall be taken care of as well as my FAAn Award ballot, which is completed in pencil but must be digitized or send snail mail. Translation to the aether is probably the better choice.

From: j_purcell54@yahoo.com

[[Yes, really...]]

February 27

John Purcell writes:

Just like lighting a cigarette while waiting for a bus, write a loc to *This Here...#13* and the next issue drops into my mailbox. You're a horrid man, Nic Farey!

As of this date, I have yet to see the newest incarnation of *Star Trek*. Many of the folks I know and respect - even those I don't know and respect - have said good things about this flick. The promos look good, so maybe I'll get a copy of it on Net-flicks and watch it. We shall see. There is no burning desire in my breast to see this movie, so maybe before the world ends in two and a half years - so close! I'd better start stockpiling the Shiner Bock for the post holocaust world Just

In Case - this may yet be seen. Don't hold your breath, though. Most of the movies that Val and I would like to see in the theater are already on DVD, so we're not concerned. When we do go it's for a matinee showing (only \$3 per) and we smuggle in candy from the Dollar Tree. Rarely do we buy cinema popcorn and treats; too bloody expensive.



[[I'll add my recommendation for the ST movie...]]

Well, I see you said the first issue of *Beam* cost about a thousand bucks to churn out. Yeep! I believe it, too, considering the fine quality of that ish. It really blew me away and I loved it. If you don't mind, I'll bug Curt Phillips for you too so that he gets that long-lost arkle in for the second issue. Man. Award a guy the Corflu 50 deal and look what he does? It's shocking, I tell you. Shocking.

[[As you by now know, Curt finally came through. I cheated a bit by keeping the issue date as "2009" though, since I hope to have #3 out by the end of this year. #2 also came out at about a grand (about half each either side of the pond), with a slightly smaller print run than #1. No doubt this will cause more cackling from A Katz about the wisdom and wonders of electronic publishing, and more admonitions from me about the dichotomy between all this Core Fandom blather and his rejection of good old-school paper fanzines...]]

Just FYI here, but I haven't been watching any of the 'rassling shows because the Winter Olympics have been running for the last two weeks, and they've been grand. I grew up in Minnesota and played hockey as a kid; chances are I knew how to ice skate before I learned how to ride a bicycle. It wouldn't surprise me in the least. Ice hockey is a great sport, and tomorrow - Sunday, Feb. 28th - the Canadian men's hockey team will be out for revenge against the USA's men's team for the gold medal. Should be a great match.

[[Tee Cochran is also a huge hockey fan, I found out, and BB is a huge Olympics fan. I personally care for neither. I used to have this conversation with a diehard hockey fan who was a regular at the pub quizzes I used to do back in Maryland. My contention was that you can't take any sport seriously if its name sounds like someone clearing their throat of a recalcitrant chunk of phlegm. Of course being a Brit, what you call "hockey" is what we call "ice hockey" and what we call "hockey" is what you call "field hockey", in my experience a far more brutal game...]]

Then there are the snowboarding, ski jumping, downhill skiing, speed skating, luge, and bobsledding competitions which I love to watch. My 14 year old son Daniel skateboards, so he's a fan of Shaun White and all the other snowboarders; he even knows all the terms for the insane maneuvers they pull off. Dan's a great kid and a terror. If you call within the next 13 minutes he can be yours for the low, low price of covering outpatient visits to the emergency room. Such a deal...

Anyhow, you were talking about the heel-turning in the WWE multi-verse, which piqued my interest a wee bit. For the money, I think Chris Jericho and Randy Orton are the best heels in the biz, but one of the oddest turns to the dark side has been CM Punk. It doesn't work on him, so I kinda expect Punk to revert to the world of Goodness and Light in not too long. He was a better draw that way and fun to watch. As for Matt Hardy, he's alright. The biggest kick I get lately is watching the tag match-ups between the Miz and Big Show against Mark Henry and MVP. That's a lot of weight in the ring when they're all together. Finally since you mentioned the Hulk's return to TNA, I have watched a few episodes and don't care for it at all. Too stupid for my wrestling tastes. But for me the wrestling shows are merely background noise while I'm grading papers and such. The Olympics are good for that, too - most sporting events are. Still, I have to admire the chiseled look of some of the pro wrestlers from a strictly artistic viewpoint. Of them all, I think Matt Morgan, Randy Orton, John Morrison, and Ted DiBiase have the best proportions and muscle definition. Some of these guys have too much muscle mass; Batista, Bobby Lashley, and John Cena, for example, are so pumped that it's painful to watch them. Speaking of which, I like Lashley. He's another good guy turned heel, and once again, it doesn't work.

[[I have to disagree somewhat here. Punk plays the heel very well, especially since (like Orton) his heel persona is based heavily on aspects of his real-life personality. This worked exceptionally well when he was feuding with Jeff Hardy, well-known for his chemical romance, and allowed Punk to turn his innate self-righteousness and pomposity to great heel advantage. Orton actually had to become more

demented and drooling to cement his heel persona, since sections of the fans were and are still cheering for him. As I write, his face turn is in progress and will probably be completed at Wrestlemania. I don't actually think Cena seems to be that pumped, certainly not compared to, say, Batista or the more obvious musclemen like Chris Masters or Rob Terry. Lashley, I thought, played heel quite successfully in WWE, then face (then heel) in TNA likewise, though most agree that his wife should never be let near the ring again...]]

Anyway, onward to the musical section of your latest ish. I liked Squeeze back in the day, but never bought any of their albums. Heard "Tempted" all the damn time and got sick of it. Good song, though, just a victim of radio overkill. I shall have to visit the Half Price Bookstore (again) and browse the LP bins. Lots of great jazz recordings hiding in there, by the way, so any excuse to get down to that store works for me.

You have good taste in women: Sally Field and Benazir Bhutto are two hot looking ladies. May I add Sophia Loren and Racquel Welch to this listing of ageless beauties? Thank you.



[[You may...]]

And that wraps this loc up. Sometimes I wish you wouldn't pub so damned frequently; it fucks up my fannish feng shui.

From: 4030 8th Street South, Arlington VA 22204

March 1

Alexis Gilliland writes:

Thank you for the nicely produced *This Here... #14*, which arrived on the heels of a promised 3 to 5 inches of snow which in the event proved to be a mere dusting, touching up the dirty snow berms left over from the 22 inches we got on February 5th. Digging out the driveway (with the help of some wandering trabajadores with snow shovels) was only part of it, because after a while ice dams formed on the roof, causing the bay window in the living room to leak, drip-

drip-drip, for nearly a week. Eventually the leak stopped, and even more eventually Lee had a contractor come out and take a look at things. His verdict: no visible damage, but the next time you have the roof done, you might want to install a water barrier to frustrate ice dams. So if the asphalt shingles on the roof last 15-20 years, and we had ours done in 1993 (seems like only yesterday), that could be any time now. With luck, we won't get any more record snowstorms until then, hopefully 2013 or maybe later.

[[I don't know the pitch of your roof, but the formation of ice dams suggest it must be on the shallow side. I recall that in Maryland, for pitches of 3:12 or less (I think) the building code required ice shield under the shingle. This isn't a big deal to install, although if you're replacing existing shingle you have to strip all the old stuff first and repaper the plywood, rather than reroofing over top of the old shingle, which is usually allowed one time (i.e. two layers). The ice shield material can be a bit of a pain to put down, but it's just a big roll of stuff with an adhesive backing. If you have a more complex roofing system with valleys and crickets, I'd recommend all these areas getting ice shield under the shingle...]]

You mention that the Katzes have encouraged you and BB to host a party or two for the Vegnants in non-meeting weeks, which is well and good if you like having parties. Having done a bit of fannish hosting in my time, I suggest that once a month might be good and plenty, even with the club chipping in on the expenses, and three times a quarter might be even better. To avoid becoming nailed to a fixed date, alternating between the second and fourth Fridays could be helpful, though this is something you and BB should discuss, because she might have a preference.

[[Interestingly, three times a quarter is probably about how it's working out, although we tend to be "occasion-based" rather than "calendar-based" - the last two parties here were 'Waifs & Strays' on Boxing Day and a Superbowl party for the Big Game. Of course, we also have a couple friends to dinner from time to time on separate occasions. It seems to be that for us, we need a reason to throw open the doors over and above the actual day-of-the-month, and our bashes also tend to include at least a few people who aren't "Vegnants" as such e.g. work buddies...]]

I mentioned *World of Warcraft* as fannish, but I can't really imagine a WoW convention. That multi-player role-playing game is its own virtual convention, a black hole to suck up one's time and energy, existing as a sink for all fannish enthusiasm. [...]



From: bwfoster@juno.com

March 9

Brad Foster writes:

Man, I have really got to catch up on my skiffy movie watching, or I'll have to turn in my geek-card one day! I'm still trying to figure out when/if we'll be able to get out to see "Avatar", now that evidently 98% of the people on the surface of the planet (and probably half of those below it), have already seen it. Plus Burton has a new slice of weirdness

off an old theme, and here comes THIS HERE... with the *Star Trek* movie up front, reminding me I've not seen -that-, either. (On the other hand, did get to see *Zombieland* a few weeks back, courtesy of friends with a big screen tv and a better budget for renting movies. So, that's a tiny baby step in the right direction...

[[I haven't seen 'Avatar' either, of course...]]

Good to hear you found a vet you can trust for your furry pals. We got lucky too in finding a vet very close by to keep an eye on our little buddies. We lost our second cat just a month ago, the sweetest Duffy. So both of the gals that Cindy and I have had together pretty much since we met have both passed on this past year. It's very odd, got used to them being here, and kind of like a major change in life not to have them around anymore.

And your mentioning of Squeeze here had me loving the ol' internet once again. I remembered hearing something from them too many years ago on tv that stayed with me, but could not remember what. With Google, Wiki and YouTube finally narrowed it down to the tune 'Tempted'. haven't heard that in a while, so it's nice to have it playing in the background now while I pound out this pitiful loc. ...Wow, here's one of the downfalls of writing a loc AS you read the zine... I've only just turned from page 3 to 4, where I see that you have now mentioned that very song that I spent about fifteen minutes tracking down on the net. sigh.

From: penneys@allstream.net

March 10

Lloyd Penney writes:

That's one thing we've got in common, being refugees from Trek fandom. I got into fandom via a Trek club in Victoria, BC, and Yvonne and I were members of the Star Trek Welcommittee for 15 years before it shut down. It took me a while to get used to the new movie... so many different things, and it would have been a simple reboot if it wasn't for the original Spock there to give it his blessing. I did like Karl Urban bringing off a perfect De Kelley imitation, and there were a few moments, I was thinking, this is your

father's Star Trek, and seeing I'm old enough to be your father... Oh, well, these old folks can't play these iconic characters forever, so new folks can fill their shoes, and they do it okay.

The building we live in is full of dogs, and they all like me, but they just love Yvonne. She's more kid-height, and she's energetic, so they play with her, and race around, and jump up, and go generally nuts. There's BB and Bailey...yes, I like dogs, but I can't eat a whole one.

They gave me a new computer at the Law Society, and this one has a sound card and earphone jack, so now I can listen as I like to Steve Wright on Radio 2. I listen to the BBC as often as I can because it's helluva lot different than the typical radio we can listen to in North America.

The death of fanzines? Not around here, I can barely keep up with them. Cons and fanzines are but two ways of fannish interactions. Clubs, pub nights, general parties, special events...lots of ways. Finding out about them is the tough part. I want that great illo on page 9 on a t-shirt.

[[Steve Jeffery's 'I Fought The Law...', for those who don't want to go look it up. I'm sure Steve won't mind if I send you the original artwork so you can get a shirt made...]]

Just for the record, greetings to James Bacon, and your party was the best event that night. Ta for the great towel, you hoopy frood. Yvonne went car shopping at the annual Canadian AutoShow last month, and she has finally decided on what she'd like her next car to be...a Mini Clubman. Dunno who's paying for it, but that's what she'd like. Pray to the lottery gods, m'dear...

[[I had an original design (highly used) Clubman in '79 or '80, as I recall, and an even older Mini Van with no brakes after that...]]



From: robertlichtman@yahoo.com

March 14

Robert Lichtman writes:

Sometimes a fanzine (or parts of it) is simply good reading, eliciting little in the way of comments but enjoyed thoroughly by its intended recipient. That's the case with *This Here...* #14, in which I enjoyed reading your views on the various Star Trek movies; your and BB's sadness at losing Bosstone, eye-popping expense at repairing Lulu's leg, and joy at acquiring Bailey; your music and musician comments; and your rasslin' notes—but pleasure is what I took away from it all, and mute pleasure at that except for this paragraph.

In the letters, I'm with Sheryl Birkhead in wondering why the firebrick in her fireplace insert needed to be replaced so quickly. When I lived on The Farm I was for several seasons assigned each fall to canvass the countryside for second-hand heating stoves. The ones that were originally manufactured for use with coal—and thus had thick firebrick liners around the firebox area—were especially favored by Farmies because they would hold residual heat longer in those brick *and* could be used with coal, unlike the wood-only models that came with double sheet metal fireboxes instead. Even though already well-used before I acquired them, none of them ever needed their firebricks replaced. Maybe, ahem ahem, they made better firebricks in those days.

My sympathies to you over the disarray your fan art files are in after your cross-country move! So Brad Foster and Alexis Gilliland have to wait a while for their work to see print in your pages—clearly neither of them has made a major move

such as you have, or they'd be more understanding. I still have some boxes of stuff from my 2005 move that haven't been properly unpacked, and I only know about some of what's in them when I find that something I should have properly filed isn't. The only one I can remember for sure at the moment is Mark and Claire's 2000 *The Inquisitor: Fan Columns from The Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine*, which is probably somewhere in the box marked "Bureau Top Miscellaneous." One of these days...

As for Brad's creeb about "unnecessary auto repairs," the best way to ensure that doesn't happen is to find a reliable shop. I don't know about where Brad lives, but around here (and, I see, also in Las Vegas)

there's always Yelp.com to check out what people think of various places. If you find a shop convenient to you with a 5-star rating *and* they're also "AAA Recommended," you can hardly go wrong. As an example of this, I recently got a set of Michelin tires from Costco using one of their discount coupons to get a Really Good Deal. They mount 'em and balance 'em, but they don't do alignment—and one *must* get a fresh alignment with new tires to ensure they wear properly from the outset. I found a great shop nearby that was covered over with positive comments for their alignment work, as well as for their services in general, and my experience with them matched all the comments. I may use them some more in future.

You write, "Apparently there's now 'third-hand smoke,' which is nicotine residue left on surfaces." I can believe that, having on many occasions stepped into a room where smoking took place at some time in the past and immediately noticing a stale smell coming off the furniture and drapes. And who hasn't bought a second-hand book over the internet and been blown away by the tobacco smoke residue embedded in its pages. (More than one book dealer or eBay seller advertises offerings "from a non-smoking household.") I make no value judgment, merely confirm the concept.

Mark Meara writes, "I never go to Starbucks." If there's a handy alternative, neither do I—but I have gone when there wasn't and don't find it bad, just average. When traveling, it's handy to have a list of the various Starbucks outlets along your route. Since you never know what bad taste might lurk in an espresso from a clueless local coffee shop, you can at least rely on Starbucks not to blow your taste buds away. It's kind of like fast food in that regard—a Taco Bell taco is the same wherever you go, pretty much.

Was this an adequate "loc out the wazoo"?

From: sue.tortoise@btinternet.com

March 20

Sue Jones writes:

As you know by now, I've been pretty-much out of fannish circulation for the last three years, due to health problems. I'm catching up, but only slowly. My continuing inability to concentrate for long, and the financial restraints of part-time working has limited my fanac to a little artwork and not much else. Heck, my pictures have been going to more conventions than I have!

I have continued to attend Novacon - haven't missed a one since Novacon 21, my very first SF con, where among other Notable Fannish Landmarks I first met YOU. Oh gosh, that's 20 years come November. How time....

Getting *TH14* prompted a quick troll backwards through the previous few issues on efanazines. (Much easier than trying

to find them in the chaos that passes for filing in the Celestial Tortoise Loft.) So I've caught up with your news in the wrong order, but I'm about there now.

The look on Lulu's face on page 2 reminds me very strongly of Katy, a young dog that my parents got from a rescue centre. Also a German shepherd mix, and a very beautiful dog. My parents couldn't resist that look. But that the rescue centre allowed two frail (and rather silly) people in their eighties to adopt such a difficult and powerful dog is beyond belief. It turned out that they couldn't manage her, of course, and because of previous mistreatment she was very possessive and aggressive. When she started nipping visitors to the house, she had to go. (Not back to the same centre, but to the well-run NCDL kennels at Roden, where we hope she found someone with the strength and patience to take her on.) My parents were heartbroken - they had come to love her so much.

I'm impressed by your deck-building skills.

It looks like you've finally found the right place at last, in Las Vegas. So here's to it all continuing good.

From: srjeffery@aol.com

March 21

Steve Jeffery writes:

Someday, science fiction fans will get to grips with the possibilities offered by live tele-conferencing for hosting a real virtual sf con across multiple continents and locations, but Corflu Cobalt wasn't it, and there were probably more people tapping away on laptops in the bar (half the *Plokta* cabal, unsurprisingly) than in the mostly deserted 'virtual internet suite', or the webcam broadcasting the Faan Awards presentation on Sunday. Did you all make it at whatever unearthly hour it was for you in Las Vegas?

[[Yes we did, and the award-winning Jacq Monahan wrote it up for Kat Templeton's 'Small and far Away' (on efanazines, natch!). I thought the online con was pretty well attended meself, but then the godawful early hours I keep (up at 5 or sooner) made it not so much a problem (more a way of life?)...]]

BBC 4 had a bit of a Roxy Music evening a couple of weeks back, including a rerun of a rather good *Arena* documentary on Brian Eno.

It may have been this that was rolling round in the back of my mind, among the cobwebs and old sweet wrappers, when I chanced across a book titled *Remake/Remodel (Art, Pop, Fashion and Making of Roxy Music, 1953-1972)*, by Michael Bracewell. 2007, Faber & Faber) in the library.

It's a weird but fascinating book. Roxy Music, even in their first pre-Manzanera incarnation, don't even get together until about page 320-something, or play their first gig (at a private party) until about 20 pages before the book ends. But

you learn all sorts of stuff about the UK art college and fashion scene in Newcastle (Ferry), Winchester (Eno) and Reading (Mackay) through the 50s, 60s and 70s.

I never realised quite what a radical reputation Reading Uni arts department had just a few years before I went there in 1974, with things like the 'White Room' experiment, which would probably now be banned under all sort of human rights injunctions. But it was fascinating to discover all this stuff that was going on that I wasn't aware of at the time, being a nerdy chemistry student who was expected to actually attend lectures, practicals and tutorials if I wanted to make it into the next year.

Mark gave me a copy of BEAM at Corflu, but not had time to do much more than admire the cover and layout and note with approval both the Molesworth reference inside the front cover and the quote from Viv Stanshall's *Sir Henry at Rawlinson's End* at the foot of the Contents on page 5.

(Dave Hicks in another fan of the latter, to judge by the reference to "Scrotum, the old wrinkled retainer" in *Flipping Heck*.)

Oh, and I read your loc to *Head 9* that you still haven't forgiven the Germans for bombing your fish shop. I have asked Doug and Christina to discover which of them was responsible and to strike them off their mailing list. That'll learn them.



[[That line was actually nicked from a Scouse stand-up who used to be 'The Comedians' (remember that show?). In the absence of being able to do the usual racist jokes, other targets had to be picked, and

Germans (Scouse pronunciation: "Chairmans") were one of them...]]

It occurs to me I intended to follow up my short loc to TH13 to say it was horrible to read about poor Bosstone and express sympathies to you and BB, but inexcusably I never got round to it.

And here's TH14 in which you now have not one, but two new pooches, Lulu and Bailey (who has quite scary eyes in that photo of her on page 3).

Somewhere in the boxes of vinyl downstairs I have a copy of that Blind Faith album, sans the tasteful over-frosting of the CD reissue. I also discovered, watching a tape of Clapton and Winwood, that my fingers still remembered most of 'Presence of the Lord'.

From: fijagh2010@ericlindsay.com

March 28

Eric Lindsay writes:

We never watch anything on TV together either. But that could probably be explained by not actually having a TV set. I don't watch sports. The hodge podge of reality shows, pointless dramas and stupid comedies long ago convinced me that TV was a wasteland. It is not helped by the free to air change to digital TV here. Instead of five channels, we now have about 20, all repeating exactly what the original five showed. How is this an advantage?

Then there are the cable people (not that it is actually cable, it is satellite). The downlink does not work through tropical rainstorms. So when might you be inside? When it is raining! Then they have the nerve to change you, but still run advertising. If I were going to pay to watch TV, it would be to avoid the inane advertising. The idea of paying and still getting advertising is insane.

If I watch TV, it is on a computer monitor. Since we run 27 inch and 30 inch monitors, that is at least as large as any TV we ever had in the past.

It seems somewhat of a waste that this house is wired with TV coax to multiple rooms. The TV signal arrives via a passive optical network cable from reception, a kilometre away. Unfortunately, there is no back haul, so having fibre optic cable to the home is utterly useless for connecting to the internet. However if backhaul ever arrives, we are ready for it. But I have locced about that previously.

We do not have dogs, or cats. Part of the entry conditions here, at least for some of us. Not that pets would be practical with the amount we go away.

The amount of argy bargy from the recording companies persuaded me to stop buying music from them long ago. I do buy music from bands and musicians at the markets. Since Jean can not stand anything that includes singing, this has gradually changed to forgetting to ever listen to music. Bit of a pity, now it is easier than ever to keep music on a computer.

I am not sure what happened to the wrestling here. There seemed a (brief) upsurge. Then it apparently disappeared entirely from TV. Of course, I am not the best person to ask about what appears on TV.

[[WWE has staged tours to the Antipodes, but not lately...]]

From: john.sila@virgin.net

April 23

Uncle Johnny Neilsen Hall writes:

Difford & Tilbrook: Despite all my recent pontificating on my indifference to songs, I love these guys. And Tempted is on my iPod. What a lyric! I never saw Squeeze live, but I did

see Jools Holland's massive Rhythm and Blues Orchestra a few times, and they they slipped into that number from out of something else and the crowd went berserk. So, plainly I'm not the only one who loves it.

I have a lot of sympathy with ShelVy on the subject of smoking, even though I have smoked yea, these thirty or so years. There is certainly a civil liberties issue in all this - if tobacco is legal it seems to me unreasonable that, in the UK at least, the only place you can smoke it is on your own outdoors or in your own home (assuming you don't have children). But at the same time, I'm clear on the health issues. Carbon monoxide from vehicles is very bad for us, but vehicles are, more or less, a necessity. Smoking cigarettes is a leisure activity, at best. Since we have had the smoking ban in the UK, restaurants, cinemas, pubs etc. are much cleaner, less stuffy places to be in. I would support bars and pubs being licensed for smokers, (and this is now happening) so that, at least, those who want to smoke have somewhere to go. I think that even if the majority of people want to live in a smoke free environment, in a free society there should still be a choice.

Had much sympathy too with Shelby's tale of his daughters experience with a judge in a property case. I've met judges like that, too. I had one once that advised me and the defendant to reach a settlement, because he wasn't to find in anyone's favour at any time in the near future, and it would only cost us both more!

James Bacon said much the same thing to me as he writes here when, at the Winchester Corflu, I expressed doubt that I would have the wherewithal to come to California next year. It's all right for some unionised train driver with paid holidays and, likely enough, the ability to go on the sick even when the holiday allowance is used up and be able to fly off around the world. Self employment, however, is the real world. And how old does he think I am when he suggests crashing on someone's floor? Audrey thinks James is marvellous, but even she gave him a stony look.

[[Yeah, and as you probably read I put it more stridently than that. I think it takes several whacks of the bat (cricket, baseball, takes yer pick) to make sure the concepts you are trying to explain penetrate the apparent exoskeleton around IFH's brain...]]

Nic, that aside about the late Benazir Bhutto gave me some pause. What a fucking pervert you are.

[[Coming from you Unc, that's either high praise indeed or serious pause for thought. I did mean while she was still alive, of course. You're probably a Thatcher man, with all them dominatrix overtones, but for knobable lady Prime Ministers that Yulia Tymoshenko is a bit of all right an' all...]]



WAHF

Rick King, who claimed to have Googled "insufferable tit" and come up with nothing; **Paul Di Filippo** ("splendid news about the new doggies (not the vet bill part!)" . Paul also sent a much-appreciated 'Working Writer's Daily Planner' for 2010; **Caroline Mullan** ("Got This Here... #14 this morning and was all ready to throw a snit because in I didn't even get a WAHF when I stopped to note the number. Don't think I got #13 - if I did it is lost in the morass. Thanks for #14. I shall read it, and #13 on efanzines, and you may, if you are lucky, get another LoC sometime in April."); **Pamela Boal** ("Gratitude but mad haste");

INDULGE ME

✓ The *Prairie Home Companion* is still good for a laugh-out-loud or two. A few weeks ago on the show, Keillor ostensibly has to take the controls of, I think, a seaplane, and

makes a predictably bad landing. The following exchange occurs:

Air Traffic Controller: "Who taught you to fly, idiot?!"

Keillor: "I'm an English major."

ATC: "I'm sorry - *by whom* were you taught to fly, idiot?!"

✓ I'm really starting to like Matt Smith as the latest incarnation of *Doctor Who*, since he reminds me in some ways of my favorite Doctor, Patrick Troughton. But despite my known fondness for redheads, I'm not at all sure about that Amy Pond.



✓ Speaking of *Prairie Home Companion*, this morning Keillor was describing prom dresses from Lake Wobegon with so many rhinestones down the back of the train that it looked like the wearer was "farting diamonds".

✓ Back on the cheap beer, habitually, so it was like a slice of utter fuckin luxury when Lord Jim Taylor brings over a twelve of Newky last night.

✓ I did actually get paid some Unemployment benefit this year, for the first time ever in my life - the not-so-princely sum of \$219 a week...

✓ Thish is an even number of pages and includes the return address box on the back - just like old times, eh? If you're Rob^t Lichtman and feeling *really* nostalgic, you can print this out, fold in in half and randomly mangle and tear it, so it'll feel just like the previous deliveries...

MIRANDA

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**"Don't throw away your basic needs:
ambience and vanity."**

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