



TENNESSEE  
VIBRATOR 2.0.10



THIS ISSUE CONTAINS  
AWARDS, MUSHROOMS, A  
POP SONNET, MIKE  
MOORCOCK, A SHORT  
WALK FROM A  
SUPERMARKET CAR PARK,  
AND PRINTER CARTRIDGES

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Hey, suddenly it's November. Firework season. Apparently some weirdo tried to blow up Parliament and now we celebrate this act of proto-terrorism. Hard on crime and the causes of crime, eh? It is also the season of Diwali, or the Hindu Festival of Lights, or as it is now being renamed, the Festival of Big Bangs. How about making your day go with a big bang by reading this latest issue of Vibrator where you will find various people banging on about many things, some of them related to science fiction and fandom and some of them not. If you like what you read or even if you don't, write me a loc, I'd certainly get a bang out of that.

I've actually found that nothing of fannish importance ever happens in November, unless you count Novacon, which I don't. I may ask Mike Meara to write up a report of this year's Novacon. He may well refuse, in which case you will be severely disappointed, almost as disappointed as you must be by not finding the promised feature on Mushrooms by Peter Roberts in this issue. What can I say? Life is hard.

I'm Graham Charnock. My address is [graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk](mailto:graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk). Please send review copies or cheques to 45 Kimberley Gardens, London N4 1LD, UK. This issue is dated November 2014. Deadline for locs for next issue 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. Thanks as always to Pat Charnock for proofreading and correcting my errant mammaries. Thanks to Steve Stiles for supplying the masthead illo and to Nic Farey for the numberplate.

### AWARDS, WHO NEEDS THEM?

Once upon a time I could contemplate writing an article with a headline like that, without panicking, because I had never won one.

That all changed on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November, when number two son Dan banged on my bedroom door and woke me from my customary afternoon nap with a cry of "Graham, you've won a Nova". I had been dreaming about shovelling up a pile of shit, somewhat after the labours of Hercules (a frequent anxiety dream with me), so assumed this was just a sort of extension of the dream. A shitload of fanzines? A shitload of awards? But no.

I would not be telling a lie if I said the thought of Novacon awards had never once crossed my mind until this moment. I would be telling the truth. It hadn't. I had had no idea when the awards were to be given, and why should I? I was at home and not at Novacon. There were other things to talk about on the web, and reported on fan-sites such as Trufen such as the shortage of chocolate. (We are currently eating more chocolate than we produce, apparently, and most of the existing and future chocolate is being bought up by China. I have no idea why. Maybe they are working on chocolate-fuelled rocket engines to help further their space explorations aspirations. But I

suspect not; I think they probably only see an opportunity to make even more anti-capitalist money). I just mention this to show there were other things on my mind. My toenails, for instance, although on my feet rather than my mind. They constantly need cutting (does anybody else have this problem?) and I am constantly finding it harder and harder to reach them and contort myself into a position where I can actually cut them. Frequently I just end up lacerating my flesh, and blood flows. I have asked Pat for help with this problem but she refuses to cut them unless I wash my feet. I wittily riposte that I'm waiting for a sinful woman to come along and wash them but she usually treats this with the derision it deserves.

Where were we? Painting the Forth Bridge. Well, sort of. The moment you think you've finished the introduction to an article you have to start all over again.

Let's start all over again.

I have nothing against awards.

No, as soon as I write that I realize it is not true. This is an often recycled view but one of the main objections to awards seems to be that their existence alone drives people to make unnatural efforts to achieve them. They sell their wives and mortgage their children. Worse, they may alienate themselves from humanity by going so far as to bribe people, if only with promises of reflected glory, a bit like religious zealots who promise their followers glory if they sacrifice themselves for their cause. I don't know why but David Kuresh springs to mind. He was mad. So are many fanzine editors. (It would be interesting to speculate what processes in society make them this way; but this is an area for more clued-up sociological commentators such as Lilian Edwards, I fear. It remains true that Fandom, and its associated award systems, is littered with the carcasses of fanzines produced because their editors thought they would bring them glory and mass adulation. As if that mattered. It seems even worse when applied to Blogs. Blogs are an area of fannish activity in which it is so easy to achieve a polished result, much as in using a programmed sequencer in music, that anyone can do it. Having said that there are, I am forced to admit, a lot (well a few) blogs out there written by articulate and intelligent people. Should they be denied their day in the sun of an award ceremony?

I realize I am rapidly writing myself into a corner. I am far too forgiving of everyone to speak nastily even of people who deserve being taken into a dark alley and beaten into a pulp. That's what actually winning an award will do to you. Almost as potent as a shot of a good single malt.

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### **MUSHROOMS IN LIFE AND ART. (Not by Peter Roberts)**

The biggest living organism in the world is not the Blue Whale or even Brian Parker's ego or the giant sequoia. In fact it is a fungus, possibly not only the largest by bulk, but the oldest. This is a honey fungus. A mushroom of this type in the Malheur National Forest in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon was found to be the largest fungal colony in the world, spanning 8.9 km<sup>2</sup> (2,200 acres) of area. This organism is also estimated to be 2400 years old. Knocks those little things you find at the end of your garden into a cocked hat really (whatever that means) But of course you wouldn't notice the honey fungus if it fell on your head, whereas you might suffer severe brain damage, or Brian damage, if it was Brian Parker's ego.

Most of us, of course, come across mushrooms in small shrink-wrapped packages in supermarkets. Unlike Nicholas Evans, the famed author of *The Horse Whisperer* we seldom go foraging for them. When Nicholas did he and his family ended up with severe kidney damage which led to many of them being on dialysis for many years. The moral for fandom is never go foraging with Greg Pickersgill if he still has a life-long grudge against you, which is probably very likely.

The Mushroom Cloud is something which has of course become an iconic image in the minds of those who want to kill lots of Japanese in an extreme act of vengeance. Of course it has nothing to do with real mushroom and has given them a bit of a bad name, as if poisoning Nicholas Evans wasn't enough. The bomber which carried the atomic bomb was called Enola Gay, which was later brought to fame and prominence (as if it had ever faded) by the Pop Group Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, a poncey pop group from the Wirral who fancied themselves as intellectuals. Apparently when released as a single, "Enola Gay", was misperceived by listeners with little knowledge of the Hiroshima bombing as a cryptic identification of the band which only shows how stupid pop fans can be. Maybe they should have tried more Magic Mushrooms.

Magic Mushrooms or psilocybin mushrooms were big in the US around about the time of Timothy Leary and Ted White, but didn't reach UK fandom until Suzie Starshine and Linda Krawaeké started introducing them into their lunchtime menus. In the US people used them to nod out to bands like The Grateful Dead; in the UK we were generally considered dozy enough as it was. In fact the first person to generate publicity about them was Aldous Huxley, the renown science fiction writer, in his book *The Doors Of Perception* which related his experiences imprisoned in a souk in Algeria during the Second World War.

And there's the Peter Roberts connection: Famed UK fan, Peter Roberts, (editor of Checkpoint) used to be the resident fungus expert at Kew Gardens in London, until jokes about him being a fun guy got too much for him, and he left for a life in quiet seclusion in Haverfordwest listening to his old Mike Moorcock & The Deep Fix records.

That's all I know about mushrooms apart from Lonnie Donegan's famous joke: I say I say, my dustbin's full of toadstools." "How do you know?" "There's not mushroom in it."

Goodbye folks.

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### **PAUL SKELTON IS ONE ISSUE LATE WITH HIS COMMENTS. THIS JUST SHOWS WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T KEEP UP, PEOPLE**

Well, issue 8 arrived, I flicked through it initially and registered the fact that you hadn't used any of my LoC, then put it aside for later perusal, with merely desultory disappointment as, whilst I recalled that it had been a longish LoC, I also recalled that it had been mostly tedious wibbling about our garden, and not anything much of general interest. Then later, as I read it, I spotted my name a time or two and realised that people were in fact responding to the LoC you hadn't used. Thus it was that it finally dawned upon me that my copy of issue 7 had vanished down some hyperspace wormhole. Cutting to the chase, you e-mailed me a replacement and I discovered that in fact you had actually printed large amounts of my tedious wibbling. Which bit of "...strictly between the two of us" proved particularly opaque?

My own fault of course...obviously it is your zine, and you can print what you wish, so I shall just have to watch myself in future and keep a more watchful eye on the wibbleometer.

Pat as Janis Joplin? Hell no, Janis is dead! Also, is Joe Ely really 'famous' in the context of a 'pop star'? I always just sort of thought of him as one of the obscure artists that I enjoy. I'm pretty sure the last few times I looked through a store's CD racks there was nothing in there by him. *Happy Songs from Rattlesnake Gulch* (2007) is the latest thing I have by him.

*I'll Be Your Baby Tonight* as one of Dylan's best and most touching romantic ballads? "That big fat moon's gonna shine like a spoon, we're gonna let it, you won't regret it." does not redefine anything other than 'banal'. Mind you, having said that, I have to admit I still kinda like it too.

*(EDITOR: I disagree with your analysis, Paul. Some of the best romantic songs of our time have specialized in recycling tropes such as moon and spoon. Dylan is reminding us of our connection with an old song-writing tradition, framing it in a modern setting. I would suggest you are just being old and jaded.)*

I share your San Francisco Joys (albeit none of them Mabel). Yes, there are a lot of specific memories but even just the general recollection of having been there makes me smile on a rainy day.

I can't be quite so succinct regarding pains and visits to doctors. Especially leg pains. One day, shortly into my first consultancy job, I started to feel a pain in my foot as I walked to the bus stop to get the bus into Manchester. It got worse as I walked, as the day wore on, and as the days and weeks wore on, though I found a way of walking (not flexing the foot at all) that made it a lot easier. The Manchester United footballer Wayne Rooney had just been in the news after breaking his metatarsal and I was convinced that was what I must have somehow done... but how can you break a bone whilst strolling to the bus stop? I had to be imagining it, right? It would gradually get better until I forgot about it, twisted suddenly, and there it would be again. And I didn't want to take any time off during my first ever consultancy role (a – not at £450/day and b – for the future reputation).

Eventually, a year later, between consultancy roles, I went to the doctor, who sent me for an x-ray. The bad news was that I had a broken metatarsal, but the good news was that it was showing signs of healing. There *is* of course a moral here, but you may feel free to ignore it. Why not? I do.

I currently take three items of medication. Omeprazole (for a hiatus hernia), Amlodipine (for my blood pressure) and a Statin, because I am in the group deemed to be 10% 'at risk' for heart problems. I believe all 3 are contra-indicated with each other. One of the side effects is joint and ligament pain, which I have increasingly around my left knee. Another is occasional severe muscle cramps, which I also get, but I tell myself there's no point in going back to the doctor with this information as I don't really have much option...except this is not really true. I could go on a strict diet and lose 3-4 stone. I've done it before. I could also cut salt from my diet. I've done that before too. After all, there is no intrinsic reason why eating should be pleasurable and food should taste nice. Quite possibly though the main stumbling block might be that I would also have to give up drinking (from the calorie intake point of view).

My own view on 'fan history' (in which I am interested) is that if it doesn't precede my own entry into fandom then it isn't really what I would call 'history'. Yes, there may be some things that happened whilst I was around, about which I would like to know more, but basically I want to know what went down before I got here. As to the photo you printed, who was the woman to Ethel's right, between and behind Mike Moorcock and Sandra Hall. She looks strangely familiar, as if I ought to recognize her.

*(EDITOR: I'm sure Jim Linwood could tell you, if he bothers to respond to this issue)*

I have to admit to a moment of sheer stupidity in your early LonCon comments as I briefly considered you to mean that your son Dan suffered from 'Orwellian metaphors' rather than the more grammatically distanced 'anxiety attacks'. I hesitated to mention this not because of my apparent stupidity but rather that you might have felt I was belittling Dan's problem which, given that I have myself suffered mild anxiety attacks, is definitely not the case.

Regarding later LonCon comments I have to agree. Certainly I cannot see that GoHs of UK conventions have ever benefitted by more than the honour itself, whereas nowadays it seems that pros attend conventions in order to be sucked up to.

As to Robert Lichtman's LoC, I have to admit that back when I was a fane I probably did not write as many LoCs as I ought to have done. Now, on the other hand I tend to err the other way. If I want to get every issue of a fanzine then I figure I should be prepared to LoC every issue of that fanzine. It only seems fair. Of course if people bombard me with issues of extremely frequent fanzines I sometimes have to tell them I simply can't cope on that basis, and leave things up to them. Conversely, when somebody sends me a fanzine that doesn't bang my particular buttons I

feel I should tell them this up front rather than risk letting them send me more issues in future. This was almost certainly what I explained to Phil Palmer had happened in respect of his fanzine.

Anyway, before quitting Robert's LoC, and his bike with 4 essential gears, I would point out that my last bike, which I gave to Mike Meara, though I have no idea whether or not he has yet ridden it about Parthenay, had 18 gears – three on the pedal cog and six on the rear derailleur. And yes, it meant I never found a gradient up which I could not cycle.

Anyway, there you go Graham, almost another two pages. Yes, there's still more stuff I could respond to, but I no longer feel guilty about not doing so.

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### **WHERE THERE IS HOPE LIEBOWITZ THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE**

Just in case I forget, we have a Thai Elephant in Toronto. When I see names like that I think, people are running out of names for restaurants.

I'd love to be able to just show up at Barcon some day, if I were IN InTheBar, but I fear that even if I had scads of money, the smoke would keep me away. Going out to dinner is a high point of most cons, if people can decide on a place, and not take hours to get somewhere. I've been on some of those long, long dinner expeditions (after going to over 350 cons) and they can be pretty awful, even if the food turns out to be good.

Here in Toronto it is only 3:30pm but it is so dark it looks like 5pm. Raining. I don't really care if I get wet, but not looking forward to the nasty ice to come.

Oh, one more thing. Bars in Toronto all seem to have multiple TVs now, so even though no smoke is allowed inside, I still don't really like going to them. Some things get better, others get worse. And now it is time to log off and think about getting ready to go out to dinner with some people I don't know at a place I've never been. But there will be wine, as no corkage on Tuesday night.

*(EDITOR: Smoking is prohibited in any enclosed space in the UK now, Hope, including hotels and restaurants, so you should not let this deter you from attending any future conventions in the UK. Also there is not the preponderance of Sports Bars in the UK that there is in the USA.)*

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### **A LATE LOC ON VIBRATOR 2.0.5. BLIMEY I KNOW ALISON SCOTT HAS BEEN BUSY ORGANIZING A WORLDCON BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS.**

This is a loc on Vibrator 2.0.5; probably a rubbish one. It's not helped by your fanzine being full of tales of death and the inevitable deteriorations of age. Silly me, I started reading it thinking 'oh, gosh, I'm feeling a bit down, but ten minutes with a Vibrator will really perk me up'. And now I see you've sent out two more. They'll be in a pile somewhere.

I have all sorts of spectacular dreams, but assume that they will be infinitely boring to other people. Sometimes I tell them to my family, who confirm my assumptions and tell me to stop.

*(EDITOR: I agree there is nothing more boring than other people recounting their dreams, which they obviously saw as tremendously significant but which are obviously not of interest to anyone else. Having said that I have used several dreams as the backbones for a few stories I have written. Hopefully applying this crafting process to them will make them more accessible to people who would otherwise have been bored. Or perhaps not.)*

Generally as a rule, I hate gardening, or at least the unending sense that if you don't do it it will get significantly worse quite quickly. But nevertheless, I have a garden. And I think we've established at this point that nobody else will do it. Though Lilian Edwards dressed up in a posh frock and heels and pulled weeds out of my garden for an hour this summer, drastically improving one small patch of it.

Or maybe that was a dream.

*(EDITOR: I suppose some people might find the image of Lilian Edwards in a posh frock and heels pulling up their weeds, incredibly erotic. Not me, of course. And I suspect not you.)*

Despite spending half of most of the last ten summers at festivals, I've never been to Glasto; too big, too expensive, and honestly, you can't see more than a tiny fraction of it. I always reckoned that there's a happy medium. At great big beer festivals, there are 1000 beers and 5 bands, and at great big music festivals, there's 1000 bands and 5 beers. And you can't see 1000 bands or drink 1000 beers in a weekend. But if you look carefully, there are festivals playing the sort of music you like, with about 40-50 bands and about 40-50 beers, and they're not so big or expensive either. Go to those ones, see the best bands and drink the best beers, and wander around in a happy haze

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**SANDRA BOND HAS COME UP WITH ANOTHER OF HER POP SONNETS – POP LYRICS WRITTEN IN THE STYLE OF SHAKESPEARE - AND CHALLENGES YOU TO 'NAME THAT TUNE!'**

How hard it is for me to make my way!  
I am not of the fancy or the fine,  
To join with whom is my avowed design;  
Such is the nature of the world today.  
I must be seen, I shall be seen, I will;  
Into the streets I'll go. The bloods I see,  
And fain I wish they would take heed of me,  
Yet fear that if they did, they'd use me ill.  
Yea, further still my efforts to refine,  
My features to enhance, I'll be tattoo'd,  
With stark design and ink of nature crude;  
O, let the churl err not in its design!  
I'm conscious of what's what, and who is who,  
All notwithstanding of my skin's fair hue.

*(EDITOR: I admit this one has got me beat. Yes, even me with my extensive encyclopaedic knowledge of pop history. So, folks this is a ready made opportunity for your to show your Superiority.)*

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**R-LAURRAINE TUTIHASI IS FULL OF APOLOGIES. WELL, FINE WORDS BUTTER NO PARSNIPS, MS TUTIHASI**

I apologize for being so far behind. I must be doing something wrong. I seem to be falling more and more behind with my reading. I suspect someone has been shortening the days.

Tara Wayne was talking about getting a CCM bike. I had ice skates made by the same company. It served me well through college but eventually fell apart.

As far as bikes go, I gave up trying here in Oracle. It's just too hilly. Also I found I couldn't really deal with the multi-speed bike that seems standard now. I'll take the old three-speed any day.

I'm sorry to hear your visit to Loncon 3 was such a disappointment to you. I couldn't afford it. Since I never stopped attending conventions, I have no problems with worldcons when I do go, as I'm planning to do next year. I find it amazing, though, that Loncon 3's attendance figures topped all previous worldcons. Wow! I still attend cons largely for the programmes. Of course, I make arrangements to meet with old friends usually. Bubonicon, which we attended this August, was the first con where I actually knew more pros than fans. But it was an enjoyable convention. It's a small convention in Albuquerque, NM, for those readers unfamiliar with it. The Loncon 3 after party sounds like fun. I have also found that it's very difficult to have enough time with all the guests when you are the host. But it was very nice of you to do it.

I found Robert Lichtman's comments about the elliptical trainer interesting and useful. I was thinking of getting one, but my knees aren't doing that well, either. Currently I do a series of physical therapy exercises that were assigned when I had treatment for sciatica. I also do a few others targeted for specific areas of my body that I feel need improvement. They must be working, since I've lost six pounds in the last four months.

Perhaps I'm not a real fan. For one of my earlier APAe, the OE offered to do the printing for me; so I dutifully typed out stencils and sent them in. This lasted a couple of years. But since I worked for Xerox, I used the copiers at work to print off other zines. These days I just print them off at home. We used to have a laser printer. Now we have an inkjet one.

I hope you were successful in getting your ears declogged. To my mind, going blind is preferable to going deaf.

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#### **JIM LINWOOD (VIA MIKE MOORCOCK) SHEDS LIGHT ON THE HAPPY EARLY DAYS OF NEW WORLDS**

Like Curt Phillips and Mark Plummer I would love to read about your days with *New Worlds* just as Charles Platt did for some extent in *Dream Makers*. When Mike was asked on the website *Moorcock's Miscellany* to describe a typical day running *New Worlds*, he wrote:

*"Horrible. I have no nostalgia for that period. It seems like a nightmare of continuing anxiety, trying to maintain the magazine primarily against censorship rather than financially. I wrote the books I did to support the magazine not because sales were bad but because the distributor was actively sabotaging us. What killed the magazine was the monopolistic system which meant that the wholesalers were also the retailers and could control the entire trade. After a public protest against their banning of New Worlds, they agreed to take it back, but secretly left the boxes of copies undistributed to their shops (this was W.H.Smith and John Menzies who between them still control the UK trade, the way Ingrams does in the US). Therefore most of what I remember is the anxiety. It didn't do my family life much good and in the end I decided I had to choose between the magazine and my children. I'm not sure what happened to my children..."*

*That was when I handed over routine editing to a series of other editors, including Lang Jones, Graham Charnock, Graham Hall, Jim Sallis, Charles Platt, Britton and Butterworth and so on. Every so often I returned to edit a special sequence of issues or a one off (like the 50th anniversary done a couple of years ago). The day would be very busy. Lots happening. Children coming and going. Papers all over my living room. Bear garden in Portobello Road (where the offices were) very similar to offices of 'underground' magazines like FRENZ and the first incarnation of Time Out. Street sellers turning up at Portobello Road to get their issues (we sold a fair number by this standard method whereby the street seller buys the issues at a discount and sells them full price -- Big Issue works a similar system, I think). This was the sixties and the counter-culture. For me the real work on New Worlds was done intensely over a period of days just before the print deadline. Routine work had been done, of course. But it was all done very rapidly, with the art editor working as intensely as the rest of us. Mostly it was a monthly schedule, but of course I didn't work on NW all month. Some of that time I was writing books. I wrote Cure for Cancer as a serial for New Worlds, month*

by month, and I did Ice Schooner in the same way for Science Fantasy. I also got my kids off to school most mornings, including cooking their breakfast. A busy time, but we were all very optimistic and thought we were going to improve the entire literary spectrum. All best, MM"

Your conclusion to *The Dream* was almost certainly the way O. Henry would have finished it and reminds me of the ending to one of my favourite songs, *The Green Green Grass of Home*:

*Then I awake and look around me, at the four grey walls that surround me  
and I realize, yes, I was only dreaming.*

*For there's a guard and there's a sad old padre -  
arm in arm we'll walk at daybreak.*

*Again I touch the green, green grass of home.*

*Yes, they'll all come to see me in the shade of that old oak tree  
as they lay me neath the green, green grass of home.*

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### FACSIMILE PAGES FROM OLD VIBRATORS No. 1

#### DRUNKDOM

Sitting here stewed it strikes me that certain fans have characteristic reactions while under the influence of alcohol, and moreover that these reactions have never been previously categorized. Take John Brosnan. "I feel hungover all the time," he says. "It's only when I'm drunk that I feel normal." But observation seems to indicate that normal to John seems to signify either an emetic or diarrhoeic state. In short he's a puker and a crapper. Pickersgill and Kettle appear to occupy diametrically opposite poles as far as drunkenness is concerned. Kettle gets voluble, excited, extremely silly and ga-ga. With Greg alcohol seems to act as a depressant; he becomes withdrawn and/or violent, and frequently maudlin. Peter Roberts on the other hand is an applied drunk. He works hard at getting drunk and then, once in his cups, he works hard at everything else, like standing up or holding his cigarette.

Fannish couples exhibit their own characteristics. The Edwards, Malcolm and Christine, both tend to move rather quickly towards a comatose state, preceded by a brief period of edgy nervous hysteria. As for the Charnocks, they take their drunkenness in turns. While Pat becomes aggressive, Graham turns protective, and vice versa. There are gentle friendly singing drunks, like Andrew Stephenson, bemused drunks like John Jarrold, drunks who go blind like John Hall, drunks who talk about themselves like Rob Holdstock, drunks who don't listen like Sheila Holdstock, lecherous drunks like Peter Nicholls, and sober drunks like John Piggott. I love em all. Hic.

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#### THE TOXICOLOGIST'S GUIDE TO ALCOHOL POISONING

Post-Mortem Appearances---Deep red colour of lining membranes of stomach. Sometimes congestion of cerebral vessels and meninges. Lungs congested, blood fluid. Rigor mortis present.

Fatal Dose---Death from  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of gin and from two bottles of port, but recovery from larger quantities.

Fatal Period---Average about twenty-four hours.

Treatment---Stomach-tube, cold affusion, electricity, injection of a pint of hot coffee into the rectum. Give chloride of ammonium in 30 grain doses to prevent delirium.

---J.H. Ryffel. 'Aids to Forensic Medicine and Toxicology'

## **NOW UNCLE JOHNNY PREDICTS MY FORTHCOMING DEMISE. THANKS UNC.**

I cannot keep up with this level of Fanac. I am very very old, you know.

I appreciated your exhortation about John Wesley Harding, not because I was going to listen to the album again- I no longer own a copy- but because it conveyed your sense of how finely put together you found the album. Indeed, it was, but at the time and as the follow up to Blonde On Blonde it was a bit of a come down. But given what came later and the influence it had on the Byrds and others, I think it must be rated as a pretty significant album. (Although, you could argue that Nashville Skyline was even more so.) Also, it has that great ensemble feel. The production, if you can call it that, is simply about good musicians playing together. Other albums that I personally rate for that sort of feeling might include The Morning After by the J. Geils Band and Bop Til You Drop and Borderline by Ry Cooder. But Dylan as an artist never transcended the work he did at that particular point in his career, and has become steadily more irrelevant as time has gone on- though I know it is sacrilege to say such things.

I am with Ian Williams. You should do something about yourself. I wish you would visit me in my second home, the Main Dialysis Unit at the Churchill Hospital, Oxford. I could introduce you to many of my fellow sufferers- the diabetic ones. Although the Churchill is primarily a cancer hospital, it is crammed out with diabetics. You see, they ignored symptoms such as you describe, they carried on drinking, they fell over or cut themselves in the lower leg, the injury never healed, and eventually they lost the leg. Some lost both legs. They became more immobile, they kept on drinking, their kidneys packed up- a lot of them have lost their eyesight besides. So now you find them in the next beds to me, dependent on wheelchairs, ambulance crews, long suffering wives and children, having their blood scrubbed. The next thing that seems to happen is they have strokes, and their cognitive powers decline drastically. There are a lot of people way worse off than me, and you could be one of them. Need I go on? Ian is a very nice person. I, by contrast, am bloody horrible.

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## **I MUST BE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT IF I CAN DRAG GRAHAM JAMES KICKING AND SCREAMING BACK INTO THE MAINSTREAM**

Naturally my first thought on reading the opening line of your post on FB (*EDITOR: I presume Graham refers here to my Facebook post about being told I had won a Nova*) was one of schlock, an ancient Hebrew term for amazement which my iPad keypad considers more visual, with both hands outstretched, upturned, equidistant and parallel to my shoulders, much like a sphinx except for the broad grin.

A car I thought? Now I always dismissed these competitions as entirely fake, much like penis enlargement therapy or surgery. So unlike pharmacology. Further, I just couldn't imagine such a realist as your good self even entering such a competition, not even in your wildest midnight ramblings. 'What do you consider the most useful addition to the current Vauxhall range?'

- A) the additional colours
- B) the glossy finish
- C) the interior

'Pat, post this in the morning, you never know, I mean if Pete Weston has one, surely I can? My battery is on the blink'.

I read on, which is something I rarely do in the age of minimalist writing, only to discover that it was something to do with a recent Novacon, a gathering not unlike VW Beetle meets, only less customised, not unlike my own first con, Novacon '78 where a very youthful Alan Dorey's Gross Encounters won a gong. Ye gods, I thought, pausing only to muse on the coincidence that I was just then listening to Steely Dan, a somewhat more prosaic term than 'Vibrator'. Still Burroughs was always good with imagery. Maybe you should have named said organ, 'Do it again', with a sort of time-shifting double attendre Dan paradox.

There was nothing else for it. I had to follow the link and at least start to read on. It's hard you know when one is now used to soundbites, tweets, one liners and the pinnacle of several thousand years of human communication reduced to 'like'. Maybe that's humanity reflecting its pre-vocal evolution as mere animals with a roar, a bark, a skawk, .... an almighty all-meaning grunt. I mean, even the Grauniad is now reduced to illustrating many of its articles with images of the writer with little speech bubbles, flashy colours and cartoon strips. It's enough to turn Roy Kettle to rage although well known guardian critics such as John Hall will of course feel a sense of self satisfaction.

18 pages. 18 and no glossy cover or streams of well finished photos in the manner of Motorway Dreamer, Inca or Speculation. How did you hold your own? Surely not on writing alone? But a read on does give some hint; a sort of con-rep following a Barcon, complete with lotsa name-dropping and resplendent with tales of eating and drinking. You do wonder how a vehicle from '75 could still be vibrant but of course many of the convention attendees could well have time out of mind.

I read it all, managing to forgive your deference towards Ian Williams. Karma might not be instant. Top piece from Mark Plummer, very clever and of course I've now just got to explore the previous issue and see just what was going on with John Wesley Harding, but I do take exception to you referring to Jim as the resident Dylan expert. It's a while since I've spent time inthebar although I served my time, served it well. These days I hang out with a bunch of musos based in Vegas, including John Wesley Hardin. I'll certainly be looking to see you all at Corflu. The last Barcon I went to chez Jackson was so overwhelming that I later crashed my own vehicle, an ageing but efficient Vauxhall cousin of the Zafira tribe, and was unable to attend the Drive By Trickers gig in Camden. There was no truth in the rumour circulating at the time that this was related to Brian Parker.

Great fanzine by the way. Humour and references way up there with the best exponents, Steely Dan, of course. Not sure about the musical similarities though. They're no match for the Old Man.

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### **ROBERT LICHTMAN SEEMS OBSESSED WITH WIFE-SWAPPING AND HUGGING.. HE MUST BE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME.**

Enjoyable Barcon 2 report! You claim that there wasn't wife-swapping, but if there actually was you would have been at something of a disadvantage. As you report, "When I woke up on Friday morning a bout of rheumatic arthritis, or arthritic rheumatism, had set in overnight, as it has recently been known to do, and I could hardly walk. Pat suggested we postpone our arrival and go on Saturday instead, but I swallowed a couple of Ibuprofen and bit the bullet." Under those limiting, even painful circumstances, you would have been incapable of holding up your end of affairs. What caring Barista would have wanted to swap with you given your inability to perform to his wife's satisfaction? She would have been getting the short end of the stick, so to speak. You also write that "there was after all no certainty I would be any better the next day." Further on in your report there's no mention of whether you *were* better on Saturday, although you do note that after walking around a lot that morning your "legs stopped working." But the reader is left not knowing whether wife-swapping was actually achieved or whether this is an intentional omission and comes under the umbrella of the final sentence of the introduction to your account: "That is all you need to know."

Steve Stiles nails it in his detailed description of the many forms and varieties of hugs. As he says of *his* parents, mine also "were far from being physically demonstrative types," but thanks to growing up at the right time (the second half of the '60s) and place (San Francisco) I overcame this disability and can hug with the best of them—moderating my hugs to match each unique situation. And in situations where a hug would be unwelcome but some sort of pro-forma physical greeting is necessary, I'm still capable of shaking hands—again with a full range of moderation (vigorous or gentle, light squeeze or intense grip). I'm seldom at a loss for how to proceed in these various circumstances—so well-adjusted that sometimes I make myself sick.

In Mark Plummer's letter he reveals a distinct generation gap between himself and me when he writes that "despite

my youthful appearance I am sufficiently old school that my music collection still resides on numerous 4.7 inch silver disks in our house.” That would be CDs, which although I own some I still think of as that new format that replaced cassette tapes which in turn replaced vinyl records. I’m of the latter generation, and find it hard to relate to CDs and, now that even more time has passed, to MP3s and the like. It’s all music, of course, but I do tend to believe fellow old-timers who make the claim that *true* sound quality was left behind when vinyl records went away—and having read that they’ve been making a comeback only tends to reinforce that belief.

I couldn’t find Mark’s exact age anywhere in a little googling, but I did run across Claire’s article in the final issue of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly*, published in 1986, where she writes that twenty years earlier she was sixteen. Assuming she and Mark are close in age, this means that he was born circa 1970, making him about the same age (more or less) as my first two sons. (I was 28 in 1970.) He would have missed *everything*, having been born too late, and I can easily understand his confusion over which came first: *John Wesley Harding* or *Nashville Skyline*. Interesting that he has a homemade tape with *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Highway 61 Revisited*, those being two of my very favorite Dylan albums of all time—although I admit that I haven’t really paid attention to, and have never owned, any of his work post-1971 when I went off to live in Tennessee. This means that of the 35 albums he’s made to date, I really only have more or less intimate (though stale) knowledge of the first nine. I don’t remember *Self Portrait* and *New Morning*, both of which came out in 1970, although I must have owned them at the time—that was one of the Very Stoned Years, which explains a lot (at least for me) about my lack of memory. Add *Blonde on Blonde* to the four listed above in this paragraph, and you have my complete list of favorites from his entire output.

*(EDITOR: On a recent episode of POINTLESS, a quiz show which polls people’s knowledge of various subjects and then challenges contestants to match the least well known, or pointless, answers, I was somewhat amazed to see that in a category covering Bob Dylan LPs, FREEWHEELING, NASHVILLE SKYLINE, BRING IT ALL BACK HOME and HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED, all came up as pointless among people polled (the contestants won). It made me feel old. Like frequently asked questions in Literature categories which usually display an amazing level of what can only be called Mass Illiteracy. (Which DOYLE has won a Booker Price? Answer: Arthur Conan Doyle.)*

Like Mark, I found that the movie *Renaldo and Clara* illuminated “very little at all about anything,” although it was (as I remember) enjoyable to watch in some respects. Just what those respects were I don’t recall, only remembering the experience in the vaguest way. It came out the year (1978) I lived in the Bay Area as the Farm publishing company’s west coast sales “manager,” but I didn’t see it until many years later at the urging of Paul Williams, for whom (again, as I recall) there was *much* significance in it.

Pat muses about the ideal way to die, suddenly or “is it better to know you’re going and say your goodbyes first?” I’m a member of fandom’s second-oldest apa, the Spectator Amateur Press Society (SAPS), founded in 1947. Although they haven’t been in it all that time, most of the present members are in their 80s (and even a couple in their 90s, such as Elinor Busby and Art Widner). When this subject came up there some years ago, the consensus seemed to be that going suddenly (ideally painlessly while one is sleeping) was the best way, as opposed to possibly enduring years of pain and increasing debilitation (we won’t even get into stuff like Alzheimer’s) but with time to say those goodbyes. They referred to that sudden death as “hitting the jackpot,” and although one may differ with this view one does have to admit its inherent charm. Of course, unless you’d had the presence of mind to put your affairs in order you would be leaving a mess for those surviving you.

I liked your ending to O. Henry’s story, and agree that you did well by not using the “frankly clunky pay-off line that O. Henry had included in his notes,” which I found at Project Gutenberg’s site.

And I enjoyed Sandra’s sonnet, but for the life of me I can’t figure out which pop lyric she’s rewritten. (And I’m waiting for the “oh, of course!” head-slapping moment when this is revealed.)

*EDITOR: I’m really surprised you couldn’t come up with the answer to Sanda’s Pop Sonnet, since you’ve already mentioned it earlier in this Loc.)*

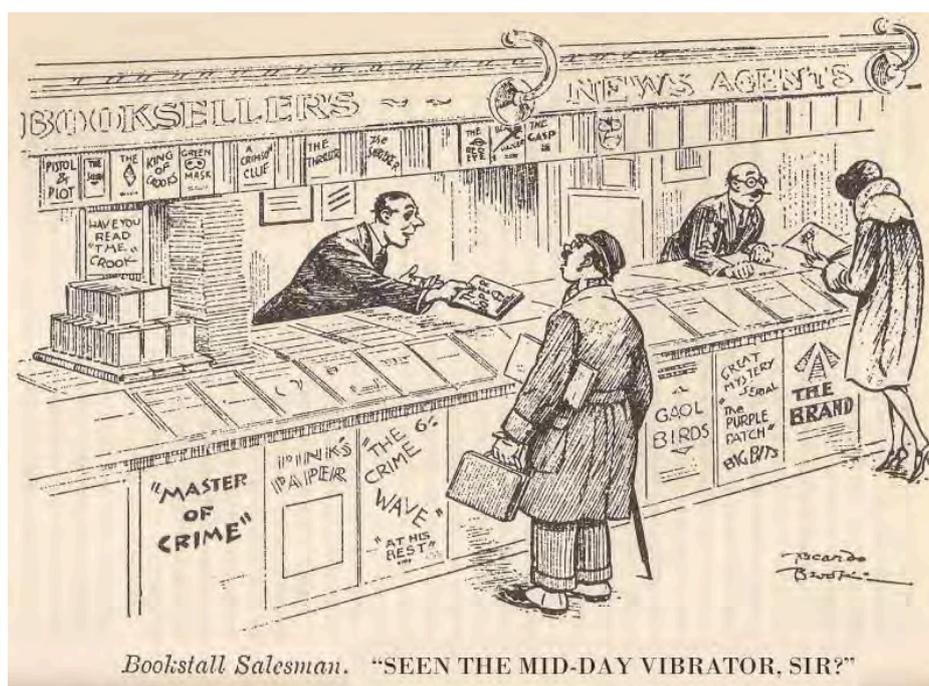
Jerry Kaufman remembers what I didn't: "Robert Lichtman remembers his first convention after returning to fandom in 1980 to be the 1984 Corflu, but I remember him being at the 1983 Westercon in San Jose. I'm sure I have photos of Robert sitting at a table in the lobby (or bar or coffee shop) with other people - he had long hair and beard at the time. Does this sound familiar, Robert?" In fact, it does. And your mention of it reminds me that I was also at the 1981 outing in Sacramento. I suppose these didn't surface because in both cases I only went for one evening, accompanying Paul Williams, and recall almost nothing of what happened at either convention. If Jerry can easily find those photos, I'd love to see them.

My earliest memory of Chinese food dates back to when I was five or six years old. My parents had taken me and my brother on the streetcar into downtown Cleveland, Ohio, perhaps to go shopping or maybe to see a movie. We had lunch on this excursion at (of course!) a Chinese restaurant that I vaguely recall being at half-basement level. I remember that my meal consisted of a mound of something that must have been either chop suey or chow mein, that it looked enormous and unconquerable to my young eyes, but that in the end I ate it all. Chopsticks were not involved. I have a similar memory of my first experience, also in downtown Cleveland, of Italian food in the form of a *huge* mound of spaghetti and meatballs, which I handled with identical dispatch. And, as with the Chinese food, a fork.

Jack Calvert writes: "Robert Lichtman mentions that he was at Baycon in 1968. This seems to have been the crossroads of Fandom As We Currently Know It. Not that everyone was there, but almost everyone was, even me – it was my one and only worldcon, and will likely remain so." I went to one worldcon before 1968—though technically speaking I wasn't there, since it was the Year of the Boondoggle and I'd asked for and received my membership payment back in protest. But I know I attended because my name appears in reports from fans as disparate as Redd Boggs and Alva Rogers. I've only been to four worldcons since then: two in the Bay Area and two in the L.A. area. Of them all, 1968 was by far my favorite. It was a decent size, just under 1,500, and as Jack says it was definitely a nexus point for fandom at that time, which had mostly recovered from 1964's bad taste.

In closing you note John DB's purchase of a new Fiat 500 and ask, "have any of you out there got a Brand New Car story they care to share?" I wish I did, but at 183,000 miles my 1998 Toyota is still going strong although its physical appearance, especially on the rear bumper, leaves something to be desired. One of these years...!

Robert Lichtman can be found at [robertlichtman@yahoo.com](mailto:robertlichtman@yahoo.com)



## **SHORT WALKS FROM SUPERMARKET CARPARKS, 2. WAITROSE, BUCKHURST HILL.**

Take the elevator down to the ground floor or else up to the first floor depending on which floor you have parked on. Try to remember which floor it is or you will never find your car again. You are advised to remove any fluffy dice, or hanging pine-tree deodorizers because frankly those are the sort of things that drive residents of Buckhurst Hill and their teenage offspring mad. Exit the car park by any means possible, meanwhile thank yourself that you are not starring in an episode of CSI or indeed a Tom Disch story. You will find yourself, if you are lucky, on Tilehurst Road. This is a street of no significance. The architecture of the terrace dwellings are as unremarkable as anywhere in the British Isles, except possibly Wolverhampton. Don't turn down Queegs Lane, it will lead you nowhere except to a railway bridge and some abandoned recreation grounds where if you are lucky you will find young schoolboys exposing themselves to one another. Turn into Hugh Massakelah Avenue which in fact is the main shopping drag. Marvel at the array of 4x4s and SUVs parked up to the kerb. Pause to look back down the hill at the Mansions on a rise to the North called Beckersley Hill, then wonder why you can't afford to live in them. It is because you are not a stockbroker. Then proceed. You can sample some of the local shops if you really want to have your poodle quiffed, or your Aunt Meg's feet pedicured. Don't expect to find any charity shops; they are forbidden by local bylaw, as are vagrants who are routinely moved on by huge street cleaning machines and turned into soya. At the top of the highroad turn left (or right, it makes no difference). After a few yards you will find yourself outside Alan Yentob's house (you will recognize it by the white van parked outside and the St George flags festooning the front). Sneer and throw eggs if you have them. If you don't have them retrace your steps to Waitrose and buy eggs, but beware, they will cost you. I would personally buy Duck Eggs. They are bigger and more messy. Circle back using your satnav and attempt to return to the car park. You may still have to ask directions. Buy a bottle of wine, I recommend a good Yakut. If you find yourself behind an ample-bosomed woman in the check-out just marvel at the amplitude of her hips and the availability of her bum. Help yourself to a free coffee if you have a privilege card. Now go home and cry.

### **ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY**

On this day in history Margie Gratten invented pressed eggs. Nobody is entirely sure what this recipe entailed since it was written in a personal journal in a tiny crabbed hand, and could really have been a recipe for anything involving wood-lice. Years later, Bob \*elevator\* Duquesne, employing a computer programme, managed to evolve an algorithm which displayed her recipe as actually involving pressed eggs. No one was ever the wiser, but don't google it on Amazon or you might end up buying a pressed egg device for Christmas.

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### **THE PROSAICALLY NAMED FRED SMITH TAKES ME TO TASK ABOUT HIS NAME**

Many thanks for your sterling publication and hope I'm within your deadline for locs! But why do you say my name is "unlikely"? Surely must be one of the most likely names there is; after all practically every town and hamlet in the country had a smith when horses were the principal means of transport.

*(EDITOR; It was a simple attempt at irony, Fred, but I would suggest your name \*is\* unlikely in the context of sf, which is populated by such extravagantly names beasts as Stanton A. Coblentz, Vargo Statten, and where even Smiths are called Cordwainer and Clark Ashton).*

Robert Lichtman mentioning movie locations and the extensive use of the Bay area as such reminds me of the helpful bystander who, noticing us looking up at the tall buildings in San Francisco, recommended that we take the elevator to the top floor bar in the Bank of America building for the best view of the city. I don't know if it is in fact the highest (Robert?) but it does seem to overlook all the others, including one next door which I noticed had a swimming pool on the roof. Looking down on this through the bar window, vodka and tonic in hand, a young man confided that this was the very place where the opening scene of "Dirty Harry" was shot. You'll remember that beginning, no doubt: the sniper on the roof shooting the girl in the pool but, having seen the film again on TV, it would appear, from the height and the angle, the camera and crew must have been on the roof of the Bank of America building, not in the bar!

Reiterating David Redd's comment about the fan columns and readers' letters in old SF magazines, Robert can't resist those "mouldering issues of Amazing, Startling Stories and Thrilling Wonder Stories". Nor could I back in the Fifties (although they weren't "mouldering" then!). The magazines I bought regularly were ASF, F&SF and Galaxy but in our little club we had a tame Collector (David) who didn't like the digest size mags and, instead, bought ALL the SF and fantasy pulps. So at each meeting I would borrow half a dozen of his, mainly Startling and Thrilling Wonder for the letters and fan stuff not the stories (although I did read the better ones, bearing in mind that those two pulps in particular had improved vastly!). David's collection ranged from about 1947 to the demise of the pulps in 1955 but he also acquired some earlier issues, including some pre-War. There's no doubt about it, those letters and fan columns were fabulous. When David died some years ago his widow asked me what she should do with his collection which also included a fair number of hard cover books, Arkham House and others. I gave her a few pointers to dealers etc. and offered to do an inventory with the vague idea of maybe making an offer for at least part of the collection. However she never came back to me and has since passed on herself so I have no idea what has happened to all those books and magazines. Sad!

While agreeing with Curt's liking for Peter Weston's "Relapse" Robert confesses to skipping parts of the ancient history they sometimes contained. While I can understand his point: obscure British fan clubs of little interest to Americans, I did read every word in the zines and found the history fascinating. What has happened to Peter anyway? I understand he has not been in good health lately but are we ever likely to see another Relapse?

Your "O. Henry" story, other stuff and letters enjoyed but that's about all the comment I have this time!

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### **IF I FAIL TO WIN ANY MORE AWARDS, IT'S IAN WILLIAMS' FAULT**

to be honest I'm scratching around for comments so I'm going to focus on something incredibly trivial -Ian Maule smoking an e-fag.

I'm surprised he hasn't fully given up the weed as, unlike me, he never seemed to be a compulsive fag-sucker (apologies to our American friends who think I'm admitting to gay sex acts). Me, I quit the weed 18 years ago and haven't indulged even once since no matter what stress I was under (like being bullied at work which resulted in a couple of months on the sick and being put on pills for anxiety or seeing death peeping over the horizon while hospitalised with both pneumonia and uncontrollable diarrhea; and stuff). I now enjoy being both irritatingly self-righteous and smug, while being sympathetic, towards people I know who haven't quit by preaching the joys and benefits of abstinence from that vile filthy life-threatening habit. Not an admirable trait on my part but even the most noble of us have their weaknesses.

That said, e-fags don't seem quite too bad. Someone at a committee meeting recently sneaked a couple of drags and the smell wasn't as unpleasant as normal cigarettes and it didn't linger either.

I don't think of myself as a big Bob Dylan fan but I have been listening and buying his stuff since the 60's. In recent years I've been selectively picking up some of his Bootleg series. **Tell Tale Signs: rare and unreleased 1989-2006** I particularly enjoyed and it led me to picking up **Modern Times, Time Out of Mind** and **Love And Theft** which are all pretty good. There's very much a rootsy Americana feel to them that I like. On the other hand the humongous **Bootleg edition of The Basement Tapes** fills me with horror.

And that's it.

If you don't win a second Nova Award next year, feel free to blame me for not living up to the standards of your other eminent correspondents.

Ian Williams can be found at [anw700@gmail.com](mailto:anw700@gmail.com)

## MEANWHILE PAUL SKELTON IS IN NO MOOD FOR A KNEES-UP

I gather congratulations are in order on a well-deserved NOVA (not to mention a probably less well-deserved birthday, given your frequent tales of dissolution). I wouldn't throw the worms away yet though...fandom can be a notoriously fickle jade. I have to say I thought you were a shoo-in for it. A regular monthly fanzine full of good writing and (generally) interesting response...what's not to like? Almost a fucking \*FOCAL POINT\* in fact. Come to think of it, in so much as UK fanzine fandom has had a focal point this past year, Vibrator has been it. So cut out the false humility crap.

So, let's quickly look at issue 2.0.9. I say quickly, because when I quickly looked at issue 2.0.8 you wrote back that I'd missed the sodding boat. I can't handle these frequent fanzines. It takes Cas nearly a fortnight to wake me up and tell me a fanzine has arrived, dammit! So please note that I am making a special effort here...particularly given that I am currently worried about Hieronymous Bosch.

It always used to annoy me the way US citizens always added the country after telling you that they been in some European city..."Hey, we saw the Eiffel Tower when we were in Paris, France."...until it dawned on me that, because they've re-used the names of every single European town and city, they have to add the name of the country in case they are talking to some mentally challenged in-breed from Passel-of-Toads, Tennessee, who might honestly think they meant "Paris, Texas". I do however think Robert Lichtman has taken this too far by telling us that the 'ancient Athens' from which they copied the Parthenon, was the ancient one in 'Greece'. Yes, I know there is an Athens in Georgia, but I don't think even the proudest citizens of Clarke County would consider it 'ancient'. Knowing Robert this would of course have been a subtle irony, which I guess I just tripped over.

I too am having a lot of trouble lately with knee pain, which condition seems to have deteriorated remarkably swiftly following many years of minor twinges when walking downhill. I suspect 'Duelling Medications', and have made an appointment to see my practice's specialist orthopaedic doctor later this week. I am a firm believer in 'seeing the doctor' whenever physical symptoms take a sudden turn for the worse. Cas tells me I am being an utter wimp for seeing the doctor with such minor stuff, but I counter by pointing out all the articles in the newspaper which tell how stoical sufferers have all died of cancer-of-this or cancer-of-that, simply because they left it too late to see the doctor over something 'trivial'. You'd think she'd accept this given that we were both incredibly lucky with our respective cancers, especially as she'd put it off for over a year and only went to see the doc after my own lucky escape...but no, that's the way she was brought up and that's the way she still thinks.

Anyway, several days have passed since I typed the above, basically because, after I'd been to see the doctor and got a walk-in appointment for an x-ray at the local hospital, my knee deteriorated even more rapidly and drastically, making it almost impossible to bend my leg without (to my wimpy tolerance anyway) severe pain. I wasn't too perturbed by this sudden deterioration as I knew the cause. The Mearae were visiting on Saturday and over the course of the evening we enjoyed a convivial meal, played Wizard, and consumed much wine and port, and I almost certainly consumed more than my fair share, trying to make up for Cas' under-achievement in that area. Then, when I got up to visit the bathroom in the night, I fell over (as you sometimes do if you've got a dodgy knee or if you've had too much to drink, and as is an almost certainty if both conditions prevail), wrenching the knee.

Couldn't get the x-ray done on the Monday as they were on strike in the morning and working to rule in the afternoon, but I was there first thing Tuesday morning. When I told the technician that the knee was much worse than usual, because I'd had a fall, he kindly took the resulting x-rays round to A & E and returned to verify that they showed no indication of recent trauma. So now I just have to go back and see the doctor in about a week to discuss the x-ray result with him, by which time the knee will hopefully be back as it was when I first saw him. For the past few days though I have been virtually housebound, able only to hobble around taking six-inch shuffling steps. As this has coincided with Cas having a vicious cold, spending most of her time in bed whimpering piteously, it means that Bestie, denied his twice-daily walks, thinks his world has come to an end. Anyway, it feels a bit easier this morning,

so I figured I'd better get back to this LoC before I miss the boat again. Might even get Bestie out for a short (very) hobble later.

However, having wiffled on about myself, there isn't really time to do more than cram a few hasty observations in about your fanzine...about par for the course, eh?

I am with David Redd in that I automatically associate *I'll Be Your Baby Tonight* with the excellent Linda Ronstadt version, and I'm with Mark Plummer in that for many years I thought Bob Dylan couldn't sing worth shit. I am also in agreement with you that Mark probably won't win an award for that LoC in 2.0.9, though he just might. He certainly should as it's a superb LoC and I hope people remember just how interesting his LoCs invariably are when it comes to Corflu, and don't just vote for him in the fanwriter/fanzine categories.

I think your reply to Fred Smith bears out my contention in an earlier LoC that you have a problem with your sense of direction. Oh, I know there is a similarity as to shape, but they are vastly different in size – so if you named your fanzine *Vibrator* in order to "...get up people's noses..." I shudder to think what you were doing with your Vick's nasal inhaler!

Paul Skelton can be found at [paulskelton2@gmail.com](mailto:paulskelton2@gmail.com)

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### **STU SHIFFMAN**

It would not be right if this issue of *Vibrator* closed without mention of Stu's death. You will all know the story so far too well for me to need to re-tell it. Lots of fans have been taken from us by either traumatic or benign brain disorders, and the situation will possibly only get worse rather than better, the older we all get. When Pat and I first visited Seattle we were taken under the wing of Randy Byers and Carl Juarez who took us to a Vanguard party at Andy Hooper's place. A lot was going on, much of which confused me (Victor Gonzales proudly displaying an example of his woodcraft which was actually a clipboard). Towards the end of the evening I found myself sitting next to Stu on a couch waiting for a ride home, and thus rather distracted. He was going through a folder of illustrations. I made small talk. He was shy and rather diffident. Andi was there too. I had no idea his immediate history would devolve into tragedy. We never have any idea, do we?

What is obvious from the response on Facebook at least is that Stu was \*much\* loved, with no one having a bad word to say against him. That itself is some epitaph

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### **NOW JERRY JAUFMAN HAS IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT THE COVER TO JOHN WESLEY HARDING.**

I have important news about the cover to *John Wesley Harding*. There really are things that appear to be faces in the top of the tree bulk. Turn the cover upside down, and look at it with a magnifying glass. I could see three or perhaps four tiny images that look like faces of people with longish, Beatle-style hair. Are they really meant to be faces, or are they just random patterns of light and dark? Am I too suggestible?

I have no idea.

Patti Smith has covered two of the songs from the album, "Drifter's Escape" and "The Wicked Messenger." One was on a compilation of cover versions of Dylan songs, the other on one of Patti's own albums. I like them. I like many versions of Dylan songs, but in general I think no one puts over a Dylan tune like Dylan himself.

Jerry Kaufman can be found at [JAKaufman@aol.com](mailto:JAKaufman@aol.com)

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## **HERE'S GOOD OLD BRYN FORTEY WITH NOSTALGIC TEARS IN HIS EYES**

VIBRATOR 2.0.9 - my first fanzine in, well I don't remember how many years. The last one I received was when Greg Pickersgill, who has remained a friend, was trying to tempt me back into fandom and arranged for someone (I forget the name) to send me a copy of BANANA WINGS (I think). I quite enjoyed it and wrote a letter of comment but never saw another one. Never mind.

Going back even further in time I look back fondly when remembering such as FOULER, THE WRINKLED SHREW and the original VIBRATOR. Even XERON, PROTEUS, RELATIVITY and so many more brings a tear to my eyes. Or maybe that's the drops I have to put in following my cataract op.

Your conclusion to the O. Henry story fitted seamlessly and would not have been spotted by me if you had not sign-posted the fact. I remember feeling a tinge of envy when Mike Ashley declared a short story of yours the best he had ever read in a fanzine, but when I read it for myself I had to agree. In more recent times I thoroughly enjoyed your novel LAKE.

The letter column mention of 'hugs' from your previous issue was particularly relevant to me. Maddalena, my late wife of fifty-three years, was Italian, so was well disposed towards both hugs and the kissing of cheeks with anyone and everyone. The Family Liaison Officer at the time of our tragedy was an ex-army old school copper who coped admirably with the ritual on a daily basis. When he brought the Chief Inspector to visit us he warned him what to expect. The Chief Inspector was a bear-like figure, not far short of seven foot and built like a barn, but he dutifully lowered himself so Maddalena could dish out her usual greeting. Luckily he was quite satisfied to keep it to a handshake with me.

Going to Italy to visit her extended family was another matter entirely. I was kissed and hugged unmercifully without fear or favour.

Bryn Fortey can be found at [brynfortey@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brynfortey@yahoo.co.uk)

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## **FINALLY, ROBERT LICHTMAN GIVES SOME ADVICE ON BUYING PRINTER CARTRIDGES**

I've owned an HP Color LaserJet 2600n for a long time. I purchased it in September 2005 after I retired from my job of eighteen years and no longer had illicit access to free printing there. I already had an ancient 1987 black and white HP laser printer, but I wanted to continue to be able to print fanzines in color.

My favorite printer in the office was a \$2,500 color laser, brand no longer remembered, that was serviced by a man who came around once a month (or more frequently if needed). He told me that one key to maintaining a long life on a laser printer, especially a color one, was to buy only first-generation toner cartridges.

"About eighty percent of the problems I run into with my clients' printers," he intoned, "is due to their going cheap and buying refilled cartridges."

I took his advice to heart, but going into retirement with reduced income I also had money concerns. I had an "aha!" moment when I realized that eBay was my friend. The "list price" for HP's color laser cartridges for my printer is just over \$100 apiece; the black and white ones are a little better, around \$90. On eBay I've never paid more than around \$65 for any of them, and often less. I keep a full set – there are four altogether – on hand at all times, replacing the one I've had to install as soon as possible.

The cartridges do have a life span, and getting the newest ones possible is important. Because few eBay sellers include what's called the "manufacture date" in their offerings, I always send a message to likely sellers, modifying it

each time to relate to my current need (changing model number and date). Here's the latest one:

"Am interested in your offering of this HP Q6001A cyan toner cartridge for my HP 2600n printer, but I need to know the manufacture date before purchasing. The date this cartridge was made would appear on the lower left on the back side of the carton (to the immediate left of the box with many Asian-language characters beneath a small HP logo) in a hard-to-see 2-line numerical code. The bottom line is the relevant one. It would read, for instance, 20140304, meaning that the cartridge was made on March 4, 2014. What does yours say? Thanks for your hoped-for prompt reply, and I hope to do business with you!"

This time around, I got that cyan cartridge for \$55.97, slightly on the low end of the median price I pay. The manufacture date is 20140516. (Others who responded gave me dates as far back as 2008. I thank them and wish them luck.) It hardly gets any better.

I'm a happy fan.

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## VIBRATOR BACKSIDE

Inflation may be taking place in the Real World, but not here in the Award Winning World of Vibrator, where the law of diminishing returns, or at least pages, remains in play. Still what do they say about size versus quality? Nothing I'm sure on either subject which would apply to Vibrator (sorry, I nearly forgot myself there for the moment, I meant the Award Winning Vibrator).

Health notes: I've had my first hypoglycaemic event since being diagnosed with diabetes, when I underestimated the effect of alcohol on inhibiting glucose production in the liver. I haven't stopped drinking but I now make sure I keep a carbo bar handy to munch on in between shots of vodka. I need a few more blood tests before I can renew my prescription of Metformin. I'm uncertain whether to get this done by a nurse at my local surgery (PRO: A timed appointment. CON: The nurse is incredibly cautious and will prod and poke my arm for ages before deciding where to put the needle, and frequently he still gets it wrong) Or I could go to the local walk-in clinic (CON: massive waiting having taken a ticket for your test. PRO: The technicians are remarkably efficient and just whack the needle in and turn you round in minutes).

What we did on our holidays: Well, nothing really. It's bloody Winter. What is particularly sickening about Facebook at this time of year is reading reports from friends in sunnier climes relaxing around a sunlit Mediterranean pool, or enjoying yacht cruises in New Zealand. Who needs friends like that? Still, got to be grateful I'm not in Buffalo.

If you haven't tried Loccing Vibrator, why not give it a go? You too could bathe in the reflected glory of the many awards this fanzine is destined to go on and win (it says here).

Next issue 2.0.11 will be out end of December. But don't take my word for it.

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