



THE VIBRATORIAL

Well, it's nearly the end of the month so time to beginning thinking about putting together another editorial for the next Vibrator. Normally I look back over the past month and make some pithy remarks to remind readers of just what a cunt Donald Trump is, but I am sort of assuming you can all take care of that for yourselves these days. I also usually manage to get in a few potshots at the Eviol Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, so here is the latest one, aimed at a fannish colleague who rashly claimed Facebook was a valuable asset as a social network.

'Well, I think that Facebook is the most pernicious instrument of social evil ever invented and Mark Zuckerberg should be doused in napalm and ignited. Why do I use it? Because it is there, which is why everybody uses it. Would I miss it if it weren't there? Not only would I not give a shit, I'd be as happy as a pig who doesn't have to roll in that shit anymore.'

Another friend pointed out Zuckerberg's main crime against society was stealing and selling personal data, but I have to say that honestly doesn't bother me. as much as what he has unleashed upon the world in persuading people that their ideas, views and opinions are important enough to be listened to by others. He has empowered millions who really don't deserve to hold any sort of power, many of whom seem not only unable even to change their own nappies but seem intent on spreading their excrement all over the world. He has made it easy for tyrants to govern and for small-minded people to spread their prejudiced brand of bigotry worldwide and even convince weak-willed people to think like them. He has also made it easy for the socially and criminally inadequate to form personal networks which bolster their inadequacy and criminality. I really don't give a shit that he is making money from selling data.

So the usual dogs have been permed and primped and walked out in the show-ring. Pat has also had a haircut, but I don't think she would appreciate being involved in a thread about show-dogs and more importantly, might threaten to go on strike as a proforeader.

The Great British Bake Off is back. Hoorah hoorah! Do I really give a flying fuck. I do not. I don't have much appetite for television these days having lapsed into the pre-programmed ways of being a pensionable daytime tv watcher who even so has a hard time finding even Rachel Riley and Lucy Alexander erotic fantasy objects these days, although I would probably stand a better chance of being able to crack one off to them than Prue Leith. Now, Dion Dublin, that's a different matter.

Meanwhile like many retired pensioners who fool themselves they still have some disposable income, ebay continues to be an attraction. Why on earth did I bid for an

old unremarkable postcard showing gents in flat-caps in a charabanc on Scarborough beach? Furthermore, why did several sad people outbid me? Oh, the auction is still open... I can go back and immediately increase my bid. Only another 4 days to go.

I also experienced an on-line artistic spasm and imagined I might investigate Chinese brush painting. This involved buying brushes, ink and parchment, but having done so I was immediately struck by what I can only call 'painter's block'. Even more so when I bought two pre-stretched mounted and primed canvas frames, imagining I would immediately go on and produce my Harry Bell inspired masterpieces. No, now I merely look at them in fear having not taken them out of their polythene wrapping. I don't want to be the one responsible for defiling their pristine beauty. Hey, maybe I have invented a new art-form, The Painting Less Painted

Speaking of pristine beauty, I have been invited by Andy Hooper to write something for what he describes as possibly being the last Chunga. I fretted about it, but finally came up with something. I do hope there will be another Chunga; for obvious reasons I hope there will be an endless series of Chunga, but one has to live in the real world. Randy's treatment was seemingly going well, but now the cancer has apparently returned, and he has to face the difficult questions of treatment versus quality of life. I am now honestly finding it difficult to follow the twists and turns in the life of this man whom I love so much.

But hey ho, always look on the bright side of life. I am only sorry Vibrator cannot represent it more adequately.

On another morbid note I saw an autopsy documentary on the death of Maurice Gibb, the famous Beegee. Most of it concentrated on whether his death was the result of his hedonistic and wastrel lifestyle as a pop star and habitual drunkard and drug-user, but of course it wasn't. He collapsed complaining of stomach pains and was discovered to have a congenital volvulus (or twisted bowel). While being treated for this he had heart failure, but was revived. Unfortunately though, his bowel had become so necrotic that when a considerable length of it was removed, it leaked a massive bacterial infection into his system, and he died four days later from sepsis. I mention this only because it reminds me of how fortunate I am that my wife (who suffered a similar problem earlier this year) is still alive. Praise the Lord and pass the anti-bacterial ammunition. And God Bless the NHS.

Thanks as usual to Steve Stiles for bearing me in mind even during his arduous convalescence from major surgery and providing another 'Marvy' piece of cover art.

FISH TALES by Graham Charnock

Hands up those who believe we are all descended from fish who dragged themselves out of the oceans and developed lungs. That's everybody but me, then. Fish and me do not get along and I do not like to think of myself sharing any ancestry with them.

When I met my wife in ninety-oompty-filth she introduced me to her brother, Jim. We seemed to get along together quite well, apart from wanting to kill each other occasionally, most specifically when he took us across a tour of Europe in his clapped out Sunbeam car incapable of doing more than 30mph on the autobahns. Either before or after that he introduced me to the delights of fishing. I mean fishing in an organized fashion, in the sense of buying a rod and floats and weights and all the accoutrements of fishing which are so attractive to blokes and constitute the mystique of the art, as much as numbers do to trainspotters. We are talking about coarse and sea fishing here. I would never trust myself to cast a fly without causing severe damage to neighbouring humans and the surrounding ecology.

I'd been introduced to the concept of fishing earlier because I used to live in a cul-de-sac backing onto the Grand Union Canal. We would do something called drag-netting which involved stretching a piece of sacking over an old tyre or wheel-frame and lowering it into the canal with a piece of bait attached to it (usually bread). When we hauled it up it sometimes contained a few small roach or tench or else nothing at all. Usually nothing at all, but at least I was beginning to learn the names of the fish we didn't catch. Carp, gudgeon, rudd, perch – these were also fish we never caught.

Flash forward several decades and I am on a beach in Shoreham casting my tangle of lines and floats about ten feet into the surf and trying to catch something. It was a pretty futile occupation. Sometimes we moved onto the jetty or pier and once I even managed to catch a very small and insignificant crab who glared malevolently at me even as I tossed him back into the sea. I have never really liked crab as a sub-species of seafood either.

(Sidebar: One sub-species of seafood I can get very enthusiastic about, however is octopus. I was introduced to these when we took a holiday on the Greek Island of Paxos, and the family we were renting from presented us with the gift of a jar of octopus pickled in ouzo, although in truth I think the octopus lasted longer than the ouzo.)

I also tried river and canal fishing, figuring I might form a sense of fellowship and community with those other guys who perch all day on their camping stools along the banks, pausing only in their contemplation of nothing to thread maggots from a

small tobacco tin onto their hooks. Well, I can tell you the term camaraderie is seldom recognized amongst these folks. A hearty cry of ‘Had any luck?’ would invariably lead to a hostile stare and a gob of tobacco spit landing at your feet. Later I was to realize that most of these men had taken up the hobby merely as an excuse to get away from the wife so were obviously not pre-disposed towards hospitality or even basic friendship.

(Sidebar 2: When we visited San Francisco we were taken out by our friend Rich Coad on a whale-watching trip. Now I know whales are not fish, but I report it simply as another example of our lack of success in actually spotting any. The closest we came to it was spotting the odd fluke (whatever that is). We did see a rather sick looking sunfish, which I gather is a real fish, and also schools of harbour dolphins, which aren't. The whole trip lasted eight hours which was about as long as we'd spent on the plane to get to San Francisco, But at least Rich's wife Stacy shared her lunch with us which was better than aeroplane food.)

The main thing which sparked this topic in my mind was the memory of my father's interest in tropical fish. At our family home he installed a rather desultory generic fish tank but I never found it or its occupants particularly fascinating. They lived a quiet unexciting life in a tank that bubbled happily away. They never really engaged me and when they died I was never really bothered. If it had been intended as an exercise in teaching me the value of all life, it had singularly failed. But then my father regularly drowned the excess kittens the family had by putting them in a sack and then into a bucket of water weighted down with a brick, so I was never under any illusion about the value of life anyway.

My father worked for Wembley Stadium, as it existed in the post war years, and I developed a rather proprietary interest in the place which is still with me. My father, as a general engineer, had a small territory which consisted of a walled Alamo-like yard with a range of outbuildings. It wasn't until I visited this for the first time that I became truly aware of my father's obsession with fish. There were whole walls filled with arrays of fish tanks all guppying away. My father obviously had also developed an interest which kept him out of the way of my mother.



There probably should be an expression of editorial policy to preface this section of the fanzine. Like any fanzine editor I love getting letters. I sort of think Vibrator is kind of special in the people it attracts with their regular comments, all contributing towards a broad sense of community, and yet one which is very specific to this fanzine (and of course knowing they are usually only a month away from being published). Thanks to you all.. I send Vibrator out via email to overseas clients and get a lot of thanks and acknowledgements for that, and I do value them, but I have never been in the habit of running a WAHF feature, so if I don't respond personally at length then I hope you will forgive me. If any of you want to expand your casual comments, however minimally, I will be eternally thankful.

DAVE COCKFIELD

I enjoyed your Next Generation cover for Vibrator 43. But I can't work out whether Data is inserting or removing a JIM chip. I'll assume the former given the Worldcon report. Wow! 75. Let's hope I live to see it get to a 100. I recognised a few of the names in the Con report but no one that I really knew well I guess. That didn't stop me from enjoying it. Jim was quite infectious and seemed to be in a bit of a daze occasionally or was that "hung over". If nothing else he has persuaded me that Helsinki is a great place to visit even if it is only to sample the food and beer.

Of most interest to me was Curt writing about Charlottesville. The events that happened there should be condemned in no uncertain manner and I understand his frustration at the Confederate flag being hijacked by the most reprehensible parts of American society. However it is wrong for it to be hidden away as it has an important historical context and does mean a lot to the many law abiding people of the South. Perhaps it could be banned from Public Buildings and from marches and demonstrations. It would be a shame to let the KKK and other racist bastards win. The same is true of the statue of Robert E Lee and others like it. Fight for what these

statues truly represent. Ulysses S Grant fought for the rights of the Negro and I think that the passing of the 15th Amendment was supposed to enshrine these in the constitution. However after that there were various amendments and interpretations such as the introduction of the grandfather clause, poll taxes, and literary tests designed to deny the right of the Negro to vote. Given the stretch of time between the Grant and Kennedy presidencies before the rights were restored I'm sure that there are many statues in the USA of political figures that deserve to be torn down before that of Robert E Lee.

A similar state of affairs exists with the swastika. It is an ancient symbol of good fortune and spiritual principles featured in the likes of Buddhism and Hinduism. Even the Greeks, Celts, and Jews (the Kabbala) used it in various forms. It was as a Hindu symbol that Rudyard Kipling used it on the covers of his books but had to remove it after the Nazis adopted it in the 1930's because people did not understand its significance. It is amazing that a tiny fraction of time in the history of the swastika has tainted it so much and nothing has been done to remove that taint. By banning these symbols we are rewriting history in favour of the enemy.

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DAVID REDD

Hey-ho, Vibrator 43, heavy with personal feelings. Curt's piece is so impassioned and so sane about Charlottesville that I can't add anything but "thank you". Jim Linwood's reminder of 1958 UK racism is a bit of a jolt about Nottingham, and a timely warning. A few hours after reading that, I had a similar jolt from a book mentioning slaves in an ancient Viking market. "Vikings had merely rounded them up and sold them to middlemen, just as English traders did with Africans two centuries ago and some Africans do with their neighbours today." Published in 1969. So back in the happy hippy Carnaby Street or San Francisco of the Swinging Sixties some of us had no idea what was still out there just waiting. Or what else our new interconnected social media would empower.

Equally weighty for similar reasons is Jim Mowatt's elephant about doing Helsinki. Writing interestingly about a programme item on demographic variables can't be easy, but he manages it. His real chiller comes early in his report: "The dealer room doesn't have anything as mundane as a science fiction short story magazine". At a World Science Fiction Convention? I think we lost the war. So if anyone deprived would like to sample the mundane (love Jim's use of the term) I could post some recent F&SF/Interzones as a public service.

It's not just the Worldcon, it's the world. Here's last Friday's list of "most prized possession from a poll of 1000 Brits: 1 House, 2 Photos/hard drive, 3 Phone, 4 Laptop/tablet, 5 Car, 6 Clothes, 7 Jewellery, 8 Antique/collector's item, 9 Shoes, 10 Watch. Not a book in sight. Other evidence this weekend of having travelled up Highway 61 to Desolation Row: tv documentaries with speedboat or bike shots pushing out facts; antique furniture makeovers with pink, plastic and glitter; scrapbook design advice favouring explosion of images over content, concert inside historic cathedral swamped by purple floodlights. Is *that* what people do? And digitally connecting all their home appliances and economic infrastructure just waiting for hackers and solar storms? But these are mild irritations compared to the concerns you've given us earlier. Have you deliberately snipped Philip Turner's Everywhere the Damned observation out of an ironic context? ("Social injustice can be cured only by killing people.") Is this the new gloves-off Charnock? Nic Farey's notes from underground come as light relief, and I didn't think I'd say that about Uber.

As for your "final word" on climate change, if the over-enthusiastic cry wolf incessantly, that doesn't prove wolves don't exist. People who come to disbelieve *everything* might still get eaten.

Sweetness and light next issue?

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GARY LABOWITZ

Well, here you are again. And here am I again.

I'm sitting here in my robe (I should be taking a bath) glancing through V43 and wondering if you will ever give up.

(EDITOR: I often think that too, Gary, although usually while sitting naked with a quart of vodka in my hand. Then I look out of my window and see the world going by wonderfully outside, all sunshine and autumn colours, and think, yes, I really should...)

Still I look through the con report and it certainly looks appealing. I remember some cons that filled me with despair, even as I was at them. Fans who weren't, some who were misguided, and all those "fantasy" fans who think magic used for good can defeat magic used for evil. Real stf fen know a good punch in the nose is the solution to "bad guys." Just ask Batman.

Anyway, maybe it was Helsinki or maybe it was your excitement that makes me want to go to another con, just to find out. This is called, getting dragged, slowly but surely, back into active fandom. HELP!

Just to prove my somewhat shaky point, I am attaching a "quick sketch" ink drawing I do while waiting for a file to load (or whatever) on scrap paper I keep near me at the computer. Whatever comes out, just comes out. You can do whatever you want with it. Hell, I did. I am attaching it to this e-mail.



(EDITOR: this is the best I could do with your peculiarly formatted attachment, Gary. I couldn't figure how to get rid of the grey cast. Perhaps I could just say this looks like a picture of Gary Numan mixing his latest track.)

Robert Lichtman is still reading 1941 fanzines? Wow. I hope I never get that far back in my stack of "must read."

Still, I wonder if he is older than I. I am now 78 (soon to be either 79 or forever 78), and I remember him for some years back when I was really active. He must be ancient!

Global climate change is now off my list of things to think about. I reached a conclusion (I keep a stack of them near my computer, similar to my scrap paper pile). Guess what I think. Or don't guess what I think; you'll probably get it wrong. The planet and the sun are doing their little dance they have been doing for many millions of years now, and the planet gets warmer, colder, cooled, heated, and

excited in various slow-motion ways without itsy bitsy human's help. We are so conceited that we can affect this planetary affair that some folks want to go around blaming it on me! And you. Etc. Well, I didn't do it, and neither did YOU. But when you collect data, fudge it a little to make it come out the way you want from computer models that you can make do anything you want (remember: I wrote computer programs for 44 years and they weren't always correct; in fact they are never "correct," they just gave us the results we wanted or were willing to accept as "close enough."). Every time I see some group announce that over the last decade (or two or three) the Earth has warmed up a total of 0.1 degree C, my eyes glaze over. I've seen this movie before. Man, talk about taking a useless sample against millennia of experience, and then relying on it to change the lives of millions of people. What chutzpah!

Still, it gives some people something to do (especially if they have lots of money to throw around on jets, houses, and cars (limos?) that they claim are destroying the Earth), I guess it's better than making them sit at home and wonder what life is all about. (Quick answer: nothing --- you just do it and get out.) The good part is that it keeps them out of fandom.

Anyway, it's always a pleasure for me to see some activity from the likes of Lichtman. Most of the other names I look for are gone. Or so fragile that they can't write any more. Of course, it seems to be bad luck for me to even notice them (Sorry Bob, you are in danger). The last guy I recontacted and exchanged pleasantries with fell off a roof the next month. Gone! I have vowed not to go on the roof, but my wife says I have to go into the attic for "cleaning" purposes (the attic, not me; my cleaning comes after I come out of the attic).

Anyway, you tickled my activity bone and here is a "letter." It's really an e-mail; letters are obsolete except for the ones you send to pay a parking ticket. For some reason the government (in this case county) haven't figured out how to use computers to collect money. They use snail mail for everything. I think it lets them hire more people than they really need who spend more time than they really need, and allow them to need more taxes and higher fines. A perfect combination.

And doctors! They just love fax... even though a pdf is a really better way to transmit the kind of data they need to send and receive. Can you imagine an EKG printed on a dot matrix printer? They would really love that.

Thanks for the zine, I always enjoy it.

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(EDITOR: Always good to hear from you Gary. Robert Lichtman is old (aren't we all) but not that old. He used to be a Hippy, you know, and worked for The Farm. I've

visited him and have seen his well organized filing cabinets full of fanzines. I think the only reason he reads old fanzines is simply because he can. Sometimes I fret to myself about Vibrator attracting more than its fair share of old-time fans. And not enough attractive and spunky young bloods, but then I'm trying to avoid being arrested, so that is also okay.)

LEIGH EDMUNDS

Another nice issue of *Vibrator*, and a bit more lively than some. I'm looking forward to the new unequivocating you in the future - there didn't seem to be much this time.

I liked your two short pieces about racial problems at the front of the issue. I must have a very select bunch of friends on Facebook because I don't recall reading any posts from right wing fascists there. And I can understand Curt's point of view but I guess the trouble is that the people he is angered by are not the kind of folks who are accustomed to thinking and so much of what he writes will be lost on them.

Last night Valma and I watched an old episode of 'Dalziel and Pascoe', they do hammer on about class in your country. Not that we don't have class here, just a less obvious and different kind. I bring this up because I was reminded of Jim Linwood's response to your piece about English race riots. There seems to me from a distance, to be a particular kind of viciousness to what I see on the tv when riots happen there. I then wonder if a kind of bitterness from the repression of class systems in Britain, and the race system in the US has something to do with that. Of course, we've had a few smallish riots here in the antipodes recently ; either exploited young white men taking out their frustration on migrants of the Islamic persuasion or, more recently, an Aboriginal riot in Kalgoorlie. Mind you, if I had to put up with the treatment that they do I'd want to riot too. In fact, our white invader ancestors were fortunate that the Aboriginal people were, by and large, a very peaceful lot and let us walk all over them without too much resistance. It's about time there was some catching up done.

Enough of deep and serious stuff. I really enjoyed Jim Mowatt's report of the Helsinki Worldcon. That's my kind of convention; sitting around talking to people, drinking too much, wandering around aimlessly looking for friends, food or grog - or all three - feeling tired and emotional. The last convention I went to was a day of the National Convention back in June. I had actually intended to take in some of the program items (for research purposes only, you understand) but the only one I actually got to was the one I was moderating, I spent the rest of the time talking to people, eating, drinking and sometimes all three at once. I must be out of training because I felt like Jim at the end of the Worldcon after only one day.

David Redd should be mortified at the cost of health insurance here, so am I. I got this year's invoice last week and I'm sure there are some small Pacific nations whose GDP is less than that. The reason we took it out in the first place is because the fascist government before last threatened all those who did not take out such insurance with some hideous punishment (I forget the details now, something like the loss of a first-born) if we didn't take out insurance. So we did. So far encroaching old age has seen us using the health system more than we ever did when we were younger and so we are a little bit ahead of where we would have been had we not had the insurance. I'm looking forward to a very long stay in hospital with the use of all the machines and tests imaginable, with a nice room and hot and cold running doctors and nurses some time down the track to make the whole thing worthwhile. This is the reason that I have not read any of those 'Year's Best' anthologies for the past twenty years so I have plenty of catch up reading to do to fill in the time while I make good on my insurance investment.

Were it not for the fact that I'm not likely to get to a Corflu and I don't want to confuse fans too much, I'd volunteer to run the FAAn Awards ballot using our preferential system. And none of this 'optional-preferential' or 'voting above the line' rubbish, twenty or thirty boxes that all have to be numbered sequentially or your vote is deemed invalid. That would test the trufannish nature of the voters for sure. The only trouble with this is that I'd have to count the votes then, and I don't want to confuse myself too much either.

Reading Robert Lichtman's letter I realize that the key factor I was missing from Rob's description about how to print *Vibrator* was the fact that paper copies are printed A5. So, that's what the folding business was in Rob's explanation. I could go back and give it a try except that I really like the big print in the A4 version that my printer gives me.

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PHILIP TURNER

Distracted as I was by getting 3 novel-length works ready for printing, I didn't notice that my timbers had not been vibrated. It took the arrival of *Banana Wings* toward the end of the month to send me to efanazines.com to find out if you were still in business. All the colour pix suggest that there wasn't a paper issue of Vib 43 (or they were too precious to be wasted on the likes of me).

Whose flag is it anyway? Taking on board our mentor's page 2 mission statement, I would like to ask Curt Phillips: "Are you a cowardly custard? Have you no backbone, sir? Are you prepared to let scumbags with a toxic agenda pee on *your* Confederate flag, in which case the shade of Robert E. Lee would be entitled to think 'shame on

you'? Or do you have the stomach to fight for *your* heritage? Your choice, mate."

I shall now retire to my bunker and await the missiles.

Looks like TfL has been reading the Taxi Nic column if Uber has got the bullet in the nation's capital. I was down at the bottom of page 28 of the zine before I got Nic's Sheridan reference. All I could think of was *The School for Scandal*. But I got there. You really have to be ancient to remember him; or a fan of old films. I hope Mrs. Nic wasn't also feeling a bit 23.

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JOHN PURCELL

The thought just struck me that if I heard somebody say "I have 43 Vibrators on file" that it would most likely be Graham Charnock making that statement. Just saying...

A fine, fine issue this latest edition is, too. From front to back it is filled with good material, much of it worthy of comment. Starting off with that front cover photo, I have to wonder exactly what Jim Mowatt has planned for that Jim Bar. It's too big to fit in his left ear, so he really should try to take the wrapper off first and then try inserting it into his mouth. In my experience, that is usually how these candy bar things work.

Curt Phillips' thoughts about the Charlottesville, Virginia, tragedy are well expressed and I completely understand where he is coming from. I know enough American history to back up Curt's statements about Robert E. Lee's character and career. Lee truly believed that through his teaching healing the divided nation was the right thing to do, despite being the commander of the Confederate Army. General Lee understood and accepted his role and what the surrender meant. Sadly, too many people did not share the general's perspective and this nation has continued to twist itself into knots over not just only what the American Civil War was about (it truthfully was about the institution of slavery and the rights of all citizens), but a large segment of the population continues to propagate racism and hatred, mostly out of ingrained ignorance, which to my thinking is the greatest tragedy to come out of that war. I find it infuriating at how willfully ignorant so many people can be. Until people are willing to open their minds and learn all of the sides to any issue, ignorance will continue to breed and spread like the terrible infection it is. Jim Linwood's brief recounting of the Nottingham race riots of 1958 provides further evidence of this. I do like Jim's closing Brecht comment. How appropriate.

Now, about that elephant in the room. The World SF Convention in Helsinki, Finland, was indeed a splendid time, provided you did not want to attend any panel discussions. Getting around was a major problem. From my side of things, getting to and from the panels and events that I was involved with - seven of them in all - was quite the hassle. At times there was a veritable logjam of people in the halls of the Messukeskus convention center trying to get from room to room for whichever panel or event they most likely would not be able to attend. Jim Mowatt accurately described this problem in his convention report, so not really attending panels and simply hanging out with friends was definitely the best way to spend one's time at Worldcon 75.

I would like to mention that on the Fan Funds Panel - "TAFF, GUFF, NOFF, WTF??" - I did not get the chance to mention my fan fund idea, the HAFF: the Half-Assed Fan Fund. Based sort of along the lines of MAFF (the Mid-Atlantic Fan Fund, which *was* mentioned during that panel) - the HAFF would be set up to bring West and East Coast United States fans to a regional convention in the middle part of the country. There are many good-sized, fun conventions ranging from north to south in the Midwest, so in alternating years a race would be held to bring a fan from either coast to a con in the American heartland: such as even numbered years would be an east coast to midwest race, then the odd numbered years would be the west coast to midwest race. The thing is, this fan fund would only provide the winning person enough money to get **to** the target convention, and would likewise only provide for half of the registration fee for the target convention, and naturally only half of the hotel accommodations. The winning fan would have to foot the remaining bills: their return air fare home, and the other half of registration and hotel room costs. Hence the name Half-Assed Fan Fund. I think it's a winner.

Overall the convention was a lot of fun, albeit crowded. Valerie and I really liked the Steam Helsinki bar, where the Hugo Losers party was held. It really is a cool place, and the food and drinks were wonderful. Valerie invented a drink that night, which she dubbed The Submersible to follow the bar's Steampunk theme. The drink is a mixture of a shot or two of gin, cranberry juice, lemon-lime drink (like Sprite, Squirt or 7-Up), a touch of grenadine, shaken together in a tumbler with crushed ice, pour the drink into a tall glass, and then put a slice of lemon or orange with a cherry speared together and sink them to the bottom. It's quite good. Myself, I enjoyed a couple pints of their in-house IPA on tap. We eventually got back to our hotel - took a cab back with Craig Glaesner - at about 3:30 AM. Good thing I didn't have to get up early on Saturday for any panels. All I had to worry about was doing the WOOF collation that day, which went very well and finished quickly despite the technical fofoeraw with the staples. Carrie Mowatt's solution for binding the collated copies together was distinctive and actually very effective. I don't think there is any chance

of pages being separated from the disty that easily. Good going, lass. Glad she was there to help. We could not have done it without her.

Enough of this. I wish you had been there, Graham, but at least Valerie and I had a grand time at the London meet-up in the Lyceum in late July (Thursday the 20th, it was) and were glad to see you there, and a good number of other fine folks. That was the first time I have met the likes of Dave Langford, Joseph Nicholas, Allison Scott, Roy Kettle, and good heavens, I have the rest of the names in my notes, which are not with me at present. Don't worry, everybody. When I get to writing the actual trip report Real Soon Now I shall list out all of you who were there.

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ROBERT LICHTMAN

You open *Vibrator* #43 with a statement I find doubtful: "I like to think we helped Steve Stiles to win his Hugo, but then we obviously didn't help enough to let him reclaim it the next year." According to the raw data in the vote breakdown, Steve received 800 of the 1,855 votes cast in the fan artist category. The next most votes were for "no award" at 466, and it goes downhill from there for the other nominees. I'm not sure who the "we" is that you're referring to, but if it's the InTheBar group there are only about fifty people there and I imagine that not a very high percentage were members of the worldcon, thus having paid at minimum the \$50 "poll tax" in order to be able to vote. I don't know how many people you send *Vibrator* to either in print or electronically – and in addition Bill Burns posts each issue on efanazines. He would know how many people download each issue there. But I'd be willing to bet that the 334-vote difference between Steve's votes and those for "no award" is significantly higher than *Vibrator's* circulation in all forms.

(EDITOR: I was merely speaking in a general sense, Robert, in that Steve has been very good at supplying me with artwork over recent years, and I liked in my humble way to think by printing it and disseminating it I might have had some small role to play in bringing it to a significant audience and enhance his Hugo-winning capability. Please allow me to indulge my vanities.)

It's good to have both Curt Phillips's take on Charlottesville and Jim Mowatt's lengthy Helsinki con report in more permanent form, and in addition I enjoyed reading Jim Linwood's short piece on early race riots in England. I note that without them this would have been an extremely thin issue.

(Editor: That's a bit like saying of any fanzine, 'without substantive content it would be rather thin'. Also rather glosses over Nic's usually characteristic substantive content. What, do I have to produce a sixty-page Trap Door type fanzine every

month to keep you satisfied?)

I'm familiar with half of the impersonal dining experience Jim describes at "somewhere called Vapiano's." The unfamiliar part is being given a card upon arrival that calculates your bill when you're done eating. We're more familiar with being given an electronic device after ordering that buzzes and flashes when your meal is ready, and then you have to go and pick it up. But more common here is being given a number on a small stand that you place on your table, and someone eventually comes around with your food. This is somehow more human – you feel like you've had an interaction of sorts – than everything being electronically processed. Comparing the two, we would be more inclined to drop some money in a tip jar in thanks for not having to shlep our own food on a tray or trays back to our table.

I certainly agree with and applaud Jim's successful efforts to get current fan fund delegates to be presenters in the fan award portion of the Hugos. But, sadly, I also am "a little conflicted after seeing the people that are now winning the fan Hugos. They seem entirely disconnected from any fandom that I know and politicised in a way that seems unimportant to me. However this seems to be the way things are going. I suspect the fan funds will also end up going to those same groups of people so it will all synchronise yet again." It's more than just "the way things are going," it's that we who started TAFF and the other travel funds are now a minority in fandom – and the actual founders are mostly deceased – and the generations that now dominate fandom will make their own determinations about who becomes a candidate. After all, the language on every TAFF ballot is pretty neutral on the subject: "The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and active fans *familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic*" (italics mine). The "20% rule" is in place to ensure that neither side is saddled with a winner known only in his or her home territory, but will it survive what Jim alludes to elsewhere in his report. He makes reference to Mihael Marjia Perkovic having "a fan she is grooming to be a forthcoming Taff candidate" and Nina Horvath having a fan from Poland she's also grooming, and she also says, "we have quite a bit of potential mainland Europe input to come along in future Taff races." Perhaps so, but how many European fans are familiar to North American fans, and vice-versa. I'd never heard of Nina before she became a candidate and then a winner, and I'd never heard of the women running against John Purcell either. I'd heard of Wolf von Witting but not Anna Raftery, and going back further several of the candidates in the race you lost to John Coxon were also unknown to me. But as an oldphart focused on what remains of fanzine fandom, I'm hardly representative. And like Jim, as noted above, I'm not familiar with most of the people who get nominated for Hugos, either.

Elsewhere, I love his reference to the music at the Haddocks' bar being "cranked up to arms treaty levels." And near the end, he refers to giving Christina Lake "a copy of my book" – what book? My first thought was TAFF report, but looking at the TAFF list of past winners I see no reference to his having completed one.

(EDITOR: Shame on you, Robert. Jim was referring to his book extracted from his running blog and publicized often enough on forums to which you are privy).

In my letter I write:

"Nic Farey opens his letter with a reference to the 'so far generally ignored *Incomplete Register* FAAn awards voters' guide.' I'll confess that I haven't given a second thought – and barely a first one – to that compilation since Nic, in his capacity as the FAAn awards administrator for next year's Corflu, announced its creation early this year. But my attention will certainly turn to it – as I suspect many others' will – next January when it comes time to cast votes for the best fanac of 2017. I'm both pleased and grateful that Nic has taken on the task, which surely must be fairly onerous even in these days of relatively few fanzines."

This has to qualify as something of a brainfart on my part. Looking back on it, my thoughts were influenced by Nic's article in *Inca* #13 in which he writes, "I hereby announce my willingness and desire to act as FAAn Awards Administrator for Corflu 2018." I read that quite some time ago and apparently conflated it into acceptance on his part, leaving out the little but not minor detail that, in addition to not yet having announced the date and venue for that Corflu, Colin Hinz and Catherine Crockett also haven't said who the Administrator will be. We know from his statements that Murray Moore won't be. Anyway, my apologies to Nic for leaping to an unwarranted (although to my mind desirable) conclusion.

And speaking of Nic, as usual I enjoyed his front-row view of life as a Vegas cabby. But what most caught my attention is his righteous observation that "fuckin no-one has anything like a 'crear,' you'll just count yourself lucky to have a job." I always felt that way, and never considered that any of what I did during my working life was anything more than a job. In the far distant past I had intimations of a career, the earliest one being when as an English major I thought I'd end up being a College Professor. Those thoughts were dashed when Reagan became governor of California and instituted cutbacks in the university system. At that time I was working as a "credit analyst" for Dun & Bradstreet – a job I fell into after hearing they were hiring from someone at a party in the Haight Ashbury before it became *the* Haight Ashbury – and I could have stayed with that. But after three years of it, enough was enough. In more recent times (i.e., after leaving the Farm commune), the various jobs I had entailed decision-making ability in one area or

another – but the “skill” underlying them all is that I could type fast and fairly accurately.

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TALES OF A LAS VEGAS TAXI DRIVER

By Nic Farey

OO ME POOR 'EAD (BAD DAY)

I *told* you this would happen, Grah. YOY I can't get it together enough to write the fuckin' column *before* the party night I don't know, but it's probably something to do with cramming in as many naps as possible on the day so I can stay up past my usual bedtime and thus participate in the enthusiastic depredations that inevitably ensue as the result of reprobates like Miller, Vaden and Hardin, two thirds of whom do actually have to work next day.

It's not like the old days when you put away the untouched bottle of off-brand Cinzano-style rubbish that some cheap asshole brought along. I wake up this morning to find a couple of sips of the good bourbon (Bulleit) that either John or Ken had failed to finish, as well as about half a glass of what's usually a quite decent white wine brung in by the Best Man. "Try this!", advises Kenny last night, and after I've had a sip, and another, and pronounced it all right, the provenance of said pish (© U O'Brien) is revealed as "It's from Chile!" in tones suggesting that it might as well have been from Nambia (qv).

So I'm finishing up the leftovers and recalling the old days when I'd be doing something similar except it was going through the ashtrays to find smokeably long enough dog ends rather than odds and sods of drink, in between reminiscences of the Tufnell Park Tavern caused by that old scruff Jim Burns, who ought to be held accountable.

I had this thought, but I think I lost it somewhere down the back of the sofa cushions. In *Askance #41* I punted an advisory piece to TAFF-winning John Purcell, who has also recently joined the artificially-toothed club. That fucker has given me the major arse in that after what seemed like mere minutes he's choffing on steaks in Texan style, whereas I've got more than two years in of no original teggies and yet (a) only ever wear the top set, and (b) am unable to eat with the fuckin things in. Famous Author™ Jen is now aware that, despite my efforts of cooking enough to fill the troughs of the assembling fen, I don't actually eat any of it on the night, sticking

mercilessly to the drink.

That thought I had was a reaction to the TfL/Uber business, and a bit of crogglements at a comment on Fucking Facebook by Mike Scott, who contended that taxi regulation could only be set up for the benefit of the drivers or the passengers, but not both. No doubt he'll loc you to advise how I got that all wrong. I'd contend that the regulation in The Meadows is a bit of both, with a ton of verbiage about rider safety (like not being allowed to pick up street hails, to the surprise of most visitors) and yet the metering designed to at least afford the driver a minimal living, despite the flooding of the county by more and more cabs in a misguided response to the ride-share pirates. Whatever other cogent argument I may have had on this topic is now stuffed away somewhere at the bottom of this glass of Chilean spoo, which really is quite nice.

September's been generally a good month for business, tourist and otherwise. I got the impression that Scotland must be half-empty, or at least half-emptier than usual, given the inordinate number of Caledonians who've leapt into the free pickle with alcoholic alacrity this last couple of weeks. Yesterday, though, not so much.

Yesterday was a bad day.

I'd had three days straight booking over \$300, having had the necessary bit of luck as well as a lot of effort. There's often a dead spot in any given day, however, and no exception, I was stalled at South Point for an hour and a half before getting the airport ride. Dropping the fare at Alaska airlines (terminal 3), I failed to double-check the blind spot and opened my door onto a passing limo who was coming up a bit close. It was a very minor trade of paint, but me & the other driver had to follow procedure and call it in, summoning up our respective road supervisors and TA to take a million or so photos and a billion or so pages of paperwork which took an hour to get resolved. Turns out that Lucky's procedure is to compensate the other driver with \$75 cash (essentially for time lost) in return for not pursuing it further. That comes out of my pocket, needless to say.

Then about half-one, I get a summons over the radio to bring the cab in for a scheduled TA inspection, which they can never do on your day off, naturally. Since I've got a couple hours left on my shift, they're not going to let me go home, so I get swapped into another cab which I can only describe as a fuckin skip, it's so full of detritus and gives me the mad itch so much that I can't wait to get out of it. I hie me to Luxor North valet, one of my habitual stages, and who's there but Dan the limo driver whose stretch Lincoln I'd scuffed earlier. He's a nice bloke, and we'd taken care of the earlier accident in a friendly and professional manner. Having a bit of a chat, he asked me if I also got \$75 for lost time, and I tell him, er, no, actually that comes out of my pocket as a bung. He's surprised by this, and immediately offers me

half back, which I decline on the "it is what it is" basis. I'm about to load a ride of a grumpy Oriental lady when Dan's over on his toes with a "here, we both have to work", and I find he's kicked me back \$30, which is a lovely gesture.

Book wise, ended up a lousy day, the worst of the week and not conducive to a good mood weekend, but in terms of the niceness of at least one member of humanity, I'm calling it a win.

THE END OF VIBRATOR

All things must pass, to quote George Harrison, and so must Vibrator. Or at least this issue. I fear this will be another *thin* issue, or a pile of crap as Robert Lichtman would probably put it, but I have been under a lot of stresses lately due to family illness which has more or less rendered me into a gaga machine incapable of dealing with reality on any level unless it involved making my way to a hospital every day (the No. 41 bus to Archway). Frankly I am sometimes amazed I can even get up in the morning these days, mostly because I can't. My dreams have become tortuous and deadly, precipitating me into scenarios where I not only wish I was dead but where I think I already am. There is definitely something Dickian about them, but it may be that I am just a dick.

Meanwhile I am constantly amazed that I continue to get into arguments with friends on Facebook. But that is one of the things about Facebook for me. I test friendship whilst my friends cruise on and continue to disregard me, because that is what friends do, okay? I should be consoled I suppose that as an Elder I am not necessarily considered as a better, in fact I am constantly pissed upon by my younger associates. Good for them. I remember how I hated my father too.

This Vibrator is No. 44, September 2017. There may be another one if you write to me, or if I stay alive long enough to write anything myself.

Pat profofread it as usual. I have her tied up in a cavern underground so she could hardly do otherwise. If she has done a good job I will loosen the ties around her wrists and let her eat gruel.

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