



VIBRATOR 2.0.8



THIS ISSUE CONTAINS: TV
COP SHOWS, EAR
SYRINGING, CALIFORNIA,
POETRY (!), JOHN WESLEY
HARDING, ADOLF HITLER,
GAMBLING

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Wotcha pop-pickers. Plug in those ear-buds that keep you connected to the Radio of Life, and tune into to another raunchy issue of Vibrator. Let us rock your universe with our funky rhythms and lyrics full of sexual innuendo. Squeeze my lemon, indeed. Who are the natural bass players, drummers and lead guitarists of fandom, or even the screaming vocalists? Well, that's a question that begs a few answers. Where does Chris Garcia fit into all this? Best, we probably don't ask that question, least of all answer it. Dave Langford as Morrissey? I think not. Pat Charnock as Janis Joplin? Ian Maule as Tom Waits? Jim Linwood as Bob Dylan? Come on fans, which famous pop star would you want to represent you? Me, I'm Joe Ely.

Not really. I am in fact Graham Charnock. My address is graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk. Please send review copies to 45 Kimberley Gardens, London N4 1LD. This issue is dated September 2014. Deadline for next issue 31st October 2014. Thanks as always to Pat Charnock for proofreading and correcting my errant mamories. Thanks to Steve Stiles for supplying the masthead illo.

WHAT'S ON TV?

One of the tv programmes I am watching at the moment is NCIS: Los Angeles. It is as slick and watchable and disposable as many major US TV cop/crime dramas set in attractive West Coast locations with lots of cars and guns. A major significant feature of its scriptwriting seems to be the heavy reliance on using computers and surveillance to solve crimes (usually of an international arms or drug based nature) rather than human intuition (as in Dexter, or even, God Help Us, Sherlock). The geeks at Central Headquarters are surrounded by projected touch screens (do those actually exist?) and can pinpoint any telephone call and seem to have CCTV covering most situations the cops find themselves in (strangely in high definition video). They can identify villains from the fuzziest images. They can hack into and manipulate remote computer systems controlling the country's infrastructure, such as switching all lights to red on a highway to slow up villains. Good job they are all working for the good of us all, eh? Of course this, along with a lot of US drama series and many similarly contrived feature films, is essentially fantasy. I don't know whether that makes me sad or glad.

ANOTHER REASON I HATE FACEBOOK

It facilitates the passing on of glib thoughtless propaganda usually under an aspirational banner. The Dalai Lama says we are all brainwashed into accepting mindless violence so of course we all mindlessly accept his words of wisdom without bothering to think for ourselves. What gives the Dalai Lama a mandate to think for us all? It is demeaning of the Dalai Lama to use such generalizations, but also of ourselves to accept them without question, and certainly demeaning to pass them on endlessly through Facebook connections. In an ideal world Facebook would be purged from our lives and perhaps reinvented as a more benign and less corporate entity. But of course, that is fantasy. This is the future folks. You invented it. You live with it.

JERRY KAUFMAN JUST MISSED THE LAST ISSUE SO IS FIRST IN LINE WITH HIS LOC HERE

We used up our Big Trip money and energy for several years by attending LonCon and London (yes, I attended London as it happened, just as though I were attending an event rather than visiting a city), so we won't be at Tynecon III. But I will send some money to Robert Lichtman for a supporting membership. Get my name in the list and therefore be a part of history.

If all your committee meetings are like that, could you stream them somehow? I'd love to watch - I can always read during the really boring bits like copyediting progress reports and the web site or deciding on the banquet menu. (I attended a meeting yesterday for the next Potlatch convention in Seattle. Discussions on these matters took up a fair amount of time - complicated by the hotel's catering service not being willing to divulge how much their different banquet choices actually cost.)

We met the Sandersons many years ago, in the mid-1970s (I think) or perhaps at the New York Corflu. They were living on Long Island then, so the Corflu would be a reasonable venue for them to appear in. Seemed like a sweet old couple.

I know that the fan funds are not charities in any legal sense, but in the sense that the monies raised are not for the benefit of the person or people asking for money, but for someone selected in the future. The term "charity" is also most often associated with fundraising for the needy or ill; the fan funds are more like foundations giving grants or scholarship awards. I've been a beneficiary of one; Suzle has had the benefit of another; we both continue to support and help them with time and money.

As for making them legal entities with (in the US) 501(c)3 status (making them tax-free and giving them an Official Stamp of Legitimacy), I think Claire has answered well.

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IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER

Hied me to the doctor (well the medical technician) today for the Ceremonial Charnock Ear Syringing. When the doctor did it years ago she had an instrument like an old icing gun which she filled with water and pumped by hand. This time there was a high tech machine which pumped water automatically like the automatic rinse cycle on a washing machine. Suffice to say I can now hear myself typing once again, although both ears are slightly infected. But the tech said that should clear up of its own accord. The first ear was painless but the second one took slightly longer to flush out and it started getting painful at times, which I gather it shouldn't be.

SEVERAL PEOPLE COMMENTED ON THIS WHEN I FIRST AIRED IT, ONE WAS CURT PHILLIPS:

On the night of August 6th, 1998, I was involved in a roll-over fire truck wreck while on my way to a house fire. I was pinned into the wreckage for about an hour while about 20 fire-fighters worked to cut me out of the wreckage. I should mention at this point that they were cutting the fire truck into pieces and removing them from around me; not the other way around.

Eventually I was removed from the wreckage, bloodied, bruised, but more or less intact, and placed aboard a helicopter for a flight to the nearest trauma center. It was my first time aboard a helicopter and I remember wanting to sit up and look out the window as we flew along. However, I was strapped onto a backboard with a great many tubes, wires, and devices attached to me, and the flight nurse seemed to take a strong personal exception to any thought of me sitting up on that flight. You know how it is; one doesn't like to be a bother - particularly when you've just met someone for the first time, so I stayed put.

We arrived at the hospital, I was conveyed into a trauma room, and many and various were the people I met in that next hour. Doctors, Nurses, Radiology techs, phlobotomists, Interns, Surgical Residents, State Police Troopers, a

Chaplin, somebody's 14 year old nephew who was thinking about maybe going to medical school someday. I met them all. Eventually everyone huddled to discuss things and they all agreed that as bad as I looked, there was really nothing much wrong with me that a few days in bed wouldn't fix. I remember how disappointed the Surgical Resident looked when he learned that I didn't - as had first been reported over the EMS radio - have a depressed skull fracture after all and thus wouldn't need surgery that night. I got the impression that he'd never done a brain surgery before and had been **really** looking forward to doing his first one on me. After that, of course, I just felt bad for having disappointed him.

After some stitches and some cleaning up the doctor asked me if I hurt anywhere else that they hadn't yet looked at. "Well", I replied, there does seem to be something in my ear." Curious, the doctor reached for an otoscope and poked it into the ear in question. There **was** something in my ear; a piece of glass, no doubt from the rear window of the fire truck, and quite possibly placed there earlier that night when that window was shattered by my head being slammed through it. "Oh yes", said the doctor. "You have a piece of glass in your ear. Do you want me to remove it?" A couple of years later, when I became a Surgical Nurse myself I would learn that this sort of comment is the sort of thing that Doctors consider to be a very funny joke. They sit around between surgeries and tell rib-splitters equally as funny as that one to each other, and then they laugh and laugh and laugh. I think it's good to find humor in your work, don't you?

Well, since I was there - still strapped to that backboard and thus unable to get up on my own, I figured that I might as well go ahead and have the doctor remove that piece of glass from my ear, before someone else came along and rammed it deeper into my head by poking another otoscope in there. So the Doctor said he'd send someone in to wash it out.

The Doctor said that, but he hadn't said **when** the washing out might happen, so I laid there after he left and waited quite a spell. Everyone else had gone and the nurse had dimmed the lights so that I could rest, and as it had been something of a tiresome day, before too long I fell asleep.

I was awakened sometime later by a feeling of white hot fire lancing through my brain and burning off the top of my skull. I may exaggerate slightly, but that was how it felt. I heard the echo of a hideous scream - like the wailings of the damned in the hottest pits of Hell - and then realized that it was my own scream. A hospital orderly - terrified and astonished - was standing by my stretcher, frozen in horror. Then he dropped the huge syringe he was holding and bolted for the door. I **think** I heard him shriek out in the hallway, "he's alive!" Moments later several nurses and doctors and that same 14-year-old wanna-be-doctor burst into the room to gawlp at me in astonishment. Finally, one Nurse spoke.

"How did you get loose from that backboard?" It was true; I was no longer strapped down to that backboard but was sitting upright with the broken backboard straps dangling on the floor. An ER Doctor picked up one of the broken straps, looked at it, looked at me, looked at it again, and finally said, "you shouldn't have been able to do that." There I was, disappointing another doctor twice in one evening. The orderly slowly came back into the room and stood a moment, staring at me. "I thought you were dead," he finally said, accusingly. In that moment I didn't care much about having disappointed him.

It turns out that one of the old ways of proving that a patient is brain dead involves filling a syringe with ice cold saline and shooting this fluid into the suspected corpse's ear. If there is any brain stem activity at all in the patient he will exhibit a Central Nervous System reaction, usually evidenced by grimacing. When there is a more or less **normal** amount of brain stem activity the reaction - according to the medical textbook I read - is likely to be one of extreme pain. Friends, I can verify that this last part is completely true. When that orderly had arrived for his night shift duties just moments before he said "howdy-do" to me in his unforgettable way, he picked up the clipboard that

had the evening orders and read "Trauma 1; L ottic wash w/Saline syringe". Then he looked into Trauma 1, saw me lying there in that dim light, strapped to my backboard and covered in cuts and bruises that looked pretty awful, and he interpreted the doctor's order as "do a cold saline brain stem test on the corpse in Trauma 1". And that's what he did. Later that night - after all the medical staff had gone outside to have a smoke and laugh off the last of their residual tension - I took a cleanish looking cotton swap I'd found and dug that piece of glass out of my ear all by myself. No one ever asked me what had become of it.

I went to work in the Surgery Dept. of that same hospital two years later, and have worked there for 14 years right up to this day. I'm told that they still tell that story down in the ER, usually with considerable laughter. Like I said, it's good to find humor in your work."

-- Curt Phillips (The author wishes to thank Ellen Datlow and David Pringle for editorial assistance on this unreservedly true story...)

ANOTHER WAS ROBERT LICHTMAN:

Probably I've mentioned this here before when the subject of ear syringing surfaces, but I have this done twice a year as a preventive measure. I went most of my life without needing it, but in 1977 when I was living on the Farm I experienced hearing loss first in one ear and then in the others. The women at the Farm clinic fixed me up using one of those instruments such as you describe.

When I left the Farm and moved back to California, I had this done a fewmore times by paying a local doctor who had one of his nurses do the job. But once I got health care as part of a job, I set up these regular syringe sessions and they've worked well for me.

Oh, and the woman who does it uses one of those "old icing gun" devices such as you describe.

--Robert Lichtman

SANDRA BOND DISCOVERED A WEB SITE WHERE PEOPLE POST SHAKESPEAREAN RECONSTRUCTIONS OF MODERN POP LYRICS. SHE TRIED A FEW OF HER OWN, AND HAS AN AMAZING KNACK FOR THE SHAKESPEAREAN VERNACULAR. HERE IS ONE AND YOU ARE INVITED TO GUESS THE LYRIC INVOLVED. THIS COULD DEVELOP INTO AN ONGOING SERIES.

*Hushed be thy speech, and silent be thy breath!
Talk in low whispers, if thou talk'st at all.
Too loud a sound will make the roof-beams fall,
And in this cavern we'll be crushed to death.
Mayhap e'en now they delve toward this place,
And till they find us they will labour on;
Mayhap they think us crush'd and all hope gone,
By hungry earth devour'd, to leave no trace.
Shines still the sun outside? or is it night?
Dost hear the sound of spades? or do I dream?
Is that a creaking from the broken beam?
Will we be rescued from this sorry plight?
I fear I reach the closing of my life.
-- Meantime, hast seen this picture of my wife?*

NOW MILT STEVENS DUSTS OFF HIS FEDORA AND CONTINUES TO WALK THOSE MEAN STREETS...

In Vibrator #2.0.7, your mention of the Mark Twain hotel in San Francisco reminded me of the Mark Twain hotel in Hollywood. If you were booking a hotel on line, the MT in Hollywood might sound like a nice place. It isn't. To borrow a phrase, it's like one of those hotels where Philip Marlowe was always finding the bodies of dead stoolies. It is located about four blocks north of Hollywood police station. My father, who worked at Hollywood Division before WWII, once told me Raymond Chandler used to occasionally drop by the station to talk to detectives.

San Francisco used to make my father sick. I don't mean that he disapproved of the city either philosophically or esthetically. It just made him sick. When I was in the Navy I spent a fair amount of time in San Francisco. I thought the summers were cold and dank compared to the winters in the Philippines or Vietnam, but I could stand it. I somehow lost my tolerance for San Francisco with age. If I were to get too close to that city, every muscle in my body would ache and my sinuses would try to drown me. Silicon Valley is about as close as I can get without dire results.

You probably saw the bit in File 770 about there being too many old people at Loncon 3. I still like attending cons, but some of them don't seem as fond of me anymore. I have been reading SF for 60 years, and I know quite a bit about the subject. I also like to talk about SF. As a result, I've been a regular program participant at a number of cons for the past 10 or 20 years. In the last couple of years, some cons are making an effort to reduce the number of old white guys on the program. So two California cons have dropped me from the program with a resounding thunk. With a non-invitation like that, I no longer attend those cons.

I have never used the Hugo voters packet. In order to use it, I would have to disable software that gives me essentially unlimited access to audio books for free. I don't wish to do that. However, it occurs to me that the voter packet approach has a major flaw. Reading a 40 page action sequence from a novel might conceal the utter stupidity of the complete novel. Voters shouldn't be encouraged to vote on selected samples of a novel.

I'm not going to bother reading Dribbles of Ink. I already have a hobby and don't have time for another one.

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HERE'S UNCLE JOHNNY TAKING ME TO TASK ABOUT MY LACK OF CHRISTIANITY

Why go to all the bother of typing out William Blake's "Jerusalem" only to critique it in a most un-christian fashion? The reason the hymn is popular is the tune, of course. It was written by Hubert Parry, and the version heard every year at the Last Night Of the Proms is orchestrated by Edward Elgar. You could, and probably should, set any old rubbish to a melody and orchestration like that and people would sing it. Perhaps you remember from Sunday School a hymn that starts: "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, forgive our foolish ways" ? Parry wrote that an' all and as with Jerusalem, the words are by somebody else, I forget who. The tune is called Repton, I think in homage to the old duffer's public school. He was head of the Royal College of Music, and people like Vaughan-Williams, John Ireland, and Frank Bridge studied composition under him, though I think Vaughan-Williams in particular has a bigger debt to Ravel. Parry also wrote some humanist cantatas. I heard one once. He wrote them as a sort of counterweight to much of his commissioned work which was settings of religious texts and psalms. I thought the bloke should have been given a pat on the back for trying, but compared to Vaughan-Williams's settings of Walt Whitman in his Sea Symphony, they were nowhere.

I'm rambling again.

The difficulty in owning up to my sexual past, which is probably nowhere near as interesting as some people would like to think it is, is that quite a few of the ladies/women concerned are still with us, and in some cases I promised them I would say nothing, and I try and keep my promises. If you want to have affairs, you had better be discreet. Of course, after this length of time, you could probably publish it all anyway, and all anyone who doesn't want to own up to it need do is laugh and accuse me of fantasies. In some cases, there was no attempt at secrecy, with cataclysmic results. I was surprised by that, believe it or not. I was naive enough to believe that honesty was the best

policy.

I think you over-dramatise when you say that sleeping around when AIDS got going became the kiss of death. It certainly led to a greater awareness of precautions, but I had been very savvy on that front ever since my experiences at Nassington Road, where virtually the entire household visited the STD clinic in Praed Street at some time or other. It was like having mice, and you always knew where it had come from too. I think post-AIDS people became more interested in non-penetrative sex, which was probably a good thing in many ways; lots more variety. I am unable to understand why most people cannot take sex more lightly. Why it had to lead to so many break-ups and estrangements back in the day, I could never fathom, but that's just me. I certainly never felt that my friends "looked rather silly with their pants around their ankles" as you put it. I was a tiny bit envious of some of them, to be honest. Or at least, envious of the delights I imagined they had experienced with some of the women I lusted after myself. And I was always lusting- the more I had, the more I wanted.

Ah well, back to the dialysis machine, with which I have exchanged more fluid than all the women I may ever have shared a couch with. Poor old chap.

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ROBERT L. ICHTMAN WRITES WITH THIS REMINISCENCE OF CALIFORNIA

As I've written elsewhere, I worked for five years for the Farm's book publishing company. In December 1977 it was decided I would move with my family to the community's outpost in Richmond, California, a gritty town north of Berkeley, from which I would take day trips (and occasionally longer ones) up and down the west coast selling books (and, as it turned out, various food items produced by the community). We drove cross-country in a huge American station wagon with a trailer holding our possessions, and were given a couple of large rooms in the three-building compound housing everyone. We were there for a little over a year, and were able to combine a few trips to the Los Angeles area—where both our parents lived—with some book selling.

One of my last sales trips while in California took me down to L.A. with another Farm person on a strictly sales trip—no parent visit. Like me, James also had family in California—actually, it was his wife, whose parents lived south of San Francisco—and he was training to take over once my time was up. We'd arranged to stay at a large, otherwise vacant house on the west end of the San Fernando Valley that belonged to one of the members of the band Canned Heat (who was an old high school friend of one of the people living in Richmond and got the okay). Very late one night, we got hungry and realized there was no food on hand. We set out in our pale blue '72 Mercury in search of a 24-hour fast food stand or supermarket.

Riding east along Ventura Blvd.—one of the Valley's main east-west roads—looking for an open store, I suddenly noticed that we were being closely tailed by a police cruiser. After a couple blocks I mentioned this to my companion, and as I did so another police car pulled out from a side street and joined the parade. After another half-mile, I said "Let's see if they're actually following us or if this is just a coincidence," and at the next available opportunity took a left turn onto a street that would take us to a freeway entrance.

As soon as I made the turn, the police cars' red lights blazed and their sirens blared, and I could hear a loudspeaker telling me to pull over *now*. I did so, and in less than a minute two more police cars descended on the scene. The loudspeaker told us to get out of the car and keep our hands in front of us, which we did. We were greeted by half a dozen police, most of whom had guns drawn and aimed in our direction.

James, who had grown up in a small town in the midwest, was visibly shaken; but as a former Los Angeles resident familiar with the LAPD's heavy-handed tactics I felt less intimidated. Some of the police shined flashlights into the windows of our car while others asked us what we were doing out so late at night (it was around 2 a.m.). I told them the truth, and without skipping a beat also asked where I might find a store. They continued to come on

strong for a little while, but then their vibes eased and the *story* came out.

It turned out that our car matched the description of one used by someone who had just robbed a nearby 24-hour Taco Bell. But of course our Tennessee license plates didn't match up. They didn't exactly apologize for the mix-up, but before long we were on our way—and they did tell us where to find a 24-hour Ralph's supermarket.

JOHN WESLEY HARDING REVISITED

This was the birth of Americana. Dylan had already kick-started popular folk, by re-writing Woody Guthrie and blasting it out of what had previously been a finger-in-the-ear niche. Then he notoriously went electric to somewhat mixed reactions (the finger-in-the-ear crowd didn't like it and one prat called out 'Judas!' when he appeared live). Now he stripped everything back to what was basically an acoustic trio (Dylan, Charlie McCoy on bass and Kenny Buttrey on drums) with the addition of Pete Drake on steel guitar on a couple of tracks. It might have seemed a bold move but basically he was so tight with CBS at that time he could have done anything he wanted, (although perhaps not an album of English children's songs including Froggie Went A'Courtin'). The gaudy Kodachrome colour sleeves of Highway 61 Revisited and Bringing It All Back Home were replaced with a monochrome shot of Dylan and his team in a faux-Indian (Native American) picture. Dylan has a cheeky grin almost as if to say 'See what I did here?' A selective deconstruction of the various tracks would be out of place, except to say they spoke of drifters, hobos and immigrants, the under privileged plundered from Woody Guthrie turned into picaresque emblematic characters. It was always an album to sit down and listen to in one go, one song seems to progress to another, all with an embedded narrative, and finally ending up with one of Dylan's best and most touching romantic ballads 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight'. Just stop what you are doing and listen to it. Now.

IAN WILLIAMS WORRIES ABOUT ME, HE REALLY DOES

I am extremely concerned about your illness and you not going to see a doctor, or your doctor. I too take several (three) different drugs, one for blood pressure, and have experienced no side effects whatsoever, unless it's the drastic decline in my libido which I put down to the aging process. But I digress. You really do not want to put off going to the docs or you'll put yourself at risk of waking up one morning suffering from something incredibly rare, even more incredibly agonising, and definitely life threatening which you wouldn't have gotten if only you'd gone to the doctor's and taken his/her advice of swallowing two aspirin and all will be well.

Then again, I could be wrong.

Not being much of a traveller, I've never been to San Francisco or much of anywhere, not even in England. I have been to Lanzarote a few times mainly because a good mate owns a place there and I can fly from Newcastle. So, no, I'm not going to San Francisco to wear flowers in my hair (which would be impossible anyway because I keep it short these days so as not to embarrass baldies or people who are trying to pretend they aren't going bald. I dunno, maybe I should let it grow and expose my luxuriant grey locks to the world. Screw you baldies, I've got hair.)

But you were really writing about fans and misunderstandings. It seems that fans (British and American) of our generation are two peoples divided by a common language but united by the love of a genre that none of us can be bothered to read any more. Then again, I could be wrong. Susan, my ex, tells me that's normal for me.

Paul Skelton writes about bikes. I had a bike. Got one when I was fourteen and fell off the first time I went on it. I could balance okay, I just didn't know how to use the brakes. After a couple of years (we're talking 1963 or thereabouts) I sold it and bought a ten ton tape recorder which I would lug across Sunderland to tape singles from various schoolmates as I didn't have a record player and couldn't afford one anyway until I was a student when the first record I bought was John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

I've seen a few of those photos of your barbecue before and others on Facebook of fans I knew back when and recognised most of them instantly but a couple (whom I won't name in case I meet them at Corflu next year and they punch me) not at all. It was the beard, Paul, honest.

I did find Rob Jackson's stuff on e-fanzines and paper zines interesting. I do a blog called Freethinking: a journal of pop culture (very intermittently these days as cat rescuing blogging has taken over) which is basically the sort of stuff I'd have put in a fanzine if I was still doing one. As it was I published one (or two?) issues of Siddhartha on the e.fanzines website which was mostly cobbled together from pieces I'd done in Freethinking. Things change. Cheap computing meant anyone (even me) could put out a neatly produced fanzine and then the Internet made it even easier with the true dawn of mass communication-millions of voice talking and hopefully millions of ears (metaphorically) listening. I mean, it's still nice to receive a paper fanzine which easier to browse when looking to comment, but things change.

Nice to see something from Earl Kemp. I lost a lot of interest in efanazines when he stopped **pubbing his ish** there. And there's a phrase I haven't used in many years.

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WHAT IS WRONG WITH NETWORK TV

I don't invest too much time keeping up with US TV series these days because the networks are so capricious and can pull the carpet out from under them at a moment's notice. My biggest disappointment recently was with *The Glades*, an untaxing and entertaining cop show with an engaging detective, a moderately interesting romantic interest, and exotic locations, but halfway through the third season the network aired a cliff-hanger, in which the hero was ostensibly shot on his wedding day and left for dead, and then they pulled the plug on the series. Never again will I have my emotions toyed with in this way. Networks please note, If you are going to put on a season at least try and follow it through with an ending that doesn't speak so much of coitus interruptus and executive producers withdrawing to discuss their stock options as anything else. *SURFACE* was another potentially interesting series which ended on a teasing note (the world engulfed with water) and then literally pulled the plug (although that may have been because the writers had successfully written themselves into a dead end). At least with *Rosemary & Thyme* and *Jonathan Creek* you know you are going to get a neat murder solved every episode. And don't even get me started on *Bergerac*. BBC wins every time.

DAVID REDD COMES THROUGH WITH A LATE COMMENT ON 2.0.6 BUT AS HE EXPLAINS IT WASN'T HIS FAULT

Vibrator 2 0 6 - A bit odd commenting on this with 2.0.7 sitting before me ... but I have your handwritten apology for it being late ... is this a possibly unique and valuable collector's item? No.

English hymns: in a previous incarnation I suffered these at H-west Grammar School every morning assembly, except the day someone put explosives in the organ. ("We will omit the hymn this morning," as smoke billowed, etc.) Unfortunately your last paragraph is pointless, as you'd already summed up "Jerusalem" completely and sufficiently with "A very fine example of William Blake's poetry, provided we bear in mind he was a madman." Sometimes we *need* madness. Within limits.

You're obviously aware that the overlapping circles of our interests diverge considerably over *Relapse*. Personally I'd quite like to see more "reminiscences of Ron Bennett" or at least a brief decent biography, Rob. Vince Clarke, on our few brief contacts, was invariably friendly and helpful. Not everyone in my life has been.

Your educational supplement on Transnistria described it succinctly and informatively. Can you now similarly explain Jonathan McCalmont?

Vibrator 2 0 7 - Forgot the dots again. Not going back – my chicken-shape kitchen timer is ticking away my deadline. (Daughter calls it my Chicken Ticker.)

Nice glimpses of SF. San Francisco of course, nothing else with those initials in here, other than passing mentions. (Another divergence. Personally I enjoyed digging into old SF, not the modern stuff, just looking into say the 1950s *Imagination* (see Banana Wings), discovering a Joel Nydahl pro story, an early mention of Stanislav Lem, the template for Bloch's *Psycho* in Rog Phillips' "The Cosmic Junkman", and – the giveaway – the old fan columns and reader's letters which were generally more fun than the stories.)

Old stuff – like Jim Linwood's letter and would be interested to hear the bootleg "Be Bop a Lula" for a modest outlay.

Chicken alarm just rang. Well, all this stuff such as your Loncon 3 bit is fascinating for being chock-full of attitude and I agree with that nice Mr Lichtman on your value to future PhD sociology researchers, and indeed to archaeologists wondering where the lost civilisation went wrong. Cute little shrew – improbable thermograph readings, so must be wrinkled at upper posterior.

Strange how so many people of genuine worth in sf and fandom have been called Robert.

David Redd can be found at **dave_redd@hotmail.com**

(EDITOR: I don't find it at all strange that so many people of genuine worth in sf and fandom have been called David, Dave)

AND HERE'S A LOC FROM ADOLF HITLER

Dear Graham

Thank you for sending me your fanzine. I showed it to Eva and she agreed it was very entertaining but then fed it to our dog. Please send another copy.

Dear Graham

Thanks for sending another copy of your fanzine. Maybe I didn't make it plain that I was busy with Crystal Nacht at the time so I would not be able to dedicate much time to it. And now I must go on to annexe Poland, so please don't send me another copy for at least six months. Meanwhile I should tell you John Brunner is acting as my UK agent for my fanzine Mein Kampf. He only accepts postal orders

Dear Graham

Well, I have taken care of Poland. Yours is a fine fanzine but Roy Kettle's descriptions of his life in a bank do not impress me, is he a Capitalist or something. I like the nude photos of Pat's bum and would pay you good money for the original negatives. If you do not want to trade in money I can throw in a few Van Goghs or two.

Dear Graham

Thanks for the latest issue. Your last issue with the long discussion of something called Loncon 3 did not impress me and I fear we must go our separate ways. Someone is knocking on the door and there are cyanide pills on the table. But first let me tell you what I think about Peter Weston's latest fanzine...

Adolf Hitler can be found at badboy@brazil.com

WHO COULD POSSIBLY FOLLOW ADOLF HITLER, BUT ROBERT LICHTMAN

It seems like every time I turn around (or turn on my computer) there's another issue of *Vibrator* staring me in the face. With some fanzines this would be a horror show, but I enjoy yours so much that it's a considerable pleasure. Long may *Vibrator* pulse!

Things like your aching big toe and your painful knee would seem on the face of it—especially with them both being on the same leg—worthy of a doctor's visit despite your assorted thoughts about what might be causing it and the likely outcome of such a visit. Having various aches and pains (as my parents used to refer to them) is, I suspect, a side effect of the dread and incurable disease of Being Old. Such things come and, if we're lucky, go without any permanent debilitating effects, and life goes on until the next time. I save actual doctor's visits for things that *don't* disappear in a timely fashion on their own, which means that thankfully those visits are very few and far between.

You write that "The Charnox, en famille, first took a trip to San Francisco in 2008." That didn't seem right, and based on careful research (i.e., flailing around on my computer) I determined that the year was actually 2007—which is the save date on a photo of me and Carol (who is wearing the leather hat that I got for her at the Kenwood Winery that year). This led me on a long side trip to try to find the video you took of the whole event, but YouTube doesn't allow one (so far as I could tell) to search by the names or handles of those posting videos, so my search was unsuccessful.

(EDITOR: Unfortunately I sent Robert an uncorrected first edition so was able to amend the SF date in the final corrected copy, but Pat assures me it was in fact 2008. Do photo save dates lie, or does Pat? The video Robert was referring to can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsY5dB30KeA> if anybody is sufficiently interested.)

(EDITOR: This just in. Pat now accepts it was 2006 and put it down to my inability to read her crabby handwriting correctly.)

About Bruce Townley you write, "My kids spotted him first, and knew enough about what draws fans to fans to recognize him from a distance." I hope that isn't too embarrassing for Bruce if he reads this piece. Coupled with the contrasting egoboo you give to me and Carol, it paints him in a mixed, but tending towards negative, light. The comment, however, reminded me of an incident that happened back around 1964. I was driving along some street in west Los Angeles with a woman I was seeing at the time, minding my own business (which was mainly keeping the car safely on the road) when she whooped and hollered and pointed to a rather large man on the sidewalk who was striding purposefully along in Great Big Steps. He was dressed entirely in black and at his side in its black scabbard was a rather long sword. "Far out," I might have said except that this was a few years before that term came into play, and we both had a good laugh over the guy specifically and the wide variety of people you can see on the street in L.A. in general. I didn't want to admit it to her, but of course that black apparition was a fan and I knew him. Specifically, it was one by the name of Owen Hannifen, who as I recall had recently moved to L.A. from points east and was very much under the influence of certain other area fans such as Bruce Pelz, Jack Harness and "Ted Johnstone" (the fan name of David McDaniel, the guy who wrote the *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* novels), all of whom also dressed like that at times.

Jim Linwood writes that "The early 60s were my most active years in fandom." I remember him from back then—he was "Jhim" and he published an enjoyable fanzine for OMPA, the name of which I don't recall. He also mentions "the Cult Type Thing, which involved writing long letters to each other using carbon paper in those pre-photocopier

days.” Those were common fanish activity back then (perhaps the most well-known being the WO3W between Redd Boggs, Dean Grennell and Bob Silverberg), although I hadn’t heard of this one before now. Another moderately well-known one was CRAP, which stood for Carbon-Reproduced Amateur Press, and which had started in 1957 with five members. As 1960 rolled into view, I applied for membership under the theory that one more legible carbon copy was possible. I was accepted, but before long others were interested and in September 1960 the group switched over to more accommodating means of reproduction (ditto and mimeo) and continued for another year. At that point Andy Main and I, dissatisfied with the influx of omniapans (back then there were so few apas that it was possible for one to be in them all, and some tried—including me for a time), engineered its dissolution and reorganized it as a new private and supposedly secret apa with a different name (Apa-X, which quickly became known as Apex) that didn’t include the people we didn’t want.

Another lesser-known carbon copy-based group was The Clique, which was started in early 1956 with Terry Carr, Pete Graham, Dave Rike, Bob “Boob” Stewart and the now-forgotten Keith Joseph, all of whom had in common being San Francisco Bay Area fans of about the same age (late teens at that point) who had been corresponding with each other separately (as well as meeting in person). There were fringe semi-members, too, each of whom contributed just once. One was Madeleine (don’t know her last name), for a time Pete’s girlfriend (who was reading his copies), and another was Michael Rossman (“Mique”), who went on to become one of the key architects (along with the much better-known Mario Savio) of the Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964. It lasted a little over a year.

I have no underlying point to make in bringing up these carbon-based correspondence groups other than Jim’s giving me a hook for doing so. I *am* one of the few (still alive) with personal knowledge of them and, in the case of The Clique, in possession of the only complete file in existence (Terry’s copy), but there’s no way I will ever write more about them than this. It would only be of interest to, at best, maybe five or six people, but since the letters themselves are private and, let’s face it, mostly pretty uninteresting in their subject matter (no hot 60-year old DNQs hanging around), it would be a large waste of time. There would be intriguing parts, such as “Dave Rike used dark red paper on some of his letters,” which could lead to fourth-dimensional mental crifanac revolving around the question of why. That might be the biggest excitement in such an article. Some diehard fan historians reading this may disagree. I can live with that. (And it’s a good thing none of these carbon-copy groups of which I have knowledge had any British component or Peter would be after me to do an article for *Relapse*.)

The opening parts of Paul Skelton’s letter, when coupled with his writing at length about Cas’s birdbath in his yard in his letter in *Trap Door* #30, give me a rather thorough mental image—even without all those photos you weren’t able to publish—of his “vast extensive grounds.” I feel like I really *know* just about every square inch of it, even down to the pathways of those slugs of whose movements he reports.

If like R-Laurraine Tutihasi I had episodes of neurocardiogenic syncope, one of which caused her to total her car, I also would be very nervous about driving at all. Fortunately, although I do have “a low thyroid condition” (which she reports as a possible contributing factor) it is controlled with medication and I’ve never suffered any of the symptoms she reports. She writes that “doctors don’t know what causes this”—the Mayo Clinic says that it “occurs when your body overreacts to certain triggers, such as the sight of blood or extreme emotional distress.” I do sympathize with her over the way it can come on unexpectedly, and I hope it’s not something that afflicts her very often.

Like you, I’ve long favored small conventions frequented by fans with whom I feel a good connection. Thus it was that the first con I went to after coming back to fandom late in 1980 was the first Corflu—which was conveniently held in Berkeley in 1984, a simple commute from where I was living in Glen Ellen at the time. My previous convention to that one was all the way back in 1968, and it was a worldcon—but what a worldcon. Coincidentally, it was convened at the same hotel—the Claremont—as that first Corflu, but even though the attendance was considerably larger at around 1,400 it felt congenial because for the most part I was able to find and hang out with

all the people I wanted to. (It was also the first worldcon—indeed the first convention of any kind I’d attended—where drugs were an enjoyable factor.) Later in 1984 I drove down to Los Angeles to attend my next convention, which was that year’s worldcon. The difference between it and 1968 was staggering. There were about 5-6 times as many people, it was held in a huge convention center and several hotels, and if not for the presence of a tiny fanzine lounge located at the end of an obscure corridor I wouldn’t have seen very many of the people I wanted to see. As it turned out, because that became the default gathering place I ended up having a good time in spite of the sheer numbers. That was the convention at which the Fan Writers of America (fwa) was founded at a party in Ted White’s room—which room served the same function as his rooms have at Corflus over the years.

All this is by way of saying that it *is* possible to have a good time at a worldcon, as you did, by making the effort to narrow one’s exposure to the larger aspects of the affair and focus only on what and who interests you. Still, I’d much rather go to a Corflu instead.

I enjoyed your brief account of your post-worldcon afternoon party and the accompanying photo page (which being in color was particularly attractive). Yes, surely Elinor Busby is by far the oldest fan “ever to have been in our garden” and probably your house, too, unless Art Widner slipped in one time unnoticed. Elinor turns ninety near the end of September, following Widner having hit ninety-seven mid-month.

Thanks to Earl Kemp for his nearly-Jacksonian explication of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, a book that even before reading his comments I had no intention of reading—in fact, was only vaguely aware of its existence thanks to media mentions.

Rob Jackson quotes the editor of *A Dribble of Ink* rebutting Mike Glycer’s view that there exists a “seemingly impassable gulf that exists between the online community and the traditional fan community. I don’t believe Mr. Glycer. While this divide between the two fan communities is undeniable, genre fandom is ripe with opportunity for creating a global fan community that embraces diversity—of voice and publishing platform—and challenges readers, authors, and publishers to become more inclusive and welcoming than ever before.”

Leaving out Rob’s snarkiness about the mental age of blog readers and his pointing out the obvious that print publications will generally not reach the same number of people as electronic ones (of whatever sort) and thus the “voter base” is significantly less, he does make the main point with which I agree: “We are headed for an age when the lowest common denominator, and flash presentation, are respectively the king and queen of the Hugos—the fan categories at least.” And yes, the large (at least potentially) audience for these blogs and on-line “magazines” does tend to bury the concept of fannishness—that “sense of community” to which Rob refers—as more possible in a smaller, more intimate venue, whether electronic or print. As Rob says, with the growth of science fiction as a mass culture thing, it definitely is no longer a “proud and lonely thing to be a fan.”

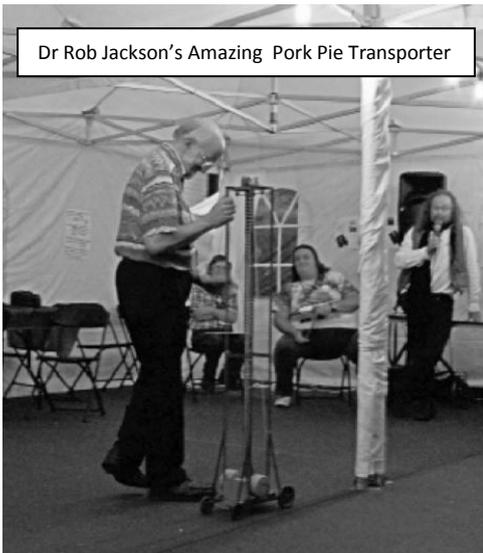
I see a direct bridge from the above discussion to what you wrote about Colin Hinz resurrecting a duper at Loncon and producing a mimeographed fanzine: “We all, I’m sure, have happy memories of cranking our dupers back in the day, and of soldering electrostencilled illos into the main text, of collecting crudsheets and using them to interleave regular paper to absorb excess ink. If you don’t have these memories then you are not a **real** fan in my book, and, yes, that does go for all you bloggers out there.” I only rarely used a mimeograph and never owned one, but I have the same fuzzy happy feelings and memories of running off my pre-1970 fanzines on a ditto machine—and there was that lovely high from the fumes emanating from the ditto fluid! The smell of toner being burnt onto photocopied pages doesn’t hold a candle.

Robert Lichtman can be found at robertlichtman@yahoo.com

JIM LINWOOD RECOLLECTS THE PORK PIES OF YORE, AMONG OTHER THINGS

I did have fun at Lon Con 3 which kicked off on the Wednesday afternoon with a non-con item in which Rob Hansen gave an excellent guided tour of the fannish connections in and around Holborn and Bloomsbury ending up at the One Tun pub in Farringdon. I actually featured in Rob's history as I attended the 1960 Eastercon at the Kingsley Hotel. Bill Burns was on the tour and we considered secretly planting fannish blue plaques on the places Rob took us to.

Marion and I were day-trippers to the Con. We turned up early in the book signing area to get Roy Kettle to autograph FUTURE PERFECT. No authors had yet turned up but there was a very large queue waiting for Bob Silverberg and only me waiting for Roy. As Bob's queue was behind the table where he would be sitting, none of them could see the sign with his name on it and I thought of swapping his with Roy's and photographing the expression on Roy's face when he arrived. I didn't and Roy and Chris Evans autographed my copy of their book writing that it was "a real page turner" – and it was.



Dr Rob Jackson's Amazing Pork Pie Transporter

Our favourite moment wasn't a con item but the social get-together at the Ramada Hotel where we met old and new friends including an American visitor called Mr Phillips. This was followed by attending The Great Pork Pie Race. A homage to Brian Burgess which was won by Rob Jackson with two ingenious mechanical devices for transporting pork pies from one end of the Fan Activity Tent to the other. I thought it would have been easier to throw or roll the pies by hand; that wasn't allowed but what about a trebuchet?

You have seen London County Hall in its present glory. I worked there for several years with the Greater London Council. There was a constant Orwellian atmosphere which, surprisingly, got even worse under the Livingstone regime.

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MY ADVENTURES IN GAMBLING

When I was young I played many games involving gambling. The basic concept fascinated me but of course being a child I had no money (2/6 a week pocket money didn't extend much beyond a comic and a couple of bags of sweets every week, or a bag of pigeons peas to fuel my pea-shooter and allow me to terrorize neighbours). So I studied the stock market listings in the newspaper, salted away virtual funds every week in stocks and shares as listed, and kept a record of how they performed. I never became even a paper millionaire. Next I tried virtual horse-racing, selecting what I thought would be winners from the racing pages and again keeping a rigorous record of how my punts performed. What basic underlying emotional or psychological needs this satisfied I never really discovered. Since I was not dealing in real money at any stage I could never win any money, but then I could never lose any either. This strikes me as a sort of corollary with what goes on in lots of online *Facebook* types games these days.

I've always envied people who could actually go into a betting shop, make a bet with confidence, and know what they were doing. Even now I view betting shops as a bit like brothels; I simply wouldn't know how to handle myself if I ever found myself in one. Graham Hall could do it, (bettings shops, not brothels) although he also never really made a fortune, or any money at all really. When I met D. West I was introduced to the delights of gambling for real money on Dominoes. Usually I was happy to buy him a drink in return for a few hours pleasurably spent, and he sometimes begrudgingly bought me one in return. I don't think either of us came out ahead.

My next encounter with gambling was at one remove and came when I got a job in a West End bookshop. The manager was an ex-child actor (Conrad Phillips' son in William Tell) who had a serious gambling addiction (poker) and seemed to do very well by it. His character was so much the antithesis of mine that I knew what it was made a successful gambler and why I had better give up straight away. He went on to emigrate to the US (he shipped a Rolls Royce over with him), and set up books on Football and Baseball, as well as continuing his infatuation with poker and claiming to have played with the likes of Bill Gates. Whenever he returned to London he took Pat and I out to dinner and managed to persuade us he was making enough money to pay for us. We happily indulged him.

The gambling mentality still fascinates me, but from a distance, and I would probably indulge it if I actually had money to gamble with. But that is the point. You have to have money and you have not to be afraid to lose it. I am so not a gambler. I can't stand losing.

SPEAKING OF DOMINO D. WEST – HE IS SLOWLY CATCHING UP AND HAS NOW READ VIBRATOR 2.0.6

Yes, fan history can be hard to take in more than small doses. I liked Vince Clarke, but he did have rather a rose-tinted view of fandom. Despite (or perhaps because of) his own experiences he still clung onto the dream of Fandom As One Big Happy Family, all fluffy kittens and cute bunny rabbits. (If you can imagine the rather utility fifties fans in such fancy dress.) Still, to do him justice, unlike some who merely paid lip service to the concept, he did attempt to make his own conduct consistent with the All Fans Love One Another ideal. He even tried to be as helpful and positive as possible to KTF reprobates like myself and Michael Ashley. So Vince was a good guy, though somewhat deluded at times.

The supporters of fan funds probably think of themselves as good guys virtuously supporting good causes, but I hope they do not imagine that TAFF, DUFF, GUFF and the like are in any real sense charitable enterprises. I mean, it's like raising funds to send someone to the pub. This might or might not provide a little light entertainment, but it's hardly in the same league as the charities which fight disease or provide aid to the victims of disaster. A sense of proportion is needed here. Whether any particular fan goes to this or that convention is a matter of very, very small importance. As far as I'm concerned, if they have the money, let them pay for the trip themselves, and if they don't have the money, let them stay at home. Either way will do no harm, and may do some good if it acts as a reminder that there is no automatic entitlement to free recreational frivolities. I'm fairly frivolous myself, but I don't expect other people to pay.

As you can see, I am not a big supporter of fanfundery. I stopped bothering years ago, having concluded that the outcome, good or bad, was just a lottery. When I heard that Abi Frost had spent all the TAFF money, I laughed. This might seem callous, but it struck me as a perfect case of let's-pretend fandom stepping on a banana skin and coming down with a thump on cold, hard reality. The surprise was not that it happened, but that it hadn't happened before.

So what could be done about this matter of accountability? (Assuming anyone gives a toss.) Well, you can make people swear loyalty oaths, but this does not guarantee loyalty. All it means is that you have something definite to blame them for if they break the oath. Likewise, you can surround a fan fund with rules and regulations, but all it means is that in the case of wrongdoing you can point to a particular rule having been broken. The money is still gone, so any advantage is somewhat theoretical.

In the end it's a case of either give up on the whole damnfool business or trust the people concerned and hope for the best. There's really no alternative, since the whole legal and financial position of fan funds is very unclear. Who is really in charge and who owns the money? Well, probably whoever has it in their pocket or in their bank account. The fund itself has only a sort of vague and mystic existence. It might be claimed that the spirit and intentions are clear, but these abstractions would not necessarily stand up in court.

Come to think of it, there's also a question mark over the status of fan funds. It could be argued that the handouts are tax-exempt gifts, but it could also be argued that they are taxable income or benefits. In the latter case the last half dozen winners might owe several hundred pounds or dollars to their respective tax authorities. In which case I expect that someone would start yet another fund to pay off the debt, thus opening the prospect of fan funds extending to infinity.

Much more sensible, if people insist on firing off fans to foreign parts, would be to drop the competition aspect and just collect money for the sending of specific persons. (As has been done occasionally.) That way everyone could see exactly what they were paying for and take it or leave it, with much less scope for arguments, accusations of cheating and so on. But perhaps that would be too easy and simple for those who enjoy raising difficulties. No fun at all.

Finally, why is everyone so down on poor Felix Dennis? He doesn't seem to have been much worse than the usual capitalist exploiter of the masses. At least people got something for their money. Anyway, to end on a positive note, here's some lines which came to mind:

Felix Dennis
Never played Tennis
He said that scoring
Was senseless and boring

D. West can be found at **16 Rockville Drive, Embsay, Skipon, North Yorks, BD23 6NX**



NOW CURT PHILLIPS PROVIDES A MODEL FOR WHAT EVERY LOC WRITER SHOULD WORK TOWARDS – READ THE FKING ZINE WRITE ABOUT IT.**

I came home from Loncon 3 with all kinds of souvenirs; suitcases bulging with rare British SF books, magazines, and fanzines; Martin Hoare's business card in my wallet; Jim Mowatt's rental car key in my pocket, odd, inexplicable things like that. I don't know why I'm confessing all this to you here, Graham, except that you mentioned Martin Hoare in VIBRATOR 2.0.7 and that reminded me that within 5 seconds of my meeting Martin in a pub in Reading last month he was drinking the ale that had been delivered to our table for me. (There are more details to that story and they make it clear that Martin was drinking my drink because I'd invited him to do so, but the bare story as I tell it above only adds to Martin's legend so I'll let it stand at that. Besides; how did he *get* me to invite him to drink my drink? Now *that's* true skill, right there...).

And another souvenir I brought home is a rather nice brochure promoting "Paris in 2023" that I was handed by a friend of Jim Mowatt's in Cambridge as we were about to start out for the convention in London. Not 24 hours later I learned at the convention that the "Paris in 2023" bid was out and now it was "Paris in 2017". Definitely not "Paris in 2016" as you have it in this of VIB, - that's already been decided in favor of Kansas City, Missouri – but then, is it *really* "2017" for Paris? Or some other year? It's all a bit confusing, but I think that it's Washington D.C. and Helsinki who are actually bidding for 2017, so where does that leave Paris?

I tried to vote in whatever Worldcon selection voting it was that took place at Loncon only to find that in order to do so one has to *pay* \$40 for the privilege. The \$40 is then discounted off of your membership if you then *buy* a membership to whichever convention wins that Worldcon, which is – I suppose – fine if you're certain that you'll be able to attend that convention in two more years, but not so much if you're just an average fan with a yearn to vote who probably won't be able to go to that Worldcon no matter who wins.

I understand why it's done this way; somebody has decided that only the most serious of Worldcon attendees should be encouraged to vote and the riff-raff shouldn't be allowed to clutter up things.

So why don't we do the voting for the Hugo Awards like that? Charge a hefty fee up front (which can be discounted off your next purchase of... something, I suppose...) so that the less serious voters will avoid cluttering up the process with their under-funded opinions. This will make things a lot more straight-forward for everybody. Then when some special interest group wants to see their particular favorite "win" a Hugo Award they can simply raise money, recruit qualified voters, and buy that award in an open and transparent manner.

The Scientologists *almost* got this approach right when they tried to buy a Hugo Award for L. Ron Hubbub at a previous London Worldcon, but Fandom wasn't quite ready for it then. In the years since then we've had the pioneering work of John Scalzi and various podcasters who've shown us how to get Hugo Awards for wildly inappropriate nominees simply by pretending to be a different *kind* of nominee. No one wants to vote for your novels? Easy! Just claim that your non-fiction postings on your blog make you a Fan Writer and get your non-fannish readers whipped into enough of a frenzy to vote for you. No one's paying attention to your amateur podcast? Just claim that your recordings of rambling comments and amateur readings of amateur fan-fiction makes your podcast a fanzine, then get the many others who can't get it together enough to publish an actual fanzine either to vote for you in support of their own frustrated aspirations. Your favorite bloated writer of bloated fantasy novels never got an award at all and you're bummed out over that? Simple! Claim that his entire series of bloated novels is really one multi-volume work – which coincidentally just concluded with this year's publication of his last posthumous book – and get enough fans who love perversely screwing with the system – any system – to bloc-vote for it. (One thing though; you have to round up more voters than will vote for the actual *good* nominees in that category. Very important point if you want to win...) Perhaps now at last we are finally ready for the concierge Hugo Awards that we've been inching towards for years.

For those who might not recognize that the above is merely sarcastic satire, let me point out that the above is merely sarcastic satire. Please don't have John Scalzi set the SFWA Death Squads on my trail. I mean, it's not as if I said anything snarky about gender parity or the bombastic feminist fury that is Fandom's current cause celebre...

Graham's Big Toe Dept: As a Diabetic you should certainly be concerned about any kind of issue with your feet, particularly with any unexplained pain or numbness in your toes. Pat is correct to urge you to consult your doctor about this, and I urge you to do so too. The whole point is to manage small issues before they become big issues. Shall I tell you what big issues might involve? I assist in a lot of amputations of toes and feet and legs on Diabetics who ignored such issues when they were small ones. See your doctor, please. Take action now so that you'll be able to dance with Eloise at her wedding someday.

Did I meet Paul Skelton at your party just after Loncon 3, Graham? I have the memory of meeting him somewhere during my trip to England but reading his loc in VIB 2.0.7 reminds me that I should have talked with him more. I – for one – would like to see his photos that you had to omit; even the ones of slugs. Isn't Paul the fellow who has that paragon of dogs, "Bestie the Westie"? We currently have two Westies and think them the perfect dog in every respect – except that they do get a bit grumpy when you don't share your hamburger or pizza crusts with them quickly enough. Somehow I suspect that Paul will know exactly what I mean by this.

I diverted my attention from VIB long enough to watch the video of your performance last year at Chez Jackson (<http://www.cartiledgeworld.co.uk/spanko.html>) and enjoyed it as much as any Barista can who wasn't there and who didn't get mentioned in the lyrics (a bucket list item for me; I can't quit Fandom in a huff without being mentioned in a Charnock tune or no one will mourn my departure) but you know how – after one of these videos stops playing – YouTube will insist of suggesting other related videos for you to watch next? For some reason after your video of "Spanko" YouTube thought that I'd enjoy watching videos of sheep. It turns out that there are a great number of sheep videos on YouTube, all the way from the rather enjoyable ones associated with the Pink Floyd tune of the same name ("Sheep", not "Spanko") to some rather disturbing ones featuring sheep and various individuals who don't look like Fans, really. I only researched this and mention it now as a cautionary service to all Fandom, for which your gratitude is taken for granted.

You wrote of our visit to IWM Duxford and indeed it was a magnificent day spent with magnificent friends. I was delighted that so many Baristas were able to turn up and our group photo in front of the V-1 rocket is now one of my most prized phoots. (Copy attached in case you can run it in the next VIBRATOR). My stand out memories of that day are many, and include the fact that when I eventually arrived at the very distant Land War building where all the tanks are kept, I noticed that most on one of the largest WWII tanks someone had taken a piece of chalk and had written "IAN MAULE WAS HERE!" I marveled at the synchronicity on this since I had met the fannish Ian Maule only that very day! What were the odds? Ian, did you have a grandfather who was also called Ian in the Tank Corp in WWII who might have written his name on a tank?

And then later when our little band had all gathered to sit at some picnic tables on the museum grounds to recover from our exertions while we watched a WWII Spitfire cavort in the skies overhead, I remember watching as that deadly fighter aircraft began a strafing run from about a mile away that was clearly centered on the exact spot where I was sitting. The Spitfire flew closer and closer, intent on its target and I began to feel a thrill of delicious fear tingle down my spine. And then I realized that Graham was sitting right next to me, so I tested my assumption about the Spitfire's target by suddenly leaping out of my seat, running 50 yards to my right and diving for cover behind some trash cans. Raising my head slightly to look back I saw with considerable satisfaction that the Spitfire was still locked onto its strafing run and so the target was clearly Graham and not me. Graham and the others may have missed noticing this because they were no longer looking at the Spitfire but were instead all staring in astonishment at me, 50 yards away. The plane snap-rolled to the left at the very last moment and veered away, it's intended victim unaware of the fact that had that plane been carrying live ammunition and had Graham been a German Field Marshall, and had it been 1943 instead of 2014, he'd have just been shot full of holes by the RAF's best.

As I smugly walked back to my party I thought of pointing out their close brush with imaginary death from the skies, but it was a nice day and I didn't want to depress anyone, so I contented myself with a knowing smile for the rest of the day. But I could tell from the way that they all got all quiet and kept watching me while trying to not let me *notice* that they were watching me that they suspected the truth...

Like you, Graham, I'm not generally attracted to today's mega-Worldcons as such. I will say that if one *is* going to attend a large Worldcon then surely doing so as the TAFF delegate must be just about the best way in the world to do so as you meet *so* many more people and get to do so many more things that might not have come one's way otherwise. LONCON 3 was the time of my life, but I do have to admit that the size of the event was intimidating. I met hundreds of people there including many old friends, but since I've returned home I've heard from a vast number of folks who were also there but whom I never saw even once during my whole 6 days in London. I wouldn't have traded the experience for anything, but I'm still looking forward to my next Corflu – whenever that might be – for, as you say, its more intimate and relaxed atmosphere and its focus on the kind of fandom that I enjoy most. However I was very glad that you and Pat did come to Loncon and it was a thrill to see you there. The photo I took of you in the Fan Village will certainly appear in my TAFF report, Real Soon Now...

I didn't really understand that all the time you were at the convention you were dealing with the anxiety and emotions that you write about here, and I'm sorry now that I didn't stop and talk with you more about what you were thinking about the convention that day. As you'll understand I was enjoying a fannish high like none other I'd ever experienced that day, and that may have blinded me from noticing when others weren't having as good a time as I was.

Now that I've read your write-up of your day at Loncon 3 I wish I could go back in time and space to the moment we did meet in the Fan Village so I could discuss all that with you back then. Does that make sense? Probably not, but at some point one does become aware that none of us necessarily sees any one thing from the same point of view; even a generally good and enjoyable thing like a successful SF convention. You've given me much food for thought now – at this time when I'm deeply into writing my TAFF report – and I can already see some parts that I'll soon be reconsidering and possibly re-writing as a result.

I – for one – would be extraordinarily interested in reading your thoughts about editing NEW WORLDS in the 70's. I have a few issues from that era (always looking for more...) and at least one of them bears your name on the masthead. Why not write about this in VIBRATOR? If I were publishing my own zine I'd beg you to write it up for me. In any event, I very much want to read your account of that experience wherever it might appear.

Nice photos from your excellent garden party (I thought you didn't do color photos in VIBRATOR?) and I see that you got one of me not only with my eyes closed but with my head lowered as if in prayer. What could I have been praying about, do you suppose? Ah! So Paul Skelton *was* there! Why didn't I get around to talking with him? My great mistake, that, and I hope I get another chance to meet him again sometime. I'm sorry that you were working so hard on the party that you didn't get to socialize enough, but at least all your guests had a fantastic time. That party was one of the high points of my trip to England and I'm very grateful to you, Pat, and Daniel for having me as a guest in your home.

I must quote an entire paragraph of Robert Lichtman on the topic of fanhistory before I can proceed. He wrote: *"There seem to be two kinds of fans when it comes to interest in and appreciation of fan history. You're clearly one of the ones who isn't concerned with what came before you hopped on board. That's unobjectionable to me, and because of your lack of interest it's completely understandable that you "found Peter Weston's Relapses futile and self-involved examples of the worst kind of fan-history binding." I have mixed feelings myself. I am interested in fanhistory, but there's a limit. So while I found much to enjoy and learn from in Peter's fanzine, I also found articles, some of them very long, that I skipped over because, upon dipping in to test the water, they were really much more than I wanted to know about the activities of some fans—specifically the ones who were only names to me, whose period of activity didn't overlap with my own, and/or who were...there's no other way to put it...living uninteresting (to me) lives that they wrote about at length. I can't say this reaction to material in fanzines is unique to Peter's, though."*

I'm a fanhistorian of a sort myself. I study it as much as I can and have always sought out older fans to hear their perspectives on the things I've read about in the fanhistories. I collect old fanzines not because I particularly want to have mounds of rapidly decomposing mimeograph paper clogging up my bookshelves but because it is the fanzines that have recorded the history of our subculture from the very beginning. Those old fanzines are the source reference material of Fandom. Even the blogs and the Internet groups haven't changed that. At least, not yet. I am fascinated by reading about the intricacies of vanished fan groups and the smallest details of what a fan thought

recording about their lives – particularly of their lives in isolation from other fans, because what those fans thought worth recording tells us much about the very nature of what it was to be a fan in those days. The ones who are only names to me now signal areas where more research is needed; not that the fan in question isn't worth my study. It is all grist for the mill – even though I haven't a clue exactly what sort of bread I'm grinding that meal for. When I went to England on my TAFF trip one of my goals was to look for more background info on several aspects of British fandom (long a weakness in my own studies of fandom) and I found more of it than those fans around me were probably aware that I was even seeing. I'll write more about this in my TAFF trip report, but what I'm leading up to is a confession that I found Peter Weston's RELAPSE to be one of the most fascinating and informative publications that I've ever read. Peter dug deeply and struck unexpected gold far more often than anyone had cause to expect, and I'll be referring to my set of RELAPSE for many years to come. I deeply regret that there will apparently be no more of them due to Peter's ill-health. I'd hoped that I'd see Peter at Loncon 3 but he announced early that he couldn't attend, so I had to content myself with writing him a note of appreciation for RELAPSE. I wish him the very best in his on-going health struggles.

At Loncon I noted a panel in the program book that read:

“Researching Fans: Fan Studies and Fan History
Capital Suite 2 (Level 3), 7pm - 8pm
Tags: Transformative Fandom, Fan Studies
Stanislaw Krawczyk, June Madeley, Jennifer Zwahr-Castro, Bertha Chin Dr,
Erin Horakova

At its most basic, "fan studies" is the study of fans, but the manner in which this is undertaken varies dramatically depending upon who is being studied and who is doing the studying. Academic research about science fiction and fantasy fans largely focuses on media texts and is only about twenty years old (Henry Jenkins's 1992 "Textual Poachers" is the most famous book). There is, however, a much older tradition of recording the history of and analysing the development of SF/F communities, centering around literary fandom (Sam Moskowitz's 1954 "The Immortal Storm" discusses early conventions and fanzines). In this session we discuss the differences between approaches to researching fans, explore why it is undertaken, some of the obstacles in our way and fan reactions to what we do as professionals and amateurs.”

As a member of that audience let me assure you that the panel devoted not one moment of time to considering the “fan reactions to what we do as professionals and amateurs”. They were relentlessly secure in their belief that they had a complete grasp on the topic, and they made it clear that they didn't want any outside influences from fans on their “fan studies”. It was one of the most ludicrous hours I've ever spent at a science fiction convention. The panel members repeatedly made statements like, “...and I'm a fan too”, and then would go on to say something so silly about fandom that it was clear that they were talking about something very different from what anyone likely to be reading VIBRATOR would call fandom. We have invaders amongst us folks, and they are studying us. They're ignoring what we're trying to tell them, but they're nonetheless studying the hell out of us...

I read with interest Robert's confession that as FAPA Sec/Tres he's long been in violation of the FAPA Constitution as regards keeping the treasury buried in a mayonnaise jar in his garden, or whatever it was he said. It's interesting because as FAPA OE I've never read the FAPA Constitution. I publish a copy of it every year but I've never actually read it (too many big words). I wonder if “anybody's*actually read the thing?

Very interesting article by Rob Jackson regarding “A Dribble Of Ink”, Kameron Hurley's Hugo winning article, and related aspects of the latest PC craze in fandom. I must confess that I have no real sympathy for the current crop of “furious feminists” in our midst with their loud and, well, mostly loud cries that males are complete bastards and we should all grovel and admit it. That's my takeaway from this latest bit of fury in fandom anyway and I write this in a tone and spirit that's obviously completely divorced from all thought of being politically correct – or of even just being mindful of the sensibilities of those I'm mocking here – for one simple reason. That is, even though they *do*

have good points to make, they alienate those of us males who might otherwise be inclined to seriously consider their complaints because they go so far over the top in their tone and their attacks as to be themselves biased against all men as a class. I am not a feminist – but neither am I a masculinist. What I am, is a humanist; trying hard to see no boundaries of fairness and access between men and women. I've expressed this idea in the past and have been scorned and vilified *by* ardent feminists, men and women alike. I think it shameful and disgraceful to identify oneself as a feminist *UNLESS* ONE THEN GOES ON TO SAY THAT DOING SO DOES *NOT* MEAN THAT ONE CONSIDERS MEN TO BE UNDESERVING OF FAIR TREATMENT TOO.

I fear that many in the current wave of hyper-feminists in fandom have not even considered the possibility that in taking their strident and aggressive positions that are very much saying that women must be elevated at the expense of men. It seems to me that there's no true fairness or real equality to be found anywhere if all concerned are devoted not to promoting one gender over another but rather devoted to promoting all humanity to the same higher level in all things. And that – my feminist friends – is and has been my position all my life. I feel that I've sometimes taken a lot of abuse from those whose only real interest is in promoting their particular agenda – like “gender parity” (why exactly is it “gender parity” and not “gender equality”? Can it be that true equality isn't really what's wanted?) rather than in actual fairness for all. I got blasted at Corflu 31 for not immediately adhering to the “gender parity” party line on a panel, and frankly I resent it. Fans should be better people than to demand that others think exactly the way that they do. That's the way that Conservative Republicans think about most of us, and I resent that too.

Let the brickbats fly...

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AND NOW THE END IS NEAR, AND SO I FACE THE FINAL CURTAIN...

Old Blue Eyes was good, wasn't he. I bet if he'd received as copy of my fanzine he'd have sat right down and written me a letter. He'd have written words oh, so sweet they would have knocked me off my feet with a lot of kisses on the bottom I'd be glad I got 'em. Well I'm still waiting for lots of kisses on the bottom from the likes of Randy Byers (Happy Birthday Randy) and Andy Hooper, but I guess I may be waiting a long time. It's a good job old Robert Lichtman is out there. He never lets me down.

I had hoped to include a report on the fun and jollity that will surely happen (or will have happened) at Barcon 2, but Curt's megaloc has shunted that off to the next issue. I refuse to publish a regular monthly fanzine of more than twenty pages. That way madness and financial dissolution lies.

What am I listening to at the moment? Glad you asked even though I only did so to attempt to drag out this sad goodbye. Kongos, which are a familial South African Group descended from their father, John Kongos (Tokoloshe Man) Good stomp and boot dance music. Ask Rich Coad what I mean by that.

Sara Batailles continues to witchify me with her soaring voice. And I am getting back to ancient, nay pre-antedeluvian Bob Dylan. I am so glad to have been alive at the same time as him. Meanwhile here is an url of me singing FUCK A MONKEY blues whilst actually fucking a monkey. (I understand this has been taken down by Youtube and I will now be facing a bestiality charge.) So before I am locked up only one last chance to beseech you to send me locs, money, bottle of Vodka, whatever you have in your garage. Goodbye cruel world.

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