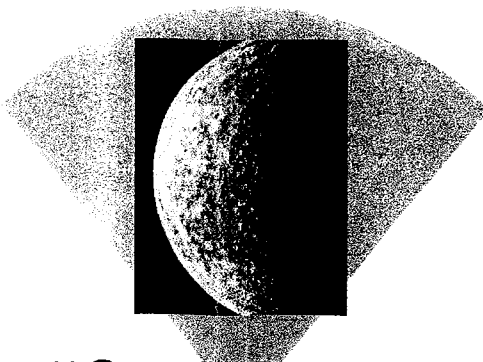


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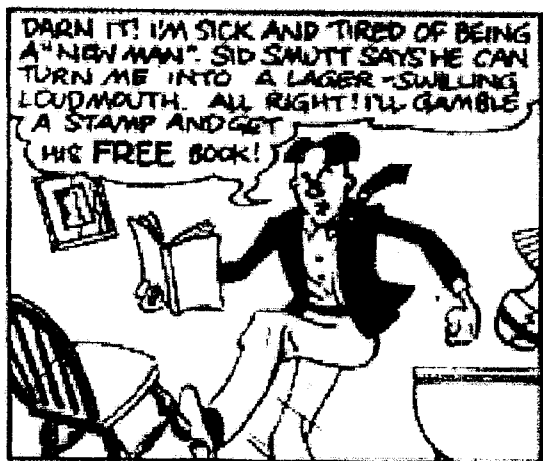
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issue #8 : March 2001

"Reportable to Public Health in Maryland" (S Birkhead)

EGOTORIAL

Hope y'all like this new format. I've gotten PrintMaster to play with at home as a substitute for bad ole MS Word, which of course buggers me up for emailing *This Here* out as a file as before, unless the happy recipient also has that piece of software. Such is progress and the price of being a bit more fancy-schmancy. Anyhoo, important stuff up front: **please note new email addresses** for personal stuff (nicandbobbie@aol.com) and a separate one for LoCs (thisherefanzine@aol.com). Anyone who emailed the old address on or after February 15th is likely to have had their missive consigned to wander the ether.



I'm finally getting off my ass to get this out in time for Corflu. (In fact, I'm having to

retype everything right now, the weekend before, since I managed to find a way to crash the program and make the original week's worth of work inaccessible.) For those who didn't know, I'm currently unemployed (which fucking sucks) after being 'let go' by my employer of the previous 3½ years (although according to the Maryland Department of Labor, I was apparently discharged - news to me, that). To be honest, it wasn't that much of a surprise. There's been hardly any work in our area for several months, and I've been sitting around most of the day going over personal correspondence,

making major decisions like which nut to scratch right now, playing *Transport Tycoon*, you know the drill. There doesn't appear to be a lot of work around in my specialty (AS/400 RPG programming) right now. We'd expected a downturn and general cutbacks in client requirements after the big push to get everybody through Y2K. We figured most companies budgetted ahead, or front-loaded their expected expenditure at the tail end of 1999 and the first and second quarters of 2000,

basically making the latter part of 2000 and probably the first half of 2001 dead time in terms of program development. So, I'm scuffing around a bit, but there is a potential career change on the horizon.

The Blessed One and m'self were somewhat lucky in having filed taxes early and, because I'd kept my original deduction schedule for the last year, we got a thumping refund since I claimed as head of household, married with two dependent kids. Given the lack of decent jobs in my own field right now, I've also been looking at the possibility of going into business for myself as some sort of travelling PC advisor. I got this idea because a number of my good ole redneck buddies call me up from time to time when they're having computer problems, and I'm usually able to sort them out, pretty much by virtue of the fact that I've used PCs for much of my working life.

We'll see how it goes, eh? Of course, the other big fucking pain is that I'll now actually have to *pay* for printing *This Here*, *nichevo*, *SingSing* and the rest instead of sneaking into work at 6am and slapping out the copies on that nice machine that sorted and stapled 'em all for me. Pah! (Hey, maybe that's why they 'discharged' me...)

A PLAN FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF ARTHUR C CLARKE

So far, 2001 frankly sucks dead bear's ass. I thought we started off well enough, to be sure. I actually managed to see the New Year in for once (it being my usual habit to be pretty insensible by the time midnight comes around), and did so at home amid friends and family. It's always nice when the holidays fall around a weekend so you get that extra celebration/recovery time. We had the kids here that weekend too, so Matt & Charlene and their brood came over, and my son stayed over Saturday *and* Sunday night - a first there. Actually he was the only one of the kids to stay up long enough to watch the ball drop, and he thought that was all pretty cool, which I suppose it is when you've just turned six.

We awoke the next morning to find that the car wouldn't start, so I had to call his grandparents to come get the wean. Turned out we needed a new fuel pump, which mercifully wasn't as expensive as it could have been. We ended up paying \$250 for the job, which was a bit of a relief since you often expect everything to cost four figures on an old Cadillac. We hoped this wasn't some kind of omen, and continued on in blind optimism (or ignorance) into the joys of a New Year.

I figured work should start to pick up a bit, since the New Year usually brings in a bunch of calls from clients who can't remember how to run their W2s from one year to the next. (Note to non-US readers: a W2 is a form showing your statement of earnings and tax paid for the previous year, which you need to file your taxes. Federal law requires that they are provided to employees by the end of January.) But no, still all quiet on the Western Front. The previous year the IRS had made some changes in the regulations, which inevitably means you

have to modify the W2 payroll programs and transmit the changes to all the clients who use them. It's not billable work, but it keeps you busy and on a deadline.

I spent a fair bit of January frantically trying to solicit articles for *nichevo #2*, which I'm sure will appear at **some** point, but won't be anywhere near the promised frequency of quarterly, what a surprise. I was a bit bummed at not getting much feedback on #1, but I'll be the first to admit that the distribution was pretty lame. I'd basically just handed out copies at Novacon to the usual suspects (and seemingly thus proving to myself the old saw that handing out copies of a fanzine gets much less response than mailing them), and mailed out maybe 20 copies or so in the US, primarily to the contributors and principals, and a number of local fen. I snuck in work early several days to make enough copies to send out with the February FAPA mailing, so we'll see if that garners any response, although of course the old email address is still given in that ish, and nothing's getting to me from *there*, thank you very much.

Anyhoo, things did seem to be looking up when we got our taxes filed, and nice 'n' early too. I've always had my withholding deductions set as though I were single, and for 2000 (as I noted) I got to claim married with two dependent kids. (This may cause problems down the line, as the Blessed One's asshole ex says he has an agreement whereby he gets to claim one of them on *his* taxes. But as I am wont to observe, you can usually tell when he's lying - his lips are moving.) The upshot of this is that between State and Federal taxes we got a refund of

around \$7,000. Yippee and all that. The Blessed One said we should set some aside to replace my lost wedding ring (oh, didn't I mention that? Another 2001 moment of joy, but I should add that I subsequently found it after several weeks). We started playing catchup with some heavy bills that'd been left wanting, bringing the mortgage up to date and paying off the seriously-in-arrears electric and phone bills. Speaking of the phone bill, it amazes the crap out of me that it costs Bobbie more to call her sister in Bowie (30 miles or so away) than it does for me to call my mother in the UK. It's a not very well kept secret that when the phone companies offer all these astounding per-minute rates for 'long distance', the small print informs you that this applies to state-to-state calls only, *not* in-state long distance, which is where they generally have you by the balls. Of course, local calls are still free, but down here in the boonies that means you can call about 3 people. Anything over about 10 miles away is 'long distance'. This, by the way, also severely limits our choice of ISP.

Then it all starts to go down the crapper, beginning, appropriately enough, with a blocked toilet. We do actually have two bathrooms in the house. When Dee Ann and I bought this place back in January of 1994, it was a typical 'summer person' beach house - no central heating, no insulation, and no bathtub - just a shower and bog in the basement and an additional commode and hand basin on the main floor. In one of the periods of refinancing and unlocking some of the cash in the place about three years ago I bought a *lot* of materials for improvements, many of which (doors, windows etc.) are still sitting around looking forlorn. We also got

bequeathed a bathroom set when the old apartment at Dee Ann's parents' house (3 choruses of 'this is where we used to live') was refurbished. The upstairs bathroom was enlarged (encroaching on a rather miffed Stephanie's room) to install the tub, which the Blessed One and I (and the kids, and the dog) happily washed in until we discovered that a break in the waste pipe under the house was pissing water and other unmentionable stuff into the area of my storage shed. So the tub's been gathering dust and spiders for a year or two until we have the wherewithal to get that pipe replaced. In fact, our original plan with that nice wodge of tax money was to get that upstairs bathroom finished, paying a reputable builder to come in and do the work.

This rather overlong preamble is to advise y'all that we have only one working toilet (the basement one) since that upstairs bathroom has been out of commission, so obviously a problem with *that* means we'll be pissing and shitting out of the window in no time at all unless we can get it sorted, and fast. The waste here runs into a septic tank which is at the side of the house, and we'd had a few problems with that some years before where we more or less had to dig down to it and clear a bunch of - er - crap out. Crab-o Mel and I re-covered it with 6x6 supports and a honkin' big piece of plywood, and I shoveled the dirt back over to hide it somewhat. However, now was the time for all good men and true (me) to dig the fucker out again, since it was clear that we'd have to have it pumped.

Have you ever tried to get hold of a particular tradesman when it's the weekend of their annual convention? Needless to say, just about every septic tank service in the county and beyond was away the weekend I was trying to get an emergency pump-out, so we had to wait until Monday before we could get anybody to do the dirty deed. The only service who offered to come out on the Saturday wanted something like \$350, which is more than

double the going rate. Because the tank is an old metal-walled type (presumably installed when the house was built in 1936) I had to sign a waiver before the guy would pump, saying it wasn't his fault if it collapsed when he did it. To be fair, though, he only charged me \$100 for what's normally a \$150 job. The pumping made no difference, and the septic guy strongly advised me to get the tank replaced (something I'd known we'd have to do sooner rather than later, except now it's later). Oh fuck, there goes the finished upstairs bathroom, since a new septic will cost a *minimum* of \$2000, and, given the accessibility problems here (the house is on a hill) could be more like \$5000, depending upon what the county inspector says we have to do. I go to get the necessary permit, and call in with the code, but the septic guys have yet to call back. This is perhaps just as well, since we don't have anything like five grand any more.

Still with a non-flushing po, I must follow the advice given and completely uncover the tank to look at where the pipes lead into it. It's possible that a bunch of dirt has gotten into one of them, or there's a blockage that I'll have to deal with. Lovely - I am *so* looking forward to wading around up to my knees in shit. An hour or so's assiduous digging later, I manage to lift the ply cover off the thing, and spend a moment or two studying the situation. (What *is* that floating over there?) It looks as though both pipes (the one from upstairs and the one from the basement) go into the tank at the same place, and the basement one has a huge wad of toilet paper in front of it, resting on top of the other pipe and blocking any egress. I get a broom handle and manage to dislodge this without getting my feet wet, and am immediately rewarded by a huge *sloooooosh* as twenty feet of pipe's worth of turds and other detritus spurt out into the tank. I redo the cover (so the tank is more accessible than before),

have a celebratory shit and am still waiting for the septic inspection. At least we now have some relief (ho ho). It hadn't been much fun driving up to the Fastop in St. Leonard, ostensibly to get cigarettes, but in fact pushing cotton all the way to the public restrooms.

This was also the week I got laid off (or discharged). February 15th hardly conjures up images of a day of infamy, but when I was called into the boss' office I had a good idea of what to expect, as I've intimated previously. Don't get me wrong here, I've no major beef with the company over this, in fact it could be said to have been pretty good of them to carry me as long as they did knowing there really wasn't the work to justify it. My work buddy Craig's fiancée Maxine left for another job last year, and she wasn't replaced. So far, my position hasn't been replaced either. They gave me two weeks severance and gave me two contacts for job agencies who, by their stunning efforts for me so far, presumably do not believe I actually exist.

Matt & Charlene have decided to move to North Carolina again, in part due to some legal problems (which we thought were all done with), in part because Matt hasn't been getting enough work (he's a carpenter) and not least because they were being thrown out of the basement apartment they were renting from one of the cousins, who has a reputation for being 'difficult' at times. On this occasion Matt was a few days late with the rent because he had something urgent to take care of, and she threw a major shit-fit over it. Ah, well. Accusations and nastiness abound, and there's the usual cycle of threat and counter-threat that goes on in these family squabbles. All too depressingly familiar.

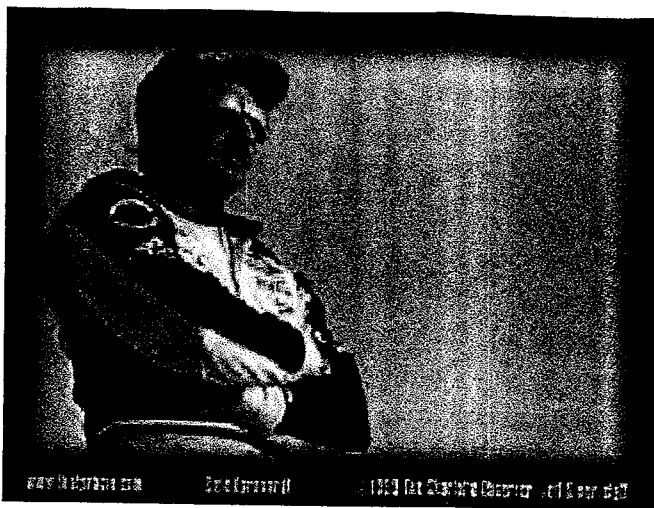
As we have a kid-free weekend, Matt & Charlene also contrive to lose their daughters so we can have a little farewell party with the four of us watching Daytona. Except for Charlene, who doesn't know much about it, we're all big race fans so this is quite the party

for us. We get plenty of race snack food, ice down a buncha beers and settle in.

statements being released from the hospital were that Earnhardt was in 'serious' (rather

pretty rude, though (perhaps understandably). Go figure how he's happy to set up a check by phone for \$1800 bucks or so, but not an even two grand because he 'doesn't trust me'. Ah, fuck off.

The world knows what happened that day. We'd already seen one apparently horrendous crash which sent Tony Stewart's #20 Pontiac flying through the air. By comparison, the knock that Earnhardt took seemed minor, but the difference was that Tony didn't actually impact anything much, whereas Dale hit the wall at something like 185mph. When you've watched enough racing, you know when something serious



DALE EARNHARDT
1951 - 2001
Now there's racin' in Heaven

has gone down from the demeanor of the other drivers. What should have been a fine celebration for Michael Waltrip, driving to his first ever win (for Dale Earnhardt, Inc.), cheered on by his brother Darrell who was in the commentary booth for the first time after retiring at the end of last season, turned quickly enough to gloom. Fox sports, who'd paid shitloads of money to get the rights to NASCAR for the next several seasons, ended coverage as scheduled, so we turned on ESPNNews and waited to hear the situation. At first, it seemed a little encouraging that the

than 'critical') condition. When the news came down at about 8pm that he was dead, I sat stunned on the couch and cried like a baby.

An unbiased observer might have felt quite sorry for the guy from the mortgage company who chose that moment to phone up to harass me about the arrears. I ended up screaming at his sorry ass for several minutes, somewhat less than politely urging him to show a little respect for the recently departed. After I'd calmed down enough to talk in a more reasonable manner, he was

Charlene got too much drink in her and got pretty upset with everything, and as usual when she's well langered started fighting with Matt and chucking stuff around the room. Great send-off. Have fun in Carolina, y'all.

Race fans are a partisan lot. I've always been a fan of Earnhardt's #3, but Bobbie likes the #24 of Jeff Gordon, who's quite the favorite of many of the ladies, but is dismissed by many guys as just a pretty boy, though it's difficult to argue with his driving record and championships. She never liked Dale Earnhardt much, since he would be rather fond of shoving other cars out of his way on many occasions. The sobriquet of 'The Intimidator' was well-deserved. On race days we more or less managed to agree to root for the Joe Gibbs Racing team of Bobby Labonte and Tony Stewart, but of course if either Gordon or Earnhardt won a race, a certain amount of crowing would ensue. It can get quite intense if Matt's favorite driver, Rusty Wallace, is also in the mix. A lot of fans will transfer their allegiance to Dale Earnhardt Jr. in the #8 car, but for some reason he doesn't inspire me quite as much as his old man did. I didn't watch much of last week's race. Somehow it's not quite the same.

TUNES!



A fair amount of ground to cover this, mainly on the Xmas albums bought and/or received, so let's get to it.

On the strength of the excellent single *Renegades of Funk*, I treated myself to Rage Against The Machine's *Renegades* just before the hols. The album is a selection of

'cover songs' of a sort, but RATM have actually created new music to the lyrics of the older songs. The almost eponymous single is a reworking of an old Afrika Bambaataa song. The hard to find original is in fact quite insipid compared to the newer, heavier treatment. Metal/funk beats pervade the disc, and it's very

strange to hear a *completely* different version of a song like *Street Fighting Man*, where you're actually pretty familiar with the original. The standout here, though, is a powerful treatment of *Kick Out The Jams*.



Bobbie got a copy of *Maroon* by the Barenaked Ladies, whom we both like, and we both liked the single *Pinch Me* a lot. The rest of the CD is, however, rather thin. You expect a lot of witty cleverness and silliness from these boys (sort of like a Canadian version of Squeeze) but the talk about their becoming 'more serious' obviously had some truth to it, since there really isn't the sense of fun here that pervaded their earlier releases.

Sit up, Steve Green, 'cos here come The Offspring with their latest effort *Conspiracy Of One*, mentioned lastish in connection with the single *Original Frankster*. This was a gift from our Joe's girl- friend Taylor, and although I still think they're very derivative, the band seem to pick their riffs with joyous intent, and the whole album bounces along very happily indeed. I *swear* I heard a Duran Duran bit in there somewhere...

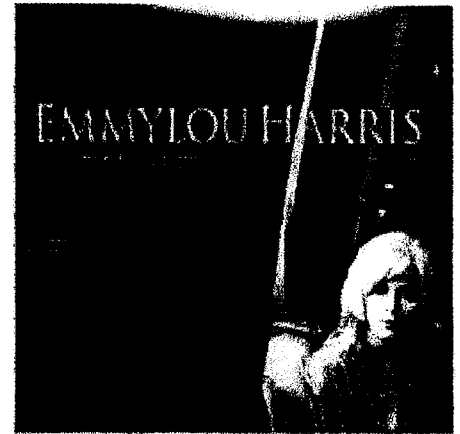
OK Max, you can turn the page now, because the country divas are next. The Blessed One got a copy of last August's release by Lee Ann

Womack, *I Hope You Dance*, which she likes a gret deal (having worked on the astounding title song for karaoke), and I must say I agree with her. Womack's song topics and indeed, her own personal story are a little reminiscent of Tammy Wynette whom she superficially resembles in some respects, but when she gets her teeth into a good traditional country tune, she can manage to sound a *lot* like Dolly Parton, which in my not so humble opinion is no bad thing at all.

In fact, let's visit both la Parton and another of country's greatest. You can safely assume to have reached iconic status when your first name is all anyone needs to identify you (excluding those who trade under their first name exclusively, of course). After all, country fans everywhere know who you're talking about when you mention 'Patsy' or 'Loretta', or indeed 'Dolly'. Likewise 'Emmylou'. I had a little post-Xmas spree at the music store and came home with Harris'



Lee Ann Womack



Red Dirt Girl and Parton's *Little Sparrow*. Surprisingly, one was much more satisfying than the other, but both have their strong and weak points.

As I wrote lastish, *Red Dirt Girl* has been getting rave reviews from all and sundry. It's Emmylou's first studio album in five years (since *Wrecking Ball*, and if you don't count *Trios II* with Parton and Linda Ronstadt), and the first in many a year on which she's actually taken on most of the songwriting chores

herself. However, I was more than a little disappointed to find an album which was basically indistinguishable from *Wrecking Ball*. Not that this is a bad thing in itself, and I don't dislike it for that, but I suppose with all the goshwow reviews I'd expected something more. As with the earlier album, I did latch on to one song here I considered outstanding: *Hour of Gold* (apparently partly based on a quotation from the Book of Psalms), a stunningly atmospheric piece which, according to the lady herself, was released in its original rough take rather than a later, more polished one. A fine decision, in this case.

Little Sparrow, on the other hand, really *did* leave me with the goshwows. It's easy to forget, thanks to Dolly's self-cultivated dumb blonde country girl image, that she's

not only a shrewd businesswoman, but also an outstanding songwriter and arranger - just think how much money she's still making from *I Will Always Love You*, for example (even though, as any fule kno, the original is a hundred times better than the overstimulated abortion perpetrated by Grotney Crack-Ho). Not only this, Parton is *usually* a fine judge of selecting others' material to rework, though the only real blot on this particular CD is a very ill-advised cover of Cole Porter's *I Get A Kick Out of You*, which comes across as merely rather silly. Not to denigrate the lady's own writing skills, but the ones that really grab you initially here are the cover versions - the abovementioned excepted. Whoever came up with the idea to redo Collective Soul's alt-rock standard *Shine* was truly inspired. This version, while quite faithful to the original, is rearranged for a country band in such a way as to suggest that's how it might have been written. I doubt many of Dolly's fan base will have even heard of the original, so I guess it's kinda moot, but for the

more broadminded listener it's tremendous fun to play the two back to back. There's also a cover of Steve Young's classic *Seven Bridges Road*, which is so good it's practically definitive.

Dolly has described this album as "bluegrass/mountain music" and the presence of guest Alison Krauss on several tracks can only boost that credential.

I have to mention the *only* CD single I've bought so far, *South Side* by Moby featuring Gwen Stefani (who does not appear on the album version, also packaged with the single). I can best describe this song as anthemic. The booming bass strings remind you that ELO used to get exactly that sound from their massed rock 'n' roll cellos before they went disco/pop, and for some reason when listening to the song I can't help but think that an extended promo for *Dark Angel* would seem to go rather well with it. A definite single of the year contender.

I also listened to the tape of Brazilian singer Marisa Monte kindly sent to me by Paul Di Filippo, and it's easy to see from this why he raves so much about her. Although English lyrics are few and far between, and needless to say I don't understand Portugese (ah, we still miss John D Rickett), there's a definite quality here which transcends such

piffling barriers. Monte's voice has an astonishing purity and clarity, and yet is by no means bereft of emotion, not surprising from such an unashamedly Latin siren. Apparently she's one of the few remaining superstars in a market notoriously affected by depression, and listening to *Rose and Charcoal* and *Memories, Chronicles and Declarations of Love* you can see why. Although the timbre of their voices is quite different, it's possible to imagine that Aretha Franklin might have sounded like this if she'd been born in Brazil - that incredible combination of traditional and modern, technical excellence and soul all rolled into one. Yes folks, now you know what Paul knows: Marisa Monte *is* that good!



Noted briefly: *Emotion* by Martina McBride, who maintains her usual high standard on this CD, and is for my money still the most amazin' looking country singer out there. Cor!

RASSLIN'

In-ring events in WCW have undoubtedly taken a back seat to the ongoing ownership saga, which in many ways is a shame since the promotion just staged a pretty damn good pay-per-view (*Greed*) and has featured some

exciting new talent in recent weeks.

A little history: when Time Warner merged with Turner Broadcasting, it was known that the honchos of the new company were not entirely happy with having rasslin'

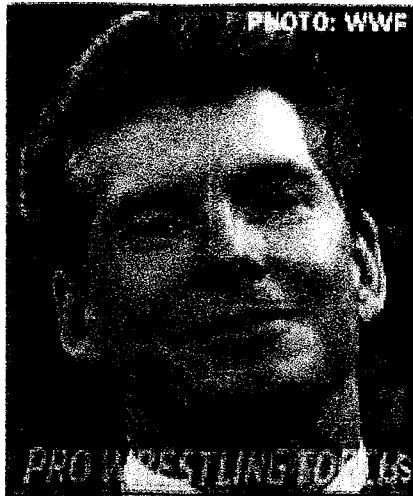
as a flagship product on the TNT and TBS cable channels. This situation was exacerbated by Time Warner's acquisition by AOL, and the announcement (at the end of last year) that the WCW properties were to be sold off lock, stock

and barrel came as little surprise. A group including former WCW maven Eric Bischoff, essentially fronting for a company called Fusient Media, emerged as the front runners to acquire the company, but it appeared that all along this sale (original asking price around \$50m) was predicated on the continued broadcast of the WCW shows. It now seems that this was never AOL/Time Warner's intent, and it doesn't seem beyond the bounds of reasonable speculation that the new mega-corp was trying to pull a fast one on potential buyers, knowing that they were going to pull the plug on rasslin' shows over the Turner network. Presumably Fusient's (and Bischoff's) insistence on guaranteed airtime (really just the continuation of existing contracts) put the nail in the coffin of this deal, since one might now deduce that AOL/Warner had no intention of living up to that.

Sho' nuff, last week new Turner Broadcasting boss Jamie Kellner announced that after the March 27th Monday Nitro (when it had been assumed that WCW would go on a brief hiatus anyway as part of the ownership transfer), rasslin' shows would no longer be carried by their stations. Predictably, the Fusient bid was effectively withdrawn the next day.

Equally predictably, this allowed Vince McMahon to step in and acquire WCW for what will probably be seen as a bargain price, said to be in the \$15-\$20m range. Bear in mind that this includes all intellectual rights to WCW properties (including the back catalog of pay-per-view recordings, merchandise and so forth) but *not* the contracts of the talent - an important distinction.

In some ways this can be seen as the conclusion of a years long feud. Back in the day, Ted



Why is this man smiling?

Turner attempted to acquire WWF when that promotion was *much* less popular than it is today, but was rebuffed by McMahon, who is probably now smirking like a madman having gotten one over on his former nemesis.

WWF has offered contracts to a number of the lower-paid talent of WCW, including Lance Storm and Billy Kidman, to name two who get consistent crowd reactions. Turner is left to offer buyouts to the higher paid rasslers on guaranteed contracts, ranging from 50 cents on the dollar (to those earning less than \$500,000) to 30 cents (for those above one and a half mil). The guys can, of



Plokt editorial meeting - soon to be a WCW pay-per-view

course, choose to remain home and get paid for the rest of their contract, but this would preclude them from working elsewhere. If they take the buyout, they have little choice but to go cap in hand to Vinnie Mac if they want to work and remain in the public eye.

It seems there's every intention of continuing to run the WCW as a separate promotion, and it's being suggested that cross-promotional rivalries could be established to boost ratings. If anything, the best result for rasslin' in general would seem to me to be that the crazy contracts paid to some of the 'superstars' by WCW will now be a thing of the past, since there's only one game in town right now. Worst case, McMahon could gut the WCW and exercise his iron hand over whoever's left kissing his ass, or in maintaining it as a separate product he could script the same cartoonish antics which fuel my general dislike of WWF. Given that the emphasis has been squarely on the action (rather than storyline at the expense of action) in the WCW of late, this would be a damn shame.

WCW will be back on our screens in some form or another (and the cable industry will be happy about this since they were apparently more than a little panicky about having lost the

ECW pay-per-views, and now potentially those of WCW also). WWF has a cast-iron agreement with Viacom to carry its shows, and so it seems likely that we'll see WCW on TNN, which while it has pretty good penetration nationwide, isn't quite up to the level of the Turner channels.

Will Vince McMahon take a perverse pleasure in dragging WCW into the dirt, or will he take the smart business decision and try to keep a good promotion going? Time will tell.

LOCO CITATO

((Editorial comment looks like this... Sheryl Birkhead's billet doux surfaced from the depths of - er - depths, probably panting slightly. Sorry for the delay in printing this, Sheryl...))

October 27

Sheryl Birkhead writes:

I'll miss **Ken** (**Cheslin**) too. I found the information on his 'disability' almost impossible to believe. His *Olafs* were crude in rendition, but humorous and totally Kench - I liked them, and told him so often.

(...)

FYI, in Maryland Scabies is reportable to Public Health because, usually, the pets are implicated and extensive treatment of the premises etc. are required. Lyme Sulfur dips anyone?

Seeing your comments about art (and having a lousy memory) I'll not stuff (well - I exaggerate) the envelope.

Just saw Chyna - the Women's WWF person - and all I can think of is: Hey, she was Harry's girlfriend on *3rd Rock!* So much for ANYTHING I know about wrestling.

(...)

I finally (May 9, 2000) paid to have my car repaired and submitted the bill to Toys R Us - now to get reimbursed (hal), but that was \$ put toward the mortgage, so I hope this happens SOON. They refused to accept the estimates I got and I couldn't wait any longer (they never returned my calls etc.), so the bank account is almost 0.

I know that, over the years, there have been (fan) fund problems, but I've stayed out of them and feel everyone is 'eligible'. I thought about running - once upon a time - but did my homework and I'm too shy (around fans) to be a good ambassador.

125509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD

20882

'December 2000'

Alan Sullivan writes:

Gosh, I've actually managed to get back to you within a couple of months. I'd suspect that it was record, if I didn't know that a record is a black vinyl disk with a hole in the middle, used for audio recording. It's the way I tell them. I'm sure you noticed...

Egotorial: Nice cover - you look rather Maverick (although it's clear to see that Bobbie has managed to get her man). May things be good for you both from here on in.

On a related note, I'm not sure who **Henry Welch** is (ignorant sod that I am) but I very much doubt that he is **Alison Scott**. About Alison Scott there can be no doubt.

I too was saddened by **Kench's** death - all the more, coming so soon after JDR's. I only ever met him once - at JDR's funeral as it happened - although I'd 'known' him on paper for some years, through fanzines, apas and letters. The impression I got was of a spirit so willing, you just *knew* it would overcome the limitations of the flesh. A man so very alive. A good fan and true. If there is some fannish Valhalla, where we will be reunited at the end of all things, he is sure to have a place of honour. Turning out hand-decorated fanzines and Olafs galore, I suspect. He certainly will be missed.

Coincidence: Some people say there's no such thing as coincidence. I'd be inclined to opt for Sod's Law working overtime myself - the theory of Universal Bloody-Mindedness has much to recommend it. However, you know what they say about three times being enemy action.

To get back to an earlier point: two weeks in Ocean City for the most DWI arrests in a given period? That's not motivation,

that's incitement to pervert the course of justice (or I *assume* that's what a lawyer would call encouraging police officers to be extra rigorous in their duties, to the point where it amounts to persecution. Not that I'm an expert, you understand.)

((We'd heard that the equivalent prize for the final quarter of 2000 was a ski trip. Since they built the Fastop (gas station / general store) opposite the Tavern in St. Leonard, the cops have had a habit of hanging out there in the parking lot at certain times. This is actually good for the predominantly female staff of the Fastop, since they're open 24 hours and there have been a few instances of people trying to rob the place or just behaving obnoxiously, and a regular police presence obviously protects them from that. Though if I were inclined to a bit of larceny, I'd wait till around 1:30 or 2:00am when all the cops are haring up the road after drivers who've just left the bar. (Refer to classic 'professional decoy' joke anytime you like.) The Surrey Inn is just north of Prince Frederick on Route 4 (the main highway). On one occasion last year a cop pulled out after a departing customer, pulled him over up the road, and finding him to be over the limit (though apparently not by a great deal) arrested and charged him. The owner of the Surrey went to court with the driver, and in a state of high indignation complained to the judge that the officer had been waiting in his parking lot (for the use of patrons only) without his permission, which is required since that is private property, a fact the cop was reluctantly forced to admit. The case was thrown out on the basis of this being an illegal stop...))

Scabies: Oh, joy. Hope the problem clears up soon.

***Some other...:** Now *that* sounds like a party and three-quarters, never mind a half. Not to mention the run up to the main event.

Congratulations on making the whole thing go well.

Tunes!: Some quality music there, and no mistake. Glad to hear that the music you had planned for the wedding – not to mention your songs – all came off without too much bother. It could all have gone horribly wrong, so very easily (I've been to, and done, enough karaoke events to know about tunes going wrong). Congratulations to both of you on carrying it off – especially the improvisation at the end. Well done.

Rasslin': I suspect I may never really understand the appeal of this sport, but you write about it with such enthusiasm, I can't help but find myself caught up in it all.

(...)

Loved the pic on p.31. I have an RPG character who probably wears one of those. I wonder what our GM will say when I show it to him.

On a final note of gratuitousness, hope you enjoy the Christine (sic) Aguilera pic I've enclosed...

'February 2000'

(...)

There has been much mention of your near-miss in the Nova awards in a variety of British fanzines. One theme that pops up once or twice is eligibility – on the basis that you live in the USA – and the lack of clear-cut rules on the matter. Personally, I would agree with those who say that since you're an ex-pat Brit, and *This Here...* reads like a Brit 'zine, you ought to either be eligible, or at least have a sort of dual nationality for the same purpose. Frankly though, it all seems like a bit of a major how-de-do over nothing, but then I never did have much taste for all this fhnishish politicking...

Sorry to hear about your mum. I hope she's on the mend.

Best of luck with getting to the Boston Conflu.

(...)

British Female Lawyers – the legal profession's answer to *Readers' Wives*? The mind boggles... Sandra Bullock and a cheese grater...? Bloody hell, I shall have to ask **M J 'Simo' Simpson** about that one, he's much more knowledgeable about 'fine arts' films and publications than I...

Tobes for TAFF: well, I've no data on the voting, so I can't comment, but I *still* say it got things shaken up. The most surprising thing from *my* point of view was how annoyed some people – ones whom I'd have thought would have taken the joke as such – got over the whole thing. Inserting extra h's doesn't make me happy. Inserting extra h's to annoy those who think extra h's are important however...

[[There's the big difference between us on this one, Alan. You considered Tobes' candidacy to be a joke, while I and others took it seriously...]]

Rodney Leighton would not approve of some of our activities as revealed in *TMJ*? Gosh. We must be doing something right then (Joke. JOKE. JOKE)...

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January 7

From L.Edwards@ed.ac.uk

Lillian Edwards writes:

Happy 2001 (weird innit?? - best piss take I have seen is an episode of *The Simpsons* where Homer floats in free fall to that Blue Danube waltz music taking munches out of Pringles in time to the music. Well, it made me laugh.)

If you're going to keep printing gratuitous pics of me I guess you might as well have a

vaguely flattering and/or up to date one not that ancient one off the uni web site .. so here you are. Don't use them all at once...

[[I'm tempted to retain them for personal use, of course...]]

I notice that Lloyd Penney often seems to recall fondly that weekend Christina and I visited Toronto back in 96. But surely something exciting has happened to Toronto fandom more recently? Lloyd should enlighten us, especially with the Toronto worldcon coming up. Incidentally if Chris and I are Thelma and Louise I'm definitely holding out from being Geena Davis - not because I fancy her (Nic) but because I don't want to be associated with a mad do gooder nun. You can see why Sean Penn was so keen to get to the electric chair if only to get away from Susan Sarandon. I did like her until that film...



Thelma & Louise (not necessarily in that order) & obligatory big-boobed broad for comparison...

January 26

From chris.murphy@breathemail.com

Chris Murphy writes:

Aaargh! My last LoC didn't convey what I intended. For a start I managed to miss a 'nearly' out of the opening sentence, making it appear that I thought you'd won the Nova. I also gave you the impression that I believed **Tobes** was comparable to **Abi Frost**. Not so. I was trying to say that Frost's behaviour has

created a climate of caution among TAFF voters. Any candidate not perceived as a familiar 'pillar of fandom' on either side of the Atlantic is at a disadvantage. For these cock-ups I apologise. It's time I learned to proofread.

On to issue # 7. You obviously had an enjoyable wedding tailored to your joint lifestyles and values, which is as it should be. I am usually uncomfortable with the traditional church ceremony, especially where I know that neither the couple nor most of the congregation believe in the doctrines of the church concerned.

This time I read 'Rasslin' all the way through. The wrestlers and fights still mean little to me, but the internal politics is intriguing in an ugly kind of way. It's sadly unsurprising that WCW should have replaced their experienced production staff with less competent ones without thinking through the likely consequences. I smell the intervention of financial consultants who didn't understand the business they were advising.

LoCs occupied more than half the 'zine and why not? They were good stuff, excepting my flawed effort, even though some of the writers seemed to view TAFF as a sort of masonic conspiracy. I have to agree with you and E B Frohvet about Julia Roberts. She may be a reasonable actress, but she's not as physically attractive as all the hype suggests.

Your exchange of views with Alan Sullivan about the merits of psychiatry and psychoanalysis interested me for very personal reasons. I spent a long time - in retrospect, far too long - with a partner who was repeatedly treated for her excessive drinking. It has recently emerged that she may have a serious psychological condition, of which the drinking is only a symptom. This was overlooked by a succession of doctors and therapists who were too busy stamping her case 'Alcoholic' to notice it. As you observe, mental health care often assumes that patients should conform to

models.

'Indulge Me': yes, whatever did happen to Curved Air? I remember that their female singer had a distinctive, laid-back voice. Their first album was originally sold in a transparent sleeve, because the graphics and text were printed on the record itself. These tended to scrape off and foul the stylus when the disk was played, so it was later reissued in the conventional format.

Please keep up what John Hertz calls 'your vivid, feisty writing'. Does it really piss off the Scott-ish Person (here's another chance to plug her website) so badly?

[[Well, I'd hate to spoil a good running gag, but this one has probably run its course. Regarding This Here.... Alison wrote that I'd 'tumed (her) slight tetchiness over editorial comment into a running joke'. However, I shan't plug the website again until it's updated more frequently than the last couple issues of this rag have appeared - so there! (But you can still link to it from the This Here... website...)]

January 27

From erg40@madasafish.com

Terry Jeeves writes:

Once again, many thanks for the issue of *This Here...* which arrived via the Tudors - hallowed be their name.

I liked the cover period illo, but it made me wonder: were people always grossly fat or anorexially thin in those days?

Congratulations on your poll placing, better luck next time, I often wonder how much positions depend on the length of print run in various zines. Sorry to hear of your mother's fall and hope she is now over the problem. It is no fun as I can testify when I had a month or two on crutches with a broken ankle.

[[She's back at home and doing fairly well, thanks for asking. She actually got out of the hospital a lot quicker than last time.

She stays pretty cheerful for the most part, but her eyesight is also falling pretty badly now. Her days are not exactly packed...]]

That wedding account was interesting, but frightening, they can be quite traumatic.

Can I have two copies plus the original model for the photo on page.11? Very nice.

[[Yeh, I wish! The Blessed Bobbie has said that I may run off with Geena Davis on the same day that Nicholas Cage comes to get her. Perhaps regrettably for us both, now that Cage is apparently single again, Geena ran off and remarried. Poot!...]]

Re your comments on trick and treat, the pernicious act has migrated over here and is a clone of 'demanding money with menaces'. The funny thing, that is allowed to proliferate whereas the innocent 'Penny for the guy' on Bonfire Day, or door to door Christmas carol singing is officially frowned on.

It's a Queer world.

[[Oh yes, and am I ever going to see a new Erg, then?...]]

February 11

Harry Warner, Jr. writes:

(...)

In the sixth issue of *This Here...* I nodded in full agreement with your words about the loss of Ken Cheslin. All I might add is that he was fortunate in one way: it happened so quickly in contrast to the awful prolonged final illnesses of Walt Willis, Ian Gunn, and several other fans who have left us. I hope I'm so lucky when my time comes.

All the accounts about your nuptials and associated activities were much fun to read. The bill you ran up to get into wedlock makes me wonder how much cash flows when there is a really elaborate wedding nowadays. I don't know how much it cost my father and mother to marry early in the 20th century but I did find after their deaths a receipt showing they had had a doctor's bill of just \$20 to bring me into this world.

((Don't even think of what the bill might be to usher you (or any of us) out of it...))

Lloyd Penney's remark about less hard drinking in his fannish circle seems to fit in with similar reports I've seen about fandom in certain other areas and at some conventions. I do know that journalists, who used to be famous for their alcoholic content, seem to have followed a similar trend in Hagerstown, and I no longer read about their big city counterparts indulging to the extent that you'll find described in memoirs of old reporters like Ben Hecht and H. L. Mencken. When I went to work with the Hagerstown newspapers in 1943, paychecks were handed out late on Fridays. I worked for the morning edition and was one of the only two teetotallers in the news room. There was a tavern across the street from the newspaper building and every other inhabitant of that room would slip over there at some time in late afternoon or early evening to get his check cashed and to get a drink or two. Then I would watch the editor whose face would go redder and redder after his trip, the city editor who would grin constantly but show no other effects, and the sports editor who instantly changed into a different person. Most of the time he was morose and complaining that the office temperature had dropped below 85° and coughing ominously. In just five minutes after his first sip, he would be a roraing drunk. It must have been a psychological rather than a physiological change because alcohol couldn't get into his system that rapidly. About six times a year, the editor would send him home because he was preventing the rest of us from finishing up our own duties, and usually I got stuck with finishing the sports pages.

((And they all probably drove home...))

In the final years of my employment, the early 1980s, I never smelled alcohol on any fellow employee's breath, never saw them coming out of watering holes, and if some of them were using illegal drugs as a substitute, I

never saw or heard any evidence of it.

I've had only one occasion when I needed to think of a title for a loc section. It was needed for my first fanzine, *Spaceways*. I settled on *The Readers Always Write*. I'm not sure that many people would realize the double meaning, since the concept of reader supremacy seems to have fallen out of favor.

((Not sure what you base that on, Harry, but the double meaning (and the concept) are obvious to me. Though of course, I do occasionally disagree with some of my valued correspondents...))

The only valid criticism of the Harry Potter books that occurs to me is the danger that they may cause all fiction for kids to become as bloated and padded as most science fiction is today. It has always been a rule of thumb that juveniles won't read long books. If most publishers begin to imitate the thickness of the Potter books in all their juvenile releases, the cost of these books will go so high that public library budgets will be ruined and relatives will buy kids shoes instead of books for Christmas.

((Only the most recent Potter book resembled a door wedge. The others are much shorter...))

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21740

February 13

Joseph T. Major writes:

Interesting wedding. Did the pastor call Bobbie by her middle name? It would have appeared, from analysis of our wedding ceremony, that I married 'Dianne' (Lisa is Lisa Dianne Thomas Major). Aside from that we had a much less eventful wedding. Except, of course, that we then adjourned to Contact in Evansville. A con is a fine honeymoon setting.

((And we agree. Although

delayed, our 'honeymoon' was basically Novacon. Lucky your pastor didn't slip one more name so that you would have married 'Thomas' (obvious joke)...))

We had a choice: the immediate families or the greater families. We chose the former. Inviting the greater families would have necessitated using Lisa's Uncle Aubrey's farm: 'Field 3A can now report to the buffet line.'

TAFF: I have a very simple method for dealing with this. I don't vote for TAFF, I don't follow TAFF, I don't really care who gets TAFF. They all seem to be from the same bunch anyhow.

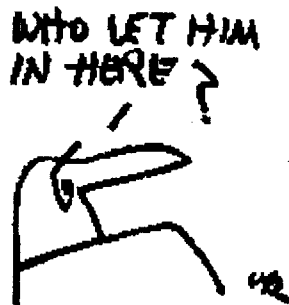
((You wouldn't think they're 'the same bunch' if you'd heard some of the recent wailing coming out of the TAFF discussion that the previous two North American representatives were 'not one of us'...))

But then, I have never seen *Survivor...* or *Friends*, for that matter. Shows how connected I am.

((You're not alone in your TV watching habits. I've never seen those shows either...))

Geena Davis looks nice but *Cutthroat Island* cut hers. I understand it does well on video, but in the theaters it, uh, sank.

((The movie, which I've seen on video and judge to be not great but not as bad as a lot of people said it was, is also often cited as one of the prime causes of Geena's separation and divorce from director Renny Harlin. He has undoubtedly shown such questionable judgement in some of his choices of movie projects that it's said that the phrase 'Would you like to read the treatment for this Renny Harlin movie' is right up there with 'Would you like to hold this pile of catshit for a moment?'. However, the Harlin-directed 'The Long Kiss Goodnight', starring Davis and the always excellent Samuel L. Jackson, is in my opinion one of the best action movies ever made...))



My favorite Jack Chick comix (well, they call everything else as poorly done by that name) was the one where the New Leftist helped the Communists kill the Christian acquaintance of his, then went on to aid the Communist conquest of America, after which he was shot and ascended to Heaven, only to be rerouted after a disclaimer of interest by the Authority. **Bernadette** told me once about pointing out the cognitive dissonance of having Jack Chick comix and C.S. Lewis books in the same bookstore.

Yes, and the man who invented the prefrontal lobotomy got the Nobel Prize for Medicine. A defendant's position at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, complete with hanging (and, incidentally, the hangman was an incompetent) would have been preferable. The latest *Atlantic Monthly* (February 2001) has a loving article on the wonders of Electroconvulsive Therapy and the evil plotters who are scheming against it. The guy who invented shock treatment (to give it its proper name) got the idea from seeing pigs stunned prior to slaughter. Had he gone to an abbatoir for cattle instead, we could have had contrecoup therapy, where the patient had his head strapped down and then got hit between the eyes.

((More or less my maternal grandfather's technique. He was the local village butcher, and my mother can be persuaded to tell (with a certain amount of disgusted relish) how she helped slaughter the pigs when she was 11 years old or so. This would have been in the early 30s, when the favored method would be to bash their heads with a brick...))

And remember, it isn't an accident that therapist parses into 'the rapist'

I was out cold on pain pills (after having eight teeth pulled) during the assassination of John F Kennedy, and except by Oliver Stone – film Garrison logic (or 'logic') deny all involvement with it.

After living under several people who had

powerful subwoofers I have decided that hip-hip (sic) is called music because no one would buy 'random cacophony' in a store. I think listening to loud music also causes brain damage, because every one of them would only say 'I like it loud' when asked why.

Actually I would have thought that the phrase '96 percent of all Americans are codependants' was a misprint because, in my experience, according to the gurus of codependency over one hundred percent of all Americans are codependents.

((Fuzzy math, eh...))

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40204-2040

February 13

E.B. Frohvet writes:

Sorry to hear about your mother's injury. I hope she is recovering in an orderly manner. A couple of years ago my mother managed to trip and break her ankle – in her own living room.

Reading about weddings is always hopeful, and the less traditional, the more fun. Yours sounds very fine indeed. Though I cringe to imagine how beer and Listerine go together. Perhaps you should have considered peppermints. There's a lot of that going around in fandom: Guy Lillian and Rose Marie Donovan are engaged, Karen Johnson is getting married, and lately I hear from fan artist Margaret Simon that she has recently become betrothed also.

Alas, poor TAFF: it may be time to put it out of its misery. I must bear some of the blame for publicizing the TAFF/Canada controversy, overlooking the fact that once some fans get their teeth into a problem, they will never let go. Probably we will still be mumbling the poor dead bones of this a generation hence.

((I received a DNQ email from Lloyd Penney on the TAFF/Canada topic, but asked

for and received permission from him to mention two important points: first, that Lloyd is not going to name names on this one, and second, that he also figures this discussion has run its course. I can only agree, and therefore declare that y'all can shut up about that partiular issue now. All other TAFF business is, as always, in season...))

Music: I have seen the Barenaked Ladies a couple of times on TV and enjoyed what I heard of their music – at least they seem to grasp what 'key' is all about, by no means a universal achievement in modern 'music'. And I can listen to Celine Dion's wonderful voice for a while, though her choice of material strikes me as a little monotonous.

((I tend to agree, and I had the same problem with the pre-Bobby Brown Whitney Houston, in addition to the fact that her vocal histrionics tended to be even worse than Selena Fuckin' Dijon (as she was called by the great Vincent LaGuardia Gambino). These days, of course, Houston is too much of a crackhead to sing anything...))

True to form, **Rodney Leighton** sets a new record for political incorrectness: recent(ly) he managed to use 'jugs', 'boobs', 'tits' and 'cleavage' in one letter (to me). I think I detect a pattern there... I agree with you, Nic, about Geena Davis, though her new TV show is something of a disappointment. How to you feel about Teri Hatcher?

((She's another one who seems a little thin in real life (bearing in mind however many pounds it is the camera is supposed to add), but she's certainly a fine looking woman, and in my opinion something of an underrated actress. And any excuse for a womanly picture etc. etc...))

Robert Lichtman would probably be horrified if I referred to him as a 'mentor'; however, I see Robert as a voice of uncommon sense and reason within fandom, and there have been a couple of times when I privately asked for Robert's opinion on a fannish



Teri Hatcher

problem, in the expectation that his judgement would be sensible and well-considered.

Lloyd Penney says he can't tolerate the politics of FOSFAX. To a large extent I agree with him, but there is enough other material in the zine that I still regard it as worth getting. And I had a couple of good talks with Tim Lane at the Chicago Worldcon. As long as we stayed away from politics, we got along well enough.

I live in the midst of a suburban neighborhood with lots of families with children; every year for Halloween I buy a bag of candy just in case, but seldom if ever get any 'trick-or-treat' visitors. This may be a custom which is still popular in rural areas like yours but is dying out over most of the country, at least as far as I can tell. It's kind of sad to see such classics as the 'toilet paper fence' or 'Volkswagen on the front porch' pass into history, but such is progress.

((Indeed. We got seriously t.p'd a couple years ago (mostly in the tulip tree ~ ouch!) when we'd gone out to a Halloween party and made the mistake of leaving on the outside light. The general rule which operates here is that if there's a visible outside light of some kind, you're 'open for business' (or open to pranks), otherwise you'll usually be left alone...))

Speaking of social customs, if anyone is interested in a World Wide Party gathering, Thursday, June 21st, at Chateau de Frohvet,

please contact me. If I don't hear anything,

I will figure there is no interest, and I'll keep all the beer for myself, so there!

((Sadly this faned will have to decline. I work a trivia quiz at the Tavern every Thursday...))

Sorry that you didn't enjoy *Twink #19*, Nic. As with most genzine faneds, I publish what I get, or write the most of it myself. I have always said that I'm doing a sercon zine, if that's not to some folks' taste, they don't have to read it.

*((Now, now, you ole git. I actually wrote that I found #19 'less interesting' than previous ishes. As you say, these things go up and down depending upon the material you get. I mean, my goodness, with a little effort you could turn *Twink* into a perzine...))*

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"We've had two technical fouls, fifty-one fouls, five stitches, fans ejected, and a

cheerleader hurt. Other than that it's been a pretty good game." (ABC sportscaster Mike Tirico, calling the St. Johns / Miami basketball game on February 10). The cheerleader caught a loose ball in the face, was briefly stunned but not hurt. The stitches were in the lip of St. Johns guard Omar Cook, who carelessly left his face in the path of a Miami elbow. The fans were ejected for cursing at St. Johns coach Mike Jarvis. Five players fouled out. St. John's won in double overtime. Vince McMahon was not present, that I know of.

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February 14

Alexis A. Gilliland writes:

The picture on your front page was funny, even without the caption which I thought was hilarious. You also got to take a bow as a Nova shortlister. So you are a big frog in a small pond; the Hugo vote sufficient for nominating a fan artist is only about 50, which isn't all that much bigger.

((The number of ballots cast in the 2000 Novas was definitely low - it has been more than double that in previous tears, I think. These things go in cycles, of course...))

A semantic quibble; the stuff I draw isn't fillos but cartoons. Which is not to put down fillos, which in *TH* are mostly photographs, like the shot of Geena Davis on page 11, which IS one fine fillo.

Wrassling. After two games, the WWF-NBC conspiracy to put on the XFL doesn't seem to be doing too well, Vince McMahon and the suits at NBC to the contrary notwithstanding. Why? I expect that wrestling evolved over time to become the WWF product of distinction you discuss so cogently, but its tics and tropes don't automatically transfer to other sports, especially one as evolved as American football. Perhaps they'd have better luck with the more primitive Rugby. Certainly audience demand does have an effect on the sports being

watched. It might have been Martina Hingis who said: 'In ten years women's tennis will be played in the nude.' If TV ratings are the driving force, she could be right.

[[A quibble of sorts back at ya: in the Rasslin' column I write about the rival WCW promotion rather than the WWF, though I do stray over there from time to time, and have also strayed into the ECW, but generally only to determine their effects on WCW. Although I consider myself a football fan, this is really the extent of my interest in the XFL, though I'll watch it if nothing else is on. McMahon, shrewd businessman that he is, I'm sure has his WWF assets sufficiently protected that if the XFL becomes a money pit, it won't affect that side of his business at all. It seems odd that, since you'd expect that the XFL and NASCAR demographic would be similar, the XFL season begins at the same time as the racing season...]]

Music. It may be that each generation is imprinted by the music they learned to make out with, so that musically the country resembles a stack of CDs, each of which eventually becomes DJ-fodder for the various oldies (we play no music before its time) stations. "Rock Around the Clock" came out about the time I went into the army, for instance, but nowadays I listen mostly to classical music.

[[I might have mentioned this before in these pages (and I know I've definitely had the equivalent conversation several times), but I always figured that every guy had a 'guaranteed to score' album in his collection. Mine was a double length Otis Redding collection. Never failed me, as I recall...]]

TAFF. Rodney Leighton doesn't believe it is a wide open contest? Given that the same people (probably less than a thousand) consistently do most of the voting he has a point, but. All it means is that would-be candidates have to make themselves known to the voters and be well enough liked to get

elected. What else? You say you really don't like the word "copacetic"? Relying on memory, copacetic was 50's slang meaning things were under control or in hand. Looking it up in my Webster's and Oxford Universal Dictionaries, I didn't find it so maybe the alleged word is fallen into disuse. On the evidence, you are entitled to declare it a nonword, anathema among the literati. I don't think a civilian is authorized to cast a nonword into the outer darkness but you could question its street credibility and savoir faire.

[[Copacetic' is not listed in Webster's New World Dictionary Concise Edition of 1962, but Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1950 edition) gives the listing: 'Slang, U.S. Capital; snappy; prime.'

4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA

22204

February 14

Paul Di Filippo writes:

Happy V-Day!

I marvel at your continued prolificness, your zest for life, and your keen wit, all on display here!

Can't say I dig rasslin', though you make a case for its nuances. "Chicken or son goat", as the frogs say!

Trying to sell yet another story collection to 4 Walls (Four Walls Eight Windows) while I gear up to start a novel.

Nice review of my *Joe's Liver* by Spinrad in current *Asimov's*.

[[March 2001 issue, for those interested, and the review article as a whole (which includes interesting remarks on Michael Swanwick's 'Tales of Old Earth') is more than up to Norman's usual high standards...]]

2 Poplar St., Providence, RI 02906

February 14

Rodney Leighton writes:

[[... a whole bunch of stuff about TAFF,

from which the following highlights...]]

'I do not think there is anyone in the U.S. who would tell me that (TAFF) is completely on the up and up whom I would believe.'

'If Sue is pissed at me, she's pissed at me. Women all over the world... and some men ... get pissed at me all the time. Usually for no good reason.'

'I threw in that bit about you standing for TAFF to see if you were sufficiently fucking stupid to fall for it. HAHHAHAHAH.'

'I wish I could be as absolutely certain that I am 100% correct about every fucking thing as you are.'

'I was delighted to see Don Fitch's comments about TAFF although I was slightly confused as to why you did not heap abuse on him, considering he said basically the same thing I did.'

'I am beginning to think I know more about TAFF than you do.'

[[No comment, and you can crow about that as a justification of your position if you like, Rodney. I'm just tired of your crap on this subject...]]

Well, anyway. Ever hear Blondie? The current CD is *Shift* by Jennifer Tefft who doesn't look much like Debbie Harry but she sure sounds like her. This is going to be a long loc. Sorry, but, well, so be it. I am always bemused by faneds who dislike long locs, because I always thought that a long loc was indicative of a fanzine which prompted a lot of comment, which should be good, I would think. Of course, I am aware that I am sometimes guilty of what a former lover once described as "having diarrhea all over the typewriter".

[[Indeed. And as to loc length, I suspect most faneds would prefer a thimbleful of caviar to a truckload of catshit...]]

Speaking of broads, how come there are no females in your loccol?

[[Because they don't always write...]]

Why is it that Dave Langford doesn't win these Nova things?

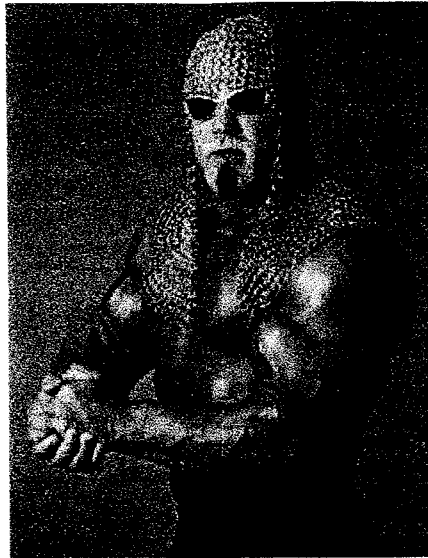
[[Because he doesn't get the votes. The Department of the Blindingly Fucking Obvious is now at lunch. (Actually Langford won with his fanzine Twll-Ddu in 1977 back when only one award was given, and also picked up the Best Fan Writer plaudit in 1990...)]]

Sorry to hear about your mother's problems. Hell to have health problems.

The last wrestling tape I received contained WCW *Sin* and WWF *Royal Rumble*. Following my usual procedure, I fast forwarded through to the Rumble, watched that, noted that with the exception of a great match between HHH and Kurt Angle, the show pretty much sucked, and then started *Sin*. Much to my surprise, it is not that bad so far. I noted that Big Lazy dug out his Diesel togs, has lost his gut and almost broke a sweat. Wants back in the WWF for sure. I almost died of shock when he laid down for one of those young guys. Last night I watched the match between Shane Douglas and Bill DeMont, err, Hugh Morrus, err, General Rection. Douglas has sucked for at least 10 years and Rection is almost completely a physical cripple. Didn't expect much. Imagine my surprise when it turned out to be a hell of a good 1970s style wrestling match. Granted that anyone who has followed the business for any amount of time could predict the outcome just as I did and the match was taken down a couple of notches by the terrible announcing, it was still a very good match. The first thing Bischoff needs to do to revive the promotion is find some announcers. Schiavone is terrible. Scott Hudson is a nice guy but God he is a lousy announcer. Mike Awesome doing a retro Iron Mike Sharpe gimmick is quite cool. I don't suppose you ever heard of Sharpe. Mike Sharpe, from Ontario, wrestled for many years back before we were born. Well, not quite. I think he retired in the 60s, so I was around, for sure. His son, known as 'Iron' Mike Sharpe, worked for many years, mostly in the WWF the last few years. Awesome now looks and acts very similar to Iron Mike. Scott Steiner has so many steroids in him that

it's a wonder he doesn't explode. I fully expect him to die in the ring someday.

Yeah, Storm has gotten something of a



Watch it, Scotty, Rodney sez your days are numbered...

push. He was also made to job to Nash in less than a minute and had to lay down to be pinned by far inferior opponents in 3 straight matches, in Canada. Things have improved for him since Russo went home. Who knows what Bisch will do? Well, he will bring in Hogan, who will immediately ruin anyone getting more heat than he is, which is to say everyone. I agree that Booker deserved his title run. Unfortunately, and sadly, I also know that he would never have gotten it if not for Onoo's lawsuit.

[[I wish I could be as absolutely certain that I am 100% correct about every fucking thing as you are...]]

Thanks for the *Jersey Beat* plug. Here's a copy for you. They are all fairly similar.

It's not much wonder that **Tim Lane** ignores **Lloyd Penney** if he doesn't have the decency to write and ask to be taken off the FOSFAX mailing list but simply let them mail issue after issue with no response. I don't blame him a bit. Given that I appear to be the only FOSFAX contributor on your mailing list, I will point out that Tim found the **Teddy**

Harvia cover amusing. It was pure Harvia; David Thayer had nothing to do with it. I thought it was funny as hell. It may be worth noting that it was originally drawn for *Proper Boskonian*. All you anti-FOSFAX bastards go ahead and laugh now.

Once upon a time I valued **Robert Lichtman's** opinion. Recently Robert takes delight in denigrating me in various and sundry fanzines. Since he sometimes also provides answers to some of my legitimate questions, I don't object. However, I do not put as much stock in Robert's opinions as I once did, for a few reasons. Chief among them is this: a few years ago I decided on an experiment in which I would write letters to a number of faneds which expressed my opinions of 'the usual' and requested a copy of their fanzine. I started with the ridiculous notion of writing 40 of them but settled for 11. The first response I received was from Robert, who proclaimed that if all the letters were similar to the one he received, he doubted if I would receive any other responses and he was certain that I would receive no fanzines. Shucks. Well, shortly after that I received a note and a zine from your good friend **Alison Scott** and have received copies of the wonderful *Ploktta* since. Not too long after that I got a nice long letter from some guy named **Mark Plummer** and shortly after started receiving *Banana Wings*. And recently, almost 3 years later, I received *Idea #12*. All in all, I have received fanzines from 8 of the 11 people I wrote to at that time, with letters which were all similar. **Victor Gonzalez** and some guy named **Frank Denton** chose to ignore me completely. Robert wanted me to pay him \$4 or \$5 for his fanzine, I was uncertain which, and since I had recently seen 4 or 5, I forget which, negative reviews of said fanzine and since paying for it was contradictory to the purpose of the project, I declined and have never seen his fanzine. However, 8 out of 11 is a pretty damned good response in my view, for anything. I haven't put that much weight on Robert's opinions since.

Of course, being a former TAFF delegate, he will have a lot to say about that.

((No doubt, and I await Robert's next loc with great interest. You fail to specify the contents of your 'cover letter', but it's easy to see why you got almost instant responses from the UK, where the very spread of your mailing list is a subject for bragging rights, though these days it seems you need a co-editor who resides at least 4,000 miles away as well. I'm not surprised you got a pleasant response from Mark Plummer, who is not referred to as 'the Sainted One' as a matter of pure whimsy. Alison Scott, of course, merely needs to hear the phrase 'wonderful Plokta', which you have supplied...))

As I have said elsewhere, the only way to change the Hugo awards is to take the voting process away from Worldcon attendees and put it in the hands of people who are actually active in fanzines, people who actually write to or for fanzines; people who actually read them. Unless you are rich enough to afford a worldcon membership you cannot vote for the fan Hugos. But perhaps that only applies to me. But are there more fans like me? In this respect? I dunno. Andrew (C. Murdoch) included a ballot for the Aurora awards and I will send it in, although it seems a bit silly since I rarely read SF and can only vote in 3 categories, all fan categories, it will only cost me a few minutes and a stamp and I will send it off. If I could vote for the Hugos for that cost, I would do so, even though it would be kind of tough to make some decisions.

((This echoes my argument made in a previous ish that to some extent the Nova and FAAN awards, to cite two examples, are probably more relevant to the fanzine community than the Hugos, and perhaps more appreciated therein...))

Hmnnn... Chris Murphy is not female, is he or she? That lends itself to being called names but since I do not know this person and I wondered earlier why you had no females in

your loccol and since I know quite a few females named Chris, it is a legitimate question.

((I can happily and accurately report that Chris Murphy is one of the finest of men, and a good friend of many years standing (and some falling down, eh Chris?)...))

RR#3, Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, CANADA

BOK 1V0

February 15

From: louishoohah@netzero.net

Marty Cantor writes:

Both you and Rodney Leighton write about *This Here...* maybe being the first SF fanzine devoted to wrestling. 'Taint so. In the late 70s and early 80s, Bay Area fan Cheryl Cline used to produce a zine usually called *The Wretch Takes to Writing*. Issue number 5 (Sep, '80) was titled *The Wretch Takes to Wrestling!* And it did just that, covering wrestling things. I had as little interest then as I have now in that form of non-sporting, scripted entertainment.

(('That form' only, I assume? I'd much rather watch rasslin' as 'non-sporting, scripted entertainment' than, say, 'Jurassic Park III' which could be described the same way...))

Now, now, Nic, you really *should* pay more attention to some important details. On page 17, Rodney Leighton writes two paragraphs about something TAFFish in *Stef* #9. Let me now quote two sentences you wrote on page 18 as part of your response to Rodney. 'I have *Stef* #9, and am familiar with the quote you cite.' Also 'As for 'Leah gives the standard bullshit line about Europe to North America.' Er - Leah who? There was no Leah.' Leah Zeldes Smith is the co-editor of *Stef*. Do you mean that you are not aware of the editors of the zines you read? That is a mite careless of you, Nic. It makes me wonder if you just might be a bit careless in your reading of the contents of the zines

themselves.

((Rodney's more succinct put-down was: 'Were you drunk when you wrote this?'. I was actually being deliberately obtuse, in a cack-handed way criticizing Rodney's confused writing style. At the time, I read his comments as pertaining to remarks which had appeared in This Here..., where of course there was 'no Leah'. Your juxtaposition of my two sentences above makes me look rather more of a dumbass than I probably really am, but having re-read the salient bits of #7, and noting that Rodney adds his 'standard bullshit' comment immediately after mentioning Stef, I can see I must have been having an off day. I assure you, Marty, I read just about everything...))

By the way, I support your position *vis-à-vis* fan funds. And, on the topic of Canadians not winning fan funds, I will *again* write what I have written elsewhere on this topic. When I won DUFF is was as a co-candidate with my then-wife Robbie. Robbie was (and still is) a Candian. At the time of our win, she was an employee of the Candian Consulate in Los Angeles - as she was during the 15 years she lived in LA.

Now let me pick a nit. Robert Lichtman wants to take Rodney Leighton to task about Rodney's views on TAFF, but only if he appears in *This Here...* You reply, 'Now he has, as you'll have seen. Sharpen yer cudgels...' Sir, cudgels are a *blunt* instrument and designed to work whilst blunt. Making them sharp would defeat the way that they work.

((Perhaps, but I've heard that an enraged Lichtman can do a lot of damage with a sharpened cudgel...))

If you find a problem with the APA-L comments in John Hertz's *Vanamonde*, you can always join that APA and see both ends of the conversation. It may be a weekly APA; however, if Jenny Glover (from Glasgow) can keep up the pace - mostly - why can you not do the same?

((Sigh, 'ere we go again. At the risk of a

*[[Sigh]. 'ere we go again. At the risk of a deluge of approbation, do I write that badly or do you just have different definitions for the words I use? I've already upbraided Frohvet for inferring that I 'didn't enjoy Twink #19' when I had remarked that I found it 'less interesting' than previous ishies. Likewise, I said (in a previous ish) that the APA-L portions of Vanamonde were of 'limited interest' to me, and again in #7 that I 'skip all the APA-L comments'. This is **not** a 'problem', merely an observation. Faneds (myself included) are a touchy bunch. eh? Actually John is nice enough to keep sending me the stuff, and more often than not includes a personal comment with each little package I get, which is much appreciated. Regarding APA-L membership, I doubt I could manage that at this time. As I write this comment (on March 1st), I'm still unemployed - and as my buddy Mel the Crabman pointed out, looking for a job is a full-time job - as well as trying to pound out This Here... #8 for Corflu (and perhaps even nichevo #2), and putting together the details for a Corflu 2002 bid. Although, it would be nice to get back in touch with Jenny Glover, whom I haven't seen in years. Did you know she has one of the sexiest voices in the known Universe?...]]*

And many, many warm thanks for placing *No Award* into the "Featured Fanzines" section. Are you *really* trying to annoy our Mutual Admiration Society? But you *did* manage to annoy me, mentioning food in the 'review' of my zine. Making me hungry whilst I am on a diet of un-enriched cardboard is Not Good.

[[The sounds of cackling can be heard up and down the Chesapeake. Of course, you'll realize the extended food metaphor review was quite deliberate. Though I'll let you into a secret - I set up the 'Featured Fanzines' section in #7 because I needed to fill out to an even number of pages, and increasing the font size for some of the reviews was a way to do that. Nevertheless, I did specifically pick out the

*fanzines which would appear there, and as I'm sure you're aware I do enjoy **No Award** very much indeed...]]*

February 17

Rodney Leighton writes:

This is more of a stream-of-semi-consciousness than anything else. Mostly prompted by thoughts generated from *Tortoise 10*, received yesterday.

The observation of how faneds operate is one of the most interesting aspects of fanzine fandom for me.

Having decided that I am not someone whom she wishes to receive mail from and that since I did not find much of interest in one issue of *Tortoise*, there was no point in sending me other issues, I wondered why Sue (Jones) wished to include my reaction in #10. I did not dispute her decisions. I have very little in common with anyone, especially young chicks in merry ole England and females don't think much of me. Looking over #10, I am still a bit confused as to why she chose to insert that one paragraph. If it was you, I would suspect that she was hinting that I suffer from Multiple Personality Syndrome but I can't see that since she has stated she is sending me no more issues. Perhaps she wanted to use that as a rather gentle reminder to people on her mailing list who do not respond. That's fine, no problem. Or maybe she just wanted a short something to break up that stream of Penney drivel.

[[The paragraph from Rodney which Sue published was as follows: 'Being unacquainted with you and Siberia, I don't quite understand the concept of an imaginary turtle. I have no interest in architecture, or art. Although the chick draped in lights is certainly cute.' Sue's response: 'Thanks for being honest, Rodney. I would rather people told me if they were not interested in the zine, so I can keep the mailing list to an affordable size. I am near the upper limit.' Sue was, as is her wont, being polite (not

something I suspect you readily recognize), and genuinely thanking you for straight out saying you weren't interested in her zine. Tortoise has a very limited print run (which is a shame, because I consider it one of the best zines around), so Sue is understandably conscientious about making sure the copies go to those who will appreciate them. Let's not forget that, despite it's small circulation, Sue's zine came second in the Nova balloting for Best Fanzine last year...]]

It is too bad that we are so disparate since one of the things I dislike about fandom is the lack of female writers and publishers. Most seem to be in the UK.. I wonder why that is? Quite intriguing is the fact that 7 of the top 10 Nova vote getters for best fan writer are female. I don't think there are 10 in all of the U.S. None in Canada, that I am aware of.

Then I start looking over the zines section. I find that *nichevo* is a paper zine, has apparently been out for awhile and contains the sort of material which would be of interest to me. Huh, why didn't the bastard send me one, I wondered. Considered writing a complaint. But, well, for one thing, it seems to be a common thing for Brits to publish 2 separate zines but only send one of them to some people. The illustrious A. Scott prints out her webzine for selected folks; Sandra Bond only started sending me *Bogus* after I cried about not receiving it... or maybe it was because I called her baby. Mark has sent me some issues of *Parakeet* but none lately but that may be because I called it the 'Let's All Pick On Noel Zine'. So maybe it's an English thing. Let's piss off Mark, if you choose to print this bit.

[[You haven't received any issues of 'Parakeet' lately because there haven't been any lately. Dept. of the Blindingly Fucking Obvious back from lunch. I have detailed earlier that nichevo #1 was not widely distributed, but I believe Lloyd Penney has a copy, if you ask him nicely...]]

But there is the possibility that it has to do with the fact that I only send out copies of whatever I do on a somewhat sporadic basis. My reasons are partly economic... I can't afford more than the 22 or so copies I make of each one... and partly due to a strong belief that copies of the things should go to people I hear from during the time I have copies and if I run out, well, sorry, but that's how it is. But, really, if I do not send you, or Mark, or Sandra, a copy of every issue of every zine-like thing I do, well, I guess there is no reason why you should send me copies of everything you do.

((A dawn of awareness here, perhaps...))

Right below you in *Tortoise* is me. Sue chooses to ignore the n in 'Scotian' but that's nothing; a native Nova Scotian does the same thing. She also ignores the fact that it was a letter sub and not a zine. There is the possibility that someone might wonder why you did not receive some issue(s). Mostly because it was a letter-sub and I made 20 copies of each one and mailed them with the first 20 letters I mailed after getting them copied. Well, 21, since I usually send the original to someone. However, the distribution for SORE is going to be the same, almost.

We are all weird, right?

I know, you don't give a fuck about any of that.

Last night I finished watching *Sin*. I was amazed at how good the tag match with Goldberg and Sarge vs Luger and Buff the Fluff actually was. I mean, Sarge has not shown he is much as an instructor but back when he was sargent Buddy Lee Parker, he was a hell of a worker. Still quite good. Goldbrick is quite one dimensional. Luger has never been any good. And that other thing. God, I hate seeing people in a wrestling ring wearing jewelry. I don't care if guys wear earrings and necklaces and chokers but when they wear them to the ring, I wish someone would rip the things off, legit. Then came the main event. My God. Sid has become Hulk Hogan. As pathetic as the so

called action was, worsened by the announcing, it was really sad to see the poor clod lying in the ring with an obviously broken leg and having to endure all that bullshit while they completed their angle. Didn't anyone have the sense, or the decency, to simply have Steiner pin the guy and introduce Animal the next night? How ridiculous was it to continue the angle with the trainer in the ring? Ah, hell, they are all idiots. I forgot there is also a really good match on the Rumble between 2 Canadians, the Chrises Benoit and Jericho.

((This is a perfect analysis (and criticism) of the Steiner/Vicious main event which, as you say, was easily the worst match on the card, mostly thanks to the boneheaded reaction to Sid's genuine injury. According to fan reports from the front row, Sid was lying on the mat calling 'Scotty, Scotty', basically begging for a finish so the medics could get to him, but no, they had to finish their angle. As you rightly point out, no-one had the wit to defer the swerve until the following night's Nitro, which could have had highly improved ratings as a result. The latest on Sid is that he's rehabbing the injury faster than expected, but with the current situation who knows who we'll be seeing again where...))

Address previously listed

February 28

From sardonicus@email.msn.com

Milit Stevens writes:

Is your first page illo on *This Here #7* supposed to be one of those puzzle things? While I don't see anyone resembling Alexis Gilliland anywhere in the illo, that doesn't absolutely mean he isn't there. He's probably lurking behind that large curtain on the left.

Congratulations on your standing in the Nova awards. However, I do have a question. If three of you received the same number of votes, why wasn't the award given to all three of you? Is there some tie breaking procedure

you didn't mention? Maybe the tie was resolved by arm wrestling. That would be fair for fannish competitions, because the fan who cranked the mimeo the most should have the strongest arm.

((I did include a reference for where to find the Nova rules, but briefly: the voters list their choices in 1-2-3 order on the ballot. In the event of a tie the number of first-place votes is assessed, and Yvonne got four to three each for Mark and I. However, I suspect that if we'd have used arm wrestling as you suggest, the result would be unchanged...))

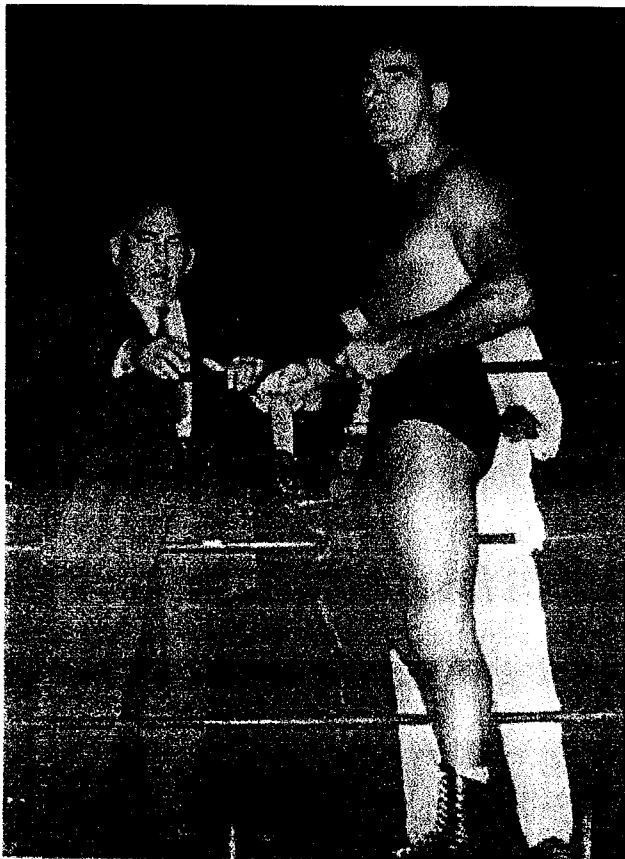
You mention that your mother fell and broke her hip. My mother did that when she was 93. She had been doing pretty well up to that point. She was a little forgetful but not oo bad. After the accident, her mental state declined. The doctors did do a tremendous job in getting her up and walking around again in under three months. She may only be able to get across the room and not much further, but that is definitely something. The accident occurred two years ago, and she has been in a nursing home since then. While her memory is shot, and she becomes confused, she is in much better shape than many of the other residents. She can carry on a reasonable if limited conversation, while many of the other residents seem to be complete vegetables.

((I'm glad your mom seems to be coping well, especially at her age. We've noticed that my mother has gotten a little forgetful, and tends to some confusion at times, but this was happening before she had either of her falls, and isn't much worse than it otherwise might have been. I read a scary statistic somewhere which stated that 60% of elderly people who'd had a hip break died within a year. This applied to the US, though, and I'm not sure whether that translates across the Atlantic...))

Your mention of the world championship of wrestling reminded me of the period when I did watch wrestling. That was back in the fifties when I was in junior high school. There were

only six or seven television stations in Los Angeles back then, and wrestling or roller derby were the only sports on any of them. (I wonder what ever happened to roller derby. I haven't seen it mentioned in decades.)

((Roller derby was resurrected as Rollerjam! on TNN, complete with a rasslin'-type setup and rasslin'-style storylines. I've watched it a few times, and it's not too bad. Check your local TV listings, but I believe it airs Friday nights...))



With "mentor" Ed "Strangler" Lewis

At that time, there was a man named Lou Thesz (above) who was supposedly the world champion wrestler. As I recall, he never wrestled, but he held onto the title for years. The number one wrestler of the period was the much parodied Gorgeous George. Even back then, I fully realized that Gorgeous George wasn't to be taken seriously. A couple of the guys who were wrestling back then went on to careers in movies. Iv (sp?) Tors, the Swedish Angel, went on to be the menacing assistant to numerous mad scientists. Woody Strode was in

a whole bunch of movies including *Spartacus* and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. He was still doing bare chested roles when he was in his fifties. He had a tremendous body.

((Hardly a week goes by when Lou Thesz's name isn't mentioned on the rasslin' shows, usually describing the popular "Thesz press" move still very much in use. He's still very much alive, in his 70s, and living more or less locally on the Chesapeake Bay in Norfolk, VA. You'll remember his phrase 'If it is to be, it is up to me', I'm sure. Of course, he has a book out (titled 'Hooker') and is still cited as the only man to have wrestled in seven different decades...))

6325 Keystone St., Simi Valley, CA 93063

March 9

From

penneys@attcanada.ca

Lloyd Penney writes:

Love the front illo... reminds me of a North American-style con suite, actually... especially with the two rather stout types blocking the front door. Anyway, to the ish at

hand...

Just about did it for a Nova, way to go! I still hear (and read) some griping about fan awards, but nothing beats the feeling of having your name announced as a winner. In 1997, I won an Aurora Award for fanwriting, but it was in the category of Fan Achievement (Other), which means any other fanac not covered by editing fanzines or running conventions. There isn't the same fanwriting tradition here as in Britain or America. (That's what made the FAAn Award as Best

Letterhack in 1999 so valuable for me.)

The Boston Corflu... another convention we'll have to pass on, as the over-valued US dollar makes it almost impossible to afford to go to an American convention other than Worldcon. We save like crazy to go, but as close as Philly is, the actual flight and hotel costs may not be affordable. The newest Mimosa has an article about how expensive Worldcons are, compared to past eras. To add to all of this, I saw an article in one of today's papers, detailing how the Australian dollar has fallen to 50.75 cents US. I can't see how Australian fans could properly advertise and bid for another Oz Worldcon unless they're fairly rich.

Did Bobbie know about your secret stashes of beer here and there before the wedding took place, or is she finding out about this as she reads this zine? Anyway, once again, congratulations. For me, marriage has meant never, ever again being lonely, and now, I can't see doing anything important in my life without Yvonne. Our 18th wedding anniversary comes up on May 28.

The WCW is losing money hand over fist? Not surprised... I think the American public is finally seeing through the BS professional wrestling groups are putting forth, making whatever takes place in the ring almost secondary to the soap opera that takes place outside of it. And now, the WWF is staging the eXtreme Football League, or XFL. Football and wrestling fans were promised bodacious cheerleaders, bone-breaking action, sideline feuds, brawls and more; instead, they got relatively good football. (And the cheerleaders.) As a result, the viewers were disappointed with the result, and ratings have gone through the floor. Could the WWF, WCW, and other groups have had their day?

((I doubt it. WWF Raw is, I believe, still the most-watched show on cable. WCW's Nitro was getting about half that viewership, but has been creeping up lately, and indeed rasslin'

is much improved. Latest news on the XFL to reach me was that Vince McMahon had pretty much pulled out of it, no doubt scared off by the ratings collapse...))

As said in my e-mail... the TAFF discussion is dried out, tired and not relevant any more. Canadian fans just have to get more involved. End of discussion

It's kinda reassuring that Hallowe'en is still a busy evening for many; up here, it seems to be dying. We still hear of reports of pins in apples, wrapped stones, or something narcotic injected into an orange, and robbing kids of their candy seems commonplace. Maybe all of this is the reason interest is fading here...

I guess I wasn't clear about my future involvement with fan funds...I should have said that as far as running for fan funds, we've done our bit. However, we will continue to support them, and vote as long as we can afford the exchange. Sales of our trip report aren't exactly brisk, but about one-third of the print run is sold. Indeed, ALL proceeds from the sales of the trip report will go to CUFF. Actually, penneys@netcom.ca and penneys@attcanada.ca are the same address. AT&T Canada bought Netcom about a year ago, and netcom.ca is our official address, but any messages that come in or go out get the attcanada.ca stamp. Frustrating, but either address will get to me.

Please do send me a copy of the FOSFAX 200 cover. Knowing **Teddy Harvia's** sense of humour, I'd like to see who he's shot down.

Hello to an ailing **Robert Lichtman**... hope the ankle heals up fast. By 'cranky living-in-the-past types', I mean those fans I've had to deal with who may share my interest in fandom past, but whine and complain about new tech that changes Fandom As They Knew It, or sneer that I'm not a fan because I've failed to abide by their arbitrary guidelines. My archiving of Trufen posts really isn't intentional. Internet Explorer 5 allows me to filter listserv posts into folders, so anything that starts with

trufen gets dumped into a folder as soon as it arrives. There, I can peruse the new posts, already filed, at my leisure, and I've been too occupied with other things to dump any of the 15,000 or so posts sitting there. Good thing my computer has a large hard drive... but I should start some HD housecleaning soon.

To **Milt Stevens**, true, a Toronto summer can be warm and humid. Being on the north shore of one of the Great Lakes can do that to you. However, my point was that Cancun can be hot to the point of cooking. I'm not sure about Cancun's humidity level, but I would have to think it can get fairly high too, given its oceanside location.

I see **Don Fitch** thinks I jest when I suggested a top 50 fannish web link list... after I wrote that, I remembered that just such a list of links already exists... **Bill Bowers'** list on **Victor Gonzalez'** Squib site. Of course, adding your own favorite sites is a given. This list would be a great starter. I find that my own time for surfing is getting less and less, so I'd appreciate such a list, and would enlarge the list myself when time allowed. Time seems to be the key word these days. If only I could win the lottery, then not only would I have money, I'd have time... I'd drop my job like a hot rock.

Coming up... we're doing a con suite for the local filkers' convention in town the end of the month, and there's a con in Niagara Falls in April, and then comes my high school reunion in May. That should be a circus unto itself. In the meantime, greetings to **Bobbie**, and I hope the spring is warm and happy for all of you. See you next issue.

1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON CANADA
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March 22

From gflynn@world.std.com

George Flynn writes:

I'm a little behind in responding, and I

thought I'd dash this off to clear the decks before Corflu, where I gather I'll see you. (It's be nice if **Paul Di Filippo** does show up: I've known Paul since he was a neofan in 1973, but in recent years ahve seen him only at the occasional con.

((As far as I know, Paul has no plans to attend Corflu. We're flying up to Providence to visit with him and Deborah for a few hours before getting the express bus up to Boston and the con...))

I'm surprised nobody else in our li'l community has written about rasslin' before'. Not too familiar with the work of **Arnie Katz**, are you? (Though of late Arnie's been going on about XFL football instead.)

((Actually yes, I was aware of Arnie's interest via 'Jackpot!', but hadn't seen any of his previous stuff on the subject (though I'd sure like to). In another example of me having a bad day, what I should have written was 'I'd be surprised if...' instead of 'I'm surprised...'))

Er - Leah who? There was no Leah.' **Rodney** was of course referring to **Leah Zeldes' Smith's** writing in *Stet 9*, so give him that point. But on the general issue, this whole tempest in a teapot over TAFF and Canada seems pretty silly. From talking to fan fund administrators over the years, my impression is that they have often been pretty desperate to find people who are both qualified and willing to stand. (The lack of willingness usually comes from some combination of modesty, fear of becoming a target, and distaste for administrative responsibilities.) So it seems unlikely that any halfway reasonable candidate would be repulsed.

I won't try catching up on the previous issue, but I'll note that I read *nichevo* online and enjoyed it.

WAHF...

Sue Jones, who wants to remind me to remind the beleaguered **M Tudor** that he's still mailing to her old address. For the gorgeous pouting

to her old address. For the gorgeous pouting Martin and anyone else, the now not so new domicile of the siren of Shrewsbury is Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, UK SY1 2BQ. Not only that, an email to sue.tortoise@btinternet.com may or may not get you swimsuit pictures; Guy Lillian III, to whom my hearty congrats on taking the

sensible precaution of marrying a wonderful woman, and *begging* me for a copy of *nichevo*; Mark Proskey: 'Enjoyed *This Here*, wasn't much interested in the wrestling material', and *begging* me for a copy of *nichevo*; D Young aka Preston Mcgher aka 'Obvious Front', with a Scrab Mag (I think it sez here) and *begging* me for a trade; I think I

lost another card from Sheryl Birkhead, too - sorry, Sheryl, you may have to start sending me stuff on bedsheets or something so I don't keep losing them; The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) several times with regard to my unemployment claim, and Bob Webber with lots of help in getting our Corflu memberships sorted out. Coo, ta!

FANZINES RECEIVED

Apologies to all the other assiduous faneds out there who continue to bombard me with quality reading. I had my office at work set up with nice little in trays where the fanzines to be reviewed/listed could be found, but after lastish I let that slip a bit, and

then my sudden denouement as Senior Applications Programmer left everything, well, fucked up to the point that I don't know what's where and haven't the time to go back through the lastish (and the humungous pile of unsorted zines here) to determine what be what.

This section will resume normal service nextish (as I think I've got it together now), perhaps even with a 'Featured Fanzine' or two.

Thanks again to all who keep trading...

INDULGE ME...

As we sit and watch (or listen to, in my case, since I'm writing this) the Oscars, we form a sort of redneck tableau. I rush back out to see my man Samuel L. Jackson, sadly niggered into presenting the 'Best Documentary' awards, and I can't help but observe that I sit here in my Wranglers, work boots and open work shirt, the Blessed Bobbie is in her capri pants, with bare feet after cutting her toenails, and we are feeding pork rinds to the dog. Soon to be a feature in a lifestyle magazine near you...

"I read Shakespeare and the Bible, and I can shoot dice. That's what I call a liberal education." (Tallulah Bankhead)

Speaking of the Oscars, what a load of bollocks! And didn't the pig Roberts jabber on and on and on and on... Best Actress *should* have been Joan Allen, Best Actor *should* have been Ed Harris, and Best Picture *should* have been anything but *Boys in Skirts*. Quite apropos in a way that the 'In Memoriam' section for the R.I.P.s of the previous year

included Steve Reeves.

Did somebody say Jennifer Lopez was actually covered up? Since you could slaver over every nuance of her chest, she might as well have been naked...



Tits oot for the lads...

Surprisingly, with all this unemployment-induced free time on

my hands, I haven't actually been doing that much new reading (mea culpa!). However, Max's thoughtful wedding gift of a voucher for amazon.com yielded Homer Hickam's *The Coalwood Way* for the Blessed One, and I read and very much enjoyed both *Shrub* by Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose and *Lost Pages* by Paul Di Filippo. The latter should be a must-read for all skiffy fans (all others may be somewhat baffled), and I certainly hope it survives the ringing endorsement by one H Ellison. I may even review this properly nextish (yeah, heard that before), but if you're paying attention Paul (of course you are!) my favorite story of the bunch was *Linda and Phil*.

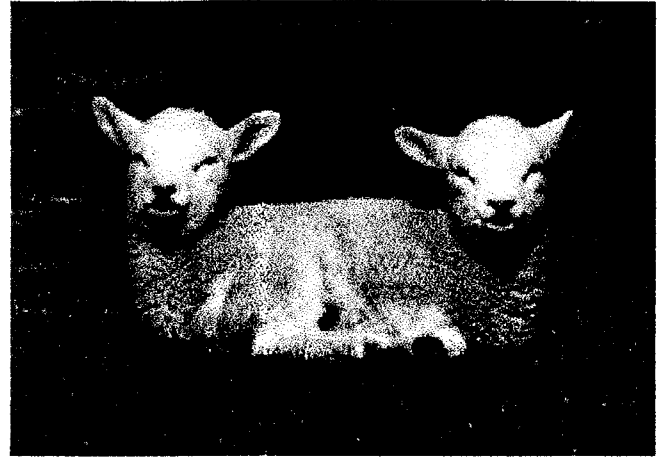
Congrats, of course, to Victor Gonzalez for his TAFF victory, not least because it seemed at one point that there wouldn't be a 2001 race at all (qv, op cit & all that). Also plaudits to Tom Springer for making a race of it, and this faned for one hopes he'll stand again.

Cor, look at that bloody great flyer down there (and it looks even better in color). Yes, I have been prevailed upon to put together a Corflu bid - another step on the road to fhannish greatness (or opprobrium, perhaps). There have been a few comments about the earliness of the date, but this was the best weekend to get reasonable room rates from the hotel (\$89 per room per night). If the bid is won, watch for further details and a website, but an enquiry to the *This Here* address will undoubtedly get you the info. Now is the time for all Maryland fen to stand up, contribute and party! (And then fall down.) Email to corflu19@popfire.net.

From News of the Weird: In January, Quebec's health insurance board approved about \$3,000 (USD) in payments for

breast implants for a 15-year-old girl after a psychiatrist submitted a recommendation calling the surgery 'necessary' for her mental health. (The next week, following the predictable outcry, a board official announced, to a chorus of skeptical critics, that the psychiatrist's recommendation was irrelevant and that the girl actually suffered from a medical condition ('aplasia of the breast,' or a lack of mammary glands, which made her breasts unusually small) that required surgery.) (National Post, 1-10-01)

- When, exactly, did candy bars become 'snack food'?
- There you are, then...



An unusual strain of foot and mouth disease from Chernobyl

Corflu Valentine

A bid for Corflu 19

Feel the Love!

February 14-17 2002
Radisson Hotel, Annapolis, MD

This Here...

is an occasional perzine by **Nic Farey**. You got this rag for one of the following (usual) reasons:

- ✳ You gave or sent me a zine (or will)
- ✳ You have locced (or will)
- ✳ You bought alcohol (or will)
- ✳ I know where you live (or will)

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Distributor/publishers for other countries are invited to apply to the US address...

PLEASE NOTE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS
thisherefanzine@aol.com

All old-fashioned (but nonetheless welcome) locs to US address please. Likewise zines in trade, though if Martin isn't already on your list I'm sure he'd also appreciate a copy, Pillar of Fandom that he is...

This Here and my other current zines *nichevo* (fandomcentric genzine) and *SingSing* (FAPAzine) as well as *Arrows of Desire* (1989-99) are online at:
www.megspace.com/arts/thishere



Max sez:

***This Here* may be distributed freely**

*"I'm as honest as the day is long.
The longer the daylight, the less I
do wrong..."*