

# This Here...

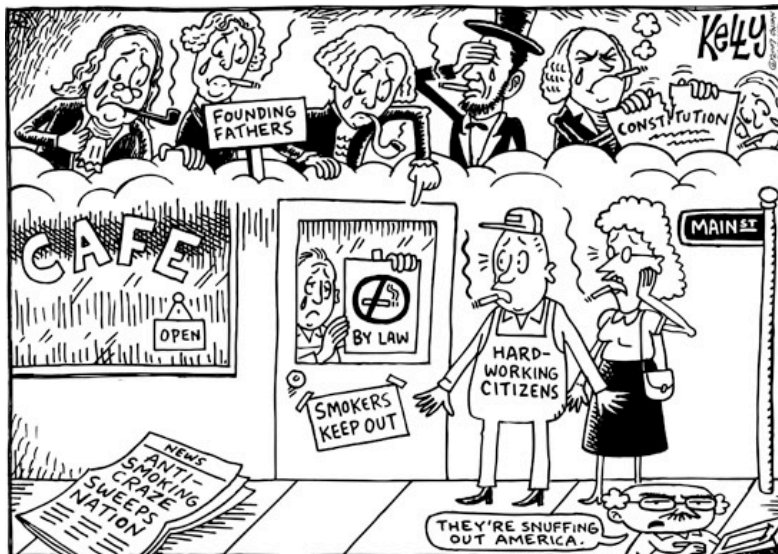
“...ridiculously removed from reality!” (S Birkhead)

## EGOTORIAL

Corflu Zed was generally good fun, but resulted in a hell of a shock to the wallet. I'd been warned by someone there, sadly I forget who, that smoking in the non-smoking rooms could result in a "cleaning surcharge" and indeed it did - \$250, which seems a bit fuckin steep for a couple of squirts of Febreze. I blame Pete Weston's small cigars, the smell of which carried all the way to the elevators. I figured out that if we'd stayed with our original plan of four nights at the ruinous Deca instead of the three we ended up with, the room bill would have been over a grand, which would have gotten me over a week in the penthouse suite at the admittedly grottier Vegas Plaza. To be fair to Byers, Hooper *et al*, Seattle is apparently a non-smoking town as far as its hotels are concerned, so the specific venue doesn't make a whole lot of difference, although other places I've stayed in with similar rules at least have had li'l patios or balconies for the use of those with the tobacco habit. If there's a next time it'll be Skoal Bandits and a spit cup, I suspect. That'll be pleasant.

A sort of apology: I usually visually proof my zines from a print of the pdf, making any final changes in the 'Pages' software then recreating the pdf as a final, but because I'd come home to a phutted disk after Corflu Zed, last-minute changes weren't an option since I didn't have a backup copy of the software (it was bought online with a code release for

the trial version). I'd already sent the pre-proof pdf to the Sainted One as a preliminary, and somewhat presciently copied to self, but it took me a few days to find the release code, and I didn't want to delay the mailing. Having re-read lastish's *Egotorial*, it seems unclear about paper zines received during the last year or so. What I was actually mentioning were those zines I had received which were **also** in the list of 'Fanzines Received' in *This Here...* #7, but I can see that this could have been misunderstood, reading that those were the **only** zines I'd gotten. So, apologies to *Chunga*, *Steam Engine Time*, *Motorway Dreamer*, *Quasiquote* and any others I've forgotten.



Speaking of which, one of the fond hopes expressed lastish bore fruit with the arrival of *Head #8*, most welcome indeed. Very nice to see Doug & Silent Chrissy back in my fanzine inbox, and they may even be getting a loc out of me. Two conreps in this issue: Eastercon Orbital by Doug and Year of the Teledu by Chrissy sat well with me. Other good stuff too concerning the old fraud Salman Rushdie (my

opinion of him, not necessarily Chrissy's), German television towers, music (Doug) and Randy Byers musing on 'The Diva', a movie I'd all but forgotten. Fab stuff, contact addresses in **WAHF**...

We also had an excellent flying visit to Katz Kastle recently - having missed the opportunity to go look at Arizona & California properties after CZ, we flew out to Vegas in mid-April and drove it from there, this time prepaying the car rental and ensuring with a few phone calls that the driver duties (officially BB) would be all good even though the

name on the booking was mine. Typically enough, BB didn't really prefer the places I was goshwow over, and vice versa. Thanks to the indefatigable Earl Kemp for coming around the AZ places with us though. We got back to Vegas Friday night, having arranged to stay with Joyce & Arnie, and were treated to food, drink & Vegrants in that order and several others. Great to see everyone, & thanks to all for a fine time, especially the Mills, Taylors and JoHn Hardin all of whom it was particularly good to catch up with.

Joyce's new musical keyboard managed to keep me in the dining room with MC Mills and TC Taylor, where various degrees of fannish noise were committed. I hope no-one was recording. Seriously.

It's all good.

Nic Farey, May 2009

## JUMPING ON THE COUCH

Politics, according to Shelby Vick, is a four-letter word. So fair warning Shel, there might be some of that in this li'l screed, but really it's more about economics than anything else. Not that I ever do, but I am entitled to add the letters BSc(Econ) after my name as a result of a three-year stint at LSE (or as it is more properly called, the London School of Economics and Political Science). As I've mentioned on earlier occasions, this doesn't give me any particular insight or expertise into economic conditions, mostly because I spent my three years drinking and fucking and rarely attending lectures or classes, but it did instill in me a more than passing interest in the subject and, to be sure, its political ramifications.

How I ended up at LSE is a bit of a story in itself. For those unfamiliar with the British educational system of back then, I attended a grammar school, supposedly (and in fact) a cut above the hoi polloi condemned to eke out a few years at the comprehensive school, thence becoming horny-handed sons of toil. At age 16 in grammar school we took our 'O' (Ordinary) level exams in up to 9 or 10 subjects (I passed seven of nine - how skiffy is that? - which actually made me the class thickie). You best 'O' level subjects determined your choice of 'A' (Advanced) level courses, of which at my school you usually chose three. Mixing it up somewhat, I took mathematics (pure science), economics (social science) and English literature (art). Eng Lit was always my best subject, and in my mind the likeliest candidate for a college subject,



Dr. Eliyahu M. Goldratt

since I'd been a pretty voracious reader for a number of years and could breeze through the texts pretty well, even if I didn't care for them too much. I remember one of the 'A' level set texts was "The Caretaker" play by Pinter, which I could actually read in about an hour. Hardy's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" would take maybe a day.

I was certain that I could get into Cambridge University (for non-UK readers who may not know, Oxford & Cambridge are considered the elite), going so far as to take the "Oxford Use of English" exam, a requirement to get in, in which I was the only one in my school to get a grade 1. However, the elation from this was not to last. My form and class teachers (with one fairly obvious exception) started leaning heavily on me about my subject choice, the cardinal argument being, incredibly, "You don't want to study English, you'll just end up a teacher." I was encouraged to continue with my Cambridge application, but to go for maths instead, my least favorite subject of the three and the one I felt least comfortable with, though I did have the knack of getting good grades in the exams. The "Fuck This" moment didn't take too long to arrive after the teachers, noting my obduracy, started leaning on my parents too, so I was getting it at school *and* at home, all day every day it seemed like. So, fuck this, I dropped out of the Cambridge application (to the horror of my advisors), switched it up to economics & went for the LSE.

I am still wont to the occasional bitter reminiscence in later years over the "just a teacher" argument. I think it likely that I'd have fairly breezed an Eng Lit BA and stuck around for an MA and probably more, no doubt settling into a life of comfortable academia (at which academics reading this will undoubtedly have a huge larf). I might still have found fandom sooner or later, given that I was still a happy and frequent reader of SF.

That, dear readers, was a long aside before the main business at hand, but should explain at least in part why I'm quite the politics junkie, also given that, as I recalled in 'The Tao of Ray Gange' (*This Here...* #10), my LSE years were the time of punk, Thatcher and activism. Perhaps one day I'll try to recall some details of the anarchists' conference (and isn't that a kind of contradiction?) I went to in Cambridge while at LSE. These days my political beliefs are way past the mere sloganeering of those days - I would probably describe myself as a socialist in some respects, a libertarian in others, but as a subscriber to *The Nation* magazine (when I incidentally mentioned this to Bob Lichtman, he commented "Ah, *that's* a good old lefty mag!"), I might appropriate

their label: “progressive”.

It’s a credo of Marxism that capitalism must eventually collapse (a view expressed by an excellent t-shirt I got from *redmolotov.com* and wore at CZ, showing a picture of Karl with the caption: “I warned you that this would happen”), and arguably this is what we’ve seen, leading to some interesting discussions about whether capitalism itself is a failed system.

The business consultant Dr. Eliyahu Goldratt, wrote a famous book called ‘The Goal’ (1984) in part intended to demonstrate his “Theory of Constraints”. Like his other books, Goldratt uses the form of a novel to illustrate his precepts rather than a lot of dry analysis. The details of ToC are not important here, but rather the definition of the ‘goal’ itself. Simply stated, the goal of any business (and by implication, any individual) is to make money. Conditions which interfere with this goal (ToC is primarily concerned with production bottlenecks) are conditions which need to be resolved. There are a couple of economic/social theories which pertain here. The first and most important is the Rational Choice Theory (RCT), a micro-economic concept which holds that individuals will act to maximize their gain and minimize their costs. This also plays into the economic concept of “utility”, some number assigned by an individual as a value on a particular action - the rational choice suggests that the outcome with the highest perceived utility will be chosen. The converse of this is “disutility”, and there’s a theory which suggests that individuals derive disutility from work, which is why you have to pay them.



If this seems like a Triumph Herald moment, let me point out that RTC is also used extensively in foreign policy and diplomacy - those of us who keep tabs on such wonkish discussions cannot fail to find the phrase “rational actor” used to describe individuals, governments or indeed whole countries. The foreign policy use of RCT is that you can deal with a country which is perceived as a “rational actor” in the process. Easy examples are China, which is considered a

largely rational actor at the moment, and North Korea, which is not. A lot of the foreign policy debate over the Middle East hinges upon whether President Ahmadinejad of Iran can be considered a “rational actor” or not. The Bushies thought not, the Barackies appear to hope otherwise.

So, going back to the “goal”, and the application of RCT to capitalists. Let’s take Goldratt at his word and believe that the capitalist “rational actor” will be focused on making money above all else - the outcome from which he or she derives the most utility. This is life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness at it’s most reductive and most short-term level. Clearly I, capitalist, derive the most utility from maximizing the money I make *today*. If I am a polluter, this does not create disutility for me since I almost certainly live far away from any polluted area, I am unlikely to wish to take expensive steps to curb pollution (a goal-contrary action), and I do not care that the Earth may be uninhabitable in 100 years because I won’t be around. Greed is good, and for me, rational. (The original phrase, “Greed is right”, was spoken by Ivan Boesky at a commencement address at UC Berkeley in 1986 - Oliver Stone heard and remembered. Boesky was of course later convicted of insider trading.)

RCT has its detractors. Theories of cognitive bias may disprove any inevitability of rational outcome, and existentialism holds as one of its central beliefs that people do not always act rationally, even when aware that they are doing so.

However, I contend that the progressive deregulation of capitalism, and financial institutions in particular, shows that the eventual outcome was entirely predictable by Rational Choice Theory. The capitalist, as rational actor, will seek to minimize constraints upon his “goal”, and when those constraints are reduced or removed will, in Goldratt’s terms, maximize throughput, whether the end result is an actual physical product or whether it is simply money itself. You can argue (and argue effectively) that this behavior, along with the dot.com boom and the housing bubble, obviously couldn’t last, but the rational capitalist does not see this, focused as he or she is on immediate gain.

It’s a favored tenet of those on the right that socialism is a “failed system” (though I’ve always argued that it’s never been properly tried), but Marx, and Rational Choice Theory, show that unfettered capitalism is equally doomed.

A story to conclude:

There was a man who owned a seaside rock factory (for US readers, this is like a very thick candy cane with lettering running through the middle), but business wasn’t going well. While drowning his sorrows in the local pub he met an efficiency expert, told him of his problems, and the other guy said he’d come by the factory and see what he could do. He visited, took copious notes and came back with a list of recommendations: get rid of the Union, speed up the

conveyor belts, reduce the length of breaks and so on, implemented these changes and went away.

A few weeks later the two men met again in the pub, the factory owner even gloomier, saying that business was still terrible. The expert came back to the factory, cut out tea breaks, speeded up the conveyors some more and laid off some of the employees.



A couple weeks later they meet in the pub again. The factory owner says "It's no good - I'm done.

I'm calling in the creditors." "I don't get it", says the expert, "You should be rolling in it by now."

"Yeah, well," says the factory owner, "You tell me how to shift a million sticks of rock with "fucking cunt" lettered through the middle" ...

## TUNES! (REDUX)

Possibly for my birthday back in January, BB got me the book of VH1's "100 greatest albums" - another part of their seemingly interminable effort to put every piece of music ever made on some kind of list. Needless to say I found plenty to disagree with (not least of which was the placement of 'Never Mind the Bollocks...' at #17, above 'London Calling' at #25. However, I was also minded to consider what *my* choices would have been. Limiting to albums I actually possess (or have possessed), I wrote down the first five I thought of: 'The Wicked Pickett', 'Sign o' the Times', 'London Calling', 'Who's Next', and 'Siren' (Roxy Music's fifth album).

The memorable cover model is Jerry Hall, who Bryan Ferry was knobbing at the time before she left for stonier pastures, and the equally memorable lead-off track was 'Love is the Drug'. I'd been a Roxy fan since 'Virginia Plain', and a *big* fan since the 'For Your Pleasure' album (1973). Something about Ferry's affected cynicism and perceived über-cool was undoubtedly attractive to the geeky picked-on teenager wot I was. One of the other standouts, particularly of this album, was the "world-weary loser in love" vibe going through a lot of it, which was beginning to resonate with me at age 17. I was beginning to learn the tomcatting skills for which I

would be renowned (and in many cases reviled) soon enough.

"Love" (implied = sex) as a game is one of the themes here, with 'Love is the Drug' setting the tone (the other single released off this album was 'Both Ends Burning'), and songs like 'Sentimental Fool' and 'Just Another High' highlighting Ferry's nod and wink to the audience. In some ways these songs can be considered satirical in that they purport to describe a romanticism which is subtly undercut by the delivery. The call-and-response of 'Sentimental Fool', for example, pits the cynical voice against the apparent hopeless romantic: "Sentimental fool, who broke the golden rule? You couldn't resist it.", followed by "Though it's all in vain, I'd do it all again, just to relive one minute."

In 'Whirlwind', Ferry sort of meets his match, describing an encounter of intensity but implied brevity, with a somewhat rueful undertone that nevertheless implies this one will be seen as a win. He suggests, assuming that love is indeed the drug, that he got out just in time: "As crosswords go you near a fatal clue, I fear. This case is closed, elementally, my dear." ("Elementally" being wordplay on the fact the the entire song is an extended weather metaphor.) The song itself runs to a driving Northern Soul beat which grabs you by the squidgy bits and doesn't let up. I always wondered what guitarist Phil Manzanera (author of the music to this song) thought of the final result. Ferry usually just supplied lyrics at this point, often after the tunes were written, and I remember reading about another song on this album, 'Nightingale', also written by Manzanera, who after the lyrics had been added apparently grouched "That wasn't what I had in mind *at all*".



'Just Another High' is by turns petulant and maudlin, and some of the lyrics are a little cringe-worthy ("I really blew my cool and you, you just blew out the candle"), but there's still the dig at the end where the protagonist suggests he'll be off to get laid somewhere else now: "...maybe I should find someone who will maybe love me like I love you."

Which is what I did, quite a lot as it happens, although *most* of the time it was serial monogamy I was engaged in, packing most people's year-long relationships into a few weeks. This would prepare me for college, since in the three years there I went all the way from virile young buck to lonely and desperate old man. It took a complete severance of all college ties to reboot, and having a whole new playground (fandom) didn't hurt much either..

"Lately it seems so empty here / But I suppose I'm all right. / Maybe tomorrow's not so clear / still I remember that night..."

## RACIN'

Let's take a break from the grunt 'n' sweat this time and turn to another often derided endeavor: NASCAR. Or, as one of my correspondents once labelled it, "Non-Athletic Sport Catering After Rednecks".

Let's put *that* canard to rest right away. Like most rasslers, who need to be in very good physical shape, an unfit race car driver isn't going to win any championships. It was interesting to note the interview with the legendary Cale Yarborough featured during the Darlington race (which he won most times of any driver). When asked why he managed to come through so well at the end of many races, he replied that he'd always considered himself an athlete and taken care of himself accordingly, unlike many drivers of the day (mid 60s to mid 80s) who were prone to run out of steam. Another NASCAR legend, Junior Johnson, considered Yarborough to be "the best driver the sport has ever seen." He added: "when you strap Cale in the car it's like adding 20 horsepower." In current 500 mile races during July and August, it wouldn't be unusual for a driver to lose up to 15 pounds

(that's 6.8 kilos in French money) during the course of the race.

As I write, this weekend is NASCAR's "All-Star Break", with the invitational race at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Charlotte, and also a good time to assess how the season is shaping up for some of the major players.

Despite what he might like to think, the racing world does not revolve around publicity hog and all-around whining nuisance, owner Jack Roush, or "the Cat in the Hat" as he is jocularly known by some (and "that fucking annoying grinning cunt" by others). As was mentioned in an earlier ish, NASCAR is bringing in rules to limit the number of cars any particular owner can run, and crybaby Jack immediately started referring to this as the "get Jack Roush" rule, even though Hendrick motorsports will also be primarily affected - and you don't hear Rick Hendrick singing the blues, possibly because his drivers tend to be more successful anyway.

This aside, I'd consider there have been three, or possibly four major developing stories this season: (1) Whether repeat champion Jimmie Johnson and scary-good crew chief Chad Knaus can continue to dominate; (2) The continuing "woes" of Dale Earnhardt Jr.; (3) The new team of Stewart-Haas, with Tony Stewart as co-owner-driver and teammate Ryan Newman; (4) The progress of 18 year old rookie Joey Logano

who took over Stewart's #20 ride at Joe Gibbs Racing.

Tony "Smoke" Stewart has always been one of my favorite drivers, and is indeed my #1 since we lost Dale Earnhardt Sr. The news that he was leaving JGR to form his own team caused a bit of trepidation around here, since we remembered the problems Michael Waltrip had in *his* first season as owner, failing to qualify for several races in part due to NASCAR's strange system of awarding guaranteed starting places based on an owner points algorithm, and secondly because his cars were pretty crap. MWR was and is running Toyota, as was Stewart at JGR, but it was no secret that Tony was not happy with Gibbs' switch from Pontiac. SHR cars are Chevrolet, a perennial dominator of the standings, and the engines are provided by Hendrick. The



Cale Yarborough

acquisition of Ryan Newman as the other team driver brings a solid and experienced presence. While yet to score a win (at the time of writing), Stewart-Haas has run well, despite Newman's somewhat slow start. A series of top-10 and top-5 finishes puts Tony second in points, with Newman 8th, well inside the top-12 Chase cutoff.

Smoke's old ride at JGR is having it's ups and downs. There have been several races where Logano has run well in the #20, but in many ways is still finding his feet, and at 18 going on 19 probably lacks the stamina of some of the older heads, quite a few of whom are admittedly not that much older. Although Mark Martin, at 50, has won two races this year and is still viewed as a serious contender, the likes of Tony and Jeff Gordon, current points leader, both 38 this year, are considered grizzled veterans compared to "young guns" like Kyle Busch (24), Carl Edwards (29) and Denny Hamlin (28), all of whom are also serious contenders.

Then there's Dale Earnhardt Jr. (34 going on 14). It's understandable in many ways that once his old man dropped off the twig at Daytona in that horrendous crash, fans would latch onto Junior very quickly. In the black Goodwrench Chevy, the #3 was worshipped, criticized, hated and feared, depending who you were, but there was nobody who *didn't* have an opinion about the man called "the Intimidator" for good reason. Jeff Gordon, who I didn't used to like at all as a driver, judging that he won most of his races by virtue of his engine and his pit crew rather than his driving skills, went up in my estimation when he got a new crew chief and actually had to learn to drive, proving that he could. He went up even further when I heard him relate a story from his second or third year in NASCAR top-division racing. The race was getting close to the wire, and Gordon was in something like 3rd, Earnhardt Sr. 4th or 5th. Co-operation among drivers to use the draft was perhaps a little more common than it is now. Gordon related that he got a message over his helmet radio: "Dale wants to work with you." He said, "That was my first and proudest moment in racing - that's when I knew I'd arrived." Such was the reverence afforded #3, and in this fan's opinion, deservedly so. Junior, on the other hand, I never thought much good. He began racing for Earnhardt's own team, DEI (while the old man was still contracted to, and racing for Richard Childress), and watching him alternately strut and quiver, I couldn't help but think that the other son, Kerry, would have been a better choice. You've got to have a little sympathy for anyone who tries to follow in the footsteps of a revered father, but it doesn't help your case if you're an arrogant little shit with questionable ability (cf Martin Amis). Junior left the not-so-tender embrace of his stepmother Theresa at DEI for the supposedly greener pastures of Hendrick, but has yet to make that much of an impact. he is still the most popular driver on the circuit, but it can only be a matter of time before everyone else realizes that he really isn't that

good. As Arnie & I despair of rasslin' fans, so too does it go with NASCAR.

As far as Jimmie Johnson's recent dominance: there's no doubt that Johnson is a helluva driver, and in Chad Knaus has the savviest crew chief going. Reading between the lines, I believe that the recently instituted testing restrictions, while packaged as a money-saving measure, were designed more to level the playing field between Knaus and the other crews. I guess we'll see, but in the meantime...

GO TONY!!!!

## LOCO CITATO

*[[Editorial comment looks like this. Sheryl's leadoff letter arrived just after #11 had been completed...]]*

From: 25509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882

March 14

**Sheryl Birkhead** writes:

In the tradition of the digital conversion - something new has happened. You may read that as undesirable. The house has one moderately large antenna on the roof that can be rotated to maximize quality of reception. That antenna is wired into the house to a splitter box. There are four wires coming out of that box but I have **never** found the fourth outlet in any of the rooms. So, that antenna is wired to three rooms and then cable runs to connect to each TV. In "theory" all three sets get the same signal, and hence the same stations. Well, you'd think so. This was, indeed the case until last Monday. The Friday before that I had an electrician out to find out what it would cost to re-wire that box, putting new wires in the three existing wired rooms and add in two other rooms (FYI - \$145/room plus a cost to rewire the splitter box itself). What I had not counted on was what happened Monday. We switched to Daylight Savings Time on Sunday (don't know if this has anything to do with what happened or not). Monday I checked the set in the rec room that is set up to tape one show Mon-Fri - nothing on the tape (well, to be accurate, an hour of snow). So, I scrolled through all the channels - whoops - how did that happen? Three of the channels that have the strongest *analog* signal were no longer in the memory. So, I patiently went back through the setup. To be safe, I went back again and asked the setup to look for new stations (although they had been there for months now - but had disappeared). Nope, nothing. Next I unplugged everything and redid every step. Finally I took the unit from the living room TV (that was still getting the stations loud and clear) and hooked it up downstairs - nope. Hmmm. I took the downstairs unit and plugged it into the living room TV - yup the channels **were** still there. That backs me into the assessment that both the converter units are fine, but for some reason the **wiring** (talk about a timely observation - see note about electrician) in the basement was selectively (huh???) dropping at least four channels (and their "sub-

channels" - don't know what else to call things like 4-2 and 4-4). No matter how you look at it, still don't have the channels and will need to have the electrician do his thing and hope. (As an aside - the electrician also said I needed a "digital antenna" for better reception. I did my due diligence and there is no such thing other than a label - an antenna, apparently, is an antenna. Then again, he is an electrician and not a TV guy - if they even exist any longer!).

*[[This herbert sounds like either an ignoramus or a ripoff merchant. As I'm sure you're aware by now, the digital conversion "drop dead" date has been postponed until June 12, so if you'd installed converter boxes for each TV already there might have been some issues if your local broadcasters weren't yet up to speed. You're quite right that there's no such thing as a "digital antenna" per se, although of course unscrupulous marketers are labeling stuff as "HD ready" etc - utter bollocks.*

*I'm not totally clear on what you're trying to achieve with rewiring the splitter, or what this sparky thinks he's charging you for. Your antenna should have a coax cable feeding from it which will connect to any standard type of splitter - two-ways can be had for ten bucks or so from Radio Shack, but you'd probably want a low-loss 4-way off the antenna, which should be \$30 or so. You give the impression that your antenna is hardwired into the splitter box you have? If it is, change it to a regular male connector (Radio Shack again - couple bucks, just cut the cable and push on the connector) then you can plug it directly into whatever splitter you choose to get. If it isn't, you don't need to do anything with the splitter at all.*

*Replacing the existing cables isn't hard to do, but shouldn't be necessary. The digital conversion won't require new cable, just the converter box. The availability of channels will be up to the relationship between the converter box and your TV, nothing else. If you haven't already done so, you should check out the website dtv.gov. Cable itself costs about a buck a foot. Installing new outlets depends on what's inside your walls. It's likely that new cable could be fished through, but you can never tell how much the wall will need to be opened, and therefore how much drywall repair/repaint will be needed. If you don't mind cable showing outside the walls, just get a \$10 splitter and run cable from one room to another along the baseboard, drilling through where necessary...]]*

Ah, back to the program currently in progress...

I think I checked to see if *Sanctuary* is available on Netflix since I know nothing about the show and it is not on "regular" TV. Since I do not recall adding it to any queue, I am guessing it is not yet available. *Heroes* had a short preview of the upcoming *Star Trek* movie, and Sylar really looks like Spock. My only, minor, quibble is that with the longer lifespan of Vulcans (although Spock is only half...) wouldn't the "younger" Spock look exactly like the Spock

we already know - while Kirk **would** be much younger. Just an observation that may or may not be pertinent (wow - talk about ridiculously removed from reality!).

*[[You're assuming that Spock is already older, which isn't the case. According to canon, Spock was born in the year 2232, Kirk in 2233. To avoid accusations of terminal sadness, I'll point out that I looked that up on Memory Alpha, it wasn't something I knew off the top of my head...]]*

I still have three kerosene heaters lounging in the basement. Two are about third generation (from the blocky heavy upright heater we had as kids that doubled as a regular stove in the winter when the electricity went out). The third is one generation further along. I have kerosene cans in the garage, but now that I have two fireplaces I try to heat as much as possible by wood and have not given much thought to the kerosene heaters - no matter how much improvement there has been, there is still a kerosene smell and I don't want that getting into the house if I can avoid it. The smell from the fireplace is in the walls, but that is pleasant. Regardless, I know I can always fall back to kerosene if I have to. In the irony department - when I bought the house I was told that, while both the furnace and AC were functional, they were both well beyond the natural lifespan of such units and when replacing one, replace them both. Three years ago in a heatwave the AC died. Since then I have aimed at almost 100% winter heat from wood in the fireplaces. This year the technician who came out to clean the furnace told me there was now scaling from lack of use in the humid times - so I need to use it. Sigh, can't win.

*[[If you're happy with fireplace heat, junk the furnace and just get an AC unit or heat pump. You might also consider getting a wood stove insert for one or both of the fireplaces...]]*

Um... er... in your note to Kim Huett does that mean YOU WANT ME TO WRITE IN ALL CAPS? I RE-READ YOUR COMMENT SEVERAL TIMES...? Agh, gotta stop that, it just feels too much like I'm yelling.

*[[Kim's loc was handwritten, but printed rather than cursive. I seem to find it more difficult to read handwriting these days, which I suspect is as much lack of practice than anything else - I'm not yet at the stage where I can't actually read my own...]]*

Hmmm Farey, Farrier... my Mom's side of the family included Ferrises - same idea about iron.

I have now seen *Wall-E*, but need to give it a second watch. I usually gauge my enjoyment by how much I actually *watch* the movie and if I stay awake. Well, the first part was great and I really really like it - but, uh, then I fell asleep - but woke up to watch (and appreciate) the ending. I need to go back and re-watch (well, really watch for the first time) the middle portion.

From: 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, W Yorks HD5 8PB, UK

April 14

Steve Sneyd writes:

Mark Plummer gave me a copy of new *This Here...* at Eastercon, so fairly speedy response.

Got an old detailed road atlas of States, so looked up Chuckey (presumably not named for the fiendish doll - curious name tho, left me wondering about origin) - noticed is handy for Davy Crockett's birthplace; coonskin hats still worn locally?

*[[Haven't seen any coonskin hats around there so far. About the name derivation, in his book 'Tennessee place names', Larry L. Miller writes: 'Chuckey probably derives its name from the nearby Nolachuckey river. Nolachuckey is believed to be a Cherokee word, but the translation is unclear'...]]*

Your mention of hard rock poll results reminds of strange fact from recently redone poll of tunes most played in public places in UK in last 50 (I think it was) years, based on Performing Rights records. - top 2 still 'Whiter Shade of Pale' & 'Bohemian Rhapsody', & both contain the word "fandango". One no doubt feeding conspiracy theorists. If you're into such polls, Planet Rock, hard rock radio station here (I hear it on digiradio, but doubtless also on web) is forever having listener polls - the ultimate riff & such like.

Think beginning to get grip on terminology in your Rasslin' reports, tho not really my thing at all. The mentions of figures out of old ITV wrestling here, Big Daddy, Mighty Haystacks *[[sic]]*, Jackie Pallo etc, brings back recall of half watching it on Saturday afts [...]. Presumably the harridans posted just outside ring, who hit any baddie thrown out over ropes with their brick-lined handbags, were also choreographed employees of the whole scripted circus, though never get a name credit as purportedly "ordinary members of audience".

Another proof, I thought, of my "poor unstable little memory" (St. Nother Balbulus®) that couldn't recall having a poem in *Arrows of Desire*, as you mention in response to my loc. But checked, 2x, through list that purportedly shows where my works appeared, for period 1986-97, which think wd cover *AoD* run (?) & not listed, so?? answer to mystery (as in "another of life's little"), I do (far too infrequently, due to general inefficiency) use Net at library (free for an hour), but behind w.sites shd look at, so checking out your back run on <efanzines.com> would be likely to prove another sometime/never. But Mark P said at e-con, when handing over *TH...*, that he still has the run of *AoD* in electronic file form, so if he had a list of which issues had poems in he could do me hard copies, a most kind offer which would also solve the problem of vast mail costs if you sent me paper copies from your back stock (my previous letter based on your offer in *Motorway Dreamer* {...}).

*[[As you should by now know, since I sent you a hard copy of the index, such poetry as there was in Arrows of Desire appeared in issues #5, #6 and #7, the first of which was produced in the UK, the latter two in the US. Your piece, 'Inside an Older Wall' was in #7, which appeared in 1995, although you might have submitted it somewhat earlier, but still well within the scope of your obviously incomplete list...]]*

From: 4030 8th Street South, Arlington VA 22204

April 14

Alexis Gilliland writes:

Many thanks for *This Here...* #11, which is nicely turned out and well written, though neither the music you discuss nor wrestling (or Rasslin' as the case may be) are even among my lesser interests. However, the NWWL may be the wave of the future for televised spectator sports. Naked women playing volleyball, basketball and tennis should boost the ratings considerably, while the Russians have already tried (and given up) naked women delivering the news and weather.

*[[Kind of adds a whole new layer of meaning to "The Russians Are Coming!" don't it? Much as it might be pleasing to consider the esthetics of naked women playing tennis (memories of much-thumbed sticky pages of Health & Efficiency passed around the 6th form arising there), I must point out that if this were a real professional sport the athletes would probably resemble a 14 year old Nadia Comaneci rather than a 28 year old Serena Williams, since the shelf would undoubtedly be a bit of an impediment. Pedophile TV would snap it up, no doubt...]]*

The papernet seems a useful partner to the internet, and unambiguous in its meaning. Randy Byers' suggestion that paper fanzines are dead is probably premature, though it does appear that they are moribund. I expect they will survive as the favored archival format or as a specialized niche serving a small minority of faneds (elite faneds if you prefer). In the class of "Everything old is new again" it is not unthinkable that some smartass will issue a fanzine on clay tablets, using Times Roman Cuneiform. Which will no doubt be scanned in and issued on CD to save postage.

*[[What Randy actually said was that paper fanzines were a "dead form", not the same thing as saying that paper fanzines themselves are dead, and indeed he proves their survival as part of the Chunga editorial triumvirate on a very regular basis. As Dale Speirs has pointed out in the past, the papernet has, and will always have, the definite advantage of being subject to little scrutiny compared to the web (which after all can be trawled by machines looking for particular phrases). Thus it will remain the medium of choice for such things as dissident comment, and always for*



*those who wish to not attract attention to their activities for whatever savory or unsavory reason...]]*

Speaking of old stuff, for Easter the History Channel had a report on the compilation of the Bible, the editors of which appear to have had an abundance of theological fan writing to sort through. This writing was done prior to Emperor Constantine's deathbed establishment of Christianity in 337 AD, and included a lot of unorthodox material, at least some of which may have had a basis in fact. The several edits (over time) kept what was deemed useful, revising when necessary, and discarded the rest, often pronouncing anathema upon the losers. One of which was "The Book of Jubilees" which expanded Genesis to explain where Cain's wife came from. Having Cain marry his sister was logically consistent, yes, but at odds with the long-standing ban on incest, and the editors very properly threw it out. Eventually Lee and I have up on all that contention and put on the DVD of the Civil War by Ken Burns. That should do for now, and good luck on getting your driver's license back.

*[[Thanks for your good wishes. If they were trying to eliminate incest from the Bible, then they missed a bit. After Lot and his family escaped from Sodom to a mountain cave (the wife being transmuted to a pillar of salt on the way), they took refuge in a mountain cave. Lot's daughters, believing for whatever reason that the world had been destroyed and it was their duty to repopulate, got the old man drunk and had their way with him, eventually producing sons Moab and Ammon. This little bit of naughtiness is described in Genesis 19:30-38, and illustrated here by the 1616 Goltzius painting "Lot and his daughters" showing the seduction. In the Muslim religion, where Lot is revered as a prophet, this little tale is not included in the Qu'ran and is considered a lie...]]*



spending 42c (or 44c if delayed) on.\* Low compliment indeed? Ahhh, but it is nice to receive the old-fashioned kind of fanzine on paper. I like the e-kind but screen reading is still not my favorite activity in the world. Well, actually it is rather low down on the list, come to think of it. But call me a sensualist, I like the feel of paper in the palms of my hand, the ever present threat of a paper cut, the slightest chance a tear drop might cause a mailing label to smear. I think I need to lie down now.

Later..."scads of junk mail." Not up in this neck of the woods, what with the economy the way it is here. The trees rejoice! Not only the stores but the malls themselves are starting to go down the path to bankruptcy. Son Aaron asked me just this morning, "What are they going to replace the Natick Collection (upscale for mall) with after they tear it down?" My kid certainly asks smart questions, do not he? I keep harkening [\ (harkening?) back to the *Earth Abides* book, and note a new TV series called *After Man*, after population reaches zero and the vines and creepers and sands and oceans obliterate the remnants of civilization for future unknown types to dig up and write speculative texts about and house "our" antiquities in their museums.

From: 1014 Concord St, Framingham MA 01701  
(fanboy@rcn.com)

April 18

**Ron Salomon** writes:

I am breaking into the piggy bank to snail mail this, not only out of a sense of nostalgia but also because it is worth

I am waiting to find out what really went down [or who] at the most recent Corflu, Nic. I used to enjoy the showpersonship of rasslin' when I was a youngun but only catch any of it on TV when channel hopping. Away back then the only thing aside from the wrestlers in the ring was the occasional handful of, what was it, salt? thrown at the opponents. Or perhaps a person of extra short stature.

*[[Salt? Er - that's Sumo, shurely...?]]*

Cute illo by Steve Stiles topping your music column. I've always thought Van Halen was the greatest rock band whose song openings were (almost) never played. And here I sit by the laptop with Spanky & Our Gang's "Like to Get to Know You" pumping out of the built-in speakers. I'm listening to BoomFM from Seattle. This streaming is a lot easier but not as much fun as in the Old Days (nights actually), for the far-away signals to reach out] DXing for clear channel radio stations from the deep south and midwest of the US. Hitting the keyboard doesn't hold a candle to twiddling a dial and constantly moving the radio around to get the clearest/best reception. Sort of like old analog TV days when one person would be twisting the rooftop antenna while a second person in front of the television would yell out "Stop! Keep it right there!", except the little transistor radio was a lot easier to keep lifted on shoulder for extended periods of time. This is National Record Day and hopefully I can empty enough out of the moocow bank (sorry, piggy not kosher enough) to at least buy the new Dylan and Springsteen 45 RPM vinyl singles at the local non-national record shop.

I was amazed when the Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again" played on the radio uncensored. First song I ever heard with that f word not bleeped out. I mean, there was no sailing of ships going on. Many years ago. I was going to say many Moons but decided agin it. Did I just write that out loud? And it wasn't that many years after Mick sang "Let's Spend Some Time Together" on TV. Jim Morrison had more balls. I am showing my age here, aren't I? I remember when the Who were on the Smothers Brothers TV show and almost blew up the whole stage and partially deafened—who was it, was it Moon?

*[[Who expert wot I am, I can point out that this is all wrong in several ways. "Won't Get Fooled Again" doesn't have any swearies in it - you're thinking of "Who Are You" which does throw the f-bomb in there. It also depends on what time you were listening, and whether you were getting it the old-fashioned way over the airwaves (bleeped before 9pm or whatever) or off the internet machine (may not be bleeped). The "Ed Sullivan edit" of the Stones was in 1967. Such recordings as still exist will show Jagger rolling his eyes at the camera as he delivers the altered line. Incidentally, as late as 2006 the Stones were instructed not to play the song in China because of its "suggestive lyrics" - guess they wouldn't have added "Starfucker" to the set as a substitute then? And just so's you get this one straight, the Who's appearance on the Smothers Brothers (excerpted on The Kids are Alright) made Pete go deaf, not Keith. Some think that this is probably the start of his problems with tinnitus...]]*

\*Well Nic, I have shut off my brain's nostalgia center, and having not found enough change for the postage, will email this instead. Of course you always have the option of

printing it up so you can then tear the paper to shreds, stomp on it, and set fire to it, which would be the feely touchy alternative to smashing your computer monitor/screen.

PS Well, it is already the 18th in some parts of our world and eventually our part/s of it will fall prey to the creeping of the calendar. Does this mean I am pre-science?

From: 1260 Hill Road, Glen Ellen, CA 95442

April 18

Jeanne Bowman writes:

[...]

There you were, remarking indeed on bus rides & transit woes, and there was Alan requesting a little back rub for the wonked out post-cross-country plane ride muscle spasm. Now, I was just at the place in your zine what was about to segway (not the new transport device by the way, one which you might consider...) and you move into wrassling. Wrestling, well. Hmm. Yes. Slam downs, takedowns, shouting and loud other smacking noises came to mind. That and the memory of a young friend who was quite serious during his high school career about becoming a WWF character. He took a short course at the school in Hayward (where they actively discouraged his continuing on account of his small stature. Big personality, but not big enough).

*[[WWE, as it has been for some years since the resolution of the lawsuit from the World Wildlife Fund, definitely prefers a certain physical type i.e. large, with few exceptions (Jamie Noble is one), and the smaller guys tend to be badly used...]]*

Our man Aaron, not to be daunted, declared he would wrestle, often in our living room, but, you may not believe this, he "shared" certain tricks of the trade. The furniture survived and it's a good thing our shack is on somewhat solid foundations. While Aaron is a bit small, our boys are not, and we had many a happy evening with the howls of "BODY SLAM" rattling the windows while the takedowns began. Our Jess is much above 200 pounds now, and there was serious "ringside" slamming & pounding going on. I think you might know what I mean. There are a few dubious holds that I still recollect the inner workings of, lifting by the head and leading into throws across the ring, for instance... that no sane house monitor would have allowed were they genuinely connected to the actual world of stright up (rather than perceived) Newtonian physics...

So, back to my afternoon respite of poor Alan's bare back drenched in kukui nut oil... when the body slam impulse strikes me and, well, began a WWF style monologue, punctuated by the appropriate growls, thumps, and a play on: "That's right. Take that deep breath. All the way down... We are counting... Oh no, I've lost the hold!! Relax, relax, and

here comes, oh no, the dreadful squeeze play... will he get loose", with punding on the bed and etc. His back is ever so much better now and we think Hulk Hogan has a future in marketing massage [...].

You will not be in the least surprised to learn that Aaron's senior project was a student vs. teachers full on mat war (astonishment - staff won) and that he has since found a lovely ranch in the central valley, where he is a practising doctor of chiropractic.

*[[Another normal day at casa Bowman, one assumes. For an interesting interview with Hogan & details of his current situation, check out Rolling Stone issue #1077, April 30, 2009 (Kings of Leon on the cover) or presumably also at rollingstone.com...]]*

From: pamelaboal@westfieldway.fsnet.co.uk

April 19

**Pamela Boal** writes:

Glad to learn that you were not incarcerated. Mind the whole affair is horribly expensive.

As mentioned before my knowledge of wrestling to day is non existent, especially ladies wrestling. Steve Jeffery really took me down memory lane, Big Daddy et al are well remembered names. I wonder where they all are now, have any of them gone on as trainers or managers and their names still recognised?

*[[It's a lot quicker to mention who's still alive, since a lot of the classic names from World of Sport are no longer with us. I'd mentioned Daddy & Haystacks, also Jackie Pallo, and the likes of Les Kellett and Gary Cooper (Catweazle) are also currently performing in the Great Ring in the Sky. Also Brian Glover, whom some may remember better for his acting roles (notably in 'Alien') but who was also an accomplished professional wrestler. Speaking of wrestler/actors Pat Roach, who died of throat cancer in 2004, was the only person apart from Harrison Ford to appear in all of the first three Indiana Jones movies. He also maintained his wrestling links right until the end. Perennial heel Mick McManus works in PR in Uxbridge, and the camp genius Adrian Street (who was usually described with the typical euphemism "flamboyant") is still going and still involved to the extent of having designed Mick Foley's 'Dude Love' apparel and inspiring the characters of several current wrestlers...]]*

Glad to hear there was something on the positive front happening with your

Tennessee home (isn't that a song title?) also think you are wise not to jump for joy just yet. Thought the poem I wrote when we obtained our boat might amuse.

The Great Retirement Plan

"We'll cruise the river Thames,  
Such peace, tranquillity.  
Or something of that sort"  
My husband said to me.  
"Pleasures on the river  
Are absolutely free."  
"That, my would be captain  
Was never meant to be."

"So we'll use our savings!  
"But is that wise, my pet?"  
"This boat is all we need,  
Just look at what we get!  
Yes there's teething troubles  
But now we are all set."  
"But my dearest darling  
The cabin's soaking wet!"

Safety is a problem  
Our licence is denied.  
Time and money later  
Our boat is true and tried.  
"Faults are now all mended  
We'll give our friends a ride."  
"Grinding gears, odd noises,  
Quick, take us to the side!"

"The engine needs some work  
There is this man I hear..."

"Work? It needs replacing  
And that will cost us dear."  
Very little cruising  
Nor river fun I fear.  
The daftest thing of all  
We'll try again next year!

*[[Brings to mind the phrase: "There's always something", or Joseph Major's even gloomier "The accession of money is followed by a catastrophe of equal or superior cost" (from This Here... #9). In my case this would appear to have been 8 months of unemployment. I awoke this morning to a voicemail from my Tennessee neighbor Rebecca to the effect that the caravan had been broken into and was currently wide open. I, of course, have the keys...]]*



Brian Glover

From: bwfoster@juno.com

April 19

**Brad Foster** writes:

Wow, three printzines in the mail on Wednesday, now two more on Saturday. If this keeps up, I'll think that these tales of the death of the printzine are all being made up. Cool!

*[[Not dead, but not very well, perhaps. Mind you, I think using the receipt of three zines on one day to disprove the never-quite-arriving death of paper fanzines is akin to saying a snow shower in April disproves global warming...]]*

Sorry to hear of your continuing "adventures" with things mechanical, but does all seem to be turning out okay in the end. And isn't that, after all, the best we can hope for? At least these days.

I'm not sure I understood Alexis' story of Lee's conversation with the cop who pulled her over for speeding. I mean, isn't it pretty much the first thing every cop asks for whenever they pull anyone over? maybe the cop was just surprised that someone actually was thinking ahead, rather than his having to ask yet again. And I'm not following how her being a blonde in a red convertible enters into it, if she was indeed doing 70 in a 55 zone. If I was doing that same speed there, I would have been pulled over as well. Now, if she has tales of driving at 37 in a 35 zone and being pulled over, the "blonde in a red convertible" might work better. I pretty much went to the "never more than 5 miles over the limit" years ago when I realized it just wasn't worth the few minutes time saved over the constant monitoring for cops, and having to pay for tickets when caught. Happily punch in the cruise control these days and then ignore the speedometer totally. (My fave moments are doing my usual 69 in the 65 zone and some guy whips past me in the left lane at around 75, only to see him slam his brakes a few miles up ahead 'cause he sees a cop, drops down to something like 50 and I end up passing him, then a few miles later he whips past again. That is WAY too much work as far as I'm concerned!

Gotta go (and only a little bit over the speed limit!)

From: garcia@computerhistory.org

April 21

**Chris Garcia** writes:

Good to see *Batteries Not Included*, which I understand folded up shop recently. I loved it, read many issues and absolutely thought that it was a magical piece. Since I actually interned in the porn industry, I heard a lot of fun stories, but BNI always had some really fun stuff.

You know, a lot of those zines I've never even heard of, once because they were before my time and two because they probably weren't on-line and that's where I go for most of

my zines. It's easier for me to deal with pixels on a screen than letters on a page because I bounce back and forth between working on whatever work calls for and various forms of FANAC, so a zine on the web is easiest to throw into that bucket. Of course, there's something to be said for paper zines, they've got that papery goodness that so many people love, but I have a thing for dots on screens.

*[[Kind of reminds me of the original run of This Here... when I was working at Computer Applications Specialists, and then, almost as now, pretty much compiled the zine during the workday (and printed it there too hem-hem). I didn't even have a home computer back then, but they very kindly gifted me my old pc when I went back a couple weeks later to ask if they'd sell it to me...]]*

NBC's web presence stinks. I watch *30 Rock*, just about the only thing on NBC I enjoy, on Hulu because the browser is so much easier on my borrowed connection from the hotel on the other side of the parking lot from my tiny little studio. I like ANC's viewer, which while not as easy on the browser as Hulu, is at least decent enough. Of course, it's also got *LOST* and *Desperate Housewives* and that new show *The Unusuals*, which I like.

*[[You remind me how little network TV I actually watch, since I've never seen any of the shows you mention. I'm also one of the few people I know who has, to this day, never seen an episode of 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer'. I watch some stuff in rerun, currently getting into CSI:NY. Of an evening I tend to get locked into 'Family Guy' reruns or Keith Olbermann and Rachel Maddow on MSNBC, unless it's Monday ('Heroes', which will be done next week as I write this), Tuesday ('Rescue Me') or of course Thursday (TNA Impact!...)]]*

WrestleMania's done come and gone, leaving us behind it. It really was the best one, but I did really like the Michaels vs. Undertaker match, and Hardy vs. Hardy was good. Not quite Dory vs. Terry Funk good, but close enough. And the Ladder Match. You gotta love Kofi Kingston and Shelton Benjamin. Those two need to be bigger stars and now!!!

*[[I've said this several times, but until WWE creates an actual title for these guys (like WCW's Cruiserweight title or TNA's X Division), they'll be condemned to mid-card, even though, as you so rightly point out, their matches are usually full of high spots. I strongly suspect Vinnie Mac will never do this because it's an admission that WCW did something right. Monday Nitro was beating Raw hands down in the ratings for a loooooong time, as you'll recall...]]*

Folks have been saying that Orton has mellowed out some since he had a kid. Still, he's not the most popular guy for a number of reasons.

I watched TNA's recent PPV and with Sting vs. Mick Foley stinkin' up the joint, I was not impressed. Of course, I have to say that I love ODB. She's just so...weird. I hear they're

thinking about bringing back Jackie Gayda, which is odd, but I always liked her.

To me, the top 100 Hard Rock Songs was dead on with G&R at the top. There is no more important 1980s hair metal song than 'Welcome to the Jungle', even if 'Patience' and 'Paradise City' are both better songs over all. WtJ really sums up the entire metal experience. I've never understood those that loved 'Enter Sandman'. For me, Metallica peaked with 'One', an amazing song, slightly ahead of 'Master of Puppets'. You're right though. Lemmy and The Boys need to be higher up on the list.

*[[I would not have considered G'n'R to be a metal band at all. Hard rock, sure, but not metal. I trawled a few metalhead "best of" lists on the internet machine, and they're barely mentioned at all, but Metallica are all over the place...]]*

Nick Grassell mentions my man Bobo Brazil. I met him when I was really young and he'd still come out to the Bay Area for the Battle Royals. He was a good guy. My dad always hated Dick the Bruiser. I've seen some of his videos and they're great.



And why would my casting Claire as Bubbles lead to a shitstorm? It seems perfect to these eyes!

That's a great picture of Jackie Pallo. When I was a kid, I'd read the wrestling magazines and they'd always cover Mick McManus and Dig Daddy and Giant Haystacks and Pallo and Johnny Saint and the young guys at that point like Dave Finlay and Robbie Brookside. Their descendants, as it were, are still big deals on the indy scene. Brookside is still wrestling, as is Johnny Saint despite the fact that he's in his 60s, I think. Nigel McGuinness is the RoH champion and he's got English Club Wrestling written all over him!

From: [drl@ansible.co.uk](mailto:drl@ansible.co.uk)

April 29

**Dave Langford** writes:

Don't worry about being a Second Series Fan (which is probably not unlike a Second Stage Lensman). The agony eases somewhat after the first 100 issues of the new series. Well, the first 200. I speak as one who has tried it.

Although you imply otherwise, *Ansible* still appears on paper, as does *Plokta*. Each issue is sent out by quaintly old-fashioned snailmail before I run the mighty macros (one called STROSS for arcane historical reasons) that generate the email and web versions. Alas, more and more fans spurn the print edition because they read it on line. I detected the end of an era when a paper *Ansible* was refused for just this reason by hotwired, cutting-edge cyberfan Brian Aldiss. Several cubic feet of my surplus back issues got dumped on the freebie fanzine table at Eastercon 2009. So it goes, or went.

*[[I hadn't realized you were still doing paper copies - I do keep up with the online version, since it seems a bit daft to ask you to mail one to the States. In fact, I don't think I've ever been on your snailmail list, since back in Blighty I almost always used to get 'em handed to me! Hadn't seen (or come to that, thought of) Plokta in many a year. Last time I looked at one of their websites, admittedly quite some time ago - probably pre-jail - it didn't seem to have been updated in a while...]]*

From: [dave\\_redd@hotmail.com](mailto:dave_redd@hotmail.com)

May 2

**David Redd** writes:

Thanks for the Real Print Edition (and thanks to Fishlifter Press for making it possible over here.) A few stamps heading for the Sainted Plummer over the bank holiday, although not very many (sorry) as our income has dropped by another 20% now that my wife has reached 60 and retired.

Can't recall many more UK wrestling names for you, or not many interesting ones, but how about Mitzi Mueller?

Always watchable. She and her sparring partner worked out a neat trick for warming up the crowd - a few minutes in, one girl grabbed the other causing arched body, agonised expression and a sudden scream of OH JESUS! Cue audience howls of appreciation. Nothing else in the bout was that interesting, but boy, people kept watching.

But if "big" names like Mitzi and the folk I mentioned last time had to tour as far as Haverfordwest to earn a crust, the UK wrestling game can't have paid too brilliantly. After one evening I saw "clown prince" Les Kellett leave the hall suitcase in hand and ask a passer-by where he could get a bed for the night. No plush tour transport for Les ; he probably had to cycle to bouts and supply his own trouserclips. Similarly, Big Daddy after his "fights" would scrawl biro squiggles across the covers of old wrestling mags just to extract a few more coppers from the kids. (I put "fights" in cynical inverted commas because in later years Big D would stand on stage shouting "Easy! Easy!" with arms outstretched while two "attackers" would somersault past. Who said wrestling was a contact sport?)

Minor comments on this here eleven:

Editors were encouraged to caption photos of Jackie Pallo as "Jackie 'Mr TV' Pallo".

Re *Ansible*, its print version still continues and is very much appreciated down here, but the intricate variations of its distribution methods are mind-numbingly complex. Dave Langford did try to enlighten me once...my head hurt...

Oh, and for "The Who's *Can't Explain*" read "The Kinks' *You Really Got Me*", surely. (I class *All Day and All of the Night* as superior to both, but it was YRGM what changed the world.)

*[[Beg to differ there, Dave. Both Kinks songs are really cranked versions of the 'Louie Louie' riff, as encouraged by producer Shel Talmy, and pretty much freely admitted by Ray Davies. Talmy was also working with The Who over at the Brunswick label, and wanted to encourage a similar sound out of them, which led to Pete writing 'Can't Explain', as he put it "to introduce The Who to the charts". This achieved, the follow-up single was the much more Mod inspired 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere'...]]*

From: [fjagh2009@ericlindsay.com](mailto:fjagh2009@ericlindsay.com)

CoA: 544 Carlyle Gardens, Beck Drive North, Condon QLD 4815, AUSTRALIA

May 10

Eric Lindsay writes:

Fanzine editors have been complaining of the death of fanzines each time technology changes. Hecto destroyed by

ditto, destroyed by mimeo, destroyed by photocopies, and now destroyed by the internet.

Mail is so unreliable. The Post Office did not deliver to our Airlie Beach apartment, so we needed a PO Box. However this year they moved all the existing PO boxes to another suburb. Here at our new home at Carlyle Gardens we have no mail box, and no delivery of mail. They say they will build some mail boxes Real Soon Now. Delivery to the mail boxes will be by contractor, not by Australia Post. The Post Office only deliver as far as reception.

*[[I've actually got a lot of good things to say about the USPS, with the caveat that, like any distributed business operation, it's as good as its local operatives. The Saint Leonard Post Office recently relocated to a new building about ¾ mile from the old one. This move was undertaken with exceptional efficiency. The PO Box there has been active for quite some time, since my name went on it when I moved here in '93, and of course Dee Ann had the PO Box for some time before that. The postmaster is still the same, and therefore well known to me and vice versa. I went by a week or two ago to ask about mail forwarding, given our impending move, and was told that mail will be forwarded for one year, and returned to sender with a note of the new address for an additional six months after that. This service is free...]]*

Travel in the USA sans automobile sure sounds more than a little difficult. While I have used Greyhound a lot, it was when i was much younger, and less worried about comfort levels. Good luck with getting your driving license back without too much more delay. I also hope you can get the van set up well for living in while on your land.

*[[Subsequent events have, of course, superseded this. The fate of the Tennessee land is now up in the air. I'd still like to develop it somewhat rather than just hold & sell later, but it's unlikely that we'll be moving there now...]]*

Except for when Arnie Katz explained it, and then only for a few minutes after basking in his glorious prose, wrestling makes no sense to me. Not sure much of it shows on TV here anyhow. Of course, not having an actual TV probably contributes to not noticing wrestling.

Worst that has happened to us is that the hot water heater does not appear to have any hot water. We only noticed this today, after about five or six days of cloud. We had not switched on the electric booster, because the solar heater had managed fine since we moved in about six weeks ago. It looks to me as if the hot water heater is not actually connected to the electricity. The earth leakage detector in the meter box does not trigger on test, which is a reasonable indication of no power through that circuit. I actually suspect none of the new houses are actually connected as yet.

From: penneys@allstream.net

May 11

Lloyd Penney writes:

I've been reading about you causing havoc in Las Vegas recently, a return visit after Corflu Silver... good on yer, keep them guessing. In the meantime, I've got issue 11 of *This Here*... here, and there are comments which must be made.

Some of those defunct fanzines I sure miss... *Stet*, especially the issue that I don't keep with my fanzine collection, but on my reference shelf, full of information on fandom's history. We all could use that particular issue updated. I don't want fanzines to be a dead form, for I still get a pile of paper zines, but I get 2 to 3 times that number electronically. If think it would be half paper, half electronic if cost wasn't such a factor.

*[[With the apparent relative ease by which fanac now occurs on the internet machine, you would expect Sturgeon's Law to be in full force, but perhaps there's a corollary here. It's a little trite (and rather easy) to poke fun at the likes of WasteBook, CrySpace and UndeadJournal, but I'd offer the following observation: Sturgeon probably applies at the 99% level in these areas, since little thought has to go into such postings, and so little does (another example of rational choice theory, perhaps). Let's face it, it's pretty dam easy to cunt on about endless irrelevancies and the fact that you're cutting your toenails right now, but conversely it's not so easy to actually publish online, giving thought to content and layout, although I grant you that Magister Burns has made this a much less trepidatious prospect than it might otherwise be. It's occurred to me that most of the zines I'm notified about in their online presence (although some faneds also send me the dead tree as well), are of generally good quality. Examples would be Visions of Paradise, Steam Engine Time, Relapse, The Drink Tank and of course the fuckin awesome and award-winning eI...]]*

I keep hearing about crooked county mounties in the southern US, and how they are making millions every year by illegally pulling over law-abiding drivers and throwing them in jail until they can bribe their way out, or pay fines on trumped-up charges. I don't think I'd want to wander off the Interstate in some parts of the country.

*[[As related by me passim ad nauseam, Maryland State Troopers (and one in particular) can be much worse than the locals. Bill Mills tells me that the Las Vegas cops are insane 'roid victims, by the way...]]*

Alexis Gilliland is right, fans of the printed word are greatly outnumbered by fans of the movie and television episode. I see dropping literacy rates, plus the rising costs of magazines and books, plus reduced availability of same, as the main reasons. Both groups can be real collectors, but there's so much media SF stuff available, while our own collectibles have some measure of time behind them... for me, those are

the true collectibles. I am trying to get a fanzine lounge on the go at the Montréal Worldcon, and I am told by some in Worldcon management just how unimportant fanzines are today. I am starting to feel the battle is being lost.

John Purcell is following the Naked Women's Wrestling League? Guess you need a break from marking all those tests? You are getting some special TV channels I'm not.

I've tried getting a look at Phil Foglio's *Girl Genius*, but either I am having some software problems, or his website uses designs I can't process.

I do have a car, a station wagon, and thank Ghu for that, but for most of my everyday travel, my bus/subway pass will do me fine. Close to where I am are some decent restuarants, a sub shop, a strip mall and a quality coffee shop. The car does the rest. I could get around with a Vespa, but that would mean exposing myself to the usual crappy Toronto driver, and I don't have a death wish just yet.

I actually do have some rasslin' news for you, Nic... you probably remember Trish Stratus. Nice lady, from the north end of Toronto, met her before she got into wrestling (she once ran a

gym in Toronto), and she certainly made her money. Once the money was made, she got out, and re-opened her gym and a yoga studio. She appears on local media from time to time as a fitness expert.



*[[Speaking of "Where are they now...?", but not rasslin' related at all, Justina Vail (above), who played the improbably hot Olga Vulkovich on 'Seven Days' is now a "life coach" in California...]]*

Steve Jeffery remembers the Cracker Barrel restaurants from his American travels...I remember the Bob Evans restaurants. Grits, chicken-fried steak, delicious food, and so very bad for you. I had mine with extra cholesterol on top.

Claire Brialey is heading sagely towards 40? Been there and done that, and turning 50 in about three weeks. I am also sailing towards decrepitude at an alarming rate.

Good local, wind it up, it's past two in the morning as I write this... not going to send it out right now, I'll get some sleep

and then fire it out. Thanks for another good zine, and keep doing it.

From: j\_purcell54@yahoo.com

May 16

**John Purcell** writes:

Hey there, Nic! It has been awhile since I've had the chance to do any loccking; being a college English prof will do that to a fan. Nevertheless, the semester is now over and done with, so here's a loc on your latest.

First off, you would probably be pleased to know that your zine arrived in the mailbox with three other fanzines: the first three issues of *Luna!*, *Motorway Dreamer* #6, and the latest *Alexiad*. Man, it was just like old times. I thought I had died and gone to fannish heaven. Now that I have some time on my hands I can read them all and get back to loccking before summer session starts the first week of June.

Your "egotorial" mumblings about music remind me that I am woefully out of practice on my guitar. If I am going to start conning it up more often, I had better get my chops back in shape. I take it you like blues just as much as I do, besides good old rock-n-roll songs. That's a good thing. Besides, I also like to write songs and having a bit of a break here will also be good for that. The other thing in your "egotorial" that pricked up my ears was your comment getting notification that a new zine was "available for viewing" on efanzines "doesn't seem to count as a 'fanzine received'." My tactic here is to actually read, print out the zine, or at the very least download it for future reading. THEN I consider it a fanzine received. In my zine *Askance* I list out fanzines viewed online; the latest ish (just posted #14 yesterday) denotes which zines are Dead Tree (DT) or Electronic Zines (EZ).

*[[You're absolutely right about my liking for good ol' blues - greatest rock band the world has ever seen, the Who, did a blues version of 'My Generation' (led into by an outstanding 'Roadrunner') which can be seen on 'The Kids Are Alright'. When I saw Daltrey on the 'Daltrey sings Townsend' tour here years ago, he introduced 'Who Are You?' by explaining what a big bluesman Pete actually was, saying that the song was really just a delta blues, and proceeded to do the first few verses as such before launching into the more familiar style. Fuckin' amazin', that was! My musical taste runs to lots of different things, though, as a decode of the lyric quotes at the end of each ish will attest. On personal musicianship or lack thereof, Teresa Cochran said in 'Home Kookin' #2' that she found it hard to believe I didn't own a musical keyboard, which at the moment I don't exactly (I think there may be some in storage though). I had oodles of fun jamming at the Vegrants, but I too am well out of practice. Incidentally, I also play - er, have played, to be more accurate - adequate bass guitar, terrible rhythm guitar*

*and basic drums, which for some reason I play left-handed even though I'm not...]]*

Of course, e-zines do save their editors/publishers a passle of postage money, but there are enough of us old pharts knocking about who will still run off print copies to mail. If you're producing a smallish-type zine like *This Here*, postage is not a real problem. Even so, that can be a pricey proposition, especially with postage rising again. \*sigh\* We will get by.

*[[Lucky me, again, that the Sainted One & Fishlifter Press does the duty for the other side of the pond. Even though I don;t have the page count of your Askance (which I browsed but haven't printed - yet), the print & mailing cost is about \$1.80 per for the US. With the overseas copies I send out from here plus postage money I owe Mark, I'd guess an issue costs around \$160 to punt. BEAM #1, by contrast, ran almost \$1,000. I'd like to consider keeping the substantial print run for BEAM #2 (due RSN, waiting on C Phillips, D Steffan) if at all possible but it'll be a bit difficult...]]*

Onward to the "Rasslin'" section. Great photo of Randy Orton. By the time this loc sees print we'll know how his match with Batista went at Judgment Day (May 16th). You have to admit that Orton is playing the Bad Guy schtick to the hilt; the man is physically capable of some very fine moves and is quite strong. I have been enjoying the "drama", but I sure wish like hell that Vicki Guerrero would shut the fuck up and get out of the show: her voice is so whiny that it hurts my ears. Besides, I suspect she's all part of a plan to have the shit smacked out of her by Awesome Kong (cross-overs are really getting popular lately) and then Vince McMahon will return to save the day. Or something like that. Whatever. Methinks it's time to get back to watching the videos on the NWWL again...

*[[After much thought, I have decided that I would do Vicki. When she's not scowling she actually has a rather cute face, don't you think?...]]*

As for the "Tunes" section, some of those top 100 shows on VH-1 are fun - my favorite one is the Greatest 100 One-Hit Wonders hosted by William Shatner - and always grounds for debate. My personal top 10 hard rock songs would include "Won't get Fooled Again", Van Halen's cover of "Pretty Woman," Aerosmith's dynamite version of "Train Kept a-Rollin'" (it rocks at a breakneck speed, like a steam train running down a steep incline without brakes), "Kashmir," and some Kinks, notably "All Day and All of the Night." I mean, face it, nobody has ever really attacked their guitar like Ray Davies did on that lead solo. Okay, maybe some have, but that song is one of my personal faves.

*[[All of the songs you list are well worthy, I'd say...]]*

In your response to Steve Sneyd, you list out a few 100+ issue zines. That list will easily grow thanks to the wonders of e-posting. Probably the most-issues running of a current



zine is *MT Void* by Mark and Evelyn Leeper. As of yesterday's posting - they ship the zine via e-mail on Friday mornings like clockwork - *MT Void* is at 1545 issues, with no sign of slowing down. Print one out and they tend to run between 8 and 12 pages in length. That's not bad, friend.

It's way too early in the morning to get into the philosophical fannish musings between you and Claire Brialey - plus, I'm chock full of caffeine, and sober, which doesn't help matters much - so I think I shall leave off here and let you enjoy the weather. Thanks for the zine, and I hope to meet you someday.

*[[I was sorry you weren't able to make it to CZ, although I noted your virtual review in Askance. I'm not at all sure at this point that we'll be able to cross the pond for Cobalt next year, though as a gesture of support I have taken out memberships. Maybe Pat Virzi can be prevailed upon to bid Texas again...]]*

#### WAHF

**Christopher D Carson** with copies of **Luna!** (described as "An Official Publication of the Luna Project", who lurk at [www.lunarc.org](http://www.lunarc.org)); **Dale Speirs** and welcome *Opuntiae*, but inexplicably referring to *This Here...* as a genzine (?) in his listing, and copying Magister Burns' original sin of calling it "This Here" instead of "This Here..." o wot a picky bastard I am; **Joyce Katz** regarding a visit to the Veggrants; **Roxanne Mills** and **Bill Mills** concerning the aftermath of the visit to the Veggrants; **Iain M Banks** (not really, but with all the reminders of *Arrows of Desire* I've been getting lately... one of the running gags was a mention of Banksie in every ish); **Christina Lake** ([christina.l@virgin.net](mailto:christina.l@virgin.net)) and **Doug Bell** ([doug\\_bell@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:doug_bell@tiscali.co.uk)), with *Head* #8: 35 Gyllyng St, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 3EL - I'd get one if I were you;

## INDULGE ME

✓ A chemist, a physicist and an economist are stranded on a desert island, with nothing but canned food and no way of getting into the cans. The chemist thinks for a bit and says: "Well, we can build a fire and put the cans in it, I'll calculate the expansion of gases within the cans so we'll know at what temperature they will explode." "Ah yes!", says the physicist. "I will calculate the trajectory of the food as it emerges from the cans so we'll be sure to stand in the right place to catch it." The economist sighs and says: "Look guys, just assume we have a can-opener..."

✓ As I choff down my One-a-Day Men's 50+ Advantage vitamin pill, I recall the following: What's the difference between a vitamin and a hormone? (A: You can't hear a vitamin.) When I told BB that one years ago, she gave me a blank look and said, "But wait a minute! You can't hear a..... oh..... never mind."

✓ "Human beings are a collection of chemicals that activate and, after a period of time, deactivate. The purpose of life is to while away the intervening time as pleasantly as possible." (The 'European mentality', as described by Charles Murray of the American Enterprise Institute in a *Washington Post* opinion essay, March 22 2009.)

✓ I'm roughly a third complete now in my collection of Erle Stanley Gardner's *Perry Mason* novels. I need to make a list, because this seems to be the point at which I start inadvertently buying duplicates.

✓ OK Steve, today's musical moment is "Shiva's R&R Dub" by Arling & Cameron, perhaps better known as the music in the Beck's beer commercial. This is fuckin awesome, sounds like JJ Cale on serious uppers with a rocket up his ass.

✓ Steve update: "The Golden Age of Rock and Roll" by Mott the Hoople. Apparently Def Leppard used to do a cover of this, which I did not previously know.

## MIRANDA

*THIS HERE...* is written, edited and produced by: **Nic Farey**, published by **Seven Views of Jerusalem** in the US and **Fishlifter Press** in the UK.

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