



MARYLAND  
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Hello Sailor, fancy a new fanzine? Come with me down this dark alley of despondency in between these tenements of despair and I can show you a good time or at least remind you why you've given up bothering about having a good time. Here's a tasteful brick wall I can slam you up against. I hope you have protection. Is that the smell of piss in the gutter? Well, get used to it. You're a fan after all. You live to suffer.

I'm Graham Charnock. I live at 45 Kimberley Garden in Haringey, London N4 1LD, UK. I'd like to hear from you, sweetie, so write to me at [graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk](mailto:graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk). I promise to be discreet and I'm very clean. Yes, the navy is in town.

Some say Chorizo, some say something else. How do you say chorizo? Hard ch or soft ch? These are issues which have known to consume some fans and reduce them to eternal enmity, and a semblance of gibbering idiots. We won't pursue it now. Unless you really want to.

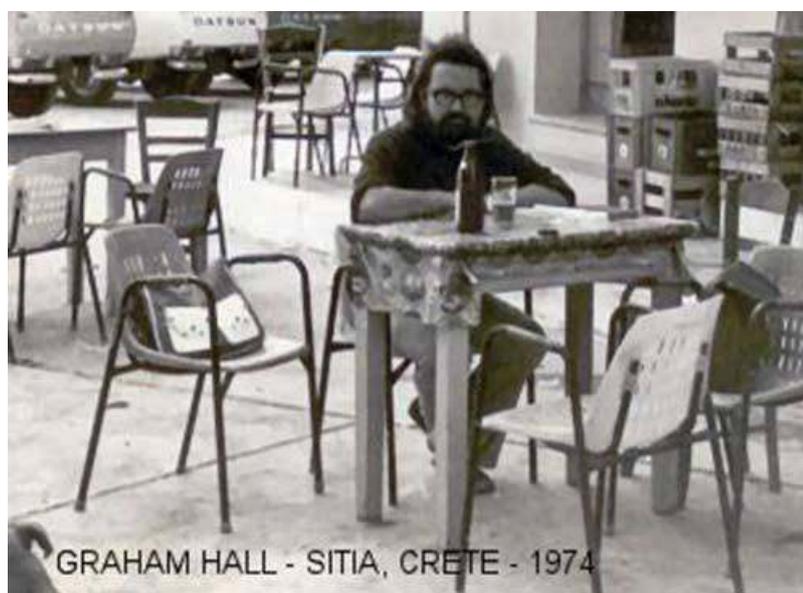
I have no fannish agenda, unlike certain climate change scientists, so write to me about anything you want to, but not, please, Grateful Dead. Photographs of foxes will no longer be tolerated.

Thanks to Harry Bell for this issue's cover illustration.

Now for the bad news. I had intended to run my feature on prostitution LADIES OF THE NIGHT in this issue, but it would have pushed the page count beyond feasible. So I will be holding it over until the next issue. But it will at least give you something to look forward to. Twelve pages of pure salacious naughtiness. Subscribe now.

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## GRAHAM HALL: A MEMORY



Graham M. Hall was an important person to me, both in my fannish and personal life. I first came into contact with him when I sent him a copy of my first fanzine Phile, and he was

encouraging in his response. At that time he worked as a junior reporter on the Tewkesbury Gazette. We established a correspondence and I visited him a few times there. He was fun and intelligent and quite unlike anyone I had ever met before, not afraid to wear his maudlin and sentimental nature on his sleeve. I remember him telling me once how when walking home from a pub in Tewkesbury he had pointed his rolled umbrella at a distant star only to see it suddenly fall from the sky. I totally believed him at the time, only to realize later he was probably only serving up one of the many romantic myths from his repertoire.

While living in Tewkesbury Graham had a romantic liaison with a girl called Sylvia, and made her pregnant. The child was premature and Graham named it Time Iago Farouk Montag Hall. It was unviable however and died shortly after birth. Graham was touched by the tiny unformed half-moons of its fingernails. How much of this as reported to me was real or merely another part of the myth he held in his mind, I do not know.

Whilst a reporter on the Tewkesbury Gazette Graham also liked to recall an anecdote about attending the trial of a local man accused of raping a chicken. So it goes.

Charles Platt was another person who adopted me on the basis of Phile, and also was a friend of Graham Hall's. Graham Hall moved to London and Charles helped him move, filling his car with Graham's junk. I went along for the ride. At one point they got into a furious argument about Graham's liking for Beethoven's Brandenburg concertos. Charles was dismissive of their basically plebeian appeal and Graham was genuinely hurt and angry. I thought I was witnessing a friendship fall apart, but that was just because I was too sensitive about these newly discovered friends for my own good.

Graham got a place at Sussex University and moved to Brighton. At that time I was still living at home with my parents, but Graham persuaded me to move down to Brighton with him. I remember him turning up on my doorstep to collect me and telling my mother, "Don't worry, I'll take care of him."

He did too, introducing me to a life of debauchery and cider drinking. At first I lived on a mattress on the floor of his apartment, where I could witness him waking up each morning and reaching for the cider. I found it a bit claustrophobic and his constant demands for sex were becoming wearing, and after a few weeks I moved out and rented a flat. It didn't seem to distance me from him appreciably because he was round virtually every day cajoling me into going down the pub with him. I was on income support and he was on a student grant. There can't have been much in it financially but he usually ended up buying all my drinks. He just didn't like to drink alone and he did like an excuse to drink in company..

In Brighton we started writing a novel SLAVES OF THE EYE. It was frankly juvenile work but it was fun to write, with each of us swapping chapters on an almost daily basis.

Eventually when my money ran out I moved back to London to get a job and a wife. Graham moved about, seemingly all over the world, filing regular reports to me in long letters.

When he came back to London we met up and he came round our place in Acton for dinner. He took me to the off-license and having got me aside told me he was suffering from degenerative liver disease and his doctors had told him he had not much time left to live. I believed him at the time, but how much this was just another aspect of self-mythologizing is now open to question. He claimed it was a hereditary disease, but Charles Platt disputes this, noting that Graham often blamed bad nutrition when he was growing up. The last time I saw him was from the top deck of a bus on the way to work as he walked along one of Notting Hill's side streets. It's an image that frequently comes to me in dreams.

Once he had moved to America I really lost contact with him and we became estranged when Charles Platt managed to get him an advance for SLAVES OF THE EYE and I only found out about it at third hand. Graham said he hadn't told me about it because he needed the money more than I did. Such denial of friendship was the price of collaboration.

*My thanks to Linda Moorcock for these memories:*

I picked him up from hospital in L.A. several times after his cirrhosis diagnosis. Once we stopped so he could buy a huge jug of wine at a convenience store. Another time he just wanted to go to the bar around the corner where he ordered and drank several Pernod rocks in the middle of the day. Don't know how Susan stood it, watching him self-destruct. Docs kept saying that if he would just stop, his liver could recover. He wasn't interested.

Graham was one of the first men admitted to Smith College in Massachusetts. Apparently he fell seriously in love with a woman there who had left her husband & was to come to the UK to be with G. He went to Heathrow to pick her up only to have her not show. M says after that he seemed even more committed to alcohol.

I only met him in '79 and continued to visit him in hospital over the next year or so. Often I only went to keep Susan, his then (EMT) wife, company as she sat with him. He went in and out of coma more than once.

Once he came out while I was there, Susan and I pinned against the wall as the numerous members of the code Blue team worked on him. At one point, the doctor got down in Graham's face, calling his name, trying to wake him fully. 'Mr Hall...Mr Hall!' Graham opens his eyes sleepily. 'Mr Hall, thank you for joining us. Can we get you anything? Apple juice? Orange juice?' to which Graham croaked something unintelligible. The doctor continued to ask him what he had said & finally, as loud as he could manage, G said clearly 'Gin and tonic, please'! You had to give it to him...he could be one funny dude.

But even at that late stage when he only had another year+ to live, the doctors continued to say to him that if he would stop drinking, there was hope for his liver's recovery. I always thought it was probably because of his relatively young age.

One more funny: once when M & I visited Graham in hospital, he was very badly jaundiced. Skin and whites of the eyes were yellow and he was beginning to have sores. Believe it or not they had him in an all yellow room. We all began laughing because the only thing that stood out in the room was his little black eyes peering out from under the covers. He and M then discussed disease coordinated rooms and decided the hospital designer would have to add red dots to the room decor as his sores got worse.

I think it was about that same time Graham asked M if there was anything he had that M might want when G died & M said 'yeah, your driver's license'. G said 'well, you might as well have it now as I'm not going anywhere' and pulled it out of his wallet and gave it to him. No photos back then so it was useful at times! M still has it.

*Graham:* So there you have it. A life with a potential unrealized? A life doomed by its own romanticism. A life at the mercy of its own body's demands. I don't know. I loved him very much.

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### **HERE'S AN EPIC FROM TARAL WAYNE WHICH SEEMS TO COVER MOST BASES.**

Strange as it may seem, I have never actually wondered why you include the email addresses of letter writers, but not their actual addresses. Why should I? I do it myself, for what I presume are the same reasons. First, I have no friggin' idea where anyone lives anymore. Once, long ago, I might have, but fans have a way of moving – first from Manchester, then to Bath, then to Hammersmith, then to Smegley On Head, then ... well, eventually we all end up in some care facility for the superannuated, don't we? So how am I supposed to know if my letter writers are still where I left them?

The other thing is, what does it matter? True, it matters if you want to mail a paper copy, but despite some bitter holdouts, more and more of us are deciding that we have better things to do with our disposable income that support the post office. Besides ... if you want to be particular about it, only publications you print yourself with a mimeo or ditto machine are *genuine* fanzines! As long as you have an email address, it is easy to get the street address for a person. Getting an email addie if all you have is the street address is another thing altogether – it can take weeks.

So by all means encourage other fans to pub their ish by giving them the emails to establish their own network in fandom ... they need nothing else to start with.

By no means is Facebook devoid of crusty old farts from fandom. In fact, I have seen fans there who still have the chutzpah to call themselves fanzine fans, though they probably haven't touched one in 25 years. But they're all over FarceBook like the alcohol on Nic Farey's breath. If you really want to talk about gay writers, gender equality at cons, or a fascist take-over of the Hugos, you'll have *no* problem finding an argument to get into. *Extracting* yourself from endless, futile argument is the problem!

In saying that he knows of no Big Band Era recordings with special effects sounds in their music, John Nielsen-Hall overlooks the inimitable Spike Jones, who often favoured a rubber innertube, a broken bottle, a wringer washing machine or an shotgun as a musical instrument. I also think John is premature in saying that Rock is dead. It seemingly has run out of directions in which to evolve, but it is still a popular genre. After all, only a few percent of even the young can bear Rap or Hip Hop, so they are forced back to the Beatles, Elvis Costello, The Grateful Dead, Bruce Springsteen, XTC, Iron Butterfly, Queen or Credence Clearwater Revival for lack of anything else to listen to. You want they should listen to Hank Snow or Dolly Parton?

In fact, it is premature to say that even Jazz is dead. Although it doesn't claim to be the cutting edge of popular culture, millions of records continue to be sold every year. I have a hard time imagining that on the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Hip Hop, anyone will play "Who Let the Dogs Out" to wallow in their nostalgia. We *do* listen to Louis Armstrong, though.

There is a sense in which Jazz was spoiled by musicians who took themselves too seriously as artistes, I suppose. The form appears to be at a dead end as far as development goes. As it became more cerebral, it lost much of its audience, who couldn't dance to it, follow the tune, or even understand what the heck was going on. Attempts to simply *update* Jazz have tended to be a little disappointing. The more and more that Fusion Jazz was like anything else, less and less seems to me like Jazz. But never mind what I think.

I was always amused by what Louis Armstrong said about modern Jazz, the stuff they called Be-Bop. Armstrong was a known critic. Noting how many unsuccessful Jazz clubs had closed their doors in the 1950s, he quipped, "Be-Bop had closed more clubs than it had opened."

The same can be said for rock acts such as Gentle Giant, Captain Beefheart, Frank Zappa, Pere Ubu, Godley & Crème, Tom Waits and loads more. But there has always been a small audience for such bands, just as there were for Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and Mingus. And how do these esoteric bands in any way detract from Blondie, U2, Mark Knopfler, Madonna or The Red Hot Chilli Peppers? They aren't popular? Come again?

Hard to get away from the FAAn awards. This year I put my foot down and not only didn't vote but have mostly refused to even talk about them. My feelings are very mixed about our purported peer awards, and nothing I can do seems to straighten them out. I have been both flattered by them ... and bitterly disappointed. My peace of mind is better served when I avoid thinking about the FAAns.

Objectively, though, can they be "saved?" I suppose first we would have to agree that they need saving from something, and what that something is they need to be saved from. I suspect it would be difficult to find agreement on either of those issues.

If we assume that diminishing participation is the problem, and that something must be done about it, we run into new levels of ambiguity. Although the FAAn is a peer award for fanzine fans, many have accused them of being awards for Corflu attendees. There certainly has been a very strong correlation between frequent Corflu goers and who wins a FAAn lately. But it hasn't always been so, I don't think, and may be in part a development of decreasing participation. There has been some success at getting non-Coflu members to vote, but I think for the awards to overthrow their reputation for in-groupishness, the voters who are not part of the convention clique need to outnumber the clique members by four, five or six-to-one. I don't imagine the ratio is anything like that, however. More likely it's about one-to-one. How do you encourage fans to vote, though? Many of those I've corresponded with simply don't take the idea of a fan award seriously. "Oh, it's just a popularity prize." Or, "It's fan politics." The reputation the FAAns have gotten have only *discouraged* people from voting, I fear.

Making a list of potential nominees may help, but, as you've pointed out, it matters very much *who* makes it. Such a list could easily reinforce the idea that the FAAns are incestuous. If lists must be made, they should probably be made by several individuals, so that biases cancel out.

It would probably also help if fanzines talked about other fanzines more. The reality is that fanzines talking about other fanzines is rather rare these days. There are few regular reviews – Guy Lillian's are the only ones that come immediately to mind. But we have also fallen out of the habit of just poking fun at each other, or expressing appreciation of good writing or other fanzines well done. The feeling of interconnectedness that fandom used to have is far, far weaker today because each of us seems increasingly an island unto ourselves.

How many of us had thought at one time or another that as long as a dozen-or-so people wrote me letters of comment, *I* would go on publishing, even though the rest of fandom perish, and all other fanzines be preserved under glass in a museum?

One final ambiguity about the FAAn award. It appears to me that too many of those who do vote, are those same FarceBookers who will argue about fanzines online, but haven't published on, wrote for one, or loosed one in two or even three decades! Why are *they* voting on a *peer* award when they long ago ceased to actively involved?

Given all this, do you believe the FAAns can be "saved?" I don't. I have much too much to do in achieving my goal to be the last fanzine standing.

Joe squashed you like a bug in his letter, sorry. Not even your argument about looking into the research behind climate-change denial will hold water, for their research has been investigated, time and time again. Occasionally it has been shown to be merely bad science, or cherry-picking papers. In most case, however, it turns out that climate denial is based on nothing at all. One blow-hard will refer to another blow-hard as his "evidence."

In that respect deniers are very much like believers in UFOs and alien abduction. They have their own little world of references and proofs that touch the outside world nowhere.

Never mind the religious beliefs of the Apache people – they're just as ridiculous as the beliefs of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants or Scientologists. The issue at stake, though, is whether or not the property belongs to them. If it's their land, they should be able to block development because their ancestors are buried there, or because they think the sugarplum fairies from Neptune will land there on the Last Day. You might not care if your mother is buried in Herefordshire and moved somewhere else so that a shopping mall might be built, but shouldn't it be your choice? Wouldn't you at least want her reburied in a plot of equal value? Why should strangers profit from taking what's yours?

Unless, of course, this is another of those ploys to use extralegal means and public sentiment to gain control of property the Apache *don't* own any longer, but just feel the ought to. Indians are no saints either, and unless you really know the case, it's dangerous to argue either side.

Poor Nic... got his job too late to be on *Taxi*

*(EDITOR: I have never argued that the research behind climate change denial should be investigated, but that all research should be investigated and balanced against the agendas that commissioned and funded them. If I wanted to be squashed like a bug, however, there is no one I would rather have do it than Joseph Nicholas.*

*I suppose the apparent bias in FAAn awards towards regular Corflu attendees can be explained by the fact that Corflu is a convention for fanzine fandom, in fact the only one. Corflu as an institution tends to engender a fondness and that is also reflected in its members enthusiasm in voting. Novacon, at the other extreme, has suffered a decline in enthusiasm for the Nova Awards which has resulted in them being canned simply because the people who most consistently attend are largely purely social sf fans, with little interest in fanzines as such. Vote? I'd rather drink! And of course the Hugos don't know the simple difference between a fanzine and blog, so there is no hope for them.*

*As far as I know the Apaches, being indigenous, never owned anything. I don't see how they can claim property rights. The concept of ownership of property came later when robber barons with armed back-up claimed rights to land merely by force and their ability to defend such *\*rights\** by shooting anyone who questioned them. That ended up being enshrined in the constitution under the right to bear arms, and see how that has gone wrong.*

*Finally, Taral, if you can tell me a sure fail-safe way to derive someone's geographical address from their email address, I will bow down to you, and report you to the NSA.)*

Taral Wayne can be found at **[taral@bell.net](mailto:taral@bell.net)**

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## R-LAURRAINE TUTUHASI LOOKS BACK NOSTALGICALLY AT VIBRATOR 13

Our shopping situation is a little different from the ones you describe. Our closest supermarket is a twenty-minute drive away. We usually shop there. My experience though is that you need at least two different supermarkets in most places to get exactly what you want or get close to it. Once every four weeks, we drive an hour to get to two other supermarkets, one of which specializes in organic products. In addition there is another supermarket I stop by when I'm close by; this usually happens when I have medical appointments. I have to drive about twenty-five minutes for those. This supermarket has a better selection of organic fruit and gluten free products. Since I get allergy injections every two weeks, this is a fairly frequent occurrence.

As far as fresh produce is concerned, I'm trying to grow some of my own fruit. So far I'm not doing too well. Two of my fruit trees died, twice. I think I'm giving up on that variety of fruit. Another fruit tree died as a result of damage caused by wildlife, and I haven't got around to replacing the tree. It seems like there are always more urgent problems to take care of.

I'm grateful for being able to order a lot of things over the Internet, but sometimes there are problems. For me ordering clothing online is great, as most stores don't carry my size. Where Internet connection is concerned, we have few choices here. We tried snail paced DSL, but we changed over to more expensive faster but limited satellite Internet service.

Porcin is a type of mushroom that doesn't appear to be sold here. I've never seen it. I wouldn't try picking mushrooms myself. Among all the various supermarkets I go to, I can usually rely on a supply of my favourite shiitake mushrooms.

Recently I've stopped buying books unless I cannot acquire a reading copy from a library. I still have more than a thousand unread books in my own collection.

I still regard *Star Trek* as a high point in TV sf. I enjoy occasionally rewatching those episodes. *Star Wars* never claimed to be anything more than science fantasy. I don't really see any conflict between the two. Personally I think *Babylon 5* was an improvement on *Star Trek*, but it was a different type of sf. *Star Trek* was strictly an episodic series with a new adventure every week. On the other hand, *Babylon 5* was a televised novel. I notice that most series nowadays have adopted the idea of a continuing arc.

I admire those contributors who showed their mastery of clerihevs and poetry in general. I never had much interest in poetry myself except occasionally as a reader. There is too much of the variety called "free verse", which to me is not real poetry.

*(EDITOR: Porcini are rarely sold fresh over here either Laurraine, but are usually readily available dried. As such, once reconstituted, they are a useful addition to Risotto recipes in particular; just add to a regular chestnut mushroom and shitake base to make an interesting three mushroom dish. Add ricotta while cooking and garnish with pecorino of course. I'll be round for lunch.)*

## JOSEPH NICHOLAS SIMPLY WON'T LET IT LIE

Thanks for *Vibrator 17* -- although when I opened the issue, I misread the title as *Startling Suburban Stores*, and was all agog to learn what you might have been getting up to at your local Homebase. Perhaps next issue...?

But there's nothing like getting your retaliation in first, is there? "Everybody has an agenda, Joseph, even you and I think you are being disingenuous if you deny this": a comment which appears to have been made out of the blue rather than based on anything I said, since I haven't explicitly denied anything -- or, for that matter, even been given a chance to do so! But if you want it spelled out, then here it is: my agenda is, rather simply, a devotion to the facts, the truth, honesty, and rational argument (albeit not necessarily in that particular order). (I may have omitted from this list one or two minor items such as the overthrow of late-stage monopoly capitalism and the establishment of peace-loving workers' democracy throughout the sevagram.)

Your response on climate change this time seems more cautious than that in *Vibrator 16*, although the pursuit of allegations of secrecy and conspiracy obviously still animates you. "It is the funding of the original research which concerns me ... I would like to see a breakdown of the research projects and papers under consideration with details of their funding". It is all published literature; as the IPCC itself states on its website, its assessments are based on "thousands of sources of scientific, technical, and socioeconomic information, including scientific journals, industry journals, reports from governments and international bodies, and other relevant literature" -- far too much to list in its annual reports, but the sectoral reports include lengthy lists of citations. (Again, this is all on the IPCC's website.) The documents so cited give details of the authors and their affiliations (universities, research institutes, corporate laboratories, charities, campaigning organisations, whatever), from which (where it is not actually stated openly) information on their funding or sponsorship can be derived. There is nothing devious or underhand about this: science and scientific research is transparent and above board; and its protocols, methodology, data, experimental results and conclusions are open to examination and query by third parties -- indeed, if it wasn't transparent and above board, it wouldn't be given the time of day, because the arguments couldn't be verified. (Which is why claims by the likes of denialist weather forecaster Piers Corbyn that he can't disclose details of his methodology because of copyright issues are not taken seriously. There is no copyright in scientific theory.) Denialists, by contrast, do not undertake research; they publish polemics on their blogs rather than submit papers to scientific journals (perhaps because they know their submissions wouldn't survive the peer review process).

If there is any concealment of funding sources, it is on the denialist side. Climate scientists' work can be traced back; denialists' work, however, usually emerges from front organisations like the (American) Heritage Foundation, the George C Marshall Institute and the Koch Brothers, where the funding trail can be lost in general accounting headings,

confidentiality agreements, grouping of sponsors, and the like -- especially where the fossil fuel industry is concerned, which obviously considers that it can't support the denialists directly because that would immediately taint any work they published. For a specific British example of this concealment, look no further than Nigel Lawson's Global Warming Policy Foundation, which repeatedly demands "greater transparency" from climate scientists on their sources of funding while equally strenuously resisting disclosure of its own sources, stating only that it doesn't accept donations from anyone with a "significant" interest in the energy industry but failing to clarify what it means by "significant".

The obvious question for you which arises from this, of course, is why you so assiduously pursue fictitious allegations of deviousness in climate science funding and reporting while entirely ignoring the fudge which distinguishes the denialists' funding and reporting.

Still on the subject of climate change, Steve Jeffery claims that "The climate change argument is just the latest and most vociferous" of scientific debates. I'd suggest that any aggression in these exchanges is largely the media's responsibility, thanks to its default position of providing platforms for adversarialist positions on any and all issues. It presumably does this because adversarialist positions are more colourful and engaging, and therefore likely to garner more readers, listeners and viewers (and blog trolls); but the result is to elevate opinions over facts, lay a fog of rhetoric over the central issues, and hamper public understanding. The BBC is particularly guilty of this, always seeking out opposing views in the belief that it will therefore be reporting both sides of a story, even where there is no real "other side". It does not give equal weight to evolutionary biologists and creationists, or to modern chemistry and the phlogiston theory of combustion; but where climate change is concerned, one routinely finds (on Radio 4's Today programme, for example) the latest report from the IPCC matched against the Global Warming Policy Institute's Benny Peiser, whose speciality is the impact of physical activity on health and who has no climate science expertise at all. As the BBC's star science presenter Professor Brian Cox has several times argued, in a complex world people want clarity rather than manufactured debate; but on climate change and other important contemporary scientific questions, the BBC has drifted far from its Reithian "mission to explain".

Steve Jeffery also lists badger culling and GM crops as previous examples of "vociferous" exchanges. For the record, badger culling was demonstrated over a decade ago to have little effect on the incidence of bovine TB, the prime cause of which is actually modern intensive stock-rearing practices, but the barley barons and the cattle ranchers of the NUF have long been immune to rational argument. (The NUF, and for that matter DEFRA vets, has a very 19th century approach to the control of animal disease -- no vaccination, no quarantine, no double-blind trials or *in vivo* tests; just kill kill kill every animal in sight.) As far as GM crops are concerned (I had dealings with this stuff in my fifteen years at the Food Standards Agency), public attitudes to GM have lagged well behind what GM technologists are actually doing -- genome modification is now much more sophisticated than it was twenty years ago, but in the public mind it's still Frankenstein foods and giant salmon despite the fact that almost all GM crop production (maize, soya, rapeseed, cotton meal) goes into feed for farmed livestock rather than food for human consumption.

Turning away from science for a moment, I note Jerry Jaufman's statement that the major

problem with participation in the FAAN Awards is that "a large chunk of fanzine publishing fandom thinks the award is only for Corflu attendees" and that this chunk believes "the administrator(s) deliberately do not count votes for fanzines that they don't like or approve of. This kind of paranoia will be hard to overcome". There is one very easy way to overcome it, and that is to entirely separate the FAAN Awards from Corflu, and have the balloting and vote-counting undertaken by individuals who have no association with Corflu and perhaps even no membership of the convention. The obvious drawback is that there could then be great difficulty in organising the presentation of the physical awards, perhaps so great that physical awards and a presentation ceremony might have to be abandoned altogether; but then I do recall that when first introduced, in the 1970s, the FAAN Awards were solely about egoboo, and indeed that remained the case for many years after they were revived in 1995 -- I won the best letterhack category in 2003, for example, but received no trophy, inscribed scroll, certificate, novelty ribbon, trinket or other physical sign that I'd won anything. But (to return to the main point) if the perception that FAAN=Corflu is as deep-rooted as Jerry suggests, such drastic separation may be the only way to save the awards from declining voter participation and eventual oblivion. It would be pointless to try to argue that Corflu ought to be for all fanzine fans: if some people have decided that it's not for them, then they will also ignore anything emerging from Corflu or which is Corflu-related.

I should stop, because I've written quite a lot already (even though there are various other issues on which I think I could venture an opinion) and you need to keep your page count under control -- as you say on your penultimate page, you've shrunk the margins, but if you were to regularise your formatting you'd shrink the page count further. For example, some letter-writers double-space their paragraphs while others indent on the following line; some use one-and-a-half line spacing while others don't; and of course the font size could be reduced throughout, to 11pt or even 10pt, meaning even fewer pages. It's doubtless a question of whether you copy'n'paste what you receive versus reformatting everything to fit a template; the latter would take slightly more work, but you'd have a more consistent-looking final result.

Actually, there is one further point I might mention, which is your rather literal interpretation of the word "renewable". Of course a sisal floor or beech kitchen counters which wear out won't renew themselves; the point is that they're biodegradable, and thus recyclable into the ecosystem. As, indeed, are you and I.

*(Editor: Okay, okay, you've beaten me into submission with your constant refusal to understand the principles of my approach to the subject, which is basically about how human nature works in propagandizing issues that are really beyond the understanding of most people by the simple expedient of saying \*scientists agree...\* when quite obviously scientists don't agree any more than you and I do. The IPCC, of course, is not in itself a unified scientific body but a body for evaluating scientific reports whose members come from disparate disciplines with disparate methodologies. I doubt they could even design a camel, let alone presume to advise governments and focus groups all too keen to believe what they want to hear (for their own agendas). Many people think the best thing the IPCC has done is create a protocol for trading carbon credits, ostensibly to stimulate initiatives for limiting CO2 production but in fact just to provide another capitalist sub-structure for people*

*to make money out of trading futures. The IPCC doesn't give a shit about what happens to our children. It exists to appease governments and pressure groups, not the likes of you and I. As to agendas it is strange that I seem to share the same one as you outline, (except that I possibly believe Truth is all too easily modulated by interpretation, and thus usually suspect as an objective measure of reality) and yet we can't get along, at least on this subject. The main problem is Climate Warming is far too complex an issue for people to align themselves simply on a yea or nay basis. If I hear one more person call me a climate change denier simply because I want a more focussed and rational discussion, I will thump them. Oh well.)*

Joseph Nicholas can be found at [excellenceingardening@gmail.com](mailto:excellenceingardening@gmail.com)

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### **PHILIP TURNER ISN'T WORRIED ABOUT THE ICE-BERGS MELTING**

Surprise! I removed Vib 2017 from its packaging, did the usual unfold to A4 flat and found myself looking at staples because someone had gone all bookish on me. I certainly prefer this format as it is easier to read (physically). With the A4 format, I kept telling myself I needed to get the butler to iron out the annoying crease but I never seemed able to catch his eye before I'd finished the mag. Was your cover ripped off from the sleeve of the "Widescreen Momma Blues" album?

I'm still enjoying the Taxi Tales, even though I associate taxi rides only with trips to hospital (mainly visiting, fortunately). Just as I associate "renewables", "eco-friendly" and similar terms with an expensive swindle on the way. When the Global Warming Swindlers start talking about 90% (or even 95%) probabilities, it has as much credibility as someone winning an election with 103% of the vote during the good old days of Soviet Communism. If you start "reasoning" from unsupportable assumptions and use computer models which make dire predictions for the end of this century, but which fail to describe what happened at the start of it, any old alarmist crap can be your destination. (Check out "How to Lie with Statistics" and similar works) 95% probability means nothing at all when the calculation is built on a "big one" heap of steaming felgerkarb.

Big Band era recordings with sound effects? What about Spike Jones and his City Slickers? I was wondering why Romiley never seems to get any tourists. Andy Porter offered a clue; we have clearly not yet lived down all those rumours about suburban cannibalism. Cordwainer Smith: weird? deferably. to be taken serious? nah!

MOST households contain Clarkson stuff? Really?

Go, Eskimos!

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### **GREG BENFORD AGREES WITH CURT**

Curt Phillips is spot on about the Southern gun tradition.

The gun culture came in part from the southern hunting history, which I took part in. By age 9 I had hunted animals like squirrels and deer, rather liking it and the communion with

forest it demanded—that's what good stalking leads to. Then my father got a commission offer from the Army and left his teaching position in Robertsedale, AL, and poof—we were in Tokyo 6 months later. End of Southern Youth.

I've always thought the gun culture started the Civil War, too. All the Confederacy had to do to escape the USA was...nothing. Don't fire on Ft. Sumter. Lincoln could never have gotten Congress to raise an Army and invade without a big provocation, and said so. One could argue that our permanent big army tips us toward involvement, as the military loves a fight—at least in the first year—as Eisenhower obliquely argued.

Now, the latest, a S. Carolina massacre provoked demands to ban Confederate flags, but no new gun legislation yet. Then today June 10 we learn that the Fed system failed to note the shooter had drug possession records, and should've not gotten the gun. Once again, existing mechanisms failed because govt can do many things, but usually not well. I doubt our gun problem can be fixed short of major new laws that effectively round up most guns—nearly impossible.

So best to just stay shy of places where others get shot. I have one gun, 9 mm Luger, inherited from my father, who took it off an SS officer his command had outflanked. My father killed the officer with a carbine and they were capturing so much German ammo in winter 1944-45 he took it as a sidearm. I fire it annually; quite accurate within 30 m or so.

Deep seated cultural problems, like guns and racism and much else, are hard to dislodge.

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## ***PAUL SKELTON'S GUIDE TO MODERN ETIQUETTE***

Like The Good Doctor (our good doctor Rob Jackson, that is) we too take The Mail on Saturday for its TV guide, eschewing newspapers for the rest of the week. However, being somewhat parsimonious we don't just chuck the accompanying newspaper into the recycling, but actually read it.

I was intrigued by one story headlined 'Day the Queen reprimanded Lewis (Hamilton) for being 'too quick off the mark'. Apparently on some TV chat show Lewis had told of the time he found himself sitting next to the Queen at a lunch event. Excited (he claimed) he started to talk to her, only to be advised that he should be talking first to the person on his left, and should speak with the Queen later.

It went on "...etiquette expert Diana Mather explained that the protocol for speaking to the person on your left first, known as Turning The Table, dates at least as far back as the Victorian times." Miss Mather added "...the idea is that you would speak to the person on your left for the first course and the person on your right for the main course. The rule is that you keep changing for each course.

So how can that work then? If you talk to the person on your left then they must be talking to the person on their right. So therefore the only thing you should say to them is, "Oy,

Twatlugs, you are committing a terrible faux pas and need to face the other way first!", though possibly Her Maj might have phrased it in a somewhat more refined manner.

Of course if strictly followed this rule would mean that everyone was talking to the back of the next persons head all the way round the table, swiveling ones head with each course like some dreadfully slow tennis rally. It's a good job I never get invited to such events as, having a false left eye, I always seat myself at the extreme left of the table in order to have nobody on my blind side. This would of course mean that I would have to spend my entire first course talking to some large invisible white rabbit called Harvey. No, the only way I can see that it could work conversationally is if every alternate person were seated facing away from the table, so that left could converse with left, and right with right. Of course that seems a bit harsh, inviting 50% of the people to lunch purely so that they could help with the conversation but not have anything to eat. Of course rich people, the sort who can afford to throw Lunch & Dinner parties can probably afford to hire 'extras' for this role, who probably grab a butty from a sandwich shop on their way to or from the function. Being at heart a fair-minded person I did temporarily consider a form of 'musical chairs' where each guest reversed their chair between courses so that everyone got to eat at least one course, but that wouldn't work as you would end up talking to the same person all the way through/

The only other possible scenario I could think of was that the 'etiquette expert'(and Brenda herself [as Private Eye magazine insists on referring to her], come to think of it, not to mention the assembled intellect of the Mail's editorial team) had not quite explained it correctly, but one hesitates to appear to question such a body of informed opinion. But just perhaps it's only every alternate person who talks first to the left. Maybe, could it possibly be, the the other 50% converse first to the right? If so, how do they know whether they address left or address right? Surely would they not all be stunned to silence for fear of committing a heinous social gaffe?

Is there a piece of the dinner service which we plebs never see? Is there a small porcelain arrow in front of each place setting indicating which way the conversation should go, discreetly reversed by the waiters as they serve each subsequent course?

I think we should be told. Always assuming, of course, that we give a shit!

--- Paul Skelton 2015

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### **MILT STEVENS IS OBVIOUSLY NOT A MAN YOU SHOULD TRY TO RIP OFF**

In Vibrator #17, Nic Farey's bit reminded me of a scam a shuttle driver tried on me. It was after the Philadelphia Worldcon, and I wanted to get back to the airport. I got to the airport and was standing in line to get my boarding pass. The shuttle driver rushed up to me and claimed I had given him a \$2 bill, and he had given me change for a \$20. Due to one of my personal quirks, the scam didn't work.

I don't like flashing my wallet in public places like airports and hotel lobbies. When entering such places I usually have my ID and credit card in my shirt pocket, so I don't have to deal with my wallet. The night before, I had asked the desk clerk at the hotel how much the

shuttle to the airport cost. She told me it cost \$8. I took a \$10 bill and put it in my shirt pocket. When the shuttle driver tried his scam, I could tell him with absolute certainty that I had given him a \$10 bill and received no change.

There aren't many \$2 bills in circulation. I don't think I've seen one in the last ten years. The \$2 bill the shuttle driver used was unusual in another way. It had writing on it. I would notice a bill with writing on it no matter what the denomination. Referring to a \$20 bill as a "yuppie food stamp" is strange. The term "yuppie" was common back in the eighties. I don't think I've heard anyone use the term since before the time I last saw a \$2 bill. I suppose the term is meant to convey contempt. I wonder what cab drivers don't like about the good old \$20 bill.

Like Andy Porter, I go to worldcons because I still know a lot of people who go to worldcons. With people to talk to, I can amuse myself for five or six days no matter what the actual convention may be doing. My con attending has gone through several phases over a fifty year period. I started out by attending and then progressed to running. After retiring from con running, I lapsed into hanging out.

Also like Andy Porter, I'm not being invited to be on convention programs anymore. If other old white guys weren't experiencing the same thing I am, I might fear that I was becoming paranoid. When you are being persecuted you don't have to worry about being paranoid. When you are paranoid you feel persecuted and have to worry about being crazy. That's much worse.

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### **LLOYD PENNEY**

Many thanks for the 17th Vibrator. I should get off my own fundament and write this loc...but I've got to sit down and do it. This metaphor just isn't working for me...

When I write a loc, I always write it in the old traditional manner of address and date at the top, as if I am about to print it and mail it out. You will always have my address, and most of the fanzine world should know I live at Eva Road, anyway. The fannish generations may never meet, but in the history of our happy hobby, have they ever? Same as it ever was, I'm afraid.

When I see people from other fandoms, I know I may not share their interest, but at least I know why they have it. When it comes to particular interests covered by SF fandom, I am pretty picky, so there are many there who I might not have anything in common with, but I am glad they are there, because their membership money, along with mine, allows the convention to happen, and we can all get what we want from the event we are all financing. I know, heresy...

Andrew Porter's loc...I've never learned to drive, either. Yvonne's our driver, and I am the navigator. The last time I was in Britain was in 1968, and I was 9 years old at the time, with

the family visiting my maternal grandparents in Ayr, Scotland. Next year in 2016, Yvonne and I intend to go to London, and do all kinds of touristy and interesting things.

I must agree with Ian Williams re guns. I can see their use in hunting and war, but to have them at home, and in use, and most guns you see are designed only to kill other humans...insanity. What happens regularly in the US only reinforces my opinion.

Chris Garcia has sprogged, and he now has the first candidates for his own little locking dungeon. Run away, kids! Or crawl away while you can...

The rest of the local was most interesting, but I fear that as I get closer to my bedtime, the type gets increasingly fuzzier, as do I. (Took a moment to watch Brianna Wu get interviewed on the CBC.) Many thanks for this, take care, see you with the next buzzing .pdf...

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### JERRY KAUFMAN

I tried to identify the cover image on #16 - the sort of Gwen Paltrow superhero, planes, etc picture. By searching on "war loans superhero female airplanes," the best I could do was to find that it's Ms. Marvel but not the image as a whole, or even an exact match to the pose or drawing style on your cover. And Steve Stiles, of course, knew who it was without searching.

There are several items in #16 that require responses, and there are a few good responses in #17. So do I need to say anything further? Well, of course.

On the subject of global warming, Joseph Nicholas gave you good answers on several points you made. What I'd like to add is a question (and of course my own answer). If the IPCC report was underpinned by corporate interests that would favor the view that humans are causing the current climate changes, which corporations were you thinking of? I don't think the biggest corporations would favor cutting back on the consumption of fossil fuels, or economic growth, or building and using cars, planes, etc. They all stand to make money if we continue doing just what we do now. I've often heard, on the other hand, that large energy companies fund the think tanks that argue against the idea that burning oil and coal are part of what is driving change. (Not that I have confirmed this with my own research.)

Alison Scott thinks none of us listens to new music, or buys it. I admit I don't buy new music much anymore, because I'm already running out of room, and most of my music buying is of classical music. However, I did pick up the new Decemberists and Sleater-Kinney albums recently, at a CD shop that is, sadly, moving twenty miles north. I also listen to music through a streaming and downloading service called Rhapsody. I downloaded the newest version of their program a month ago, and found it doesn't work well with my Sony Walkman MP3 player- but before the change I was able to download the new Django Django, Modest Mouse, and Waxahatchee albums. But there's so much new pop music every week that there's no way to keep track of, or listen to, it all. Alison, any recommendations?

Nic Farey's taxi tales in both issues are fascinating, and touch on my perverse interest in less common sexual mores and cultures.

John Nielsen-Hall, in issue 17, says he can't recall any record from the big band era that used sound effects. While I can't point to a specific record, I can finger Spike Jones and his City Slickers. They used tons of effects.

Do you hold the same low opinion of Neil Gaiman's genre writing as you do of George Martin's? I think Gaiman might be a better choice for comparison of style. On the other hand, you could have compared Greene's writing to that of a genre writer of his own era, and really had a strong case for dismissing genre writing. Or you could have compared a current literary writer with Martin. Julian Barnes, for example, a favorite of mine. The literary writer would still have come out on top. As genre writing (in whatever genre) has always had different aims than literary writing, I suspect that lit will always beat genre in a contest of style.

My opinion of the Tate Modern is more in agreement with Steve than with Fred Lerner. I had a great time exploring it when I was there - I think in 2005.

Sometimes I wonder if you are just having us on with some of your comments and opinions. "When was the last time you saw Andy Hooper swing a baseball bat?" Don't you know that Andy organizes a softball game at every Corflu possible? (Softball is almost the same as baseball, but with a slightly larger and softer ball, and a few rules changes.) Or maybe it is standard baseball - I can't remember. Of course, this means I haven't always actually seen him swing a bat even if I'm at a Corflu where he's got a game going, because I don't do sports much. The last time I played was at a Seattle Corflu, and that's been a few years.

I'm more of a gun control advocate than a gun rights supporter - I don't own any guns, and voted for stricter background checks in the State of Washington (a citizen initiative that passed). But even I have fired guns in my life, mostly in high school when I belonged to the Boy Scouts. This consisted of target practice with a rifle and skeet shooting with a shotgun. I could hit a stationary target, but not the clay disks flying through the air. I also shot a pistol at a target when I visited a friend during college whose hobby (aside from fanzine publishing) was DIY ammunition and target shooting. If I recall correctly, making your own ammo is called "reloading." You cast the lead bullets in a mould and then jam them into empty cartridges.

Fred Smith should know that not only is Curt's big band show available online, so is a Seattle-based program called "The Swing Years and Beyond." It's five hours of recordings from the 1920s to the 1950s, and runs Saturday evenings on KUOW FM. But you can listen to it anytime online. (While I'm recommending radio music programs, I'll mention a show called, "The Score," which is an hour-long program of music from movie soundtracks. It's produced in Portland, Oregon, but we listen to it on a Seattle classical music station.)

I really liked Steve's "Batmobile" drawing in #17.

Keep up the good work, and know that I'll include several issues of *Vibrator* in my display of current fanzines in the Lost World Fanzine Lounge at Sasquan.

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## DAVE COCKFIELD

You could certainly feel the width with **VIBRATOR 2. 0. 17** but the quality was also there in abundance. There are so many hooks for potential novella sized locs. Thankfully I'm borderline illiterate.

**Fred Smith** was not sure if I was pleased with the election result or not. A definite NOT! I have always considered myself a socialist and will vote Labour when I think that they may do some good. I couldn't stand **Milliband and Balls** and just wished that for once we would have a great politician like the late **John Smith** come forward and actually inspire people with ideas. I admire much of what **Jeremy Corbyn**, Labour Loser candidate, has to say but unfortunately **Michael Foot's** walking stick had more dynamism and charisma. I grudgingly think that the Coalition was not that bad.

I enjoy walking in the country but have limited my exploits as a physical fitness fanatic. When still a callow youth, whatever that means, our school gym teacher used to split the class into two teams for games. The winning team got to spank the losing team with their sandshoes. Miraculously I was always a spanker and not a spankee. Actually only twice as I rarely turned up for school. **Harry Bell** and I once did weight training together. This didn't involve him trying to pick me up. It was all done on machines in a Newcastle gym followed by the communal, male member only, showers. There were no Rob Roy moments but I do remember talcum powder up the nose.

I think that **Michael Chabon and Dan Simmons** are two genre writers to rank with the likes of **Greene and Conrad** but I'm not a good enough scholar to adequately put their case. I'm not sure how much it matters these days though. I'm just happy when I see kids reading anything rather than playing games or living in Twitterville. From the age of 12 to 14 I rarely attended my assigned school, Clegwell Secondary Modern. I did however indulge in a lot recreational reading that covered comic books, **E.R.Burroughs, Doc Savage, Paul Gallico**, and the **Angelique** novels by the husband and wife team, **Sergeanne Golon**. It was hard to resist the bodice ripping exploits of the heroine and the daring adventures of her husband, **Joffrey de Peyrac aka Rescator the Pirate**. **Michelle Mercier** was stunning as **Angelique** in a later series of films based on the books.

I then ended up in a sanatorium, as opposed to a sanalaborum, in Morpeth for 18 months. I don't think that **Angelique** was completely responsible. I was lucky enough to fall under the wing of an intelligent chap called **Tom Taylor** who took the piss out of my reading habits and introduced me to serious literature. I discovered **Mann, Joyce, Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, and Orwell** whilst still retaining a love for science fiction and the like. I even got to be caned for a schoolboy sketch on **Spoonful of Sugar** by **Mr J Saville** esquire. My joystick and landing strip remained unsullied.

In the case of **Graham Greene** my introduction to him came from first seeing movie adaptations of his stories. **This Gun For Hire (A Gun For Sale), Brighton Rock, Our Man In Havana, England Made Me, The Human Factor and The Singer Not The Song**, to name but a few. There have been many and they were all favourites that were even better when rediscovered in the written word. Okay, I know that the last one was written by **Audrey Erskine-Lindop** but for some reason the film led me to **Greene's The Power and the Glory**. Given my compulsive nature I don't know why I didn't expand my reading of much more by **Greene**.

In the case of **Conrad** I first read **Lord Jim** after seeing the film but then found that I wanted to devour everything that I could lay my hands and eyes on. That led to a very valuable lesson in life and an embarrassing Faanish incident. At an unnamed room party, during an unnamed Convention (you can't expect me to remember every fucking detail!) I first met the wonderful **Roy Kettle** and his attractive erudite girlfriend, **Kath**. Amazingly I found myself talking to **Kath** about my passion for the works of Conrad stupidly bragging that I'd read everything he'd written. Ten minutes later I realised that I'd barely touched the surface and even worse that my knowledge and interpretation of his work was sadly lacking. Red faced I slinked away to find someone less challenging to converse with.. Say what you want about the guy, but **Ian Williams** was always there to talk to and restore sanity to the world. Or should that be insanity.

**Ian Williams** mentioned that he couldn't manage without a car and had not had a major accident in 34 years. Way back when on holiday in Cornwall **Ian** was my buddy chauffeur. If I remember rightly he was proud of having just passed his test. Later I was to suspect that he meant the 11+. His driving was careful, mannered, and very much within legal limits. He hadn't yet discovered his inner **Stirling Moss**. We had a couple of amusing adventures during this time the hairiest of which was when he accidentally turned into the wrong lane of a dual carriageway. It took a while to sink in that all of the cars heading towards us were not themselves in the wrong lane. After about a minute that seemed like an eternity we eventually shot across the road and into a pub car park. I'm sure that **Ian** will tell you that during the whole incident he was not shaking like a leaf in a thunderstorm and that he was rational and in complete control. Once in the car park however, after checking that there had been no precipitous bowel movements, **Ian** berated me for, as he put it, repeatedly screaming and shouting in panic at the top of my voice " Pull over and get off this fucking road". I suspect that it was this fog horn invective that warned oncoming drivers well in advance of the predicament we were in so they could avoid us. For a time I thought that he might have sold his soul to the Devil but he couldn't have. It is obvious that he put pen to contract much later when he asked Lucifer for lots of "Pussy" in his life.

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## **PAUL SKELTON**

Nice Covers. Regarding the front, Cas pointed out that one look at me would be enough to turn off anybody's maid, so I guess it's no surprise I haven't eaten a pancake in years. As to

the back cover, very clever, but mention of the Batmobile reminds me that, whilst having gone years without seeing a brown car, suddenly there seem to be quite a few around, all with fairly recent registrations. Now I can understand any guy's nostalgic attraction to the Batmobile, but who'd want to be known as "The guy who drives the turdmobile"?

Jerry Kaufman mentions a lack of enthusiasm for the FAAN Awards. I dunno...39 people voted this last time. I have a distinct impression that there were several fans whose names appear in the fanzine letter columns that I see who were not represented in that total. That does seem low, but I don't know how things are with fanzines these days. In its prime (such as it was) SFD had a circulation of about 100, though mostly a fair bit less. I always figured that was pretty low compared to most zines of the day. I'd be interested to know how today's figures compare to those of yore. How many people do you send *Vibrator* to, Graham? What's Mike Meara's *aMfO* mailing list total come out like? What's the circulation of *Raucus Caucus & Banana Wings*?

I only receive about a dozen zines (out of the 48 which received a vote last time) so have never felt qualified to vote, my misunderstanding about needing to be a member of Corflu notwithstanding, and would not have done so this time without your remark to the effect that it is an opportunity to give people a pat on the back for the pleasure their efforts have brought. Yes, perhaps had I a greater familiarity with today's scene I might have patted some other backs instead, but then again perhaps not. You can only go with what you know. I can see at least 3 perfectly acceptable reasons for not voting...

1 – Not believing in awards (either in general or these specific ones).

2 – Not feeling qualified.

3 – Can't be arsed...which I guess is effectively as 1 above.

I loved the concept, in Robert Lichtman's letter, of 'volunteer plums' falling off the tree. I have this vision of the plums CO asking for 3 volunteers to fall off today and of 3 sleepy plums standing still whilst all the other plums take a step backwards...and yes, I fully appreciate that personal fancy may well embody an example of Boyd Raeburn's excellent principle (sometimes known as 'common sense') mentioned by John Berry.

Yet another example of Fred Smith and me marching to the beat of a different wosname was his mention of Phil Woods//Quincy Jones 'The Gypsy'. Again I went on YouTube and, whilst I agree there were some good saxophone passages, I was more of the view that in too many places it was basically a case of Uncle Johnny's "Musicians getting in the way of the music". Mind you I thought the overall arrangement of the band was turgid, with the other instruments giving the effect of muttering in the background and cluttering the sound, rather than giving the saxophone a platform from which to soar. I guess there is no hope for me Fred, but I really do try to like this stuff. I know the fault lies in me, and would dearly like to eradicate it (purely because there is so much of that music out there).

But I won't go on. I will instead go off (and LoC something else).

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### **JIM LINWOOD AGREES WITH JOSEPH, RATHER A LOT**

Gun Law: While I agree with Joseph's Nicholas's comments on gun ownership, I think he oversimplified the case of Tony Martin. Martin was a violent eccentric with a criminal record who lived in a remote run-down farmhouse known locally as Bleak House which was frequent prey to burglars. With an illegally-held pump-action shotgun he shot one burglar in the back and another in the leg as they were fleeing from the farm – the burglar shot in the back died on the scene. In a previous incident, Martin had fired on a burglar's car and his shotgun certificate was revoked – so the law had previously acted properly in this case. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder which on appeal, taking into account a diagnosis of a paranoid disorder, was reduced to manslaughter. He was released after serving three years. Martin has recently given support to UKIP, the National Front and the British National Party – organisations that regard him as a hero.

Climate Change Again I agree with Joseph but there are also some cranks on the other side of the debate. At a Cornish hotel where we were recently staying we met a know-all former editor of an angling magazine. He believed in two potential culprits causing climate change. Wind farms will deplete atmospheric pressure and force us to wear oxygen masks. Still worse, he believed that solar panels will reduce the sun's energy and create a permanent twilight zone. He later revealed that he was a big fan of John Ringo's zombie apocalypse books which explains everything.

Big Band Radio Show Fred Smith complains that there is nothing on UK radio that compares with Curt Phillips' show – there is: Clare Teal's Sunday night programme on BBC Radio 2 from 9pm to 11pm. Her knowledge of and presentation jazz equals that of Willis Conover (and Curt). She is also a great jazz singer and tours the country with her big band – I have heard her several times at the Cadogan Hall in Chelsea.

Jim Linwood can be found at [jlinwood@aol.com](mailto:jlinwood@aol.com).

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### **IAN WILLIAMS KNOWS ITS ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL, BUT HE LIKES IT**

Like the new format now I can appreciate in paper. Much easier to handle and read.

Taxi stories interesting fun read.

Joseph on guns. Were I as intelligent and articulate as Joseph I have no doubt I would write something almost the same. But I'm not. I also agree with Paul Skelton on guns and in particular his comments on snapping turtles also echo my own. Just because they may not be aesthetically pleasing and have the temerity to bite people who attempt to touch them is no justification for shooting them. I have said this many times so I don't mind saying it

again: my view of the American attitude towards guns is, by British (and probably most other countries) standards bordering on the clinically insane. More guns means more deaths by guns. Strict gun control drastically limits death by gun. This is inarguable. Unless you happen to be American in which case there's a strong possibility you will argue the case. And be wrong.

On the other hand, America gave us Rock and Roll (and the Blues) and we gave it back to them. On the subject of music, which seems to occupy the attention of several of your readers (me being one of them). I just bought The Rolling Stones From The Vault - L.A. Forum -Live In 1975 [DVD] [2014] [NTSC] which is a 2-CD/1 DVD combo pack. There's a lot of iffy unauthorised cheapo concert stuff from various rock legends going around at the moment but this isn't one of them being authorized. The DVD has the same track list as the CDs but is from the previous evening when (according to one review) they were on the sauce. Whatever, it's pretty damn good with loose extended versions of some of their best songs. Wyman was still with them and Wood had just arrived.. Seeing that there's a lot of old farts (like me) reading Vib I thought this may be of interest. And do remember that Mick Jagger is the author of one of the 20th century's most profound statements: It's only Rock and Roll but I like it.

As regards Blues/Rock, I'm currently eagerly awaiting, having heard snippets on Amazon, CDs by respectively The Nimmo Brothers and King King (almost identical bands only KK is less a brother). Never heard of them before but the samples sound great.

Having had no experience whatsoever with ladies of the night, I have nothing more to add on the subject but I look forward to reading about those who have. Or possibly their fantasies.

*(EDITOR: The conclusions I have drawn from the Ladies of the Night Feature in this very issue, Ian, are that our particular sf community apart from a few notable libidinous exceptions such as Uncle Johnny and Chuck Connor, seems comprised of some remarkably unworldly people. Maybe reading science fiction really is a displacement activity.)*

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### **UNCLE JOHNNY PRETENDS HIS IS A LITERARY CRITIC**

Nic's taxi column was once again enthralling. I'm very sorry to read that Nic (a) doesn't piss and (b) has chronic ED. Quite what use that thing between his legs actually has must be a question for introspection and philosophical debate. Or it would be, if one believed either claim. Anyway Nic, if you seriously don't want to piss, have your kidneys out. Although there are downsides which I will enumerate on application.

I too hated sport at school, where my experience was very akin to yours, but I always enjoyed watching cricket, and found as I got older, that playing it could be very enjoyable too. Once upon a time, I worked at a firm of accountants in the City that had a number of

regional offices about the home counties, and there was an inter-office cricket championship. Our City team got through to the final, which we played at the Essex ground at Chelmsford, and yours truly, number four in the batting order, actually scored 20(!) before getting out LBW. Those twenty runs are my personal best, I'll have you know. No helmets, either. I doubt I could do it now.

Indeed, I doubt that anyone would remotely consider me for any kind of team sport nowadays. Of course, I always loved any kind of motor sport, and probably would prefer that if I was going to do anything at all sporty. Which I am not. But lots of girls do love motors, whereas those that even understand cricket, let alone play it, are vastly fewer.

It's years since I read him, but all the same, I was shocked by Ian Williams' mentioning that you had expressed dislike of Cordwainer Smith on Facebook. But I know you often adopt contrary opinions just to encourage the others, as it were. It's why I have kept out of your spurious George R R Martin versus Graham Greene nonsense. That Graham Greene was a better literary stylist there can be no possible dispute, but since one is a fan, one is much more likely to actually enjoy the writing of Railroad Martin, than to immerse oneself in Graham Greene which endeavour would expose you to involved expositions of guilt and remorse from a wannabe martyr. Moreover, I think you know that perfectly well. Graham Greene was a sad product of his age. In another hundred years, no one will have heard of him.

Cordwainer Smith was a true original, whose imagination took the reader to places no one else could take them to - not even Lang Jones, and he was pretty good and slightly in the same mould. Even if you have given up on the imaginary wonders of the universe, there are better writers than Greene with which to voyage into the depths of human experience. Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life*, for instance. I bet you haven't read that. And you would be mad not to. Jo Walton is not just a brilliant fantasy writer either- try *My Real Children* by her.

Here endeth the lesson.

*(EDITOR: Does being a fan mean you have to put up with reading crap? Well, then, I am glad I am not a fan. I agree there are a lot of great contemporary writers about, just not sf or fantasy ones.)*

John Nielsen-Hall can be found at [johnsila32@gmail.com](mailto:johnsila32@gmail.com)

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## **FREDERICK SMITH**

More very interesting stuff from Nic Farey. Could be titled "Thrilling Taxi Tales", judging from his encounters with some of the denizens of LV. But (excuse my innocence) what is "chronic ED" and why is it helpful?

As an "old and unreconstructed jazzer" I have to take issue with John Neilsen-Hall yet again. In fact there's so much in his LOC that I hardly know where to begin. Okay, so he should have said "the greatest instrumental pop 45 of all time", which removes it from any comparison with (a) jazz and (b) 78s, LPs and CDs. And, yes, I do have an "old trumpet 78" which is more deserving: Artie Shaw's "Stardust" which, in addition to featuring a really beautiful trumpet solo by Billy Butterfield, has a wonderful solo by Shaw himself on clarinet. It's also a big-selling "pop" record of the time, as it happens.

The Sound, ah yes, the famous Glenn Miller Sound that Jimmy Stewart accidentally found when a lead trumpeter hurt his lip and Willy Schwartz had to lead the sax section on clarinet. Actually, what really happened was that Miller, as a budding arranger, tried various combinations of instruments and found that Schwartz (who had been recommended to him) had a particularly warm tone on clarinet which, when doubled by one of the tenors an octave below (the other three saxes harmonising), produced that unique (for the time) Sound which became the band's trademark. Nevertheless, most of Miller's hit records didn't feature it but were the work of outstanding arrangers (in addition to Miller) like Jerry Gray and Bill Finegan combined with rigid, martial, drilling of the musicians.

While agreeing that music is better "live" in a concert hall or wherever, I still believe that records (and, particularly jazz records) are worthwhile and serve a need for people who can't get to concerts easily. I also disagree with John's idea that a soloist's "importance" can "get in the way of what the medium is for". In fact, if musicians "should be stopped" who's going to produce music? Certainly not "rappers and techno-geeks". However, it seems to be current pop that he means and that, in common with many others, he doesn't appreciate what jazz is about.

Your article about cricket and Sport in Grammar School rings a bell with me. During the year that I spent at what in England would be called a Public School we had cricket during the summer and rugby (or "rugger") during the winter. I wasn't much good at cricket and my policy when playing rugger was to keep as far away from the ball as possible. We didn't have Health and Safety in those days!

I suppose that, like yourself, I too have a "soft spot" for Jeremy Clarkson (your reply to David Redd) for much the same reasons but when it comes to Russell Brand we part company. He's boorish, ugly and, worse, totally unfunny. I can't see any reason for him and would avoid looking at, or listening to, the bum. A total waste of space!

Bryn Fortey's heart's in the right place but, although admiring him, Louis A. is not my favourite and I've never seen him in the flesh so to speak. Love the Ella/Louis duets though! Not a fan of Stan Kenton either although I have a few of his records. Speaking of music to head to the flames by (as Bryn was!) a few years back I attended the funeral of a well-known trumpeter I used to work for. Music being played in the crematorium was stuff that he had taped at various times, mostly of himself. On came a piano solo, however, and while I was trying to figure out who was playing another musician sitting next to me turned and said, "That's you"!

It's a real meaty ish again this time but that's about all the comment that comes to mind except that the small is beautiful size okay but difficult to read for these eyes!

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## **R-LAURRAINE-TUTIHASI**

I looked up the site mentioned in Robert Lichtman's LoC (Vibrator 14) that enables one to play the top songs for each year since 1900. Out of curiosity I looked up my birth year; the top song was "Buttons and Bows" sung by Dinah Shore. I wasn't familiar with the song, so I had to play it to find out—a lightweight fun song. The year my family and I came to the US, the top song was "Que Sera, Sera" sung by Doris Day, with which even I am familiar. I've bookmarked the page and may explore more later.

Referring to your back page, what is so painful about being on a panel with Ian Sorensen? I admit I don't know him well. He seems to have a good sense of humour; at least he makes me laugh. I also love to hear that accent of his.

*(EDITOR: The poke at Ian Sorensen was a totally gratuitous piece of bitchery, I'm afraid, Laurraine. I admit Ian can be entertaining, but he knows it and is possibly the most self-important person in fandom, that I know of anyway.)*

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## **KEV WILLIAMS IS STUCK IN SUMBOURGH WITH THOSE SHETLAND BLUES AGAIN**

Another interesting issue. Was in full agreement with Paul Skelton and John Hall's take on the U.S. Gun situation. Availability is obviously part of the issue. I remember reading that most gun related accidents and suicides in the UK is among farmers, who have the highest ownership of guns here. That, plus the 'distance' that guns allow you to keep from your potential victim, add to the likelihood of use.

The U.S. is huge, and to us Europeans living cheek by jowl, particularly Brits, the related 'don't like government' movement of the tea-party gang, seems incomprehensible. There was even one republican candidate in the last election who said he thought that police should be 'optional'; that he and his supporters could look after themselves, thanks. This seems inconceivable to us. I have travelled a fair bit out in the 'boonies' in the U.S., I can kinda understand that the presence of government, isn't seen much. In Utah, Arizona and eastern California you can drive for miles through the desert and occasionally see a mailbox, standing on its own, with no house anywhere in sight. Maybe just a dusty track leading off into the mountains. Possibly the nearest neighbour is ten or twenty miles away, and the nearest town, yet further. In those circumstances, the concept of 'government' might be seen as theoretical.

I think that the U.S. in general gets a really bad rap globally. They're incredibly generous with money and time for many global causes. Yes, they've elected the occasional idiot (and we haven't?) allowing shadowy, deeply venal figures to dictate the agenda (though Reagan seems like a socialist compared to some current reps).

I worked with Americans most of my life, lived and worked there - both on the east coast (New England) and in the mid-west (Cincinnati) for nearly four years. I found them to be the most generous and welcoming of people, and several have become lifelong friends. I was gobsmacked with the amount of money that my US work colleagues contributed to charity every year - like 10% of gross salary (tax deductible). And of course, the worlds greatest philanthropists are American. But however generous the well off may be, helping those that can't help themselves, shouldn't be on the whim of the rich man. We need effective government to help the disadvantaged.

When I was in Cincinnati, I'd roll into work at 8:30am (early for me), and a lot of people had already been there for two and a half hours. By the time I'd started to get my act together and had a coffee they were going for lunch - at about 11:15. The restaurant stopped serving lunch at 12:15! But then, at 4:00pm, the building emptied, and the only two people left were me and my boss - an Italian, and we'd be there until 7 and leave together. It actually worked very well, the people I worked with would prep for when I came in, then the core hours when the labs were operating and I was there were very productive, and then I'd have a few hours after everybody left to do some thinking.

It was different to this on the east coast. I think that the Ohio work habits were dictated by the fact that they were on the far western edge of the local time zone and from May to October it was light and warm until 11:00pm - so if you left work at 4:00, you'd have the best part of a day ahead of you.

Which brings me to a related topic.....

So, geography and time-zones can dictate how you live to quite a degree.

As I write this, I am stuck in Sumbourgh airport in Shetland, in the far north of Scotland; in fact pretty much as far north as Britain goes. We're trying to get to Orkney, but air traffic is down, and so we are for the moment stranded. The Shetland isles stretch to 61 deg north - the same latitude as Alaska and Greenland, and yet thanks to the Gulf Stream, in the summer it is quite temperate. We've had a glorious sunny five days where the July temperature has stretch as high as 18degrees! The air is so clear that it takes on a surreal quality.

Of course in the winter, there's only four or five hours of daylight and Seasonal Affective Disorder is a problem. Fortunately they have lots of oil money here and cultural, educational, community and recreational facilities are second to none.

The character of these islands is dictated mainly by their proximity to Scandinavia. London is 600 miles away, Bergen 200. The history goes back to Neolithic times. We've just visited Jarlshof, a site which has been continuously occupied since 2700 BC - 500 years before Stonehenge. But from 850AD onwards the Vikings raided and then settled and a huge trading empire was created way out here, probably rivalling what was going on on the mainland. Travel by sea was so easy - especially to the Vikings - two days from Bergen to Shetland, one week to Iceland. A short commute to work for pre-millennial Raiders. The

'Kingdom of the isles' grew and flourished for 800 years and variously encompassed the Shetlands, Orkneys, Hebrides and the Isle of Man. This tends to be overlooked in British history, because we are naturally 'land' oriented. The waters of the north and Irish seas were cross-crossed with sea 'ways', every bit as permanent in the minds of the navigators as roads trodden into earth. The philosopher of landscape and ways, Robert McFarlane in his book 'the Old Ways', which I am reading as we travel, is positively poetic on the subject:

*"Sea roads are dissolving paths...they survive as convention, a tradition, as a sequence of coordinates, way-marks, dotted lines on charts. Along these sea paths for thousands of years have travelled ships, boats, people, objects and language. The ocean brings together far apart places. In the pre-modern world the boat was the fastest means of long-distance travel. Sea roads are not arbitrary; they are optimal routes across open seas, determined by the shape of the coastline (out to avoid headlands, dip towards ports, archipelagos, the direction of flight of birds, the Pole star or the North Star), as well as by marine phenomena: surface currents, tidal streams, and prevailing winds - all offering limits and opportunities for sea travel. 'The sea divides and the land unites' said the Romans, but for millennia prior to Rome, the opposite was true...."*

*Invert the mental map you hold of Britain and Western Europe; turn it inside out; blank out the land interiors - consider them featureless; populate the western and northern waters with paths and tracks: a travel system that joins port to port, island to island, headland to headland, river mouth to river mouth. The sea has become land - is now the usual medium of transit: not barrier but corridor. Natural boundaries shiver and collapse, instead of belonging to nations that possess coastlines, those outward facing coastal settlements from the Shetlands and the Orkneys all the way round to Galicia in Spain, become a continuous territory of their own; Atlanticist in nature sharing culture, technologies, crafts and languages"*

A very different way of looking at geography, like a non-Mercator projections map of the world, or the upside down maps that the antipodeans a love, or the real tube map as opposed to the familiar formatted version. The Old Ways, is a great book if you have any interest in landscape, paths and ways.

Still stuck in Sumbourgh, though.

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## **ROBERT LICHTMAN**

In the introduction to *Vibrator* 2.0.17 you write about how when you started publishing it you culled names of likely recipients from sources such as my fanzine. That's certainly the time-honored way to go about compiling a mailing list, which I did first at the age of sixteen when I launched into my fanzine publishing career. Even though I'd only seen a few dozen fanzines at the time, between the fanzine review and letter columns it was easy enough to get together around eighty or so names to which to send my first effusion. "I'd like to hope *Vibrator* encourages other people to produce fanzines...but I suspect I am one of a

diminishing breed.” Well, maybe, but over the years – even the more recent ones – fanzines have popped up out of more-or-less nowhere, had their run, and then disappeared. I’m thinking here of Andy Hooper’s *Flag* here, whose sixteen-issue run in 2013 and 2014 you just exceeded with this issue, and also of Sandra Bond’s two issues of *Jiant* in 2014. I’d love to see both of them come back. Currently there’s also John Purcell’s print-only *Askew* and Guy Lillian’s *Spartacus*, which each editor publishes in addition to their more ambitious projects (*Askance* and *Challenger*, respectively). So don’t write off fanzine fandom’s ability to regenerate just yet. It’s just a bit erratic.

Thanks to Nic for another instalment of Taxidriver Tales, and for naming the glossary after me (an honor, guv!), but I am one of those “keen to weigh in on what a bad idea” it is to hold off pissing for the sort of extended periods he describes. Could he not carry around a lidded container of a size that would fit under the driver’s seat (in case he has a front-seat passenger) that could be surreptitiously dumped between the time one leaves off a passenger and returns to the joys of waiting on stands for the next fare?

“I was watching a television programme recently about a house-hunting couple who wanted an eco-friendly house. *Renewable resource* is a current buzz-term which is so often misused.” I agree with your mini-rant about those renewable resources. What caught my attention here was your confessing that you watch what we call “house shows.” There’s an entire cable network here devoted to such things, and we dip in fairly frequently ourselves. They’re billed as reality shows in the listings, and indeed they are – totally formulaic and tightly constrained. Wherever in the world the house search is being conducted, it’s a truism that because the area is so in demand prices will have gone up – just like real life there! – and the house seekers may not have realized this in setting their “budget.” On each, the house-hunting people (couples usually, sometimes gay ones, but also single people who are not exempt from looking for new digs) are shown three listings. At least one of them will be “above budget,” but the sales agent shows it to the searchers anyway for some sort of relativity. Another will be “below budget” but will be deficient in some way and might need renovation on top of that. A third might be “on budget” but there will also be some problem: too small, no view, outdated kitchen appliances, lack of dual sinks in the en suite bathroom – the list goes on and on. In the end, the seekers stop to consider their options – sometimes over a drink, other times perhaps walking in a park or on the beach – and decide which of the three to eliminate first. In the end they make their choice, and surprisingly sometimes the choice is of a dwelling for which serious reservations existed when it was first being shown, but which are now suddenly erased. And in the closing scene, we *always* see the buyers some weeks or months later in their new digs – with rapid-fire before/after shots of the rooms and, of course, always happy as clams over their choice.

At the tail end of his comments of “Almost Washed My Hair,” Andy Porter writes, in connection with his outlining the perils of getting it and out of a bathtub, “From what I remember, Lee Jacobs, a well-known Southern fan, died in his shower; don't know whether he had a heart attack there, or slipped and fell.” I was still active in fandom when Lee died

in 1968, but I don't remember the details. When I tried to find a possible fanzine in which this may have been reported, I was stymied at every turn. The first incarnation of *Focal Point* had folded before his death and the second one didn't start until over a year later. Peter Roberts' *Checkpoint* hadn't yet started. Lee had been a member of SAPS at the time membership was noted only as "deceased." I finally hit probably the only contemporary reference in Ron Bennett's *Skyrack* #95, May 1968: "Our spy in infiltrated territory, Art Wilson, informs us of the sudden and tragic death of long-time FAPAn and West Coast personality Lee Jacobs." Checking Lee's address in numerous issues of FAPA's *Fantasy Amateur* and SAPS's *Spectator*, the only time Lee lived anywhere near the American South was briefly in the early '50s when he had a Washington DC address. So I'm at a loss as to why Andy thinks Lee was a Southern fan. Most of the time he lived in Los Angeles, where I first met him as a youngfan around 1959. I liked Lee a lot, and losing both him and Ron Ellik in the same year was a real (in the terms of the times) bummer.

Regarding those Native American "ancient burial sites," you do a good job of deconstructing them – especially with your comment, "Is the graveyard my mother is buried in Herefordshire a sacred site? No, it's just a place where she and many other people are buried. Could it be turned into a car park for a new homes housing development. Well, certainly." It's no secret that some desirable neighborhoods in San Francisco are built on what used to be early graveyards. Those graves were dug up around a hundred years ago and moved to Colma, a small incorporated town south of San Francisco. You can read more about it here:

*(EDITOR: Here Robert included a lot of links, which I don't like publishing in my fanzine. I'm just funny that way. You'll have to imagine them, I suppose.)*

With the last few issues of *Vibrator* I've been noticing the steady increase in page count. The dozen issues from 2.0.4 to 2.0.14 averaged about 15 pages each, but the last three have climbed steadily: 24 pages, 26 pages, and with this issue a leap to 36 pages. This is something I think of as "the *Habakkuk* phenomenon." Back in 1960 a fan named Bill Donaho, who had recently moved from New York to Berkeley, began a fanzine by that name. The first issue was 13 pages, the second more than doubled to 28 pages, and the third doubled again to 56 pages. The final three issues ranged from 81 to 117 pages, and the entire run was produced in just 15 months. Donaho revived the title in the mid-'60s for three issues and avoided this escalation. But a third 4-issue incarnation in 1993/94 repeated the original run's cycle, starting at 10 pages and then 62, 68 and 78 before folding for the last time. Why I mention this is that I find it more challenging to keep up with your larger issues. Of course it's not all about me, though, and you'll obviously ride this wave as long as it (and you) lasts. And we'll all enjoy it. *(EDITOR: Yes, Robert, I am indeed worried by the way this fanzine is growing. The trouble is I feel obliged to included letters my correspondents send me. I have already had to trim the content of this issue.)*

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# ***TAXIMMETRY BY NIC FAREY***

So, the multiple-award-winning Grah sends out the call for salaciousness in the form of a request for tales about the world's oldest profession, while I continue to toil the trenches in service of the world's third oldest profession. The second oldest, I venture to suggest, would be innkeeper, by the basic logic that follows: (1) Profession offers solace to the knob; (2) Profession provides a place in which solace may be given to the knob; (3) Profession provides conveyance to place in which solace to the knob is given.

This does convey the heavy implication that all history must have been driven by knobs and the quest for solace thereof, but I'm prepared to stand by the argument that until more recent times which are showing some flashes of enlightenment, mankind's progress has been mostly knob-centric.

So what's all that philosophy got to do with taxis and the price of fish, then? Despite Las Vegas' sterling reputation as the City of Sin, if something is illegal in your home town, it's also probably illegal here (as Joyce Katz always cheerfully pointed out in Corflu PRs *passim*)

Prostitution is legal in certain Nevada counties, and there are legal brothels, but Clark County is not one of them. However, a blind eye is generally turned to all but the most obvious and egregious solicitation, and there are rub & tug establishments aplenty which charge a small fortune, a lot of which gets circulated back out in backhanders. (Typically, \$100+ per customer is the kickback given to a cab driver, and presumably the po-po are also getting regular rent.)

All we really see of these establishments is the punters going in and out, and a peek out by the (usually) Oriental madame as she pays us out, whereas in the small hours it's not unusual to get calls from places known to domicile (or be a staging point for) "working girls", and you can tell a bit about the likely quality by where they live. Any Siegel Suites or similar sketchy "flexible stay" place indicates a dodgy one, whereas the classier practitioners will be living in quite nice condos like the aptly-named Allure on Sahara Avenue just west of the Strip - many of the dancers who work at the better topless joints will take up residence in the latter. The other drivers can always tell if you've taken one of the girls home from work, since you'll have been paid the fare largely if not entirely in dollar bills.

One of our regular callers for rides is the famous and/or notorious Las Vegas Lounge on Karen avenue, frequented by cross-dressers, transvestites and transsexuals, many of whom do indeed make a living by providing certain services (ahem). Apropos of nothing in particular, I've observed that the girls seem to be either generally miserable, bitter and angry, or cheerful, friendly and happy, with very little shading in between. Still, a cursory scour of craigslist will put you in contact with many of them, and they like roses.

Gay news: Staged at the Commercial Center a couple of weeks ago, and one of the bartenders from Badlands (notorious gay dive bar) comes beetling up waving his arms. One of the other bartenders (now, presumably, off duty) is well languered, possibly due to birthday celebrations, and they'd like to make sure he gets home all right. On-duty bar

bloke gives me \$20 up front, and I not unreasonably ask where his mate lives, a salient fact which we need to extract from him, as he unsteadily wobbles out and is placed in the back seat. We eventually get "Manhattan" out of him, clever me knows that this will be the Manhattan condos down near South Point, and not the bit of New York of the same name. Bar-bloke gives me another \$20 (which will about cover it), and off we go. I head for the I15, explaining to the drunk that it'll be the best route at that time of night (true), but he keeps trying to get my attention in a rather lovely soft voice, which because of the tinnitus and all that I have a bit of trouble making out. "Ey, driver...". (mumbles). As we're on the freeway heading south, I realize what he's actually asking me is: "Ey, driver - grab my dick". I politely declined, pointed out that it was my task to get him home safely, and not to wank him off while going down the road at 65. My admonitions got a bit less polite after the third time of asking. ("You fucking behave back there, I'm driving!"). So we eventually pull up at the Manhattan, absent any dick-grabbing since he'd mercifully dozed off a bit. The condos have a security gate and guard, whom I inform that I'm bringing a resident in, and coincidentally notice a rather strange expression on the guard's face. Getting to the right stairwell, I get out of the cab to make sure the ride has all his pressies with him (which I'd been admonished to ensure), and notice at this point that he's got his kex round his ankles and knob waving in the wind (which explains the expression on the guard's mush). While not exactly in "can of Vim with a sheep's heart on top" territory, I did take a second to be a bit impressed before reminding the bloke that he'd better pull 'em up before getting out, and declining the following invitation to come upstairs. I'm not sure the guard totally believed me when I said (on the way out) that I had no idea, 'cos I can't actually see the back seat (and in any case I'm watching the road), but we still had a good larf.

### POSSIBLY SEXUAL GLOSSARY

**Roses** : In craigslist ads for certain services, since prostitution is illegal, "roses" = \$\$.

**Stacked and packed** : While this sounds like the sort of pneumatic physiology that tends to excite aged accountants, in taxi lingo it's the opposite of "wide and waiting" (qv); in other words: many cabs, no punters.

**Wide and waiting** : How you might expect a prospective provider of certain services to be ready, but also music to a cabbie's ears: no cabs (wide) and a line of punters (waiting). Sounds much naughtier than it really is.

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### **VIBRATOR TAILPIECE**

Well, it's happened. Another issue. We made it, Ma. Thanks as usual to you, my regular correspondents and contributors, for adding to this on-going record of contemporary fanzine fandom. Hey, it may not have much to do with science fiction but, what the hell, I'm perfectly prepared to leave that kind of stuff to people like Andy Hooper and Arnie Katz, who both seem intent on pursuing some elusive definition of the genre that lies entirely in their own heads. Roy Kettle made a joke which he put in Andy's mouth as "Vibrator the Fuck-all Point Fanzine". I don't know if Andy said it, or Roy made it up, but it pretty well sums the venture up. Thanks as usual to Pat Charnock for proof-reading this issue which is dated July 2015. Deadline for next issue is August 31<sup>st</sup>. I'm graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk