



The Seventeenth issue of a weekly, or thereabouts (job, life, love, etc., permitting), letter substitute from:

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"Adventures in TommyWorld,"

by Vikki Coven.

I have to preface my tour of Tommy's Toronto with the story of how we met. It was at Confusion. It might have been Tommy's 1st American Con, but it was my first con ever. I also had heard rumours of easy sex to be had, but I was sure that was not for me. "I just don't do that kind of thing anymore, not since the early 80's," is what I told my girlfriend at the beginning of the con. Boy-oh-boy, did I ever eat my words! Tommy's easy wit and affable nature totally charmed the pants of me. At the time he left me with a good memory and his fanzine. I was intrigued by his forthrightness in "Tommy's Nose," not many people are willing to admit to such a strange affliction. So I wrote him a loc.

More fanzines and letters followed with a couple of phone calls thrown in. (Tommy is impossible to reach by phone, I never once saw him answer it while I was there, and he has crazy working hours that change weekly, daily, at that.) Hopefully soon I will have EMail, but I'm still only able to reach him through snail mail. Eventually I was invited for the American Memorial Day weekend, May 23-26.

After a day of life guarding and teaching swimming, one of the funniest jobs in the world, I drove from Detroit to Toronto in about five hours (holiday traffic.) I found his house from the verbal directions he had given me over the phone the week before, his mailed map never arrived (this has been a frustration - I blame Canadian and not US mail.) I knocked on the front door, paranoid he forgot I was coming. It took me about five minutes to remember that he said come around the back, I finally did, noting that it is a very deep house with the living room at the back - no wonder he didn't hear me at the front.

I felt awkward and clumsy as I hugged him hello and knocked over his beer. I couldn't believe I was really here. After a cold drink and a quick change we took a cab over to

the big event of the weekend - MikeCon XVIII, the three day birthday party of Mike Glicksohn and Mike Harper. It had been a long day but I'm used to partying late on Friday and then working Saturday morning. I was ready for some fun because I knew I would get to sleep in.

I met some really nice people in Toronto fandom. I had some great conversations with Susan Manchester (Mike's wife), Catherine Crockett, Hope Leibowitz and Tommy himself. The evening ended with a poker game in the basement. I just watched because I'm a gambling wimp - can't stand the thought of losing hard earned cash - even if it is that fake Canadian stuff. Tommy on the other hand had quite a good turn of luck ((Skill - ed.)) and ended the evening about \$10 up.

After a quick cab home, it was time to get up close and personal. I would like to say here and now, contrary to earlier reports, that all of Tommy's bits and pieces were in perfect working order, thank you very much. And yes, I do admit to waking the dog - but that is all I'm going to saying on that subject!

Saturday we both slept incredibly late, I got up at 2 PM, Tommy ((at his normal -Ed.)) 3pm. By the time we were dressed it was time to go find dinner. We walked down Bloor Street, Tommy pointing out his favourite pubs and the Church he has yet to visit, until we found a little outdoor cafe that served vegetarian food for me. It was still a bit cool but I was ready to be outside after a long winter. I personally feel that this is a typical Toronto experience (this being my fourth trip to the city) and was surprised to find out that this was Tommy's first time eating Al Fresco. People watching was fun, but I was feeling awkward again as we tried to learn more about each other. Maybe I was just feeling old compared to all the young people in the 'hood.

After dinner we stopped in for a libation at one of his favourite pubs, Paupers, until it was time to get ready for the party again. It was formal night at Mike #2s house. Tommy wore a jacket and tie, I wore my blue mylar dress. I think we looked good. Tommy wanted to take the subway but I looked down at my high heels and said, "I don't think so, I'll drive." I had to promise not to drive intoxicated which made me quit drinking by 1am.

At the party I was very happy to see Valerie Westwood again. Now just to clear it up, at Confusion Tommy slept with me, Vikki, not Valerie. Since we both made an appearance in TommyWorld in the same issue and both our names begin with V some people have been confused. Valerie is married, I'm not. We hung out, drank, and chatted with a lot of people. This being one of my favourite activities I was happy as a clam. About 3am we toddled off home and I gave Catherine Crockett, Colin Hinz and Neil (?) a ride home.

Sunday we were not up until the afternoon. We had to rush because it was time for the pig roast at Mike #1s house. We got there late, but we could still see from the carcass it had been a big pig. Most of it was eaten by the 50 or so people there. We sat around in lawn chairs desperately hoping it would warm up. I had good chats with Yvonne and Lloyd Penny, Hope, Tommy and others. I'm still new to fandom (though I've read SF for years) so it's easy to quiz others about it - making conversation with new people more comfortable. There was more poker in the basement with Tommy's luck deserting him this time ("I wuz robbed!") The party was pretty much over when Mike and Susan's toilet broke...

We then went out to eat, my treat, at a dark and cosy little coffee house, called Dark City on the Danforth, that resembled the set from Batman. After this we stopped in at Allen's - Tommy's home away from home. I met my fourth Mike (Tommy's room mate is also called Mike), truly a MikeCon weekend. This last Mike is a semi-reformed bad boy who man's the bar. I don't know how good he is, I kept finding toys in our drinks and he couldn't make my favourite - a screaming orgasm (the drink.) I also met Doug, the new guy, and Carmel "All Aboard!" - who is newly in love with a bus driver. We talked, drank and played the jukebox until closing. I was pleasantly surprised at being out with a man who liked some of the same music that I do. After closing, since the boss was away, the mice did play. The drinks were now free and we had our own private party. There were five of us and we didn't leave until 4am. I admit to acquiring a taste for Black Sambuca. By the time we got home Tommy was accepting the fact that he was supposed to be back at work at 9.30am. So we cuddled and had the best and most open honest chat of the weekend.

Monday I got up slowly, it was Memorial Day, my day off. I packed and got out of there by 2.30 or so. I stopped by Allen's to say goodbye - having a diet coke whilst Tommy finished his lunch. I thanked him for the lovely vacation. I had had no responsibilities beyond showering and getting dressed and then having fun. Tommy was really glad that I liked doing this kind of thing over sightseeing, I think liking to do the same thing makes it easier on both Visitor and host. I then took his picture, kissed him good-bye and then I was on the road again. It was time to hurry back to my own frantically paced life.

It all went by much too fast, as all good times do. I hope when I get him to visit there that I can show him as good a time as I had. Of course anytime I'm invited back - I'm there!

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Yes, my ego is such that I can print the above. Although I use this thing as a letter sub and to give brief details of what I'm up to, the whole article revolves around me as much as Vikki, that it seems appropriate. And, after the fourth person enquired about details, I

thought it better to let Vikki speak. Sometimes I really hate the DNQ (although I know it is invaluable.)

The Foxes Den - yes, July 3rd is the next meeting - so Tuesday and Thursday start with the same letter, we can all make mistakes. Last time round we had 9 people, a 300% improvement over the first meeting, as one wag noted. It was a lot of fun and the details can be found in the Foxes Den Newsletter, available on the 3rd of July meeting. Yep, you gotta be there to pick it up.

Now some bad news. After an almighty fuck-up at work, I've been scheduled to work this weekend, the weekend of Ad Astra. At the moment I'm desperately trying to get Saturday and Sunday morning off (trading with people) and I hope to be able to do this. However, it does screw up some plans. I do hope to be party host/barman for the Toronto in '03 World con bid (Toronto in '03 On-Line at: <http://www.worldhouse.com/worldcon-2003>) and to attend the fanzine panel on Sunday morning. But don't be surprised if I don't make it for the whole con. Needless to say, I'm extremely fucked off by this, hence this 24 hour delay in TW. Updates to the relevant people when I can confirm my plans.

Party Time. Well EVERYONE (and their wife) is coming to my birthday bash - for which, thank you. However, I really don't have the financial resources to cater for you all. So here's the deal, you bring the booze, I'll do all the food. And maybe Allen's will throw in some stuff...

And now, you...

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From: rlt@netscorp.net (FAO Steve Jeffrey) "Dear Tommy, Thanks for TommyWorld 15 and 16. The attached RTF format works just fine at this end, and it looks very nice too with coloured heading et al. (Oh, I can guess I'm using an American spell checker; it's just underlined 'coloured'. Cheek) This odd relationship by EMail you commented on for Vikki's and my LoCs in TW15. It feels strange from this end too. After 10 years together, we haven't spent more than a couple of days together at a stretch since January, and not seen each other at all since the middle of April, with me over here in Texas and Vikki back in Oxford. Another three weeks (today) and I go home. With the strange possibility that Vikki may be flying out to Atlanta and Dragon*Con the same weekend I return (I can't get my I-94 extended to make the trip).

And perhaps I ought to clear up any confusion over the sudden multiplicity of Vikki's in the pages of TommyWorld. This is my Vikki (France), UK fan, not your Vikki (Coven) And neither are the other Vikki (Rosenzweig) from Philly. Although probably both will refute any suggestion that they are anybody's Vikki's but their own. But you know what I

mean. I hope. But back to TommyWorld. Sounds like you're having fun. Definitely a more lively and active fannish scene up there than here, down at the yellow butt end of Texas, just before it falls into Mexico (which is, literally, just at the end of the road). Where, of all things, it is currently raining - albeit in definitely big Texas fashion.

I'd sort of sussed the essential difference between US and Brit fans (smokes vs beer) from Arnie Katz's various con reports and from Philcon back in 91 (where I saw fans imbibing soft drinks - by preference!). But cards is a new one on me - particularly Canadian? Don West has his dominoes, but they've hardly taken the UK convention scene by storm (on the other hand, I rarely venture into the con gaming rooms to see what they get up to there between - presumably- consenting adults).

Ever Fallen in Love with Someone?? ?[complete well known phrase or saying; that'll sort out the Buzzcocks fans] Oh to be a teenager or adolescent again.. Err, No Thanks very much. Jeez, it was all so intense back then. It's a nice change to be able to listen to a good gloomy record, like John Martyn's Grace and Danger or The Cure's Faith, without it becoming too intensely personal. (hmm, that rather effectively dates the last time I was 'in lurve' - as we say in these parts, pards) Lest Lesley feel slight at the revelation of her teddy bear owning status, I freely admit, although it's no great secret by now, to being a huge Pooh fan. It's probably congenital, seeing as my Dad is a big Rupert the Bear nut. Only you would emigrate to Canada and work in an Irish bar?. Continue having fun.

From: rbyers@u.washington.edu (Randy Byers) For a few years, my housemate, Denys, and I used to throw a Birthday Party every September (we both have September birthdays) and an Unbirthday Party every March (midway to the next September, you see). They were a lot of fun, but they did not last all weekend (well, except for the friends from Oregon who stayed overnight) and we did not roast whole pigs. A duck, once, but no pigs. Oh, yeah, and there was a salmon once, too, but it was dropped on the floor, much to the cat's delight. You weren't there, which was too bad. We would've missed you, except we didn't know you yet. Sorry to hear that you probably won't make it out for Westercon. In this case, we definitely *will* miss you. And thanks for letting us know that Lesley is into furry fandom. She will be punished.

Gee, this is my second emoc to you in one day. How the hell do you rate? Anyway, best line from Kenneth Branagh's otherwise forgettable "Peter's Friends": "I've never fallen in love, but I've stepped in it a few times." Sorry, Tommy, once you turn thirty you will no longer be capable of falling head over heels in love. You will only be capable of mature, clear-headed, rational, adult love. That gives you how many days to fall hard? Hurry! Randy "Luv Stinks" Byers

From: mbergqui@amnesty.iol.ie (Margaret Bergquist) "Glad to see that 'boat drinks' is still in the vocabulary. A wonderful saying. I for one liked TommyWorld 10, dream or reality or whatever people thought it was. Just thought it was interesting and well

written. Hope all's well on that side of the pond and that spring will come eventually to the frozen north.....

From: nigel@impolex.demon.co.uk (Nigel E. Richardson) "Tommy, Read about the Crown Website in the Guardian last week. The live picture seems to have remained the same for the last ten minutes, however--unless they don't move much there.

From: mark@nicrc.thegap.com (Mark McCann) "... I take great exception to the following line:

> I'm so jealous of her because she got to kiss Craig Charles from Red Dwarf,

I was trying to eat my breakfast at the time and I'm still getting the egg McMuffin out of my keyboard...

> "...how do I fit into this thing?... & "...can I get off?..."

It may be naive of me to ask but what kind of mechanical devices do you worry about "fitting into" as part of your relationships? Toronto grows ever more weird in my mind with each passing zine.

From: UAOBRIEN@uci.edu (Ulrika A. O'Briend) "Look, another TommyWorld. Damn if this doesn't work all of a sudden. About true love, well, well. This is free advice (or free opinion, or free pronouncements -- your choice), so value accordingly, but frankly the modern Western notion of Romantic Love is, in my opinion, deeply myth laden, hopelessly muddled, full of stupid misconceptions, and generally a terrible hurdle in the way of actually loving people. It's crap, in short. Or possibly a metaphor that people keep taking literally. Anyway, it sounds a bit like you may have been saddled with some of that baggage (saddle bags!) yourself.

Maybe things really are different for you, but in my experience that big all consuming, deep burning, locked in the now magical sunsets goshwow flutter flutter feeling isn't so much a measure of how deep or intense the love is but of how (comparatively) new the relationship is. It's what the alt.poly folk call New Relationship Energy, and usually clocks out after two or three years, tops. I am inclined to suspect that mistaking New Relationship Energy for True Love, and the decline of New Relationship Energy for death of love, is a major player in a lot of needless relationship misery. Yes, NRE is addictive, seductive, and a really nice vacation from the daily grind, and I do understand pining for that thrill, but I hope you're not really expecting to hold any possible new relationship up to the level of fluttery overblown romanticism you could achieve when you were nineteen. If your nineteen was anything like mine, anyhow. Hell, people think it's cool to be nihilistic yuppies and get tattoos on their freheads when they're nineteen. Not necessarily a state of mental pliancy to be nostalgic for.

So if you ask me (I know, you didn't), don't worry about the headology of relationships too much, just be as honest and vulnerable as you can stand, love as many people as your heart can fit, and fall in love with what you do with your time and fill your time with things you feel passionate about. Love will catch up with you a few minutes after you gave up looking.

From: Evelyn@murraycoltness.demon.co.uk (Evelyn Murray) Hi Tommy, Hope you are well and sorry I will not be at the party of *this* century, namely your 30th bash. it is very unfair of you not to be born during my school summer holidays as I am sure I could have found some excuse to fly over, there is still the invite to Ottawa from my mystery C.F. fan, you know!! Anyway, life seems to be fine with you apart from your despair at ever finding true love again. Wombat? I hear you say...

From: Peverel@aol.com (Vikki Lee France) Hi - Vix here, Just got TommyWorld 16 and enjoyed hugely as usual. I know Steve has it in Texas too. Thoroughly enjoyed it, and looking forward to the next one! {: ~)

From: Steve.Brewster@bristol.ac.uk (Steve Brewster) "Thanks for "TommyWorld 16". Mark McCann's digression into Esperanto was interesting - I once tried to learn Esperanto, but got bored a few chapters into the textbook. I seem to recall that the most widely-spoken artificial language in the world is now Klingon. Makes you think... or possibly throw up. Someone once told me that there's a regular (monthly?) church service somewhere in Bristol conducted in Esperanto, but I've never quite believed this. Allegedly there are still a few Volapuk speakers left in Britain, all elderly and still locked in bitter controversy with the Esperantists.

The NI local elections made for interesting comparisons between STV and FPTP. I like the idea of proportional representation, and STV certainly sounds the best implementation of it; but although STV is very fair, and democratic and balanced, and so on, there's something appealing about the sheer drama and brutality of FPTP. STV might have saved us from the worst excesses of the Tories, but the early hours of May 2nd - from about midnight to 4am - saw a cathartic release of joy and anti-Tory spleen that I'll remember happily to the end of my days; and you don't get that under STV, where the results trickle out over a couple of days sometimes. It had all the vicious pleasure of a public execution; watching wrongdoers get their comeuppance (Martin Bell's victory over Neil Hamilton springs to mind in particular; Bell originally only stood in order to get Hamilton to resign as Conservative candidate, and Bell looked absolutely terrified after the result was announced, as though he'd only just realised that now he'd have to sit in Parliament. There's something endearing about political power going to someone who really, really doesn't want it.) First result from the RoI election are coming in now (3pm Saturday) - looks like a very close call.

From: murray.moore@encode.com (Murray Moore) "Video, 7pm Thursday 5 June (and Thursday 1 July). Um, Tommy, July 1 is a Tuesday..."

From: ian@soren.demon.co.uk (Ian Sorensen) "Hi Tom, Thanks for the continuing stream of TommyWorlds. They may not be the real world but they seem more fun than you deserve. I'd like to sow a little bit of fatherly caution in the fertile soil of you Catholic guilt: don't you think it's all going just a bit too well? Shouldn't you be suffering a bit more? And what about the future? When are you going to settle down and get married, have children, wreck "their" lives? Hee hee.

I'm winding down now - - only 3 weeks until the summer holidays. Then I have 6 whole weeks to get up to mischief. So far I have a trip to Leeds with Alison Freebairn to link up with Lilian and Christina to look forward to and another jaunt to Julia Daly's posh parent's house for a week long pool party. Got any spare lifeguards? Next summer I'll be over your way prior to the Baltimore WorldCon, so don't be too mad this summer, save it for your old - very old - pal to join in in 1998.

From: d.farr@interserv.com (Daniel Farr) Well I wasn't sure if I would make it with a reply, but seeing as you still haven't posted a new TW I guess I qualify as being slightly ontime. I guess you can't be too disappointed this time with The Foxes Den group this month. A 300% percent increase in attendance is nothing to sneeze at, though that still only means 9 people. On the other hand if this increase was to keep up at the present pace, we'd be looking at a very large convention centre by Xmas?

The talk about "Love and Bullets" only serves to remind me of my own mortality, I'm probably slightly closer to it that you - though these days one never really can be sure. Love is something that I've worked on long and hard, and maybe only in the past few years really came to know what it meant. It's a relationship - stupid. It's all the mundane things that you do in life, like the dishes, and laundry, and watching the tube together because there's no one you'd rather be doing it with. It's feeling settled. All that sex stuff is great - still is and it's even still exciting, but heh, there is more!

I have some friends who are suffering from the "Love and Bullet's" stuff and maybe someday I'll be back at that stage again as well, but I know what's real, and what's not. No I'm no teenager, no kid, and maybe I've resigned from the game for now, but if I ever have to get back in it again well-----we'll see? So when is the next Foxes Den? July 1 or 3? Either would probably be good for moi?

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Brown comments from your ed next week - lots of replies and a shit load that were DNQed - some real good stuff, thank you, even if I can't publicly acknowledge it. Gotta go, get a life and a Saturday off. Fuck. Again. Monday. Take Care. -))

This is being distributed to a whole bunch of friends on the net, if you received this and would NOT like to be on the mailing list please accept my apologies for this intrusion and let me know so that you will not be bothered by further ramblings. If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing drop me a line.