



The Twenty Ninth issue of a sortof letter substitute, kinda thing, maybe weekly, maybe not, from:

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Available only via the net at the moment. Supporting Maureen Kincaid Speller for TAFF and urging you to do likewise. Thanks to Mark McCann for computer. This issue dated, already, 19/1/98

A Family is not just for Christmas.

I was quite surprised to find that this year, the first since Toronto, not everyone in my circle of friends was as anxious to spend more time with their family at Christmas. Now I know that the old adage 'Friends you can choose, family your stuck with,' is as true for me as anyone else and back issues of TommyWorld and my other writing illustrates that I have as many problems with my family as anyone else. Regardless of the problems though they are my family, they are important to me and I do like spending time with them.

That isn't too say that my family is the be all and end all of the domestic bliss but is more akin to the seemingly prevalent image displayed on American TV of late. I can mention The Simpsons, Married With Children and any number of horrible Sitcoms (passim Roseanne, Home Improvement et al.) My family can out weird them at any time. I'm not going to go into all the details, (I wouldn't want to impinge on current legal appeals,) but I can say that my some of my family are reclining at Her Majesty's Pleasure. I'm the youngest member of a family of four and the oldest, Bridgeen ("What kind of name is that?" from any number of Canadian and American fans) is 38 years old.

That leaves a lot of space for me to be a complete asshole and get away with it. My siblings have all done the whole growing up bit already; I'm just trailing along. In a way I like my family so much because, the most outrageous thing I can do, that hasn't been done already is get a tattoo, and even then they just accepted that. My Dad though, whose brothers were all in the Merchant Navy and has a forces background himself, has still to say something about it. My mum is actually more concerned about my pierced ear (a thirtieth birthday present) than the tattoo. Strange woman, my mother. My siblings all think both are really cool, and they notch up some cool points of their own.

So going home is not a huge challenge. There are no big fights, nor are there those horrible scenes some families have. We've had them all before, of course, some really wild and notable ones, but ever since I've been about twenty or so there has been truce in the family. People have already grown up with each other, we know how everyone is

going to react to certain situations and events and there aren't too many new surprises left in us.

Moving to Canada wasn't even that big a deal when it came right down to it. There were tears and sad farewells but my mother and my aunt in Canada were a lot closer than I had realised. My father and uncle (it was my father's sister I stayed with in St Catherine's initially and who helped me out so much) had been together for quite a while and he was able to tell me a few stories. Strangely enough I wasn't able to reciprocate. My sister had been in Jersey for two years as a nanny and hell, these days Canada is only five hours away.

As a lot of people I know found out, I had a great time over Christmas and the New Year and look forward to going home once again. What about you?

Talking of which, here's you

Pamela Boal PJBoal@aol.com "Success at last and I can even get at it to read off line. Mind there are screeds and screeds of gobbledegook between each paragraph. Also looked in on your Web site, great fun. With my eyes I tend not to spend long looking at the screen but I will pop in occasionally. I will also reply properly to Tommy World when I have managed to read it all, mean time thanks for persisting. Of course I do prefer the lovely thud of paper on doormat. Looking forward to your next such. Warm regards, Pamela." ((Well Design For Life 3 is in gestation, although the original deadline for Corflu UK now seems a little impractical. A lot of people may not have got DFL 2 in the UK as there was a very brief distribution at Novacon last year, and I haven't been able to reproduce and mail out to the rest of the mail list. I hope to send out the rest of the issue with number three in due course. That should be a nice thud on the doormat...))

Joyce Worley Katz JoyWorley@aol.com "Hi, Got your e-zine, and like it. You have a nice, easy to read format, and are keeping each issue tidy and short enough to peruse in one sitting. Very neat. And, I'm afraid I agree with you about your opinion of conversations via the news groups. The multiple threadings are nothing at all like real conversation. But I suppose they are a good substitute, when nothing "real" is available. Best wishes to you from Las Vegas."

Victor Gonzalez, squib@galaxy-7.net "I think TW 28 is your best issue yet, with a thorough range of responses to your rasff article, well-navigated by your sure editorial hand. It's nice to see you reach out (or back?) into fandom once in a while. And fannish issues always draw comment. Good work, anyway. I am but a simple cave-fan. I do not understand this invisible, multi-threaded "Usenet." I do not grasp these "embedded quotes" or this "uneven propogation." I stare at the little white dots but my simple cave-fan mind is incapable of comprehending. (Uh, oh, starting to sound like a self-aware Bill

Bridget. See ya.)" ((Obviously that article was designed to provoke a response which I'm happy to say it did. Although I was suitably enlightened about some aspects of Usenet discussions I'm still of the same opinion as you, and a few others who replied. But, as Ulrika said last issue, some people get it and some people don't. Live and let live as I continually say to my arms supplier))

Garth Spencer golem@direct.ca "Dear Mr. Ferguson, Glad to hear from you, although we haven't met or corresponded before. Hope you're having a great New Year. I gathered from scattered mentions in the fanzines I receive that you sojourned briefly in Toronto, you're back in Ireland, and you'll be coming back to North America soon, probably settling in the Seattle area. You may find some resemblance's in Seattle (and for that matter Vancouver, if you come visit) to the fannish scene you found in Toronto. Apparently fandom has been around long enough in these places that there are now some diverse and divided fannish tribes, each with a tendency to exclusive interests, each somewhat unaware of the others." ((Canadians, eh? So polite Er, Garth, I've been to both Vancouver and Seattle, the latter fairly frequently last year. If you're interested in my trip reports check out the TommyWorld web site. Where I've just realised they are not on, but will be soon.))

"There is probably more fanzine activity in the Seattle area than in Vancouver; don't ask me why. Or maybe I'm defining "fanzine" as genzines and perzines, to the prejudice of Star Trek zines. Maybe I'm being chauvinistic or something." ((Not at all my good man. We take our fanzine definitions very seriously here in TommyWorld, and even more seriously at Götterdämmerung mansions. Welcome to the gang.))

Alison Scott plokta@fuggles.demon.co.uk "Thanks for TommyWorld, though I don't have any comments this week, except to say that I'm a Word '97 user, and even I'm much, much happier with an RTF file. I don't like getting really vast e-mails unless they're to a useful end (like photos of the sender in leather gear that we can put in Plokta...)" ((I'm tempted to send you some very interesting JPEG's, not of me of course (the world is not yet ready for those visions,) but of fellow Belfast fan On second thoughts, methinks Cowardice is the better part of valour. I'm currently getting some photos ready for my web site and ma horrified at the size of some of the tiffs one photo actually came out at 8 Meg! Time to rescale, bring the colours down and see if we can get under 100k. Ah, the trials of web publishing))

Richard Brandt rsbrandt@cris.com "Thanks once more. I can relate to Ian's remarks about Word97. Wouldn't dream of having Word on my home PC (we have it at the office and that's bad enough), but I used my Lotus WordPro to open a Word document someone sent me for my website. There were all of their changes and corrections laid out for my naked eye to see; gosh, the auctorial mind at work. Sort of like watching UNKNOWN CHAPLIN." ((Yeah, I was told about this and really scared the shit out of me. Imagine all those first drafts and things you were going to say, but then woke up to the smell of roasting Colombian beans, and didn't say, all being available to the naked eye.

Arrgh, doesn't bear thinking about. Although Word '97 does all sorts of wonderful formatting and layout options it is just way too cumbersome to be useful in getting TW out to the masses. Most people seem a lot happier with the RTF format, so I'll leave it at that. All other suggestions are still welcome.

And finally, after the advertising spiel last week it now turns out I won't be able to make it to Corflu UK though I still urge you all to get there and, while I'm at it, vote in the Faan awards as well (you can do so here.) My previous plan of not going to Eastercon has now got some revision as well; I might actually make it this year. The reason for all this malarkey employment. Yep, some stupid sod has gone and given me a job more of which next week. See you then.))

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.