



The Thirty Fifth 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. Thanks to Mark McCann for computer usage and computer advice. Supporting Maureen Kincaid Speller for TAFF and Toronto in '03 for the 2003 WorldCon. This issue dated, already, 7/3/98

Welcome to Seattle.

I've been to Seattle three times last year for a total of nearly four weeks. I still think of myself as a stranger there but that feeling is slowly but surely being erased. I'm making the mistake of Pine and Pike just like a local. Demanding my coffee now, not when the barista gets around to it. And have taken to the local beers, breweries and pubs like an Irishman to, well you get the picture. But there are still things that continue to amaze me.

Seattle for me is not the coffee. Not the space needle or the monorail. Not even grunge, bad dress sense, Boeing or Microsoft. Seattle to me is a host of smaller things. Those little gadgets on the front of buses, you know the ones I mean, the things to hook your bike on. It is the epitome of the city that continues to innovate in the area of re-cycling that the two most polluting reasons are addressed: the exhaust fumes and the personal action of individuals. On one hand the use of cycles is widely encouraged and, when that is no longer practical or safe, within the city limits the buses have these gizmos to transport your bike; called 'bike racks,' obviously. Not only that but the buses are free within that zone.

On the sidewalk down Broadway is a range of public art. From the brass inlaid shells down the left-hand side, to the various different footprints, demonstrating dance steps to a statute of Jimi Hendrix (famously recognised by a stone in the zoo.) This is art for arts sake, public demonstration and something that you normally only relate to European cities and public purse tax money being spent on artwork Angel of the North, indeed.

Thankfully though, there is more to it than that. The scenery is amazing. One of the problems with Toronto was that it is uniformly flat. Apart from the lake there is no distinguishing natural features around the city. Seattle however has Mount Rainer, a huge fuck-off mountain slap back in viewing distance. It has the Cascades and Rockies to one side and the islands in Puget Sound to the other. In between is Seattle and its

numerous hills to break up the monotony although this does entail the huge re-transmitter pylons on most hills. There is just so much happening geographically that you feel enclosed safe and protected from the worst elements that Mother Nature can throw at you.

The people of Seattle are also uniformly friendly. I have yet to meet someone in the service industries that were not genuinely pleased to see me. From the two guys that Lesley and I riffed with in the Odeon Cineplex about the computer virus that, right before our eyes, sent a Pacman across their display board (Eating up Alien resurrection as we watched!) to the woman in the Red Apple at 11.40 pm:

"It looks like munchies time here. I wouldn't smoke as much, if I were you" said with a huge grin.

The bus drivers, a species in Belfast uniformly reviled and shot at, were pleasant to an extent that was, at 11.30 am, obnoxious; but welcome nonetheless. Todd, at the Big Time brewpub and Gregg at Flowers bar (both on University Way in the U district) take the biscuit though no where is good service more important to an Irishman than in a bar. I can heartily recommend both.

And if the way to an Irishman's politics is through his beer, his heart is roped in on the hook of his food. Seattle's location with regard to the Pacific Rim results in the splendours of many Asian culinary experiences. Drawing the line at Sushi I have, nevertheless, had some wonderful Teriyaki, amazing and interesting Ethiopian cuisine, killer burritos from Taco Del Mar and some of the best Pakistani food I've ever tasted. On the down side I still haven't tried Dick's burgers, but they there is always next time.

And the coffee well there are some clichés about Seattle that are nonetheless true and this one is still as accurate as ever. The more I get settled into the daily life of Belfast the more I realise that I will not be here for the duration, there is just so much good stuff out there. Seattle epitomises what I now want from my life: not money, a house, or even a job. I want a quality of life that can be described as politeness, good coffee or simply not being shot at. Won't be long now.

News and views.

Further to last week's issue I received this communiqué from Kim Huett (rub@macquarie.matra.com.au, his website being www.mindspring.com/~huntzinger/rub/;) explaining some erroneous interpretations I put on his recent fanzine:

"G'day Tommy, I'm afraid the report on my activities is a little less than totally accurate. What I'm attempting is a two-part project. The first half involves assembling as complete a collection of Lucy Huntzinger's fannish writings as possible onto one file. This

is a special gift to Lucy, as she no longer has access to quite a bit of what she has written over the years. As such it will be produced in a limited edition of one disc and one hard copy volume. After I have done that and sent it to Lucy we will go through the contents and pick out a selection of the better pieces. These will be published as a collection which will go free to everybody on my mailing list. Anybody else interested will also be able to have a copy by sending me a yet to be determined amount for postage, probably two pound notes/dollar bills. None of this material will be posted to the web unless Lucy decides to put selected items onto her own site, which by the way I think is miles better Nigel's.

Anyway, while I correcting you I must point out that Andy isn't putting any real 'new spin' and the FAAN Awards. The first version of the FAANs included a category for letterhack and during the early Sixties a best new fan award was made for a while though I don't know any details about this beyond seeing several people, such as Bob Leman, being named as such. All in all you have done very well as an agent of chaos with this issue Tommy. I think I might have to take the piss out of you until you dry up and blow away for this sometime he says grinning darkly, Kim"

Hey, I try though I'm always happy to print corrections when I bugger things up. I hope my previous error hasn't caused any problems or embarrassment. Now back to the issue of books that define a generation. I've already had some feedback, which I used in previous issues of TommyWorld, but here is the man who started it all once again with a few more ideas, and suggested chronology. I really do think this idea has some merit and would be interested in hearing your views on it. But first, Jim:

"Tommy Here are the few notes I made on books: Books Regarding this book exercise: What I had in mind was NOT a book that defines a generation (one book every 20-25 years - there's the TV generation for you!!!) but rather the book that you just had to read to be capable of sentient conversation with your peer group. Quite possibly, the entire perception that a book was 'going around' was limited to an age bracket on the order of 18-25, i.e., eventually you didn't have a literate peer group or you were more likely to be reading Green Eggs and Ham to your children. These changed every few years and they may have been regionally determined as well. Memory serves me poorly but beginning about 1960, a very rough biblio-stratigraphy (for an ex-Californian) would go something like this:

1968 Stranger in a Strange Land (there was a time when anyone could say 'grok' and people knew what it meant; try it today.)

1967 Siddharta/Steppenwolf (only in the US; I have never met a German who didn't fall apart laughing at the thought of Hesse as a "in" author.)

1965 Lord of the Rings.

1962 Lord of the Flies.

If you 'grok' what I am up to, then surely this chronology can be extended both earlier and later."

And now, you.

Luke McGuff luko@oo.net ((Previously on TommyWorld)) ">Joyce Worley JoyWorley@aol.com 'Dear Tommy, Your description of >bombed-out Belfast was interesting, if sad. Feeling out of your element isn't >limited to just places where you might get your head thumped; even in non->threatening situations, it's uncomfortable to feel an outsider. You can feel as >vulnerable in the wrong church as in the wrong neighborhood.'

I found this last sentence ironically amusing: churches, to most Americans, would be a place of sanctuary (literally, eh). But in Northern Ireland, that's part of the problem, isn't it? The wrong church could be really dangerous -- maybe more dangerous than the wrong neighborhood. (Although probably not as dangerous as the wrong pub.) Not as if I know what you're talking from firsthand experience. . .

This reminds me of a story: The parents of a friend of ours were visiting him last summer, and they insisted he take them to church. So, he found the closest church of their denomination. It was a "reconciliation" church, which meant the congregation was gay and lesbian. And since it was Gay Pride day in Seattle, everyone was talking about going to the Parade and festival. Hah! This made our friend's sexually conservative parents *exTREEmly* uncomfortable. The wrong church they could have just dismissed as heathens or papists. But the right denomination, with a congregation they considered perverts -- glurp."

Randy Byers rbyers@u.washington.edu "Hey, Tommy. Congrats on the new job! With the experience you gain as a Database Co-ordinator, you can have my job when you move to Seattle. I'll retire to Cuba, smoke a few cigars, putter in the cane fields, and die on the barricades when Miami invades. All I ask is that you dedicate one issue of TommyWorld to my heroic life (and death) and email a copy to my poor mom and dad. Make sure it doesn't have any technical fuck-ups, because they aren't able to deal with much complexity when it comes to computers. (Older generation, raised to be farmers, etc., etc.) Oh, and you'll need to feed the cat now and again, too. And maybe you could finish writing the pornographic novel I started a couple of years ago? There's also the small matter of the debt on my Visa card, but I'll try to get that paid down to a reasonable amount. A few touch-me-nots on the grave would be nice. So much, so much! But not much of substance, obviously. Yours, Randy." ((And remember to turn the lights out, just before you leave. And don't leave the gas on, you know how much that pisses people off. Don't forget what happened the last time))

Pamela Boal PJBoal@aol.com "Dear Tommy, Your nice straight forward e-mail came through no problem, I'm happy to say as it has a deal of interesting content. Just as well it arrived before I installed the update disc that AOL sent me. The latest update caused me all sorts of problems, which are now sorted. I'm thinking of applying to software companies as resident dumbo, to point out to these bastions of IT how singularly they fail to communicate. My main problem was, that with my old programme if I wanted to run a flash session I was told to turn of my Com Central at that point. With my update it simply does not play if I don't turn off ComCentral before opening the programme, it just puts up an utter gibberish fault message. I wouldn't mind but when installing the update one has the opportunity (which I took) to print out a Reference Guide. Of course that guide makes no mention of the fact that you can't run the programme without turning of Com Central. The Guide tells you how to change your password (the fault message mentions it so I wondered if my password had some how failed to get transferred) a very simple procedure but it fails to mention that you have to change the password in two places.

I hadn't heard any mention of James White for some time, it is good to know that he is at least still well enough to be a Guest of Honour. Seems like a good Con building up there. A Comics Workshop seems an unusual programme item to me (may be it's me just out of touch) it particularly caught my eye as our daughter is selling her rare comics collection. If any one is interested in such please do get in touch with me. I had hoped to take up more points raised in this ish but all that mucking about with my e-mail programme has robbed me of the time for more fun things." ((Yeah, yeah, yeah computers, eh? Lost without 'em, lost with 'em. James has been doing exceptionally well of late and every once and a while drops in on the Belfast crew for a pint.))

((Talking of which the Belfast crew will be very much in evidence at Corflu next week with lots of fanzines to give out, bookmarks and flyers for all the happy stuff that goes on here. There will also be a special TommyWorld available a one off printed version so remember to annoy Eugene in the bar and grab a copy I hope everything goes well, an don't believe everything that Mark McCann says))

IAHF: Linda Krawecke (now at: lkrawecke@tigert.demon.co.uk). Victor Gonzalez (with the interesting sig file, "My attitude in writing it was that an honest man erected the ignoring of 'tact' into a point of honour." --William Empson.) Lucy Huntzinger (who writes: "Maybe now that I'm quitting my horrible job I'll have more time for the important things in life.") Geri Sullivan (who although In Country for a few days I won't be getting to meet. Boo hoo.) Luke McGuff. Jim Trash, Chad Childers and John D. Berry more of which next week.

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.