



The Thirty Sixth 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, 15/3/98

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The Fanzine Review column.

Christina Lake and I have had a lot in common over the last year: fed up with work we both up sticks and left for a year (as it turned out in my case,) travelled abroad, met new people and did new things. Unfortunately, for me, Christina is a bit better at reliving her experiences and sharing them with others.

Never Quite Arriving Six understandably focuses a lot on her travels, but also takes time out to include reflections on TAFF and two articles from the two candidates that she is nominating for the 1998 races, Victor Gonzalez (who subsequently lost to Ulrika O'Brien) and Maureen Kincaid Speller (the deadline for voting for Maureen is April 25th.) This is quite a lot, with editorial and letter column, to fit into 32 pages. Thankfully the excitement of publishing again has meant she resists the temptation to spread the articles around or delay publication.

NQA 6 is an impressive fanzine; there is some truly excellent writing involved. I think that Christina's travel writing captures a sense of place and time that professional travel writers are able to do. Her tales of trekking in Thailand detail the problems of the task, the sense of place that is Thailand ("The next hurdle was to find a spot where I could go to the toilet without being disturbed by the pigs... Village life is not for me, I decided, after I failed to outsmart the pigs." Wonderful.) The evidence of good travel journalism is the essence of a location: the daily hassles of life, getting around and the people. Christina catches this well.

This the best of her own writing, the articles on the Australian fan scene, and the report of a drunken homecoming party on the day before SHE died were entertaining, but weak in comparison. The outstanding pieces in the zine are Maureen and Victor's contribution.

In the introduction to Maureen's piece, Christina states: "Back in the 80s, Maureen was even credited with a school of writing - pastoralism. Descriptive writing, noted more for atmosphere than content." At first reading I took this to be back handed complement,

but subsequent reading of Maureen's article (and the excellent Snufkin's Bum, Maureen's own fanzine) had led to a grudging admiration of the reference. This is exactly the strength of Maureen's piece in NQA.

Ostensibly dealing with her reasons for standing for TAFF in the first place, to see the fabled America of her childhood, it quickly develops into introspection on a time of reading, personal expectations and the realisation of these dreams and ideas. The Idealisation of America from 1950s musicals is a concept that, after the rest of the article fades will haunt me with a smile and a chuckle. Atmosphere, not content. Good one.

Victor's piece on the other hand is a tour de force. I had always thought of Victor as someone striving to achieve what others achieves by rote. There always appeared something forced in his metaphors, and the limits of Apak's size made the editing of some of pieces appear cumbersome. His recent writing, in his own fanzine Squib, and in articles like this and his piece in Widening Gyre, show his talents more clearly.

These articles have been deeply personal in nature - dwelling on personal accidents, his life since coming off drugs and, as here, with the tragic the death of his mother. The structure of the article deals with comparisons with the death of Princess Diana, the effect he perceives this on having with her sons and the comparison with how he felt when his mother died, in a car crash as well. On a simple level, this is absolute nonsense; but the article never works on that level. It is about his father's ability to protect the woman he loved, even after divorce; the extension being Victor's own ability to do the same, his mother, his lover, father important woman in his life. There is a whole Freudian analysis in this one article, but if you let that drift with you, rather than against you, this is powerful, thought writing. It should make for an impressive icebreaker at Corflu UK.

It hardly needs saying but the sprinkling of D. West cartoons throughout the zine add deft touch of realism in what is mainly an fanzine dealing with the other worldly and unreal. The best of the three is on page 19, and takes the piss (ever so lightly..) out of the Plokta Cabal. The punch line being: "This is almost too much. Are you sure fandom is ready?" I'm not too sure, but fandom has been waiting too long for a fanzine of the quality of Never Quite Arriving 6. I hope we don't have to wait too long for another.

## News & Views

This issue will be going out on the Sunday of Corflu UK so either this prediction will be astoundingly accurate or a complaint. The best fanzine I received in the last twelve months is Trapdoor from Bob Lichtman (although Idea 11, from Geri Sullivan was a close second, with Bob bringing up the rear.) I still think the best fan writer of the last year is Mark McCann (despite strong competition from Geri Sullivan and Christina Lake.) Best New fan writer is Lesley Reece, (despite strong pressure from Alison Freebairn and

Mark Plummer.) And yes, that is really what I think Best Artist was actually quite straight forward: 1) D. West 2) Dave Mooring 3) Sue Mason and Best Letter Hack was awfully idiosyncratic: 1) Steve Brewster 2) D.M. Sherwood 3) Lloyd Penney.

Hopefully I will have the real results here. ((Hey, what can I say? Close, nut no cigar))

And now, you.

Pam Boal Dear Tommy, Thanks for 35, came through fine. I enjoyed your description of Seattle it comes across as a good place to be. I'm looking forward to reports on Corflu I'm really fed up at having to miss it. Oh well our new windows are really rather good.

I do take your point about the books that were the favoured reading matter for each generation or rather were considered to be the ones that one should have read. Of course books were scarce during the war and in my social set up reading was considered a waste of time, especially for girls. I was out of step from an early age, those who did read were rather in to Enid Blyton. I read Agatha Christie (my Mum's libraries) and the classics until I discovered Science Fiction. The in books are more a matter for the educated classes, those of us amongst the great unwashed might be considered peculiar for reading but at least we were not dictated to by fashions or pretentious would be intellectual leaders. Bye for now, Pamela.

Tommy Where are you? It seems absurd to have been corresponding while you were at the other side of the world but not to meet when you are perhaps a few streets away! Come down to my bogland retreat any weekend. I am going down this coming Thursday until Monday - any chance of joining me? I deduce from the messages that you now have a job, so perhaps it will have to be a more disciplined Friday to Sunday event. Anyway, get in touch.

Evelyn Murray Dear Tommy, Good to know you are well and in good health. I am still recovering from a broken foot I managed to obtain at Novacon last year. Yes, it is a foot this time, no, it is not related to my broken knee two years ago. My motto is fast becoming "it's Christmas, so Evelyn must have a limb in plaster!" Taking bets on which arm it will be next year. Sorry to hear you cannot make it to Corflu this weekend, I'll miss you, especially as it is so near St Patrick's day (also my birthday) so we would have had loads of reasons to stay in the bar all night and drink. Oops I forgot, REAL FANS do not need a reason. I.S. commented to me several weeks ago that you were just the kind of fan Corflu needed because of your transatlantic reputation, at least I think that was the reputation he was talking about. Looking forward you other halves! hey, maths was never my strong point. Your dyslexic friend (my excuse for the typos),

Randy Byers Tommy, The way to a Seattleite's heart is through praise of the city, however: 1. The ride-free zone for buses is not simply "within the city limits." I can't

remember how far the ride-free zone extends, but I think of it as "the downtown area." Anywhere else -- for example, on Capitol Hill or in the U District -- you have to pay.

2. It's true that the Rockies are off to the east of Seattle, but if you were able to see them while you were here, Todd was serving you better beer than he serves me. Did I miss some kind of Carrot Ale special? (Or maybe a Bronco Bitter. "The fifth pint's a charm: you'll be a mile high!") (Yes, that's an American football joke.) Anyway, thanks for the advert. I'm sure we can expect a wave of Irish immigrants in the next ten years. (How do the Irish get along with Scandinavians?) Randy

Vicki Rosenzweig Tommy Ah, yes, Seattle. All that wonderful salmon, and in the summer, blackberries for the picking as you walk down the street in residential neighborhoods or wander through the Arboretum. But while Rainier is gorgeous, I wouldn't exactly call it comforting: that's a natural disaster waiting to happen. (Like living near the San Andreas Fault: it probably won't kill you, but it's not reassuring.) The last time that mountain erupted, it sent lava through what is now downtown Tacoma. Which isn't to say that I wouldn't move to Seattle, if jobs and such worked out that way. Vicki

Joyce Katz Tommy I enjoyed the description of Seattle. I've never been there, and (although I'd dread the rain, and am forbidden the coffee) I know I'd enjoy its distinct personality. I am hoping that Seattle fandom will treat us to a Northwestern Corflu some year soon. (Andy?) Luke McGuff remarked, << 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. . . >>

In fact, that choice of words was deliberate, if ironic. Historically, it's been terribly dangerous to be in "the wrong church" (meaning the wrong philosophy), often resulting in dire consequence, no place more certainly than in Ireland. But the bombs in Belfast are perhaps a more immediate problem than the divergent philosophies if you are walking among them. Best wishes to everyone at Corflu England; Arnie and I wish we were there.

Murray Moore Dear Tommy, Yes, indeed, being able to offer experience as a database administrator should be useful in an application to immigrate to the U.S. Here in Canada there is a push to change immigration policy so that people with badly needed computer-related skills can immigrate to Canada within days rather than months. All in all, it's a real shame that you, Tommy, will never be able to return to Toronto. The reason? The Cult of Tommy. You have no idea of how your deification is getting out of control. I attended the First Thursdays of last November, January, February, and March.

Every meeting, at some point, Peter Halasz rises and proposes a Toast to Tommy. And we do. You typed it yourself, in a recent TommyWorld: "Canadians -- so polite, eh?"

But as the ranks of First Thursday --your creation, your monster-- swell, and the memories of fen who met you fade, you become ever more mystical and fantastic. By the time Torcon 3 rolls around, First Thursday might be drawing more fans than the Toronto Raptors (not a large accomplishment, at present). To illustrate how this snowball is mushrooming, a Third Wednesday group has been created, meeting in Orwell's Pub, adjacent to the second-most- westerly TTC station.

Meanwhile you are an omnipresent electronic presence, issuing your electronic ejaculations faster than reg'lar folks can keep up. That's what Jo McBride-Wilson commented during the March First Thursday. No, Jo didn't speak exactly as in the preceding sentence, but don't change the subject. You get my point? If you ever show up in Toronto, the fen overburdened with expectation would be crushed, or enraged, that Tommy Whom We Toast is an ordinary bloke, only with a fresher accent than Hope Leibowitz. And you are a bad influence. Look at me. Earlier today, in a letter to Graeme Cameron, I typed, "I support written fanac over electronic fanac. The fan who takes the time to collate, staple, envelope stuff, address, and mail a zine to me, and pay the associated costs, gets my attention first." Toronto. Closed to you forever. Pity, but there it is. You have your memories, though. .\ Murray

Peter Halasz Hi Tommy, It's really good to hear from you. Most especially good to have heard about the permanent employment, money is useful. Weather here is inordinately temperate, spring-like even. It's spooky but we all love it. As far as most Canadians are concerned I think we'd love to have El Nino come \*every\* year. The 1st Thursday went well with an attendance of 25 (I think). Pretty good eh? Hard to believe but nobody, I mean absolutely no one had the gumption to try for free drinks for the rest of the night. Perhaps the attendance had something to do with it, if tried & failed it would've meant a round for the house. And we all know how cheap, err, impoverished fans are. We actually had a very good 1st Thursday last night, attendance was more restrained but that just allowed a larger group to interact rather than everyone splitting into little sub-groups.

Toronto has a mother of a fan feud going these days. I'm sorry I don't have the time to get into details, I'm leaving for Florida next week and I'm frantically trying to wrap up all kinds of loose ends before I go. The short version is that Allan Weiss has filed multi-million dollar lawsuits against Realms (the Toronto give-away) and Robert J. Sawyer. Counter-suits are imminent. Yeah, unfortunately you did read it right the first time. I'm going to sign off and get back to work; hopefully by a couple of weeks after I return (mid-April) I'll be able to surface long enough to write. all best, Peter

And Finally

There's this room, and in it are Jim Morrison and Ray Manzarek. They both have their trousers pulled right down to their ankles and Gillian Taylforth (Eastenders) is crawling around on all fours with her mouth open. Next to Jim and Ray are the Beatles, including Yoko Ono, and they've all got their trousers down to their ankles and Gillian Taylforth is crawling round on all fours with her mouth open. Next to the Beatles are the Rolling Stones, and the whole band have got their trousers round their ankles and Gillian Taylforth is crawling round on all fours with her mouth open. Suddenly, one of the walls flies apart as a Mini comes crashing through it. The mini stops, the door opens and out steps Michael Caine who shouts...

"YOU WERE ONLY S'POSED TO BLOW THE BLOODY DOORS OFF!!"

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.