



THE BALOOBIUS

As in *Issue Nein* (*I Zee Nut'ing!*)

September. Yow. The pages on the calendar lie on the floor in an untidy heap, and I'm too lazy to pick them up! The annual Canadian National Exhibition was held at the end of the Fall, and before I could make up my mind whether I would chance Covid, and attend or not, the "Ex" was over! I didn't care much for wearing a mask in crowded spaces anyway ... maybe next year. **245 Dunn Ave. Apt. 2111, Toronto Ontario, M6K 1S6, Canada – (416) 531-8974, Taral@bell.net.** We have a small amount of material this issue, so I'm moving up my unstated schedule by an unheard-of two months. There are no guarantees for the final "Tense" issue soon. **KB&A #332**

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NO ONE EXPECTS THE BRITISH SUCCESSION

I got up today to discover that the Queen was dead, God Save the King and all that... My first couple of years were under George VI, but of course, I remember nothing of that. All my life, the Queen has sat on the throne, and now – like that – history has moved on.

I feel nothing about the Queen, really – a lady who brought dignity and a sense of determination to the crown. I had a desire to see her live to 100, but 96 isn't shabby – longest reign in British history, even all the way back to the Anglo Saxons and dark ages. Nor was her reign one free of debacle and tumult. There were wars on her shift, the enormous black eye that Diana's death forced on the Royal family, the "Annus Horibilis" in which Windsor Castle was badly damaged in a fire, the assassination of the Queen's uncle, Louis Mountbatten, by Irish terrorists, and recently the ignominious retreat from the European Union by the British Government. It's a wonder all the crockery at Buckingham Palace wasn't chipped by biting.

But there were lighter moments too.

My favorite is the Queen's meeting with James Bond at the Palace before kicking off the 2012 London Summer Olympics. It was done with perfection, and every moment as Daniel Craig escorted the Queen through the halls of Buckingham Palace to the waiting helicopter, and on to the Games, was absolutely believable.

It was on a much less serious note that the Queen had tea with Paddington Bear at the palace. The occasion was Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, the 70th anniversary of her accession to the throne earlier this year, and what could have been more appropriate than a marmalade sandwich shared from the Queen's purse?



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There was a lot of talk about the monarchy ending with Elizabeth, and indeed many British didn't like Charles. But sensible heads knew that there would never be enough interest in

abolishing the monarchy to overcome the historic inertia of the institution. On the whole, Charles will likely fill the throne well. But he is already 73, the oldest British monarch to ascend to the throne. And even if he is as long-lived as his mother, he is probably not going to be around for another 20 years. In fact, as far as the male heirs of the Windsor line have shown, they don't have extraordinarily long lives. The "Queen Mother," who was Elizabeth's mother, actually didn't die until she was mid-101!

So after Charles III (the first lost his head in the 1640s during the English Civil War, the second was known as the "Merry Monarch" for his libertine lifestyle), there will be the new Prince of Wales, William V. William may not be a name with a lucky number. William III, "King Billy," hammered the Catholic Irish and ended the Catholic Stuart line after yet another English Civil War. William IV was, in retrospect, a nobody who sat on the throne for about six years. At the very least, I think we can expect to see a much more modern, streamlined British monarchy – similar to Europe – in our William's time ... if not before.

I think I may have to buy the Gold Pressed Latinum commemorative coin when one is released by the Canadian and British mints.

Hypothetically, we will have all new bills and coins marking the change from the old Queen to the next King. But while it is fairly likely that we will see the likeness of Charles III on our small change, one- and two-dollar coins, it isn't as clear whether Charles will ever be reproduced on the face of the twenty-dollar bill. Elizabeth graces our polymer plastic currently, and it seems likely that Charles will continue tradition. But our currency has become remarkably sensitive to numerous political demands. Not long ago, our first Prime Minister and most prominent author of the acts that brought Canada into being, was successfully disgraced by native rights activists, and his likeness has been removed from our \$10 bill. Yet his memory was celebrated on the \$2 coin as recently as 2015. By 2018, however, his name was *merde*, his statues toppled and schools all around the country renamed. Whatever good McDonald accomplished for Canada doesn't matter compared to any harm anyone cares to charge him with. I'm sure that given a choice, they would prefer Canada had never happened.

Will the new King Charles fare well in the coming years? Who knows? This hypothetical \$25 bill was found online a few years ago may somewhat resemble reality soon. Then again, we may be as likely to find our new money celebrating a "two-spirited" Inuit kayak fisherman pissing on the bones of the Franklin Expedition. I wouldn't want to wager money on it.



Nobody Excepts the BBC

Hearsay by Sir W. Jas. Wentz, Esq.

Scene: A stuffy-looking Brit and his wife in a small, cramped parlor:

Brit: “Well, old girl, I expect we may see a royal succession soon....”

(Dramatic chord, door slams open and three people in ornate uniforms, a Chamberlain, a Guardsman and Peer of the Realm, rush in:

Chamberlain: “Nobody expects the British Succession!”

Brit: “Eh, wot?”

Chamberlain: “The British Succession has one primary attribute, Inevitability! ... And Pageantry.. ... no, TWO primary attributes, Inevitability and Pageantry! And Established Custom... Yes, THREE primary attributes, Inevitability, Pageantry and also Established Custom... And also... Oh, bugger, erm, just a moment...”

(The three rush out, slamming the door behind them)...

Wife: “What are those three barmy clots on about? You’d think we never expected a succession...”

(Dramatic chord, the door slams open again and the three rush in):

Guardsman: “Nobody expects the British Succession! The British Throne, established by God, has passed down in unbroken succession...”

Brit: “Unbroken? Are you daft? The British throne has been usurped so many times you’d need a bloody scorecard to keep track of it!”

Guardsman: “Ah, um... well, Sah, they were all loyal Englishmen, at any rate, Sah...”

Wife: “English? Fiddlesticks! Every time some feeble royal line peters out, we have to ring in a Dutchman, a Frog or at best a Scottish gowk, just to hold down the throne...”

Guardsman: “Um... a bit of conference, lads...”

(The three rush out, slamming the door).

Brit: “Whoof! Well, that’s got rid of *them*, I expect....”

(Chord, door slams open and the three rush in)

Peer of the Realm: “Nobody expects the British Succession! The noble names of past sovereigns are gloriously carried on by their heirs, Charles...”

Brit: “Glorious? The first Charles was a pompous little twit who touched off a

revolution and got himself beheaded, and the second was a boozier who turned the castle into a brothel!”

Peer: “Ah... well, admittedly there are a few scamps in any family, but after Charles, William will carry on the name of the noble fruit of ...

Brit: “Bollocks! The first William was a Frenchified bastard who killed off our real English king, and the next was such a goon he got offed by one of his own nobles!”

Chamberlain: "Erm... If I may intrude, at least the Succession will be a great spectacle..."

Brit: "If we can't find anything better on the telly! Git orf, the lot of you!"
And so on...

(The three rush out, slamming the door ... And so on...)

– *Walt Wentz*

Wee Beastie

For some time, now, I've been finding little "presents" around my apartment that tell me that a mouse has taken up residence. I've seen it a number of times, and more brazenly each time. Two weeks ago, I saw it saunter out into the living room, as confident as though it were the owner. It disappeared, as before, behind a cabinet that I'm unable to move without a tremendous amount of trouble. So, I've ignored it, figuring that my place is clean, I leave no food around, and my groceries are all in jars or cans, or refrigerated. Eventually, the mouse would stop coming around here without finding food. Making a living is tough enough for a mouse, without wasting effort. So far, it seemed to be working. I hadn't seen the pest for those last two weeks. But I spoke too soon.

Yesterday, I used the washroom and noticed movement in the bath tub. I looked and found it was my mouse! I don't know how it climbed up the tub in the first place, but plainly it was unable to climb out. The presents suggested that it had been hiding in my tub for a couple of days, in fact. Once I was sure the thing couldn't escape, I went to the kitchen for a large, clear plastic jar that had previously held cashews. I clapped the jar over the mouse and scooped it in with the lid. That easily done, I looked the wee beast in the eye and wondered what to do with it next.

They have a poor chance of survival if removed from its native surroundings – which happened to be my apartment. But obviously, I didn't want it to have the free run of my place, regardless of its chances. So I took it out in the hall and let it go... let it be some other apartment dweller's problem. The last I saw of wee mousie, it was running hell-bent-for-leather down the hall and would likely run smack into the fire door at the end, if it didn't stop. Like I said ... no longer my problem. It was either, that or down the toilet, and – while it may all be the same in the end – I didn't have the heart for aggravated mousicide.

Feelin' Blue

Of little note, another mouse turned up. It was a little smaller, so I know it wasn't the same one. It was less cautious, as well, and wandered around in full sight while I watched from my computer station. Finally, I threw something moderately soft at the creature, to keep it on its toes. Or so I thought. Next day, I saw it again. When I woke, I noticed something unfamiliar on the floor, and went over to pick it up. It was the mouse. It didn't panic or bite ... just lay cupped in my hand, obviously in distress. So I threw it out in the hall. Yeah, not the most charitable thing, but it had obviously been poisoned by some other resident, and I didn't have any good idea of what to do with it. I don't think nursing it back to life was in my own best interest, if even if it wasn't far too late ... as I suspect it was. So I chose simply not to interfere. Later that evening, it was gone, disposed of by the cleaning staff. When you come down to it, that may be all any of us can expect at the end.

I've not been feeling too good, myself. Once a month, I have an appointment with Dr. Vo, who tests my blood coagulation factor. Too much Warfarin, and I could have a fatal stroke. Too little of the drug and I could have a fatal heart attack instead. So I have to be checked every month to see that I'm in my "sweet spot." The first inkling that something was not to my liking was that Dr. Vo wasn't available that month. Her assistant made the test for her, and had difficulty administering it, drawing blood three times before the diagnostic succeeded. Then the assistant calmly announced that my results were off the scale. She ordered me to fill a new prescription for extra blue pills, and begin to take them immediately when I got home.

I did as I was told, forgot about it. It was not as though Dr. Vo had never tweaked my dose from one month to the next, by adding or skipping a pill. I was a little uneasy about such a large change, on this day, but I would be seeing Dr. Vo or her assistant again in a short while.

I think I began to feel something was not right only a few days later. I had skipped both blue pills, for the next two days, and then resumed taking both blue pills daily, as directed. The rest of the pills from the prescription were for future use. However, I noticed that I was falling into uncontrollable sleep again, as before during my incident with CHF (Chronic Heart Failure). My bad leg began to swell up again, turning into a red sausage, with telltale spots that would develop into wet lesions if nothing were done, so my first act was to put on a fresh pair of compression socks. They seemed to help almost immediately.

I was able to get in touch with Dr. Vo by phone and saw her again a few days later. My Warfarin levels were worse than ever ... but now in the other direction. She told me not to take either of the two small blue pills today, nor tomorrow, and that would get me back on track. I'll be seeing Dr. Vo in another week. Hopefully, this will stabilize my situation.

Certainly, my leg's swelling is going slowly to normal, and I seem to have stopped falling asleep without warning. So what happened? Was my problem due to a spontaneous cardiovascular event, that might have happened at any time? Or did the Pharmacologist assistant who tested me actually give me exactly the opposite dose that I needed, possibly putting me at serious risk? The answer ought to be buried in the read-out, but I guess I'll never know.

It may amuse you that Warfarin is prescribed for controlling coagulation in the blood, but it was originally developed not as a human medication, but as rat poison. The beasties nearly got revenge on me, after all.

PENNEY LANE - WHERE OLD ZINES GO WHEN THEY DIE

I can finally respond to The Baloobius 8! The last two months was full of editorial work, and family responsibilities, and minor illnesses, and vending opportunities at various shows. As a result, my fanzine activities have basically been ignored. Time to rectify that.

Death shall not release us, but it claims us at the damndest times. Too many of our numbers are leaving. Must be something to do with a lot of us now being in our 60s and 70s. Mike Glicksohn is still much missed around here, but with this pandemic, I kinda miss just about everyone.

[I've written a fair number of obituaries in recent years, sometimes when I was sure no-one else would. Even so, there are some I will not write for one reason or another. Only, only a week ago, for a poor wretch I only knew through his friends..]

We really don't order much online these days, for the temptation to get all the things we'd like to get is still there, and right now, we need the money more than we need the stuff. We must be thrifty, and dance on the edge of being cheap. With that in mind, haven't seen *American Gods* or *Turning Red*, and we are not likely to see them in the future. Besides, we'd heard so much about it, and seen so many clips, we might as well have seen them.

Over the last few years, I do understand why it is difficult to deal with some aspects of, and some people in, fandom. Bill Rotsler had it down many years ago in one of his iconic cartoons... "Fandom, so neat, so nifty...too bad it's full of fans."

The pandemic, and the fact it is still with us, no matter who says it's over...new

variations are cropping up all the time, and now that we've had four shots, we are looking towards having a fifth one, and if that's not on offer, it might become part of our regular flu shots. I have been hearing about various conventions in Canada and the US not having any control over vaccinations or masking at their events, and reading about hundreds of cases of COVID-19 arising as a result. Anime North was about five weeks ago, and it wasn't the convention, but the convention centre who insisted on full vaccination and masking. We've yet to hear about any cases arising. And, with the end of this weekend is the end of Fan eXpo downtown, no controls, no vacs, no masks, and I am waiting to hear about again hundreds of cases in the news.

[I would have liked to attend the Canadian National Exhibition this year, but I was of two minds about it. What decided it for me was the realization I'd spend hours in a sweaty, stifling mask and paying for the privilege! I ended up missing the Ex this year.]

A sharp decline in the number of letters of comment...more reason for me to get with it, and get caught up. At this point, with about 25 boxes of paper fanzines in storage, e-zines are actually better for me. Some ignore the e-zines, but many people send me the zines directly, and those who don't, I can find them on eFanzines. We are a society of instant gratification. I want it now, if not sooner. Everyone wants the finished product, but are willing only to consume it, without reacting to it. Mr. Glicksohn told me that the local was at the heart of a fanzines, and while I have had my doubt over the years, it's what kept me there.

*[My fear is that younger readers of fanzines don't have any personal connection to the hobby. They download what they want, read some parts of it, file it on the hard drive as a right. It didn't cost them anything, owe no-one anything, give no thought to where it came from. It might as well be a vid on YouTube. There certainly is no thought given to the fan who created it. At least that's what I fear. The true answer may be more simple. Older fans are getting tired. Older fans all want to publish **their** ish. But none want to loc ... unless its to obsess over awards and cons.]*

More and more, I see shows that are supported in their advertising with shorts, about 3-5 minutes, taking scenes and resetting them to tell a similar story. It's a fast commercial-like set of clips, and are often issued to stations carrying the main show. Some shows seem to be popular enough that it goes for multiple seasons, but you wonder sometimes if quality is being sacrificed for longevity, and the continues paycheque.

It sounds like the best thing to do is continue to create your own Fraggie Rock, for it will continue with the quality you want only in your memories. And, I'm sure there will be more in your fanzines. We will see you then.

[If there are more stories to write, I'll write them. I've long since accepted that I was born to be a pin-setter, not a director of iconic Hollywood mega-blockbusters.]

Endit