

Rasterman Blues #2

Another “lazy web extract” publication compiled by Lenny Bailes of 504 Bartlett Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 (email: lennyb@speakeasy.net) to demonstrate that he is a fanzine fan. This is a Bailesania publication.

“The mail flap still rattles...,”
Mr. Lichtman might say.
But not like it used to, back in the day.
I’m an aging Kinks Misfit and I read ess-eff,
‘Cause the ink tastes better than a PDF.
Yeah, that ink’s still tastier than a PDF.

I hate to tell you that my ish is late
for the trans-warp postman at the Corflu gate.
I’m cooking up a genzine, but it’s not in time;
when my promised writers won’t get off the dime.

Lord, my promised writers won’t get off the dime!

[Refrain]
So I’ll try this again -- hope it’s not a ruse.
I’ll be Abraham “Link-In” with the Rasterman Blues!

*We are members of a Secret Society, (hush!)
Working by the moon's uncertain disc;*

So wrote W.S. Gilbert in an obscure (non Sullivan-scored) operetta called [The Mountebanks](http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/other_gilbert/mountebanks/mountebanks_libretto.txt). (http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/other_gilbert/mountebanks/mountebanks_libretto.txt)

John Brunner told us back in *The Shock Wave Rider* that our world was going to change. And, sure enough, it has. For instance, if you were reading this page onscreen in a PDF, you could take a “hyper-break” and click on that link to the W.S. Gilbert libretto. Gilbert has some fairly witty dialog and song lyrics, and you could make a note to yourself to go back and visit the libretto again—to read it or print the whole thing out.

My assumption is that some of you, who I account to be the best writers in fanzine fandom, still won’t do that—with W.S. Gilbert librettos or anything else!. “The electronics aren’t good enough and convenient enough, yet.” Or you just don’t want to.

I know the feeling that nothing we have in the electronic world yet matches the escapist experience of traveling as a non-driver, with a good paperback novel or fanzine in your carrying bag.

But setting aside the lifelong pleasure of easily-portable paper; there are some interesting things we can do in fan writing, now, that we couldn’t do in the heyday of paper fanzines.

I'm not just talking about making side trips to handily-accessible classic works (that may already be sitting on our library shelves), but about the whole "hypertext" idea of punctuating essays with illustrative material that may deepen appreciation of what's being said.

I know (and you probably know) that people have been theorizing about "hypertext" since the 1980s. So there's no new conceptual revelation in my last paragraph. What's new about it, to me, is that the implementation technology is slowly getting better—to the point where it may actually support a pleasant aesthetic experience that's not just for computer wonks with blunted sensibilities. If you still spurn the notion of reading solid text onscreen (with accompanying links and illustrations), you may be missing out on an interesting form of reading experience that's becoming more and more common.

I'm a big fan of the fine, classic style of fanzine writing—that we now find primarily in the pages of *Trap Door* and *Banana Wings*. I surely wouldn't want to be without those fanzines. I grew up with the paradigms for fan publishing in *Warhoon*, *Void*, and *Lighthouse* (followed by *Boonfark*, *Telos*, *Izzard*, and *Blat!*). The editorial styles and content of those fanzines have always been my guide beacons for good journalism. My ambition with *Whistlestar* is to publish a paper fanzine that may eventually make a minor place for itself in this tradition.

But, you know, the online blogging thing is a slightly different beast. It can also be compelling, when done right. In an online essay, you've always got Marshall McLuhan a mouse click away—to back up claims of what's been said or what's been done.

My fantasy is that some of you may be stimulated by the visible content displayed on these printed pages to fire up a computer and check out the hyperlinked material. But you don't have to! I've spelled out some of the links, in full, for people who *don't like* reading PDFs onscreen. Could some of you feel comfortable with a paper fanzine in your lap, hand-typing URLs into a web browser as you turn the pages? I don't know. Some people watch *The Wizard of Oz* on TV, while playing Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* on their stereos to get a serendipitous multimedia experience. This is more synchronized. The links embedded in the diary entries are there to punctuate, rather than to distract.

Can a Livejournal translate into a stapled fanzine? Some of you may see this experiment as a waste of paper. Others of you, if you open the PDF version on a computer, might yet get that sense of entering a fannish, magical Oz—where the pages and pictures are now in color, flowing naturally into material that includes news article documentation, songs, and animated cartoons. That's what online journaling is supposed to be about.

As a young fanzine fan, I know I always dreamed about being able to do this in the World of the Future.

(If you're a FIAWOL type who's bored by political indignation, you may want to skip those pages. You may still find something in this to catch your interest. Go to Bill Burns' efanzines.com, if you want to try the PDF. And I'll see you all in the next *Whistlestar!*)



 spacecrab

Brust-Aid for aging brain cells


You say you've just started reading "Dzur," and you can't quite remember what happened to Vlad's weapons in "Issola?" When was the last time he encountered The Sorceress in Green, anyway? Where did he meet Aibynn? Why can't Verra hear him, if he's wearing the Phoenix Stone?

Steve's not telling you again, if you don't remember. You either listen to Vlad with the brain cells you've got left, or begin reading all the books all over again -- if you want to get the full technicolor experience.

I don't know whether Steve would approve of this, but there is actually another alternative. Brust-Aid for aging brain cells is available, [here](#). In the coming cybernetic world of the future, maybe Tor will package this website into every new Vlad novel. *Or maybe not.*

(I have found one jarring note that needs to be corrected. Try searching for "Orb" and see what you get.)

Comments

From:  mathenais (AKA Lucy Huntzinger)

Date: 08/23/2006 20:29:21

Hours of fun.

Upside-down Flag

I don't know. I don't much feel like writing about today's Senate vote on Livejournal. If I'm capable of any coherent writing on that topic, it should probably be directed to U.S. Senators, Representatives, and newspapers.

[[See Washington Post: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/28/AR2006092800824.html?nav=hcmoduletmv>

“Congress approved landmark changes to the nation's system of interrogating and prosecuting terrorism suspects last night, preparing the ground for possible military trials for key al-Qaeda members under rules that critics say will draw stiff constitutional challenges.” The U.S. approved Soviet-style treatment of perceived Enemies of the State.” That's *all* this was - LB 2011]]

I've never been a prolific LJ poster. But, right now, I feel a sense of shame at the thought of posting any of the personal, s-f fandom related stuff that I'd normally be putting up here. My mind flirts with the idea of making a useless vow: to refrain from posting any personal, recreational writing at all, until such time as the Detainee Bill passed by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives is recognized as null and void by all three branches of the United States government.

But I'm probably not going to do that to myself. I hope I'll find less drastic ways to make myself remember that I'm no longer living in a free country -- and find the stamina to channel my energy into engaging constructively with the fact. In the meantime, **as Jim Henley points out**, life will go on for us lucky duckies in our dictatorship more-authoritarian-than-yesterday nation.

For now, we still have the ability to **make noise** about the **despicable actions** ordered by our **despicable, de facto** government.

Note to self: **put the wallet** where the keyboard is a little bit more. [[= **link to "Act Blue" progressive Dem fundraisers -LB 2011**]]

[[**Jim Henley points out** = <http://highclearing.com/index.php/archives/2006/09/28/5508>
make noise= link to a post by Patrick Nielsen Hayden on "Making Light" entitled "I Put My Fingers Against the Glass." Patrick's post contains further essay links: some to people you know, and some to people you don't know-- all weighing in on what may have been the worst moment in American history.
despicable actions = U.S. persecution of an innocent taxi cab driver, Dilawar. ... **despicable, defacto government** = rollcall of Congressmen who passed the *Torture act,* list compiled by Terry Karney ... + a dead link to a Rolling Stone article by JFK, Jr. on the how the 2004 election was stolen -- LB 2011]]

Comments

From:  kevin_standlee

Date: 09/29/2006 11:50:51

I won't stop writing about the rest of my life in my LJ, but I share the growing despair at the actions of our government. I just hope that the pendulum will swing back again. It always has before (Alien & Sedition Acts, Red Scare, etc.).

I think it's likely a lot of people who voted for that bill did so for cynical political reasons (they want to go home and campaign for re-election saying, "I was Tough on Terrorism") and assume that the blatantly unconstitutional portions of the bill will be struck down by the courts. To some extent, I can even respect those people more than those who honestly believe that the law is a good idea. The former are mercenary, but at least know what they are doing; the latter are just clueless.

I further fear that there are whole lot of people in this country who figure, "Why is this a problem? This is a law about Bad People, and I am not a Bad Person. I'm a white-skinned American and don't speak with a funny accent. It will never affect me" and worse, "Anyone who opposes laws like this is suspicious and may be a Bad Person."

I also hope that we can survive two more years of the current administration and that they really will step down when the term ends instead of deciding that "the current emergency" needs a strong leader "for the duration," and that anyone who says otherwise is "aiding terrorism" and will be shipped off to a secret camp For Our Safety.

It's annoying that we have to fight elections for our cause --

The inconvenience of having to get the majority.

If normal methods of persuasion fail to win us applause,

There are other ways of establishing authority.

From:  don_fitch

Date: 10/13/2006 18:57:00

I figure that the reason we must speak out on matters like this is so that our ordinary day-to-day activities can continue, so it seems perfectly proper to keep on doing both on lj or a personal blog. It's like the Terrorism bit -- if we cease leading our Real Lives, day by day,

as we've been accustomed to doing, "They" will have won, and I'm not nearly ready to admit that -- because I don't think they have, or will.

10/27/2006 16:40:00

Mike Ford, Entropy, and ribbons for our hair

elisem, [[**Elise Matthesen**]] a good friend, wishes [this link](#) about today's memorial for Mike to be spread throughout the Ether.

The linked post in **nemesis_draco** contains additional information about two charity fund drives that Mike would be happy to know are thriving: The John M. Ford Memorial Endowment Fund for [Friends of the Minneapolis Library](#) and the Surgical Transplant Fund for the [Hennepin Kidney Transplant Program](#).

Elise, I'm not sure whether you'll find time to read this post in the vastness of the LJ Web, but if you do, here's a link to a "[A Piece For You](#)", which is a Phil Lesh song that you might like. (*Lyrics are [here](#).)

Mike is alive in my heart and mind:

V'Yis Gaddol, V'Yis Kaddash, we're Animaniacs, once a Green Lantern, always a Green Lantern, amen.

Incredible String Band – 1970

[[You Tube song link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OYwvIfrX7Q&> ...If you like the Incredible String Band, you'll love this.

-LB 2011]]

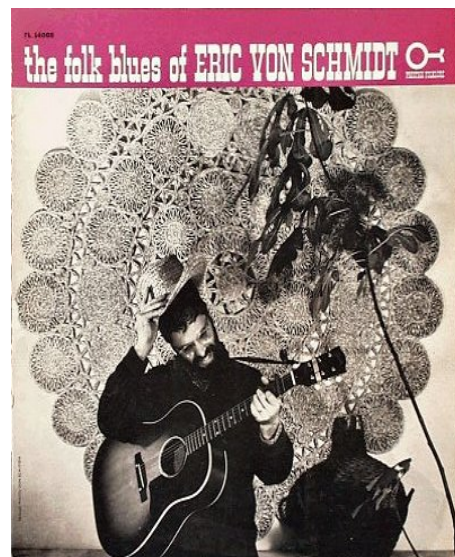
So long, Eric!

"Please understand, things can swing,
You get just about what you bring--
You better catch it, catch it while you can."

-- Eric von Schmidt, "Catch It"

"He could sing the bird off the wire and the
rubber off the tire,
He can separate the men from the boys
and the note from the noise
the bridle from the saddle
and the cow from the cattle,
He can play the tune of the moon
the why of the sky and the commotion of the
ocean."

-- Bob Dylan, [liner notes](#)



He also drew all this cover art.



12/02/2006 06:09:00

What's new on a slow Friday ...



Live! -- streaming from the KPFA performance studio

[[A great studio performance that you can still catch at:

<http://www.kpfa.org/archives/20061129-Wed2100.m3u>

but don't tell KPFA that it's still there! - LB 2011]]

11/29/2006

- Sliding Delta Blues
- Contract
- I Don't Know You
- Lonesome LA Cowboy
- Four Strong Winds
- Whatcha Gonna Do
- Dirty Business
- Peggy-O
- Louisiana Lady
- Lochinvar
- 15 Days Under the Hood
- Last Lonely Eagle
- Henry
- Sutter's Mill
- Garden of Eden
- Whiskey
- Panama Red



Followed by a kickass 11/13/06 jam band version of "The Golden Road to Unlimited Devotion," courtesy of Bob Weir and Ratdog.

And a Spacecrab job interview, today, with the Computer Networking and Information Technology department at City College of San Francisco.

[[This resulted in my landing a teaching job that lasted for about a year - LB 2011]]



spacecrab

04/23/2007 12:49:00

IPSTP day

Meme meme meme meme....

I'm OK with [this one](#).

[[Link is to Jo Walton answering SF author Howard Hendrix's bullheaded statement about copyright. Jo's reply stimulated the creation of an Internet holiday in which writers demonstrated their willingness to publish creative work without demanding payment—LB 2011]]

So I'm following suit on something popular that other people on LiveJournal are doing. Will this lead to a well-adjusted life and new friendships?

Anyway, in celebration of International Pixel-Stained Technopeasant Day, [this link](#) goes to my review of John Varley's The Golden Globe, written several years ago for *The New York Review of Science Fiction*. I really liked that novel when I read it. The review has been fiddled with, slightly, to make it read better to my 2007 ear. If you go there (which I hope you do) and scroll up the page, you'll find other stuff I've written for *NYRSF*, along with a link to my [favorite page on the site](#), which I'm not sure anyone but me has actually read.

[<http://www.speakeasy.org/~lennyb/sfrr.html>. Click and see me explaining that the source material for the first Green Lantern may actually be found in the Andrew Lang Yellow Fairy Book—LB 2011]

FWIW: my take on Howard Hendrix before reading his recent [insertion of foot onto keyboard](#) has been that he's an open, friendly guy, genuinely interested in reading and talking about science fiction, as well as writing it. In some ways, the *Science Fiction (and Fantasy) Writers of America* seems a bit like that [other club](#) co-founded by Damon Knight. Both of them appear to exert a baleful influence on those members who find their way into elected office.

Potlatch 16 Panel Notes are up

Potlatch 16 Panel Notes [are now up](#) at the [Potlatch website](#).

Posting yearly [sets of notes](#) on Potlatch panels is a project that I've pursued on and off for around ten years, now. I was inspired to start doing Potlatch notes after reading the excellent panel notes and extended discussions that appeared in [Khatru](#), a "sercon" '70s fanzine published by Jeff Smith.

The two P16 panels that have the most extensive notes, this time, are the one populated by Ursula Le Guin, Eileen Gunn, Vonda McIntyre, Kate Schaefer, and Molly Gloss on "Effective Subversive Fiction," and one populated by Lenny Bailes, Sharon Sbarsky, David Bratman, and Tom Whitmore on "Themes in Robert Sheckley." There were three or four other interesting panels, which you'll also find notes for. But the notes I managed to persuade people to produce on those panels were kind of sketchy. The Sheckley panel has the most detailed reportage, because I got some of the other participants to respond and was able to throw my own pre-panel stuff into the mix.

Since [amy_thomson](#) tape recorded the "Effective Subversive Fiction" and "Environmental Disasters" panels, we may eventually have more extensive notes on those.

Next year's Potlatch (#17) is in Seattle. The Book of Honor is soon to be announced, and Potlatch 17 will also have a special focus on Clarion, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Clarion West workshops.

06/24/2007 18:50:00

Hey, good comics! (#1 in a series of "good stuff" reviews)



I don't post very often, over here. I've never had a clear idea of what I want to do with a livejournal (as I've probably whinged about too many times). I don't have the stamina to start a real blog and post to it on a regular basis. But I do have a few things to share that have accumulated over the last several months. Each of these should be its own entry. (My previous post on Potlatch should probably have been #1.) We'll see if I can make myself follow through properly on the rest. After all, there are Doctor Who episodes to watch, books to read, and even work to do.

* * * *

I'm really bored by most of the current comic titles in the DC Universe. I used to think of myself as a comic book geek. But I'm incapable of sustaining interest in their current, convoluted multiverse reboot -- because there are hardly any individual stories, anymore. Most of the books now feature incomplete, disjoint episodes that are part of a vast title-spanning infodump. The attempt to link the histories of every character in their stable into a giant, shared soap opera isn't working for me. I get more enjoyment and understanding out of reading Wikipedia articles about the DC Universe than I do reading the primary source material.

That having been said, Paul Dini, Kurt Busiek, Grant Morrison, and Darwyn Cooke can and have produced great comic book work for DC.

They still manage to do so every once in awhile, when they manage to escape the horrid schema that seems primarily to be the work of editor Dan DiDio.

See:

Paul Dini: Detective Comics 833, August 2007. (Click on Zatanna, above.) In some sense, this story might be read as a prequel/sequel to Dini's animated JLU s3, ep6: [This Little Piggy](#). The relationship between Batman and Zatanna is set up there (with an amazing bonus: Batman's [bluesy Karaoke performance](#), which reverses Circe's spell and transforms Wonder Woman from a pig back into herself). In the current Detective Comics, Dini produces an inspired retcon of the relationship between Bruce Wayne and Zatanna, showing them as childhood friends. (Dini reveals that their fathers, Thomas Wayne and Zatara, were also friends who worked together.)

Grant Morrison (Frank Quitely, artist): [All-Star Superman #1-?](#): see particularly #4, which depicts the coolest Jimmy Olsen this side of Supreme, and #5, which features an issue-long prison rap session between Lex Luthor and Clark Kent.

Darwyn Cooke: [Batman/Spirit #1](#) Pretty good stuff, if you're a fan of either the Spirit or the animated Batman. The two universes combine into one when Dolan, Commissioner Gordon, and femmes fatale from both worlds are added to the mix.

02/02/2008 21:01:00

Put Poetry in Your Blog Day

Hm. A LiveJournal meme that I actually like.

An Encyclopedia Affair by Don Marquis

The gay BOK-CAN was a gentleman
In a coat of gold and green, O!
And he loved SIB-SZO from head to toe,
Though the alphabet stretched between, O!

"SIB-SZO," he would say, "you keep away
From MOT-ORM and his doings,
Distrust the lip of the glib GOU-HIP,
And hearken to my wooings!

"BOKHARA goats, dear ma'am, eat oats,
And BURGUNDY grows good wine, ma'am!
CAMPHOR comes from vegetal gums,
O say that you'll be mine, ma'am!"

But SIB-SZO sighed as she replied,
"The SIMOON sweeps the sea, sir,
SPINOZA fought for the freedom of thought,
I cannot wed with thee, sir!"

"Where will you find," he cried, "a mind
More crowded with information?
Edmund BURKE was an eloquent Turk,
BRAZIL is quite a nation!

"The BURIAT wears his cheek-bones flat,
BROWNING wrote *Sordello*
The BRACHIOPOD is a creature odd,
Do you love some other fellow?"

She bowed her head and she wept and said,
"SYZRAN is a city,
SOCRATES scorned luxuries,
What I feel for you is pity.

"The SUGAR-BIRD is rather absurd,
And STEAM will raise a blister.
My sweetheart is the bold FAL-FYZ,
But I will be your sister!"

BOK-CAN did choke, and sadness BROKE
The heart in his noble BUST, sir
URA-ZYM found an URN for him
And DUG-EF claimed his DUST, sir!

05/23/2008 23:21:00

Are we there?

Once again, it's [International Talk Like an Old Weird American Day](#). While the world rejoices in [celebration](#), we of the Invisible Republic pause to wish [LJ](#) [lydy](#) a happy birthday (as is also traditional at this time).

And we are pleased to announce the electronic availability of the [7th issue of *Whistlestar*](#), which doubles as a paper s-f fanzine (such as the ones [wistfully missed](#) by LJ's own Paul di Filippo).

Gort is alive, magic is a foot.

The above-referenced issue of *Whistlestar* includes articles by several members of [the Old Weird S-F Fandom](#). In particular, it contains the second part of *Fanotchka* a fannish play written by Andy Hooper as a pastiche of Ernst Lubitscha's 1939 film, *Ninotchka*, which starred Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas. The complete illustrated edition of *Fanotchka* is [here](#).

"Who is Andy Hooper?" you may ask if you've stumbled onto this page without being on my Friends List. He's a man long overdue for one of those silly rocketship nominations you hear so much about these days. You can click [here](#) to listen to his most recent radio play, *The Price of Pugwash*, which was performed at this year's Corflu fanzine convention. If you do, you'll also hear what might pass for my entry in this year's "Talk Like [Johnny Fontless] Day" celebration -- about three minutes into the performance.

"Who should I tell, oh, who should I tell?
The forty-nine of you like bats out of hell
Oh underneath that old apple suckling tree,
[Oh yeah!](#)"

[[[Links to the rest of the lyrics of this obscure, but good Bob Dylan Basement Tapes song. -LB2011](#)]]



spacecrab

Last fair deal in the country? [[lyrics to indirectly referenced Grateful Dead song are at <http://www.dead.net/song/loser> --LB2011]]

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I'm writing to express my opposition to allowing Henry Paulson to steamroller the Senate (and House of Representatives) into immediately passing bail-out legislation that will result in handing 700 billion dollars over to the Bush administration--without placing checks and balances on how the money will be spent.

1) Paulson's current plan will simply drop money back into the hands of the investment bankers who have precipitated this crisis. I'm sure you're familiar with the recent speeches made by Hillary Clinton.

2) Please **do not** cave in to the Bush administrations pressure to act immediately in protection of the same people who precipitated the crisis--and **not** in the interests of homeowners, and middle-class citizens whose 401K pensions are on the line.

You are well aware of the Bush administration's record on managing huge amounts of money and of how they spend it. It would be criminal to hand them a blank check to perpetrate mismanagement similar to the disbursement of funds for the Iraq war. If you do not stand firm, this time, and fulfill the functions of Congress--to supervise and audit the Executive branch--you may not have another opportunity.


Read what economic experts say: the current crisis has not been caused solely by a lack of liquidity. The current crisis is one of insolvency caused by poor investment choices of greedy businessmen. True to form in any crisis, George Bush and Dick Cheney want to rescue these people--not ordinary stockholders and homeowners (and their children).


PS: as a Democrat, you must surely be familiar with the principles applied by FDR in his establishment of the Home Owners' Loan Corp -- a government bail out that **worked** and channeled relief back to homeowners, not foolish investment bankers.

Senate phone numbers and websites.
U.S. Representatives Phone Numbers.

Letter fodder:
Seven Simple Reasons To Oppose The Bailout (via Avedon).

Comments

From:  fringefaan [[AKA Randy Byers]] **Date:** 09/23/2008 13:25:45
Good letter. Thanks for posting it.

From:  calimac [AKA David Bratman]
She sounds, at the least, skeptical.

11/23/2008 18:15:00

My City's Not Gone



I looked up one evening and found my city was *still there.*

When I fell into the ticket line, listened to fans gossiping about the new tour bus parked in front of the theater, and eyeballed the arcane ornament patterns over the doorways of adjoining flats, I felt a familiar buzz.

It could just as well have been 1972, standing outside the *Keystone Korner*, waiting for Jerry's kids to be ushered inside -- or several years later, receiving good wishes and a piece of Col. Sanders chicken delivered personally by Bill Graham, as he walked up and down the long line outside of Winterland. (Oh yes. *That* San Francisco.) Roadies dutifully carried stuff out of the big tour bus and I waited patiently, even though a power failure had pushed admission to the ballroom back 3/4 of an hour. A big cheer went up from the line when the GAMH marquee fired itself back into life. *E-lec-tri-city.*



I don't have the setlist, recordings (or even photos) for this to link to. (I realize that most of you who will be reading this, either from my Friends List -- or through the fandom central collection on [lpnh's](#) list -- may have no inkling of why I'm

raving on about this band. But I've decided to pretend that some of you may be interested enough to sample some material linked to in this post.)

For passersby who've "herd of 'em": David Gans opened the show and joined the Buffalos on "No Place Like The Right Time."

Crooked Fence, Chicken Yard

Life can be simple but still be hard

Oh my head, it hurts my eyes

The world's getting bigger as it shrinks in size.

Tara Nevins sang her heart out on "Family Picture," they did a bunch of stuff from their new release "Silverlined" and Jeb Puryear delivered a series of 4 to 5 minute guitar solos during the show-closing "Conscious Evolution" that made me feel he was directly channeling the fingers of Duane Allman. Proper invocations were made to wish for peace, love, harmony, and a prayer for a better life under Barack Obama. The band was at least as good as the sample stuff you'll find appended below, and the room was full of dancers -- young pretty ones with tall handsome boyfriends, mid 30s-to-40s ones, grey-haired couples, and lumpy, longhaired types (like me) who could have (and might have) stepped out from an s-f convention or WELL party:

Donna The Buffalo - Family Picture (Live image linked to Studio Performance)



Tides of Time

*Some day I might figure it
Right now I'm just livin' it
Right now I'm just livin' it
Right now I'm just givin' it*

*Looking out over the multitude
Looking in to the heart of it
Reaching out into the middle of it
Seeing how we're a part of it*

*Chorus:
I'm feeling the tides of time
Moving in on my senses now
I'm feeling the tides of time
Pull me in, pull me out.*

Here are a couple that [☺coffeem](#) and [☺willshetterly](#) might like.

[Locket and Key](#) (New Studio Release)

[Ring of Fire](#)

***Oh, by the way.** I don't have a link to the show I saw on Friday night. But [here's](#) a link to the whole show from the day before (Portland, Oregon, Thursday, 11-20-08). To listen to this you'll need the music geek skill to advance your audio player pointer to "02:24:00" to skip the opening band. (This is also explained on the website.) In case you're lucky enough to be located on the tour bus path, [here's](#) a tour schedule.

Comments

From: [☺coffeem](#) [[AKA Emma Bull]]

Date: 11/25/2008 11:38:42

Great stuff--thank you!

From: (Anonymous)

Date: 11/26/2008 10:33:19

Wow

I first heard Donna the Buffalo (in my hometown of Erie PA) about fifteen years ago. They had the infamous tour bus then (I have to believe it was since replaced). I remember Tara Nevins and some of the other band members, and have a couple of their early albums. Had no idea they were still together. Thanks for posting this.

Just like the night? (contains Mondegreens)

Happy New Year.

I'm afraid my thoughts are going something like this:
(after having just watched a so-so Disney adaptation of
"Prince Caspian," which was once one of my favorite childhood fairy
tales).

"The peddler, he now steps to the road,
Crying 'everything's been returned, which was old'
On the back of the Phish track that loads,
while my conscious corrodes."

I celebrate the cacaphonic ensemble of Snufkins;
summoning the wind to continue playing
their skeleton keys in the rain.



Time now for a bit of sleep, and hope
that the Young Prince of Compromise
may listen to his conscience;
and mitigate the suffering caused
by jewel-thieving mules --

--when his Cape of the Stage starts flowing,
in twenty days or so.

[[**Nuts! Two years into his
administration, and not so much of that
– LB 2011**]]

<http://www.karlova.tartu.ee/~ako/Ako/muumid/snufkin.gif>
<http://shortpantspress.com/images/moomin2.jpg>

Afloat upon the waves!

Trafficking with the Proscribed Planet Minion

Thirty years ago, when I was a longer-haired indigent hippie, I realized that science fiction had warned me about certain ethical perils of everyday life.

If anyone younger than 35 is reading this, you may not know that Piers Anthony, circa 1975, was thought of as a leading-edge science fiction writer. The Xanth books were years in the future. The protagonist of *Cthon*, Anthony's first novel, was a character who'd been exiled to a prison planet for falling in love with and courting a Minionette. Anthony's Minionettes were sensuous alien females, indigenous to the Planet Minion -- where the emotional spectrum and responses of the inhabitants are the inverse of normal human emotions.

For Minionettes, pain equal pleasure, pleasure equals pain. Or, as Jethro Tull told us around the same time:

*Lend me your ear while I call you a fool.
You were kissed by a witch one night in the wood,
and later insisted your feelings were true.
The witch's promise was coming,
believing he listened while laughing you flew.*

*Leaves falling red, yellow, brown, all are the same,
and the love you have found lay outside in the rain.
Washed clean by the water but nursing its pain.
The witch's promise was coming, and you're looking
elsewhere for your own selfish gain.*

-- [Witch's Promise](#) -- Jethro Tull

What has all this hippie chestnut stuff got to do with anything now? Well... I can't say they never warned me if my train gets lost.

Like many aging Boomers, I now have a certain percentage of my

retirement savings sunk into -- mining operations on the Planet Minion. I monitor economic processes on the planet during coffee breaks at work, hoping that at the end of the day I'll have at least as much in my savings accounts as I had at the beginning of the day. On days where the little Dow and NASDAQ status reports are green, I congratulate myself for not being completely locked down to the miserable investment rates of CDs.

Except that the following news note reminds me of what my younger self already knew. I'm turning myself in, for the benefit of Pastwatch and Futurewatch time-monitoring versions of myself. (No idea whether any other entities will care.)

From [Google News](#), Wed Nov 4, 2009 3:42pm EST:

... In the hour following the FOMC statement, the S&P 500 rose as high as 1,061.00 and the Nasdaq touched 2,081.00. With less than 30 minutes before the closing bell, though, those late-day gains began to fade somewhat.

The healthcare sector jumped on hopes the Obama administration's healthcare reforms may be slowed after Republicans scored some key election victories.

Comments

From:  scalimac (AKA David Bratman) Date: 11/04/2009 16:12:34

The one thing I can think of more mentally poisonous than investing in evil is obsessively following what are, by necessity, long-term prospects on a close-up, day-by-day or even month-by-month basis.

From:  spacecrab

Date: 11/04/2009 16:46:10

The irony is that, as individual entities, companies like Apple and Google aren't necessarily evil. But news flashes like the one I linked do suggest that the game where many of us place bets on the fortunes of businesses **is** evil. (FWIW, for me, the place where the roulette ball jumps does sometimes result in daily gains or losses at least equal to my daily wages.)

From:  fringefaan (AKA Randy Byers)

Date: 11/04/2009 16:14:24

That's hilarious. The only election results that I can think of that might have an effect on healthcare reforms are the two House races (NY-23 and CA-10), which were both won by Democrats, leading to a +1 change for the Democrats in their house majority.

Not to mention the fact that healthcare reform would make our economy more efficient and thus more profitable. But who expects capitalists to be rational?



 spacecrab

Hurt vs. Filing Sorcerers

A slightly whacked-out post title -- to talk about something that's actually a serious and sobering development in my life.

I've been wanting to write for a couple of months about some difficult medical issues I'm facing. I've hesitated, because I haven't been sure how to talk about this without feeling like I'm dumping an emotional burden on my friends. I think I'm ready to try to report at this point:

The short story is that I had some scans a few months ago to follow up on my ongoing intestinal/digestive issues. The first CT scan, coincidentally, revealed two solid exophytic masses on my right kidney, a small solid mass on the left kidney, and bilateral renal lesions. A subsequent MRI scan confirmed the presence of the two solid masses on the poles of my right kidney (around 2cm x 4cm each in size) and the much smaller mass (10mm) on my left kidney. The urologists estimated a 90% probability that the masses are malignant-- but I've remained free of any overt symptoms such as blood in urine, etc., and my metabolic tests say that my kidneys are still currently functioning normally.

The good news is that after a couple of weeks in July and August (where I wondered whether I was going to spend the rest of my life on dialysis -- or just needed to get ready to check out early), my urologists told me they felt confident that the masses could be removed without taking out either



kidney. I was most likely to retain kidney functionality on both sides.

I've been hesitant to share news about this with my friends in fandom until I had a better idea of likely procedures and outcomes.

The UCSF urologists I consulted felt that they would need to do open surgery to cut the masses out. This procedure would save my life, but would involve considerable pain and anywhere from one to four months of recovery time, where I would most likely not be able to work. As a stubborn Googler, I educated myself to learn that several leading-edge institutions (Johns Hopkins University, the Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, etc.) are now employing an alternative surgery technique to perform this operation. Laparoscopic surgery (also called bandaid surgery and keyhole surgery) is a modern technique in which operations in the abdomen are performed through small incisions (usually 0.5–1.5 cm) as compared to larger incisions needed in traditional surgical procedures. (If you're more clinically minded, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laparoscopic_surgery.)

The UCSF guys referred me to the Dept. of Urology at USC in Southern California, which is chaired by someone they described as "the most skillful laparoscopic surgeon in the country." Apparently, laparoscopic techniques are tricky and can only be performed as an alternative to open surgery by very skilled and well-trained physicians. I had some good luck, for a change: USC looked at my scans and this surgeon declared that he believed laparoscopic treatment was possible in my case. They scheduled me for a date in mid-November.

Most of the Google-reachable literature available

on this subject asserts that when kidney tumors are removed laparoscopically, recovery usually takes half the time (or less) required with traditional open surgery. So I will most likely not lose my job (with the accompanying ability it provides to pay my humungous monthly health insurance premiums).

I'm scheduled to go into surgery on November 16th. They estimate releasing me on November 19th or 20th, and want me to hang around in Los Angeles over the weekend. If all goes well, depending upon what they find in a post-operative inspection on November 22nd, I can fly back to the Bay Area later that week (pre or post-Thanksgiving).

I'm OK and able to carry this stuff. But I wouldn't be me, anymore, without some urge to deliver a reductio-ad-absurdum soundbyte that places things in terms that my right brain understands. Hence, the obscure pun for the post title and the accompanying graphic image.

The image accompanying this post is from the "Homelands" chapter of Bill Willingham's *Fables*, which, in my book, is the Greatest Story Ever Told -- since around 2003, anyway. I'm hoping to find some time to say more about this. That panel has resonances and allusions for me that may or may not strike a chord with anyone else who reads this. The Filing Sorcerer in this case = a hero equipped with a magical Vorpall Sword that can cut (or file through) anything.*

*Here's [an example](#) of my Mundy wizard at work. I believe I'm extremely lucky to have found him.

Comments

From:  holyoutlaw (AKA Luke McGuff) **Date:** 10/23/2010 22:13:56

Good luck to you. I'll keep my fingers crossed.

From:  calimac (AKA David Bratman) **Date:** 10/24/2010 00:52:18

Thanks for letting us know, and we'll be hoping for the best. Laparoscope is how B's gall bladder was removed, and recovery was swift.

From:  bibliofile **Date:** 10/25/2010 00:18:56

Yikes! But this is why we have things like social networking & the internet, IMHO. Please keep us posted (or have someone else do it for you) during & after the proceedings.

PS: My surgery went well. A post-op biopsy on the removed tumors declared them to be oncocytomas -- a rare type of benign growth that can masquerade as malignant tumors. Kind of a fortuitous anticlimax. - LB 2011]