

VENUSIAN SPEARMINT



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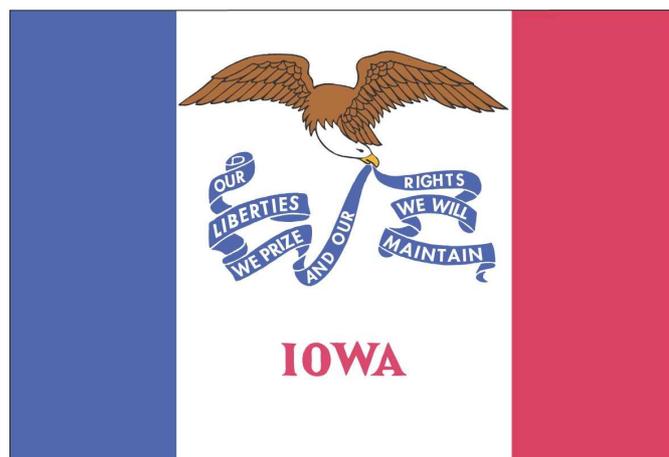
Hello People! Welcome to my world ... won't you come on in? In this issue you'll find flags, neutrinos, slang term definitions, *Dead Ringers*, a contributor article, pinball, acronyms, and 'Weird Al' Yankovic. All in a month's work! Enjoy.

RIP Rue McClanahan

Well, wouldn't you know it, Rue McClanahan passed away on the day I published my last issue. I remember laughing at her quite a lot on *The Golden Girls*, and I had forgotten she was in *Mama's Family*. One of her fellow cast members on that show was Allan Kayser, and when my sister was at university (roughly 1996), he was a bartender at her local hangout. And she said that it was a huge mistake to say you thought he looked familiar, as he'd tell you why you probably recognised him and wouldn't shut up about it. Anyway, Rue was an Okie and played those Southern Belle stereotypes pretty well, didn't she? Okies certainly aren't Deep South but they definitely have a twang.

USA World Cup Opener (aka, England World Cup Opener)

I watched the USA World Cup opener, of course, rooting for the USA. I was very pleasantly happy and surprised to be watching the ITV coverage, and toward the end of the coverage, I saw a mahoosively big Iowa flag. The Iowa flag normally looks like this, modelled after the French flag, partially because the first European explorers in the territory that became Iowa were French. The banner reads with our state motto.



The one the fans brought to the England v. USA match had 'Des Moines' plastered in big letters on it. (It's huge in comparison to that tiny shape of Minnesota next to it ;-). This screen grab took me and the hubby quite a bit of time and effort but we got it. (Oh the lengths I go to for a hobby zine!)



I also couldn't get over the facts that there was an England goalkeeper in green named Green, and a yellow card given to a USA player named Demerit. I couldn't make this stuff up.

Donovan Hero!

I was shocked and amazed at Landon Donovan's last-minute win for the USA in the group stage, but a little surprised at how none of the media in Britain seemed to care. It was complete England Tunnel Vision. Maybe I really shouldn't be so shocked by this (as the USA won the group as a result and I'm sure no English fans were bitter about that, eh?). Still the England v. Slovenia match was up on the BBC iPlayer almost immediately, but the USA v. Algeria match seemed to be nobody's concern.

It's a shame for both the USA and England that they both lost in their first matches of the final 16. But the bigger shame is that I'm also glad I don't have to endure more football hooliganism, vuvuzelas and honking horns at all hours of the night for England.

Reality is truly stranger than fiction

by Contributor of the Month, Anthony S.

The Register (That bastion of IT and science reporting professionalism, almost on par with such tomes as *Private Eye*) published a story on the 25 June entitled 'Venus home to lost cities left by long-dead aliens, says ESA' with the by-line, 'Well, it was strongly implied.' The summary of the story was that ESA have published an article to declare [that at] one time there was an abundance of water on Venus. The register invites us to spin our own Friday afternoon notions from there. Their idea such a notion involves long uninhabited Venusian cities with nuclear bunkers containing DNA ready to be cloned in to fully fledged Aliens. I am willing to bet that David

Clegg (our two headed beast at the head of Government) didn't see that one coming when they put together their latest immigration policy.

What caught my interest was the report on a theory by Eric Chassefiere that the water on Venus existed only as a mist in the air. This reminded me of the description of the Garden of Eden in the book of Genesis (Chapter 2 and verse 6 if you must know) where most decent translations recognise that a mist (fog or vapour) came up from the ground to water everything. Now could it possibly be that Venus was once our Garden of Eden? That would mean that our ancestors were then banished to Earth as a living Hell and the fires of the sun are the flaming sword that prevents us from ever returning to paradise. (Not that this stops NASA's robots and the cast and crew of *Defying Gravity* from going there. Maybe we should consider sending them there as punishment for making such a dismal first season as to get such a wonderful idea cancelled before the season even finished!)

Consequently, could we really all be Venusians, all illegal aliens and possibly all delusional? Anyone for more spearmint?

Moving on swiftly! Douglas Adams postulated in *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* that 'There is a theory which states that if ever anyone discovers exactly what the Universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something even more bizarre and inexplicable.' Well, the Higgs Boson has been discovered to have spilt personalities. This is of course a disaster. Physicists were hoping that this so called God Particle would be this fat bloke in the sky that gives everything else meaning (or was it mass? It's all getting rather spiritual.) Now that there are more parts to it than they originally reckoned, are they going to call the new Boson family 'Mount Olympus?'

Anyway, the Higgs Boson discovery would not be so bad if it were not for the discovery of neutrinos' ability to transform themselves into other types of neutrino in a harmonic kind of way. What starts out as one type of neutrino can end up oscillating between types as it travels. And if that was not bad enough, what is really getting physicists' goat is the fact that an anti-neutrino is not in fact the opposite of a neutrino. So the Standard Model of physics is not so much back to the drawing board as in the trash can. Can anyone remember when it used to be Protons, Neutrons and Electrons?

'There is another theory which states that this has already happened!'

Short Takes

I watched the season finale of *Glee*, of course, and Journey songs were used as the theme for the episode. But instead of the blindingly obvious 'Open Arms,' I get 'To Sir With Love.' I was shocked.

The Pet Shop Boys at Glastonbury was certainly...uh... interesting. There were some strange wannabe-retro visuals going on there. Why is it that they never seem to sing 'Home and Dry,' I like that song so much (if you know it or have a listen, take a guess why!)

I have to say I really enjoyed Christopher Eccleston as John Lennon in *Lennon Naked*. It must be considerable pressure to play a real person like that. There did seem to be quite a lot of bad ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement or Additional Dialogue Recording, depends who you ask) which really jarred, so you have to wonder if someone was unhappy with Eccleston's Liverpool accent and forced him to do it again. (Interesting how producers seem to think the viewers won't notice this, but I hear dialogue at different levels **all** the time – surely it's not just me?) You do have to wonder how the *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* conversation between Eccleston and Naoko Mori went...

Doctor Who is Top of the Heap

Here is a picture of a carrier bag from late 2008 or so. Obviously 2|Entertain thought our beloved character/show belonged up top there.



'Ever since I was a young boy, I played that silver ball ...'

As mentioned in an earlier issue, I did manage to see quite a bit of the infamous and wonderful Bally/Midway (Williams, as it turns out!) *Doctor Who* Pinball Machine throughout a lot of 1998 and 1999 in quite a few Iowa towns. Whenever we heard about it or my mates found it, my brother and I would find an excuse to go to that place and take some pictures of it. I follow LeVar Burton on Twitter, much more because I loved the bloody fantastic *Reading Rainbow* than for *Star Trek: TNG*, or even *Roots*. There were many summers of my youth when I was far past the target audience age group, but I would make a point to watch *Reading Rainbow* every day at around lunchtime on Iowa Public Television. Then they went and re-branded the many years of series (mostly from the 1980s!) with new credits and a new arrangement of the theme song in about 2004 and boy was I miffed. I even found the composer for the show on Twitter (that'd be Steve Horelick if you care!) but 'twas beyond his control so I didn't bother complaining about it to him. Anywho ...

LeVar Burton re-tweeted a fantastic picture someone had tweeted at him:



That's a very young LeVar next to a Who (of sorts).

The website on which LeVar directed his readers to the picture on the Internet Pinball Database, <http://www.ipdb.org> , direct link to pic with comment: <http://tinyurl.com/levarpinball> .

As a result of this, I found the most stereotypically American promo film on YouTube for the *Doctor Who* Pinball Machine: <http://tinyurl.com/doctorwhopinball> . The voiceover guy states that *Doctor Who* premiered in 1962; he can't pronounce 'Davros' and keeps using a long 'o' sound, phonetically like 'Dav-Roce' instead of 'Dav-Ross.' They use the same clips of each Doctor over and over again, in varying degrees of video quality ... and it's just plain fantastic to watch for any number of reasons, not in the least, the claimed statistics of worldwide viewers and numbers of conventions held in the USA ... I would think even then those numbers given were not confirmed or verifiable. They claim that there was a *Doctor Who* convention held every weekend in the USA. Uh, maybe in 1986 or 87 there was, folkies, but seems doubtful in 1991 or 92.

Sci-Fi Friday Night

As you may have noticed, I sometimes go into 'Crusty Old Iowegian *Doctor Who* Fan' mode, so why not do so again? I'd like to tell you about *Sci-Fi Friday Night* on Iowa Public Television. 'SFFN,' as it was known, was broadcast roughly 1997 or 1998 to about 2002 or 2003, when the sci-fi block was moved to Saturday nights. Iowa Public Television aired this, and they are known as IPTV. (No, not Internet Protocol Television, that concept nicked the acronym, we had it first! Or maybe Idaho Public Television had it first. Also we bloody had the 'Sci-Fi Friday Night' idea before the bloody Sci-Fi Channel did. We woz robbed there, too. Anywho...) SFFN evolved out of the many years of IPTV's broadcast of *Doctor Who*, since 1972 in fact. In its time, I and many other Iowegians were treated to *Red Dwarf*, *Blake's 7*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Star Cops*, *Neverwhere*, *Day of the Triffids*, *Space Island One*, and *The Invisible Man* (with a tiny Deborah Watling as a child!). The quality of these shows varied wildly, but *Red Dwarf* and *Doctor Who* remained throughout. (*Red Dwarf* was admittedly a little more 'sexy' than *Doctor Who* and would get more viewer response and financial support than *Doctor Who*.) This was a hell of an amazing thing to have for someone who was as Anglophilic and Sci-Fi-o-philic as myself. We also had a presenter who would write his own intros and banter for each block of shows, called Mike Frisbee – more about him another time.

An active fan created a webpage for it, <http://www.sffn.com> (still there for posterity, though dead to updates), with unofficial broadcast schedules, links to official and fan websites, and a message forum. It also directly led to our statewide Iowa fan club, the Universal Network of Iowan Timelords, or 'UNIT.'

SFFN.com also had a chat room where many fans would gather while watching the show. There was a huge buzz going on at MIPTV in April (world TV market in Cannes, discussed in May 2010 issue) about the two-screen viewer experience, around Twitter and a telly. Well, alls I got to say about dat is: we Iowegian (and some Nebraskan, Kansan, Minnesotan, Missourian, etc.) British sci-fi fans were doing the two-screen experience pretty actively ten years ago, once a week, from about 1999 to 2002.

SFFN was a complete anomaly of public television in the USA at the time, and is even more so now because it no longer exists. In those halcyon days, we fannish types knew that if we got enough people asking for a show, there was a pretty safe bet that IPTV would get it for us. Of course we had to pay for it, as public broadcasting is supported voluntarily in the USA. But I cannot think of anything that would compare to it on American public television, then or now. (However, we never took the next step and held fan conventions in support of public TV, as a Washington State public TV station did with the now-defunct Anglicon.)

The Doctor Demento Show

I had been meaning to write a bit about the infamous *Dr Demento Show* for a long while. The fandoms of the Midwest in all their varied forms - literary, fantasy, Trekkies, Trekkers, Wholigans, Whovians, comix, sci-fi, TV, film, horror, LARPerS, gamers, etc. - are all also usually quite familiar with filk and parody songs. *The Doctor Demento Show* is just exactly that, syndicated across US radio stations for about 35 or 40 years now. It's where 'Weird Al' Yankovic started his wildly successful career, playing 'Another One Rides the Bus' ('hey, he's gonna sit by YOU!') on his accordion for the show. It was also the first avenue by which I ever heard 'Shaddup You Face*' and I remember being a little shocked to hear 'Frank Pickle' sing it on *The Vicar of Dibley*. I reckon the *Wurzels* have been played on there once or twice, too. It tends to have lots of Anglophiles listening, - again, a lot of overlap with the 'subculture' of sci fi, comix, TV fandoms, etc. - I know particularly Monty Python songs used to get played a lot.

Dr D himself shows up at conventions now and then, and listeners can join The Demento Society, wherein you get a signed photo of Dr D and a CD or two. At least, that's how it was when I joined many years ago. They'd send you 'Basement Tapes' with new material or some popular stuff. Each week people request songs and they can be from any era at all; Tom Lehrer and Stan Freberg certainly were old favourites. At the end of each edition is the Funny Five, where the top five most requested songs of that week are played. Here is his website: <http://www.dremento.com> .

Back in 2003 when our good matey *Doctor Who* turned 40, some sensibly demented fan suggested to Dr D that he should do a tribute show for his 'colleague Doctor Who,' as he ended up phrasing it on the air. Naturally,

'Doctorin' the Tardis' was played. Goodness knows how I heard about it, but I sent him a homemade CD of stuff related to *Doctor Who*, some of which was from *Dead Ringers* with Jon Culshaw doing his Tom Baker impersonations. This wouldn't have been necessarily against type; Dr D tends to generally stray away from spoken word and radio skits and the like, unless it contains music, but as it was a special show, I thought, hey ho, I'll give it a go. I subsequently realised all of those clips must have needed to be licensed from the Beeb, because Dr D didn't play any of them at all. He did play a couple of things which I was well chuffed about, though, which was a totally insane 'Fart Version' of the *Doctor Who* theme which I'm sure I found late one night on Napster, and of course, the wonderful 'Doctor Qui' from Bill Bailey. Ever the rights-conscious individual, when I wrote the letter to enclose with the CD, I actually wrote Bill Bailey's agent's address and phone number so that Dr D could clear it for transmission if needs must. I don't really know if he did, I'm guessing so. He had to bleep the 'sh' word as it is a relatively family show, but consarn it, I was so proud (really the 'Fart Version' of the theme was all I could find that was also 'humorous' to include and was a song! ;-). He even credited me on the air but unfortunately pronounced my name incorrectly. (I'm sorta used to it after all these years.) I'm fairly certain that nobody would have heard 'Doctor Qui' on *The Doctor Demento Show* before that time.

So, ya'll, what should we send Dr D for Dr W's 50th birthday?

* For a hilariously funny couple of minutes, check out Samuel L. Jackson reciting the lyrics to 'Shuddup You Face' on Wossy's show. <http://tinyurl.com/jacksondolce> .

Your Fairly Resident (Iowegian) Yank's UK to US Dictionary (Continued)

Some of these may be quite obvious, some not. As before, absolutely no celebrity endorsements of epithets implied (merely Uatu the Watcher, here):

Plaster/Elastoplast = Band-Aid

'Band Aid' = 'We Are the World' (*for better or worse!*)

chiropodist = podiatrist

'Made redundant' = 'Laid off;' redundancies = layoffs

superannuation = pension

DavLav = Don's Jons, & another apparently separate co., Don's Johns!

crisps = chips

chips = fries

mate = friend (*stereotypically, Americans know Britons & Australians mean this*)

sexual partner = mate (*i.e. breeding, 'mated with;' not used to mean 'friend'*)

[British] Summer Time = Daylight Savings Time

Blankety Blank = *Match Game*; *Family Fortunes* = *Family Feud*

(both gameshow formats now appear to be owned by Fremantle Media)

Formula 1 Theme = 'The Chain' by Fleetwood Mac

Top Gear Theme = 'Jessica' by The Allman Brothers

chemist = pharmacist (a 'chemist' works in a university lab)

Note: We used to use 'drug' as in, 'Sun Drug' or 'Drug Town' brand/chain, but the 'War on Drugs' subtly changed it to 'pharmacy'

paracetamol = acetaminophen

Anadin = Anacin (odd but true)

braces = suspenders (braces are only on your teeth)

suspenders = suspenders

innit = idn't it; innat = idn't at

fag = cigarette

faggots = meatballs

poof, pofter = fag

bum = fanny

fanny = uh, not many polite terms for this (not that 'fanny' is), so I'll refrain

Also, 'shag' is not as offensive in the US as it is in the UK, nor is 'bugger.'

Doctor Who Finale

I liked it. After one viewing: shades of the *Red Dwarf* episode 'White Hole,' Genesis 1, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, and *FAQ About Time Travel*.

In regard to *Confidential*: I'm glad Moffat stated (paraphrasing) that Americans would be the first to flip out if anyone Americanised *Doctor Who* too much. But I do have to wonder what he may mean by 'Americanising.' If he means too much interference from network execs, well, hey, he's the first to be in a position to complain after his experience with NBC execs royally screwing over *Coupling*, and I don't blame him a bit. I also wonder how annoyed the accountants are getting when Matt and Karen quote pop songs, and next thing you know, the producers (think they?) have to licence the songs they're quoting and play them.

It's really interesting to note how Moffat is so much like JNT in his (or marketing execs') promotion of the show, with the *Doctor Who* tour bus and doing screenings in New York. Roll on *Doctor Who USA Tour – The Sequel!*

For the Regal Beagles and Legal Eagles

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