

LARRIKIN

LARRIKIN 1, JUNE 1986, an attempt to be not only frequent but also entertaining, is edited and published by Perry Middlemiss (GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA) and Irwin Hirsh (2/416 Dandenong Rd., Caulfield North, Victoria 3161 AUSTRALIA). This fanzine is available for written contributions - articles or letters of comment but keep them short and pithy - or fanzines in trade (one to each of us please). In other words the standard old boring stuff. Other than the obvious, this fanzine supports lots of things like Greenpeace and Amnesty International. The obvious? Of course it just has to be

IRWIN HIRSH FOR GUFF

SPORTS INJURIES

- Perry -

A few years back I eventually came to the conclusion that indulging in outdoor sports was a pastime for mugs or cripples, or both. Sure indoor sports can result in the odd spot of bodily damage but not to the extent found outside.

The incident that really drove this notion home occurred in a game of six-a-side cricket. The rules of this game are the same as those used by the big boys except that each side has only six players as opposed to the normal eleven. If you have any knowledge of the Great Game you will realise that restricting a side to only six players causes a few problems in terms of field placements. Once you have a bowler and place a wicketkeeper the other four guys are going to be in for a lot of running around chasing leather. (Maybe that's why they only have four overs per innings). Position one fieldsman at each of point, cover, mid-wicket and square-leg and let the poor buggers fend for themselves is the general philosophy.

I was scheduled to play two games early in the morning of this one-day competition and being more than a trifle slow brainwise first thing in the morning I had allowed myself to be placed somewhere in the outfield. Needless to say, by the end of the first game, I was stuffed. While the flesh was decidedly weak at this point, the recent unprecedented bloodflow had kick-started the brain into gear working on the problem of the excessive physical exertion. Before long the solution to my difficulties was clear - keep wickets.

The way I figured it all I had to do was stand back about ten metres to the medium-pacers and about two to the spinners. Piece of cake really. Take the ball easily if it was missed - which wasn't going to happen too often as this was actually a hit-and-run slog match - or take a pleasant little stroll up to the stumps to receive the ball if the batsman connected well. If a sharp single was taken I'd do my best to get up over the bails even though I didn't have Buckley's chance of making it. I could then roundly abuse the fieldsman for missing the stumps

with his throw and the fieldsman on the other side of the wicket for failing to backup properly. I was on safe ground here of course as I had thrown down the stumps on one occasion and backed-up effectively on a couple of others in the first game. On top of all this I didn't even have to bowl.

The first over of the game went uneventfully without me having to do anything silly. This was probably because our bowler was being hit all over the park. Come the second over and our captain decided to put on our best bowler in the hope of curbing the run-rate. The first two deliveries didn't help the plan along much as they were clouted into the covers by wildly agricultural shots rarely seen past schoolboy cricket. So far, so good.

The bowler, by the way, was one Philip Ryan (may he rest in hell) who wasn't taking this treatment very well. He must have decided to assert his authority over the batsman as his next run-up was much longer and his delivery much shorter than previous. The extra pace also helped but the bloke must have been in need of glasses or something. What he had failed to notice was that the batsman facing him was left-handed. The ball would have been great if delivered to a right-hander but was just easy pickings for a leftie who, as any cricket watcher will tell you, are suckers for the hook shot. Seeing the ball dropped short and down the leg-side as it was, and remembering how this guy had thumped the last couple I could imagine the ball clearing the backward square-leg fence without much trouble. No such luck unfortunately.

Having played a lot of hockey as a goalkeeper during my student years I had a few reflexes left over that I had forgotten about. One of these was already moving my feet across to the leg-side to take the ball as the almighty swipe of the bat only registered a faint snick. This slight touch was just enough to push it out of my reach so another of those fabled reflexes took over and I found myself flying through the air Rodney Marsh style. Our mate Rodney would have dragged in the catch without any trouble at all and then executed a neat tumble to accept the applause of the crowd. None of that malarky here. I actually got to the ball but couldn't hold it. I was flying sideways by this stage with nowhere to go but down. And down I went - rather like a wet rag I suspect. Why I had to put my hand out to cushion my fall I will never know. Whatever the reason, I hadn't counted on the fact that, in addition to going sideways, I was also going backwards. To cut a long story short I stopped my spectacular dive with the base of my thumb.

Thumbs have a tendency to consider such treatment overly harsh and mine was no exception to the rule. The bloody thing popped out of joint and then, thankfully, back in again. It's never been right since. So, isn't it any wonder I turn and run whenever anyone proposes a game of social cricket. When you get to my age parts of you have a bad tendency to come loose and drop off.

This reminds me of an incident during the Australian Rugby Union tour of Europe a few years back - you know, the one where

the Wallabies creamed everything that came their way. In the Test Match against the Poms, one of the Australians left out of the side (a Queenslander as I recall) was helping the ABC commentators with their live television broadcast. Anyway, a scrum goes down, the ball is cleared and this Pommie player starts running towards the sideline with his face all contorted. Not being slow off the mark the camera boys got onto this pretty fast and concentrated on the player with a trainer in attendance.

"I think he's dislocated a finger," says the ABC bloke. Close shot on a finger sticking out sideways.

"Must be a bit of a wimp," says the player, "otherwise he would have popped it back in himself."

Ah, they breed 'em tough up North.

PARTY TIME The time seemed right for a party. Wendy and I had the excuse of our first anniversary, we - Irwin - never had the flat-warming we'd promised we would, and, after six months of working 60 hours a week, I would be on holidays.

Once we decided on a date things went slowly. It took a while for us to ask Danielle, our six-year-old niece and flower-girl at our wedding, to do a drawing for the invitation. Then another delay before we letrasetted in the details of time, date, etc., and a further few days before I photocopied enough copies to go round. By the time we began handing out the invites everyone was receiving a late notice, what with the first invite going out only two weeks before the night.

Except for various family members the first person to arrive was Denise, a good half hour early. She offered to help prepare things but there was now nothing to be done, so Denise and I sat down in the lounge room to be entertained by Danielle and her three-year-old brother Rodney. Danielle, a regular Olga Korbut, provided us with a series of cartwheels, backflips, and somersaults, while Rodney tried hard to keep up. Fortunately boredom at his failures took hold before frustration and he happily decided that he'd enjoy running circuits of the flat. While Danielle continued to show her attempts to emulate a petite Russian, Rodney proceeded to show the spirit Lasse Viren displayed at the Munich Olympics. It is hoped that Rodney develops the balance necessary for taking corners before he destroys too many walls, pieces of furniture, or his body.

The advertised starting time of 8 o'clock ticked by and it wasn't too long before we had a party on our hands. You know how it is, you'd be chatting with someone and then be called away by the ringing of the doorbell. At least it made a change from the scenario of sitting around for a hour-and-a-half waiting for everyone - anyone - to arrive.

Peter and Daniel Collins walked in carrying a large bag which just had to contain a present. I shook my head.

"Look, I told you yesterday..." I began to say but Peter interrupted me.

"Paper, right?", and with that he slowly dug his hand into the bag and brought out a piece of neatly folded origami. A few seconds later I was running around the flat juggling four origami structures, trying not to crush them.

The day before Peter had asked us what we would like as a present, the latest in a line of questions which had made us wish we'd never mentioned the word "anniversary" on the invitations. It isn't that the thought wasn't appreciated, it was just that we thought it unnecessary. Still, I must thank those who gave us those bottles of port, and champagne, and so that we could drink it all Marc and Cath Ortlieb gave us a pair of coffee mugs. Sherryl Ryan also made use of the paper theme and gave us a special print, while my sister Anouk, and Simon and Bronwyn Trumble finally provided evidence that I was being listened to, even if they were more than a year late. For some reason no-one had taken note of my request for "books and records" when it came to giving us an engagement or wedding present.

At about 9.30 Danielle and Rodney changed into pyjamas and went to bed. The plan was that they would go to sleep in our bedroom until their parents wanted to go home, but 20 minutes later there were these two little people running underfoot. I stopped Danielle and asked her what gives.

"Couldn't sleep," she replied, and ran off for more fun.

It was Danielle who won the night's fashion stakes. Everyone seemed to notice her style of dress, particularly the slippers. I'll have to enquire as to whether the sale of slippers with Cabbage Patch Dolls sprouting out of the toe have increased since the party.

While people were noticing Danielle's slippers, Rodney was noticing Andrew Brown's height. Wendy and Karl, Rodney's father, were particularly embarrassed about Rodney, as he was staring, wide-eyed at Andrew. Albeit from the vantage point of behind people's legs or around corners, for he was scared of someone so tall. Wendy went over to Andrew to apologise, and Andrew just took it all in his stride. At that point Wendy decided that some introductions were in order and called Rodney over. At first he kept his distance, so Andrew got down on his knees, put his arm around Wendy, and smiled sweetly at Rodney. I left the room just as Rodney burst into laughter, no doubt seeing the humour of someone on their knees, about the same height as his aunt.

At one stage Anouk and her boyfriend Andrew called us over and chuckled over the baby photos which we'd placed on display. They particularly liked the misspelling of my name. "Hey, look," cried Anouk between laughs, "Irvin, Vendy and Andrew."

Cath Ortlieb had noticed the photos and asked me about the inscription at the bottom. I explained that WIZO is the Women's International Zionist Organisation, which raises money for various Israeli charities. Each year each group sponsors a child in whose name fundraising functions are held. I was sponsored in 1961, while Wendy was sponsored in 1962 and 1965. "I see," said Cath, "sort of like a fan fund."

Oh yes, my GUFF candidacy was discussed many times during the night. Marc told me that Valma Brown, particularly, spent a lot of time at Swancon XI, the previous weekend, campaigning. At that point Justin Ackroyd joined the conversation, "Yes, and she offered me the use of Leigh's body." I still have the image of him saying that firmly in my mind, but I'm unable to decide if corruption is to play a big part in the current race, and if it is, whether it means Valma has won or if it is now between Jean Weber and I.

The hours of 12 - 2 were a mirror image of 8 - 10, with people leaving in the same stream that they arrived. The last people to leave were Steve, Debbie, Denise, Walter, Nomi, and Ronny, our best friends of the last few months. The eight of us sat around for an hour and as they left we made arrangements for the next weekend. This is, I guess, how it would be. One effect of my working 60 hours a week was to reduce the motivation to go out with people we hadn't seen for quite a while. It was easier to keep making arrangements to see the same small group from one week to the next than to get on the telephone and contact other friends. The thing I most looked forward to was the chance to catch up with so many of my friends, and it was this aspect which I enjoyed most about the party. That there was a nice, agreeable air about the evening only makes me pleased about the night.

A NIGHT AT THE ROKPRA

- Perry -

I was first introduced to the music of Lloyd Cole and the Commotions by a friend when I was living in Canberra. Maybe introduced isn't the right word. This mate of mine used to thrash the album something rotten whenever I went around to his place. I suppose he was just trying to convince someone else of the music's worth as it was getting very little airplay at the time. In any event, in those types of situations you either hate the record immediately or it grows on you over time like a mould. As I didn't hate it straight away the album ended up in my collection before long, from where, not infrequently, it would appear to torture my friends. I guess it was just that sort of music.

Part of the record's appeal lay in the fact that the songs' lyrics weren't printed on the cover. When a songwriter starts dropping names like Norman Mailer, Simone de Beauvoir and Eve Marie Saint into his compositions I at least have my curiosity piqued.

So when, over a Chinese meal one evening, Ms R. stated that she was interested in going to see the group but couldn't find anyone who was similarly disposed I offered to buy the tickets and accompany her.

One of the good things about working in the city - and in the public service in particular - is that it provides me with the opportunity to skip out to lunch before the general rush starts. This is most useful where buying concert tickets is concerned. The ticket sellers at the Bass agency I frequent have a tendency to be noticable only by their absence for a few hours after midday. Couple this with the throng of eager punters lining up with sweaty palms, wads of the folding stuff and with no idea of what they want and you might as well pack a cut lunch because you are going to be there all day if you're not careful.

There are few things less interesting than listening to someone trying to make a decision about what night they can go to the show in question, who they are going to sit with, where they are going to sit and so on and so on. I had hoped that by going to lunch early on this particular day I might have missed this form of street theatre, and would have if I hadn't picked the wrong queue. After witnessing at least five minutes of classic prevarication from four coffin candidates (during which no tickets were purchased) I made it to the desk. Two minutes and fifty bucks later I had two third row seats. God knows how I got them. I knew that this was the second concert to go on sale but it was only two weeks before the performance. I seem to remember the old duck behind the counter muttering something about the orchestra pit which might have had something to do with it but which meant nothing to me at the time. Whatever, I wasn't about to argue the toss.

As you might expect not much happened over the next few weeks leading up to the concert. I bought the band's second album and wasn't overly impressed. This did not bode well for the performance.

On the morning of the relevant day I happened to come across a review in the paper of the band's first concert a couple of nights before. The thing was so small I would have been hard pressed to find it if I was actually looking for it. The reviewer gave the indication in the piece that he was reasonably impressed with the product on display without being totally enraptured. That seemed to be okay. It's not too often that you get to feel that way so that didn't bother me too much. His next point did however. It transpires that there must have been a bit of a rush at the stage at one point by all the thirteen-year-old Madonna clones in the audience. Cole was somewhat taken aback by this display according to the reviewer. I could understand how he felt. The prospect of all those beauty spots, pearl necklaces and bare pubescent midriffs rushing at you would be more than a little daunting. I have a few friends who will tell you, with a slight tear in their eye, that in those situations they would just lie back, think of the image and let it all happen. Not me mate. It might be interesting to watch - in a purely academic sense you

understand - but I wouldn't want to be caught up in it. It was at that time that I remembered that I would be sitting only three rows from the front. It looked like I was going to be in the thick of it after all. I'm too old for this sort of shit I thought.

So, feeling more than a little apprehensive about the whole idea, I accompanied Ms R. to the Melbourne Concert Hall. We turned up with plenty of time to spare, as is my usual style, and spent it having a beer and a fag and checking out our fellow concert-goers. Ms R. commented on the fact that audiences seemed to be getting older every time she went to something like this and, looking around, I tended to agree with her. Maybe things wouldn't be so bad after all.

The Australian support act (Cattle Truck for you completists) came on and played a very lively half hour set. Not much movement at the station during this period although the guy in the seat next to me was bouncing around a bit.

The interval came around and we went out for a walk in the large foyer. The number of ankle-biters had greatly increased so I didn't stay outside long. Obviously the older members of the audience came early to see both bands and to get their money's worth while the younger ones were typically only interested in the overseas commodity.

Back inside and within 30 seconds of the lights going down we were surrounded by the aforementioned clones. Luckily we had a row of seats behind us and one seat between us and the aisle so at least we didn't have them breathing down our necks but it did seem to reduce the amount of breathing space in our general vicinity.

It was obvious right from the start that the theatre management wasn't going to put up with any of the youngsters dancing around the front of the stage. Heaven forbid that they should have a good time. They achieved this by placing a couple of Cro-Magnons either side of the small area between the front row of seats and the stage. At our end the bouncers consisted of a short straight-looking guy whose only claim to fame was a sizeable beer gut - good gap-plugging material I guess - and an incredibly hard-faced woman who looked like a Nazi prison guard. I reckon you won't have much trouble chopping wood with a face like that.

Oh yes, the band. Well, they took a long time to get moving, which probably had more to do with the lack of audience response than anything else, but delivered quite well in the end. The funniest thing of the night concerned a young girl standing in the aisle behind us who had been having a good time yelling out amusing things to the band during the breaks. One old bloke in suit and tie a few seats along turned around at one point and asked her to keep quiet. She just looked at him and told him to go take a running jump at himself. It's good to see that the old Aussie vernacular has a life in it yet.

AN EDITORIAL MANIFESTO OF SORTS

- Irwin -

Every time I start working on a new issue of my fanzine Sikander I do so with a special sort of feeling.

It is one of creative anticipation of the end result. To be starting a new fanzine, with a co-editor, this feeling is only heightened. Will this fanzine work? Will we work well as a team? Questions only time will tell.

For some time I've wanted to try my hand at the "ensmalled" breed of fanzine, but I knew that if it was to be published to a frequent schedule it could only be done with someone as a co-editor. When I first considered this notion there was no currently active fanzine fan in Melbourne with whom I felt comfortable about the idea. Then in late 1985 Perry moved from Canberra to Melbourne and with the move came the indication that he was getting back into fanzines. He had started to write film reviews for The Notional, and, yes, he would write something for Sikander. Some of you may remember Perry from his fanzine work in the late-'70s/ early-'80s. He was only fanzine active for about 3 years but in that time he edited some solid fanzines for the Adelaide Uni SF Club, and, with Helen Swift, produced some excellent apazines. It took a while for me to realise it but here was the co-editor I'd been looking for.

So here we are.

The temptation is to now provide an editorial manifesto of aims and objectives, but I tend to believe that it is better to do rather than say. I think it is enough to state that this fanzine will be monthly, 20 grams an issue and overseas copies will travel par avion. I have every intention to continue publishing Sikander - how's your article going Perry? - and I should explain that the Larrikin mailing list will operate separately from that of Sikander.

In any case we trust you enjoy this fanzine, and remember to send along those locs and trades.

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