



The Adventures
of Trufans
in Glitter City
Silvercon III, April 1994

By Arnie Katz

The 1812 Overture

Excitement gripped Las Vegrants. With Silvercon less than a week away, the coming confluence of trufans monopolized all conversations.

Like most local fandoms, the majority of Vegans know little about national/international fanzine fandom. The Vegrants, though, are more knowledgeable. They'd been anticipating the return of Silvercon veterans like the Burbees, Retsler, Lichtman, Fitch, Widner and Epeer (all much beloved by Vegas Fandom) for months, and looking forward to meeting pro GoH Greg Benford and fan GoH Ted White for the first time. As if that wasn't enough, we'd started hearing from major fans who'd decided to come see Las Vegas Fandom in its unnatural habitat. As the list of notables grew, expectations soared.

True to form, Joyce sat there scribbling lists. Besides the menus for the Thursday night pre-con party at our place and the FAPA party Friday night at the hotel, Joyce couldn't help toting up the human treasure hurtling toward Glitter City.

"We've got, like, seventeen people," she said, waving the list at the rest of us. "I can't believe they're all coming here!"

And indeed it *was* hard to believe that our newish (and neoish) fandom was to be visited by so many BNFs. With one exception, Vegas fandom has been fortunate in its visitors, but adding the Steffans, rich brown, Lenny Bailes, Bill Donaho, John D. Berry, and Andy Hooper to the impending influx was giddy. Anyone who heard us all burbling semi-incoherently about our coming good fortune might have had trouble extracting much meat from our blather, but they'd sure as hell know we were all in a good mood.

My project for this Silvercon was **The Ted White Sampler**, which turned out to be a 46-page collection of some of Ted's finest fanwriting. I got so much help, both from the Vegrants and out-of-towners, that I'm already planning the second volume for the

near future.

Everything was going well until the copier developed problems as we finished running off the final contributions for Apa V, the local monthly distributed at Las Vegrants meetings. We got an emergency service call, but the machine really didn't work right after that.

Thursday, the Trufan Stayed Busy

The idea of working until noon received much lip service at Katz Kunkel Worley, Inc. I, for one, devoutly believed it would be so. I woke up early and started right in on a feature for **Electronic Games**.

I'd forgotten to allow for the fact that all our full-time employees are fans. By 10, we had a house full of fans vibrating like human tuning forks with pre-con excitement.

Surrendering to the inevitable, I packed away business stuff, tidied my office, and prepared to accompany JoHn Hardin to the airport to pick up Ted White.

Flights were running late at McCarran. JoHn stayed with the car while I patrolled the pavement outside the exits near the baggage claim.

"With your shades, standing there, I first thought you might be a young mafioso, waiting at the airport for his Don." Ted said when we spotted each other. I kissed his ring, threw his bag in the trunk, and we sped off to Jackie Gaughan's Plaza.

Despite the super-fast check-in, we ended up spending more time than we'd budgeted for this leg of the trip. Once we got to Ted's room -- 1111 for numerologists -- we sat around and talked about fandom.

In part, I bemoaned how my image has been... enhanced... during my absence from fandom. To all the glorious (and vain-glorious) things I did as a fiery young fan, flawed memories have added several more deeds to my rap sheet.

"Examples, examples," they pressed.

I offered two.

Almost as soon as I re-entered fandom, I



got a letter accusing me of causing Creath Thorne's gafiation by snubbing him at St. Louiscon. The fan who told me this even offered excuses, such as my eyesight, for how I could've given inadvertent offense. I had a theory, too: it would've been hard to snub Creath, a fan I've always liked and admired, at a convention I didn't attend.

The other involves Baycon, the 1968 worldcon held at the Claremont. I walked into a convention party and heard a friend of mine regaling the room with the story of how I brought the capsules of then-legal THC (or then-equivocal hog tranquillizer) to the convention and sowed psychedelic fannishness like Johnny Appleseed.

This was such an appealing story that, for a moment, I was tempted to let it stand. Reportorial honesty won out. I provided the raconteur with the name of the Los Angeles fan who actually held that distinction.

JoHn and I stopped at the Subway Station. Joyce and my home in Northwest Vegas, just long enough to greet Art Widner, and get a little sercon about the Future of Fandom. I hated to leave a lively conversation about fanhistory, but I also wanted to welcome Lenny Bailes and rich brown to Las Vegas. Rich was arriving a few minutes after 4, and Lenny approximately a half-hour later.

"I've got to leave," I told Art and Ted. "But I'll give you a topic for while I'm gone. Science Fiction Fandom is neither science fiction nor fandom -- discuss among yourselves." I made a stirring motion with my hand.

"Are you fah-clemp?" Art asked as I exited stage left.

Both planes landed late. As a result, rich and Lenny reached the rendezvous point within minutes of each other. We got them registered and the four of us headed for 3701 Bridgeglen,

JoHn was the embodiment of driving safety as we zoomed along the freeway. The

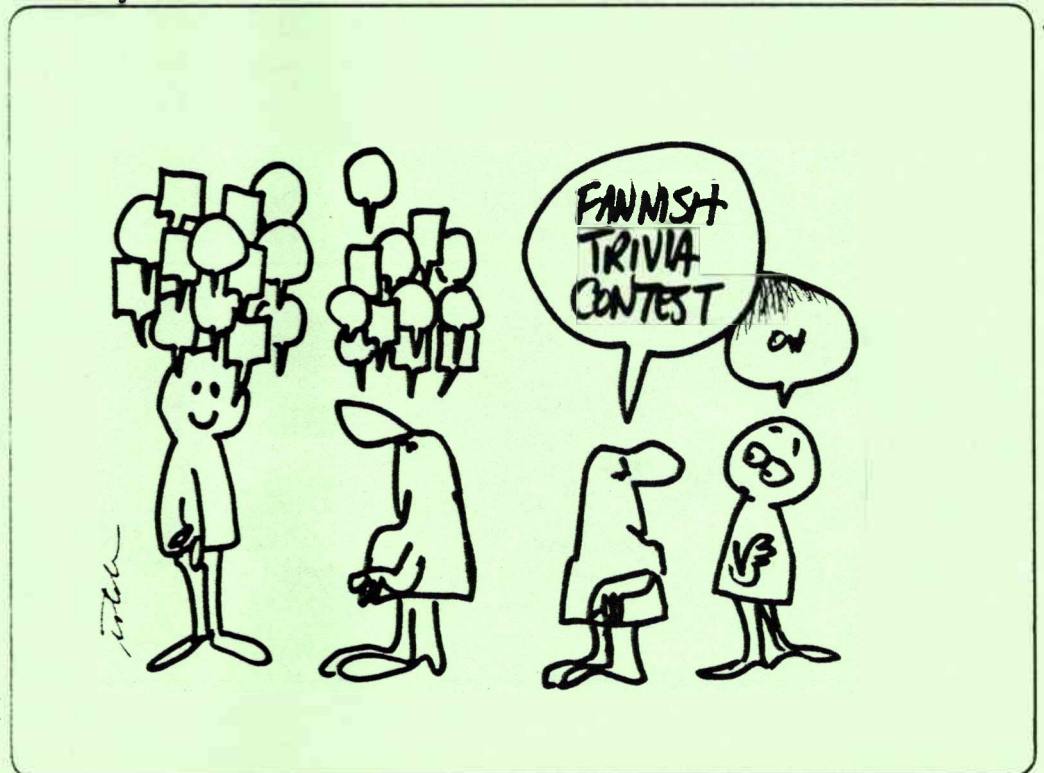
guy who hit our car from behind wasn't nearly as on top of the situation. In fact, he was so drunk that he had a lot of trouble locating the name of the insurance company when we stopped to talk to him after the accident.

By the time we got back, the party had exploded out of the livingroom to fill the house and back yard. During our absence, Bill Donaho, Andy Hooper, and Ken Forman had augmented the ranks of trufandom. I hadn't seen Bill since a party at his home after the 1966 Westercon. He looks a lot healthier these days.

I may've stunned Andy Hooper with my latest scheme to make this a more perfect fanworld: rename fandom. "If you're trying to drum up interest in a product, you've got to put it in an attractive package," I told him.

This is heresy to Andy, a sincere science fiction fan in his soul. I once heard him refer, in a conversation with Joyce, to "the mystic brotherhood that binds all fans."

That's beautiful. Probably, things were better when fans shared that vision. But



can this principle sustain fanzine fandom?

My attempts at humor in "Needed: Persecution" mask a serious point. In former times, reading science fiction and fantasy was a stigma that turned young people into alienated social pariahs, raw

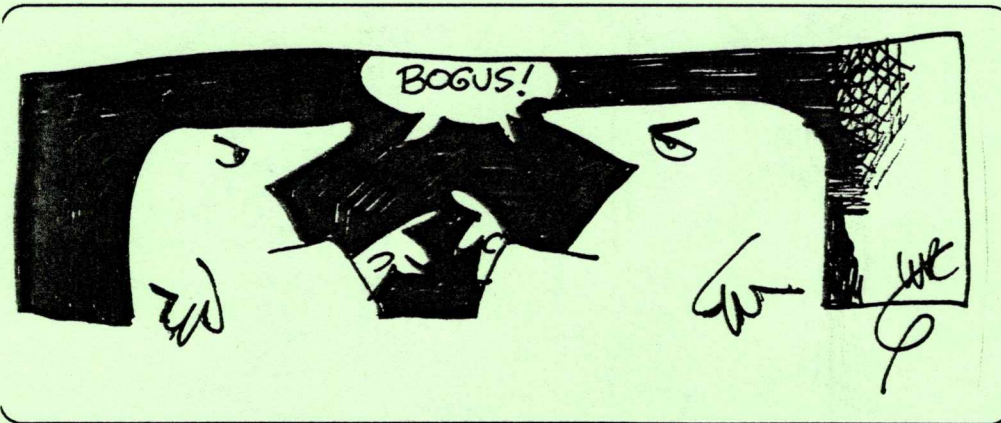
actifan material. Now sf is so acceptable that no special mindset is required. Thanks to the proliferation of electronic sf, it's even possible to become a fan without being literate.

As a media fan, I don't see this as particularly ruinous to fandom as a whole. As a fanzine fan, I worry that SF fandom is attracting fewer people who meet fanzine fandom's "entrance requirements."

SF fandom has no recruitment problem. Today's Westercons are twice as big as most worldcons in the 1960s. It's fanzine fandom that cries for new blood. Trawling the pro-zines and conventions for fanzine fan prospects are good ideas, but I recommend a different approach. It won't draw in a lot of fans, but the ones it attracts will all become fanzine fans.

Instead of seeking commonality in SF, let's look for people who share our fanzine dreams. Members of other publishing fandoms who've grown tired with the sercon subject of that fandom might be ripe for our group. We have a rich environment with lots of feedback that should appeal to anyone who wants to produce fanzines.

I'm talking to someone like that now, an erudite electronic gamer named Greg Bemis. We'll see if Greg, his girlfriend Tara, and coeditor Jonah Jackson take the plunge. Their **High Density** is one of the better electronic gaming fanzines (roughly equivalent to a "6" relative to our fanzines),



and they seem open to our more wide-ranging mix of editorial subjects.

That's how I come to my not-quite-facetious proposal to rename our fandom. Instead of thinking of ourselves as an adjunct to science fiction fandom, could we not with equal justice present ourselves as a segment of personal publishing fandom? As little SFcentered material as

runs in most of our zines, why set up interest in SF as a litmus test?

Rich brown's scan of the wall ornaments quickly brought him to the three framed pages of the first **Quip** cover. Seeing Dr. Gafia standing there regarding his toon counterpart kindled nostalgic thoughts.

We regaled JoHn Hardin with stories about Rich's past gafiations and the fanzine sales which accompanied them. Those, I explained, were a two-edged sword. Rich sold great fanzines at prices low enough to tempt even a paragon of fannish virtue. Balancing that was the absolute certainty that he would not gafiate.

Perhaps in some earlier fannish incarnation not well known to me, rich brown gafiated for days, months, even years at a time. There may've been times when friends despaired of saving him for fandom. It is entirely possible that he actually did things which caused fans to dub him Dr. Gafia.

By the time I came under his fannish tutelage in the mid-1960s, rich was an indisputably perennial fan. Even as a callow youth (a period which lasted into my thirties...), I had enough insight to figure out that rich brown will never truly gafiate. He has cast his lot with us for the Duration.

So I never greeted rich's gafiation announcements with the proper consternation. This put me in a peculiar position with regard to his distress fanzine sales. "He

used to make it tough on me," I creebed to JoHn. "He'd threaten to sell them to other people, fans who were Unworthy to own those fanzines, if I didn't agree to buy them."

Rich then told how he'd taught me that he meant business when he sold fanzines, whatever my opinion of the

permanence of his gafia. When I declined to buy his fanzines, saying that he'd want them in a week after he returned to fandom, rich took them along with us on the Great Fanoclast Trek (to Midwestcon and Westercon) of 1965.

4 We rode along, side by side, rich clothed in his gafia and me in my certainty that anyone who'd go to two conventions on

successive weekends was not a gafiote in the usual understanding of that term. He hauled those fanzines all the way to the West Coast. I sat inches away from those precious fanzines for every mile of the trip.

Well, not every mile. Only half the miles. When we got to California, rich sold the lot to Greg Benford. And when in future times rich again announced gafia, I knew he wasn't bluffing.

If other con reports say that Joyce and I have a messy house with boxes piled high against bare walls and a damn car right in the middle of the living room, don't believe them. Many of the fanzine fans gravitated to our garage, which Joyce calls "KKW's soft white underbelly," where they stood around our washer-dryer combo in loquacious, if somewhat sercon, discussion.

Greg Benford flattered me by asking for help on the subject of baseball, probably after noticing the shelves of books and memorabilia in my office. "Flattered," because our subsequent conversation made it clear that Greg has done a ton of research on the subject. I was impressed. (It's important to pause, occasionally, to be impressed by one's friends.)

As Andy Hooper personally rid the universe of about seventeen interstellar empires in his marathon game of **Star Control** (Accolade/Genesis), those watching him obliterate the armed might of a hundred suns started talking about interactive electronic entertainment. Greg described his experience with Time Warner on an astronomy-centered edutainment project, and dissatisfactions that caused him to back away. I sympathized, but also suggested that it was time to sell the electronic rights to his intellectual properties. Wheeler-dealer Barry Friedman (he is the dicknose in **Folly**) is on the case, so Virtual Benford will someday cruise the digital highway.

It was about 2:00 when Joyce rounded up the last guests (Ted, Andy, Bill Donaho, Lenny) and drove them back to the hotel. I cleaned up a bit. When she returned, we sat down for a short chat with Art Widner, who had reserved our spare room for the night. (Memo to beautiful women: Widner does not have perpetual title to this room).

Though I was having trouble winding down from our record-sized Social, I knew I'd better get some sleep. Joyce dragged

me off to the bedroom before I soliloquized the night away..

Friday,
the Trufan
Slept Late

The first thing I did, when I woke at 7:30, was pull the unconsumed sodas out of our tub so we could bathe.

As I sat there, sorting the cans in the can as it were, I noticed a striking shift in brand preference. For any marketing directors for leading soft drink companies reading this, thirsting for data about what those alienated trendsetters of fanzine fandom drink, I am ready with a Full Report.

As I sorted the sodas onto cardboard flats, it became apparent that we had an inordinate number of Coca-Colas left. And though we'd started with more Pepsis than Cokes, not a single one remained!

In the eternal struggle between Pepsi and Coke, Las Vegas has switched sides.

Crossed the line.

Gone over the hill.

Turned coat.

The former gargantuan Coke guzzlers have abandoned The Real Thing and joined the Pepsi Generation.

A lesser analyst might connect the Pepsi tide sweeping this young and impressionable fan center with Ted White's arrival in Las Vegas. There'd be veiled references to the Group Mind (the cabal, not the fanzine).

Assuredly, it played a role. No one could deny some causality. Even leaving aside possible effects of the Group Mind (the fan zombies, not the fanzine), the proximity of Ted White to a supply of soft drinks guarantees some increase in Pepsi Cola consumption.

Yet to attribute the lopsided Pepsi preference solely to Ted White (and it is Untrue that he can empty a can of Pepsi Cola without popping the top) is a gross simplification. Even allowing for some increased Pepsi consumption due to a desire to emulate Silvercon 3's Fan Guest of Honor, it would be wrong to give Ted all the credit.

No, I think we have to look behind Ted White to the Secret Master of Vegas Soft Drinks, Laurie Yates. Disdaining the whispered blandishments of that Caliph of Carbonated Beverages, Moshe Feder, Laurie has championed the supremacy of that other bubbling brown liquid. "Pepsi Cola hits the spot," she is sometimes heard to

exclaim. "Twelve full ounces, that's a lot!"

As she continues her search for the sodaholic's Holy Grail, the world's largest drink bottle, Laurie has shown the way to dozens of confused Vegas fans. Once unsure about the proper potable, they have one by one embraced Laurie's choice.

And when they saw Ted White sip his Pepsi in the insurgent manner, they knew the Messiah of their refreshment religion had come unto them.

And the Pepsi drinkers rejoiced and became more numerous.

And Ted White looked around him, at the happy multitudes secure in their Pepsi and saw that it was good.

I had to abandon such musings, because some people thought I ought to be able to talk business on the phone merely because it was Friday. Home offices are convenient and comfortable, but their occupants are "reachable." People know I'll be at home even if I'm not working, or its late or early, and they often think their mission is important enough to justify the intrusion. Sometimes I agree, sometimes I don't. But if I don't, I can't act on that impulse. It's business. So I answered the phone and did a lot of mundane stuff until about 10.

The only fan call was from Peggy Burke, who wanted me to know that she wouldn't be at the FAPA party because she had concert tickets. She also said she'd resigned from FAPA, so that may've had something to do with it. I told Peggy I wished she'd kept her membership and trimmed something else. Her other apas are "special interest" groups, and exposure to diverse opinions often helps prospective writers. Besides, I'm not in any of those apas, and I'll miss reading her contributions.

I think it's only fair to the young fans

whom Art Widner ragged relentlessly about their lack of stamina on Thursday night to report that AW slept until after 11. It took much encouragement, plus threats of imminent departure, to rouse him from his bed.

I must also admit that once he was thoroughly awake, Art showed no observable effects from the previous night's partying. He helped us load up the LeBaron and then he headed for the Plaza in his car.

Before we could take the same route, we had one more errand, a wholly pleasant one. We drove to McCarren Airport to collect Bill Rotsler. He'd had some commitments back in Los Angeles and so hadn't been able to come in time for the Thursday party.

Rotsler's got a batch of books in the works, so the conversation on the way to the hotel turned to quotes. I didn't say anything at that moment -- or any other, as far as I know -- which qualified me for inclusion in any of the books, but the Bartlett of the 90's' dissertation on the subject was fascinating. One of the most interesting facts he's discovered relates to advice quotes: the "don't"s are many times more numerous than the "do"s.

It got me thinking about fannish quotes, adages, and aphorisms. There are a lot of famous sayings and catchphrase, but have we neglected the wisdom of admonitory

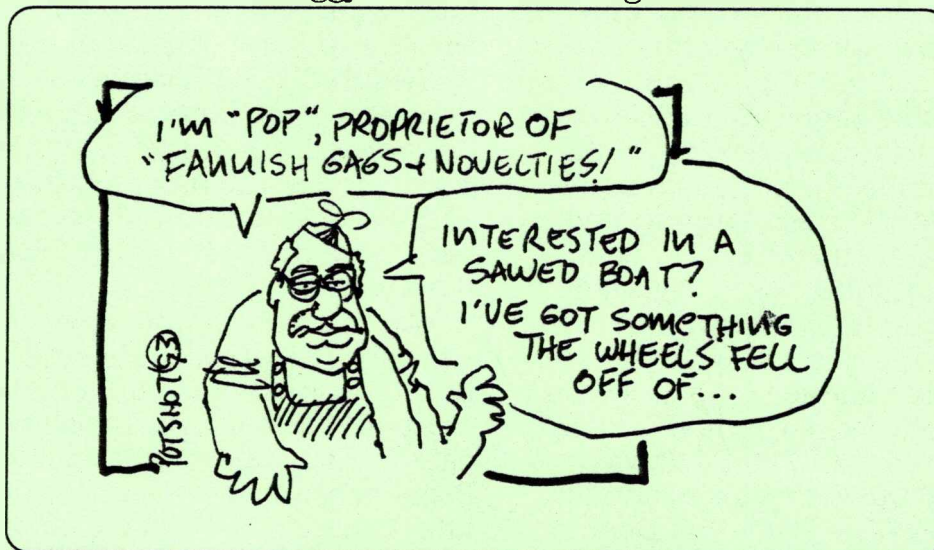
quotes? There really isn't a fannish equivalent for "Haste makes waste" and "an empty barrel makes the most noise."

Maybe I can fill this cultural chasm. How about: "Corflu in a shuttered room brings doom"? Well, this is still un-

der development. Submissions welcome.

We took advantage of the room rates Silvercon negotiated and got a suite. We planned to give at least one party, for FAPA that night and wanted to entertain our friends during the weekend. It cost about the same as a double in most hotels, so we splurged.

They gave us room 1812. We would've



settled in much sooner, but we had to wait politely until our friends squeezed every possible pun from the room number as overture to actually taking possession of the suite. Once they shot their comedic load, serious partying commenced.

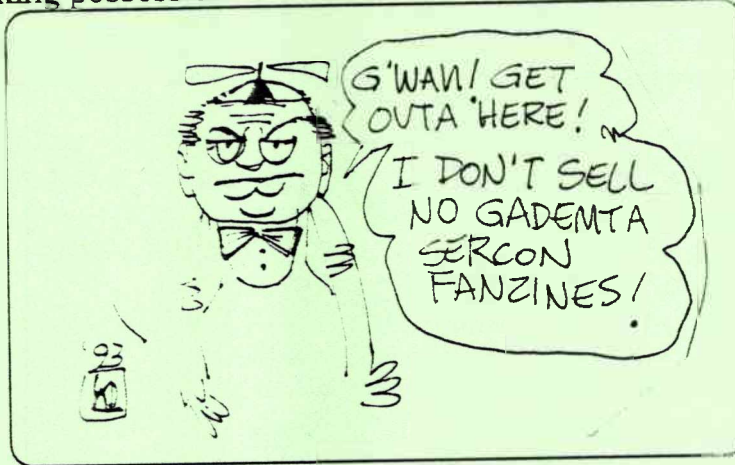
During lunch with Rotsler, Joyce, Ted and Mark Karnes, talk drifted to food. It often does during lunch, which was the point of a Rotsler anecdote. Grania Davidson wanted to interview him for some project, and he agreed to meet her at Los Angeles' famous Canter's delicatessen. Grania, whose generous proportions testify to her hearty appetite, arrived on time and the interview appeared to come off without a glitch. Canter's worked its magic upon her, largely undetected by Bill. When the published article appeared in print, it raved about the delicacies at Canter's and virtually ignored Bill. Gives a new meaning to being called a second banana.

Back in 1812 after lunch, Bill Kunkel, Joyce and I told rich, Andy, Ted and Mark about seeing Katy Sonntag on "Talk Soup," Greg Kinnear's daily talk show highlight compilation.

What shocks Potshot most about the talk shows is the way they seat mortal enemies next to each other on stage. "All of a sudden, the host turns away from the victim," he said, "and shouts, 'bring on the rapist!' Then they act surprised when people go crazy."

Of course, not all confrontations on talk shows erupt into fist fights. There are also incoherent screaming matches and, my favorite, ass waving. Why so many women on these programs express rage by turning around, bending over and shaking it at the hated foe is a mystery to me. Is it a

species memory from primordial times? Whatever the reason, the sight of a 250-lb. woman waving her posterior as she shouts obscenities is not soon forgotten.



Friday night's dinner, set up for the Benfords in advance by Aileen Forman, put Greg, Joan, Ted, Joyce, Rotsler, Lenny, Robert L, Widner, and I around a table at Center Stage. The Plaza's premier restaurant won't be

issuing a cookbook any time soon, but I was pleasantly surprised by my prime rib. The others seemed reasonably happy, too, and I noticed that the check was low for such a large and hungry group.

Rotsler told us about a guide book he'd found that should be issued to every high school student. It's a detailed guide to how to go to a restaurant. It covers everything from proper attire to table manners, plus tips like: "Don't get Chinese Food on Monday because the chef always has the day off" and "Don't order fish on the weekend because there are no deliveries."



Greg got on the subject of HG Wells and what a surprise hearing a recorded speech by the man had been: "He spoke in a little English Man voice." Art Widner then mentioned that Forry Ackerman is one of the few living US fans who has met HG... and about Forry's excellent imitation.

Greg described how Franklin Roosevelt had called in all kind of science fiction writers to get their slant on the future, and that it is recorded that FDR

spent several hours walking the White House ground with HG Wells...

"It shows how far the Presidency has come since then," Greg observed. Then he grew thoughtful. "Maybe the Germans should've won World War II," said Greg, who added something about fighting communism.

"I'm sorry, Greg, but I have a rooting interest for the other side. The Germans gassed almost my whole family." This led to the currently obligatory discussion of "Shindler's List." Since no one said anything profound, I will spare you the recapitulation.

A *DS9* and *Next Gen* discussion mostly focusing on the shortcomings of the show. I instanced the *Next Generation* episode about Dax and the blood oath of vengeance that the previous version of the symbiot pledged with a group of Klingon warriors,

My complaints: after making the audience follow Dax's interminable debate on the moral and ethical ramifications of the blood oath, a *deus ex machina* makes it unnecessary for her to come to a definite conclusion.

Greg mentioned a *Next Gen* episode, which had an unfortunate similarity to a Dick Lupoff short story and a title the same as one of Greg's works, "Timescape."

The committee asked several fans,

Benford's Law: Half the people are below average.

including Joyce and me, to come up with questions for the trivia contest. Thankfully, they also asked Andy Hooper to emcee the Friday evening event. He came up with a lot of good ones in the categories of literature, fandom, media, and authors.

Marcia McDowell and Greg Benford pooled their knowledge to beat Joyce and Peggy by one point. The outcome might've been different if Joyce had remembered the original name of the LASFS or if Greg was less sure that FAPA was started by damon knight.

Two other teams took the stage, including one that didn't seem like ideal contestants, since neither knew much about any of the quiz categories. They were easily dispatched by Woody Bernardi and Lee Reckling.

Then Tragedy struck the Benford-

McDowell tandem. While waiting for their chance to compete in the championship round against Lee and Woody, Marci got a call from work and had to rush off to her eye-in-the-sky job at the Sahara.

Greg Benford, young master of science fiction, was distraught. "I need someone," he pleaded with the audience, "that knows this *Star Trek* shit." Peggy jumped on the bandwagon, and it wasn't long before the team of Benford and Burke were steam-rolling the other finalist team by a 34-17 margin.

Andy and the other question-writers did a good job under demanding circumstances. The audience had a lot of knowledge, but few were even minimally proficient in all four categories. Much credit goes to Andy, as emcee, for making this about the most popular program item of the weekend.

Following the trivia contest came the FAPA party. We had two officers (President Joyce Katz and Secretary Treasurer Robert Lichtman) as well as over 20 past, present, and future FAPAns. Prior to the con, Aileen jokingly suggested that Silvercon was about to host so many FAPAns that we could change the course of that venerable organization with such a sizable voting bloc. We didn't rock any boats, but everyone seemed to have a good time.

I found myself sitting between Robert Lichtman and Jack Speer. I guess the FAPA context made me think of a question which Ken Forman had asked and for which I did not have the answer. "What's the best way to collate a mailing?" I asked. They professed to not have the answer, either, so I guess we'd better be nice to current Official Editor Seth Goldberg, at least until someone obtains this vital information.

When rich brown and Bill Kunkel joined us, the talk shifted to critical assessments of one of the more controversial science fiction movies, **Dune**. Rich isn't enthusiastic about the movie, but Bill, who didn't care for the book at all, labeled it a classic.

As someone who likes both, I think that's the basis for their differing ratings. Many who liked the metaphysical side of the Herbert novel are disappointed to find it de-emphasized in the film. Those who came to the movie without

preconceptions accept it for what it is and don't miss the parts they don't really know about in the first place.

Dan had the dummy for his edition of "Big Name Fan." Although he hasn't placed the illos onto the master pages yet, the graphic design is impressive. You'll want this jewel of a fan publication even if you have the Burbee yarn in another form.

Robert Lichtman was especially pleased by Dan's project and explained that "Big Name Fan" is his favorite piece of faan fiction. Rich brown didn't pick a favorite, but said that "Big Name Fan" might be as much a touchstone of the Insurgent view of fandom as *The Enchanted Duplicator* is for Trufannishness.

The Enchanted Duplicator remains my choice. It combines literary quality, clever satire, intelligent analysis, and a good deal of personal resonance. It still speaks to my fannish heart (not excessively tiny, I hope) the way it did when I read it 30 years ago.

My other favorites are "Way out West in Texas" by Marion Zimmer Bradley, which could be inferred from the number of times I've reprinted it, and "I Was Captain of a Spaceship." Throw in "The Cacher of the Rye" and you've got examples of four major types of faan fiction: utopian allegory (*TED*), fannish realism ("Way Out West"), brandonization ("Cacher"), and dystopic satire ("Big Name Fan").

How can the same person like the trenchantly cynical "Big Name Fan." and the lyrically idealistic *TED*? I'm just a dichotomy looking for a synthesis.

I ambled back into the suite's living room just as Ted White looked around the room, paused a moment to ponder the va-lidity of his current thought, and announced: "We are living in a Golden Age of

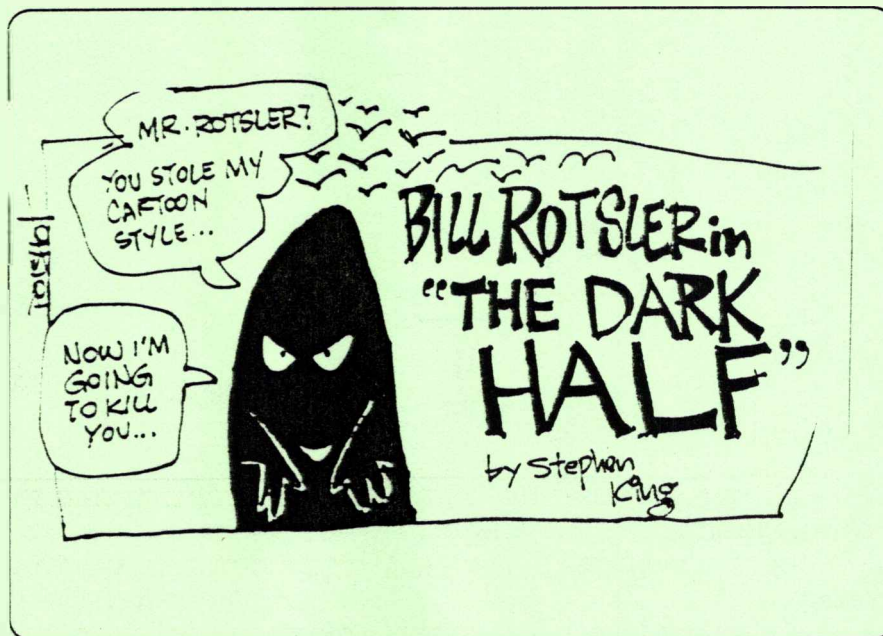
Fandom."

Dead silence. Everybody looked at Ted and tried to memorize where they were at this Great Moment.

Ted sensed our skepticism and started to explain his remark. "Look around the room," he said, indicating the packed party. "Everyone here is working on a fanzine, or writing for fanzines, or doing something else in fandom.

"And this is the kind of room party we used to have in the '60s and early '70s." I lowered my eyes at this generous compliment.

"Yeah," said Dan, "like the ones at the Katz's place." I didn't



blush, at least I don't think so, but I couldn't look at him in case he wasn't really serious.

"It takes a big man to run for TAFF," said Ted as Lynn Steffan snapped the picture. Within her frame of reference were the Alphonse and Gaston of transatlantic fanac, Dan Steffan and Andy Hooper.

Throughout the weekend, these worthies went to great lengths to tell each other, and fandom at large, what a great candidate the other will make. Several times, I found myself falling under Dan or Andy's oratorical spell. I had to consciously restrain my impulse to declare my undying loyalty for their opponent.

I saw them together often during Silvercon 3, and often they were talking about TAFF. Whoever's turn it was would patiently explain to the other why he couldn't possibly run a credible race against such an overpoweringly appropriate candidate.

They'd go along in that vein until the speaker proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the TAFF winner sat before

him. As the object of all the egoboo grew happier at the prospect of seeing UK fandom in its natural habitat, the other would slowly become depressed by the force of his own argument.

Then they'd switch roles. The suddenly abashed egoboo recipient would start to console the fan who'd been comforting him a

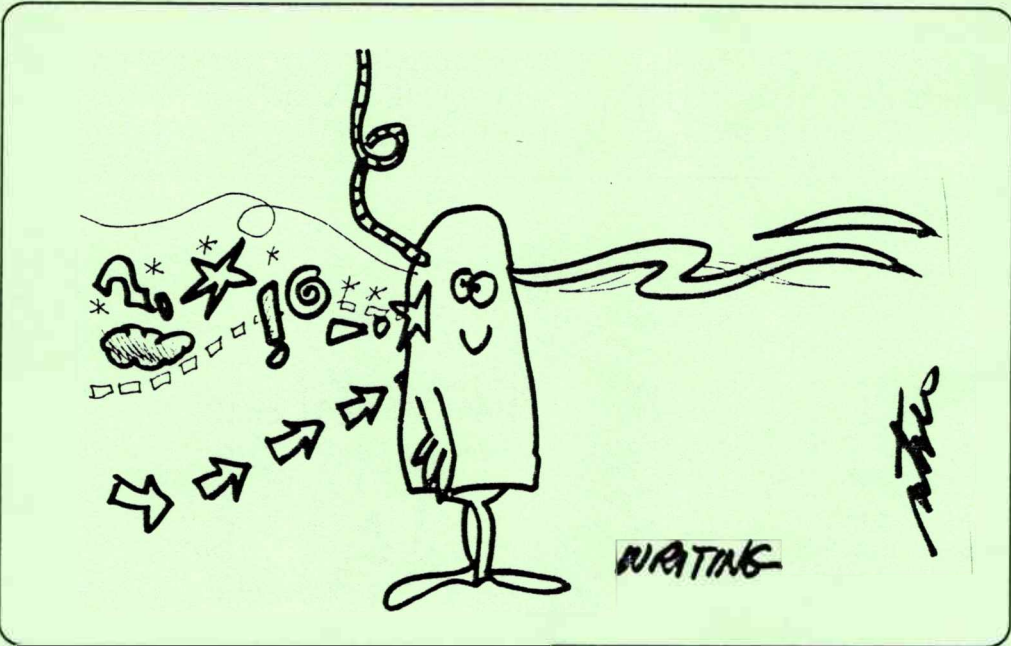
moment earlier, assuring him that his nomination was entirely justified and, perhaps, in the best interests of fandom unto the seventh generation.

Both were so sincerely concerned about preserving mutual respect and friendship that it was one of the most touching things I've ever seen in fandom. Andy and Dan are enthusiastic about TAFF, but I think it shows what kind of people they are that neither will let this coveted prize interfere with the important things.

It's a good year for TAFF when even one candidate of stature stands for the honor. A genuine election with two outstanding nominees can't help but revive at least some of the enthusiasm for the institution. I honestly don't know how I'll cast my vote, but I'll certainly support this TAFF race enthusiastically. Maybe it'll even help thaw US-UK fannish relations. *(Since the con, Andy Hooper has withdrawn from the race and other candidates have entered. This was the situation at the time of Silvercon 3 in April 1994.)*

Saturday,
the Trufan
ate Breakfast

a much-valued fan friend, and his artic-



ulate conversation makes him a fascinating companion. I haven't had much opportunity to get friendly with Joan, so I was glad Silvercon 3 afforded the chance to get to know her a little better.

Despite much Benfordian bragging about how early they wake up, the late-night partying may have taken a little more out of Silvercon's pro GoH than he anticipated. When we phoned their room at the appointed time, 8:00 am, they were still preparing to meet

fandom. We offered to go down and scope out the restaurant line, and they promised to be down in a few minutes.

We ran into Bill Rotsler outside the restaurant. The ever-amiable one extended a breakfast invitation. We explained our plans and suggested that he join us. The Benfords obligingly arrived two minutes later, and we went into the restaurant.

Talk of the impending Burbday celebration got Rotsler reminiscing about his first years in fandom. We all heaped praises on him for the fanart revolution he began during those insurgent years.

Bill described his surprising discovery upon starting art school: every student was the best in his high school. Instead of being the uncommon artist of the group, you're running with a pack of similarly talented folks.

It put me in mind of the hurdles would-be athletes face. All little league shortstops (the position which requires the greatest physical prowess) end up on the same high school baseball teams. A high school first baseman, unless he shows unusual batting skill, seldom advances to the next level of competition (college or minor league ball), because all those roster spots are filled with former high school shortstops. I was reminded of this axiom while watching the rock and jock baseball game on MTV

a couple of days before Silvercon. Roaming the left side of the infield and making all the plays was John Kruk, who is usually thought of as a lumbering, ungainly fielder with a golden bat.

Rotsler offered another analogy: starlets. They're all hometown beauty queens. Hollywood is a town full of hometown beauty queens, which can be a mortal blow to the ego and explains, to an extent, why so many young actresses go off the rails.

Everyone wanted to know about Joyce's magnum opus in progress, **Guns into the West**, an interactive multimedia roleplaying adventure with educational overtones. (How will they get all that on the front of one of those crystal CD holders?) Her description of traveling the Santa Fe Trail in the mid-19th century led to talk of the sad fate of the Native Americans.

Greg spoke eloquently about the cultural collision that virtually wiped out the stone age culture. His thesis was that the destruction of Indian civilization became inevitable when the Europeans wanted the land the Indians occupied. As Greg described the sad plight of the Indians, it occurred to me that someone with his charisma and oratorical mastery would make a fine politician. In my mind, I saw him vaulting up the ladder of success two rungs at a time. Mayor Benford... Governor Benford... Senator Benford...

And then the fan becomes the Man, President Gregory A. Benford, Ph. D. I was mentally viewing the inauguration when this dream exploded. Greg can't be president: he knows us. The minute he hit the campaign trail, someone trots out a run of **Void**, and Greg goes from the candidate to the condemned.

As I entered the consuite, I heard someone telling Raven, "I seldom change colors." I expected to see Q*bert when I turned to look at the source of the comment, but it was one of the miniatures fans attending

Raven's workshop on miniature figure painting.

Our fandom isn't the only one shamed by unpleasantness like Topic A and Boon-doggle. The Filkers are engaged in a years-long struggle to the death, and blameless Silvercon took a stray bullet between the eyes.

When Silvercon1 invited Leslie Fish as Filk Guest of Honor, filkers interpreted it as a comment on the feud. (Naturally it wasn't, since no one in Vegas was even aware of its existence.)

When it came to a Filk GoH for Silvercon 2, chairman Woody Bernardi chose someone from the other faction in an attempt to balance things. This year, he invited Barry and Sally Childs-Helton, because of their excellent reputation as performers.

For those who don't get enough feud gossip in our fandom, the Filk War sprang from the acrimonious dissolution of a commercial filk tape business. Personal and financial disagreements engendered a massive faction-feud. That's the extent of my knowledge.

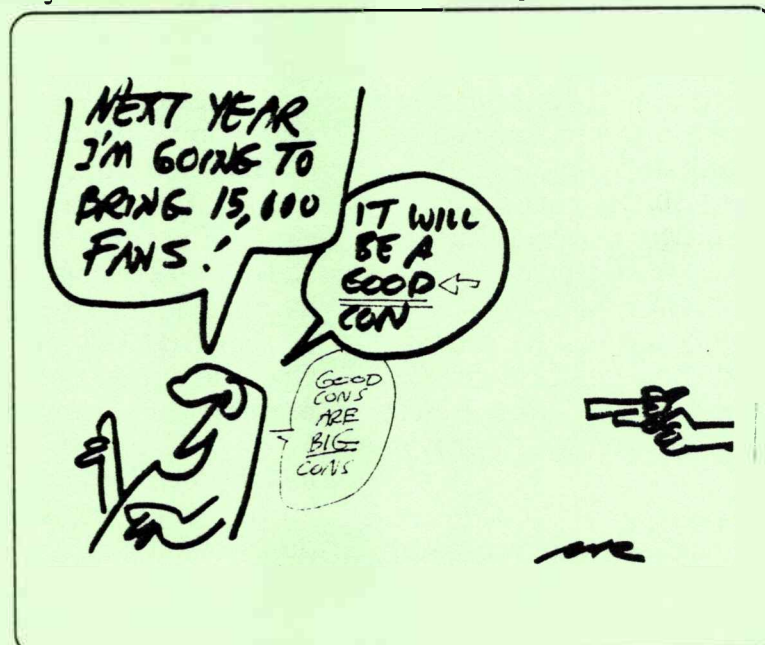
Silvercon's neutral course earned it a virtual boycott by both sides. (The Childs-

Heltons led some filksinging each night, I am told, so I guess it wasn't a total washout for the local filkers.)

Soon it was nearly 11, time to go to the huckster room where Greg, Ted, and Vivian Schilling were going to sign autographs. I already have quite a few White and

Benford signatures, and had no desire to get one from Vivian Schilling, but I wanted to be there for solidarity.

Ken had three TEW books, part of the growing SNAFFU club collection, already the state's largest sf lending library. Ted looked pleased when he saw the little pile of paperbacks. Ken had also bought two



copies of Benford's "Chiller," one for the library and the other to auction.

Vivian Schilling is an entrepreneur who wrote and starred in her own direct-to-video movie and has also produced a novel. Her company contacted Silvercon 3 and offered to pay her expenses if the con would recognize her in some way. Somewhat over-obligingly, the con committee agreed. (They like to agree, except with each other.)

She arrived, accompanied by her publicist, to do the signing and a panel, and left after completing her work. Very generously, she gave a free signed copy of her novel to anyone who solicited her autograph.

The cons she mentioned attending were of the commercial sort, and she treated the whole thing like a bookstore signing. Ted noticed an award seal on the cover of her book, and upon inquiring, learned that it was a Silver Scroll Award bestowed by "The Academy of Science Fiction Arts."

None of us knew the organization or its award. This gave Ted the idea that we should form "The Academy of Fanzine Arts and Letters," and hop on the award gravy train.

Peggy Burke, my occasionally wayward fandaughter, finally asked the question that must've been on the minds of most Silvercon attendees. I know it was on *my* mind from the moment I first heard of her a week earlier. Peggy's question: "Who is Vivian Schilling?"

"Well, Peggy," I replied, as I held up the two-sided flyer for Schilling's novel. I flipped it over to the back, entirely filled with a photograph of the authoress.

"I'd say she's an attractive woman with

reddish blonde hair who uses a pin-up to sell her book," I said. Actually, Ms. Schilling seemed like a hard-working woman, though

her talent is another question for separate study.

From the signing session, Ted, rich, Joyce and I went up to the suite to chat about the fan-nish issues of the day. Heading the agenda was the current coolness between U.S. and U.K. fandoms. As a lifelong anglophile, and a great admirer



of their fanzines, I find the current estrangement very frustrating.

We couldn't agree on any program to rebuild bridges, so we settled for assurances all around that it was one of those cyclical things that will pass away of its own accord. Ted and Joyce, more practical than the rest of us, exhorted us to send more copies overseas.

This led Joyce to lament the international postal rates. Whining about the price of stamps comes easily to fans, like rich folks complaining about the price and availability of decent servants.

Not that I don't agree. I hope that when Greg becomes Senator Benford, he'll remember his old mates and tack a Special Postage Exemption onto some more vital legislation, like foreign aid to some dictatorship. I think the same government that doles out arts grants should do something to protect and nurture the fanzine artform.

While we're waiting for that jubilee a-comin', maybe we should think about a trans-oceanic fanzine distribution service. I haven't worked out the finances, but it seems like bulk mailing fanzines to a central mailing point might save a lot of money.

12 I will always remember this as the con at which a fanzine of which I had previously been ignorant first entered my con-

sciousness. It was at Silvercon that they first told me about **Galacto-Celtic News Flash**. Ted and Dan even read passages by the editor.

The thing that really excites me, to be honest, is the name itself. (I hope I've spelled it right, since I've never seen the zine itself.)

I love it. It is the Amber of goofy fanzine titles (fantasy reference for Andy Hooper). It made my own best effort in that direction, the never-to-be-published **Science Fantasy Lightbulb**, pale by comparison.

Hey, what about **Gastro-Intestinal Sidetrack**?

As the appointed time for the second annual Silvercon cartoon jam approached, more and more fans wandered to 1812. Our artists, psyching up for the event, started to get experimental.

They invented Ouija Art. Rotsler held the pen while Dan moved the paper around. I was hoping they'd contact one of the great fanartists at the Enchanted Convention, but the drawings weren't in any recognizable style. Maybe crossed etheric wires connected them to an abstract expressionist instead.

Lenny Bailes, watching Bill and Dan struggling to wrest art from random collisions had a better use for the new technique.

"How about a fannish polygraph?" he proposed, obviously hoping to head off this occasionally fan-

ciful con report. Fortunately, others in the room showed similar resistance to anything that would bind them to the absolute truth.

Overhead Dialogue
Between Two Artists

"Has anyone seen a fat sharpie?"

"Well, not that sharp, but I think I saw her in the program room."

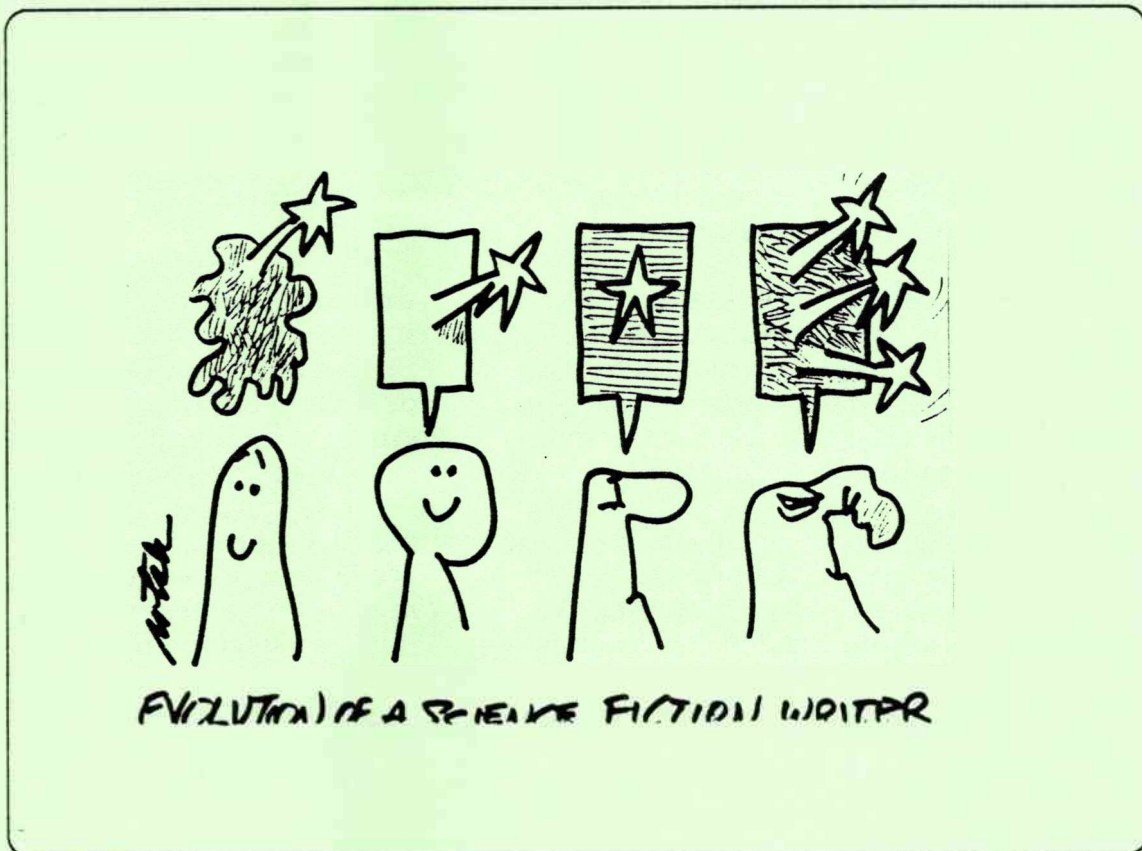
The squeak of markers and the scratch of penpoints filled the suite as the cartoonists limbered up. Andy Hooper leaned over to see the image taking shape on one of the drawing pads. "You're good with fish," Andy said, admiringly.

The artist preened.

"Don't get too excited," I advised. "So are potatoes." You don't want the artists to get too revved up for the jam.

Silvercon is an ideal-size convention for something like a cartoon jam. Our four stalwarts -- Rotsler, Potshot, Steffan, and Chamberlain -- sat at a rectangular table. Although the jam drew one of the weekend's largest crowds, fans had plenty of room to stand around the table and see the illos take shape.

Laurie Yates has developed a nice feel fo



managing the mechanics of a cartoon jam. She'd take a just-finished illo from in front of one artist, analyze the content, and dole it out to whomever she felt was

most likely to add something to it.

Rotsler encouraged cartoon ideas from the audience. A woman whose name I didn't get jumped right in with more awful cartoon ideas in less time than I'd ever heard from one person. I believe there was one series of ideas she pressed on the four-some that turned on the concept of replacing "Star Trek" characters with animated peanuts.

"Critic vs. Writer," moderated by Joyce, put Greg and Ted on the dais to talk about the seesaw struggle between those who write books and those who judge them.

Perhaps we shouldn't have let conversation digress down memory lane to a discussion of **Void**. Reminiscing about their fanzine put both into such mellow moods that anticipated verbal fireworks never materialized. It was a good exchange of opinions, but I expected a little more passion,

I'd been fighting off illness for a few days before the con. With the auction at 4:00, I decided to go back to the room and rest. Eventually, Mark Karnes, Dan and Lynn Steffan, Bill Kunkel, Laurie Yates, and Joyce came to the room to fetch me for the auction.

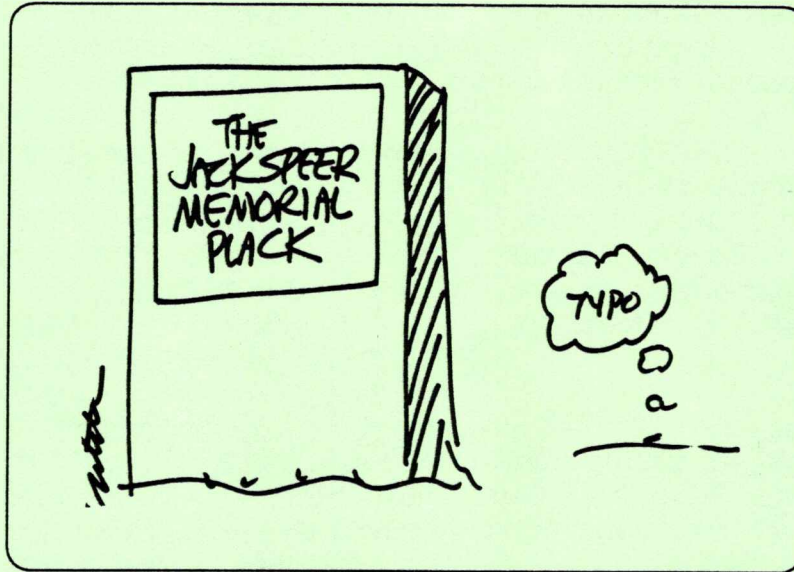
I played auctioneer at Silvercon 2, and I guess I'm enough of a ham to enjoy it. I threw myself into the role, damning the committee -- whom I called "those cheap-skates" for failing to rent a microphone to boom my theatrics to the far corners of the convention.

"We should have brought Joyce's portable mike," said the ever-sympathetic Bill *Potshot* Kunkel. Why does the erstwhile High Priestess of Brooklyn Fandom have a portable microphone? Let me answer a question with a question: isn't this con report long enough? That's what I thought, too. Bombarding Joyce with cards and

letters (Fax: 702-648-5365) pleading for this explanation.

This year's auction catalog was slightly thinner than in 1993, though there were some good items.

Lenny Bailes donated three **Guips**, and we had a **Lighthouse #9**, Donaho's **Viper #6**, and a copy of Joyce and my **Tandem**. Autographed Benford and White books, a first edition "Star Wars" paperback, a movie poster collection, the Jack Gaughan portfolio from St. Louiscon, and



a fanzine-cover-to-order by the ever-generous Rotsler were high spots. With the aid of bid-spotter Ken Forman and secretary-treasurer Su Williams, we raked in more than last year in two-thirds the time.

When we host Corflu in 1995, I'll get to do the fannish auctioneer's equivalent of Playing the Palace. I can't wait to flog those primo fan items to my fellow elitist snobs. Maybe Joyce will loan me her portable microphone...

The banquet wasn't fully subscribed, so the committee ate fifteen tickets. It may have been a tastier meal than the actual Silvercon buffet. The food might best be described as "uneven," something of a surprise after the buffet at Silvercon 2, which was pretty good.

Joyce praised the fruit salad, and the cake was pretty good. The salad got a good grade from most of the diners, too. The mashed potatoes, which is what they might've become if the liquidy white substance had solidified and from somewhere acquired the taste and aroma of potatoes, were a write-off. (Even Rotsler couldn't draw on them; they weren't firm enough to hold his elegant line.)

This may dishearten those who might someday attend a Vegas Corflu luncheon, but I don't care much about the food at the banquet. The company and the speeches are the key factors for me. This banquet passed muster on both scores.

It began with a salute to Charles Burbee on his 79th birthday. We presented a card, signed by all the fans, and sang "Happy Birthday" to Insurgent #1 (and the Godfather of Vegas Fandom). "You've got a ton of autographs," Aileen said to Burb. He deciphered a few of the more legible scrawls.

"L. Ron Hubbard signed," he announced to the audience. "And Francis T. Laney in the corner." All we needed was someone paging Mr. Flugel...

Toastmaster Jack Speer introduced Greg Benford as "the embodiment of the Gernsback Delusion," because he's a fan who has actually become a scientist.

It was a very good, and appropriate, speech about the contributions of science fiction and fandom to society. "We have created concepts for society as a whole," he said, adding that we'd shown the world "how to organize around an interest group." Woody Bernardi promises a transcript in an upcoming *Marquée*, so I won't try to recapitulate it here, other than to say that his stress on fandom as a tribe captured the mood of the fanzine fan segment of the audience. In particular, Greg's observation that, "Fandom works because we have writing as our major focus." was well-received by the remnants of that part of fandom which actually does revolve around written creativity and communication.

Speer next introduced Ted White. Ted looked out over the audience, recognized almost every sensitive fannish face, and adroitly shifted gears. "I love you all," began Ted, in the best Silvercon tradition. And a little later said: "Being a fan is what I am."

Ted cleverly linked his comments on the essence of being a fan to Greg's tribal references. This one-two assault had the audience jumping, and I wouldn't have been surprised if someone had lurched from their seat, rolled on the floor, and begun babbling in fanspeak.

Meanwhile, at the back of the banquet hall, the plates were moving faster than during last winter's big quake. Fortunately, they were dessert plates, and they were migrating in the direction of the facile pen of William Rotsler. The mood came upon him during the speeches and, egged on by most of the audience, Rotsler began to redecorate the crockery.

The committee, in a friendly gesture, notified the hotel that it would pay for the

dishes, and that left Rotsler free to beautify dozens of them. I wonder if anyone -- you, Laurie? -- has collected enough of them to serve cake to a dozen or so fans. (Yes, I know Laurie would never risk damaging the artwork, but I like the idea of a fannish kaffee klatsch with the cake served on Rotsler's handiwork. More seriously, I hope some owners will photocopy their plates and share them with us as fanzine illos.)

Jack had needled both Greg and Ted a little during his introductions, standard banquet practice, but I'm not sure that the filk GoHs Barry and Sally Childs-Helton were ready for his comment that "They aren't just filkers, they're intelligent people." Many still wonder what was in Juffus' mind when he asked the duo, who were about to burst into song, if the rest of us could mill around the hall during their performance.

"No, no, you can't" or something very much like it, they chorused. They tried hard to fit in with perky commentary and a couple of perky songs. Their tunes, especially one about Sputnik, had some wit even if they weren't quite trufannish enough to completely please the audience at that moment.

Awhile later, some fans gravitated to 1812, where the subject turned to the L.A. Insurgents. It wasn't far from there to the most frequent butt of their jokes, Al Ashley.

Art Widner, who actually knew Ashley in Los Angeles, offered some reminiscences of AA 194. Asked the inevitable question about whether Al Ashley was as big a jerk as portrayed, Widner reached back for memories of the man, and his verdict was a qualifiedly positive one. He characterized Ashley as intelligent and a good sort, but the type of overly serious person who made a good foil.

A little later, we asked Art for a similar first-hand recollection of Laney, with whom he had stayed in Los Angeles. Art described the Stormy Petrel as an innocent who came to the Big Bad City from a bucolic area of Idaho-Washington.

Several of us speculated on the possibility of a Laney revival, and whether or not that would be a good thing. I think fandom should know more of Towner than "Ah, Sweet Idiocy!" Robert L has come into possession of the bulk of Burbee's fanzine collection, which is full of tasty insurgent stories, and Vegas hopes to help him

produce an anthology after he completes his pet project, an Elmer Purdue compilation.

While cruising between the ad hoc party in our suite and the consuite, I ran into Karl Kreder. Silvercon's master of the games had a slightly stunned expression, so I asked if anything was wrong.

"Sort of," he hedged, as I fell into step beside him. He'd just come from a live-action roleplaying session of "Vampire," and it seems the roleplaying got a little too intense for a couple of the participants. When they seemed about to come to blows, Karl explained, "it seemed like a good time to close down."

It *didn't* come to hand-to-hand combat, though, so it was a pretty minor incident. An hour later, the gamers were partying happily as though nothing had happened. (Later still, complaints from neighboring rooms caused the party to be moved downstairs, but that's par for the convention course, isn't it?)

Really, I can't say enough good things about the way Karl conducted the gaming, and the way the gamers conducted themselves. I think Karl sets the tone for them. When they see him hobnobbing on easy terms with people like Rotsler, White and Brown, it makes the fanzine folks seem a lot less alien.

I had trepidations about gaming overwhelming the rest of the con. These proved groundless. The gamers didn't get in other fans' faces, and the non-gamers returned this cordiality with similar friendliness.

Silvercon 3 will go into the fanhistory books as the place where The Shrimp Boys came into being as a major force in fandom. I can still hear Andy Hooper, Dan Steffan and John D. Berry singing their little song, "Shrimp Boys are a-snackin', they're snackin' tonight; Shrimp boys are a-comin' with big appetites," as they filed out of the party.

It all began innocently when someone admired the view of downtown Las Vegas from the suite. Naturally, everyone in the room turned toward the window to participate in the aesthetic moment.

Looking out the window, the trio of trenchermen spied a sign on the hotel across the street which promised a veritable orgy of conspicuous shrimp

consumption. It's hard to describe the pleasure which this sign gave my three friends. It reminded me of the joy that suffused Rotsler's face when he first beheld the "Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch" billboard during Silvercon 2.

There was one difference. Rotsler waited until the next night to investigate this scenic wonder in the company of Ken Forman and John Hardin, but Steffan, Berry and Hooper acted decisively. Only minutes after seeing the shrimp sign, they bid the rest of us "good night" and headed across Main St. for their rendezvous with discount shellfish.

Joyce and I were up and dressed by 7 am on Sunday, because she wanted to get home and return with her Third Annual Ham and Egg Silvercon Breakfast before 10 am. Fixing a meal for the entire convention is no easy job, but Joyce sees it as her special contribution to the convention.

When she came back with the food, we immediately took it to the consuite, where Joyce had arranged to dispense it to the multitudes... It was locked.

We went to the meeting room and registration area to search for someone who'd open the consuite, an event already a half-hour late. I met Su Williams, who was *staying* in the consuite, but she didn't assign a high priority to Joyce's effort. She said she was going to the coffee shop and didn't have time to open the room or help in any other way. (Joyce finally found someone -- Ken and Aileen, I think -- who got the consuite open, so she could feed the multitudes.)

Catering duties finished, Joyce and I went looking for others who might've risen before noon. We ran into a very nice young couple, with whom we'd exchanged "hello"s in passing a couple of times.

This time, we stopped to chat. In response to Joyce's question about how he liked the convention, the longhaired blond guy said that it was pretty good, but he knew he could help make it better.

"How can you do that?" Joyce wanted to know, a serious constructive light flickering in her eyes.

16 "Next year, I can deliver 15,000 comic book fans!" he said, as proud as a pet cat dropping a mangled bird at your feet.

"Oh. no!" Joyce shrieked. "Please, please don't!"

Mr. Helpful was genuinely surprised. He looked at Joyce questioningly, wondering what possible flaw she could find in such a philanthropic offer.

"We really wouldn't want to have a convention with so many people," I explained, more gently than my friends could've anticipated. "A lot of Silvercon's charm is the intimate size."

"You wouldn't?" he asked. Naked disbelief thinned his voice. Apparently, no one had ever turned down 15,000 comic book fans before.

"We go to conventions mostly to see friends and meet interesting people," Joyce explained.

"Really?" he said.

"Really," Joyce said. "Think of it this way: We wouldn't be having this conversation at a big convention like that."

"Well, that's true." He nodded, as if conceding the point, but I knew he was still dubious. We left him with his thoughts and his lady and went to warn our friends.

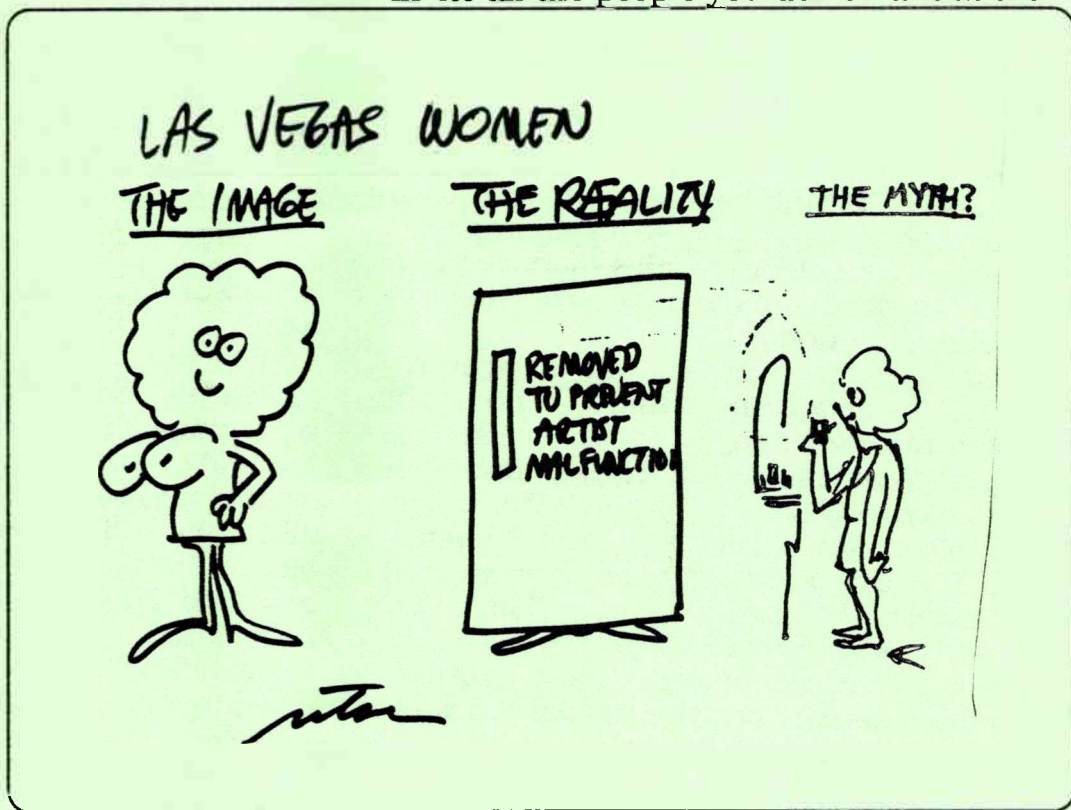
When I told Lenny about the 15,000 comic book fans, he responded with unexpected enthusiasm. He quickly outlined a future in which someone --- presumably him -- sat at Master Convention Control. From this nexus point could be monitored the health of every convention, big and small. And when MCC sees that a convention is in trouble, they take action. They step in and rescue the beleaguered convention. "I see these 15,000 comic book fans, frozen in a chamber somewhere," Bailes said, sharing his vision with me. "And when they're needed -- poof! -- they're unfrozen and dispatched to the convention."

The more I've thought about this idea, the more I like it. No more sleepless nights worrying about whether Creationcon or the like are making enough money. No more worrying about what those 15,000 comic book fans do *between* conventions. I hate to say it, but my one-time co-editor Has Something Here.

For some reason, this bit of dialogue inspired Rotsler to tell us about an innovative way to guarantee a good party at a convention. "All you have to do," he explained, "is have two parties."

"Two parties, Rotsler?" I said. Towner can you hear me?

"One is the Dork party, and the other is the sharp party." He paused to bask in the waves of our silent adulation. "You just invite all the people you don't want at the



sharp party to the dork party."

"Actually, Bill," I said, "Joyce has added her own refinement to that technique."

"She has?" Surely a fandom in which Bill Rotsler serves, however briefly, as the conversational foil of a lowly Las Vegas fan such as myself is a Good Fandom.

"Yes, she cuts the work in half," I replied. "She just invites all the dorks to someone else's party." I gave him a sidelong glance.

"And what's your room number again?"

All right, I *didn't* give him a sidelong glance and say, "so what's your room

number again?" I guess that's why he's William Rotsler and I am only Arnie Katz.

I would have liked to have said that. I would've, too, if I had thought of it at the time rather than during the writing.

But I didn't. Say it, that is. Yet here is the comment, right in the report as though it really happened. After another depleting decade or two of partying, even Rotsler may think I said it.

That's one nice thing about con reports. You can edit yourself into a semblance of wit, or at least coherence.

A gang of 14 people, including Joyce and me, went to the Celebrity Deli, the subject of an article I intend to thrust upon the fanzine-reading public within the next few months.

I'd tell you who they were, but I'm pouting. I couldn't get even the usually cooperative Robert X (name changed to deny egoboo) to comply with my itty-bitty requests. With all we've been to each other, you wouldn't think he'd refuse to ask for my autograph as part of my campaign to convince the Celebrity Deli's management that I am worthy of having a sandwich named in my honor.

So I won't tell you who was there even though it was a really stellar gathering and I could raise my image in your eyes by dropping names like Bill Kunkel, Laurie Yates, Lenny Bailes, Bill Rotsler, John Berry and Eileen Gunn, Dan and Lynn Steffan, Paul Williams and Cindy Lee Berryhill and Mark Karnes. Plus the mystery Robert X to whom I previously referred.

I hadn't seen Paul in too many years. The last time may've been the Discon II. I was especially pleased to get two issues of *Crawdaddy* from him. I remember the sometimes-incomprehensible, yet simultaneously fascinating original. Cindy, his companion, had a copy of her first CD, just released the previous day, so both were in a buoyant mood. Unfortunately, we lacked a CD player, so there'll be no record reviews in this con report.

I chaired the fanhistory panel. We didn't blaze many new trails, but the discussion held the crowd's attention. Ted White, Jack Speer, Andy Hooper, rich brown, and I threw a few more shovels of dirt on the carcass of the Numbered Fandoms

Theory, but we couldn't agree on anything to take its place. There wasn't even a consensus that meaningful historical analysis is possible in today's fragmented and nebulous mega-fandom.

Charting all of fanhistory is too big a job for me. Such a theory, if even possible, requires working out the complete history of each sub-group. I've narrowed my broad mental horizons to the part of fandom that means the most to me, fanzine fandom.

I also wonder if a comprehensive theory of fanhistory is very useful. A historical scheme for all of fandom would deal in long time periods and broad trends. I don't think dividing fandom into EoFandom, the Sercon Era, the Fanzine Age, and the Age of Special Fandoms makes fanhistory much more understandable.

At the panel, I pled for more memoirs in lieu of fanhistories. We should create the largest possible body of first-hand reportage so that fanhistorians of tomorrow will have abundant sources on which to base their analysis.

We'd originally planned to give up the suite Sunday morning to save the cost. The weekend was going so well, however, that we extended our stay through Sunday night so that there'd be a large enough room to accommodate all our friends. Sure enough, the end of the official convention found a sizable number of fans yakking furiously in 1812. We still had some sodas and some snacks from Mark Karnes' Saturday food run, and Don Fitch brought in some chocolate.

Dan Steffan, I think it was, loudly despaired of the crumbling pages of antique fanzines. There isn't any way to forestall the decay of fanzine pages, aggravated by the use of cheap paper. In some not-too-distant day, our fanzine collections will crumble to dust.

Fandom's traditional answer to the question of what to do about old fanzines is "reprints." Keeping the fannish classics in print upholds the fannish context -- and they're fun to read.

Desktop publishing, optical scanning, and improved copiers make reprinting much easier. I admitted that most home scanners can't cope with fanzines published by hektograph, spirit duplicator, or AB Dick-type mimeograph.

On the other hand, once something is desktopped and stored electronically, it's likely to stay available. I keep the master pages from major projects in file folders, and that's a lot more convenient than those piles of inky stencils sandwiched in newspaper I had back in Brooklyn.

Digital technology may provide the ultimate solution to disintegrating fanzines. Rapid advances in scanning and the spread of CD-ROM technology will soon make it feasible to transfer fanzines to disk. A page can be scanned into the computer, and a single CD disk easily holds 10,000 such pages. (I'm not enough of a techie to know the exact number. It's a lot, though.) These pages would have the same text, art, and layout as the original fanzines and might be printable for those who want to feel a facsimile of **Quandry #1** in their hands.

Or we could follow the current trend and go multimedia. You know how some of the more prententious fanzines sometimes feel the need to tell you what music was playing when they were written? Why not put sound tracks on the digital fanzines of the future? No need to tell them that you played Pearl Jam continuously while compiling the letter column; now you can just include it on the sound track that plays while the appropriate pages are on the screen.

Yes, this feature is open to abuse. Imagine: As the cover of the latest **Galacto-Celtic News Flash** bursts onto the screen, the voice of a young girl pleads for critical leniency. Or: You boot the disk and the opening pages of that big pompous fanzine appear, accompanied by a flourish of trumpets and a "public service announcement" about nominating it for a Hugo.

No one said the future will be perfect. On the other hand, everyone will own a complete set of **Hyphen**.

Joyce and I joined about 10 other fans for dinner at the golden Nugget, downtown Vegas' most opulent hotel-casino, and afterward visited the con suite. Ron Pehr and Raven were hosting a lively room with the assistance of Aileen Forman. We stayed until the onset of con postmortems, mostly accounts of the bizarre behavior of several local fans during the weekend. I had a hunch I'd be hearing about the exploits of some of Vegas' zanier citizens for some

weeks to come, so fled this opportunity.

The party migrated up to Dan and Lynn Steffan's room after we checked out of the suite, but the narrower confines didn't dent the good humor that prevailed straight through Silvercon 3. It started with about 10 fans, but gathered strength as the sun set.

Several party-goers postulated the existence of Fugghead Fandom, a repository for all the lamebrains who, per my 1993 article, are suddenly scarce in our corner of the microcosm. That was the only possible explanation, they agreed, for the extreme rarity of the BNFs (Big Name Fuggheads) who used to stumble through fandom in mythic times.

Being science fiction fans, they didn't let lack of facts deter speculation about Fugghead Fandom.

Dan Steffan had a particularly frightening concept: The UberFug. This individual, the Walt Willis of fuggheads, is honored and quoted with the same reverence in Fugghead Fandom, Dan assured me, as Bob Tucker is in ours. I think he envisions the Uberfug as the necessary worthily unworthy adversary for the Group Mind.

It's inspiring to have friends who can summon such deep feeling even for fuggheads. I can't honestly say whether anyone shed actual tears, but I saw a glint in more than one eye as they told how they would welcome those BNFuggheads. Some seemed to have those epic articles already written (in their heads, of course), awaiting only the name of a suitably impressive target to complete the picture.

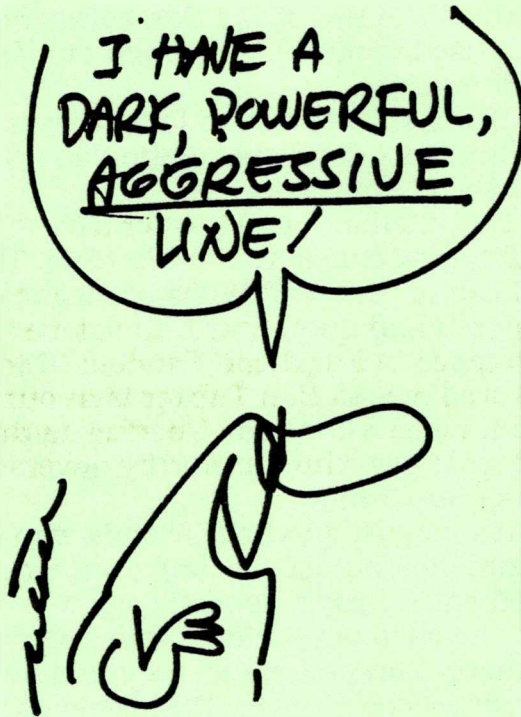
Joyce and I couldn't postpone the inevitable much longer and told everyone we'd see them in the fanzines. (I picked up this phrase from Ted White, who doesn't seem to like the moment of farewell any more than I do). Downstairs waiting for our car, we met Ron and Raven who were also calling it a convention. We all waited together while the valets brought around our cars and promised to get together he week after the convention.

As it eventuated, we needn't have said good-bye to as many as we did; more fans than we knew stayed through Monday. We did get to taper off a little by having

dinner with Bill and Laurie and Dan and Lynn, which was a relaxing and satisfying way to wrap up one of the most enjoyable regionals I've ever attended.

As things stand now, the next Silvercon will probably be a fall convention in

September 1995. I don't know how chairfan Aileen Forman plans to top this warm and wonderful gathering, but you can bet I'll be there to find out. And with any luck, many of you will be there to experience it with me.



Silvercon Memories, The Adventures of Trufans in Glitter City, is written and published by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107).

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All artwork is by Bill Kunkel and Bill Rotsler.