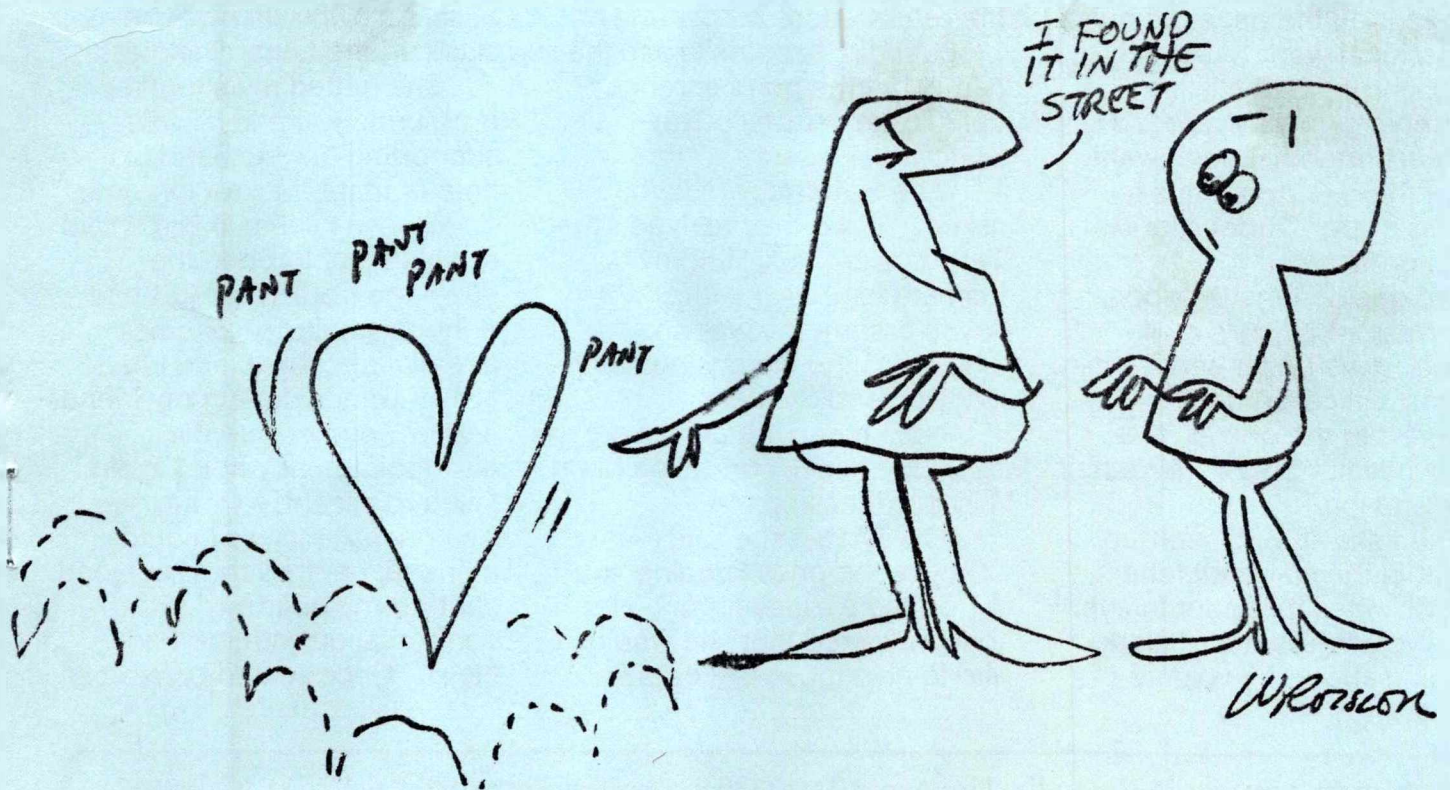
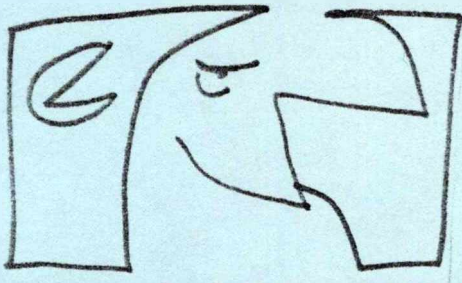


# CROSSFIRE

SAPS Jan. 1993  
First Issue







# Mewsings...

"Is this anything important?" Joyce asked as she waved an envelope in my general direction. She was performing the daily ritual of sorting the mountain of mail our business and fanlife generates.

We don't receive mail at our home address, because we want to keep it off the pages of our professional work. As much as I love the couple of million electronic gamers who read our stuff each month, I don't want any of them to drop in us to discuss **Super Duper Mario Cousins 17**.

We decided that Mailbox, Etc., Western Union's mail centers, gave better service than the Post Office, so ours is delivered to the one at 330 South Decatur Blvd. We're their pride and joy.

The folks at MBE seem to delight in the stacks of letters and packages that pour in every day. I've actually heard clerks bragging about the volume of

material we get.

On the day that Joyce asked me about this particular letter, I was standing a discreet distance from the table on which she segregated the day's haul into appropriate piles. "Maybe it's from an electronic gaming fan," she suggested, not recognizing the return address.

But I did. I couldn't read the name, but the graphic rang a bell. Toskey! "That's **The Spectator!**" I said.

"**The Spectator?**" Joyce asked. "Have they revived **The Tattler**, too?" Lacking my intimate familiarity with SAPS, Joyce assumed it was an allusion to the literary works of Addison and Steele.

"No, I mean the official organ of SAPS," I said, correcting her misapprehension.

"Oh, SAPS," she said. "They're the ones keeping you #1 on the waitlist, right?" Her tone indicated that she would like to give those SApeople a

Stern Lecture on the subject if the opportunity presented itself.

"Yes," I said, memory of the day, so long ago, when I added my name to the tail of the modest list of SAPS wanna-bes. "I think I've been #1 on the waitlist for eight mailings -- or maybe that's eight years." Time passes slowly when you're sitting in the Outer Darkness.

She patted my shoulder reassuringly, the loyal wife supporting her husband in his time of trial. "Maybe this time."

"Doesn't seem likely," I said as I slunk off to open the envelope from Toskey. I had done this quite a few times already, of course, and I had grown wary of letting my friends and loved ones see the disappointment when I again failed to ascend to the roster. As nonchallantly as I could manage, I retired to a secluded spot for my quarterly confrontation with the Bad News. Once seated comfortably

Crossfire #1, January 1993, is edited by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. It is produced for the entertainment of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, of which he is a newly minted member. Publication date: December 28m 1882,



on the throne, I prised open the envelope and extracted the four-pager.

I looked at the listing of contents. Not the largest mailing, I observed, but definitely a representative selection of participants. I turned to the next page, which Toskey had duplicated upside down. No clues there, even after I reversed the zine so I could actually read it. Nor did the page three treasury report and "pages owed" summary disclose any critical information.

Of course, I was just postponing the Moment of Truth. I knew it, and I didn't care. This one moment of hope is all that keeps my fannish soul alive during those three dreary months of despair.

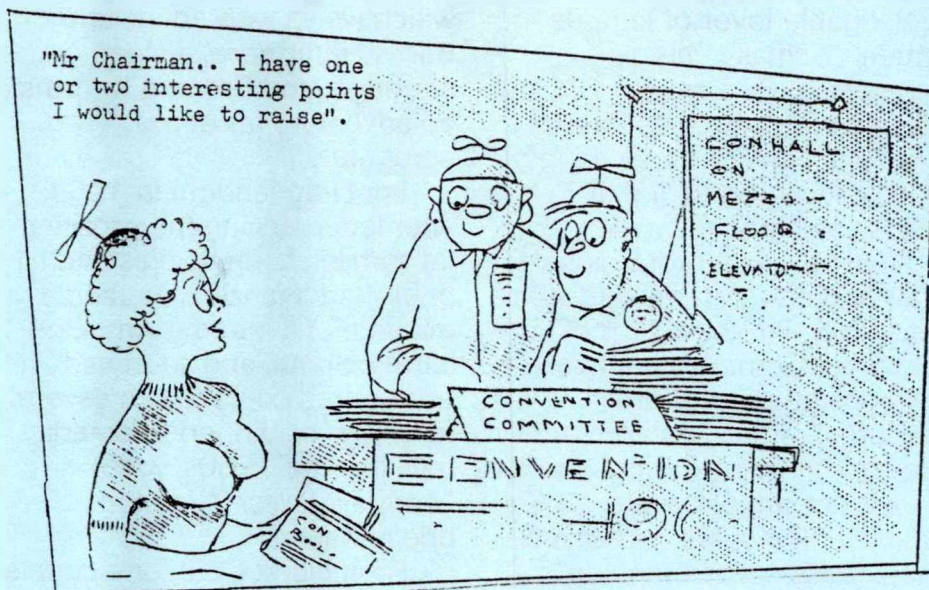
I scanned the roster, starting with William Austin and working my way down to the "K"s. No Katz. On the off-chance that Burnett had misspelled my surname, I continued my perusal right down to "Rocky Willson" without seeing my own moniker.

For the dozenth time, I reviewed the bonus point system. I yearned to earn a bonus point of my very own, to make Toskey proud of me.

Then I saw it: "Jeopardy". Unless he was prospecting for quiz show contestants, this looked promising. I wondered how Colin Wright had managed to untie himself to make that call. Another get-Arnie-into-SAPS scheme gone awry.

Below that, I saw two names marked "Limbo". Surely, Don Fitch would find a way to save his membership. And could a woman with such a Fannishly Correct name as "Suzi Steff" could not do anything so seriously wrong as to terminate her SAPS tenure.

And then I saw it. One seven-letter word: "Invitee".



And below that, my name and address. "I'm in! I'm in!" I shouted.

That brought a sharp knock at the bathroom door. "Do you need help getting out?" a voice on the other side of the portal inquired.

"No, no," I yelled above the sound of the flushing. "I am a member of SAPS!"

And jubilation reigned in Las Vegas.

It is good to be back. "Back?" some of you may be asking. Yes, I am another SAPSish retread, ready to start my second tour in the apa that FAPA would be, if FAPA had the nerve. I was a member in the late 60s and did a whole lot of issues of *Excelsior*. If I knew how many issues, I'd probably be doing more of them right now, but since I don't, I've coined a new title, *Crossfire*.

Those looking for some oblique connection with the political discussion show will search in vain, since the name has a different slant. I often use

it as my handle on computer networks and BBSes, and I thought it would work well in this context, too. It derives, not from the T.V., but the from Mark Evanier's ground level costumed hero comic book of the same name. The four-color *Crossfire* patrols the sequin-strewn streets of Hollywood, saving starlets from Fates Worse than Death, much as this issue of *Crossfire* will save me from the fate of having to ride up the waitlist again.

About half the SAPS membership gets *Folly*, my fairly frequent genzine, and presumably know at least as much about my life and times as they care to. I hope they'll bear with me unto the next skipped line while I indulge in the traditional first-issue autobiography. To show my sympathy for those who must endure my self-aggrandizement, I will endeavor to change the facts in the name of variety. I will also refrain from lengthy recitations about my career as



an astronaut my life as a Mafia don, and my exploits as the indefatigable lover of famous women. Actually, this represents only a small sacrifice, inasmuch as I never actually did any of those things, anyway. I wanted to, if that means anything.

What I am is a professional writer and editor in my mid-40s. Specifically, I'm the editor of **Electronic Games**, a relatively new consumer magazine devoted to video and computer gaming. I've been writing about this subject since the late 1970s and, with Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley Katz, started the world's first magazine devoted to this hobby in 1981.

Prior to my involvement with interactive electronic entertainment, I worked for several trade magazines, starting with **Quick Frozen Foods Magazine** in 1971. Before that, I went to college and graduate school while earning enough to buy the odd six-pack of Pepsi by serving as Associate Editor of **Amazing** and **Fantastic** under the tutelage of Ted White.

My mentor at **QFF** was Sam Martin, better known to science fiction fans as Sam Moskowitz. I've always felt there was something special about being able to cite Sam Moskowitz and Ted White as my two main teachers...

After flirting with a couple of projects in the mid-1970s, including a professional wrestling magazine called **Main Event**, Bill, Joyce, and I finally struck paydirt with video and computer games.

In the mid-1980s, we formed Katz Kunkel Worley, Inc., because we all wanted an impressive letterhead. We began evaluating, fine-tuning, and designing computer and video games as well as writing

about them. That's gone pretty well, too. Relatively new titles on which we've worked include **Bart's Nightmare**, a video game cartridge; and **Batman Returns!**, an adventure for home computers.

I got into fandom in 1963 after letterhacking the prozines for awhile. Lenny Bailes and I published a fanzine, worked a mention of it into the **Amazing** letter column, and soon had established contact with several fans. We continued to co-edit until the late 1960s, when Lenny's interest in fandom briefly waned.

I continued **Quip** for a couple of years after that before reviving **Focal Point** with rich brown. After we headed the Bob Shaw **FDund** that brought him to the 1971 Noreascon, rich cut back activity and moved to the Washington, D.C. area. I continued **Focal Point** as a monthly genzine before collaborating with my wife Joyce on **Swoon**. We also became hosts of the Brooklyn Insurgents, a weekly club for fanzine fans that met through most of the 1970s.

After many, many fanzines and club meetings, the demands of career-building inspired a 14-year gaffiation that ended in summer 1990. Mark Blackman brought me back to the hobby with a letter alerting me to the 300th monthly issue of **The Terrean**, the official organ of **TAPS**, a rotating apa which I co-founded with Bailes 25 years earlier. I not only contributed to the landmark issue, but hung around for a few more months as a waitlister.

The fanzine bug evidently has something in common with malaria, because it wasn't long before I started **Folly**. I've done 18 issues in a little over two years, and with Joyce as my new

coeditor, head into the third year with some confidence about continuing it.

"It's a Proud and Lonely Thing to be a Fan" says the addage, but most of my fanlife has been anything but solitary. The more enthusiastic I got about **Folly**, the more I missed the camaraderie that comes from face-to-face association with other fans. I'd been a member of the Fanboclasts and, later, the Insurgents in New York City. Once I resumed publishing, I missed the stimulation of other minds attuned to fanzine fandom.

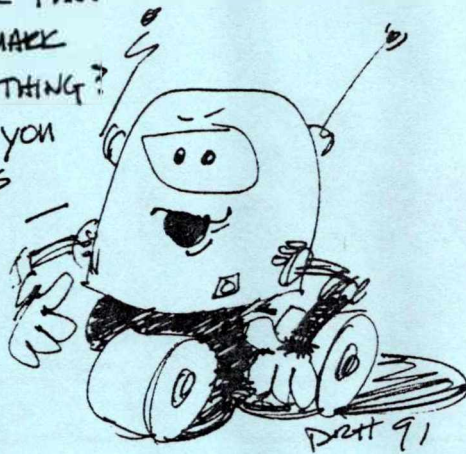
Alas, Las Vegas had a deserved reputation as a fannish wasteland. With the exception of Dwain Kaiser, who quickly moved to southern California, no fans with any national identity had called Vegas home.

I spent the winter of 1990-91 wrestling with the problem of a cataract in my single functioning eye. I was legally blind from October to February, and then spent the next month or so waiting to recover enough to get new glasses. I didn't go out much and, in truth, probably was pretty preoccupied, so I missed the start of the Southern Nevada Area Fantasy Fiction Union (SNAFFU).

Some time during the summer, Mike Glicksohn alerted Joyce and me to an event called **VegasCon** scheduled for October 1991. I found a listing in one of the newszines, called the information number, and spoke to chairman Shaun White. He, in turn, directed me to Ken and Aileen Forman, then the club's hosts.

Our careers as fannish hermits ended at a summer SNAFFU meeting. None of them planned to attend the **Chicon IV**, so we threw Vegas' first fan-run convention, **NonCon I**, on the

YOU THINK THAT  
LAST REMARK  
WAS SOMETHING?  
WAIT 'TIL YOU  
READ THIS  
LETTER!



Sunday of Labor Day weekend for about 50 guests.

That event spawned a series of monthly informal party meetings which still continues. They're called the Socials. We've had as many as 80 attend, but I think they're more fun with about 40.

I know that a few cynics whisper that Las Vegas Fandom is a creation of my fevered imagination, but I assure you that they exist. I even have witnesses; Art Widner and Don Fitch were at Silvercon I last Spring.

Life Among the Neofen is not without its charms. John Hardin nicknamed the group "The Fandom of Good Cheer", and they live up to that billing most of the time.

To puncture another misconception, I did not personally recruit all these people. Like a fannish Columbus, I sailed into their orbit and discovered them. SNAFFU, operating in isolation, was a going concern, complete with an excellent club newsletter, before Joyce and I established a connection to fandom-at-large.

In a variety of ways, Vegas Fandom disproves the doom-

crying of those who believe that traditional fandom is about to expire. Though fandom has grayed in the last decade, Vegas fandom is a fountain of youth. Most of the major fans are in their 20s. We even have teenagers!

And they like fanzines. The group produces a oneshot of 4-6 pages at each Social, and there are now five Vegas fans in FAPA with two more high on the waitlist. Besides **Folly**, the Vegas genzines are **Dalmation Alley** and **Area 51**. Other zines and projects are brewing.

They are neofans, though. It isn't always easy for someone with insurgent tendencies to keep smiling. On the whole, though, I can't imagine a more genial set of playmates.

If I can divert enough copies, I'll distribute **Area 51 #1** in this mailing. I try never to push them into anything, but at least a couple of locals have asked about SAPS. I'll loan my mailing to those who request it, and we'll see if any of them are captivated by the apa's special ambience.

Speaking of the mailing, I want to beg advance forgiveness for my first serving of mailing comments. I fear they

will be neither complete nor sufficiently discursive in the SAPSish manner. I remember how important mailing comments are here from my previous tour, but it may take a couple of mailings to get up to speed.

# Willis Plays Vegas

A fan novel  
by  
**Arnie Katz**  
\$10



# Luck of the Fannish

A Fan Novel  
by  
**Arnie Katz**  
\$5

**Live Right --  
Buy Both**



# The Fantasy Revolution

Westercolt .45, in Phoenix, AZ, was a typical large regional convention to most of its 1,800 members, but it stunned Joyce and me. It's one thing to intellectually understand a situation, but it is quite another to personally observe it. The other cons we'd attended prior to Westercon (VegasCon, Corflu 9, and Silvercon 1) didn't prepare us for the sweeping changes since our last spate of con-going in the early 1970s.

Everyone assures me that Westercolt .45 was a mainstream con with broad similarities to other large regionals, but it was a radical departure from any con we'd previously attended. New (to us) were: the huge number of "hall costumes"; the heavy emphasis on gaming; the shift in huckster room merchandise from books and magazines to jewelry, blades, staffs and the like; the masquerade replacing the banquet as the con's most important official event; the autograph signings, and the scant attention to fanzines.

These drastic alterations in the fabric of fandom have provided much material for thought. Today's fandom is the consequence of many causes, but I have a theory that the most important influence is the change in emphasis from science fiction to fantasy.

I'm not saying the changes of the last two decades are good or bad. They make "Fandom-at-large" of less interest to me, but the current state of affairs clearly delights a vast number of people. I would never want to take away their fun.

This article isn't a call for changes in Fandom. It's just my attempt to explain How We Got Here from There. Personally, I'm quite content to attend the cons, like Corflu and Ditto, that cater to our little splinter of fandom and Pub My Ish. At

heart, I guess I'm still one of those little boys who likes to pull apart his toys and see how they work.

Fantasy's traditional place in fandom was as a special interest. Some folks read it, but you can do anything you want in the privacy of your own home. Many fantasy authors had large followings in fandom -- Lovecraft, Bradbury, and Howard, to name three -- but fantasy was an adjunct to science fiction. With the possible exception of the "Conan:" saga, most popular fantasy was of a distinctly literary bent, contrasted to the pulp s. f. dispensed by *Planet* and *Startling*.

Science fiction dominated conventions through the mid-1960s. Most masquerade costumes were whimsical, fannish, or derived from science fiction. Fantasy-inspired costumes usually presented some classic horror element like vampires or werewolves. Hall costumes were virtually unknown. Anyone who wore a stfnal ornament was sure to draw attention, because it was a rare thing.

The huckster room was mostly old books and magazines. Filk singing featured humor about books and fannish references.

I think there was also a special relationship between the pros and fanzine fans. So many had passed through the hobby, and there were always the likes of Bloch and Tucker to provide a direct connection. Even the pros without fan experience sometimes found that fanzine fans were kindred spirits -- bookworms who liked a good bull session about outlandish ideas and respected the talent it took to make a living as a writer or artist.

Gaming had no official status. Chess, hearts, poker, and homemade science fiction boardgames got the most play late at night. Unless you count Tucker. (I always count Tucker, who is quite a card



himself. A ten of clubs, I believe.) One of the highlights of my first worldcon, Discon in 1963, was a game of chess with Kate MacLean. The easy familiarity that develops over a game made it possible to narrow the gap between an awestruck teenager and a Genuine Pro Author.

A series of pop cultural events, with repercussions far beyond the narrow confines of fandom, reshaped s.f. fandom into an informal network of fantasy fans.

The Tolkien boom of the late 1960s, kindled in part by the hippie counterculture, had a profound effect on fandom. Fans had touted the merits of Middle Earth for many years, but the Tolkien boom threw the trilogy into the thick of sercon discussion.

(I don't know how to evaluate the impact of the Burroughs boom of the mid-1960s. John Carter, Carson of Venus, and Pellucidar probably fall into the science-fantasy category, which means that these books may have prepared many for the adventurous fantasy of Tolkien.)

It was natural for publishers to see the incredible success of "Lord of the Rings" and seek to emulate it with new fantasy fiction in the same general mold. Terry Brooks' "Sword of Shanara", a novel pretty much disdained by fans at the time, showed that the author didn't have to grapple with the lofty themes of "LOTR" to appeal to that new audience.

Then came the sword & sorcery craze, which drew strength from the upswing in mysticism in Western Civilization that also led to the New Age movement. Blade-bearing barbarians swashbuckled their way through movies, comic books, and innumerable novels.

Like the Tolkien boom, the mania for sword & sorcery increased the number of fantasy lovers in the general population, the pool from which new fans are drawn. The rise of sword & sorcery also signaled a shift in the fantasy mainstream, away from the lofty themes and heavy content of Tolkien to stories that stressed colorful setting and characters in simple, action-driven plots.

Many science fiction fans esteem fantasy because its most notable expressions derive from literary, rather than pulp, tradition. With exceptions like Michael Moorcock, sword & sorcery is pulp fantasy. A person who masters the elements of the genre can sell books that do not depend on bold new ideas, mind-boggling concepts or deep, convoluted philosophical themes. More people are capable of writing a story about a deposed princeling who must cross the great wilderness to assemble the seven

segments of the Sacred Staff of Setaract to rescue the princess and reclaim the throne than can produce a salable science fiction novel.

In the late 1960s, some fantasy fans graduated from reading and watching it to acting out its more colorful aspects. The Society for Creative Anachronisms made its first worldcon appearance at 1968's Baycon, somewhat to the distaste of science fiction fans. Renaissance Fairs generated even more pseudo-Medievalists with a strong interest in costumery.

All of these factors fueled the mania for RPGs (role-playing games) in the 1970s. "Dungeons & Dragons" and other games of this type captured the hearts of millions of players, the most creative of whom became Game Masters (the person who writes and runs the RPG).

Game Masters (GMs) spend months designing backgrounds, detailed to the lowliest shopkeeper in some cases, before characters begin their first adventure. During the interactive gaming sessions, the players' responses embellish the GM's creation. Games often take unexpected swerves when particularly ingenious RPGers find unanticipated solutions to the GM's traps and puzzles.

What makes a successful design for an RPG campaign? Ingredients of the best ones include: a detailed, logical world with enough unique features to engage the players' attention; vibrant characters who take on added depth as they survive adventure after adventure; tricky situations that require ingenious solution; combat action; colorful non-player characters, and an articulate GM with a knack for description.

Almost unconsciously, GMs learned to create a fantasy novel. Like earlier generations of fledgling writers who used a fanzine apprenticeship as a pro prep school, RPG fans acquired enough skill to sell.

The novels they write, like the campaigns they plan, are heroic fantasies with a strong emphasis on puzzles, clever twists on standard plots, bravura characters, and lots of detail in costuming and weaponry.

Heroic fantasy has become a self-sustaining genre. There are enough RPGers and masqueraders looking for inspiration for their projects to keep quite a few fantasy writers churning out trilogies.

Fandom has no membership requirements, because there's no umbrella organization to set up

*Continued on page 23*





## Pre-Holiday Season Musings

### On the Road

The worldcon was monumental, incredible, outstanding. We flew down to Ft. Myers on Wednesday, and spent 24 hours with my sister, before going on to Orlando. I'd never been in Florida before; it impressed me with its greenery, its table-like flatness, and the incredible profusion of wildlife harbored by all that rain-forest. Florida has lizards, little green ones, the way we desert folk have ants. And, I think I prefer the ants.

We'd opted for the Peabody, and I'm glad we did, since even the hike across the highway to the convention center, then the l-o-n-g trudge through the convention center to the fan room, totaled a lot of walking for me. (I made the trek a half-dozen times each day, so it did add up.) By the second day, I jumped at every chance to lean on the arm of one gentle fan or another; it wasn't only affection that made me seek out the contact.

It was great. It was superb. It was a joyful reunion with old friends, a spiritual home-coming that gathered together hearts. Need I say how treasured each moment was? I was overwhelmed by seeing loved ones long-known but never met; I was humbled by the forgiveness of a friend once wronged; I found some loves I had lost but never forgotten. I confess my tears when time came for the goodbyes.

### Masters of War

When pay-per-view advertised the Bob Dylan 25th Anniversary Concert, I misunderstood exactly what I was buying. I thought it would be a Dylan concert; instead it was a concert of Dylan music by some of the greatest performers of the past quarter century.

We'd invited Bill Kunkel and Laurie Yates, Ron Pehr and Raven to join us for dinner and the watch, and it made for a pleasant evening's

entertainment. I was all a-tingle in anticipation by the time the concert began. I've seen Dylan very few times. Once on Saturday Night Live, once on the televised Rolling Thunder concert, in the movie DOC... I'm not sure if there are any more. Never in person.

To be completely honest, I can't say that I always loved Dylan. In fact, I remember when Hank Luttrell introduced Dylan to me, that I was most unkind about his musical abilities. It took a long time for me to come around to him. Sometimes I'm that way about stuff: remarkably hard-headed and slow to get the message. I was that way about Tolkien and LotR. Took me years to read through even half of the first book. Then suddenly, click! something snapped into place, and I couldn't conceive of not loving the trilogy. Since then, I've read and reread it with the fervor one might expect from an ex-Bible-thumping-Baptist. Why couldn't I enjoy it before? I don't know.

Since my conversion, Dylan's been Really Important to me for about 22 of his 25 year career. So important, in fact, that I wasn't even bummed out when I learned that this concert was Of Dylan, and not By Dylan. I loved hearing all the excellent performances; it was well worth my time and money.

Watching the greatest rock guitarists of the past 25 years, we talked a great deal about Who Is Number One. There were votes for Eric Clapton, George Thorogood, and others of great worth. After hearing them all, I selected Johnny Winters as my candidate for that honor. Lor,



how that man can play the blues!

In the midst of the celebration of Dylan-love, Sinead O'Connor came to the mike to do her bit. It was one week after her appearance on Saturday Night Live, when she tore up a picture of the Pope as an act of protest against [I'm not sure exactly what].

Although I've frequently heard that some performer or another was booed off a stage, I had never actually seen it happen until then. If I liked her better, I might have felt sorry for her, but I had the feeling that it didn't altogether displease her to have this added to her air of perpetual martyrdom.

We, watching, discussed quite a bit the irony of the fact that Dylan's greatest role has been as a spokesman for Social Consciousness. He was our great Voice of Protest. We, who listened, were the Protest Generation.

And yet the audience at the Dylan concert booed this protester from the stage for tearing up a picture of the Pope.

Was it, do you suppose, because a picture of the Pope seemed more inviolate than the flag, or the draft cards, or the bras, or the other symbols we railed against? I doubt that.

Was it because they have forgotten? This seems unlikely.

Or was it simply because Sinead O'Connor is so self-righteous that she's easy to hate, and the whole world was just waiting for this good excuse?

Gardening Update

I can't believe it. Over nine months after they were planted, all of a sudden I have

two bell peppers. I figure that they only cost me \$387.26 each.

#### Picketing For SF

From the moment it was announced, fans in Las Vegas knew they wanted it...and were almost guaranteed that they wouldn't get the chance to sign up for it. True to form, Prime Cable, the local vendor that provides cable tv to most of Las Vegas, decided in their infinite wisdom that they would not make the sf cable available to viewers in this area.

Every SNAFFU club meeting, one or another member would get up and report their latest contact with Prime. Each meeting the word grew more negative. It went from "Not likely" to "Definitely not" with hardly a pause. "Write letters, send cards, make phonecalls," these sad reporters urged.

But, Prime was firm...and when the day came that the rest of the world was treated

to the new sf channel, Vegas fans gnashed their teeth. "I think we should protest," I suggested at the meeting that Sunday. "We're the official area club: if we don't Speak Out for science fiction, who will?"

So it came that eight or ten of us gathered at Prime Cable one Thursday morning, with posters and walking shoes, prepared to make our feelings known. We'd faxed a press release to local papers and t.v. stations to let them know we'd be there; Channel 13 actually showed up before the pickets and marchers were ready and obligingly waited for us to get our corns in a row before they started to film the happening.

It went rather well. The t.v. people gave us 2-3 minutes time on the evening news. The managers of Prime Cable first displayed great trepidation and unease at our presence, as if they expected us to become violent, then





finally relaxed and talked to us. They expressed phony surprise at our desire for the cable; the Head Man pretended he'd had no cards, letters or calls on the subject.

But the bottom line was that we got a little attention to our cause, and the manager rather grudgingly said that they would consider adding the channel when contract renewal time comes.

It was the first time I'd marched for anything, since St. Louis fans marched against the war. It was kinda fun...and I believe it may eventually get more results than all those earlier protests put together.

#### Worley-Gigs

(Thanks to John Hardin for thinking up this title for me)

Being a science fiction fan should have suited me superbly well to act as a reporter of technological breakthroughs. Actually, I've usually found that science fiction didn't account for the near future inventions nearly as well as the far distant ones. Although Clifford Simak anticipated the decentralization of cities, with electronic communications tying the isolated workers together, he barely imagined the particulars that made the Back Office a reality. Fax, modem, over-night express and telephone are the true social changers; they've done more than any protester could ever accomplish to separate the illuminati from the great unwashed.

Breakthroughs are occurring at such a rapid pace in the computer field that even a news reporter feels the world slipping beneath her feet. Comdex, the country's



largest computer show, opens here in Vegas next week, and I've been receiving a lot of advance press material about the Wonders to be Unveiled. Faster, brighter, smaller, bigger...these are routines touted by every vendor. But, every tenth one or so has something more obviously slated to change the way we live and work.... the board for your p.c. that windows a t.v. program in the corner of your monitor. The electronic book readers. The thin-screen monitors, the wrist-watch computers. Consumer-pleasing items made possible by applied technology which will cause giant social upheavals.

If you haven't looked at a computer game since Pac-Man, take a gander at the current state of computer graphics. They can truly make you believe a man can fly, or that you're seeing another world, or traveling through space...

I guess that touches on the thing I like about the electronic entertainment field. I surely do like simulations of things and experiences that I can never hope to achieve...may never want to achieve. I can relive history. I can refight old wars. I can discover America, and give the Indians the horse before

Cortez. I can fight alien cultures, or establish civilizations, and enjoy all these kicks without the sore feet.

I'm really looking forward to the coming-of-age of CD-ROM entertainments. We're only seeing the very beginning wave now, yet there are already museum tours I want to take on disk, zoos to visit, dungeons to crawl. Before it's over I'll be able to dive beneath the sea, climb the mountains, and walk on the moon...using CD to save the data, computer graphics to produce the visuals, and virtual reality technology to put me in the middle of the adventure.

One new product just on the verge of premier is a home game unit designed ready to receive downloads from fiber-optic communication cables. With this, people will be able to order up interactive electronic entertainment the same way people now order a pay-per-view movie. Although people will still purchase some items they wish to replay, or those which are esoteric and therefore not in the catalog, retailers who depend on sales or rental of games will likely see that market change drastically away from mass marketing.

Books and magazines, too, will likely join the move toward electronic distribution, defying the costs of paper, printing, and postage. We may already be in the last days of printed words. Ah, and alas! What will become of fans when there are no more bookstores to work in?

Social upheaval lies ahead...and not all that far ahead, either.

— Joyce Katz



# The Strange Preoccupation of **Woody!** From Las Vegas to the Cosmos... and Back Again

By  
**Arnie  
Katz**

Shedding New Light on a Las Vegas Fan Luminary

I have an announcement. The current mailing contains what the rest of Las Vegas Fandom fervently believes is the last article about Isaac Asimov by Woody Bernardi.

We have Put Our Foot Down. We have Been Stern with fan-dom's Candide. As Joyce put it so eloquently during a recent visit: "Other people have died Woody. It's time to move on."

Woody looked dubious. From a single paragraph, it had grown to a short piece in Marquee and then ballooned to its full, majestic length in Area 51 #1.

I understood his quandary. Only that morning Joyce and I had speculated about what the future might hold for Jophan Junior. "I think he'll expect the article into a book," she theorized.

"And then comes the Encyclopedia of Asimov," I predicted. "I can see it lined up on every fan's shelf, in handsome leather bindings." In truth, I visualized the Infomercial, with Harlan Ellison pitching The Encyclopedia of Asimov like mad. "Order now and get the seven A volumes for the price of three!" he pleads.

I also pointed out the perils of launching Woody on a career of obsession with obituaries. "Las Vegas Fandom doesn't need its own Grim Reaper," I scolded.

I thought of a fan who succumbed to the lure of this preoccupation. At first, he only noted the passing of legendary science fiction personages like E.E. Smith and

John Campbell. Then, it was any pro or well-known fan. Soon, he was tracking every American who had ever had a connection with any aspect of fantasy and science fiction.

Before long, his scope widened to encompass the whole world. If someone who had ever read a science fiction magazine died, he knew it and mourned the loss.

Then came the phone calls.

I'd lift the receiver and the first thing I'd hear was: "Guess who died." Then, total silence. No other greeting was necessary—or offered. It could only be the Messenger of Death.

The first few times, I tried to guess the identity of the person whose number had come up. I would fail, of course. Then he would triumphantly announce the answer.

I grew to dread these calls. It reached its nadir one sweltering New York summer. The world of science fiction, caught in the grips of abnormally good health, couldn't provide sufficient grist for his lugubrious mill. In those dark days, he would phone me to report the untimely endings of neighbors of the relatives of tradespeople in his neighborhood. He intoned these obituaries with the same funereal air once reserved for Dr. David H. Keller, M.D., but I found I couldn't share his boundless sorrow. "I don't even know your bitcher's cousin's eighbor!" I told him after one deathbed bulletin too many.

After that, the calls went elsewhere.

Amazingly, this story had not had

the desired sobering effect on Joyce. Rather, I think she envisioned Woody becoming a valuable cog in the Spindizzy News Combine.

So it was not altogether surprising when she put a compassionate hand on Woody's slumped shoulder and said, "Don't worry, Woody. Other people will die. There will be other retrospectives and memorials."

"There will?" The young fan wiped the tears from his eyes. His habitual smile began to breath through his gloomy expression.

"How about Fritz Lieber?" she coaxed. "He's dead, too."

Woody sat upright, again. The light had returned to his eyes. Joyce and I nodded sagely to each other. Another Area 51 article was practically on the page.



he's so  
good NATURED  
he'll LAFF AT  
this CAPTION.



# C. Ross Country

## A Moving Story by C. Ross Chamberlain

ONCE UPON A TIME, long ago in the early Spring of 1992, there was a couple that, all unwillingly, lived far apart, he on the easternmost coast of the country, in the City of the Big Apple, also known as New York, and she some 500 miles away, upon the southern banks of a great lake toward the north and middle part of the nation, in the city sometimes called the Big Plum, sometimes The Mistake on the Lake, or, alternatively, Cleveland. The circumstances of this separation have already been told and retold to the point of tedium; suffice it that neither party desired it and, although brief visits were possible at infrequent intervals, they sought fruitlessly for conditions that would bring them back together again on a permanent basis.

Now Ross and Joy-Lynd (for those were their names) had once both resided in New York, and there, a quarter of a century before, in the context of a strange, subcultural society called Science Fiction Fandom, had made the close acquaintance of another couple, Arnold (known as Arnie) and Joyce. In the latter years of Ross and Joy-Lynd's habitation in New York, Arnie, surnamed Katz, and Joyce, whose maiden name was Worley, joined in partnership with another friend, Bill Kunkel, to create and publish news about what was then a new phenomenon, computerized entertainment. Their firm was called Katz Kunkel Worley, or KKW for short.

In a middle year of the ninth decade (never mind finger-counting; that's the 1980s) being sorely taxed in the land of New York, the members of KKW incorporated and sought a new locale for their operations in Western Lands where corporate taxation was minimized. They settled in fabled Las Vegas, which in Spanish means The Meadows, after an oasis once held secret by the Native Americans of that territory. Ross, who had earlier been transferred to Cleveland with Joy-Lynd, had by this time returned to New York alone; when the KKW team left, they allowed as how they would send for him once they were established.

It was not until the first year or so of the final decade of the century that they began to think they were sufficiently settled in and their operations successful enough to consider the prospect of putting up the cost of moving Ross and Joy-Lynd westward. Hopes on all sides had built up when, disappointingly, a recession, incited by a brief but expensive war called Desert Storm,

delayed it by over a year.

Meanwhile, in the period when the hopes for moving westward had seemingly been dashed, circumstances arose for both Joy-Lynd and Ross that pointed to the need to move from the residences they had been maintaining. In Ross's case, his employer had moved across the great River Hudson to the state of New Jersey, and complications connected with the incursion of taxes by *both* New York and New Jersey prompted Ross to follow suit. For Joy-Lynd, too, changes in employment and the impending cutoff of funds supplied by the national government combined with policies at the public housing where she resided to point to relocation.

She had found a place and was making preparations to move, and Ross had actually physically made his move, when Joyce passed the word that Katz Kunkel Worley, Inc., was 99 44/100% ready to bring the two of them to their Southwestern paradise...

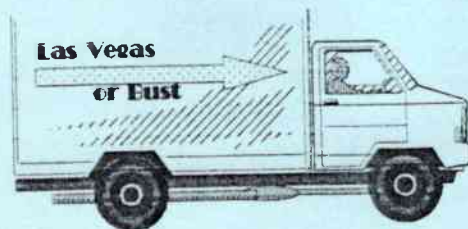
### Reaction and Remorse

[Author's note: Dear reader, at this juncture the primary author wished to get out of third person mode and into first person, which is, frankly, easier. However, the other participant in this tale registered disappointment at this intention, the general intention being to include this in a family letter, too. So we shall continue—but perhaps with less of the mythic atmosphere...]

Needless to say, the telephone call from Joyce surprised Ross a little—and Joy-Lynd when she was apprised of it. As already indicated, they had both about given up on hopes for the Las Vegas move, and thought they were facing continued separate existence of indefinite duration.

There had been positive elements for their prospects. In Ross's case, he was now living in a suburban residential neighborhood, with lots of trees and lawns and things, compared to the brick canyon, traffic-polluted atmosphere of upper Manhattan. His room was twice the size of the rooms he had had for the last couple of years; it was, in fact, formerly the living room of a full apartment. The person he was renting it from, one Enzo Matarazzo, lived in the

remaining rooms of the apartment, and they shared a well-appointed kitchen as well as the bath. Enzo, a very pleasant young (28) fellow, ran a pastry and ice cream shop in town, and shared with Ross a taste for good





music. [No time now for a digression on what constitutes "good" in this context.]

The new New Jersey residence was about 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles from where Ross worked and he was making a regular habit of walking it, both ways—a far healthier regimen than he had been used to, though previously he had frequently walked about a mile across the George Washington Bridge to (and from) work.

He was beginning to see progress in his ongoing effort to get his company to install a computer system for desktop publishing, and had great plans for implementing it. Once the moving expenses and old taxes were out of the way (from the first months of 1992, when he was still a New York resident), his income level would have been somewhat better, and he was even working up the gumption to ask for a raise. *Iraucous and derisive laughter appropriate at this point!*

For Joy-Lynd, a friend had promised to make available to her a sizable and quite attractive apartment at an incredibly low figure per month (naah, you wouldn't believe it!). This was especially welcome because Joy-Lynd had already started a new full-time teaching job; the salary sufficient that it would have meant a considerable rent increase at the public housing location she'd been living in since shortly after Ross moved back to New York.

So the two were not exactly prepared for pulling up stakes, folding tents, and moseying off into the unknown. Indeed, if truth be known, Joy-Lynd was far less so than Ross. She had not only developed a substantial circle of friends, but also established herself rather comfortably in Cleveland and environs as a computer expert. She's not only a WordPerfect 5.1 maven, but somehow able to help anyone with nearly any problem that comes up.

Hence, in some ways, when Ross passed the message on to her that the invitation had been made (albeit details to be determined later), it was something of a shock. Not unakin to the jar one gets when one tries confidently to tread on one more step than a staircase actually possesses...

Re-examining the coin reveals a dark side to Joy-Lynd's situation in Cleveland as well; she had increasingly little time to herself. Nevertheless, Ross has, since the moments they actually got underway, discovered a certain mine of guilt over dragging her away from all that. After all, she's had precious little time to be alone since then, as well...

### Preparation

Joyce's call was made in April. She recommended that Ross not give notice quite yet, since KKW's plans were still somewhat in flux; for the same reason Joy-Lynd could not advise the people she was working for right away, either. Happily, both had people they could confide in—people who were supportive about it, if sorry to see them go.

As production manager on *Quick Frozen Foods International*, but with the necessity to give relatively short notice, Ross had to prepare some materials to help his successor take over with minimal personal, interactive help. Another hat that he wore at QFFI was statistics editor, involving some preparation of tabular data for most issues of the quarterly magazine.

His primary job under that title was to put together the

U.S. data for the annual *Global Frozen Foods Almanac*, a 32-page supplement for the October issue. He'd been doing this for longer than he'd been with QFFI, collecting the same data for the domestic edition, *Quick Frozen Foods*, from some time in the 1970s. Who had been his predecessor on this interesting activity? Why, one Arnie Katz, no less!

Ross had started writing a manual for preparing the almanac a year or so earlier, on the premise that it would be needed sooner or later. Nevertheless, continually altering circumstances in the approaches required to gather the data forced considerable rewriting, even rethinking, to some extent. The manuscript for this effort wound up quite a few pages long, with all too many topics boiling down to "I can give this much only; the rest you'll have to figure out for yourself."

Fortunately, his successor in that particular operation, one John J. Pierce, is a tenacious reporter and has worked on gathering the international data for several years; Ross has every confidence that JJ will be able to carry it off.

[Subsequent to that writing, as the days dwindled down to a precious few, i.e., 'long about August and September, Ross got several calls from JJ, requesting clarification of some areas. However, in each case the upshot remained, essentially, 'the rest you'll have to figure out yourself.')

The other manual, that for the post of production manager on QFFI, was a pretty straightforward recounting of the things it was necessary to do within the job. Ross did not attempt to write it as a bare job description, but as a kind of chatty how-to-do-it manual, and it ended up at 35 pages, 15 of which were sample documents and forms.

Ross acknowledges that he was quite astonished at how much he actually did in that job!

The company Ross worked for then was a family operation, E. W. Williams Publications Co. Timing for the change was awkward. As it happened, Mr. Edwin W. Williams, publisher, and his son Andrew Williams, vice president (called Andy, but not to be confused with the singer of Moon River), were to be in Europe through most of May. Things were cleared from Las Vegas for Ross to be able to give his month's notice on the day before Andy was to leave, a week before his father was scheduled to go. Did I say awkward?

Ross's fears and trepidations about this were, happily, unrealized. Both Williamses took it very well, all things considered, expressing some surprise and disappointment at his leaving, and even concern for his future when he told them that his new post was with a new start-up publication—but no rancor.

In fact, when they put an ad in the Sunday papers (both *The New York Times* and *The Bergen Record*), they put in Ross's name as the person to contact. When he arrived at the office the following Monday morning, at about 9 (on time, but later than his usual 8:30 to 8:40), he was told that the phones had been ringing off the hook...

He learned fairly quickly how to talk to people who were inquiring about his job, and in fact, he got to the point where he rather enjoyed it. There was no question of actually interviewing them at the office—that would have to wait for the Williams's return—nor was it in Ross's province to give them a salary offer; but discussing what areas of experience and expertise would be required became a pleasurable experience, not unmixed with a degree of insight and pride... and admiration for people who frequently knew some areas and disciplines better than he did. It was a bit disconcerting to find himself on the other end of the "over-qualified" assertion.



The senior Mr. Williams returned about a week before Ross's last day—Friday, May 29—but he didn't actually interview anyone until Wednesday or Thursday that week. Ross met only one of the people interviewed, and had a good conversation with her. He had a positive feeling about her and her qualifications, and later learned that she was in fact the one hired.

Meanwhile, back on the packing front, Ross had not been as astute. He had called and received materials from U-Haul, Hertz-Penske and Ryder. Hertz-Penske offered the best deal, with a 10-day limit but unlimited mileage, at under \$900 for a 14-foot truck, not including insurance, boxes and other such amenities.

Ah, but where Ross had gone wrong was in reading the literature and accepting the statement that a 14-foot truck would be adequate for 2-3 rooms worth of material. What he had forgotten was that he alone had a couple of rooms' worth of stuff in his one room, and that Joy-Lynd had at least five rooms' worth in her two! Not to mention that there was a queen-size bed in storage that should be moved...

And where he goofed again was in not mentioning the size of the truck in one of his nightly phone conversations with Joy-Lynd until after it was too late to change the request at the local (New Jersey) Hertz-Penske location.

The weekend before he was to move was a hot one, the sun clear and hot, temperatures peaking in the 90s. That Saturday morning, Ross chose to walk down to the North Bergen Hertz-Penske rental location to see if they had yet stocked up on any boxes. Another mistake. On the map it didn't look that much farther from his home than his office. It was, in fact, closer to 6 miles there, and Ross had neglected to wear a hat. (For anyone who has no mental image of the fellow, Ross's forehead and scalp share characteristics with those of Ed Asner and Patrick Stewart.)

When he arrived, Ross found that they had no boxes. Despite being aware that he was already in trouble, he walked home again, rather than spend a few dollars for a cab. Needless to say, he was not as productive that afternoon and Sunday as he might have liked, and walked into the office that Monday with a crimson scalp—and, despite liberal application of Jergens Lotion with Lanolin and Aloe from Saturday afternoon on, eventually peeled most unappealingly.

On Friday, Ross was treated to lunch at a local Chinese restaurant (his selection) by practically the entire group of his office coworkers. This was both a humbling and ego-boosting event, and while one suspects he did not make the best of it, he did, one hopes, make his gratitude clear to everyone.

He was still packing his office stuff that evening when

everyone had left, and in fact did not complete the job until the next day, after he had picked up the truck. It was a 14-footer; despite hopes and near-assurances, Hertz-Penske had not been able to get in a larger truck for him at the last minute. The weather was drizzly, and promised to continue that way through the weekend.

Saturday evening stretched into Sunday morning with Ross still packing. He had hoped to get away Sunday, about noon, but midday found him still loading the truck, with a long way to go. In fact, it was not until late Sunday evening that the truck was loaded—about a third full—with his room empty of all but some last stuff to be thrown out. Enzo helped a little at the last and wished him well when, finally, Ross drove away.

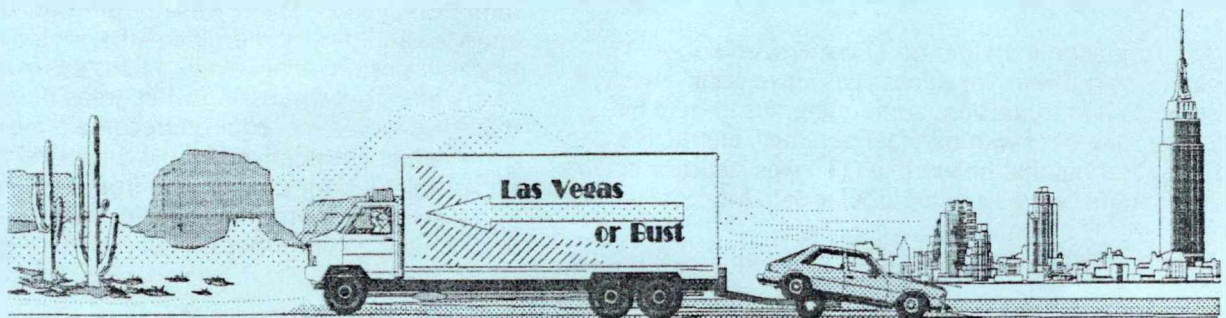
Ross had called Joy-Lynd several times during the day, holding off from disconnecting his phone until the very last. They had finally agreed to meet for breakfast at a Denny's restaurant in North Olmsted; originally the intention had been to have supper there and then drive the truck to a friend's home where they would leave it overnight. Joy-Lynd had long decided it would not be safe to leave the loaded truck parked at the complex where she lived.

The drive out of New Jersey began well enough, save that Ross of course somehow departed from Enzo's directions to get to Interstate 80 and found himself driving about 20 miles out of the way before getting onto the proper route. He was armed with the last of a couple of 2-liter bottles of soda (Pepsi and Slice) and some iced tea (Snapples), and was confident of driving most of the way without getting too sleepy to drive.

In fact, he was about two thirds of the way through Pennsylvania, or perhaps three-fifths of the journey, before he finally decided that it was going to be necessary to pull off the road and nap a bit. And this he did several times over the rest of the journey, stopping behind truck-stop restaurants and in off-highway rest locations five or six different times, totalling perhaps two or three hours' rest, during the last couple of hundred miles through Pennsylvania and Ohio. For many of those miles he was undoubtedly a significant danger to himself and to others, and he looks back on that night and morning with considerable alarm and earnest promises to himself not to get into that position again.

The last familiar miles into North Olmsted on I-480 West are a bit of a blur to Ross's recollection, but the delight of seeing Joy-Lynd in her booth in the restaurant remains distinct. The two ate a substantial breakfast, then he (with the help of several cups of coffee) followed her through a couple of towns and some narrow streets (be assured—most streets are much narrower than usual when one is driving a large truck!), and into an even narrower driveway, to her friend Melanie's house. There was a kind of concrete platform area where he was able to park the truck without interfering with accessibility by her car or Joy-Lynd's.

Now, Ross has lost a good many of the pertinent details for





the rest of that day, and actually much of the following week. The next morning the two did get over to a local Hertz-Penske location and were able to upgrade to a 24-foot truck. Ross occupied much of the rest of that morning transferring his junk from the 14-footer, across a narrow ramp between the tailgates. He incessantly bumped his head against the raised door of the smaller truck. He was not able to later use the resulting bruises as an excuse to get out of further work, however.

Melanie's driveway was too narrow for the big truck, but to one side there was an unpaved access to the concrete platform, which they used from then on. Joy-Lynd actually did most of the driving of the big truck. There was a loading platform at the rear of the building where Joy-Lynd lived; she ably backed the big van to the platform the first time out, and Ross "let" her continue to prove her expertise on the following two or three days it took to load it up...

Joy-Lynd lived in a public housing complex, on the 12th floor of the Highrise, a 19-story building set amidst two-story apartment houses. There were only two elevators, one of which was set up to do double duty as a freight elevator. The way from the elevator to the loading platform was through the basement. That elevator could be locked off from general access, so this was done, but it was only possible for a few hours each day, and that had to be between 9 and 5. The street gate to the loading area was locked at 5, so the truck had to be out by then.

Joy-Lynd and Ross did have help. Melanie has an acquaintance, a rather charismatic Texan by the name of Claude, who heads up a small community group of recovering alcoholics who are prepared to do odd jobs for very little money. Two of these offered their services. Ross picked them up in the mornings and drove them home at five in the afternoon.

Tony was quite young, in his early 20s perhaps; Terry was a feisty fellow in his 60s, and both were enthusiastic about their work— Perhaps over-eager... They would pack anything in sight, including un-emptied ashtrays and at least one bag of trash. Ross had a wide briefcase intended to go with him in the cab of the truck, in which he had put travel stuff, like a new Road Atlas and a camera—it got packed, as did some things Joy-Lynd had put aside for the same sort of thing.

Linda, another friend of Joy-Lynd's, came over a couple of days to help pack, and she had a friend, Peter, who joined the packing and loading crew.

Without these wonderful people, it would have taken much, much longer—if Ross and Joy-Lynd could have done it alone at all. Much appreciation is due all of them, but more than that, they were good people, and when all that could be done was done, and they left for home for the last time (Linda in her car, and Pete taking Tony and Terry), they were missed.

The residents, of course, were not happy about the elevators being tied up. And there were even members of the building security and maintenance crews who would occasionally steal away the elevator while the flatbed dolly was being unloaded at the platform.

Anyone who has ever moved knows that feeling that the process of packing will never end; that things somehow continue to spontaneously generate in rooms that should be looking emptier as the effort continues. So it was that after all the helpers had left for the last time, Thursday, June 4, Ross and Joy-Lynd were still packing stuff. They had hoped to get her car attached to the tow dolly the next morning,

and then be on the road— but all they could do was keep packing...

They were still at it on Friday afternoon when the time came to pull the truck out of the loading area; a frantic call to the Hertz-Penske rental place got the word that someone would still be there to help with the tow dolly by the time they arrived there.

Ross, driving Joy-Lynd's '86 Chevette, tried to follow her in the truck, but lost her at a red light and darn near got lost. Fortunately he was well-enough acquainted with the destination area that he arrived not *too* long after she did. It took three or four tries to find a tow dolly whose rear lights would connect to the truck's system *and* with undefective tire-shackles that would hold the car firmly, etc., but eventually that was done. Joy-Lynd and Ross parked the truck across a row of parking spaces in back of the Denny's in North Olmsted for a farewell-Ohio supper, then returned to her place and parked outside the complex. Ross stayed with the truck (yes, it *is* that kind of neighborhood) while she went in to pack up a last few things and do a last sweep-up.

It was about ten o'clock Friday evening when they rumbled for the last time through the streets of Cleveland's west side and headed down to I-480 West... They drove past North Olmsted, where they'd first lived when they moved to Ohio, and then kept on going.

### Westward Ho!

They didn't get out of Ohio that first night, but stayed in a Best Western motel somewhere off the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) near Toledo. It had originally been Ross' intention to seek out Motel 6's, due to the radio blandishments of Tom Bodette ( *sp?*), but in fact prices at the Best Westerns turned out not to be that much more, and both Joy-Lynd and Ross have (almost) always had excellent experience with the accommodations at Best Westerns. They stayed with that motel chain throughout the trip. [End commercial.]

They had and used a Triple-A Triptik for this journey. It provided some interesting details about what one may see along the way, such as "level to rolling farmlands devoted to grain, hay, livestock and varied industries" and the like. This was, in fact, their surroundings for most of the first day, Saturday, as they continued on I-80, transferring from the Ohio Turnpike to the Indiana and, eventually, Illinois toll roads.

The cab of the big, yellow van required a substantial step up, but once inside, it had a comfortable bench seat. Centered on it between the travellers they placed a cooler for soft drinks and the like. On the lid Joy-Lynd had attached base grips for a pair of covered travel cups she had acquired at Dunkin' Donuts. Experimenting with a couple of other techniques for carrying beverages out where they could be handily reached proved inadequate; the cab jounced and bounced enough that liquid usually found a way to splatter.

The cab was provided with an AM/FM-stereo radio that supplied pleasant music for most of the trip. In most areas they discovered "oldie" stations, playing pop music from the 50s, 60s and 70s; there was an occasional classical music station, but in general the latter's longer pieces would start to break up as the travellers passed out of range, rendering them unsatisfactory listening. So in the long run they stayed with stations offering lighter—and shorter—fare.

Before the trip ever began, Ross had initially hoped to be able to drop in on some people he'd gotten to know on the phone while working for QFFI. The typesetting and prepress operations for E. W. Williams had been done at Typehouse of Iowa and American Graphics Service, both located in Cedar



Falls. But it turned out that that town was well off I-80, by something like 70 or 80 miles, which would have meant a 150-mile detour at the least. And, besides, it was Saturday, and while it was possible, it would be unlikely they'd be working that day, and if they were, their primary interest would be in getting done with it and home. So Ross kinda waded in a northerly direction as they rumbled between Iowa City and Des Moines.

Ross and Joy-Lynd had thought to stay overnight in or near Des Moines, but it was not to be. It seems there was a Pork Convention in town that weekend, and all the lodging for miles was taken. Sounds like one of those classic humor bits, doesn't it? Twarn't funny, McGee...

They learned this at the first Best Western they inquired at, on the east side of town, hoping to check in. The manager tried to help and called around, and in fact he actually found someone with a room available; but Ross and Joy-Lynd thought they'd go on for a while and see if they could get one further west of the city.

Joy-Lynd and Ross stopped at a fine truck-stop, where, while we were filling up the gas tank, Joy-Lynd got into conversation with an employee, a woman who turned out to be originally from Ohio, who kindly provided us with some discount tickets for the restaurant, normally given to repeat customers.

Long before finding a motel, however, our weary travellers reached a point that they had to stop at a highway rest stop. They pulled in next to rows of semis and huge 18-wheelers, and napped for a while before continuing. (*Dejà vu!*—I thought of myself as an old hand at this.)

Within a mile after returning to the road, they saw a billboard for a BW motel, only a few miles ahead! Turned out it was also full, but the manager called another one, via CB, that was some 30-plus miles further yet, and that one had a room available. The travellers got directions—it was in a town called Atlantic, some five miles (they were told) off the interstate.

That turned out to be reasonably accurate, perhaps, as the crow flies... The road getting to it was longer. Needless to say, they slept well that night.

### High Plains Twister (almost)

Before the trip, Ross's low acquaintances had warned him that traveling across Nebraska would be a mind-numbingly dull experience. "There's miles and miles of nothing," he was told. This turned out not to be quite accurate, but for reasons probably not anticipated by his advisors.

For one thing, this was the beginning of the high plains. The land was flattening out from Iowa's rolling farmlands, true, but for Ross, at least, it was new country. He had a sense of narrowing horizons, as though there was a great drop off just beyond the low ridges that surrounded them. Sagebrush was just beginning to be a part of the landscape.

The elevation, though neither Joy-Lynd nor Ross yet quite understood it, was also beginning to affect the running of the truck, so that a peculiar racing, howling sound, signalling an apparent loss of power, that had occasionally been heard even back in Ohio, now seemed to be a regular feature.

And as they approached North Platte and Ogallala, the sky became increasingly...interesting. The radio reported a tornado watch for the panhandle area, that northwestern section of the state above Colorado's northeastern corner. Later reports described a fifteen-mile-wide front, with

thunderstorms, moving into the Ogallala area. And the western sky ahead of the truck was turning dark.

Dark? Well, this was different from anything Ross had seen before. He'd seen advancing rain clouds and thunderstorms before, and indeed this trip had provided several vistas including such, most passing harmlessly off to one side. But though they were now driving through partially cloudy sunshine, before them was rising something like a great dark dome, illuminated from behind and to the sides.

There were normal clouds before and around it, suggesting its vastness. Ross thought it looked like an enormous flying saucer; Joy-Lynd compared it to the spacecloud surrounding Vee-jur, the planet-sized space probe from the first *Star Trek* movie.

As it came closer, its smooth forward edge surrounded by boiling clouds from Stephen Spielberg's special effects department, its interior seemed composed of a vast grey nothingness in which lightning flashes silently struck, played, disappeared.

Over the years, Ross has had dreams of being surrounded by enormous natural disasters—volcanoes erupting, tidal waves imminent or meteors roaring down from the sky, or, yes, tornados tearing up the landscape—awesome, dangerous powers, but somehow incurring less a sense of helplessness than of presence at events of immense significance. This was the kind of feeling he had now; the big truck, the highway, and even the wide and increasingly eerily lit landscape about them irrelevant to that which approached them.

The normally suppressed consciousness of mortality recurred to him and the age-old question fled through his head again and again—"Is this it?"—together with the usual ironic, "Now? After all the trouble getting here?" He kept a lookout amongst the clouds for that seemingly innocent little probing point of darkness that could signal the beginning of a funnel...

And then the edge was overhead, the sunlit sky was behind them, and the rain began to fall. Some concern about maybe being hit by lightning remained, but the sense of awe turned into shakes of the head, and "Wow, that was something, wasn't it?"—And they were simply driving in the rain.

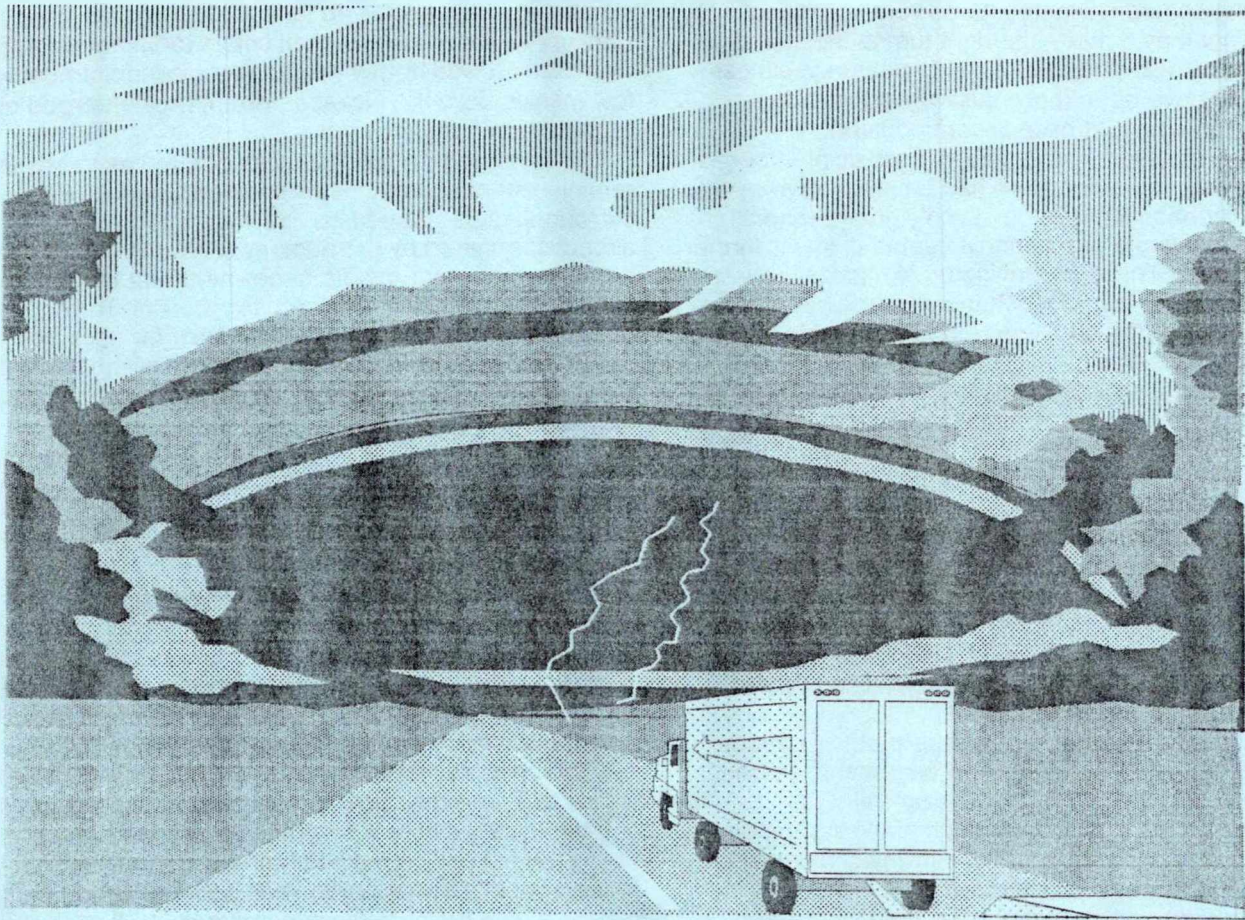
They soon turned off from I-80 onto I-76, heading south into Colorado. The clouds eased away, and far away, purplish with distance, mountain skylines appeared. Roadsigns advised trucks to drive in the left lane, flouting all familiar instructions from the Eastern part of the country. The sun set—and set—and... The sunset lasted forever, it seemed, as the two drove on and on toward Sterling, Colorado, where their next scheduled Best Western motel awaited them.

On Monday, they discovered that they were paying higher prices for gasoline. (The truck required standard unleaded gas, not diesel or other exotic fuel.) The wheezing and howling became a regular noise from the engine, and normal grades were noticeably more effort for the truck.

They reached Denver a little before noon, turning and twisting through a maze of connecting roads to transfer from I-76 to I-70. Once on it, they turned their faces confidently toward the mountains. But the truck didn't seem to want to cooperate. Slower and slower it ran, howling and straining.

They stopped once, on the shoulder, just past Denver, to let the engine cool down, and when they started again, after discouraging a would-be hitchhiker, it seemed to want to go okay for a while. But the truck was soon back to complaining bitterly, and they exited, stopping at the crest of a hill near a





phone, where they called the Hertz-Penske 800 trouble number.

Initially they were told that their truck wouldn't take the altitudes they were approaching at all, and that they would have to change their route south, by way of Albuquerque and Flagstaff. Aside from the possible opportunity to visit Ross's sister Elinor, in Prescott, this didn't sit well with either of them, but fortunately they were finally connected to someone in the Denver office who said he'd come out and check the truck.

They had to wait some time for him to show up. Where they'd stopped had a spectacular valley view—to be overshadowed by later ones, but delightful then. Ross found a pizza place nearby, in a little upscale-rustic shopping center, and got slices for the both of them. Later he took a picture of Joy-Lynd at the truck, using her disposable Panorama camera so as to include as much of the view as possible.

When the Hertz-Penske rep arrived, he drove the truck a little way (Joy-Lynd following in his truck), and pronounced the truck okay. It would make the passes, he told them, including the Eisenhower Tunnel which is at some two miles' altitude, but they'd have to expect the truck to be slow in taking the grades. And while the automatic transmission would handle the upgrades, they'd have to shift to the low gears while descending, taking it as easy going down as they'd been forced to going up.

And thus it was that they got back on their way through the Rockies. Thank all the stars in heaven for

the building of the Interstate highways across this grand country of ours! Ross shall be ever grateful that I-70 had none of those dreadful highway stretches where the road is fifteen feet wide with cliffs on either side, one up, one down... (They're still up there, and if the two had had to detour around the Eisenhower Tunnel that's what they'd have had to take. Many blessings have been counted!)

Long, steep downgrades were occasionally outfitted with sandy spurs called "runaway chutes," where trucks that have lost their brakes have a chance of stopping safely. Our travelers made it through without requiring their services.

There were occasional sprinkles of rain enhancing (or interfering with) the sunlit views of green and golden valleys, towering conifer-covered walls (some silver where a blight had passed within recent years), red and silver stone... Ross, who had never previously passed this way, was continuously filled with the awe and delight of visiting these wonders.

They stopped in one small town in one of the valleys to eat (the rustic-themed restaurant had impossibly salty French onion soup, but was otherwise pleasant) and to acquire warmer clothing than they were currently wearing—This was one of those areas where the enthusiasm of the packers in Ohio had overcome the intended prudence of the travelers. Ross wore his touristy sweatshirt, celebrating Colorado, for the rest of the trip.

They passed through a couple of the famous skiing resort towns, notably Vale and Aspen. They were running low on gas when they neared Vale, and exited there, hoping to find a gas station. They made one *leette* wrong turn, and found themselves driving through tiny streets unable to locate a gas station or even



a side road they could navigate. It was very frustrating. Probably even if they'd made the right turn at the start it wouldn't have helped—the truck's 12' 1" clearance almost certainly would have been more than any gas station's canopy in that town could have accommodated.

They finally escaped from Vale—as Ross pointed out as they were leaving, their visit there had been to 'no avail' (the good reader probably echoes Joy-Lynd's groan)—and succeeded in locating a gas station a couple of towns further on down the road. There, by driving up *alongside* the station's canopy, they could reach the gas tank from the pump. Towns in that region seem to be designed to discommodate truck traffic.

Indeed, over the course of this trip, Ross and Joy-Lynd actually became fairly adept at maneuvering that big truck together with its '86 Chevette in tow. Ross has learned considerable respect for the drivers of the even huger semis and 18-wheelers.

The landscape gradually changed as the day and the road wore on and they found themselves barreling through lower Colorado and, eventually, upper Utah. Mesas and desert plants appeared, notably sagebrush and joshua trees (which Joy-Lynd thought were cactus and Ross—trying to hark back 45 years to Reg Manning's *What Kinda Cactus Izzat?*—mistakenly identified as yucca).

A large section of the trip was alongside the Colorado River, some of it through canyons and very scenic passages. In Utah, they went through the Grand River Valley, but by this time it was getting too dark to see much of the surroundings. Some very spectacular and massive highway construction projects were underway along this region.

They were running late that day, delayed by the stop outside of Denver and slowed by the truck's oxygen starvation (not to mention the construction-area delays, where single lanes and the truck's maximum speeds of 35 to 45 on the grades created long lines of angry traffic behind the intrepid travelers), and did not arrive at the Best Western in Green River, Utah, until very late, about 2 a.m. They actually had to ring the night manager out of bed, and he was understandably not overhappy about it. It was fortunate that they had secured their reservation.

The last leg of their journey to Las Vegas came on Tuesday, June 9. There was about a 100-mile stretch after Green River where there were no services available. This was through some more spectacular landscape—wonderful movie-western desert and rocky canyons, including some considerable ridge elevations (the Road Atlas calls it the San Rafael Valley and the San Rafael Swell). They stopped at one of the numerous viewpoints, on the edge of a red and golden canyon, where Ross tested his acrophobia, and Joy-Lynd blew a bit of their budget on Indian jewelry—some really beautiful pieces that she could no doubt describe better than this writer can.

They reached I-15 toward midday, and drove south through so many miles of semi-desert and Western-style landscapes that they almost became inured to it. At one gas stop they found a Subway Shop, one of Joy-Lynd's favorite food sources in Cleveland, and the first they had seen on their travels. They tried out some of the new 4" round sandwiches, which had not yet been introduced in Ohio when they left.

I-15 passes through a small corner of Arizona, but that corner was enough to rouse the awe again in Ross and Joy-Lynd's nearly jaded visual centers. The highway, built alongside the Virgin River, is cut through some of the most

stimulatingly visual canyon landscape this side of the Grand Canyon, with stone walls of all colors looming incessantly overhead. It was both a relief and a disappointment when, a few miles before the Nevada border, they emerged onto relatively plain desert.

Ross compared the last miles before Las Vegas as reminiscent of L. Frank Baum's fabled Deadly Desert surrounding Oz. It seemed interminable, though they were already fascinated by the number of resorts and casinos built out in the apparent middle of nowhere, not to mention the billboards advertising attractions in the city. They'd actually been seeing such billboards since fairly far back into Utah.

At last they broke through the edge of the mountains surrounding Las Vegas. It was a shame in some ways that they had not timed it for evening—Joy-Lynd had been reminiscing about how, the first time she had driven into the city at night, and well before seeing the city, the sky looked like day. When she'd come through the pass, the blaze of lights stretching for miles and miles across the valley floor was wondrous and amazing.

[Recently the two made a point of driving out one evening specifically for that spectacular view. It was worth it.]

On this Tuesday afternoon, there was a slight haze across the city, whose subdued glitter came only from the sun on windows and cars. But its extent across the valley ahead of them was indeed impressive.

They had directions for finding the home of Arnie and Joyce Katz, and thus got their first taste of Las Vegas streets and traffic... It's different in a variety of ways from that in other towns, due in part to the width of the streets—but not in any real essence. Drivers come in all degrees of competence and civility no matter where you are.

### Settlers in Paradise

Arnie and Joyce made them welcome, took them out to dinner and put them up (or put up with them) until they could find and move into a new apartment. The truck and its appendant vehicle were meanwhile parked across the street from the Katz's lovely home, no doubt a blight on the residential neighborhood—but apparently nobody complained.

The next morning, Joyce, Joy-Lynd and Ross went to a realtor (Joyce driving) to get a listing of three-bedroom homes. There weren't that many—Vegas is crazy about two-bedroom domiciles. The city has literally hundreds of apartment and condo complexes, most containing two-story stucco quasi-Spanish style buildings within walled-off blocks. But the realtor was only able to find about three that had three-bedroom apartments available.

The need for a third bedroom came from the fact that while Ross was going to be working for KKW, he was going to do so largely out of his home. It would be necessary to set up a room as a legitimate home office. The extra rent, it seems, could be more than offset by the tax benefits. That's the theory, anyway.

It came down to two of the three locations— All such apartment complexes have rental offices, staffed by people who can describe the benefits and requirements for prospective tenants. At the third complex they visited, this office was manned by an officious and persnickety little snot of a man who must have been hired simply to keep people away. It certainly worked with our protagonists.

Of the remaining two complexes, one was a tad more luxurious than the other, with rent to match. The reader must understand that, to Ross and Joy-Lynd, although the rents



being asked were at least double anything they had ever had to pay before, what they were getting would have cost thousands per month in the New York or Boston metropolitan areas, and maybe even in Cleveland. But closer examination showed some advantages to the "cheaper" one, such as a larger patio, gas stove in the kitchen rather than electric, built-in microwave, etc.

So the one they selected was the one called Canyon Lake Apartments, located at 2200 S. Fort Apache Road. It's in an area unaccountably called The Lakes, several miles west of the center of town (as with the roads of the ancient Roman empire, in Las Vegas all things are measured from The Strip).

Bypassing here the mundane process of making the arrangements to live there, the next trick was to actually get moved in. After getting Joy-Lynd's car unhitched from the truck, and Ross began the process of getting some first things out of the truck and into the apartment, Joyce and Joy-Lynd sought out helpers. There are parts of town where one may go to find unemployed people who do this kind of work.

They came back with a couple of guys, both very pleasant. One looked like a former football player, mid-30's, perhaps, with a great scar where he'd evidently had knee surgery at one time. Claimed to be a musician, though... said he expected to have a rock band one day. Maybe.

They knew their stuff, and helped get the truck

unloaded in only a few hours.

#### Four Months' Perspective

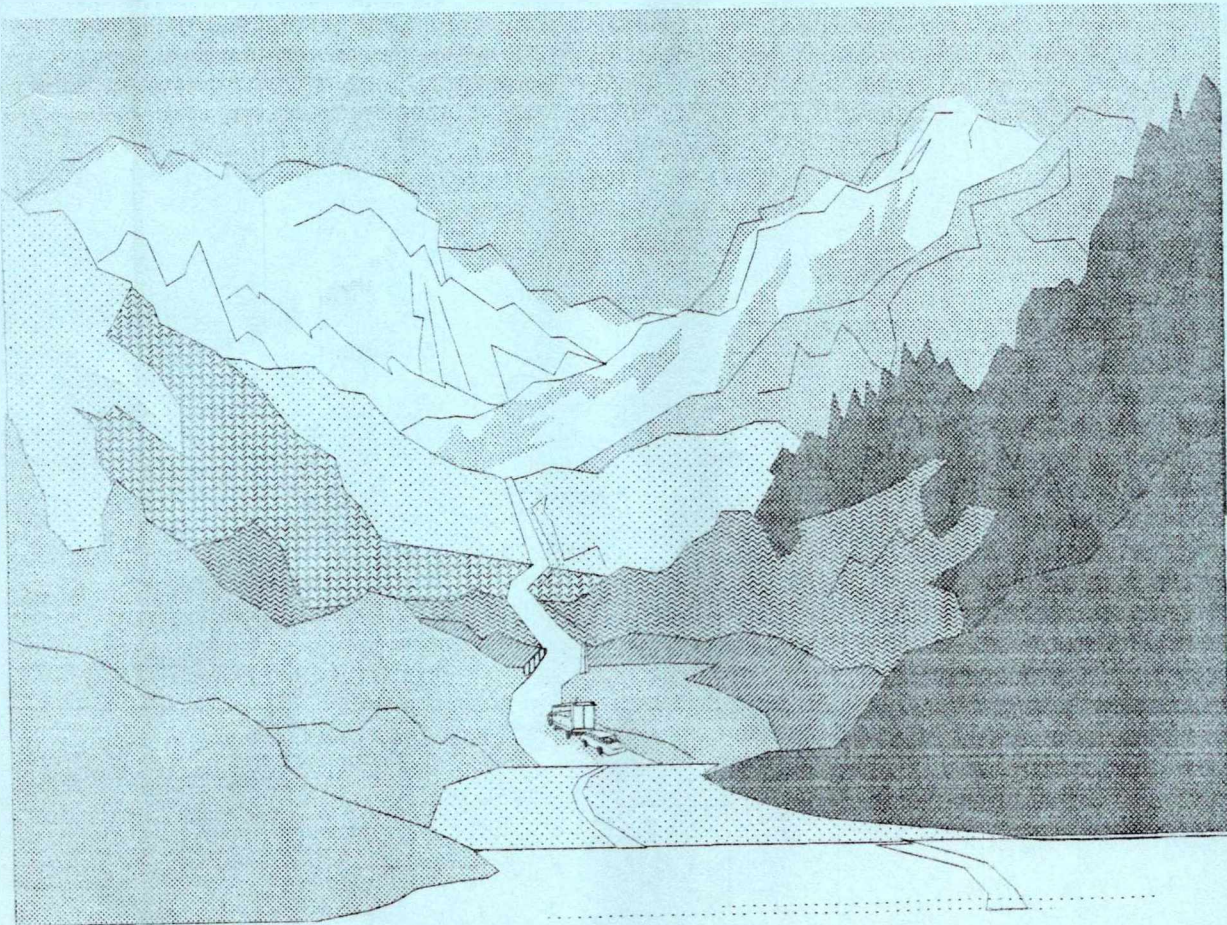
As of this writing, four months later, Ross and Joy-Lynd are still unpacking boxes, looking for missing things that are hopefully only still in boxes, and trying to sort out the things by then unpacked.

For some reason, despite increasing familiarity, there's still little sense that Las Vegas is "home." As Ross and Joy-Lynd drive back and forth, the surrounding mountains, while scenic, are alien. So are the occasional palm-lined streets, the walled communities with their ticky-tacky stucco, and the downtown glitz. Something about the apartment complex and the apartment itself puts Ross in mind of living in a motel.

Except in or immediately approaching the Strip area, no matter where one drives one has the sense of heading out of town! This got Ross lost a couple of times when he and Joy-Lynd were first getting acquainted with the area.

The much-vaunted "dry heat" of the area has in recent years been yielding to higher humidity levels, owing to the enormous influx of population and its concomitant building boom—including pools, both swimming and decorative, along with waterfalls, fountains and other ornamental uses at the exteriors of casinos and luxury developments. In Ross's first visit, a native resident told him that he remembered the humidity averaging around 5% and hardly ever reaching above 10% or so; this summer it seldom got below 10% and frequently reached into the 30's.

When you're talking about temperatures in the upper 90s and, for a period in late July and early August, regularly reaching over 100 and often hitting 110, this becomes debilitating when it's





necessary to go outside. Even at lower humidity levels, driving with the windows open in such weather is reminiscent of pointing a blow-dryer at one's face.

Now, in late October/early November, with the advent of cooler weather (lows in 40's, highs in 70's), the humidity has frequently been well above 50%.

Ross and Joy-Lynd were pleased to find that, apparently, no roaches succeeded in making the transit to Nevada, and ecstatic to find none awaiting them—though this may be a happy function of the location in a "luxury" community, where maintenance is assiduously attended to. Silverfish, which Ross hadn't seen since living in Texas, are a nuisance, and, in the summer, Joy-Lynd found the constant chirping of crickets something of an annoyance.

The job process has been complicated by the lack of a second vehicle. In the mornings Ross needs to go to what, by day, are the KKW offices (at night, they turn into...the Katz's home!) to do some work there, and to pick up materials to bring back. When he takes the car this leaves Joy-Lynd without transport for varying portions of the day, which initially led to some cabin fever. Usually she drives him to work now.

But she is seeking employment, and will eventually need to have her car available full time. Ross has mulled the possibility that he can bicycle the 8 miles to and from the Katz's under the Las Vegas sun... Neither Joy-Lynd nor Joyce Katz have been sanguine about this idea, suggesting that it could prove fatal.

Though Ross's income was considerably upped from what he had been making, since Joy-Lynd did not find employment right away, their combined earnings leveled to something less than it had been. In a kind of Catch 22 combination, this has prevented them from investing in a bicycle or other secondary means of transportation (forget mass transit—there is such a thing in Las Vegas, but rare and not widely extended—the nearest bus stop to S. Fort

Apache Road is about three miles away), hence it has been difficult to work out any good way for Joy-Lynd to be free to look for work.

At this writing, however, the prospects look good for her to do some teaching at Southern Nevada Community College, starting in January, and meanwhile she has been doing some tutoring at home, and in fact has several potential students seeking to have classes with her, if time and place can get coordinated.

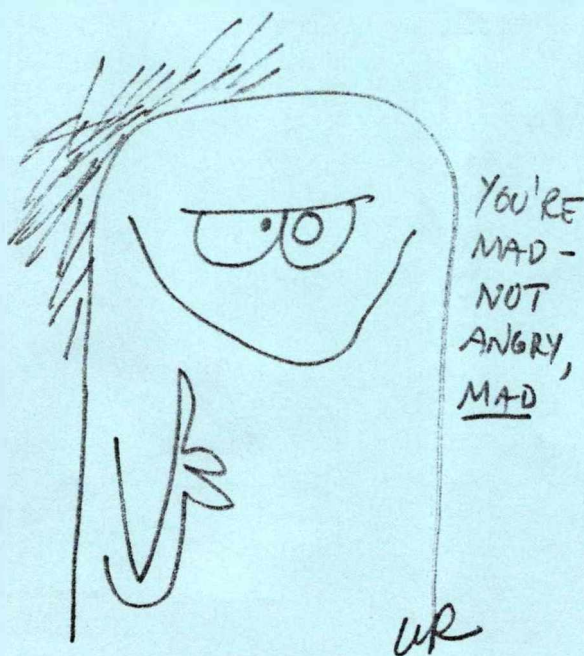
*Electronic Games* is doing fine. The first issue, dated October, went on the stands at or about September 1, on schedule. There were a few inevitable glitches in the premiere number, not the least of which was that 'September 1992' appeared on the masthead/colophon column. Two issues have made it to the stands since then (well, the third will have by the time you see this). All in all everybody's pleased with the way it has been turning out, and the word is it's doing okay on the newsstands.

Ross is having some interesting times not just learning how to use the Macintosh, but plunging right into QuarkXPress, the desktop publishing program. Ross is getting more comfortable with the machine itself, if it matters to any of you Mac fans out there, but its flexibility and power, and those of Quark, seem to come at a high price. Both literally and figuratively speaking.

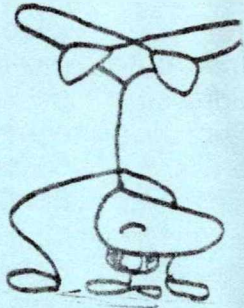
Maybe, if Ross can get more comfortable with it, and figure out how to import graphics from DOS-based DrawPerfect or other programs (he doesn't yet have any of the good Mac-based draw or paint programs), he'd be able to prepare the fannish stuff and other things using it that he does now with WordPerfect 5.1.

But all that is part of the "settling in" process, with our reunited couple starting or about to start new jobs, in a new location, in the presence of old friends. What happens from here on? Will they live happily ever after?

Well, despite the mythic cast of the beginning of this tale, it's no fairy story. But the prospects are just fine, thank you.







# Sci Fi

## Thots on the Sci Fi Channel

Did you hear about the Science Fiction Channel? Unfortunately the new cable service, which premiered last September, is still just an enticing rumor here in Las Vegas. Prime Cable, the cable operator for most of the city, has declined to carry it.

At first they told callers that there wasn't enough interested in the service to justify its addition. Of course, that was waving a red flag in front of area fans. Soon the phonecalls grew so numerous that they stopped putting complainers about Sci Fi Channel through to the program director. That's when SNAFFU organized a big letter writing campaign.

When the avalanche of mail failed to produce any discernible effect, the club decided to stage a small protest at Prime Cable's headquarters. I wrote a press release and faxed it to the three

major local T.V. stations, which produced a very favorable story on the protest on channel 13's evening news.

The sign-waving and speech-making, led by Aileen Forman and Joyce, had little immediate impact. Prime retreats to a claim that there were no available channel slots. In the long run, however, the hubbub has alerted Prime to the fact that there's money to be made from this rocketshit. The operator has just moved to larger quarters and expects to add additional channels soon.

It was particularly galling to miss seeing Joyce's brief appearance, during the first week of Sci Fi Channel. At Magicon, a video crew drafted her and Suzanne Vick as window dressing for a Jack Williamson interview segment. Even my agent Barry Friedman, who lives in the wilds of New Brunswick,

Canada, saw Joyce.

The Sci Fi Channel is a harbinger of things to come in home entertainment. The idea is straight out of the narrow-casting handbook. When an audience is divided among a great number of alternatives, securing a niche audience is a sure way to guarantee a share of viewership.

Las Vegas has over 40 channels available on cable. That's a lot of choices, even if many of the offerings are far from choice. Thirty years ago, a city the size of Vegas might've had five channels, and none of them would have touched round-the-clock science fiction with a Frederick Pohl.

Even those towers of broadcasting power, the networks, have felt the effect of the multiplication of channels. Budgets for episodes of regular series are lower, relatively



cheap shows (sitcoms and tabloid news) dominate programming, and the number of homes tuned to the networks has slid steadily in recent years.

The networks peddle audience size. There's some demographic analysis, but it mostly boils down to numbers. A show with an awful rating is seldom spared because of its appeal to a particular income, ethnic, or age group. (An exception: golf, which stays on because rich folks watch it in big numbers). and the shows with "top 10" total viewership are seldom downrated no matter what the composition of their audience. If a show appealed to the mentally ill so much that they all tuned in every week, *TV Guide* would call it a megahit.

So the size of the science fiction audience doesn't look too bad these days. The success of "Star Trek" movies and T.V. shows, Stephen King and similar authors, "Quantum Leap", and the half-hour video anthologies like "Tales from the Darkside" and "Tales from the Crypt" hasn't hurt, either.

As an outsider, I can only speculate about the reasons The Science Fiction Channel hasn't rocketed onto the airwaves as originally planned. There are probably things of which I am totally unaware, but a few factors have certainly had some effect on the launch.

One roadblock may have been a couple of rival cable channels with fairly similar formats. Cable systems saw the confusion that ensued when The Comedy Channel and Ha! tried to sign up outlets at roughly the same time. Rather than make the wrong commitment, some cable operators evidently preferred to make none.

It's hard to believe, but the

cable dial is getting crowded. The theoretical number of channels is huge, of course, but the technological limitations of older cable systems restrict the actual number in most areas. Some cities won't have space to add another basic cable service until one of the existing ones falters.

Like most fans, I'm hoping that The Science Fiction Channel can surmount these problems, put together a schedule, and attract enough advertisers to make it a financial success. My fanzines don't carry a much stellar material, it's true, but I am a sucker for electronic SF.

It seems logical to assume that The Science Fiction Channel, when it turns on the juice, will have a selection of movies and T.V. series. I especially anticipate seeing "Dr Who" again. It was a favorite when I lived in New York, where it's on a half-dozen stations in various formats and time slots, but it isn't shown in Las Vegas.

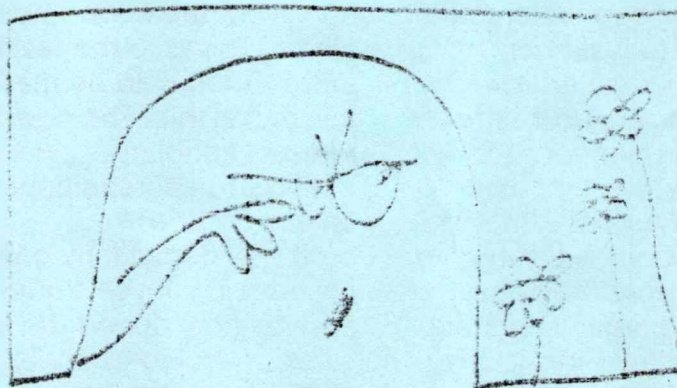
All the programs the Science

Fiction Channel might want to telecast aren't available. Some movies are already part of packages, while syndication contracts are likely to take some beloved T.V. series out of contention. We might get "Twilight Zone" and "Night Gallery", or it could be "My Favorite Martian" and "The Invaders".

What else will we see? I mean besides Harlan Ellison telling the world about his hard feelings toward fandom.

Discussion shows, Japanimation, remotes from cons, and tons of old movies are good bets to get air time.

Even with multiple repeats of each show, all those hours will prove hard to fill. ESPN throws in guaranteed crowd-pleasers like skeet shooting and women's bowling, when it doesn't have enough basketball, baseball, and boxing. When The Science Fiction Channel gets into a similar bind, it may be a choice between running badly dubbed



WHAT ARE YOU FLOWERS  
UP TO ?



"Super Argo" movies and making a little room on the tube for Fandom.

So they'll try "Super Argo". Eventually they'll get desperate, and then fandom will get its shot at glory. Fandom owed it to itself to be ready to take advantage of this opportunity. Here are a few ideas I've had for original programming with a science fiction slant.

**Beauty and the Beast**  
(Drama) • 1 hour

Drama romance, and bumper sticker philosophy wash across the cathode ray tube in this moving series about a femmefan and her Gestetner copier.

**Insurgents** (Adventure) • 1 hour

The coast-to-coast adventures of a band of fabulous fannish coeditors, who are kicking out at random righting wrongs offandom. Greg Benford plays himself.

**770** (Comedy) • 1/2 hour

He's oh-so-cute and cuddly! He's Mike Glyer, the editor of the world's most infrequent newszine, and the star of this laugh-a-millennium sitcom.

**The Wonder Years**  
(Comedy-Drama) • 1 hour

You'll laugh, you'll cry in this long-format adaptation of "The Immortal Storm".

**The B-Team** (Drama) • 1 hour

Tonight's episode: Enter Wally "Wastebasket" Weber!

**One Fan's Family** (Comedy)  
• 1/2 hour

He has six kids (boys), she

has four (girls). Together there's One Fan's Family -- and the members of the first apa founded for residents of one home.

**Quandry Leap** (Science Fiction) • 1 hour

A trufan voyages back and forth through Numbered Fandoms as she tries to return to the early 1950s. Tongith: Lee faces a fan crisis in 1967. Bjo Trimble: Debra Winger.

And when there isn't a show they can bear to stick on the air at, say, 5:30 AM Sunday morning, it'll be time for the program for which trufans have hungered without knowing what it was. That's when they'll run "The Fandom Infomercial"!



## The Fantasy Revolution

*Continued from page 7*

rules. But perhaps there are "unofficial" prerequisites. People pick hobbies that meet their needs. There are many reasons why I'm a fanzine fan, but some have to do with the pleasure and satisfaction I get from fanac. Otherwise, I'd do something else.

Many of today's fans seem to have a different set of needs than the folks who became fans in earlier eras. Traditional S.F. fans had a literary bent. Fanzine fans carried their appreciation of written creativity to the next level, attempts to write, draw, and edit.

This may be reaching, but I think what most current fans want is more drama in their lives. Masquerades, live-action medievalism, hall costumes, and other manifestations of current fandom are all based on "personal drama".

Could this explain why efforts to recruit fanzine fans from among those who go to cons has worked so poorly? If my notion is right, most of those who go to the large cons don't share fanzine fans' love of literature. There'll always be a few who love both lit and drama -- fanzine fandom always has its flamboyant personalities and enthralling speakers -- but fanzines answer no particular need for most con-goers.

When I was a young fan, no one except maybe John W. Campbell wrote much about the differences between science fiction and fantasy. Now that fantasy has surpassed science fiction in importance to fandom, those differences have reshaped the hobby.



# MEOWing Comments

The Spectator #181

When I rejoined F--- a couple of years ago, the group was rife with talk about the low level of activity. "Go out and recruit new blood," they all said to me, never dreaming that I would actually do exactly that.

Such efforts would be superfluous here. The October mailing total, 293 pages, is more than 10 per member 00 and this was one of the smallest bundles in the last year or so.

I owe Special Thanks to G.M. Carr, who sent an invitation to submit something to the SAPSzine she sent to me. I preferred to be seen (on the roster) and not heard, but I much appreciated the offer.

By the way, do you remember me, G.M.? You encountered the 17-year-old Arnie Katz in the mid-1960s, shortly after I joined the N3F. Come to think of it, that was also my first contact with Art and Nancy Rapp and Robert Lichtman.

I don't know if the tradition continues, but herewith my SAPS Met: F.M. Busby, Elinor Busby, Dian Crayne, Howard Devore, Don Fitch, Robert Lichtman, Nicki Lynch, Norm Metcalf, Roy Tackett, Harry Warner, Wally Weber, and Art Widner. I blush to

admit that time-clouded memory leaves me wondering if I have actually met Gordon Eklund, or if it was only a neofan's dream. (I think it would've been at Baycon in 1968...) On the other hand, I often wonder if Harry Warner remembers meeting me. It was a fleeting contact at the Discon, and I was still very much the neofannish face in the crowd.

The Slice XI (Leigh Edmonds)

My 1989 move from New York City to Las Vegas compelled me to adjust to a new panorama of scenery, both natural and man-made. After a lifetime of emerald green grass, stately shade trees and rolling hills, it took awhile to get used to the flat starkness of the desert landscape.

The soil here is so thin and poor compared to the fecund earth of Long Island where I spent most of my youth. Everyone says our lawn is one of the most verdant on the block, but it would have inspired catty comments from the neighbors back in New Hyde Park.

The construction philosophy is also different. New York City is crammed with tall buildings. The Vegas skyline is largely composed of mammoth neon signs. There



are a few structures of 20 or more stories, construction is more apt to spread horizontally rather than vertically.

I've had little trouble adjusting to Las Vegas' prevailing standard of dress. I don't miss wearing a suit and tie every day, though I guess it would be nice to see some fancier clothes in the otherwise glamorous casinos.

Vegas women are a treat to the eye. Not only are they tall, prettier, and healthier than average, but they insist on wearing the scantiest outfits imaginable. The miniskirt and the micro-mini have never fallen out of fashion favor here, though skin-tight cut-offs are a year-round favorite.

Resin V2, N26 (Norm Metcalf)

I'm somewhat puzzled by your use of the word "fanzine" to describe Amazing and other marginal professional science fiction magazines. I could be missing something, but how does Amazing satisfy the definition? Amazing pays for its material, which would seem sufficient distinction from fanzines.

I've wrestled with the U.S. magazine distribution system for about 14 years. I've witnessed enough horror stories to daunt anyone's enthusiasm for marketing a publication in this manner, though it didn't stop me from launching Electronic Games, for Decker Publications, last fall.

It is a slow and inefficient system at best, and the worst is beyond description. The national distributors vary in management prowess, but I've met quite a few knowledgeable, caring people. \*I've also encountered arrant fools. There are just enough of the latter to hamstring the efforts of the former to modernize and streamline.

But the problems really begin when the

national distributor ships to the local and regional outfits that disperse the magazines. Some magazines never get out of the warehouse. Some guy looks at the title, doesn't like it for some unguessable reason, and the whole batch is history,

Magazines that reach retail newsstands aren't out of the woods. Distributors may remove them from sale prematurely. Retyailers may decide not to display them. They can be displayed in the wrong section. They can be fenced to a secondhand dealer, which allows the retailer to also submit a claim of unsold copies for credit from the distributor.

One particularly galling thing is that the newsstand responds to a hit title with aching slowness in many cases. If a title doesn't sell out, many distributors will slash their order to the bone, but few will increase that order when a periodical enjoys complete sell-through.

The publisher can fuel single-copy sales expansion by increasing the number of copies forced into the pipeline, but the information gap sabotages efforts to the the wave of sudden success. An example: The first issue of Electronic Games, dated October, came out around Labor Day. We got the score on newsstand sales about December 1.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Amazing and many other magazines have targetted book stores and comics shops rather than the traditional channels. The sell through percentage is often twice as good, the retailers are more knowledgeable and involved, and it's a "cleaner" business. Mass market title like People and Time can't do without the newsstand, but

Vombis #4 (Roy Tackett)

If by cataloguing my book collection you mean typing out little cards for each



volume, it all comes down to sex. I figure that the only way to find enough time for such a gherculean task is to give up sex. At this point in my life, a card file my book collection remains one of those delightful ideas that I never quite get around to implementing.

The closest I've come is alphabetizing my hardback science fiction collection and clumping books together according to topic, like baseball, gaming, history, television, and comedy. The best thing I can say about the paperback fiction is that all the mysteries are one place and all the science fiction another.

More than half of my gaszine collection is alphabetized and stored in file folders. I'll probably buckle down to sorting the rest when I acquire another four-drawer cabinet and find a place for it in the already overcrowded garage. The collection that may be furthest out of control is software. I have many, many games in alphabetical order in storage boxes according to system, but there are still hundreds of unfiled disks and carts. Really, the state of my software collection is disk-gusting. They keep coming in so fast...

I'm proud of my record collection, alphabetically arranged and stored in closed cabinets. Alas, it more and more resembles a well-ordered collection of buggy whips in this CD world.

My tiny collection of compact disks has little discernable organization. I know I should put it in order before it becomes too daunting a task. I'll have to do something before they overflow the cabinet in which I now store them.

My video tapes are reasonably well labeled, but I have failed to impose any more stringent structure. They line shelves in the room we call the megagaming office, a hangover from the period during

which we not only wrote and laid out, but also published that monthly electronic gaming bulletin. (At this point, it is mostly the office of Ross Chamberlain and is lined with collections of paperbacks, the aforementioned tapes, and dozens of old stand-alone electronic games.

Door Knob #36 (Robert Lichtman)

Airing times for "Star Trek: The Next Generation" changed in many areas last fall, when the Fox Network went to seven-nights-a-week programming. A lot of affiliates had aired new episodes Tuesday evening when there were no network shows. Here in Las Vegas, new episodes are now shown at 6 pm on Saturday, followed by a re-run. After that, it's Fox's Saturday night line-up.

Right before "Star Trek" is another syndicated SF series, "Highlander". I've enjoyed many of the episodes as simple action-adventure fare, but the series' premise still doesn't make sense to me. Perhaps I'd understand it all better if I'd seen the movies, though I've been told that the second one is at variance with the T.V. show.

It seems like Darwin run amok for all these supposedly gifted people to compulsively stalk and behead each other. The idea that they will slaughter each other until one remains to become king of the universe disturbs me. And who issued those silver swords?

Rip Van Winkle 9/2 (Harry Warner)

Drugstore soda fountains and lunch counters don't hold a special place in my memory, because they were virtually extinct on Long Island by the time my family moved there in 1950. Despite the many, many hours Lenny Bailes and I spent walking around the area in



search of the latest comic books, I only recall two such establishments.

One bore the slightly shocking name of Hellens Drug Store. (Rather than providing prescriptions for the netherworld, the proprietor had merely affixed his surname to his place of business. Overshadowing any memory of the food Mr. Heller dispensed is my recollection of the floods that periodically inundated the drug store. Union Turnpile in front of Hellens had no drainage, and any decent rain turned the four-lane street into a lake. Every severe storm sent mobile T.V. news crews to this spot to pick up impressive devastation for the 6 o'clock report.

The other lunch counter was -- what else? -- a Woolworth's. I don't think I ever actually sat down and had a meal, but it was hard to resist those hotdogs spinning around and around in the glass-walled cooker.

Voice from the Past #34 (G.M. Carr)

Your comment to Norm Metcalf about the lack of mailing comment "hooks" has a ring of the familiar tone. It has been said to me often enough in the past to be indelibly stamped on my fannish consciousness.

A year ago I decided to do something about it. I've always had a tendency to write tightly structured pieces that many find too self-contained to admit comments from others. Now I try to do my apazines more informally, with less revision. In FAPA, at least, this has translated into more return comments. I'm hoping that a similar approach will work here as well.

Keyhole #10 (Wally Weber)

Since the day I first set foot back in fandom, after my 15 years in the glades of Gafia, changes have assailed me from every direction. Change, change, change --

and it sometimes seems that only Harry Warner remains the same, the Gibraltar of my fannish existence. So it's utterly delightful to find you here in SAPS, the same lovable lunatic. It's one of the things that makes rejoining so worthwhile.

Did you say that you built shelves? I must remember to shield this mailing from impressionminds, such as my wife's. I wouldn't want her to get the idea that anybody can perform this exacting and specialized task. Currently, the prevailing view at my house is that I am a supremely creative and talented literary artist cannot be expected to efficiently discharge mundane tasks like building shelves. When I do occasionally find something I can fix, celebration rains! I have done something unexpected and extraordinary. Joyce beams with pride as she displays the fruits of my ingenuity to all our friends and acquaintances.

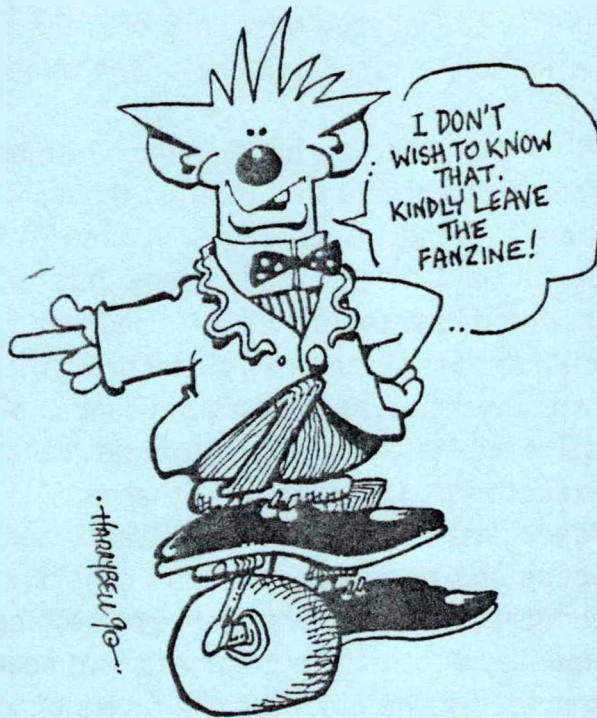
What a change would be wrought in my life if Joyce somehow got the idea that I could learn to wield a hammer and other devilish implements with the mastery of a Weber! "The Time-Life Home Handyman" series would be just around my personal corner. Imagine paying for a lifetime at hard labor on the installment plan. I'd sooner surrender to the Nordic Track.

Pat: I wouldn't copunt Brent Spiner out of the Seventh Season until you see the first episode without him. I'm sure epidermal health is of importance to him, but financial health might somehow be made to balance that concern. In other words, it might take a fatter contract to get Spiner to re-evaluate the medical consequences of continuing his role as Data.

Collector (Howard DeVore)

No item in this mailing rivalled your accident account for gripping my interest. I





read your efforts to staunch the blood with mounting trepidation. When you were down to three minutes, I was on the edge of the chair to find out if you would survive to the end of Collector.

Seriously, I can hardly convey my relief when you revealed that it wasn't as serious as first feared. I hope there have been no effects more negative than the carpet stains.

I hate to start a feud with you, in this, our first SA(Sish contact in Who Knows When, but I can't let your asperions on Large Breasted Women pass without Strong Rebuke. I will defer discussion of the glories of Sizable Hooters for another time, but You Have Been Warned.

I guess the closest I've ever come to a Rotsler girl was last yerar, getting a hug and kiss from Elvira. As attractive a specimen of male as I am, I think her ardebnt behaviort was not unconnected with the fact that someone had just told

her that I was the guy who had, at no charge, put together an electronic gaming deal that made her many thousands of dollars.

She also sent me an automgraphed picture. It's kind of a strange item, in its way. It has what is clearly a machine-created inscription -- and then a personal one written by the Mistress of Darkness herself.

It came encased in flexible plastic. I keep it ready in the event of a game of ghoodminton. I thought it artfully combined the Irish Fandom traditions of outre ghoodminton batrs and revealing calendars.

Aalor #10 (Burnett Tosky)

Your reference to Ty Rex and the Dinosaurs as a suitable name for a combo suggest that you are unaware of the pop music duo known as Tyrannasaurus Rex (later shortened to T. Rex). They were exceptionally popular in the 1960s and 1970s, known for unusual melodies, evocative lyrics, and stylized vocal delivery. They produced a cross between rock and English folk music. One of the pair had a big second career as a children's entertainer on U.K. television. Both died trafically young, though their music has retained some pupularity today.

And with that single paragraph I've probably alienated, perhaps even offended, SAPS' devotes of Serious Music (as Harry Warner put it this mailing).

I confess that I am still a rocker. As a matter of fact, the recent appearance of so-called Alternative Rock has me listening to the radio and buying albums. Il mever warmed to snthesizer pop, disco, hiphop, or rap, but the current wave of guitar-centered bands has renewed my interest.



Have you seen the goings-on at today's rock dance clubs? Maybe you shouldn't be too quick to dismiss Rock as Serious Music. I mean, I can't imagine anything more serious than getting creamed by a 200-lb. moshers diving off the stage onto you.

Spacewarp #166 (Art Rapp)

Are you printing copies of SWARP directly from your computer rather than photo copying master pages? This guess is based on your use of only one side of the page. Or is this an ingenious way to get extra-long mailing comments by giving us the luxury of a blank page next to every one of text to take notes? If you need copying help, I think I can perform the service for you at cost, about three cents a sheet (both sides) plus paper. Contact me if this would help.

SAPS will reach 50,000 pages by next January? What a milestone! Is this your call for us to assault the single-mailing page-count record in celebration? I figure about 46 pages per member ought to do it.

I brought a copy of "A Wealth of Fable" home from Magicon., and I am currently savoring its delights. Harry did a fine job assembling all that data and presenting it in a highiyu readable and accessible manner. I've noticed several of the locals paging through it with evident fascination during get-togethers here, so it will probably make Las Vegas fandom somewhat more conscious of fanhistory.

Zap (Robert Briggs)

Your reference to the "Jew controlled media" threw me into quite a tizzy. I'm proud of my career as a magazine writer and editor, but what limited control I exercise is highly modified by what my boss, a certifiable non-Jew. Now you suggest that I have completely missed the

boat, stuck in a subordinate position while all the other Jews are controlling up a sotrm. Could you send me a few names and address of these "Jew media controllers"? Maybe if I ask them nicely, they'll cut me in on the action.

Say, Robert, do you think it's possible that the Spectator Amateur Press Society might be the target of a takeover by those Jew media controllers? I hunted through the roster for Possible Jews, and I have two definites, Robert Lichtman and Arnie Katz. There are a couple of possibles, but it's hard to prejudge a person just from a surname. Besides, people sometimes change theirnames. It could just as easily be Art Rappaport or Wally Weberman.

Let's stay conservative and say that there are only two. That means, there was only one a mailing ago. A 100% increase in just three months! At this rate, they'll be doing SPSzines in Yiddish, and one of the Elders of Zion will replace the beloved Toskey as OE.

The situation may be even more dire than this suggests. A cunning loophole in the SAPS rules -- perhaps concocted years ago for just this sinister purpose by some arch-Jew OE -- might result in a further increase in Jew Control of SAPS without a formal change in the roster.

If Tosk continues to interpret the membership criteria in a loose way, it is conceivable that Carol Carr, a Known Jewess, might someday claim a joint membership with Robert Lichtman. Of even greater likelihood is that my roster spot will become a joint membership with my wife Joyce. You may think she's even worse than a natural born Jew, because she voluntarily converted.

That would be four Jews! Plus who knows how many other Secret Semites. If you really believe in this Jew Controleld Media stuff, now might be the best time for you to



make tracks, Robert.

Outsiders #136 (Wrai Ballard)

Congratulations to you and Carol on your new computer. Is it a 386 or 486? Because our business is writing about computer and video games, we've got a lot of equipment around here, yet I still faunch for more.

If you got six years out of your old machine before your needs outstripped its capabilities, that isn't too bad. Alas, those who bought a a 386 this year may find that it's aging a lot faster. The hardware industry made some wrong moves and are abnout to pay the price in the form of consumer resentment.

Manufacturers put everything behind the 386, and now it turns out that that chip series is only an intermediate step to the much superior 486. And for some compelling reasons, that is apt to give 'way to the 586 before the end of 1993.

The introduction of newer machines doesn't make existing ones any less capable of doing what they'vebeen doing, of course./ Still, better equipment expands user horizons, and what was good enough before suddenly won't do at all.

I wincedhappily at your examples of horribly inappropriate writing. That writes get paid for such literary offenses is shameful

I've often wondered what inspires such tripe. Maybe it's an outgrowth of interpreting everything in cliches -- and then mixing them without sufficient thought to the literal meaning of the words.

Now, if you could string enough bad examples together into a coherent story, people might take it for sophisticated comedy...

Basingstoke #73 (Carol BBallard)

The poem you printed, "Human Brain Not Yet Obsolete" tempt me to reprint my accounts of a ceaseless war against spellcheckers from Folly. I sense you have the samejaundiced view of them as I do. Oh, I use them. They catch things. But somehow they never as good in practice as in theory. The poem cleverly points out all the little ways spellcheckers miss the mark. I've changed spellcheckers recently, out ofnecessity, and have been shocked to find actual misspellings in mynew one's main dictionary.

For those who are interested, I write Crossfire on a Macintosh IICI using MacWrite 5.0. I dump copy into Publish It!, a desktop publishing program. Heading are created with Typestyler. An Apple laser printer generates the masters for reproduction on a Gestetner 2316ZD.

BeBop #6 (Gordon Eklund)

I tremendously enjoyed the sentence on your fannish origins. I'm sort of compiling a booket of first contact stuff, and I'd like to use this if you have no objection.

Curiously enough, my start in fandom had something to do with both Fantastic and the NFFF. I don't think I could tell it all in just one setence, so perhaps this is an article-in-the-making.

Retro #97 (F.M. Busby)

Speaking of SAPSish milestones as I was earlier, I see that Retro is rapidly closing in on the century mark. Kist think how many typing stroke you'll have saved by shortening the title to its present length.

I don't want to shatter any illusions you might cherish about Bill Gates, and I certainly think it would be inappropriate for me to elaborate, but let me say that I have met a few people who might not be so quick to cite Gates as an example of



someone who has amassed great wealth while maintaining ethical purity.

It pains me, because I want Good to Triumph, but people who behave unethically have some advantage over those who try to maintain integrity. If it didn't cost anything to be ethical, maybe it wouldn't be so admirable to be that way.

#### Memory Lane #32 (Elinor Busby)

Though I think modesty may be leading you to belittle your and Buz's contribution to the Cry gestalt, I was pleased that you spoke up for the even more self-effacing Wally Weber. He's always been one of my favorite fan humorists, and his sunny, upbeat popularity puts me in mind of another wonderful fella, Shelby Vick. \*Are you blushing yet, WWW?\*

The recent fannish renaissance has turned my thought to underappreciated fanzine fans of the past a couple of times recently. The history of fandom unreeled in such a way that many fans who entered the hobby after 1965 have very little

knowledge of the leading lights of the period between Quandry and the Boondoggle. Fans who maintained or resurged after that date are well-recognized, but those who didn't are sometimes overlooked.

Who do I think are underrated? My nominees are Dean Grennell, John Berry, and Wally Weber. Maybe it's time to do some pre-fannish reprints. It's a shame for current fans to miss all the fine articles and fanzines these three produced during the 1950s and early 1960s.

#### Lucubrations #23 (Rockey Willson)

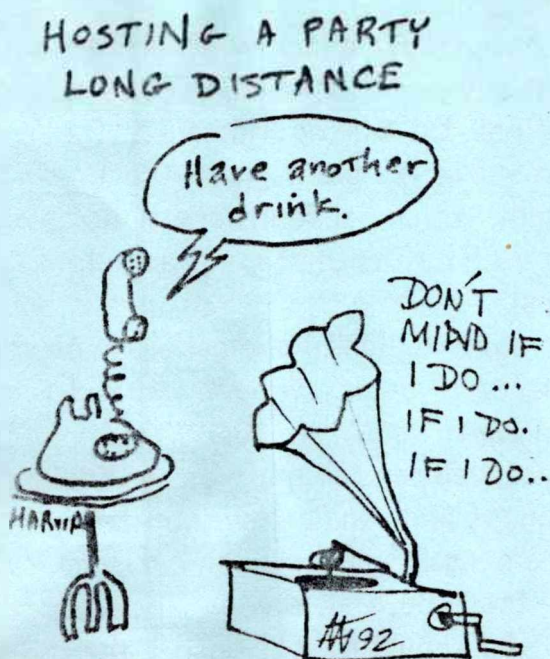
I'm sure everyone else knows, but what is the nature of your business? I spent the last half of the 1980s helping to build up a business, and the last couple trying to pay off the debts we gathered during the lean times.

In retrospect, it would've been a good idea for us (Bill Kunkel, my wife Joyce Worley Katz, and me) to leave New York for Vegas several years earlier than we did.

The relocation drastically changed our tax situation. In New York, we paid city and state income tax, neither of which exists here. We're now owners rather than renters, and that helps, too. We've wittled our tax indebtedness down to one bill from the State of New York, which surfaced recently.

Your discussion of want versus need as the determining factor in your purchase of computer stuff warms the heart of this designer of computer and video games. (That's what our company, Katz Kunkel Worley, Inc., does when we're not writing and editing magazines.) I'm keenly aware that none of the titles we've designed, or finetuned, is a necessity.

When I became entertainment editor of the now defunct, but still fondly





remembered, MACazine, editor Barbara Chan omsosted that my first column justify games on the basis of productivity. Ever the amiable freelancer, I wrote a column that made playing games sound like the one true path to health, happiness, and prosperity.

I'm still not sure I buy my rationalizations. It struck me as a comment on the editor's outlook that she felt games require farfetched justification. I don't feel compelled to apolothesize for having a good time.

Which doesn't mean that I think games have no utility. They are aerobic, cathartic, and mentally stimulating. And if they weren't fun, too, I wouldn't play 'em.

Jupiter Jump #11 (Mark Manning)

I'm ambivalent about ranking fans in SAPS or general fandom as a whole. I like to think of fandom as a larger plateau sitting on an even larger one. Neogans start on the lower plateau, and as they learn their way around the hobby, climb to the upper one. I don't see fandom as a hierarchy based on quality and quantity of fanac.

On the other hand, I want who have entertained me to get egoboo for their efforts. That's partly due to my appreciation for fine work and partly enlightened self-interest. (Ehpnpp encourages future production.) I'm also a terrible Figure Filbert. I can't resist ratings and polls and such.

Omnarorwly averted a repetition of the Burbee Incident during my brief sojourn in the N3F in the mid-1960s. After about two months in the group, a combination of eager-beaverism and good timing made me chairman of the Welcommittee. My own lack of knowledge of the hobby wasn't considered a barrier to welcoming others to it.

I started a little zine for the volunteers which described new members. I think it was my second month on the job that we got news of a new recruit by the name of R. Monroe Sneary. I suspect I frustrated Rick's hopes of getting welcomed to fandom by a group in which he had previously served as an officer.

Cosmic Debris #57 (Nicki Lynch)

Congratulations on your rocket. I like Mimosa best of all the nominated fanzines, and it was certainly a well-recvied selection.

Thanks for your first-person account of the Hugo ceremony. I generally skip such things, having little interest in awards, but I was sorry not to be there to witness such a shocking piece of fanhistory.

I wonder if George Laskowski wasn't the big winner, after all. A lot of folks who don't like Lans Lantern were impressed by his magnanimity in a difficult situation. I don't know how much Lan cares about a bunch of fannsih fanzine fans, but the incident definitely improved his image inthose precincts.

I attended more program items at Magicon than at any previously worldcon since my very first, the Discon I in 1963. That's a testament to the con's multi-track program, which caused there to be several items each day with strong fannish interest.

Even so, I wouldn't have gone all the way to Orlando -- or anywhere -- kidst for the offical portions of Magicon. What made it a great convention for me was the feeling of togethness and good fellowing that held sway among the fanzine fan contingent.

I see that you, too, enjoy "Alien Nation". Joyce and I didn't spot it until after the first few epospdes, but I think we've seen most of them. I always thought the sad



state of the infant Fox network at the time sabotaged any chance it had for success.

Suzanne Vick and Joyce were shown on the SciFi Channel about a week after it went on the air. They drafted them to serve as Fawning Accolytes for a Jack Williamson interview taped at Magicon. Unfortunately, Las Vegas' Prime Cable has not yet added the service, so we remain in Darkness and Know Not Sci-Fi. I've worked with them in my guise as electronic games guru, and may do some more,

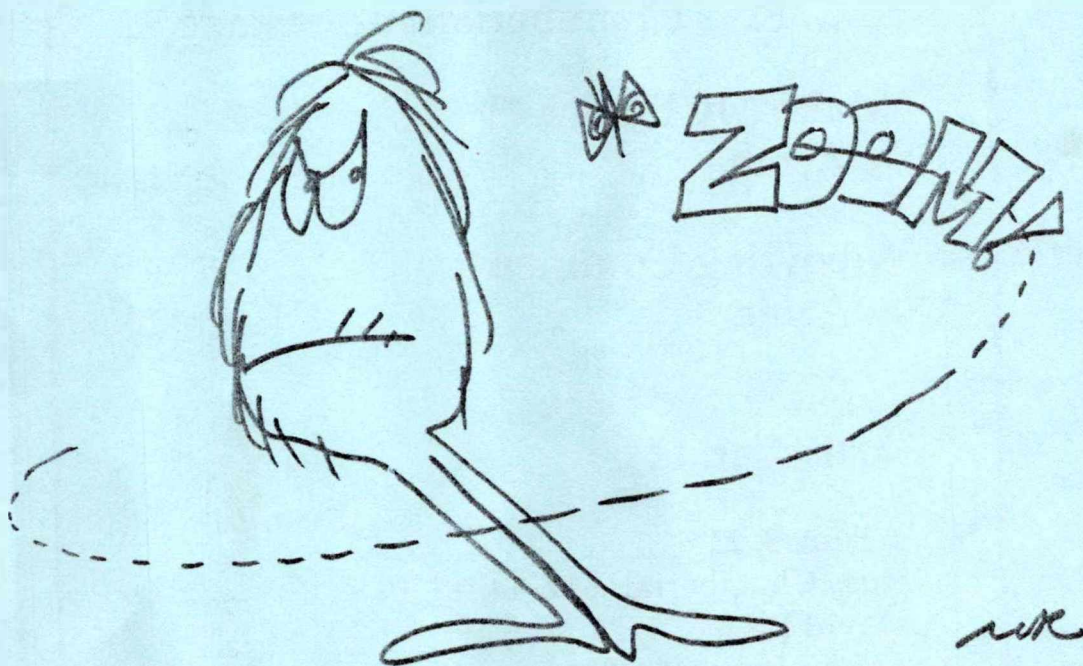
Spaghetti (Nancy Rapp)

Condolences on the death of your brother, Nancy. I am currently steeling myself for my father's demise -- he has had a long, progressively deteriorating

heart condition --so I entirely understand your comment about not feeling fannish enough to [rpduce a SAPSzine in your inimitable (and charming) style.

You changed your SAPSzine title! I did so like "Ignatz". I was even willing to consider adopting the given name "Krazy" so that we could be a set.

And that must be it for this month. Though I have runout of neither mailing nor enthusiasm, time pressure is Closingin Fast. Between the holidays and the winter Consumer Electronics Show, I must finish this issue and bundle it with Area 51#1 and "Gist of the MAGICon" in the next few days if it is happen at all. And I don't think I can face two or three more years riding back up the waitlist.





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ATom: 3, 23  
Ross Chamberlain: 12, 14, 17, 19  
David Haugh: 5, 26  
Lee Hoffman: 21  
Joyce Katz: 9, 10, 11, 31  
JBill Rotsler: Cover, 2, 20, 22, 33