

# SWERVE

sheepish about this letter-less issue. I intended to print untold pages of your letters in **Swerve #2**, hundreds of witticisms to delight and amaze.

Two things stopped me. I didn't get enough letters to fill untold pages, and I don't have time to type them if I'm going to get it done in time for Corflu Vegas.

When I conceived that giant letter section, I thought I had a couple of weeks to transcribe them. I'd planned to wait until after Corflu

Vegas.

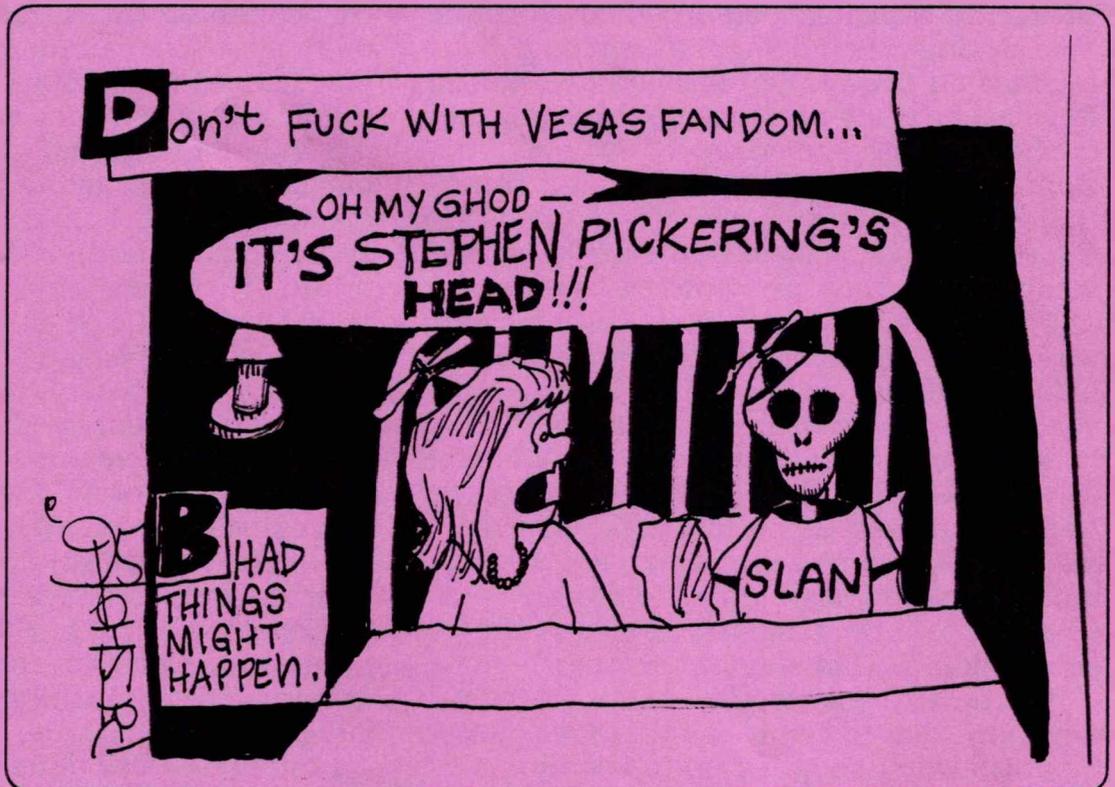
I wanted to play the old Waiting Game. I'd hold off publishing until fans who'd come to Glitter City for the con started to miss me a little. I wasn't going to wait the full 27 years, but I figured 10 days was better than nothing. Then, still exhilarated by four days

## It's Contagious

I devoted an extravagant amount of space in **Swerve #1** to wheedling for letter of comment. I didn't threaten to delete a digital dog, as we did in **Wild Heirs #3**, but I went nearly that far. I'm sure you could all visualize me, groveling on bended knees amid the crud sheets, as I pled for response.

You responded splendidly, bountifully. If it keeps up, **Swerve** may actually get out monthly. Don't let that stop you from writing to this issue, though. Failure to do so can only lead to more katzite kvetching in **Swerve #3**. No one want *that*. So send a loc and change future fan-history..

Anyway, that's why I feel a little



**Swerve #2**, Second Issue (no investment value), April, 1995, is edited by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). **Swerve** is available for your fanzine in trade, a letter of comment, art or whim. It is published pretty damn frequently, all things considered.

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Member fwa.

of high-class in-person fanatic, I'd astound fandom with **Serve #2**.

The strategy appealed to me. Properly timed, **Swerve #2** could worm its way into your heart like a friendly puppy. Why would you want worms in your heart the size of puppies? I hope to answer that question in a future **Swerve**.) It's not likely, of course, but a fan can hope.

I've revised the Swerve schedule. And wonder of wonders, I'm speeding it up rather than slowing it down. I'm flying in the face of fannish entropy due solely to the influence of Las Vegrants.

Is this the same Las Vegas fandom that whiled away most of 1994 without raising a sweat? It's even less plausible to me, a witness to the full flower of their sloth,

Impossible... yet true! Fanzine publishing frenzy has gripped the Sodom of the Southwest. Everybody's doing it -- and producing fanzines while they rest up. We've done two **Wild Heirs** with another on the way, APA V distributions are close to record size, Joyce has the club newsletter **Situation Normal??** on a regular schedule. Tom Springer is putting the finishing touches on **Brody**, Ken Forman just mailed **Dalmatian Alley** and has a Rotsler portfolio for Corflu Vegas, the Gang of Four is slamming out **Nine Lines Each** at a better-than-weekly pace and Ben Wilson and Cathi Copeland have pledged that their **Vows** will be out before they say "I do" on the first night of the convention. Even JoHn Hardin was overheard to remark that another **Rant** is in the offing. (He has since recovered his composure and denies everything.)

Ken, Ben, JoHn, Tom and Karla all came over the Tuesday night before Corflu, mostly to finish up various publications. As the piles of collated and stapled fanzines mounted perilously higher, so did my yearning to have a fanzine to take to the convention. So I'm staying up half the night -- not the best way to prepare for the four-day marathon to come --so that these feisty upstarts won't shop me up too badly.

### **In the Fandom of the loc-less, the One Loc Zine is King**

Finally, in its second issue, this fanzine begins to live up to the meaning of its name.

I just wrote that **Swerve #2** is without letters, but I'm about to print one right here, right now. It's only a brief excerpt from a much longer communication, sure to land in next issue's letter column, but it is a letter. The fact that its author Brad Foster sent along two fabulous cartoons should not be construed as the reason his words go into print and you're go into a manilla folder for Next Time. Brad sez:

Ack!! Now you're doing it, too! Seems like there are so many fanzines that come my way out of Las Vegas, constant new titles, revamped titles, strange new mixes of editors that overlap from one to the other, cross-reference to others I've never seen... well, it's kinda confusing for this poor little fan artist sitting here at his drawing board in Texas.

And now *you*, the proclaimed Big Daddy, Numero-Uno Chief, toss a new title into the mix. Ack!

Even if Brad hadn't started *and* ended this comment with a reference to vintage fandom -- who can forget the Number One Fan Face of the 1940s? -- I would've published his plea for enlightenment. All truth (and many lies) are contained in fanzines, as the saying goes, and it will be a black day when I can't take the time to share some of both with a fine fan (and primo art connection).

First, I apologize on behalf of Las Vegrants, Las Vegas Fandom and all the permutations thereof. If the number of titles and the interlocking editorial combinations have confused we are sorry. In our defense, however, it's not as if we constantly change our names, the way they do in some other fan centers. We have no Moon Stallions, Firepies and Rutabaga Sunshines.

Some may feel that the large number of publications and group projects betoken nothing more a healthy and active fanzine fan group. That is true, as far as it goes, but it's time I disclose details of the system we instituted about eight months ago.

Perceptions notwithstanding, I'm not the "Big Daddy" of Las Vegas Fandom. I'm the Foreman. This gets confusing, sometimes, when I'm in the room with Ken and Aileen, ,

but my attempt to differentiate by pronouncing the silent "e" just caused confusion with that "Ack" guy Brad mentions twice in one paragraph.

As Foreman of Las Vegas Fandom, I sit at my desk, in the majestic Fanzine Workers Hiring Hall. It is my job to unite ways, means and fanpower to implement the many fourth dimensional crifanac concepts that sprout from the minds of Las Vegrants. (Things grow better with the liberal addition of manure.)

Let me give you an example of how it works. Let's say there's a call for a mid-length oneshot with a fannish slant. I fire up the database, conduct search routines, sort and compile. Onto the screen pops lists of appropriate editors, artists and writers.

Next I staff the publication. I use a computer-generated production model and determine how many fans are required for each job. Now comes a little touch of art to leaven the science; I analyze the personnel lists and put together workable combinations. For instance, it doesn't do to team Country music lover Ross Chamberlain with industrial rocker JoHn Hardin, because they're sure to fight over control of the radio during publishing sessions.

Once I nail down staffing, I get on the microphone and call out the names. Those selected writers, editors and artists file into my office, pick up their assignments and report promptly for fanac the next day.

Next month, I'm buying them uniforms. I had in mind gray jumpsuits with the Vegrant's name sewn into the shirt picket.

And don't forget twice the comments or your loc returned.

### Getting Personal

A recent **Aparachik** had kind words for the first **Swerve**. Ordinarily, this would've made me happy, because I'm as much an egoboo hound as any other faned, but one tiny aspect deflated my pleasure.

It was only a word, just a couple of syllables. Yet like the lover in "Rappucini's Daughter," I couldn't fully enjoy the beauty of the whole due to the minuscule flaw.

No blame for turning my blue skies to

partly cloudy attaches to Andy Hooper. The most serious charge against him is no more than that he is the unwitting and unintentional author of my anguish. He did nothing more heinous than call **Swerve** a perzine.

It may be hard to fathom the fuss, inasmuch as most fans would call **Swerve** as a personalzine without a second thought. I don't deny that Andy's terminology is correct, but the description makes me uneasy. When someone calls one of my efforts a personalzine, I always feel I'm sailing under false colors

Relative to **Swerve**, I am not sure that "perzine" truly maps the territory. It identifies the fanzine's format, but it doesn't speak to the tenor of the content.

When someone calls **Swerve** a personalzine, I always expect some wise-ass to jump up with: "**Swerve** is an *im* personalzine." It would be hard to shoot down that heckler. My track record strongly suggests that this is not the publication to read for intimate revelations.

The candor of Laney and White wins my admiration, even though the studied presentations of Burbee and Willis are more comfortable for me. I've never learned how to unburden my innermost thoughts to fandom in a graceful, sincere and entertaining way, so I seldom do it.

The "art" of my fanwriting -- its presence has been detected, something along the lines of how astronomers found Pluto -- gets in the way of potential soul-bearing. I re-read something intimate I've written and think, "Boy, this is dull shit. Better replace it with something funny Joyce said yesterday."

It's my long-time addiction to the Literature of Product rising up again. Laugh if you will, but I'm a very private person. When I edit myself, it's hard to restrain the impulse to keep things fabulous and faannish. Well, faanish, anyway. I'll try to be a little looser in **Swerve** than in **Folly**, but I'm not sure I can live up to that "perzine" sobriquet.

### What It Is

Some may wonder what, exactly, I have in mind for **Swerve**. I'm not making too

many plans. Looking too far down the road has always been a fannish shortcoming of mine, so I'm consciously directing my attention to the current issue. ("We're just gonna pub 'em one ish at a time," said Arnie Katz, editor.)

I designed **Swerve** to be easy to produce, much less work than **Folly**. Content is my stuff, letters and a few cartoons. When I admitted that I couldn't continue **Folly** at the desired size and frequency, I conceived **Swerve** as an alternative to doing nothing. It seemed better to produce a more modest fanzine to maintain contact and keep the mailbox full of fanzines.

**Swerve** accommodates my well-known idiosyncrasies. It keeps manuscript copying, the hardest part of fanzine fanac to me, to a minimum while giving leeway to assail you with a parade of Arnie Katz articles. I could set up most of the sections within **Swerve** with regulation headlines and give them the status of articles, but it'll go a lot easier for everyone if you just imagine that you see those banner headings blazoned across the pages of this fanzine.

Comments about the difficulty of transcribing text should not deter anyone from sending a letter of comment. Response to the first issue was good, and you can read some of the most interesting locs once you get through all of my verbiage.

I do want to encourage those of you with modem-equipped computers to follow the example of **Swerve**'s letterhack of the month, Rob Hansen, who became the first person to send me a letter of comment via Internet. I'll gladly process the letters of those who aren't plugged into telecommunications, but e-mail (Crossfire@AOL.com) is appreciated.

### **I Sing the Fanzines Electric**

Fandom was slow to embrace the home computer age. When I was active in the early 1970s, a few fans toiled as data entry clerks, and a few others used computers in scientific pursuits, but I don't remember many welcoming this technology into their homes with a glad cry. A lot of fans were even a bit antagonistic about the encroachment of video games into pop culture.

Like a reluctant damsel, fandom has utterly surrendered to the blandishments of computing after putting up that show of resistance. Now fans speak of the death of print and the possibility of awarding a Hugo for the best electronic fanzine.

The electronic Hugo controversy isn't very important to me. I am not much on awards in general and fan-oriented Hugos in particular. I have no problem with adding another semi-meaningless honor to the list, but don't come crying to me when some guy trawling for cybersex beats out Teresa Nielsen-Hayden.

One small suggestion: the award itself should reflect the worthiness of electronic fanac. The Electronic Fanzine Hugo should be a gif of a rocketship on a gold CD-ROM disc. I will be waiting to see the reactions from those so anxious to win an Electronic Fanzine Hugo to gauge the limit of their allegiance to the cyberverses.

Hugos and glory aside, the relationship between electronic and traditional fanzine fanac has occupied my thoughts lately. Since I won't have the chance to declaim my opinions from the pulpit of Corflu Vegas' "Electronic Fanzine" panel, I'm going to vent here.

I love telecommunications. Always a terrible correspondent, I now exchange letters on a near-weekly basis with many of my networked friends. Nothing beats e-mail for correspondence. Even those who insist on saving files of letters can quickly download all the text to a storage disk.

What keeps hardcopy fan correspondence going is all the fantastic people who don't own modems. As their numbers decrease, it's likely that e-mail will become the main conduit for correspondence.

On the other hand, "rec.arts.sf.fandom," fandom's Internet newsgroup, is not an immediate threat to fanzine fandom. Despite laudable efforts, there is no way to organize the discussions or weed out the inane entries. It's more like going to dinner with a group of fans in a very noisy and crowded restaurant in which other patrons feel free to barge into the table's conversations. There's excitement and energy, but the ambience is poor.

Every fanzine fan with a computer will want to check rec.arts.sf.fandom, if only for its few stellar writers. And while it has its moments, I don't see much to recommend rec.arts.sf.fandom over the N3F's **Tightbeam** letterzine.

Nor do I scry a better future for rec.arts.sf.fandom. Only fundamental structural changes could make it truly useful and appealing to most of the fans who read **Swerve**. The present structure doesn't allow for anything remotely like a fanzine. Since revisions would necessitate an overhaul of the Newsgroups are, it doesn't seem likely. .

Sites on the World Wide Web hold much more potential. The owner of the website can tailor content and physical appearance to their personal interests and largely control the postings. New technology enables real-time chat at WWW sites -- a virtual convention for invited, electronic guests.

One possible application for websites is electronic apas. FAPA could set up a site and give each member an access code to download other members' submissions. The site could also offer information about FAPA, and perhaps fandom itself, for free to casual browsers.

A WWW site could function as a fanzine, though it wouldn't have the same organization and couldn't employ graphics in the traditional way. A sitezine could put each article and feature under a clickable icon or provide a contents menu to facilitate downloading and reading.

HTML (Hyper Text Mark-up Language) may be the technology for the electronic fanzines of tomorrow. HTMLs look somewhat like paper fanzines and can be delivered via e-mail or downloading at a WWW site.

An HTML can be made much more interactive than a hardcopy publication. A reader can click any highlighted word in the text and get something extra. Possibilities include sound and video clips, digitized pictures and mini-movies. Imagine reading about SNAFFU meetings at Skinny Dugan's pub and being able to hear JoHn Hardin do his sf game reviews or see the awesomely proportioned barmaid!

HTML technology is neither cheap nor simple, today. It will be both before too many more years. I have such strong emotional ties to printed fanzines that I am constitutionally unable to forecast their demise, but I have come to the conclusion that the true sequel to *The Enchanted Duplicator* may be called *The Mystic Modem*.

### **CopyKatz**

I'm busting to tell you about my new duplicator. Such announcements, once prevalent in fanzine editorials, have become exceedingly rare these days. The copier age makes it advantageous for most fans to abandon the do-it-yourself aspect of amateur publishing in favor of the local copy shop.

Much as I am drawn to any place with a name like "Kinko," I still worship at the shrine of homemade fanzines and am un-altar--ably opposed to the shipping those masters off to some unsympathetic commercial printer.

Since my return to fandom, Katz Kunkel Worley Dille, Inc. has very kindly let me use the Gestetner 2316 ZD to produce my fanzines. This alternative has become progressively more problematic, and I had already steeled myself to the necessity of switching to commercial copying. As a test, we took **Wild Heirs #3** to a printer. While the price for the job was a little daunting, I have to admit that the repro is pretty good.

The Gestetner 2316 ZD is a fine duplexing copier, but it was never made for the rigors of fanzine publishing. I generally print about 200 copies of whatever I do, and 20 pages is a typical Katzine. That's 4,000 impressions, about 80% of the machine's rated capacity for a month. Running a fanzine straight through, starting each sheet as soon as the previous one finished, exceeded the 2316's parameters and caused a litany of problems.

It took thick-headed me about a year to internalize the concept that a copier is *not* a mimeograph, and that it requires a different operating strategy. Mimeos, for those whose memory of them is not fresh, generally work best for long runs. Assuming the duper is in good mechanical order, has good rubber

parts and the ink dispense is full, it will churn out copies until the stencil itself starts to deteriorate.

The repairman got pretty sick of me by the time I figured it out. I've rehabilitated myself so thoroughly that the 2316 has now reached its estimated lifetime copy limit and shows almost no wear.

So I learned to baby the Gestetner 2316. I'd duplex one sheet (400 impressions) and then let the machine stand idle until it cooled down. This minimized service calls, but the results were sometimes disappointingly uneven compared to the quick-copy outlets.

I don't completely know how it happened, but I lucked into a truly incredible deal. The company that services our copier and keeps us in toner decided to move its office and somewhat de-emphasize copiers in favor of high-end equipment like bar code readers and engineering copiers. As part of its realignment, Vegas Copies will stop selling Gestetners, though it will continue to service them.

Anyway, Vegas Copier has a few floor samples that it wanted to move at sacrifice prices. We leased a Gestetner 2355 ZDF for about \$100 per month for 39 months. After that, we can buy it for a buck. KKWD will lease it by the month from Joyce and me, halving my cost.

This baby is \$22K new, and it is still about 4.2 million copies short of its rated lifespan. It produces 55 copies a minute and has a tray that holds five reams of paper. **Swerve** would have to get a lot fatter, and much more popular, to dent the Gestetner's 100,000-copies-per-month capacity.

The new copier is already ensconced in its position of honor in my office, and we are adjusting to life together. I ran the first sheet of **Swerve #1**, and I'll use to for this entire issue. You'll know soon enough if this will chase those inconsistent reproduction blues. This copier is a bit like a fancy sports car, in that it spends more time being serviced than in operation. The master mechanic has made about six housecalls this month so far, and he'll be back again soon enough. Gradually, he's whipping it into shape.

I can hear it humming, just out of sight

around the bend in the "L" of my office. I think it likes me.

### A Warning for Chucky

Recently, some telecommunications-savvy fans had a truly excellent idea: get Chuch Harris onto the Internet. No fan is more attuned to real-time written communication, and few would make better use of the opportunity to enter the Digiverse.

I am supposed to write "Copyright Barry Friedman" here. My Canada-based partner, best-known to fandom as the guy who drives while wearing a dicknose, is copyrighting words he thinks will be useful to travelers on the cyberbahn. He's got dozens of them tied up, all nice and legal.

It won't be long before he'll start charging a penny or two every time one of his copyrighted words is spoken or written. He plans to hire a corps of agents to visit every part of North America to monitor usage and collect those fees.

It's only a penny, you say.

It's not worth all the trouble, you say.

That's why Barry owns half of New Brunswick, and you're reading a fanzine.

As a service to fandom, I considered printing the Friedman dictionary. It's a thick book, but I thought that you'd all want a list of his words. Leave them out of conversation and save thousands of pennies a year.!

Then I considered the situation. I had to ask myself, could I handle the royalty payments on the words repeatedly printed in that dictionary? And Barry would probably want a licensing fee. He's a hard bargainer, so I anticipated a stiff price.

So I've cancelled the first printing of the Barry Friedman Dictionary.

Odd as it may seem, Andy Hooper once wrote in **Spent Brass** that sometimes he thought I didn't know what I was going to write until I typed it on the page. This observation saddened me, because I'd always imagined that my fan articles were delicately balanced

People who know me better know how I labor tirelessly over the construction of each piece. Can I help it if my mind works this way?

These are not unplanned, meandering digressions; they're premeditated meandering digressions. A tip for would-be critics: you can glimpse the incredibly sophisticated structure beneath the apparently haphazard arrangements in the painstakingly wrought and expertly constructed transitions. Note how effortlessly I move the subject from Andy Hooper's appraisal of my writing back to the central theme of this piece, a warning to Chuch Harris.

So, anyway, as I was saying about Chuch Harris, he was an ideal candidate for entry into the cyberspace. (Ha, Friedman... cost you a penny that time!)

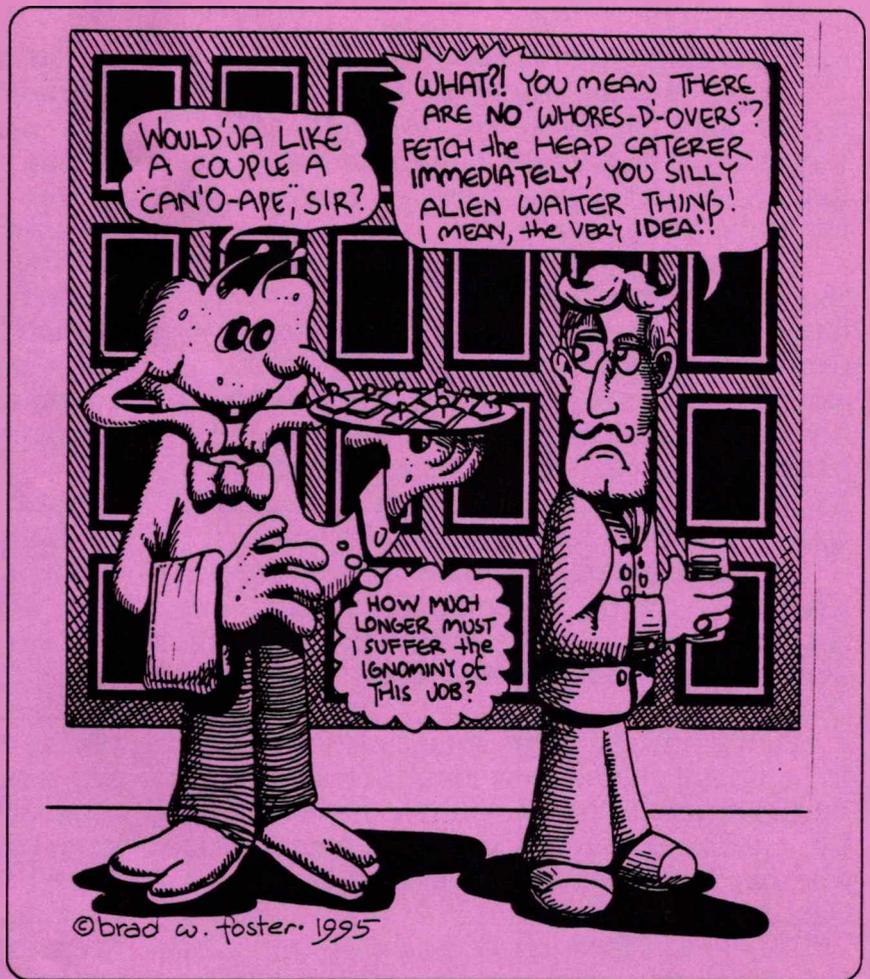
Dave Langford coined a catchy name, GHETTO (Get Harris Equipped To Talk Online), Avedon Carol conducted Chuch on a whirlwind tour of the net to show the potential, and fans started sending money. I don't remember any fan fund achieving its goal so quickly.

It won't be long before Dave Langford turns the money into a computer, a modem, and an Internet access account. Thus fandom enters the age of Digital Chuchy. It may not be the unalloyed blessing that contributors to GHETTO imagined when they forked over their dough.

What heresy is this? Am I about to slander a man who has been like a dirty uncle to me for so many years? Am I about to bite the lecherous hand that feeds me all those hilarious articles and columns?

If you'll stop the damn questions, I'll tell you what's been on my mind since I got an e-letter proclaiming the fund's success. Chuch himself stands in utmost peril, and the events GHETTO has set in motion may topple the Internet.

The problem is the collision between this hero-fan, Charles Randolph Harris, and cutting-edge technology. We are losing a keyboard demon on a world unprepared for the onslaught.



Chuch has been a voluminous and superb correspondent for nearly five decades. His long letters are compendiums of wit and humor, as is his lifelong triangular correspondence with Walt Willis and Vin¢ Clarke. Even his letter substitute is packed with so much prime, laugh-out-load Harris had too much top grade material to get more than choice excerpts into **Folly**, even when it was monthly.

Chuch Harris is a correspondent schooled in the ancient rituals of snail mail. He has maintained an enviable record as a correspondent, one supposes, by developing iron discipline. Like most veteran fans, Chuch pounces on each letter as it arrives and fires off a superlative response without hours after slitting the envelop. His years of fine fanning have taught him the bitter truth: a letter delayed is a letter unwritten.

The first thing Chuch will discover, when he logs onto the Internet, is electronic mail. Gone at a stroke is 90% of the drudgery of getting a letter written, addressed, stamped

and into the hands of the Post Office.

E-mail is easy. It may be *too* easy for a fan whose time-tested correspondence habits have stood the test of international mail regulations, postal strikes and wayward deliveries.

The problem with time-tested habits is that they're infernally hard to break. I foresee Chuch settling himself at the computer to process the 20 or 30 letters which have arrived since the previous night. After psyching himself up for the rigamarole of traditional correspondence, Daventry's favorite son will whizz through the queue of waiting e-letters like a digital buzzsaw.

It's like when Superman moved from Krypton to Earth. His muscles, intended to cope with the crushing gravity of his home world, propel him over the tallest building on ours.

That's fine, as far as it goes. But consider the effect of the all-new computerized TurboChuchy! The question is not whether Chuch Harris is ready for the Internet, but whether the Internet is ready for Chuch Harris.

This is not farfetched. Theorists, possibly the same sages who once predicted that a dozen 4K computers would be enough to run the world, estimate that the Internet will become hopeless snarled and unmanageable when it attracts 100 million subscribers.

Since only 30 million computerists use the Internet today, you may wonder how that relates to Chuch and the menace he poses. It's simple: those theorists mean 100 million *normal* people, not slan-like masters of written communication like Chuch Harris.

Think of the Internet like a big elevator. There's a sign on the elevator that it has a capacity of 20 people. But what happens if the 20 largest fans you know crowd into the car? Plunge city!

The Internet operates the same way. I grant that even Chuch Harris probably can't cause digital gridlock all by himself. But he's only the harbinger of other BNFs to come. Already, there's a lively discussion line about which venerable should be next to be injected into cyberspace.

Study suggests that 12 BNFs firing fannish correspondence at everyone they can reach, could crash the Internet. That's regular conversation only, incidentally; the outbreak of a feud might burn out the telephone lines themselves.

The fate of the Internet, and perhaps western civilization, is in the hands of Chuch Harris. The rest of this section, therefore, is a straightforward plea to my friend (though the rest of you are invited to read over his shoulder).

### **A Section for Robert Lichtman**

"I hate your fan articles with lots of dialogue," Robert Lichtman said to me. Well, he didn't say "hate." I distinctly recall a much more tactful phrase. Actually, he didn't say "your," either, though my submission to the elegant **Trap Door** was under discussion. I never heard him make any similar complaint to Burbee or any other dialogist, so I am assuming that his keen critical eye singled me out. Of course, I don't shadow Robert 24 hours a day, so he may've said such things on hundreds of occasions. He may have little cards pre-printed with the sentiment

In fact, I think he said something altogether different and much more soothing, as befits sercon fandom's ambassador of good will.

I'd probably print a whole lot of funny repartee between Lichtman and me, if we had had any funny repartee about his disinclination to enjoy fanzine articles which rely on conversation rather than narrative. I envisioned a while article full of nothing by him and me talking back and forth about how he didn't like articles with dialogue. And then I would've dedicated the whole section to him.

I guess that's why I'm Irony Katz.

### **I Hate Long Good-Byes...**

... so it's just as well that I haven't got room for more than a few lines in this vein. There'll be another **Swerve** around the beginning of May, this time with more than one letter.

So if you were thining of maillordering a vial of Japanese high school girls' saliva (guaranteed fresh), why not send a letter of comment to Swerve instead?

See you all in the fanzines.

-- Arnie Katz.