

The Sweetheart of Fanac Falls

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The Joyce Katz Anthology



Edited by Arnie Katz

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The Sweetheart of Fanac Falls: The Joyce Katz Anthology is produced to commemorate her Salute at the Sunday Social on March 13, 2005 by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur Blvd.,PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107; email: Crossfire4@cox.net).

Member fwa Supporter: AFAL.

The High Priestess

Biography by Arnie Katz

The author wishes to apologize in advance for mentioning himself so often in the following piece. The lives and fan careers of Joyce and me are so inextricably connected that it is possible for me to separate mine from hers.

Where does myth end and reality begin? It isn't always easy to tell in the *Twilight Zone* and it's no picnic when it comes to the life of Joyce Worley Katz, The story of the girl who wanted to be a fan and the woman who became one of the best is full of odd, weird and downright miraculous events. Alas, Joyce's life-long dedication to the philosophy of hypocrisy, and her motto, "You've got to go to sleep sometime," make it impossible for me to reveal some of the juiciest stuff at this time.

Still, I believe I can authenticate some of the fabulous stories that surround her and dispel others. And, of course, I can make up any damn thing that flies into my head between now and the end of the article.

Incredible as it seems, Joyce Worley Katz and Claude Degler were born in the same tiny Missouri town. Yes, though the Cosmic One first came to prominence as a citizen of New Castle, IN, he was born in Poplar Bluff, MO.

Two fans in a town of less than 10,000 is a pretty heavy concentration, so how about *four*? Poplar Bluff is also the birthplace of two other BNFs, Max Keasler and Duggie "Ray" Fisher. Given that Clod was a generation older than this trio, one might speculate as to whether he might have contributed some cosmic DNA to one or all of their genetic heritage. So far as is

known, however, Degler left Poplar Bluff at a very young age and never returned. It's probably better that way, since Joyce and Duggie (pronounced "Doogie" and the genesis of the TV show "Doogie Hauser," written by Poplar Bluff's Linda Bloodworth Thompson.) got married upon her graduation from high school.

Joyce does not speak of a childhood in the Free Love Camp in the Ozarks, so it is possible that she had a normal – normally subnormal, that is – Missouri education or something even unlikelier to produce the unique personality known as Joyce Worley Katz.

Joyce did not lose heart when mere accidents of fanhistory prevented her from fulfilling a possible destiny as Bride of the Starbeggotten One. (She has, it is true, been less easily reconciled to not having becoming Queen of England, but let's give her props on the Mrs. Claude Degler thing.) Not only had Claude been whisked out of town, perhaps by time traveling fak-fen who wished to stop the union, but he had long since vanished from fandom by the time teenaged Joyce Worley was looking for a husband.

Clearly, in view of her preference for mating only with fans, she had only two possible choices: her slightly older Poplar Bluff contemporaries Fisher and Keasler. Since Max wasn't exactly the marrying kind, she opted for Duggie, who had published at least a dozen issues of *ODD* at mid-century.

Joyce was not the first woman to be disappointed by her wedding, though her grounds were unique in the chronicle of marital relations. Imagine her shock and frustration to discover that Duggie had gafiated! Like many active in 5^h and 6^h Fandom, he had folded

his tent and turned his gaze to matters beyond fandom.

Even worse for the young, disillusioned bride, she saw evidence that Duggie's gafia was chronic, permanent. Not only was he out of fandom, but he strongly resisted any suggestion that he return to fandom and bring Joyce along with him.

And so, unknowingly, Joyce Worley Fisher became the first fan to go directly to gafia without engaging in any form of fanac. She had become an ex-fan!

Fandom might have lost Joyce forever to the strange and nefarious pursuits that filled the next decade or so. Statutes of limitation can be very tricky, legally speaking, so a fuller account of those years is not possible at this time. Suffice to say she rambled a lot of places, including Mexico and Hollywood, and led several amazing lives.

All the time she was accumulating this rich store of life experience, and considering how to keep anyone from ever knowing about it, she continued to yearn for fandom. And yet, denied that all-important first fan contact, Joyce continued to dwell in the Glades of Gafia.

Being an ex-fan is not quite the same as being a non-fan, however. Ex-fans may sometimes have unexpected resources. Duggie did. What he had, besides a lot of memories of fanac past, was a fanzine collection.

And it was not a coupe of crammed and bulging cartons at the back of the closet, either. With characteristic thoroughness, Duggie had assembled an anal retentive's dream of a collection. Not only did he have just about every major fanzine published between the end of World War II and 1953, but each precious issue was perfectly preserved in its own clasp-sealed manila envelope.

Prevented by circumstance from assuming her rightful, future role in fandom, Joyce took refuge in this mammoth library of some of the best fanzines ever published. She read *Vampyre*, *confusion*, *Fan-variety* and, most of all, *Quamdry*. In Lee Hoffman, Joyce found inspiration and motivation as the brilliance of *Q* slowly turned her into a sacred vessel of Trufannishness.

She read and read, and became steeped in the legend and lore of Trufandom. Finally, one day in 1965, her opportunity arrived. She was cruising a bookstore when she chatted up a fellow science fiction browser who turned out to be James Hall. Forces beyond her control impelled her to ask this stranger a very surprising and provocative question: "Do you know anything about science fiction fandom?"

Jim replied that he didn't, but said that his son Dave could help her.

Joyce talked to Dave on the phone and soon vis-

ited the Hall residence, Duggie in tow, for what turned out to be the first meeting of The Ozark Science Fiction Association, the first fan club in St. Louis, MO, in at least a generation.

A strong case could be made that Jim Hall was nuts, an abusive and delusional character with unsettling paranoid tendencies. His son Dave displayed remarkable intelligence and imagination, but he also bore the psychological scars inflicted by his mercurial and sometimes frightening father. He was just a crazy teenager, with the accent on "crazy," but he had some friends who were both more knowledgeable about fandom and more capable of mixing in its subculture in a meaningful way. Among those who attended that first meeting were Hank Luttrell, Paul Gilster and Jim Reuss.

Much like Michael Corleone, Dugie Fisher, by then known to most as "Ray," got pulled back in. With prodding from Joyce, they set to work on the first issue of *ODD* in about 15 years. They assembled an amalgam of reprints, unpublished bits and a little new writing.

Ray's perfectionist compulsion came to the fore quickly. Since they didn't own a mimeograph, they opted for "next generation" reproduction technology. They took out a loan and bought a somewhat cumbersome offset press and the equipment to make their own pictures and plates. Most of this bulky, and costly, gear ended up crowding into the Fishers' already cluttered bedroom.

That first revival issue, #14, drew encouraging "Welcome back to fandom" feedback from Ray's old fan friends and others who knew of his previous tour of fanac. The response was good enough, in fact, that Joyce convinced Ray that they should continue with *ODD*.

The fanzine had a few advantages and, well, a few disadvantages. On the plus side, it offered artists fabulous reproduction compared to all fanzines not produced by Redd Boggs, Ted White and Juanita Coulson (in a medium intrinsically superior to even the finest mimeography.) *ODD* knew how to give something a lavish presentation and the way to pet the delicate egos of some fairly skittish contributors like counter-culture Scottish bad boy Richard Gordon and the quirky Vaughn Bode.

And Ray Fisher may have had the best people skills of anyone I've ever met in fandom. His chameleon personality could go from unrepentant bohemian to dedicated con-monger to bucolic bumpkin in a flicker and few fans have found it easier to attract a wide and diverse circle of fan friends. People liked Ray and, when they came in contact with her, Joyce and couldn't wait to show their support and high regard.

As a result of all these factors, *ODD* shot through the ranks of a soft genzine field. (This was only a year

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or so after the Breen Boondoggle, so general circulation fans were at a premium).

Joyce's overt contribution amounted to some surprisingly good poetry until near the end of the run, but she profoundly influenced *ODD* on both a strategic and tactic level. Ray's vision shaped *ODD's* policy, but Joyce played a major part in realizing this concept in ink and paper.

Like most fanzine fans, Joyce's horizon wasn't limited to St. Louis, though she did serve as OSFA's Director during its most successful period. It was n't long before she started corresponding with leading fans and planning the first Ozarkcon.

As someone who co-edited a fanzine before ever seeing one, I sympathize with the panoramic ignorance with which Joyce led the nascent Gateway City fandom into its first convention, Ozarkcon, in 1966. There are now listservs composed entirely of the stuff OSFA didn't know about conventions.

The most glaring piece of ignorance was that they didn't know about parties. They thought fans came, heard the speeches and panels, went through the artshow and huckster room – and then went home to bed. (Alone, needless to say.)

With the unerring fannish instincts she has displayed so often since that 1965 event, Joyce championed the choice of Ted White as Guest of Honor. Not only did he create instant, at-the-con credibility, but that put Ted in St. Louis at a time when his knowledge and leadership could have their maximum effect. The ad hoc addition of parties and the overall fannish flavor made Ozarkcon I a breakout success.

Ted's GoH stint, and lots of correspondence between Joyce and various Fanoclasts, cemented the alliance between the two fan centers, a collaboration that profoundly impacted fandom during the late 1960s. The Fanoclasts and the Saturday People, the club Joyce co-hosted, shared a similar view of Fandom and generally took the same side of every controversy.

Fittingly enough, Joyce's first Worldcon was NY-Con 3 in 1967. I was talking with Harlan Ellison when his eagle eye spotted a slim girl with long hair the color of dark honey helping set up the hangings in the Art Show. He suggested that we go chat her up. It sounded like a good idea, so we took our Mutt-and-Jeff act across the room.

Ever brimming with confidence, Harlan opened a conversation and I followed his lead. When we exchanged names and Joyce and I recognized each other as correspondents and paper friends, Harlan obligingly switched roles with me and became the wingman. Harlan and I became the first, among many, to be charmed by her.

The NYCon 3 not only gave Joyce a chance to meet all those names on paper. It also provided her first brush with full-on crackpot lunacy. Earlier in

1967, Joyce and Ray had gotten involved in a small correspondence group that, ostensibly, discussed parapsychological phenomena. It was not until the convention, however, that Joyce perceived that the Circle's leader, Judi Sephton, were more or less insane. One look at wild-eyed Judi, with her bird's nest of garishly dyed red hair and Joyce knew *something* wasn't quite right.

It didn't take long for some probing questions to confirm her suspicions. The Circle's purpose, as revealed to a stunned Joyce, went considerably beyond academic discussion. Judi disclosed that the real purpose of The Circle was to engage in psychic combat against invaders from Jupiter. Since psychic super-beings from Jupiter never did conquer Earth, this is one more debt of gratitude fandom (and the planet) owes Joyce, even if she was a wholly unwitting participant in the Great Work.

Few things were likely to draw a more negative reaction from Joyce than pseudo-scientific claptrap. While living in Hollywood, she had dabbled in several forms of psychic charlatanry, including palmistry and tarot card reading, but had rejected an offer to set her up as the West Coast equivalent of Jeanne Dixon. After turning her back on such nonsense, Joyce had very little patience for people who claimed paranormal mental powers, let alone those who planned to use them to fight an interplanetary war.

That incident was probably the genesis of her strongly held Insurgent beliefs. It proved beyond all doubt that all fans aren't equally worthy of her attention. Henceforth, Joyce reserved her feelings of fannish fellowship for those with whom she truly had that kind of connection.

Fandom's fannish wing cringed when Columbus Fandom reared its ugly head as a bidder for the 1969 Worldcon. The group's mean-spirited "dirty tricks," so reminiscent of Richard Nixon, caused a great deal of consternation as did the bidding committee's fatuous assertion that they planned to exclude a major (and entirely blameless fan) just to show that they were "a real committee," meant that more than a worldcon site was at stake.

With plenty of prodding from New York, Los Angeles and Minneapolis fandoms, Joyce found herself spearheading a Worldcon bid after only three years as an actfan. She and Ray became co-chairmen and Columbus and St. Louis were soon going hammer and tongs.

Ray represented the public face of the St. Louis-con bid, while Joyce served as chief executive and director of operations. The bid proved quite a strain, mostly because some Columbus fans went to quasi-criminal extremes in pursuit of P*O*W*E*R. One misguided fan actually moved to St. Louis to spy and sow dissension. Paradoxically, the charm and easy-going

ways of the Saturday People had exactly the opposite effect; the would be infiltrator became friendly with the St. Louis fans, including Joyce, and ceased to be much of an irritant.

Putting on a worldcon, it was often said in the 1970s, put intolerable strains on marriages. The St. Louiscon was a success. The largest worldcon outside Chicago or New York up to that time, St. Louiscon built on the "big show" approach of NYCon 3 and provided a wide range of entertainments for fans of just about every persuasion.

Joyce and Ray's marriage, never particularly strong, crumbled under the stress of mounting such a gigantic event. By summer 1970 they had split up and she had moved to New York. (It was indicative of the relationship that both Ray and Joyce both remarried within a year.)

Joyce arrived in New York on July 17, 1970. Rich brown and his then-wife Colleen very kindly offered to let her stay in their apartment. Joyce surveyed the local fan scene and finding it devoid of hot guys, settled for me. We moved in together on October 1, 1971 and have been together ever since.

Not surprisingly, Joyce and I spent a lot of time lost in our own little world, the typical new couple on perpetual honeymoon. We became disaffected from the Fanoclasts, now under the leadership of Steve and Gayle Stiles, for a variety of reasons, and for a time, did little beyond occasional fanzines.

Joyce and I took over hosting the Brooklyn Insurgents, a club originally started by rich and Colleen brown and myself. The Insurgents began with a small cabal of similar-minded fanzine fans and met on alternate Fridays to the Fanoclasts. Ross Chamberlain, Bruce Telzer, Jay Kinney, Chris Couch and Ned Sontag were the main members at the beginning and Terry Carr served as a one-man alumni group/ advisory board to Joyce and me.

The meetings were small in the first few months, but Joyce's charm, hospitality and charisma soon began to propel the Insurgents forward.

Joyce and I got married on April 25, 1971, after she had duly converted from being a lapsed Baptist to a non-practicing Jew. The ceremony was held at a huge Synagogue located at Grand Army Plaza, presided over by a very unimpressive rabbi who freely quoted Spiro Agnew in his arrogantly wrong-headed sermons. Chris Couch gave away the bride. My family found Chris, Bruce and Jay oddly fascinating, though none of them were hip enough to draw a comparison to the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers.

The Insurgents really turned the corner in May 1971, with the arrival of a new couple, Bill and Charlene Kunkel. Bill and Joyce had corresponded off-and-on for several years and had even met at NYCon

3. Bill gaffed after NYCon, but he somehow read about Joyce and I getting together. He and Charl thought we might be a couple with whom they could socialize and called us shortly after our wedding.

Joyce invited them over for dinner. She filled their bellies with spaghetti and their minds with tales of the fun to be had in fandom. The two couples bonded almost instantaneously and started hanging out together quite a bit.

When Bill and Charlene planned a short trip to Chicago, we went to the bus station to see them on their way. We left them at the Port Authority Bus Station walked a block down 42nd Street to an amusement arcade we often visited. We were intently playing a relatively new machine called *Pong*, when we heard voices calling our names.

We whirled around to find – Bill and Charlene. Some hitch in the bus schedule had delayed their departure for a couple of hours. They'd decided to pass the time at the very same arcade.

Fandom *and* coin-ops in common? Our collective joy knew no bounds. Suddenly, we were all best friends – and stayed that way for many, many years.

Charlene and Bill both dabbled in higher education at Queens College. There they met, and recruited for the Insurgents, three young men – Moshe Feder, Barry Smotroff and Stu Shiffman. All became Insurgents and plunged into fanzines. It wasn't long before we also pulled in a trio of fairly new fans who clustered around a slanshack called the Avocado Pit – Jerry Kaufman, Eli Cohen and David Emerson. Susan Palermo, Andy Porter and several others joined the suddenly dynamic club and the Brooklyn Insurgents reached critical mass. This roughly coincided with the departure of the browns to the Washington, DC, area – the Whites had left some time earlier – and the Fanoclasts languished under a series of ineffectual hosts.

Few groups in the history of fandom have put more effort into fanzine publishing than the Insurgents. Joyce's *Potlatch* and my solo-edited genzine run of *Focal Point* were soon joined by *Rats!* (Bill & Charlene), *Dead Flowers* (Bill alone), *Nope* (Jay Kinney), *Cypher* (Chris Couch), *Fangle* (Ross Chamberlain), *Breet* (David Emerson) and quite a few other titles. Eventually, Joyce and I folded our individual genzines and produced our first collaborative fanzine, *Swoon*. Not long after the Insurgents got into high gear, Joyce began taking the cover of each new fanzine to the wall and soon there were rows of them to testify to the club's high level of activity.

Joyce's *Potlatch* wasn't the largest or most frequent Insurgents fanzine, but a lot of fans thought it was the best. Excellent material by Joyce, Terry Carr, Bob Tucker, Bill Kunkel, me and others could be found under those fascinating Jay Kinney covers.

Joyce started the practice of inviting a few Insur-

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gents for dinner on meeting nights. She knew that some really could use the meal and, besides, she enjoyed watching them eat with such gusto. The meals got bigger and bigger, sometimes including as many as two-dozen dishes in portions generous enough to satisfy even our leading gourmards, Ross Chamberlain and John D. Berry. The pre-meeting dinners took on a life of their own as fans fell into the family atmosphere that dominated such occasions.

Most publishing took place on Saturday. At the biggest session, we ran off no fewer than three complete genzines. I recall standing over the Rex Rotary, sweat dripping down my long hair on a muggy New York summer day as others in the group prepared the next stencils, collated sections of fanzines or just kibitzed. Even Foo Manchu, our huge and malevolent yellow-and-white tomcat played a role. As I ran off one side of each page, someone would stack up the sheets and place the pile on the day bed that occupied one corner of the room in which we did the fanzines. After running over all the odd-numbered pages, we'd get a pile, straight it up and flip it over to print the other side. This created a space in the rows of page-piles. The cat liked to jump into the vacant area and hunker down to completely fill the space. Whomever took the complete, two-sided page from the paper tray usually had to cajole –fighting the abnormally strong and clever Foo was out of the question – for the right to put the pile back in its appointed spot.

It was during this period that Joyce became known as the High Priestess of Brooklyn Fandom (and by extension, faanish fanzine fandom wherever it was found). It was the only tangible result of one of the more silly and pointless confrontations I have ever seen in fandom.

Ted Pauls, he of the poltergeist phenomenon and the voluminous, text-heavy fanzines, for some reason decided that Joyce was a threat to the safety of science fiction and must be eradicated. I think Ted maybe spent too much time alone. So he wrote an dumb attack piece in which he accused Joyce of some kind of Machiavellian conspiracy to ruin sercon fandom and, indeed, the world of science fiction on which it was based. A callow youth from Australia named Bruce R. Gillespie chimed in with an allegation that Joyce had, in fact, destroyed science fiction.

Terry Carr wrote a nice, straightforward defense of Joyce and the Brooklyn Insurgents for *Potlatch*. Terry did a very good job, but I didn't think his calm, reasonable words would do much to stop the largely irrational barbs directed at Joyce and the club she hosted. I went in an entirely different direction.

Ted Pauls' attack included a disparaging reference to Joyce as the "High Priestess of Brooklyn Fandom." I had no idea what that meant to him, but I saw it as the key to ending the incipient feud with one

sledgehammer blow. I wrote an article for *Potlatch* that admitted every charge and allegations. I took the lunacy to its absurd limit in an article that painted a lurid picture of alleged fanlife among the Insurgents.

It made the whole thing sound so crazy that it jolted Ted and Bruce back to reality. Apologies were cheerfully received and accepted by Joyce. Now she's co-chairman (with me) of the Bring Bruce Bay-side Fun to import the very same Bruce R. Gillespie to Corflu and Potlatch (the convention, not the fanzine) in 2005.

Swoon supplanted *Potlatch* and *Focal Point*. It combined aspects of both fanzines in a new package that reflected our hedonistic and faanish lifestyle. The "S" in the title, for instance, looked suspiciously like Towner, the blown glass swan that sat on top of the book case in the Living room, ready to fly down to the fans on especially joyous occasions.

Joyce and I tried to do a four-page biweekly newszine, *FIAWOL*. In fact, we tried two separate runs. They were all right, but we didn't have the needed fire nor was fandom in a particularly exciting phase, so we backed away from newszines and turned to the fanzine that changed our lives – *Four Star Extra*.

The Bicentennial Issue of *Swoon*, which celebrated the nation's 200th birthday with a selection of pieces tied in some way to American Life, gave Bill, Charlene, Joyce and I the idea for *Four Star Extra*, a fanzine that profoundly affected our lives,

We intended *Four Star Extra* as a way to stretch our writing muscles. Each month, we'd decide on a theme, generally picking it on the spur of the moment, and then each of us would write an article on the topic. We wrapped the whole thing in a round-robin editorial that also dovetailed with the theme and topped off the whole thing with a series of stylishly minimalist Ross Chamberlain covers.

The format gave me a chance to work with the others to hone their writing craft with an eye toward professional journalism. It was like a small, focused writer's group that produced a fanzine.

It worked, too. I was a full-time editor and writer before *4SE* and Bill had written a little for a couple of trade magazines where I had editorial influence. Joyce and Charlene had never sold a professional word. After *Four Star Extra*, all four of us were full-time, profitably employed professionals.

A combination of jobs, family obligations and wanderlust led to a mass exodus of Brooklyn Insurgents from the New York City metropolitan area, Joyce and I found less and less to engage our attention in local fandom. And when career opportunities started to soak up spare time in 1977, Joyce and I Gafiated.

Joyce (and I) came to regard it as a mistake that

we simply drifted away from contact with fans. Occasionally, I would see the light of Trufandom flash in her eyes as she thought of halcyon times in the microcosm, but the spark never quite became a flame.

Shortly after we moved to Las Vegas in 1989, Mark Blackman tracked me down with an invitation to participate in the 25th anniversary of TAPS, a rotational apa I started with Lenny Bailes in the mid-1960s. That didn't sound so hard. Besides, I saw the potential for some easy egoboo, a drug that never builds up a tolerance.

Joyce watched my involvement with TAPS with Olympian detachment. She half-heartedly questioned me about the group, but she lost interest when I failed to mention any of her friends among the membership or tell stories of high voltage fannishness.

Her reaction forced me to consider my situation. I enjoyed my minimal activity in TAPS, but I had to admit she was right: something was missing. If this didn't ignite her fannish impulses, then I needed to look elsewhere, beyond TAPS.

Joyce was now the reluctant one. She seemed astonished that I not only spent time with a desktop publishing program, but actually produced the first issue of *Folly*. I'd somehow gotten some addresses and sent copies to everyone I used to know during our first tour of Fandom. I also wrote to two fans with whom we had not parted on good terms, rich brown and Ted White, to try to mend fences and revive relationships.

Rich wrote back with assurances that we could draw a line and let a new relationship develop. Ted was warier, but he did not make any hostile moves. A third person with whom we had a bad history, unexpectedly wrote to me within the first few months of my return to apologize and that pretty much got rid of the old baggage.

Knowing my ego, rich brown had gone to some pains to warn me that no one would remember me and that I would have to start from scratch. That wouldn't have frightened me, but it didn't play out that way at all.

Rich neglected to consider the fact that fanzine fandom's turnover had slowed to a crawl. The fanzine fans now were, mostly, the same ones we'd known and they all remembered us. What's more, they seemed thrilled about our return.

Walt Willis was quickest off the mark with a lengthy letter that bowled me over and, when I showed it to Joyce, had the same effect on Joyce. Here, finally, was something that registered on her fannish radar! WAW went into ecstasies of jubilation about our return, offered addresses and advice and personally entreated Joyce and I to come to Magicon, the 1993 worldcon that had the sense to make him Fan Guest of Honor.

Chuch Harris, whose fan career had scarcely overlapped ours in the past, became an overnight friend – yes, "overnight friends," wherever you are Chuchy and began a voluminous correspondence that led to Chuch becoming the "European Editor" of *Wild Heirs*.

Linda Bushyager wrote a very nice welcoming note and anticipated our greatest need by sending a mailing list.

Vincent Clark wrote, which was amazing since we had never had any contact with him whatsoever. His letter, if anything, topped Willis' for all-out egoboo. He said that, when he returned to fandom, he had discovered Joyce and me and had become a collector of our fanzines and fanwriting. He added that, although he greatly enjoyed our fanzines, he felt sad because we would never be fans together.

That made us feel a little easier about the fact that we were Vincent Clark collectors and had similarly despaired of ever enjoying an actual relationship. (I wrote back and told him so, cementing a friendship that lasted right up to his death.)

Vince said he knew we would get lots of advice from Walt and Chuch, but he allowed as how there might be questions that we felt were too sensitive or whatever for them. "You can ask me anything," he assured us.

Snail mail and email brought a daily deluge of positive feedback. It turned out that we had re-entered the hobby just after the Bergeron Wars had fried US fanzine fandom and reduced activity to a fraction of what it had been in the pre-War early 1980s. At first our ignorance of the details of the feud kept *Folly* totally divorced from any rehash of the sad story. By the time we knew the story, I could see the advantage of maintaining the No Topic A rule and by doing so made *Folly* a friendly fanzine that remained free of the feud that had sapped everyone's energy.

Fandom had reclaimed me, but Joyce remained hesitant. She felt something was still missing. With a few months out for my cataract surgery, we started to look for signs of a local fandom and failed to find any sign of a group. At one bookstore, The Amber Unicorn, my inquiry about a science fiction and fantasy club brought loud, derisive comments from the clerk, who seemed to regard it as a horrible possibility on a par with a local chapter of NAMBLA.

In the end, the fan network came through for us. The nearly Gafia Mike Glicksohn saw a mention of a local convention in Las Vegas, added news of our return to activity and came up with the erroneous conclusion that Joyce might be running such an event.

My return explained that we had met no local fans, but thanked him for putting us on the right trail. The blurb (from Andy Porter's *SF Chronicle*) gave the name Sean White and a phone number.

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Now Joyce's fannish hormones began to percolate. She sternly instructed me to call Sear White. He turned out to be mostly a gamer and not very interested in, or friendly toward, people who liked "that sci-fi stuff." With more than a little cajoling, aided by professional interviewing skills, I wrung a name and phone number from his reluctant lips.

Joyce's eyes blazed with the light of Trufandom as she told me to call the science fiction couple, Ken and Aileen Forman right then and there. Since it was past 9:30 by the time we had fully digested this exciting news, I suggested we postpone the call until the next day so we could ring these total strangers at a more civilized hour. We had kinky fan sex that night.

Since I knew nothing about them, I had no idea what a "civilized hour" might be. I decided on 11 AM. That exhaustively chronicled conversation marked the first contact between a brand new club called SNAFU and Fandom. It turned out to be an uncivilized hour for the Formans, both of whom worked nights, but Ken persevered through clouds of sleep and the Katzes were set to make their local debut.

I hadn't seen Joyce so excited about our social life in years as she counted the days until the meeting. Her enthusiasm was so contagious that I even published a special fanzine, *Glitter #1*, with articles relating to our move to Vegas and search for local fandom, to pass out at the meeting.

The SNAFFU meeting was both more and less than we hoped. Joyce and I both gravitated toward Ken and Aileen, and we also started to get to know Peggy Burke and Laurie Yates, but a lot of the others didn't even show polite interest in the newcomers. Some were gamers with absolutely no interest in anything except games, while a few were just xenophobic and paranoid.

Joyce and I had discussed this possibility and were prepared for it. Whereas some might've contested for leadership or attempted to assert themselves as Authorities, Joyce and I took almost the opposite approach. Right from the start, we backed Ken and Aileen to the hilt and tried to show that we were good local fans in addition to our participation in the larger fandom outside Clark County.

Most disappointing was the news, mentioned by Ken in a subsequent phone call, that this had been the last regular meeting of the club for almost three months. Ken explained that no one would want to have a meeting in the summer, so they were stopping in early June with an eye toward re-starting after Labor Day. Oh, how I yearned to tell him he was wrong, wrong wrong – and oh, how I bit my tongue.

Instead, Joyce announced that, since no one from Las Vegas Fandom seemed to be going to Worldcon, we would have something she called a "Noncon" over the Labor Day weekend. It turned out

to be the largest fan-run event ever held in Las Vegas up to that time with close to 50 fans (including a few prospects) cavorting around Toner Hall, playing Marco Polo in the pool and groping each other in the Jacuzzi.

I also set up my Macintosh for a oneshot. I typed up a sheet of suggestions for how to do it, wrote the first section and then encouraged the guests to give it a try. At first they avoided getting too close to the machine, lest it suck them into its digital maw, but eventually Laurie Yates sat down and typed something. After her show of bravery did not result in lightning striking her dead on the spot, others gave it a try, too. Sooner there were several pages of material and a short line to participate.

The party led to the monthly Socials, Joyce's expert blending of Vegas socializing and genuine fanac. They ran monthly for five years and attracted as many as 100 people to graze her sumptuous buffet, chatter, play in the pool and Jacuzzi, write for the oneshot (renamed *The Vegas All Stars* with its second issue) and carouse until the wee hours of Sunday morning.

The Socials were great for bringing in new fans and exposing them to actual fanac. As much as we enjoyed hosting on the grand scale, we also wanted to foster a sense of closeness and group unity. The only way to do that was to start a small club. Like the Saturday People and the Brooklyn Insurgents, Las Vegrants followed the Fanoclast template. It worked as well in Las Vegas as it had been in St. Louis and New York.

Since the Socials used the third Saturday in the month, we put the Vegrants meeting on the first Saturday. That way, neither interfered with SNAFFU, which used the second and fourth Fridays.

The Vegrants quickly began to assemble the cast of characters that became so well known through *Wild Heirs*, including, Ken & Aileen Forman, Tom and Tammy Springer, Ben & Cathi Wilson, Ray & Marcia Waldie, Marcie McDonald, Ross Chamberlain, Bill & Laurie Kunkel, Marc Cram Ron & Raven Pehr, Peggy Burke and Woody Bernardi.

Wild Heirs wasn't a beginning; it was a culmination of the rising interest in fanzines and fandom among the locals. Since Vegas didn't have a stratum of older, experienced fans, the locals spontaneously embraced fans like that from outside the city. And when they fastened onto a fan, Joyce and I would be right there with anecdotes, fanzine readings and such to strengthen the bond.

This soon led to Vegas crafting its own alumni group – Jack Speer, Art Widner, Charles Burbee, Bill Rotsler, Chuch Harris, Ted White and rich brown. Once the Vegrants felt the bond with these BNFs, they wanted to reach out to them with a fanzine and the group began work on *Wild Heirs*.

All this friendship and fanac completely revived Joyce's interest in fandom and she became a frequent, and stellar, contributor to *Wild Heirs* and started a FAPA-genzine called QUANt Suff, a dual tribute to her favorite science fiction writer Alfred Bester and her fannish model Lee Hoffman.

Joyce had always said that she'd divorce me if I made any noise about bidding for a worldcon or Westercon. I had no urge to do either, so con-running did not dent our marital harmony.

After we attended Corflu in LA in 1991, her attitude softened. We went to several more Corflus and, with each one, Joyce warmed to the idea of doing one in Las Vegas. She wanted to entertain her long-time fan friends and yearned to show them Toner Hall and the all-night city that is Las Vegas.

We floated the idea and got very positive feedback. We announced our desire to host Corflu Vegas in '95 a good deal before the 1994 con. Tom Becker also wanted to host a con, but he graciously stepped back when the groundswell for Vegas became evident. Tom is one of Fandom's true gentlemen, a model of adult, reasonable behavior (and I am glad he's getting to put on Corflu in '05).

Joyce demonstrated a unique approach to Corflu Vegas. For her, it took the place of the Bar Mitzvahs and Bas Mitzvahs and Sweet 16 parties and weddings that we would never have the pleasure of hosting.

Her vision for Corflu was unclouded by any need to make the books balance. Instead, she focused on the results she wanted to achieve. Opulent hospitality became the hallmark of the con, including a Barbeque Feast and a Deli Lunch, which raised the hospitality bar for all future Corflus.

The Formans, the Wilsons, the Springers, the Waldies and other Vegrants supported Corflu Vegas very strongly. Aileen reigned benignly over the con suites, seconded by Cathi, and the guys did mammoth amounts of grunt work and also kept things perking along through the whole weekend.

Corflu Vegas is a good example of how Joyce and I work together in fandom (and in life). We each took responsibility for specific areas and let the other person deal with their responsibilities. Joyce dealt with the hotel, tracked memberships and worked with Aileen and Cathi to make up the shopping list for supplies, while I handled all the publications including the Fanthology and several Vegas fanzines we were aiming at the con, and put together the program.

Her most recent fanzine fanac, *Smokin' Rockets*, represents some new directions in graphics and distribution while preserving her good-humored Insurgentism. Alan White, perhaps the best fanzine art director working today, has provide her fanzine with a visual unity and panache that goes very well with her

assortment of essays, humor and faan fiction.

Few fans have made greater contributions to fandom than the inimitable Joyce Worley Fisher Katz. She has hosted three major fan clubs in as many cities, chaired a Worldcon and a Corflu, published memorable fanzines including *Potlatch* and *Odd*, written innumerable fine articles and columns, served as President of FAPA and won its annual Egoboo Poll, co-chaired the BBB Fund and maintained her brand of laid-back Insurgentism in good times and bad.

Joyce doesn't shrink from the labels "elitist and snob," but she puts a highly individualistic spin on such terms. What she means is that she is utterly devoted to her friends. She believe that in a world with limited time, the best way to spend it is with the people about whom she cares the most.

Joyce believes in the tribal nature of fanzine fandom, but she is more dubious about the Balkanized and diverse group of hobbies and interests that now clustered under the umbrella of Science Fiction Fandom. Her interests are wide-ranging, in and out of fandom, but she is most at ease with those who have a community of interest, who are part of the fanzine fan subculture. When she writes and publishes, she sees the faces of her friends and her writing is often written with these friends in mind.

She never hedges about her belief in the fan philosophy of Insurgentism. She embraces the concept of the most possible fun with the least possible rules. She has been the director of a formal club (OSFA in St. Louis), but she is more at home with the informality of the Vegrants.

Best of all, she is still going strong, creating essays and fanzines to entertain her friends and delight all of fanzine fandom.

—Arnie Katz



The Second Vegas NonCon

The 24th consecutive Social on July 10 was special, not just because it marked two years of these monthly gatherings at our house, but because of out of town visitors.

That's one of the side benefits of moving to Las Vegas: we get a lot of company. It's a natural stop-over for friends and family traveling cross-country, and there's hardly a P.R. person in electronics who won't jump at a chance to spend time in Vegas. We get a fairly steady stream of the latter, who come to see the Electronic Games staff on our own turf, and there've been a gratifying number of friends.

Linda and Ron Bushyager mentioned at Corflu that they'd be here for the Video Software Dealers Assn convention, so we set the date of the July Social to coincide with their visit.

Then we got word that Cora & Burb would be back that weekend as well, so we decided to go all out. Arnie ran off some fliers announcing the event as Las Vegas' Second Non-Con (the first had been Labor Day 1991, the first Social). He named Ron & Linda as TruFan GoHs, and the Burbee's as Insurgent GoHs of the event.

Ken Forman volunteered to handle the barbecue pit. We had a nice Sears grill installed the summer after we moved to Vegas. Trouble is, I'm so terrified of propane that I have to screw up my courage to light the thing, and I usually end up cooking inside.

One of these days I want to get it switched to natural gas, so it'll be less daunting. But Ken took care of the whole thing, then did a grand job of grilling burgers and dogs for the gang, while I shepherded the rest of the food through the kitchen. Ended up

with rather a lot, since others carried in generous bounty.

It was one of the large Socials. These events range from a low of 30-40 people, to a high of 70, even 80. We'd spread the word of our visiting stars, so turnout was high this time. And, once they arrived, there was quite a lot going on, between the cooking inside and out, the swimmers, fortune tellers, con planners, computer, video and board gamers, and one-shotters.

This was sort of a mixed blessing. It was great fun, but there was so much eddy and swirl that I didn't actually get to talk much to anyone until the crowd thinned out around 1 a.m. I often find that I enjoy most the final two or three hours, right at the end of these affairs. But, by that time Ron and Linda, and their friend Bill Cavin and two others whose names I don't recall, had gone back to the Strip. My chat with them in the car represented the most time I spent with them that night, which was kinda disappointing.

The Burbees, too, admitted they'd have enjoyed a smaller crowd more. It would have allowed them to spend more time with the fanzine fans in the group.

As it was, I fear they felt alone in the crowd, particularly during the time that I was involved with food preparation and Arnie was setting up the one-shot. Next time they come, which they predicted would be in October, we'll make their party a gathering of the pubbers, instead of the whole group.

Caveats aside, it was a fine gathering, a celebration of two full years of Socials with Vegas Fandom. As I studied the crowd, I realized just how much they've meant to me, and felt myself lucky to be here.

How LeeH, ShelVy & Max Shaped My World

Do I know Lee Hoffman? You better believe it! In fact, I've known LeeH for almost fifty years; she's been an important fixture in my life for the entire half century.

Not that we've hung out together, or been best friends, or anything like that. Heck, I guess we've only been in the same place at the same time a half dozen times or so, if that. But LeeH's been in my life in that peculiar way that fans are, and my fan life has been interlaced with hers all the way through. In a way, I owe her everything...her, and ShelVy, Walt and the two Bobs, and Max.

It started late in the summer of 1956. Duggie Fisher and I had been married just about a month when he asked me, "Do you read Science Fiction?" (He capitalized the letters when he spoke; I could tell this was important to him.)

"What's Science Fiction?" I asked naively. Actually, I had read a little Science Fiction, mostly in the Saturday Evening Post. But I'd never heard the entire genre lumped together that way.

Duggie turned pale and commanded, "Come with me!" My deficiency in knowledge of scien-

tification hit him like I'd confessed to a series of ax murderers in my family tree, or reoccurring cannibalism.

This was an obvious failing on my part that had to be corrected immediately or the world would collapse. From the way he acted, the Science Fiction Police were likely to appear any moment to cleave apart what God and the Reverend Chester B. Pillow had joined together.

He led me into his sanctum sanctorum, his holiest of holy, the Fisher Family Attic. It was reached through a steep and narrow stairway, made smaller and darker by boxes of aging clutter sitting on the steps, waiting to be transported up into the gloom. At the top of the stairs, the tight room under the eaves was stuffed with old furniture, clothing, discarded restaurant equipment, and unrecognizable piffle cast off by the Fishers during the previous 30 years.

He dragged me down a narrow corridor formed by stacks of boxes, until we reached a tiny chamber encircled by the debris. There, concealed from casual gaze, was a carpeted area about 4 by 6, with an old sofa, two rickety chairs and a couple of lamps. And on every side, extending as far under the eaves as I could see, there were bookshelves containing his Collection. I had found his Most Precious, his Dearly Beloved, his



How LeeH, ShelBy and Max Shaped My Life II

Soul

He spent that afternoon pulling out one book after another, and assigning me short stories. It was years before I realized that he was picking the best flowers of the field. That afternoon I read **Nightfall**, and **Adam With No Eve**, and **Killdozer**. When we finally descended the stairs, slapping away the dust and paper shards, I was a convert.

That evening, sitting in the living room under a circle of golden light, he started telling me about fandom. The funny thing is, he'd told me about **Odd**, back when I was 13 and visiting with his sister. But the message hadn't really sunk in at that time. I've always wished it had; I would love to have entered fandom in 1952-53. But now, in 1956 going-on '57, I heard him loud and clear.

He handed me a stack of zines to browse, starting with his own **Odd**. I went through them with fascination. But almost immediately, I noticed something: I found the book reviews and quasi-scientific columns to be intolerably boring. The part I liked, and the things I searched for, were the letters. In them I discovered that **Odd** owed its life to Shelby Vick, who sent a dime for the first issue and thus inspired Dug to continue publishing. I saw how it had gone from a couple of hectographed sheets to a fair-sized mimeographed rag of a zine with lots of contributors. As I went through the zines he handed me, I spotted tidbits that made sense to me, people commenting about each other and each other's writings. I learned quickly to skim for the high spots and skip the reviews: after I looked at the Ray Nelson cartoons, read the letter column, and hunted for recognizable names, I'd move on to another zine.

Max Keasler came over that evening, and saw me combing through the stack. He fueled the fire by pushing his own to the top, **Opus** and **FanVariety**. Well, of course, that started it in earnest. I met LeeH there, visited with ShelVy, laughed at Tucker's and Bloch's high jinx, and started my life long admiration of Walt.

While I was reading, Max and Duggie were filling me in about the people whose names I was beginning to know. They had a lot to say about LeeH; Max had actually met her once or twice. It was clear to me that they both had a bit of a crush on this southern flower. "I hear she's real pretty," said Dug, prompting Max. "Oh, sure...pretty. A Nice Girl," Keasler pronounced. And the two of them explained how she'd earned her fan credentials just like any guy, without relying on her femininity to get contributions and support for her zine. Right then and there I started my one-woman admiration club of this paragon, and determined to try to be like her in method even if I couldn't manage her magic.

Quandry was easy to like. There's probably not a person reading this who won't agree: it was light and

witty, almost breezy. There was lots of air in the layout, and unpretentious cartoons on almost every page. Best of all was the banter passing between the half-dozen names I knew. It was clear to me, right from that very day, that I had stumbled into a society of literati who communicated with letters and fanzines, an inviting circle of friendly spirits who teased and taunted each other, even though it was clear they were fond of one another. I knew from that moment that fandom was for me.

In the next half dozen or so years, there were many evenings, many stories of fandom from Max and Duggie. And, I met the rest of the old Poplar Bluff club, William Holmes, Don and Bill Jacobs, and Jackie Dean Clark who had published a carbon paper zine. They were all gaffates, but they all spoke fondly of fandom, and acted like they'd go back just any day...but they never did, of course.

Even though I'd lost my heart to fandom, I didn't become part of it for a long long time after that. I tried to make contact several times, but never found an active fan, until years later when I met Jim Hall in a St. Louis bookstore.

The last time I saw Max Keasler was at his house one New Years Eve early in the '60s. The whole bunch of them were there, and they talked about science fiction, and space conquest, and fandom. Duggie and I had to leave early because we were driving back to St. Louis the next morning. When we left, they were all toasting fandom and each other, drinking flaming vodkas, while the operatic Bill Holmes belted "The Flight of the Die Valkyrie".

Later that same spring, Max had a toothache and went to a dentist, and died just a week or so after... some kind of cancer grabbed him away all too soon. Jackie Dean Clark became a schoolteacher, and I lost track of him. Don Jacobs became well known in the Bay Area preaching under the name "Moby Whale"; and his brother Bill died of The Good Life this spring, choking on a bite of steak until he was brain-dead. And of course, Duggie died about 15 years ago. Bill Holmes and I are the only ones left of the old Poplar Bluff crew.

But if you go there, you'll still find their shades up in the Fisher's attic, and they're still chuckling over the dusty old fanzines. They're still talking about LeeH and how she fooled everyone into thinking she was a guy, and Max is still saying, "Pretty, yes....a Real Nice Girl."

I didn't actually meet LeeH until 1967 when I attended NyCon2. And she was just like I knew she'd be, still part of that fun that started so long before. She had the good grace to remember the Poplar Bluff guys, to smile sadly when we talked of Max, to laugh softly about the rest of them. A pretty lady, a Real Nice Girl -- and in my opinion, the number one fem-mefan in the whole fan world.

Chester Malon

A Neo for All Fandoms

The cat won't come out of the garage. He's been there since morning, and nothing I've done can coax him inside. He's hidden away behind a wall of boxes, in a nest that's out of sight. But I know he's there; when I call, I hear tiny little moving noises.

It's as if he knew that today would be a Vegrants meeting, and he's letting us all know he can do without our company. Although he likes me, my company isn't worth putting up with the rest of the world, and he's retreated out of it.

Of course, it may just be that he read the notice I left lying on the table, that it's time for his rabies vaccination. He's cooling his heels, hoping to outwait that threat.

I recognize what he's doing, because I've had other, less furry, friends who did much the same when threatened with pricks from the arrows of outrageous fortune. They just hid themselves from view until all the danger passed.

Fandom has its fair share of crazy mixed up people. Not me or you, of course. But it seems like every fan group has at least one member who goes over the top at some point or other, and then hides out 'til the smoke clears.

Among the regulars of St. Louis fandom was one Chester Malon. Skinny and high-keyed, he possessed the energy of ten, and the bad ideas of a hundred.

I have no idea how Chester stumbled into fandom. He was a monster movie fan, so the odds are that he made the connection through one of the other movie fans in the group.

Once he joined the Ozark Science Fiction Asso-

ciation (OSFA), he threw himself into science fiction, collecting, fanzine reading and all the other activities of the group.

Almost from the first organizational meeting, OSFA had aimed itself at hosting a convention. Ozarkon was planned to be a small friendly convention of the old type -- one room with a few huckster tables at one end, a small milling area, and seats facing the podium at the other end of the meeting room. Not an ambitious plan; not much than could go wrong.

Among the entertainments would be movies. Rich Wannan owned a projector, and prints of some Flash Gordon episodes, as well as "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari". (That may not be spelled right, but I'm among friends...) Chester was enthusiastic about the plan, and offered help.

We also planned a large con-suite party every night, and Chester jumped right in and offered to help stock it with booze and bites.

Being Smart Fans, if not experienced, we also realized there'd need to be some hotel liaison, some set-up work, various welcoming duties....a light schedule by large convention standards, but nonetheless duties that must be done. Chester volunteered, of course.

In fact, Chester was so eager for the event, that he begged to be made co-chairman of the convention. He made plans to appear at the hotel early on the morning of the Big Day, to be Chester-on-the-spot for convention-related duties, emergencies, and all-round helpfulness.

Chester, a high-strung kind of guy with a metabo-

Chester Malon: A Neo for All Fandoms II

lism about like a NASCAR racer, was geared for action. From the week before, the convention was his entire focus -- preparation and plans totally dominated him.

On the day Ozarkon 1 started, he called early in the morning to let us all know that he was ready; he was able. He was heading down to the hotel that minute, and the world was safe in his hands.

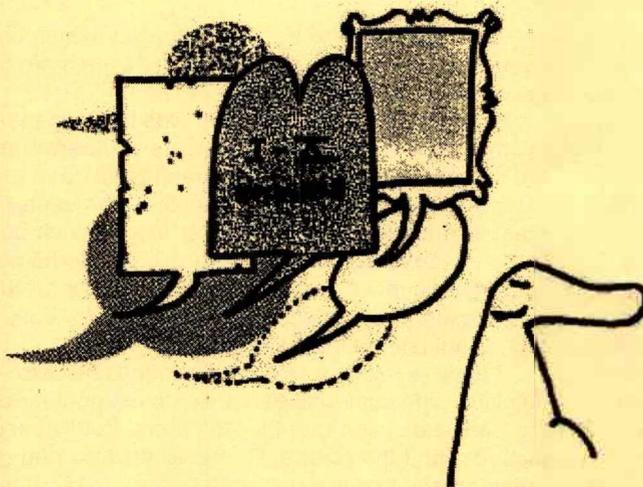
A few hours later, we went downtown to the hotel to start the festivities. Rich Wannan was busily setting up his projector; Hank Luttrell was helping our one out-of-town huckster unpack. (Camille Cassadesus, of Burroughs fandom fame, brought a carload full of wares through, and won our lasting thanks for being the huckster of the hour...but that's another story.) Jim and Dave Hall, Ron Whittington, and Bob Schoenfeld were setting up chairs and podium, and outfitting the con suite.

There was already one major problem. The city picked that day to do some roadwork right in front of the hotel. The unfortunate result is that the water was cut off. Someone had to do some major cajoling, cursing, threatening, and entreatments to get the water on before our Guest of Honor, Ted White and wife Robyn, woke up and wanted a bath. (I don't think we quite made it, but the emergency was solved early in the afternoon.)

But where was Chester? He hadn't appeared; none of the working crew had seen him since their arrival at the hotel.

For all that day and the next, we worried and fretted about Chester. Was he lost? Had he met with some ill fortune? Sunday evening, as the convention closed down, and the crews packed up the mess, he was still gone.

Monday Ron Whittington brought us the answer.



VOICES FROM THE PAST

It seems Chester had reached the hotel and immediately met a girl he knew. Every thought of fandom and the convention and his duties flew out of his mind... the rest is obvious.

When Chester finally showed his face again, we asked him why he did that. "How could you leave your friends hanging like that? How could you back out on something you'd been planning for months?"

He stammered and stuttered, and finally blurted it out: "It seemed like a good idea at the time. Besides, I knew you'd all understand."

Since then, I've seen something similar happen at almost every convention I've ever attended.

Oh, sure, we all understood. And yes, we were friends again. But the next year when, believe it or not, Chester again asked to head up the convention committee, we didn't even bother to explain why we wouldn't consider it.

Chester worked hard toward St. LouisCon, too. He was so excited about the worldcon; his whole life revolved around the plans. He and Ron Whittington actually published a fanzine to aid the bidding effort.

Aargh!! was an unusual first fanzine. It had fairly good reproduction, wasn't double-spaced, and was published on both sides of its pages. It consisted of a long piece of fan fiction about a twisted conspiracy to deprive St. Louis of the bid, which all played itself out in the Caves of St. Louis.

Although it's not widely known, the reason that beer brewing is so big in St. Louis is the existence of a large fresh-water supply, and underground caves beneath the city where the beer vats used to be stored in coolness to age.

The cavers in our group assured us that the caves were completely uninteresting except for their potential for storage, but Chester and Ron built quite a mythos around them.

He had agents from Columbus Ohio, the city we were bidding against, hiding in the caves, building vast armies to march against OSFA and destroy our plans.

The fanzine is now lost, all but forgotten. But don't try to find it.

No one was more enthusiastic than Chester when the bid was won. When we made plans for the all night movies, he threw himself into it.

I'm sure I don't need to tell you that, by the time St. Louiscon happened, Chester had gaffiated. He missed the convention, the movies, and what (if any) egoboo might have drifted his way if he'd attended.

Ron Whittington tells me he still bumps into Chester every few years. He's still wildly enthusiastic about whatever new idea crosses the horizon...and he's still never carried through on any plan he's ever made.

Midwestern Trilogy

Part One: Why I Became A Fan: Heart's Made of Glass

Growing up in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, there were no theme parks, amusement parks, nor any form of standing recreational area. Instead, we looked forward to the one or two traveling carnivals that came through town each year.

That was before the end of the great traveling groups that crisscrossed the Midwest. Later, they dwindled into insignificant little parking-lot shows. But in the good ole days, there were midways, freak shows, exotic dancers, peep shows, and all sorts of wonderful spectacles otherwise pretty much unknown in Tom Sawyer Country.

My interest in carnivals went far beyond the rides; those splendid brilliantly lit wheels of terror (and nausea!) I loved it all: the scent of the greasy bubbling oil, the cotton candy, the sawdust under our feet. I always told my mother I wanted to run away with the carnival when I grew up; she dissuaded me with discussions of hygiene ("such dirty places; no provision for sanitation...")

None of her arguments affected my love of the troupes that traveled through town. In my eyes, their lives were glamorous, filled with travel, new places and people...and, yet, with a strong tie to their fellows. The carnival people were a family: even I could see that, and I admired and craved that sense of belonging they each seemed to have, despite their easy ways that swept them from one county to another, one state to the next, like birds flying from one field to another.

I never really got over my love for carnivals, even when the rides and midway had lost their appeal. It was my awareness of a special society they belonged to that kept dragging me back.

Later, when I read Quandry and FanVariety and some of the other fanzines of that period, I saw that same sense of family in the quips and banter between the fans who wrote for them. It fascinated me that they all knew each other. I believe that sense of family was what really attracted me to fandom, even more than my interest in artistic creation.

Becoming a fan was just my way of running away to join the carnival.

Carnivals used to have one special exhibit that, even now as I think of it, catches me even more than the ferris wheels.

In the center of the exhibits, was the coin-toss event. Stacks of glittering glassware were arranged in the center of the display: bowls and plates and tumblers and soup tureens, and usually in the center, one magnificent large cut glass piece, like a punch bowl or fancy candelabras. Surrounding this wonderful heap of shiny silicon was a fence, and a walkway for the coin-tossers. The object was simple: pitch a coin, and any dish it landed in was yours!

I believe my love of glassware goes back to those displays. The coin-toss event was most popular during the Depression (no, I wasn't there, but I've seen pictures) and the colorful Depression Glass and glittering pressed crystal were more shiny to me than gold.

Midwestrn Trilogy II

My entire love of collecting probably goes back to those stacks of glassware I never could possess, in whose shine I will always see the reflection of the carnival.

Part 2: A Visit To The Heartland: Daisy, Daisy, Tell Me The Answer Do

The whole world (well, at least the fannish part of it) knows that I'm a Cat Person; my yellow tomcats have been immortalized by Ross, Jay Kinney, Mickey Rhodes and Pam Janish; reported on by Arnie, and lovingly cataloged by me. But this very year I lost my heart to a dog named Daisy, and this story is about her.

I spent a few days in October away from my computerized world, visiting with my brother in St. Joseph, Missouri (home of the Pony Express, and jumping off place for The Mormon Trail.) A pretty little town (about 70,000 honest souls), it has lots of old time charm spread up and down the hilly streets. It's cuddled up to the East Shore of the Missouri River, just a mite north of where the Platte comes in. I liked it a lot; it wasn't quite home, but very close.

When we entered the parsonage, Daisy sprang toward me snarling, baring her fangs, hair standing upright on her back. "Now, Daisy, you settle down," Earl reasoned with her, and she obediently backed off, while keeping me on point.

My sis-in-law was pinned down with a bad back; she'd picked up a piece of paper the week before and strained a muscle. Earl's probably the best cook in my family, and not a bad housekeeper, either, so the hospitality was fine, but it wasn't a good weekend for site-seeing. This actually worked well to my liking; when I visit folks, I'd rather sit and talk.

As we sat together, me on the loveseat and Earl in the rocker, while Marilyn lay on the sofa, Daisy eyed me menacingly, now and then growling low under her breath. "Daisy, you be still," Marilyn said, then told me, "Try not to look directly at her. She's funny; doesn't like strangers to look at her."

I obligingly looked away, while putting my hand down and patting her. "Good girl, good girl," I said, staring into the wallpaper.

"She really likes to be rubbed under her chin," Marilyn encouraged. So I sat rubbing this snarling behemoth under her chin, saying "Good dog," and wondering if

she'd let me live.

The conversation roamed freely; we'd not seen each other for 7 or 8 years. Earl's been preaching for 40 years or so, and we were disagreeing a lot even before he started in the ministry. But despite our very basic dissimilarities, we're kin, and have a lot of stances in common as well. It used to worry me, back when I was still in steady contact with him, that we didn't get along too well; in later years, it worried me some when Earl and I got along too well.

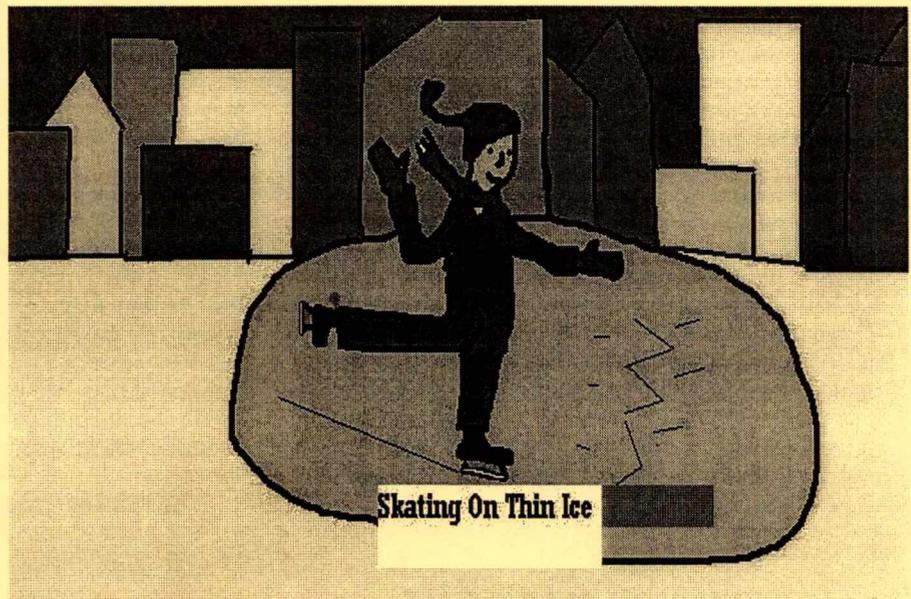
But by now, time, age, loss, death, disappointment—all the things that make people strive harder for wisdom—have restored us more to familial status; I suppose we try harder to understand one another now.

Perhaps that's why we found more points of agreement than usual. Earl's interests are more political than mine. I expected him to be religious; in his line of work, I'd be sad if he were not. But the depth of his political interests were a surprise. He sees bad intent and downright evil plot in many things I'd never even thought about. He's sure of conspiracies, where I see only coincidence. Yet we did find, to my surprise, many concerns in common. We both bemoaned the state of education. We both worried about the cost of medical expenses, the homeless, the disadvantaged. We found ourselves in similar stance on the plight of abandoned children.

Friday morning, Daisy eyed me with distrust, and complained that I was still on her turf. As we sat at breakfast, Daisy barred her fangs as I chucked her under her chin, 'good dog'ing her as I gazed through the window at the Missouri landscape.

My brother had some chores to do at the church, so I went along for the ride and my first look at St. Joe.

After a rolling tour of 19th Century architecture,





we came to his own church, a charmingly traditional stonework. I toured the Sunday School rooms, saw his office. Then while he did his duties, I sat in the small sanctuary, second pew center right in front of the preacher's podium, where Joanne, Tommie and I had always sat, like three no-evils, before I left religion behind. I browsed the hymnal--I liked the music best of anything back in the First Baptist Church of Poplar Bluff, and the short time passed comfortably as I read through my favorite old songs.

Daisy greeted us with a bark and a wag. She sniffed suspiciously at me, but let me pat her head. That night we brought in barbecue, good Missouri hickory smoked ribs and brisket and pork roast, made the old way, in a smoker, the way Pruitt, and Hayden, and Spencer used to do it back home. We gorged ourselves on this uncommon treat, and Daisy got her share, too.

Later in the living room, Earl brought out a bowl of candies, and we fed Daisy little bits from our fingers. Then she came and laid her head on my lap.

We watched Earl's slides from his most recent mission to Nepal--a primitive country where they still burn their wives; where orphans are cursed by the Hindu gods and therefore left unaided; where disease, poverty and cruelty are constant. He showed me the snapshots of himself and the six or seven other missionaries in Katmandu, and of Simon Peter, the Nepalese convert who'd taken 265 orphans, adopted them into his home, to feed and clothe them and raise them as Christians. Christianity was working out better for them than Hinduism had; shabby but clean clothes, scrubbed faces and little shy smiles peeped from behind every bush and post. Simon'd built bunk beds for them all, and they all ate two meals of rice and vegetables every day, with chicken or water buffalo meat two or three times a week.

Christianity was an illegal practice in Nepal until

last year; now it's permitted in a sort of dangerous and uneasy compromise. Conversions have been numerous -- 500 here, 600 there, a thousand somewhere else, and I asked my brother, "Why are they so eager to convert."

"For a better life; before they had no hope at all. Now they say, 'Even if I am killed, I will go to Heaven', so they try to live by the Golden Rule." He showed me the picture of a murderer, now converted and preaching against killing. He showed me a picture of a child, no more than 15 but small as a six year old, who was in a street gang, cutthroat and brutal, now baptized Christian, living indoors, eating regularly, loved by his adopted family.

The last morning, Daisy woke and greeted me. She brought her ball, and we played her strange game of keep away. "Let me have that ball," I'd say, and try to take it from her. She'd grip the ball in her teeth, then growl ferociously, as I put my hand into her mouth, secure and positive that she'd never bite. I'd pull and wrestle the ball, her hot breath and bare fangs against my fingers, until she'd give it to me. Then I'd toss it in the air and play that I'd keep it while she quivered waiting for me to toss it, happy in her faith that I'd give it back.

Paul, Earl and Marilyn's middle son, called that day. He's got an inoperable malignant brain tumor. The doctors said "There's nothing we can do; you'll die before October 1," but he's still feeling well and strong. There's no hope left but prayer, but their faith is unchanged. Marilyn told me, "Paul says he will be cured. Either here, or he will be cured in Heaven."

Paul believes the tumor has already stopped growing, maybe even gone away, and he's praying about whether he should stop all medication. He asked his mom and dad to pray that he'd have the wisdom to make the right decision, and to ask their congregation to pray for him too.

That night Daisy crawled into my lap and lay in my arms with adoring eyes fixed on my face. "I love you too," I told her. "Good girl, good dog."

There was a little spark within me that longed to stay with Daisy, to keep within that loving gaze, to never disappoint that adoring faith she had in my love for her.

And I wished with all my heart I could have explained why I must go away from her trusting love, back to my own home, my own life, my own pets.

Part Three: A Scary Story: Young Love

Ah, Halloween...that luscious season of mysterious costumes (mine usually ran heavily toward gypsies), adventure (it was the only time kids could Run Free without supervision), and danger (so much cheap candy to give us stomach aches on November 1.)

The last time I went trick or treating I dressed up

Midwestern Trilogy IV

in my Dad's old clothes and ragged slouch hat.

I knew I was actually too old to go around begging my neighbors for candy, but I was hunting for kicks. So I knocked on Karen's door. Her ma was already gone to work selling tickets down at the Strand Theater, and I could see the fear on Karen's face. "Here, take it!" she thrust the candy through the screen door, then slammed it shut and locked the door.

The next day, as we walked to school, she told me, "I had the most horrible trick-or-treater; he was a giant, over six feet tall, and had an evil look..." She went through the halls telling her story to our classmates over and over through that day, as I stood beside her smiling. I've never told her, to this day, that I was the one.

After that, Halloweens were given over to teen parties. In fact, my first date was to a Halloween wiener roast. It was a girls-ask-the-boys type of thing, and I was pretty shy. I ended by asking my third cousin to escort me.

Little Dickie Godwin developed a crush on me that very evening. He walked home with me and cousin Robert; the next day he called and asked me to a movie – my first Real date.

A couple of years later, I saw him again, swimming at Hillcrest Park, and I dive-bombed him. But I struck the edge of the pool as I leaped, and broke my little toe. It's still crooked.

Last week I got a newsletter from our class president, with all the news. Dean's cancer is in remission; Lyle has a heart; and Glenn is dead.

Glenn is dead. I wonder if Mary knows. Mary and I used to walk five blocks out of our way every day after school, to go past his house. When we got to his

block, Mary couldn't speak; her breath came in short frightening pants until we were past.

I don't believe Glenn ever knew that Mary loved him. So far as I know, they never spoke. Oh, once she came face to face with him in the halls, and stammered out a "Hi, Glenn" in high squeaky tones. We talked about it for months after: "Did I look alright; should I have held my books in my right arm or my left; was it ok for me to speak; did he notice me at all?" The evidence was he didn't notice.

She used to call his house, in that way of high school girls, and then hang up. He was never the one who answered the phone, but it eased her misery for just a moment to hear the air that he breathed.

I'm sure he never knew.

At that same Halloween Party, Karen invited Kenny, and they were an item for a while. But Karen started going with Cecil, and eventually they got married. Later, Joanne and Kenny dated in our senior year. They walked in the park in May, and blossoms fell from the trees into her hair, and they kissed. But he never called her again, though she waited by the phone all that summer, with a hurt and puzzled look on her face.

Kenny died a year or so after graduation; I guess that may have been his last date.

The last time I saw Joanne, she told me she'd seen Jesus and he told her, "Cover your face; you're about to have a car accident." So she covered her eyes, and the car crashed.

I said, "Perhaps if you hadn't covered your eyes while you were driving, there wouldn't have been a wreck." She looked at me with that same hurt and puzzled look, and I realized she had finally found love.

Art Credits

Front Cover: Alan White

Ross Chamberlain: 12, 30, 45

Joyce Katz: 17, 27, 34, 36, 38, 41

Bill Kunkel: 51

Bill Rotsler: 15, 18, 22, 23, 25, 28, 31, 46, 48

Alan White: 10, 42, 47, 49

Back Cover: Ross Chamberlain

My Somewhat True UFO Experience

Sure, I've seen one; hasn't everybody? It was back in 1949 or maybe it was 1951, in Poplar Bluff MO on a sunny summer afternoon.

Me and Charlotte and Caroline were playing with our dolls on the grassy bank in the Griffiths' front yard, the one we sometimes liked to pretend was our playhouse. Domestic bliss, which as I remember meant forcing our dolls to eat cookie crumbs and cups of tepid water, shattered when Larry Wilson rolled up on his scooter.

Larry usually played with us, but not when we were tea-partying it up with the dolls. Those days he'd tie a towel to his shoulders, then shadow punch numerous invisible assailants. We'd watch him fly around the yard until we tired of the dolls enough to give up the sissy stuff and go to the Wilsons' yard to play cops and detectives.

So it was a surprise to see him pumping the one-footer toward us.

"Did you hear what's going on," he shouted as he rolled to where we were playing. "There's a UFO in the sky!" With a flourish he pointed to the one o'clock position over our heads, and sure 'nuff, there it was. A shiny dot of

gleaming silver hung high above us. Soon all the neighborhood was standing outside, pointing to the speck and gabbling about what it meant.

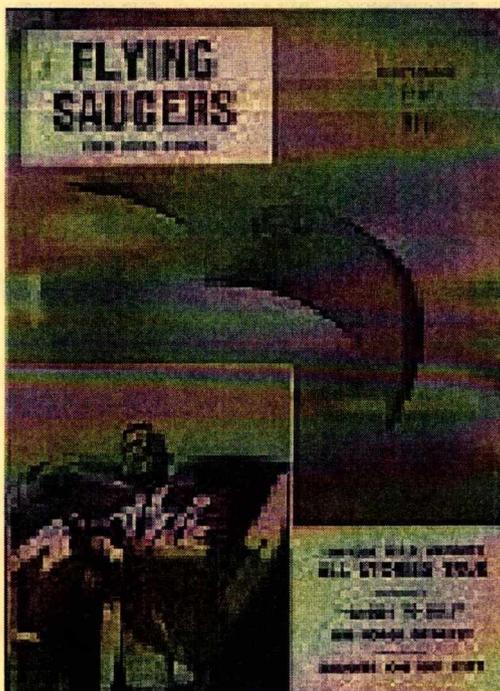
Eventually we all got tired of craning our necks. The speck didn't appear to be moving, and it wasn't coming any closer. Our mothers went back inside their houses. To accommodate Larry, and because

we were pretty tired of the dolls, we went to climb trees over in Miss Pauline's yard.

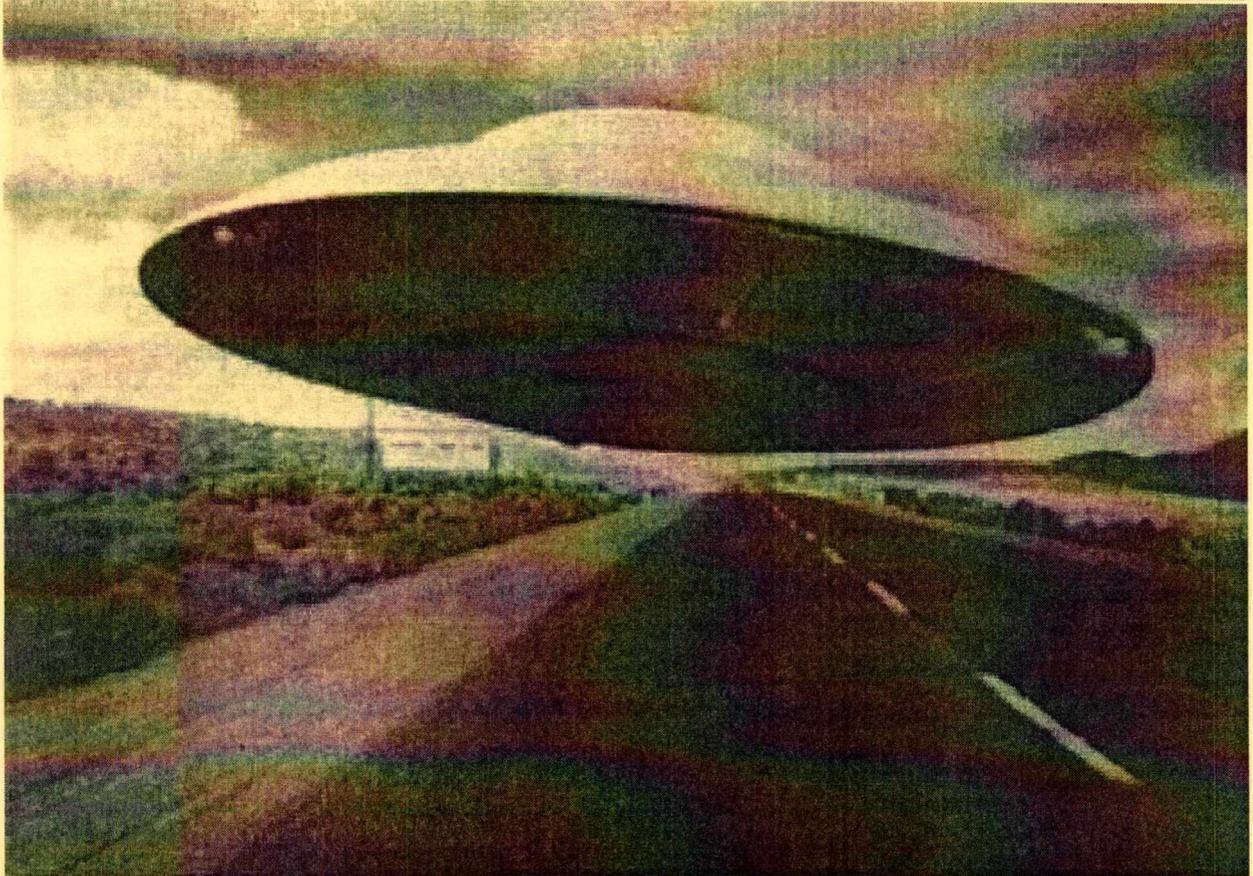
Later that afternoon, when the newspaper was delivered, we learned that it had been identified as a weather balloon by someone at the airbase at Paducah, Kentucky. They said it was one of theirs, drifted further west than usual because of unusual air currents.

That wasn't much of a UFO encounter. It was too difficult to see to care about, and explained too quickly to be mysterious. Traumatized by not having truly exciting UFOs to brag about, we returned to our kid world of tree houses and Superman.

It wasn't until 1956-7 that I heard the next part. Duggie Fisher told me that he saw that



My Somewhat True UFO Experience II



UFO, too, and that he in Poplar Bluff, Bill Homes in Williamsville, and Don Jacobs at Pilot Knob had triangulated its position, and judged it to be better than 30,000 feet high.

I was impressed. I'd never heard 'triangulated' used in a sentence before, and that convinced me he must be telling the truth.

And that wasn't the whole story. Pilot Don Sharp had taken a light plane up to have a look, but he couldn't get much above 5,000 feet, so had to give it up.

The incident attracted press coverage as far away as New York. Associated Press picked up the report from Poplar Bluff's paper. The further away the story got, the better it was. The best report was, as you'd expect, in the Times. It had, as behooves top reporting and prize-worthy editing, a lot of details.

The Times reported that a UFO had been sighted over the Ozarks, and that mathematicians had calculated that it was 150,000 feet above the ground.

The report continued: A fighter jet from the Malden Air Force Base attacked the UFO, and there was a blazing battle, jet versus saucer, streaking across the skies above the mountains.

But they didn't brag; they didn't say that the Malden Base had actually captured the UFO. The AF jet

inflicted damage, but had to return to base because it ran low on fuel, so the wobbling UFO was able to escape.

This was my first real lesson in why you shouldn't believe everything you read in print. Perhaps, in some small way, it was the reason I became a journalist. It taught me that it is possible to make truth better than fiction, with only a slight amount of embroidery.

But it was also my first and only UFO encounter. It wasn't much, but it's all I've got.



Rocking Out in St. Louis

Sometimes hobbies last forever. I've collected books all my life, for example. But sometimes hobbies pass as quickly as a summer storm, leaving only a little debris behind to be kept or cleared away as the mood strikes.

I don't know what makes interest wax and wane. It's as fickle as love, as unpredictable as a three-year-old's moods. One day it's there, burning bright and avid; the next it's gone. And there's about as much profit in trying to whip up new interest as there is in trying to fan flame back into a dead romance.

I used to have a closet stuffed with skeletons, my guilty secrets, my abandoned projects. Here, a glass cutting set; my actual output was a half-dozen

smashed wine bottles and one hideously jagged vase, until I coldly stuffed the apparatus into the back of the closet. There, a partially hooked rug and the wool that would never be used to finish it. A half-done embroidered scarf; a partially completed paint-by-number set. Stuffing for unfinished pillows, material for unmade dresses, lace for a lampshade I never trimmed.

I escaped the guilt by cleaning out the closet, and as easily as I gave away the unfinished projects, that how easily I shrugged away the hobby each represented.

Ray "Duggie" Fisher was similarly mercurial about hobbies and pastimes. I couldn't begin to list all the avocations he adopted and abandoned. Chemistry, rocketry, photography, and fires. Politics, gambling, astronomy and choirs.

Shortly after we moved to St. Louis, a new bug bit: rock hounding and the lapidary arts. As usual, he jumped in full-heartedly, impassionedly visiting every store in the Greater St. Louis Area to view specimens, marvel at the stones. We joined the St. Louis Rock & Mineral Club, and attended meetings faithfully. Weekends were spent crawling through quarries, or squatting in the gravel near charming riverbanks.

You might not know it, but Missouri is a gratifying area for rock hounding. Oh, we don't have the jade of Wyoming, or the gold of the Rockies. But there's some nice jasper, a lot of agate, and even occasional crystalline deposits.

In the St. Louis Area, there are geode formations that open to beautiful, if low-grade, amethyst forma-



Rocking Out in St. Louis II

tions. And, there's a spectacular geode that yields up Union Street Agate, called that because it was first found when builders blasted the roadway.

Over near Dexter, Missouri, there's terminal moraine, where the southern-most glacier finally melted, leaving its deposit of silt and stone. Lots of rock there, from god-knows-where.

We've also got the Mississippi. While it's providing the Midwest with its biggest wastebasket, it also is tumbling rocks downstream. In the area below the joining of the Missouri and Mississippi, you might find anything at all. Stones that end up on the banks are round and smooth from their journey: agate, jasper, obsidian...a treasure trove beneath the mud.

The hobby was intriguing. From my point of view, it was more involving than most of the things that captured Ray's interest. His brief flirtation with archery had whizzed by me; his passion for firearms was mer-

cifully brief; his romance with mathematics left me totally uninvolved. Rock hounding was better. I liked sitting on the riverbanks; the pictures of stones in his books were pretty to see.

And, there was always the tantalizing hope of jewelry, the glittering goal of all the mud-moshing.

As easily as we slipped into the hobby of rock hounding, we eased out of it into the more focused passion for lapidary skills and equipment.

We started with a diamond rock saw, an expensive and sizeable venture. Ray set it up on the desktop in the kitchen, and soon the room was covered with chips and sand, as he began to slice stone.

Obviously we needed a polishing wheel to turn the raw slaps of rock into paperweights.

To tell the truth, all this was hard work. Ray was into it, but it took a great deal longer to slice a rock than he liked, and it was even harder to polish one.

That's when we bought the first tumbler, a small quart-sized hopper that rotated its load of pebbles to smooth them to a sheen. It worked... it turned over and over, sloshing the gravelly mixture with rhythmic beat. But again, it was damnably slow, and he wanted better.

That's when we decided to spend the big bucks and go for the vibrating tumbler. This was a beautiful instrument, all steel and polish, seated on rubber legs that gripped the desktop.

Ray bought a load of high-grade stone at the rock hound store, and loaded it up with water and the gritty polishers. A flip of the switch and it began to chuckle. Then it settled down to a shimmy which, we were told, would in one week produce highly polished nuggets of jewel quality.

That evening we noticed that the desk was shimmying, but we didn't give it a thought.

The next morning, the shimmying seemed visible throughout the whole room, shaking the paintings on the wall.

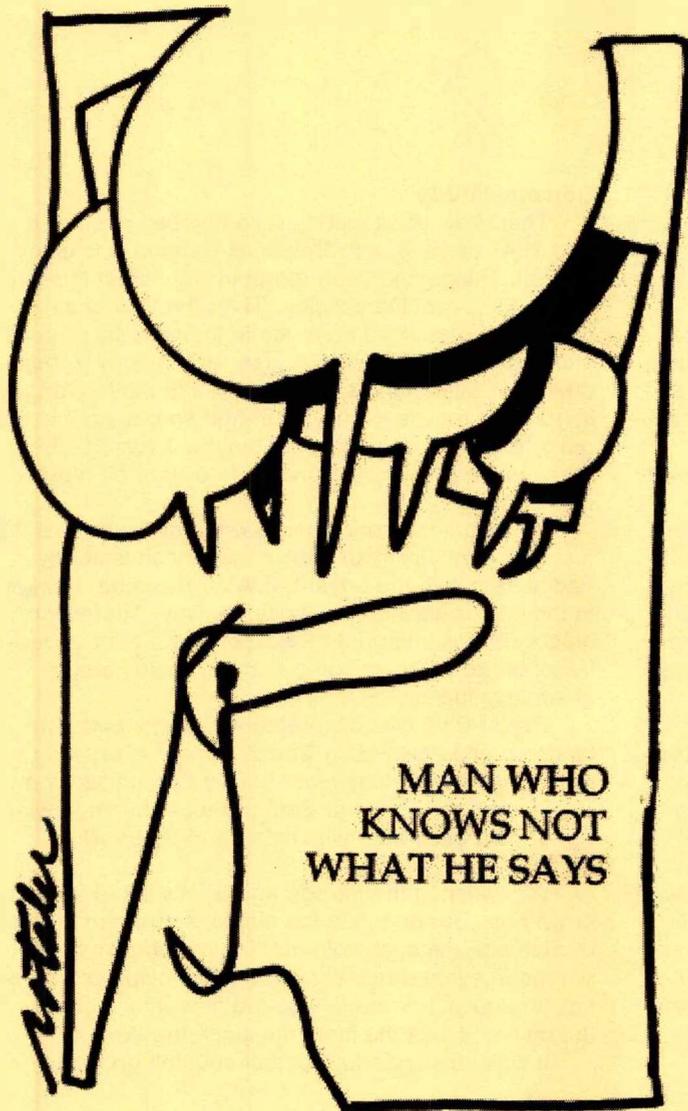
When we got home from work that afternoon, the woman from the apartment below us was talking to the landlord on the porch. "I don't know what happened. All of a sudden, the entire ceiling caved in."

Quietly, quickly, we walked up the stairs and flipped the switch, turning off the vibrating tumbler.

That ended our excursion into the lapidary arts.

I still have a few polished stones, my booty from the affair. But we never told any of the neighbors about the tumbler.

Eventually we sold the lapidary equipment and used the money as a down payment on a printing press, so we could publish ODD. So, you can really say that we rock hounded our way into fandom.



Guise & Dolls

It must have been Christmas 1948 when I was nine years old. It could have been 1947, but I can't tell for sure, so I'll say 1948. Yet it might have been 1947 when I was eight. It's not too likely that it was 1946, although there is just a chance....

I was getting to be a big girl. I had already lost most of my interest in dolls, although I faithfully cared for my little family. I dutifully arranged their dresses, and saw that they were bedded down each night snug and warm.

Yet my heart wasn't in it — I preferred roller skating along the sidewalks of our neighborhood, or climbing trees with Larry Wilson, the boy next door. Charlotte and Carolyn Griffith, the two little girls who lived in the house on the other side, still liked to play house, so I'd drag out Emily, my favorite, for an afternoon of Little Mothers. But I'd rather have a tea party, or play a game. And if I was alone, I was beginning to develop an interest in reading.

Ed, my older brother, had been a reader, too, so I gradually grew into the bookshelf of Tom Swift, Jack London adventures, and Tom Sawyer. On rare occasions, I'd be gifted with a new book, such as *Shepherd of the Hills*, *Black Beauty*, or *A Lantern in Her Hand*.

The funny thing was, my mother just hated to see my Doll Days pass. I was her youngest child, and I suppose she saw the way I was cooling toward them, and realized it was the end of an era for her. After about 20 years of raising her family, with the steady stream of baby dolls and crying dolls and rag dolls, she dreaded the end of it all.

Downtown Day

That year, and I just can't remember whether it was 1947 or 1948, the Christmas Season was extra special. Things had been rough in Southeast Missouri during the Great Depression. Then the War came along, and that didn't do much to improve life on a 40 acre dirt farm. Toys were scarce, and money to buy them was even harder to come by. We moved to town in 1944, or maybe it was 1945, and very gradually, life got a little easier. By 1947, or maybe it was 1948, there was a little more money and quite a bit more merchandise.

It was a good year, whichever year it was. For the first time in my lifespan (which very inconveniently had started with the advent of WWII) we had a turkey in the icebox waiting for Christmas Day. There were stacks of presents under the tree, and a general feeling of better things to come had put smiles on the grownups' faces.

Poplar Bluff was decorated with lights and garlands up and down Main Street. Almost everybody turned out the Monday night before Christmas for a parade and the arrival of Santa Claus. The shop windows were decorated with lights and Wonderful Things.

We watched the parade and then walked up and down Main Street to see the displays. I remember the excitement, the crisp cold burning my cheeks as we peered in every window, admiring the displays of trinkets and toys. For me, it was the first time....and for the others, it was the first time since the War.

It was so wonderful, we just couldn't go home

Guise & Dolls II

even though it was well past my bedtime. But I wanted to see everything, every store in town...and Mother must have felt the same, because we walked all the way down Main Street to the part where we never went. We rushed past the town's pool hall, eyes discreetly averted, to visit the sporting goods store on the end of the block.

I'd never been there before....there was that pool hall next door, you know...and I was fascinated by the displays of tackle boxes and hip high boots and camping gear. I was especially enthralled by the beautiful fishing lures, and hung over the counter to examine every single one. Mother told me to stay there, she'd be right back, then she went to the far end of the store and started examining the shoeboxes stacked there.

I really liked those fishing lures. In fact, I still do, and have one or two around here that I keep for no other reason than that I fancy them. I knew there'd be a pair of house slippers under the tree for me, and wasn't particularly interested in watching Mother pick them out; I was perfectly content to study the lures and flies.

Snow

The week passed in blissful playtime. School was out, and there was snow on the ground; we kids spent every possible minute outside. My brothers and the older kids on the block had brutal snowball fights every day, while we littler kids tried to stay out of range. We spent our time making snowmen, lying in the snow to make snow angels, and sledding down the easy streets.

Fifth Street, in front of my house, was a long gradual slope. On the other hand, Neat Street, which ran beside my house, was a steep incline. The big kids would throw themselves on their sleds, belly down, and hurtle down the incline at hair-raising

speeds. Charlotte, Carolyn, Larry and I sat upright, poised in prim safety as we tried to steer the sled.

One day my dad came outside to watch us play, and the snow must have triggered some childhood memories of his own, 'cause he dragged out a couple of shovels and showed us how to sit on the blade holding onto the handle in front of us. The shovel rides were wild uncontrolled careening trips that spun us and flung us down embankments in a dangerous thrill ride. Naturally we loved it, and spent hours tempting fate as our worried mothers wrung their hands.

The Turkey

There were still a lot of items that were hard to find; it took a few years for the world to get off its war footing. In 1946 (or was it '47?), turkeys were still scarce. The City Fathers somehow got their hands on a dozen live birds, and staged a Turkey Toss a few days before Christmas.

There were several hundred people gathered around the Court House, including my two brothers and me. Excitement was high; everyone hoped to catch one of the birds. The Mayor and his cronies had the birds in a cage, up on top of the Court House. At four stories, it was the tallest building in town, and the crowd craned necks trying to catch a glimpse of the desirable meat-on-the-roof.

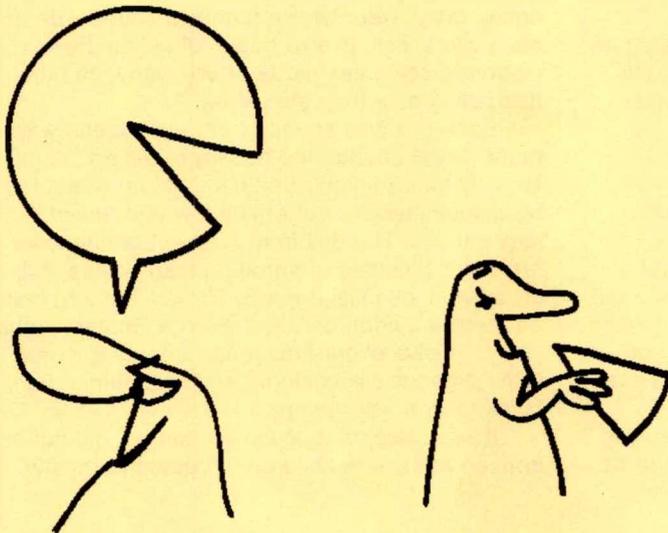
Finally, after what seemed like hours of waiting, they started throwing the birds from the roof to the crowd below.

Probably they thought the turkeys would fly. In fact, they fell like bombs on the waiting crowd. And it was ugly....a terrible scene, as people struggled to catch, were knocked down by, and in at least one case, actually tore a living bird apart as the mob tried to wrench them from each others hands.

My brother and I weren't even close to ground zero. I guess that was lucky for us. Even so, I was pushed to the ground by the surging crowd grappling for the birds. Trampled, my brother managed to pull me to my feet, and when we knew we were out of luck, we trudged home to tell Mother that we'd failed.

The entire turkey toss was such a disgrace that the city never staged another. There was a story about it on the front page of the paper that night, and it even mentioned me, saying "one small girl was thrown to the ground and trampled in the crush." My first brush with fame.

On the 23rd, Mother went to the grocery for our dinner supplies. Although she went to every store in town, even to the farmer's stores on the other side of the river, there wasn't a turkey to be had. Disappointed, she settled for a couple of fat hens.



On the way home, she swung by my grandpa's house to visit with her father. Grandpa and Gramma divorced many years before, and Grandpa had a second wife and a second family of five children, half brothers and sisters to my mother. Their ages ranged from 16 to just about my age.

While the grownups talked, we kids played. My halfuncles and aunts were in a high state of excitement about Christmas; the first thing they did was take me into the back, to an unheated room to look inside a laundry tub where their own turkey chilled, wrapped in brown butcher's paper. Every few minutes one or the other of them would leave our games to peer at the package in the washer; whispering their anticipation of their first turkey dinner.

Eventually Mother called me from play, and we drove across town to our own home. Something was troubling her, and she told me that Grandpa had traded her the turkey, taking just one of the hens in exchange. She said he insisted; had said 'he didn't care for turkey much anyhow.'

A Sidebar

For all my life, and now I'm over sixty, this has grieved me, as I thought of his children and their disappointment, as I thought of five children and two adults making a Christmas dinner from one hen.

Why did he do it? And how could she have taken it? I have pondered this question for over 50 years, with tears in my eyes for the shame and pity of it. The son of Irish-German immigrants, raised on a hill farm west of Poplar Bluff, was it some fierce Ozark mountain pride that required him to satisfy the need of one family at the expense of another? Was it because, as my Mother believed, he favored one daughter so much more than his other children that he let them hunger for her good? Or was it because he was a old broken down drunk who was so thoughtless that he didn't think beyond the moment of the gift?

My family of half-aunts and uncles are gone; lost to me now, I can never ask them to forgive me.

We cannot know what our parents and grandparents went through to make them as they were, we cannot know how they suffered. If they made mistakes, we can never truly understand why.

Rocking around the Christmas Tree

At last, Christmas Eve Day arrived. Mother started working on the turkey — it was a skinny, stringy beast, tough as shoe leather. She looked at the bird, and calculated the likelihood of it turning out tender and juicy. It seemed remote, but Mother wasn't to be daunted so easily. She got out her giant pot, normally used only during canning season, and she boiled the bird.

It wasn't long before turkey steam was sweating up the windows, and a fabulous aroma started to fill

the house. While she busied herself making cakes and pies, she just kept boiling that tough old bird throughout the day. The steam got thicker, and the essence of turkey floated all through the house, even out the windows to scent the neighborhood.

By late afternoon, the smell had attracted us all... the whole family kept drifting into the kitchen to get a whiff of that boiling bird. For me, it was the first turkey I'd ever seen, and for the rest of them, certainly the first since before the War, and maybe even since before the Depression started. It permeated the house with its magic; it scented our skins with its sensual perfume.

We had homemade chili for supper — a Christmas Eve tradition in our family — and for the first time ever, Mother agreed to let us open our presents on Christmas Eve instead of waiting 'til the next morning.

I don't remember much except the highlights. There was a book or two for sure, some lavender cologne, a stack of toys. I got my fluffy pink house slippers, a nice collection of loot. Then we all had a slice of Mother's no-bake fruitcake and a cup of eggnog, and went to bed to dream of sugarplums.

I woke up early on Christmas morning. Doesn't everyone? Mother was already in the kitchen. She lifted the boiled bird out of its tub of rich broth, filled it with stuffing, and had it in the oven before six a.m. By noon, when we'd have our Christmas Dinner, it would be brown and beautiful, juice dripping from every pore, so tender it fell apart under your fork. I've never seen nor heard of anyone boiling the bird since then, but my mother's magic worked wonders.

She insisted that, before I walked into the living room to start playing with my new toys, we should all sit down for a hot breakfast. Finally, she nodded her agreement, and followed behind me as I walked into the parlor.

Finally We Get to the Main Event

Spread across the sofa, on every chair, on the coffee table, were twelve identical shoeboxes. Inside each was a doll, twelve beautiful ladies dressed in elaborate costumes made of silk with lace trims, real hair falling over their shoulders.

Each box was stamped across the end with the name of the country the doll represented. Yugoslavia, Norway and Belgium. Spain's doll had a fabulous black lace mantilla; Argentina's was dressed like a lady gaucho. The doll from Alsace Lorraine wore embroidered blouse and apron. United States' doll was dressed in long silk organdy like a Southern belle. There was a bride doll, and even a Roman Catholic sister. Twelve exquisitely made beauty queens, each with gorgeous silk costume and real human hair, and faces to steal your heart.

It was staggering, even daunting. I did not come from an era where children expected to receive whole

Guise & Dolls IV

sets of anything. I didn't come from a family where anyone expected to own silken-clad ladies with hand-made finery.

The gift of the dolls dominated the holiday season for all of us. The entire family took a turn staring at their magnificence. Mother cleared room on the family bookshelf, and gave me a dozen fruit jars. We stood each doll inside a jar, with the long skirts hiding the improvised stands, and there they lived, opulent and extravagant.

Mother eventually explained that the sporting goods store received a shipment of these dolls, and let them go at some basement price. I believe she got them for \$2 each, an incredible bargain even for the 1940s.

The Centennial

Poplar Bluff, Missouri was settled in the early 1800s. First a trading station, then a lumber camp and rail head, it incorporated as a town in 1849. In celebration of that fact, when I was ten and the town was a hundred, the city fathers staged a celebration for its Centennial year. There was a carnival-like atmosphere, public picnics, fireworks, a county fair with pies and canned goods, livestock and tractors. The high school band played on the Court House lawn every day, and there was a steady flow of free ice cream and soda pop.

The locals went all out to make it special. The City Council passed a law that every man and woman who appeared on the street on Centennial Day must be properly dressed in 1849 gear. Men had to sport beards, or at least long hair. Women were expected to wear long dresses and sun bonnets. Naturally, there was a parade. All Poplar Bluff's children were invited to march in their 1849 costumes, with their pets and bicycles and roller skates and toys.

Mother was terribly excited by the Centennial. She had family roots going back to the beginning, and a civic pride that was almost possessive. She talked the men folk of the family into beards and gingham, while she and I sported hand-made garments made from old-fashioned patterns.

She jumped right into the parade thing; she had a concept. We borrowed the Griffiths' little red wagon, and with a little carpentry and a lot of crepe paper, created a two tiered platform. Then we circled the dolls around this podium, with my four favorites on the top level. The idea was for me, in my 1849 skirt and bonnet, to pull the beauty queens on their float along the parade route.

The parade gathered behind Junior High school. The band led the troupe, some of the town's real beauty queens rode in

convertibles, and we kids formed the body of the parade. There must have been a hundred there, and barking dogs, bicycles, skates and scooters...a marvelous mélange of kid stuff. After what seemed like endless milling around, the band struck up a march, and the ragged company began the long walk, down Vine Street, turn left on Broadway, then up to Main, and finally to the Court House. The Mayor talked; there was more music, and finally the whole thing was over and we trudged back home.

Later that afternoon, someone took a picture of me and my mother with the dolls. Mother told everyone that I had won first prize with the float, though I don't remember anything like that. I suspect it was one of those parades that all the children were awarded first prize just for being there.

Through the years, the dolls moved from bookshelf to the top of the piano, to my bedroom. Eventually, although it did take a long time, they went back into their boxes and onto the shelf in my bedroom closet.

A couple of years after I was married, when I was 19 or 20, my parents sold their house and moved to Arizona. At that time, Mother sold the dolls to a local collector....got \$100 for them, which was quite an increase on her investment. I didn't mind; my life had moved on. I was just happy that they went to someone who'd appreciate how beautiful they were.

The Collecting Channel

When I was hired as the first writer for the Collecting Channel, I began with articles about what I knew. I had a lot of collectibles, mostly in the glass field, and filled a number of columns by writing about what I owned. But eventually, I had to do research each day to come up with new topics.

Searching for information on the web is an addictive sport. It's rare not to find at least some data on whatever topic comes to mind, and it's a satisfying



experience to run the links on a topic and uncover fascinating new facts. I guess that's why web surfing grabs hold of so many people; there's a lot of instant gratification in it.

Although dolls were not my bailiwick, it eventually occurred to me to try to locate my twelve little beauties. I was curious to see if they ever attained any real value. I also hoped to find information about when and where they were made. I didn't actually expect nor hope to recover them, but a few pictures would be nice to own.

Ebay.com is a great hunting ground for researchers. There aren't many items that don't cross those portals sooner or later, and I figured I'd eventually stumble across them.

But how? There are, at any given moment, literally thousands of dolls offered for sale on eBay. Sifting through all the entries could be a real time-filler.

The problem was, I didn't know anything about them, not who manufactured them, not their "proper" names, not the year they were made. I got them in 1947, or maybe it was 1948. But they may have been a couple of years old when they were remaindered at the sporting goods store.

I started by searching for fashion dolls. I knew that they predated Barbie, so I excluded her from the hunt...and got rid of several hundred entries right there. I knew they must have been made in the 1940s, so I sat the parameters for 194* to narrow the focus. I eliminated Gene dolls and movie dolls, and sat the wheels spinning.

Every time I did a search, I'd narrow the thousands to several hundred, then painstakingly open every entry to look for a picture that matched my memory.

Along the way, I began to acquire some helpful information. I learned, by reading a lot of entries, that the Duchess Doll Company had made a set of "Dolls of the World" in 1948-49. But these were definitely not the same...the Duchess dolls were shorter, and they came in square boxes. Madame Alexander also had some "world" dolls, but they were not the same.

I got my big break when I stumbled on a costumed doll in its original box, and the box matched my memory of the boxes my little queens came in. It was a shoebox-shape printed with stars all over...I almost cried when I saw the picture, as a rush of memory hit me, of the boxes my mother had examined in the sporting goods store, and how they looked stacked on the closet shelf.

The cutie in the box was a Little Shepherdess, a nine-inch lady that looked quite a bit like the dolls I had owned. The text with the picture told me

she was made in 1948, and was part of the Storybook Series made by The Hollywood Doll Company. I also learned that Hollywood had made a number of different series during this time period, including a Toyland Series and a Princess Series. I don't know the family name of my set, but it seems certain that I had found their maker.

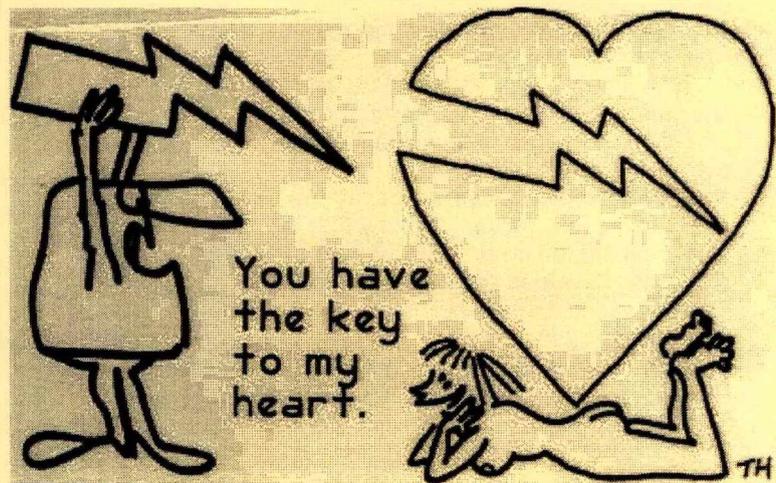
That gave me a real hook for my searches. Now I set my browser for Hollywood Doll* 194*. Turns out that Hollywood Dolls made a lot of models, ranging from baby dolls to 20 inch walkers. I actually spotted one that I thought was Emily. But I never found even one of the beauty queens of the world that I had let slip through my fingers.

Well, that's about it. I still search the long list of eBay dolls every week; I still run Copernic searches for Hollywood Dolls; I still hunt for Hollywood Doll collecting groups. But in all the thousands of pictures I've studied, I have never come across even one of my beauty queens. The world simply opened its mouth and swallowed them, and left no trace behind, no trail for me to follow.

But, at least I have the picture. Before Mother got too sick to worry about such things, she went through all the family photos and sent each of us four kids a stack of mementos. And among the treasures she sent to me was the picture that was taken on that hot summer afternoon in 1949, following the children's parade.

So there we are, frozen forever in time, my Mother and I in our old-fashioned sun-bonnets, standing in front of the family home, with the Griffiths' red wagon decorated as a float, and the beauty queens stealing the show. They look so real, I can almost reach out my hand to grasp them.....yet they are gone forever, buried in the sands of time.

But I had them once...and I believe they rest somewhere in some valued collection, all together like sisters, like virgin princesses of great beauty, wrapped in silk and lace.



Kentucky Home

(Being the story, as best I can remember was told to me, of how the Worleys came to migrate to Missouri. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of these stories, nor do I know which of the alternate versions is correct. But this is what happened, or at least what I was told.)

Suzie Maria Davenport (born October 15, 1865; died September 16, 1950)

Suzie liked him the first time she saw him. He came riding up the mountain on a big horse, with a soft way of talking, and a smile that picked Suzie out of the folks standing around the junction store.

Aunt Ilah Worley, Uncle Buck's wife, told me he came over the hills from Virginia, and that may be true. But there's no way of knowing for sure.

The way I was told, there were two brothers. One, a butcher named John, became a bourgeois storekeeper. The other felt crowded by the new folks settling too near for comfort, and left the area for open territory. The one who stayed behind prospered; the actress Joanne Worley is from that branch. It is our luck to be descended from the mountain man instead of his more citified kin.

Suzie dropped her head so he wouldn't see she was staring, but he had noticed, all right. She was a right pretty thing, small and slender as a willow with a long hank of hair that hung loose to her waist, high cheekbones, and high color that hinted at French-Indian grandparents.

He never said if he'd been with women before, over on the other side of the mountain, nor if he was

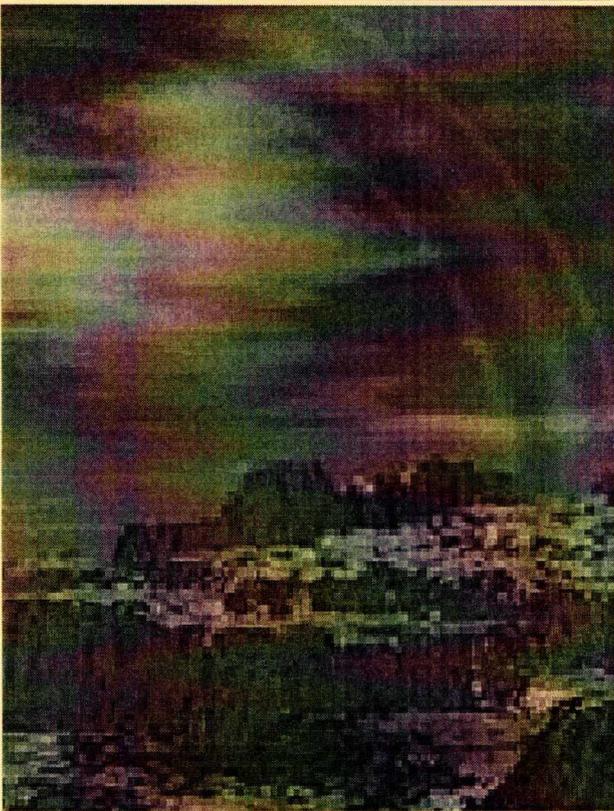
a wanted man back home. He never said much about what was there, or why he came to leave. But the War Between the States hadn't been finished for long; there were lots of reasons for a man to leave his past behind and make a new start. Maybe he'd lost his people, or his land. Maybe there'd been trouble in his county. All I was ever told for sure was that his pa's name was Samuel L. Worley, and he had two brothers, Sam and Carter. George Washington Worley was also quick to say he'd been a member of the Union Army, which suited the mountain folk in Kentucky just fine.

The next time Suzie saw him, he came right up to her. She was captured as swiftly as a bird in a snare, by his voice and his eyes, and knew right then he was the one for her. If she ever regretted it, she never said for all the rest of her life.

Her family was not all that pleased. "You'll have a hard life with him," warned her brother Houston. "He's not good enough for you; he's not up to our standards," complained her sister Renee. Even her uncle, Burlee LeMasters, shook his head soberly when she announced her intention to wed the lanky man from the east.

The Davenports did have proud standards. They had earned a lot of respect on the mountain. The men were industrious, and their women made fine wives, good cooks and fertile mothers. The Davenport place was well-favored, with sweet well water and enough cleared valley land for a fine garden tended by the women folk, while the men brought in corn and tobacco crops.

They were planters, down from a long line of



Pennsylvania farmers. Pressed in the family Bible was a piece of paper that deeded Davenport's the land where Pittsburgh is now, signed by the English King and co-signed by William Penn. They'd left that territory years before to settle in Kentucky, abandoning the land they'd been given in Pennsylvania.

The Davenports lived in a log cabin built by the old man with the help of his sons. It was raised off the ground on rock corners, with steps leading up to a porch across the front of the house. Old Man Davenport would sit there in his rocking chair in the evening, watching the trees bend with the wind that always blew sweet and cool from the mountain.

Behind him, in the two windows that shed light on the interior, there was glass, toted horseback all the way from Bowling Green, and a split-log wooden floor that extended throughout the house.

Suzie had schooling, not customary for the women on the mountain. But she knew how to read and write and do sums. She'd helped her own ma with the garden and the cooking, and had the womanly skills to make a home for a man. She would have been a fine catch for any farmer in Kentucky.

Cleburn James Worley (born February 13, 1897; died November 12, 1960)

The four boys hunkered in the snow, waiting out-

side the cabin, listening to the sounds of the birthing going on inside. James, Clyde, Sam and John had been sent to the barn to wait. Normally, they could find plenty to do, wrestling and jumping around the hayloft. But today was different, and after a while, they crept back toward the house. Now they squatted silently a few feet from the door of the cabin while their mother labored.

Cleburn screamed his way into the world. Suzie took her new son in her arms, but she was tired. Tired and sick; the pregnancy had been hard, and she was worn out with it. The pack of hungry younguns outside kept her busy, and George was usually not around to help.

She nursed the newborn...another boy!...but she was too poorly, and her milk didn't come. The baby cried, hungry, starving, dying, until Houston picked up the squalling infant and rode off on his horse to the black folk's cabin just down the road. The young mother living there suckled Baby Cleburn at her breast beside her own child, and so he lived.

When George returned to the mountain, he heard about his new son and how he'd almost died, and that he'd been taken to the neighbor to wet-nurse.

Raging, he galloped to the shack and snatched Cleburn from the woman's arms. Screaming, he cursed her, and said, "No son of mine is going to suck a nigger woman's teat."

He took Cleburn back to Suzie for her to keep him alive as best she could.

Cousins Corbett and Nicola

George had a nephew, Carter's son, named Nobel. Nobel was a riverboat worker, sailing on the Ohio until he was murdered one night on the river. The law didn't bother to hunt his killer. "Suicide," they said, although his throat was cut from ear to ear.

Nobel's wife died, birthing her second child, Nicola. The two kids, Corbett and his little sister Nicola, came to live in the crowded Worley cabin, and were raised alongside the clan of Worleys.

In all, George and Suzie had twelve kids, eight that lived. James, Clyde, Sam and John, then Cleburn, followed by Alfred, Ishmael Garman, and Mary, their one daughter. Then there were the two cousins, Corbett and Nicola.

Nicola grew to be a beautiful girl. She married, then died giving birth to her first child, and the baby died, too. I named my own daughter Nicola Fey in her memory, since she too was fated to die.

Corbett, in some sort of familial karma, became a prosperous grocer in Maryville, California. The family visited him there when I was 16, and I went bicycling with his son, my handsome distant cousin, up in the Butte Mountains. Riding home, I hit a rock and went flying over the handlebars of the bike, 10-20 feet and landed on the rocky road ahead. I never biked again.

Kentucku Home III

And, my good-looking cousin never asked me out again, either.

It was Corbett who went to Phoenix in mid-November of 1960, to collect my mother and drive her back to Missouri after Cleburn died in the Veterans Hospital in Arizona.

Hilltop Life

Suzie and her siblings grew up in the mountain valley, children of an industrious planter, on a fertile farm not far from the Green River. When he grew up, her brother Houston eventually got his own spread, higher up the mountain, but well-favored with a deep well and a spring-fed stream spewing out the mouth of a cool cave in the hollow. There was enough level cleared land for farming, plus some fine woods filled with game. There was plenty of hay in the barn and corn in the crib to see the animals through the hard winters, and plenty of meat in the smokehouse and vegetables in the jars. Each year Houston and his boys took tobacco to market for cash.

Life was harder further up the hill. George wasn't much of a farmer. Each spring he'd take his Bible and gallop away on his horse, circuit riding the mountains. He'd usually not be back until after harvest. He'd come riding home when the weather was turning cold, bearing whatever he'd been given by the farmers he'd ministered to. Some years, it was nothing better than a sack of corn.

The place they lived wasn't what Suzie had been

raised to expect. George wasn't a cash-earning kind of guy; the best he could manage was a dirt-floor cabin. Rocky fields surrounded it, and the soil was barren. They had to carry water in from a neighbor's well. When George rode off each spring to preach, he left Suzie and the kids to take care of the farming.

I saw the cabin myself, when Cleburn took us back to Kentucky in 1949 to visit. It was deserted but intact, floor still packed hard by the trample of bare feet. Sometime in the '20s, someone had covered the walls with newspapers to block the wind that whistled between the logs.

It's doubtful I could ever find it again. But the farm was on the mountain near the place where the Green and the Barren Rivers join. The family took us there to swim, as my father and his brothers had forty years before. The water was fresh and cool, and the trees on the bank hung their branches low, creating a cathedral of greenery over the wide river.

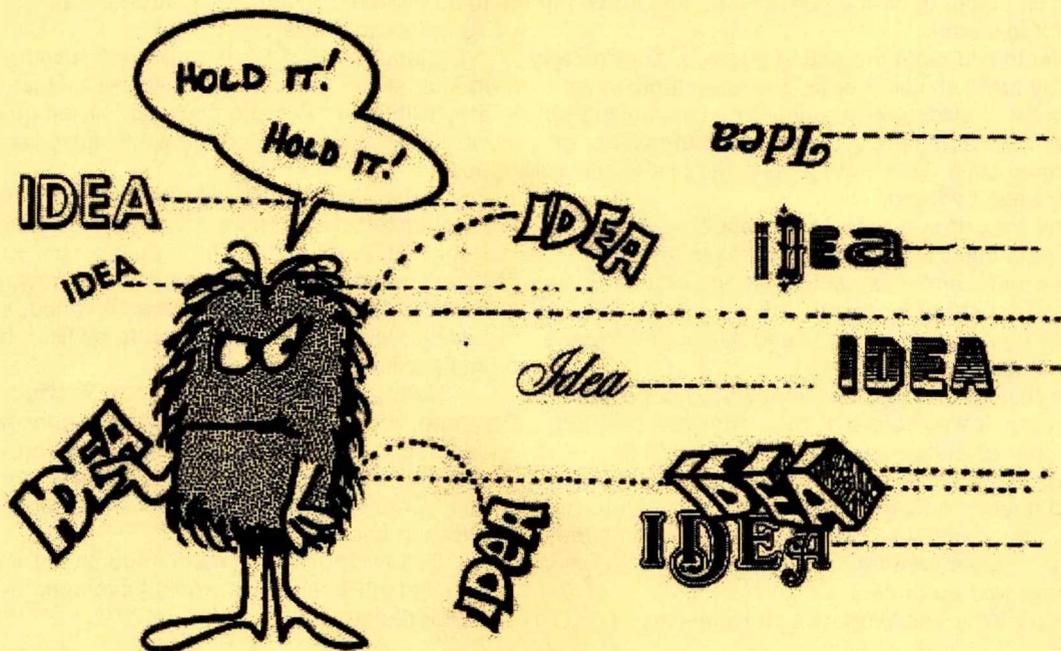
Why Did They Leave Kentucky?

Did you think I'd never get to the point of this tale? Well, here's the meat of the matter.

I've been told three stories. I suspect The Real Truth about why the Worleys left their Kentucky home lies somewhere between their lines.

Reason Number One: The Killing

Cleburn sat playing in the road, in front of the



general store/post office that comprised the entirety of the town of Riverside, Kentucky. An old man sat dozing on the steps of the store.

Suddenly, two young men thundered up the road on horseback. The old man saw them, stood and turned to run, but he wasn't fast enough. Shots rang out; he was gunned down by the younger men, and bled to death in the dirt.

Cleburn saw it all. Witness to the last blood feud killing in Kentucky, the family feared for his life. He could be called to testify. Or he could be killed outright to silence his words.

That's Why The Worley's Left Kentucky.

Reason Number Two: The Killing (Well, Almost)

James, already a strapping young man, got into a fight with another youth on the mountain. It was bad...brutal. When it was over, James was able to walk away, but the other boy lay dying on the ground, stomach slit from hip to hip by James' knife.

That's Why The Worleys Left Kentucky.

(Forty years later, we returned for a visit. We learned the other boy had not died. I met him. Although he bore facial scars left over from the fight, he was good natured, and laughed at the irony of the whole Worley clan leaving the State over a killing that never happened.)

Reason Number Three: The Tobacco

Tobacco farming is hard work. The Worley boys understood just how it was going to be. Pa was going to ride off again, to do the Lord's work, and leave the rest of it to them.

First they'd plant the young tobacco. They'd carry water by hand all summer long to keep it growing. Each week they'd crawl through the rows, pulling up weeds. They'd hoe the ground around the plants to keep them alive. They'd go among the plants and pull off any bugs by hand.

And then, they'd have to harvest it, spread it in the barn to cure, work it with their rakes to keep it drying evenly, and eventually, beg one of their uncles to take it to market for them.

The summer stretched ahead, bleak and joyless, filled with tobacco work.

So that last spring, the Worley boys concocted a conspiracy. It was so-o-o simple. They just pinched each tobacco sprig before they planted it in the ground.

No hoeing, no weeding, no debugging. Unfortunately, they hadn't thought it through as well as they should. It also meant no harvest. The plants all died, and there was no money.

That's Why The Worleys Left Kentucky.

After They Came to Missouri

The Worley family traveled from Kentucky to Missouri by wagon. They ferried over the great Mississippi River; there was no bridge.

They settled in the swampish land south of Poplar Bluff, and the boys got jobs in the timber there. Schooling was long-since over for Cleburn. He only got to the fourth grade, then Daddy was put to work cutting railroad ties.

All the Worley men were part of the great effort that drained the swamp and turned that part of Missouri into fertile farmland.

Daddy served in World War I, where he was personally decorated for bravery by General Blackjack Pershing after a suicide mission carrying word of his cut-off regiment's position to HQ.

He was wounded in the Argonne Forest, and was recommended for the Congressional Metal of Honor. He was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart.

During his time at the Front, he received one letter from Suzie; I read it. It spoke of how things were for the family; the hardships they endured. It ended with her prayer that he would live through the great ordeal.

After he returned home, he got a job on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The older boys had married and left, and he helped Suzie raise the younger kids.

One of his coworkers was Martin Smithers Randles, who invited the handsome young war hero home to have dinner with his wife and daughters. There Cleburn met Elizabeth. They married, and had four children: Lilliemae, Edgar Lee, Earl Roy, and me, Joyce Marie Worley.

Cleburn asked Suzie to come live with our family; in fact, all the brothers begged their mother to come stay with them. But she declined, saying no matter which she chose, the others would have been jealous.

Suzie died in the middle of the night in her two-room stilted shack in the Ashcroft Addition in South Poplar Bluff. When they brought her from the undertaker's parlor, the doorway was too narrow for the coffin to go through. I remember my father sobbing because his mother's body had to be tilted to get it into her house.

Daddy worked for the Missouri Pacific until he retired. His happiest times were during those brief years after he quit work. He and mother moved to Arizona, where he made a circle of new friends. His final years were spent going back and forth between Missouri and the desert.

Daddy died in Arizona in 1960, in the Veterans Hospital in Phoenix. He would have been 64 on his next birthday.

Going into the West

Going into the West, Part 1

It started in the smallish town of Tyne & Weare, just outside Manchester, England. Arnie and I were basking in the praises of Barry Friedman, agent and friend, as we celebrated the successful conclusion of the visit with our host and then-publisher, Tynesoft. We'd just finished an intensive four-day meeting with the programmers and other members of the implementation team during which we fine-tuned a number of our computer game designs. It's always fun to give a critique and see the changes materialize right before your eyes.

I arrived at this particular poignant moment by a fairly direct route. When Arnie, Bill Kunkel and I founded Electronic Games Magazine, I put away my secretarial skills for fulltime writing about video and computer software. After the three of us left EG, I wrote freelance pieces about high-tech entertainment for almost every magazine in the computer biz. I also served as high-tech associate editor for *Essence*, *Women's Wear Daily*, and numerous other female-oriented publications; I even told the *Cosmopolitan* girl which system to buy.

When Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine began, I became News Editor, and my freelancing dwindled to a fraction. About this time, Bill, Arnie and I started doing game design work; soon that portion of our business grew to at least 50% of our income.

The contract with Tynesoft was a milestone. Barry, the wizard of international software deal making, put us together with the English software publisher, and we completed a total of 14 games for

them. Trevor Scot and his partner Colin Courtney invited the three of us to visit the Tynesoft headquarters to give in-person input to the artists working on our projects. Bill declined and stayed home to watch the store, while Arnie and I flew to England.

As we discussed our dreams, Barry uttered the words that dominated our thoughts for the next few months. "You can wait to accumulate enough money to buy your perfect brownstone in Brooklyn Heights, and maybe never get it. Or you can change your dream, relocate to a different part of the country, and buy a home immediately."

Convincing Kunkel

Leaving London, Arnie and I discussed the concept. First we thought, "Maybe we'll move to Jersey, where property is a bit cheaper." Then, "Well, if we're leaving NYC, and going that far, why not the Poconos?" Next we thought, "What's the reason for staying in the East at all?" None, really. We didn't need to be near the Big Apple to work; we do it all by Fed Ex or by modem, anyhow.

Suddenly, the world stretched out before us with no barriers, no ties to any special spot. All we had to do is decide: Where did we want to go?

We considered Dallas...too cold. Houston...too rednecked. Atlanta, too muggy. California was completely out of the question; I would have rather stayed in New York.

There really was only one place that seemed right to Arnie and me. But we decided to put it to Bill, and see what he had to suggest.



"Find a city...any city...that you think would feel right. It should have a good airport, with plenty of things to do and places to go." We loaded Bill's hands with US maps to study.

He's a god man. It's a testament to how well our partnership works that, after he looked at the charts, he came up with the same conclusion we had reached as we jetted over the Atlantic.

Viva Las Vegas!

It seemed a natural decision, the perfect choice for Katz Kunkel Worley. We all wanted a warm climate; we all preferred dryness to humidity. We had enjoyed Vegas on our trips to Winter Consumer Electronic Shows during the previous ten years. Property was reasonable prices, and the tax situation was very favorable. And none of us gamble.

The next step was getting a good realtor. Cathy Bittinger became the most important person in our lives for six months prior to the move. We provided her lists of what we each wanted in a house, then kept refining them until she knew exactly what would suit us. She, in turn, started doing computer searches of the area's real estate listings, and every week or so sent printout descriptions of property that matched our specifications.

Making Plans

Our moving date was set automatically, by the fact that the Katz lease ran out on October 1, 1989. (For the fan historians among you, that date marked 19 years since we had moved into the Livingston Street address.) The three of us could barely be contained through the summer. There was a lot to be

done, to get ready to transfer ourselves, chattel, livestock (cat) and the business. It's a good thing we were busy, otherwise our impatience might have finished us. We were like three kids anticipating Christmas; once we made the decision to leave the New York City area, we couldn't wait to leave the Big Apple behind.

When spring came, we started hunting our mover. After calling all the majors, and some of the haul-it-by-nights, we determined they were all a bunch of thieves. We got quotes from several name-brand cross-country movers, and although each used the same price-per-hundredweight, their estimates varied vastly.

It was going to be costly, at best. Goods had to be removed from three separate locations, Bill's apartment in Queens, our apartment in Brooklyn Heights, and a storage warehouse in Bay Ridge. Although Bill planned to take very little furniture, Arnie and I were moving four over-full rooms, plus tons and tons (about 22 of 'em) of books, magazines, fanzines, records, games and assorted hobby-craft. Then there were the computers and accoutrements.

We used North American Van Lines. They gave the highest estimate of weight; we figured this would serve us well, so the overage at the end of the trip wouldn't be as much. It worked for us; the balance due after weighing the load was a small percentage of the total.

Choosing a Home

The frenzy of preplanning hit its peak the weekend following Labor Day, when we made our first trip west to pick places to buy. Timing was critical: as late in the summer as possible, to be sure of the Tynesoft royalty checks, destined for escrow as down payments on two residences, and early as possible to allow time for the current owners to vacate. We wanted to move direct into our new homes upon our arrival in Vegas. More than want, really; we had to accomplish this in order to have places to put the furniture, due in Vegas about a week after departing NYC.

We originally planned to go the last weekend in August, but delayed so Barry would be back in the USA after his summer in Canada. Barry, or Prince Among Men, as I like to call him, offered to meet us in Vegas to help house hunt and to negotiate the purchases. Waiting for Barry turned out to be the smartest decision we ever made.

Thursday evening we let Cathy know we had arrived, and arranged to meet her in the lobby of the Sahara the next morning. She had never seen us, of course, but we had exchanged pictures. We'd talked on the phone a lot during the summer; she had al-

Going into the West III

lowed herself to get caught up in our excitement to a gratifying extent. She had handled cross-country purchases before, but this was the first time she had ever dealt with three artistic types who traveled around with a financial manager. Barry had already started on the paperwork with her, Vegas bankers, and the escrow company, filing financial statements royalty reports, credit reports, tax returns, and hundreds of sheets of information on our personal careers and financial worth.

I'd like to devote several paragraphs to the exhausting ordeal of house-hunting, but the truth is that Cathy cut through that. It was so simple we were finished before noon, left with nothing more arduous to do than chortle about our homes.

Cathy first took us to a house Arnie and I had picked from the computer search. It had the details we had requested: 4 bedrooms, pool, spa, and lots of extras. But it failed to tug at our heartstrings. Next she drove to the western side of town to eyeball a property that had just come onto the lists.

From the minute we drove up in front, I could tell. Favorably situated on a low green hill, on the left hand side of a Y in a quite cul-de-sac, the ranch style house was framed in trees and rosebushes. Inside, we were charmed by the pink walls and hunter green carpeting. Arnie walked into the large parquet-floored sunroom that looked over the deep back yard, pool and deck, threw wide his arms and said, "This will be my office!" Barry sat in a chair in the terraced, tree-filled backyard and when we told him "this is the one", enthusiastically agreed it was a winner.

Next Cathy took us to the place she thought would please Bill. Although Arnie and I had labored through all of two walk-throughs (ah, the wonders of computer shopping!) Bill needed only one look. The Greens was an exquisitely manicured, gated community, complete with pool, spa, tennis courts, and guard gate. The two-story condominium he chose was huge, beautiful and spotless, with private patio, fireplace, cathedral ceilings and a gourmet kitchen. Barry worked magic that afternoon, negotiating the prices for each of the properties. Cathy just sat back shaking her head. "I thought I knew about bargaining," she said at one point, "but I've never seen anything like this!" Later she told us that she had completely changed her tactics, as a result of seeing Barry in operation.

We had the two properties sewn up by nightfall, and handshake agreements with both current owners. Our house wouldn't be vacant by the time the three of us moved on September 25th, but Casilda promised to have the garage cleaned out so we could stash our stuff there. Bill's condo was ready; that would be our destination on That Great Day.

But there were still lots of things to accomplish before we returned to NY. Deposits had to be paid on

all utilities; we had to arrange for the phones to be installed. We needed a post office box, so we could get it into circulation as soon as possible. We had to open bank accounts for ourselves personally, and for Katz Kunkel Worley, Inc.

Barry Moves Mountains

Saturday we met with the trust company officer to apply for mortgages. Cathy, who was first fairly awed by Barry's presence, then impressed by his negotiating expertise, was even more amazed that the loan exec opened hi business on Saturday for us. It was painless; Barry had already provided every scrap of information they needed. The meeting was so low-stress, it was almost social, a pressing of the flesh and little more.

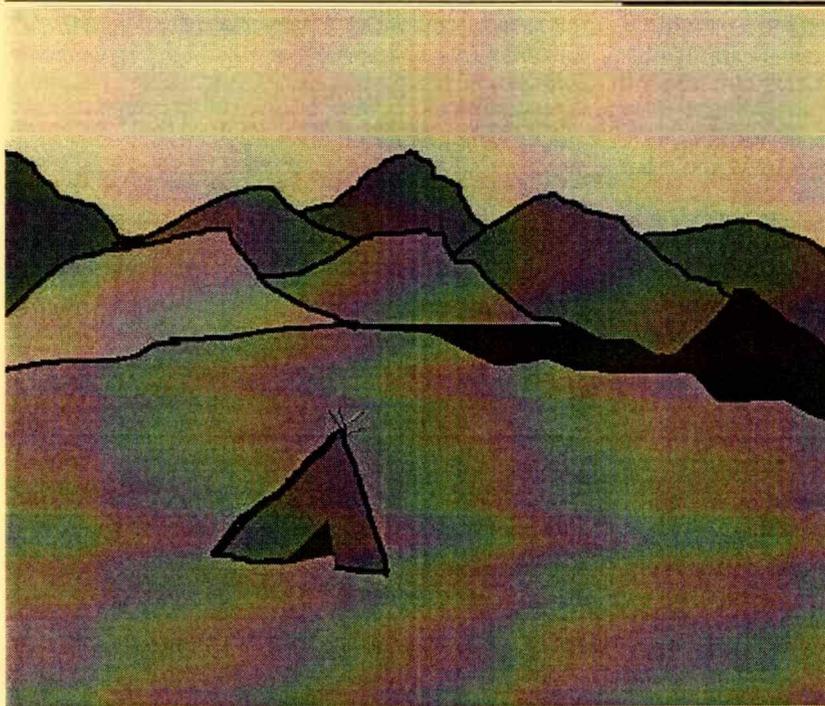
We had mulled over the question of how we would live during the week between our arrival and the coming of the furniture. First we thought we might have to motel-it for those days, but dreaded the inconvenience, especially since work would continue during that time. Our schedules were heavy; we couldn't spare more than a couple of days to moving. Barry had the answer to this problem, too: we arranged for a condo-full of rental furniture to be in place on our arrival.

I'd like to digress here to talk about the Wonder of Los Wages This town is the most convenient in the world for travelers or new arrivals. Several hundred thousand new residents move into the Vegas Valley each year, along with several million tourists. The city is therefore accustomed to providing special services. If we desired, we could have had a full staff waiting, hot meal on the table, fire in the fireplace, and a party of welcoming celebrants.

Monday we did business. Barry was in his element; his expertise cut through every problem. The banker had also been prepared for our arrival, with tax returns, financial statements, and advance deposits for our starting accounts. (It's astounding how much of the red tape that tangles most transactions is cut away by professional advisors!) Vegas financial institutions normally are not easy to satisfy, even to open a simple checking account. Along with the millions of tourists and thousands of new arrivals, there are unfortunately thousands of fly-by-night operators running scams and get-rich-quick schemes.

We did the official walk-through of the properties that afternoon, and signed the first purchase documents. We shot a roll of film in each place, to show the folks back east. Truthfully, it was as much to have them for ourselves to dream over until the actual move...

As we flew out of our newly adopted city that afternoon, our own buoyancy probably was what kept the plane up! There was a lot to do in the next three



weeks, to get ready. But no amount of work could undermine our joy.

Going into the West. Part 2

When Arnie and I moved to 59 Livingston St., Brooklyn Heights, on October 1, 1970, we put down roots. I had just survived a painful upheaval in my life that transplanted me from Missouri to New York; I desperately needed solidity; I craved permanence.

It didn't take long to figure a way to feel immovable: I started collecting glass. On the day Arnie and I moved in, we walked to downtown Brooklyn and bought our first set of dishes (plain white with a classic silver band.) Arnie lugged the heavy box home on his back, and we set up housekeeping. Soon came the Initial K crystal, at the rate of one a month, we bought 13 place settings including fragile wine, water, sherbet, ice tea, large and small highball glasses. About the time we finished with the stemware, Bohack's Grocery started a plate-a-week promotion. We ended with 13 settings of brownware, then bought all the nifty side dishes to match.

Depression Glass was next. It's a passion I doubt I'll ever outgrow. First I bought odds and ends at street fairs, then started trying to match up sets. Charlene Komar-Kunkel gifted me with a service for eight of black octagon; I laboriously put together a service for six of blue bubble. When Indiana Glass Company repoured some old molds in celebration of the Bicentennial in 1976, I got a service for four of clear pattern glass, with every side dish. A year or two later, the company sanded the date off the designs, and

repoured in pink. My heart turned over at the sight, and I bought enough pink dishes for eight place settings.

To summarize, I have a lot of glass.

Move It or Lose It

Unfortunately, glass wasn't the only stuff we collected in the last 20 years. The Livingston Street apartment was stuffed. Every closet was solid-packed, like tuna without the water, and every wall was lined with shelves, bureaus, file drawers, and other storage devices. I started as soon as we knew we would move. Each week, I'd have groceries delivered in boxes, then scouted the basement for what I could find. I began in the kitchen closet with the holiday pieces. Every week I'd wash, then newspaper-wrap and pack as many items as I could box. I discarded a few; some pieces I gave to friends as remembrances, and the rest went to a friend setting up a new household.

I fussed at Arnie, and to a lesser degree, Bill, to make them start. I knew the job was formidable. It was almost the end of summer before Arnie finally made a stab at our bedroom closet. Lined with storage shelves high above my reach, it was stuffed to the ceiling with enveloped FAPA mailings. LeeH gave them to Terry when she went south; Terry gave them to Arnie when he went west. Arnie tried to sort the zines that filled most of the space. The ones he kept were packed into cartons, and we started discard boxes for those we weren't going to move.

The hall closet was another space that hadn't been cleaned for years. I pulled out several square feet of woolen hats, gloves, scarves and other cold-weather gear I wouldn't be needing again, and put them in a pass-along box. We trashed the slot car racing set; a lot of the pieces were missing or bent anyhow. I decided to move the tabletop hockey set. Although it was bulky, it didn't weigh much. As I looked at it, I could still envision Arnie and Bruce Telzer in stormy battles.

The closets were filled with the past. The photo enlarger reminded me of sweltering nights, kitchen window blocked with Reynolds Wrap, developing pictures. No one wanted the darkroom stuff we used when we published Main Event wrestling magazine, but it disappeared in minutes after I put it in the hall. In one bag were toy soldiers Arnie and I, Bill and Charlene had collected in skee-ball contests in Coney Island; in another, the lead D&D figures I had abandoned unpainted when my eyes began to go back. Lettering guides, stencils, press type and zip-a-tone reminded me of other days; there were even uncollated pages of a fanzine that never went to more than a handful of friends. One closet yielded up two dozen realms of twill-

Going into the West V

tone paper; The Very Paper that caused the trouble between Moshe and Arnie over a decade earlier, but neither of us could remember just what that trouble had been.

One closet held pain; a box of special mementos brought with me from St. Louis so many years ago. A tiny pair of shoes; a photo of a baby's coffin. Missing friends; lost loves; torn dreams. Pictures of my father, who died over a quarter of a century ago. A fresher wound: the pictures of my mother who passed two years ago. I averted my eyes as I repackaged the stuff without examining it.

I sealed up the run of ODD Duggie gave me; it starts with the back-from-gafia issue in 1967, and runs through the last, undistributed ODD 21. Probably the only collection that includes the issues he did from 1947-52 is the one he left to his son Jason, after his death in Texas. As I packed, I thought a lot about Jason, and wondered if he would eventually be a fan.

I packed the stuffed animals: Ferocious Lion from the first Christmas Arnie and I were together; Buffalo-Who-Cannot-Stand that marked his family's move to Arizona; the panda named Burbee given to me by Barry Smotroff before he was murdered.

Packing can make one feel very very old, you know.

Partings Not All That Much Sorrow

"Once a person makes up his mind to go, it's like part of him is gone already. His attention slips further and further toward the new place, until there's only a shell left behind." I remember telling a friend that once, talking about some lost love or other. The same holds true of cross-country movers.

Once Bill, Arnie and I decided to leave, we could hardly stand the place. New York, the city once called a Summer Festival, was steamy, crime infested, and overcrowded. The charming tree-lined streets that framed Brooklyn Heights were filled with homeless; the store-keepers who once took pride in friendliness now shuttered their windows with steel bars. Our view of the harbor was denied; our landlord no longer gave his tenants roof access, and the 4th of July parties gazing at Miss Liberty cloaked in fireworks, were just memories.

Each Tuesday and Friday were meeting days; Bill would take the two-hour subway ride to our place. We'd lunch on tuna sandwiches, go through the mail, take care of our business, then pour over the computer printouts and real estate mags Cathy sent us almost weekly. The pictures of the Vegas landscapes, the blue skies and blazing sunlight, warmed our hearts. As we gazed over the Brooklyn rooftops at the grey skies of New York, our souls had already started the westward journey.

Through the summer, Arnie and I made a real effort to make "one last visit" to places we loved. But it was a muggy year, filled with rain, soot and pollen. Good sense kept me and my sinuses out of Brooklyn's Botanical Garden, though I was sorry not to see it again. We never quite got around to one last tour of the Metropolitan Museum;

and, we didn't go down to Luna Park (that's Coney Island to you out-of-towners.)

We did go to the Stage Deli, and Carnegie, and (over and over again) to Brooklyn's own Junior's, that palace of pleasure, home of the finest cheesecake, fluffiest blintzes, and leanest corned beef in all the USA.

Now that it's over and done, the only thing I can really say I miss from New York is Junior's.

But Some Partings Were

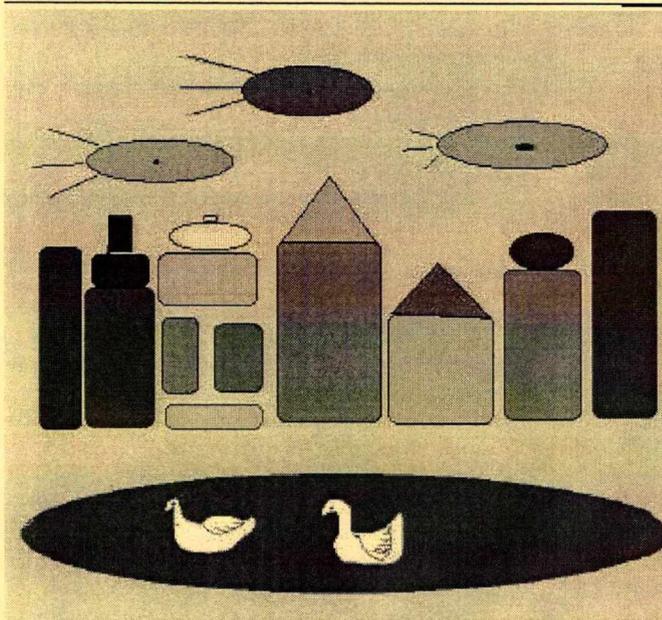
There were a handful of people I really hated to tell goodbye. An old employer I had really loved; my building super's wife who had such charm it transcended the language barrier between us. I hated to leave my professional advisors. I had grown to trust and depend on dear Bob Halfon, our accountant; for months I tried to convince myself I'd continue to be his client via phone and modem and the occasional trip east to take care of business. And my doctor; no one had cared for me for years except Dr. Pelz. I dreaded the notion of finding a new physician.

Then there was Arnie and Bill's weekly computer baseball league. Every Tuesday night, six other stat freaks joined them to play Micro League Baseball. We had enough computers to keep eight managers playing through their season's schedules. (Actually, we could have kept several more pairs going.) While the teams battled for leadership in the two divisions, building up to their annual world's series, we-who-waited created our own diversions. After a weekly supper of burgers (I refused to try to be creative on such a regular schedule,) the wives, girl friends, and friends-of-the-league socialized, played games, and occasionally ragged the eight managers. These things... these people... really mattered to me.

Sharon got pretty creative while she waited for Jeff Schwartz. I guess it came from hanging out with Arnie and me for so long. She and I were coworkers at my last insurance agency job; we glommed right onto each other from the time we met. In no time, Jeff and she were involved in our doings. Both are great cooks; they invited us over for long evenings of gourmet dining at their apartment. Game lovers, they were enthusiastic participants in the mystery dinner parties that became our favorite method of entertaining. The Jamie Sweis mysteries called for eight players; we'd assume the characters we were assigned (even costuming for the parts,) have gorgeous formal dinners, then match wits to find whodunit. They even survived bitter Diplomacy games; greater loyalty has no friend!

Jeff and Sharon were enthusiastic supporters when electronic gaming started dominating our lives; there was really no question about the friendship surviving my retirement from secretarial work. They played the games, followed the magazines, attended the parties, and were unflagging listeners to our hopes and dreams.

This must be the reason Sharon started evidencing such a fannish turn. The League wasn't half through its first season when she named the living room setters the



Widow's Web. Then, surprising even herself with the effort, she began publishing an irregular newsletter for the Web. At first it was fairly sercon. It discussed baseball strategy and the league standings, with a mix of innocent charm and half-knowledge (sort of a baseball version of Bester's Scientific People in The Stars My Destination.) Eventually she quit the baseball talk and wrote appealingly of things just for the nonplaying group.

Her literary efforts bore fruit...grapes, in fact. The insurance agency started a house monthly with standings, sales reports, and the mundania of underwriting. In no time, Sharon was in the thick of it, writing the paper's only really interesting material: a column about wine and gourmet foods. I was prouder than if I did it myself!

It was hardest to tell Ross Chamberlain. After his return to New York from Cleveland, he joined the Web, and Tuesday's crowd was incomplete without him. Having Ross back again was like having a lost relative restored; it was as if he had never been gone. The leather recliner was renamed Ross' Chair, and the living room looked empty without him there.

These were the years of our closest friendship. Not a correspondent, I never wrote to him (or anyone else) while he was away. On his occasional visits to New York I often chided him that we were growing further apart as the years passed. Leaving youth, his mellow voice became even quieter and lower. In a room full of noisy chatter, hearing him became harder for me. I always feared that eventually we'd be unable to communicate at all. The fine long evenings of quiet conversation while they played ball were a reprieve; they re-cemented our friendship.

Ross cat-sat for us during a couple of our CES trips, and then did the same when we went to England. So he was on the spot when we got back, our heads filled with the notion of moving. His first reaction was shocked disbe-

lief; he knew what a New York Chauvinist Arnie had always been. At first he thought we were joking. But when we started explaining our train of thought, he was quick to see we were serious, and then to recognize the advantages Vegas offered.

I couldn't leave it at that, of course. Before the summer was over, I had Ross, Jeff and Sharon all thinking about Vegas. One of these days, if I have my way about it, they'll make the same move.

Goodbye to N.Y. Fandom

The discard box of fanzines filled, and another and another. We actually considered trashing them, but couldn't do it. I reminded Arnie of how Bob Tucker once sold his collection for nickels and dimes. I made him think of Lee's, then Terry's, pass-ons of unwanted treasures. I forced him to admit it would be wrong to junk them. We were long out of N.Y. fandom, but Tim Marion had never given us up; once or twice a year he'd call. I convinced Arnie that Tim should at least be offered the zines.

Actually, it was a very pleasant visit. Tim came over one Sunday afternoon with Gary Tesser, and we loaded Gary's car with as much fannish gear as we could gather.

The two were charming; we enjoyed their visit and were glad we had called. It was our first real contact with anyone in local fandom for many years. It wasn't exactly a glorious reunion, but it was nice. And it helped us realize that some of our mistakes had been forgotten, and that we should forget some of the mistakes made by others, too.

In the end, I called Andy Porter. A chance encounter a year or so previous at a Simon & Schuster press event had been pleasant; then I had spoken with him again when Duggie died. Andy had stayed in contact with him longer than almost any other fan, and Duggie always cared a lot about him.

Perhaps the disagreements of a decade before were as vague in Andy's mind as mine; at any rate, after all was said and done, I just didn't feel right about leaving without telling him. Again, I was glad I did. He responded with interest, and we even made tentative plans to visit during the book show he wanted to attend in Vegas.

And Then Just Goodbye

Finally, although it seemed the time would never pass, the month, the week, the day arrived, along with the huge moving van. When the house was empty, we went to Jeff and Sharon's place to spend our last night in New York enjoying their fine hospitality.

And when the morning came, we picked up our cat, crawled into the taxi, and rode away.

Going Into the West. Part 3

Our flight was late in departing, and we paced the

Going into the West VII

Kennedy Airport impatient to leave. Once aboard, there were still delays, and I gazed at the skyline with few regrets. My heart had already flown west. As time passed, me glancing anxiously at my watch, I worried more about Slugger, already in the baggage hold.

But time passed as it always does, and soon we were lofting over the city. As we veered toward the sinking sun, I caught a final glimpse of Beautiful Brooklyn under our wings.

I've never had any complaints about New York City. I was never robbed, raped, mugged, homeless, or abused. I always had work; I made a good marriage there; I built a career in New York. The City owes me nothing, and I owe it a great deal.

I didn't take time to be swamped with memories, but I did feel a churning as I said goodbye to the past 19 years.

Arnie was jumpy, but he picked up a book and tried to concentrate as we winged toward our destinies. Even Bill, whose ability to sleep on planes is legendary, was restless. We'd each sit quietly in our own thoughts, then rouse to exchange a round of enthusiastic burbles about Las Vegas.

This time when we flew over Missouri, I kept my eyes chasing the moon. My future lay somewhere there ahead of the plane, and I wanted to see it arrive.

Vegas!

Waiting for our luggage, I only had eyes for one container: a helpful airline baggage handler, all smiles and solicitousness, carried Slugger's cage to me. He was unhappy: a wail came from the cage. But he had been cared for: there was sand, and someone had followed my urgent message painted on his tag "Please water me in Phoenix." I put my fingers between the bars to calm him, and his sad song quieted as I held his cage in my arms.

Our realtor Cathy Bittinger met us at the plane. We loaded gear into her BMW, and hired a limo to take us and the rest of the stuff to Bill's new condo.

We carried a great deal of luggage through with us on the plane: a mistake, since it was costly, and it would have been better to lessen the load and ship it through. The limo driver grumbled about our gypsy-like load of boxes, bags, and slugger's king-sized carrier sitting on my lap. "A car like this isn't meant for this kind of load..." We hushed his worries with a stiff tip, and he happily helped us carry the goods into the condo.

A year or so later, one night while picking up someone at the airport, I saw another couple, surrounded by pet carrier and boxes, and knew instantly I was seeing our own arrival again.

Life Resumes – Sorta

Bill's new place already had its furniture sitting in place and Cathy had stocked the frig with fruit and sodas and snacks. We were exhausted, but too excited to settle down. Instead we set up Slugger's cat box (new sand cour-

tesy of Cathy) and loosed him from his cage. He stalked out on wobbly legs: even he was cramped from the long trip.

Eventually we settled into our beds, waiting for the sun to rise on our new lives.

Federal Express came through like troopers the next day: our three computers came out of the packing crates, and our work never missed a beat. By 10 a.m. we were all writing the final articles and news for the next issue of the magazine.

When we'd planned the move, we knew it would occur right in the middle of our deadline period. It was simply impossible to take time off: the issue must be finished on time. So we arranged the move to have the least disruption in our working lives as possible. We actually only had one-day downtime: the moving/flying day.

Federal Express impressed me a lot during this. They kept to their schedule, and nothing was damaged. We couldn't have done it without them.

Wheeled Up

After a few hours writing, I went to the corner to use a payphone, to line up a rental car. Ended up having to take a cab back to airport row, but a nice little 4-door sedan soon had me wheeling my way back to Bill's place. I kept it for a week, got my NY licensed changed to Nevada, then leased a LeBaron and returned the rental.

My driving skills were still fairly unevolved, but Vegas is delightfully easy. In the weeks to come, as I'd swerve and sway my way through the streets, often lost and almost always frightened, Vegans would just smile and wave me ahead, as I blundered into wrong lanes.

One blistering trip took Bill and I to a truck stop. Lost and already scared, I was suddenly in the middle lane between two triple-van behemoths. My terror reached its highest point in the history of my driving. In the long run, it was good: I was never again that afraid.

A Week to Explore

Casilda Tucker, the previous owner of our house, hadn't yet vacated despite her promise to have the place cleared by the time we arrived. Didn't happen. "Some friends came in and I decided to party for the weekend instead," she told us.

This pretty much left us up the creek. The van was due to arrive in three days, and we had no place to put our belongings. Ended up, we stored our stuff in Bill's garage. This was a financial disaster, of course. But, as ever, Cathy came through for us. S

he knew a couple of guys with a truck. When we finally did get possession of the house a week later, we hired them to reload and move all the furniture and boxes. It cost an additional \$800 we hadn't planned on, to get us settled, but we were fixed.

But for the first seven days, Arnie and I and Slugger

stayed with Bill. We got the phones turned on (the rest of the utilities were prearranged in our first trip.) We got Bill moved in, did the magazine, and spent most afternoons exploring our new hometown.

The thing is, the place is beautiful. Long sunny days slipped into long twilights. The surrounding rims of mountains changed their makeup as often as a Vegas showgirl; every hour's angle of the sun, every passing cloud, showed them in new light.

As we drove around town, we marveled at the pretty buildings. Most of Vegas' shopping centers and strip stores have a vaguely Spanish motif, exotic and pleasing to our eyes. And the graceful palms added a bizarre touch to people used to the sturdy trees of New York State.

Settling In

Autumn seemed to never come: the long slow summer stretched on with a stately and unhurried pace. We splashed and played in Bill's pool for the first week, then in ours all the way into November. We used the hot tub the rest of the winter: our hot thick New York blood laughed at the Vegas winter. Old timers (anyone who's been here five years or more) said it'd be different next year...and it was...but for that first winter, we reveled in the mild season.

Each afternoon we'd hop in the car and explore a little more of the city. We found a good comic store, Page After Page, in the phone book, and that was a once-a-week trip.

The three of us stuck to each other pretty close that fall. We found it wasn't quite as easy to make friends as it had been in New York. People tend to think newcomers are transient, and don't get involved. I was hoping for a welcome wagon or something, but no neighbors called. So I painted on my best smile and called on five or six of the closest. They all received me politely, even with friendly attitudes. And when I said, 'Perhaps we'll have a block party,' they said, 'Great, we'd like to come.' But it started no chains of neighborliness: polite, but aloof, each stayed in his own castle.

Most nights the three of us had dinner together. Late each afternoon Arnie'd ask, 'What's for dinner?' I'd quickly go through my repertory and into repetition, and the inevitable response came: 'Oh, you look tired; we'll eat out.'

That's the real Vegas vice, you know. Most people think it's gambling, but the fact is, though most Vegans gamble some, they quickly get that jones under control. If not, they go under. But food's a different matter. There's a Vegas axiom the residents all repeat to each other, like a Golden Rule: 'It's cheaper to eat out than to cook at home.' It's not true, of course, but all Vegans live by it.

We worked our way through the casino coffee shops. The Sahara won for club sandwiches, but Riviera had the best chicken-in-a-pot. We zeroed in on Palace Station's Iron Horse Café for the best 24-hour menu. One day driving through town we spotted the New York Deli. That sat-

isfied those cravings until, just as suddenly, one day we found it closed. It was years until we located the Celebrity Deli.

On Thanksgiving, Arnie and I went to Phoenix to visit his family, and Bill spent it with Becky and Dennis, our first Vegan friends. Christmas, Bill went to his family in New York, and Arnie and I talked about maybe, possibly, going back into Fandom.

And when the New Year rang in 1990, a new decade and a new life, we toasted ourselves and gazed to the future. We knew that changes would come, but could not imagine what they would be.

Going Into The West. Part 4

My Western Odyssey

In the great circle of life, it now seems inevitable that Arnie and I would move to Nevada.

Well, perhaps a little less inevitable for a Brooklyn Boy whose feet had never been off concrete. (So I exaggerate a little, you get the point.) But tying up with me and my karma meant the wide-open spaces were just over the hill from our Livingston Street view of the Statue of Liberty.

Not that Arnie knew that when he married me. I was in my City Slicker phase back then, and had left any western lore I ever had behind me in Missouri.

But blood will out. When I was a kid, we railroaded all over the west, saw the trails, watched all the western movies, and read the settler-family books. My whole family was favorably inclined to western things. We often assured each other that people were friendlier in the west, as compared to easterners who were known to be cold and inhospitable. For that reason, we always traveled west, and never visited any spot more eastern than Kentucky.

At some point in the early '70s, my interest in western history started to resurface. It was probably sparked by the gift of a Russell art calendar. Whether it was that or something else, I gradually drifted back to admiring the west.

About this time I got a professional reason to pursue my renewed interest (or perhaps it was the other way around.) Katz Kunkel Worley got a contract to design some games for Tynesoft, an English software company. The second in our string was "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show & Rodeo."

I did the backgrounder stuff for the design: extensive research in just exactly how to rope a calf or ride a bronco or barrel race. Saddles and lariats and types of brands and posthole diggers and styles of barbed wire...you get started down this road, and it's amazing the dusty tracks you'll stumble into.

Well, I pretty much steeped myself in rodeo lore, then started down the back alleys of cattle ranching. And, I was reading a little Indian history, and getting the tribes straight in my mind again.

It was about that time I was given My Mission.

Going into the West IX

Now, some people go all their lives and they never really get assigned A Great Quest. They peacefully watch the telly and read the news, and never hear The Call.

Mine came the last night of a January Consumer Electronic Show. We sat in the room with Ken Williams, President of Sierra On-Line, and he said, "Would you like to do a game for Sierra?" Nobody says no to such a question. So, thinking fast, I popped up with, "I'd like to do a game about the Western Migration, an Oregon Trail adventure."

Ken allowed as how that seemed like an interesting idea.

"I'll need to do a little basic research," I explained to Arnie and Bill after that meeting, "to make sure I get the facts right." And they said, "Buy anything you need."

It was like turning me loose in a candy store, with carte blanche to acquire everything that looked good to me. I already had a basic western history collection; it quickly advanced to a good collection of western books. Then I got sources for more arcane knowledge: the trail books, song-books, cookbooks. The diaries, the photograph albums.

And there were other places to go for research: every state's tourist board from Independence to Oregon City got a call from me. Most came up with rare and unusual material about their state's history and geography. Utah was particularly helpful with pages and pages of photocopied diaries, photographs, maps.

When I needed more information about oxen, I went to Purina. They had one man (only one in the country!) who could tell me the weight, and daily consumption of a healthy ox, and how long it would take an ox to die of starvation, and how many pounds of meat that starved ox would produce. Now there are two of us who know.

I hugged a real (stuffed) buffalo, and examined an authentic prairie schooner in Salt Lake City. I studied the wheel tracks cut into the road in Wyoming. I sent away for photographs of the Snake River, with its four places to ford.

I learned the name of every tribe between Missouri and the West Coast, and just exactly what they were doing in 1850. I traced the route of every famous wagon train leader, Indian scout, and mountain trapper that year, to figure where their paths may have crossed and where each might have been seen on which date by the mythical traveler in the game.

Birds, flowers, trees and wildlife were next: I had to know every creature and thing the pioneer would see.

Sitting in Brooklyn Heights, I became the eastern-most expert on The Wild West of 1850.

The game itself took some interesting trails. After creating the route to Oregon, we decided to extend it to California as well. I ran the pioneers through Truckee, and wept over the agonies these historical heroes experienced in the mountains. We like to think of them as Men of Iron and Women of Steel. But they were, sadly, frail as thee and me, just forced by their awful circumstances into acts of ferocious heroism. I marveled at the men, and I cried over the women who carried their children on their backs as

they walked barefoot through the mountain snows.

The game passed through several publishers' hands. Sierra gave me back the game (and let me keep the money) and I resold it to an Ohio company who wanted to produce it for the school market. They acquired a Smithsonian sanction for it and for me—for about two weeks I was the official "Miss Smithsonian Software". Then that company went under, lost the Smithsonian license, and I got the game back to resell.

The last company I sold it to wanted something different: "Give me a game I can sell to schools, that I can do using lots of New Mexico scenery as background." So I scrapped the Oregon Trail project, and started researching the Santa Fe Trail. An altogether different experience for the traveler, and a whole new set of terrain and Indians and wildlife and flora...

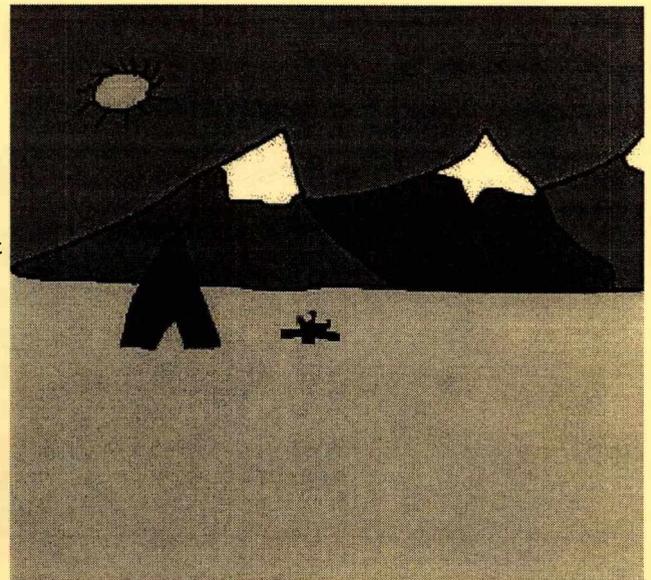
So I researched that side of history to a fair-thee-well. This time I knew the routine, and was a lot more efficient about it. But it was still a major undertaking...and my history library developed a southwestern accent.

About that time, my publisher started marketing a piece of hardware: a gun to fire at the computer monitor for target style games. So, I got a new directive: "Change the game so there'll be a lot more shooting. The educational stuff will still be embedded, but now the gamer can shoot more people and animals."

I objected somewhat to all the buffalo and Indian shooting. I didn't win, exactly, but I was allowed to build in a sort of karmic retribution that came from being too much of a free-shooter.

So, I did it all again. This time I read up on various models of guns and their loading times, the weight and cost of ammunition for each in 1850. And I learned the violence level of all the tribes between Missouri and Santa Fe, so we could build in their responses to all the shooting.

By this point, I'd been going into the west for ten years



or more. I was not only trail wise about The Oregon, The California, and The Santa Fe Trails; I was looking toward other roads. So the publisher got a notion: "How about we fix it so we could sell add-on disks of other trails, so the traveler could choose other routes, other destinations."

That got me started on some of the other major arteries through the Southwest. I started slowly building up the information I'd eventually need for The Mormon, The Bozeman, and The Gila Trails Looking toward future projects, I also went back a bit in time and started making notes on how to recreate Lewis & Clarke's exploration.

I was getting pretty trail-worn by this time. I began talking like Gary Cooper, bought a square-dance dress, and started wearing boots most of the time. I got some really good turquoise, and a leather fringed jacket.

But the epic of the game isn't over, and My Mission isn't yet complete.

The publisher recently brought his wife into the business. She decided what they really should do is start a line of games for teenaged girls. She wants to redo the game as an orphan teen taking her siblings into the west and having a quasi-lesbian friendship with the girl in the next wagon. And, 'Oh, by the way, not so much shooting please, but more gingham.'

The role of the game designer has just as much importance in the scheme of things as the role of scriptwriter for the movies.

But don't think my western odyssey is finished. I own so many western history books at this point that it is absolutely necessary for me to find a way to resell my accumulated knowledge. It's only a matter of time 'til I peddle all this arcane lore to someone else.

Now that I'm in Nevada, I look everyday at the mountains, and wonder at the barrier they represented to the pioneers who passed this way. I study the desert, and mentally tally the edible fodder for the stock. I read the diaries of these heroes, and marvel at their tenacity.

When I go to the airport, I always look at the statue of the broncobuster that welcomes visitors. When the rodeo

comes to town, I break out my western shirts. Often, when I drive along the Las Vegas streets, I play cowboy songs on my car radio.

Don't get me wrong. It wasn't the lure of Cowboys and Indians that made us turn our eyes to the west, when Arnie and I decided to make our move. And I'm not going to tell you that I'm some kind of Annie Oakley/Calamity Jane/Dale Evans cowgirl. I'm allergic to horses, and avoid actually walking on dusty trails.

But my move into the west was preordained. The neon and sequins were only part of it.

Every Fan A Hero

I could never start any discussion of my fan heroes without mentioning Lee Hoffman in the first sentence. It was her light and easy wit that made me want to be a fan, her and Walt Willis and Bob Tucker and Bob Bloch and Shelby Vick. But especially Lee.

Lee proved that a woman could be just as good a fan, and produce just as good a fanzine as any man. When she started *Quandry*, it probably wasn't really her intention to hide her sex. She just didn't mention it. Then, as time passed, she never corrected the people who assumed she was a guy. Oh, there was that birthday card she sent to Walt; hindsight makes some fans see the hint that no one picked up on at the time. But the fact is, she had won her laurels as a good fanned before she showed up at the New Orleans worldcon. Lee is definitely my number one role model.

But as I start counting down my fan heroes, I realize that I have a lot of them.

I salute Forry Ackerman for starting fandom, and Ray Palmer for the first fanzine. I salute SaM for being the first to know that fandom is the Immortal Storm.

I salute Bob Tucker for establishing wit, humor and insurgentism as the fannish coin.

And ShelVy for his kind nature and generosity. And Rotsler, and Burbee, and Laney, and...

I salute Ted White for how much he promotes the highest standards, and for how much he loves fandom and its history.

I salute Ray Nelson for inventing the propeller beanie as our cartooned emblem.

This article could get as long as my mailing list, as long as a fan history book. But you get my drift. Fandom is just full of people who have done their heroic best.

Not just fandom at large, either, but hometown, local fandom. I salute Ken & Aileen for nurturing this desert crew; without them, we'd not be gathered today. I salute Ben & Cathi for having the heart to choose Burbee and Corflu for their wedding. I salute Tom Springer for the way he grasps fandom; he was truly touched by the Spirit of Trufandom. ("Takes one to know one," Arnie said to me when I expressed this opinion.)



Going into the West XI

I salute Arnie, truly my hero among heroes: For always helping, for always encouraging, for always holding the torch of trufandom against all forces.

Do you begin to get the idea? Fandom is made up of people who are giants in my eyes.

That's why it's so hard to accept it when any fan is exposed in other than heroic light. I wrote before, of the genre of heroes: "We like to think of them as Men of Iron and Women of Steel. But they were, sadly, frail as thee and me, just forced by their awful circumstances into acts of ferocious heroism."

Fan heroes may be forced to their acts by a different style of Awful Circumstances, but it comes to the same. They get the badge of heroism pinned to their chest by such worshippers as me because they did what they did, or do what they do, out of devotion to fannish goals.

Ben Wilson said, in a recent *Wild Heirs* lettercol, something quite profound. Something to the order of, 'I'm not the first to discover there's a difference between the person and what he writes.' That's how it is with heroes. Often they don't stand too much close examination, beyond the specific act that wins them their badges of merit.

I remember well the first time it happened to me. I adored a certain fan and hung on every word written or spoken. I considered this fan a paragon. Later, when I got a glimpse of his feet, it fairly well shattered me.

But after it was all over, when I was able to explore my feelings, I surprised myself: I liked the fan just as well as before, for the same reasons I admired him at first. His accomplishments were still the same, whether or not he had other faults.

That experience helped me. Before, I would have said, "I could never call any man a hero who did thus-and-so." After, I realized that a weak person might rise and shine at times. And the tragedy of weakness does not darken the brightness.

And so I can look around at my friends, and scan my mailing list, and think of the world of fans, and I can name many heroes and why I love them, without turning my head away in sorrow at their failings.

I salute Harry Warner for always sending a letter.

I salute Robert Lichtman for his love of fan history.

I salute Don Fitch for his hospitality.

I salute Chuch for his wicked wit.

I salute Redd for his unfailing wisdom and logic.

I salute rich for his passion.

I salute.....

I salute.....

A Hero's Life

Paula met me at the Oklahoma City airport. It was the first time we'd seen each other since, oh, when was it...two years before Mother died, at least eight or ten years ago. She was thinner, not yet recovered from anorexia and alcohol, but she blazed in the waiting crowd, drawing eyes to her jet-black hair and copper skin. Like most Native

Americans (we wrinkle, you know) her age seemed indeterminate, and I had to count on my fingers to set her at 43.

Her happy chatter hardly ceased during the drive to Ed's place. She'd only moved back to Oklahoma a few weeks earlier; left a good job in Nashville to relocate to be near him. There was no regret in her; her bubbly spirit exuded gaiety even when she admitted that clerking at a convenience store was a step down from being a journeyman printer. But Oklahoma is where she is now, and she looked around her surroundings with the same joy as when she left.

Meeker is in that triangle of Indian Territory bounded by Midwest City on the west, Shawnee on the east, and Chandler to the north. Rolling hills and farmland, gently wooded, the clay nourishes a lush ground cover: the area is festive in green with red earth trim. Ed's land is 8-10 miles from the village; the prettiest piece of property I've seen. Five acres of plush, well-trimmed lawn, with a small woods running across one corner; it's easy to see why he placed his trailer there twenty-five years ago. Since then the Worley roots dug deep. He moored the trailer on a permanent foundation, and added on— first a master bedroom, then a family room, and most recently a fine front porch, shady and carpeted, with bird feeders hanging from the roof.

Cars lined the front; I recognized Ed's Chrysler, and Mary's wagon. Cory's truck was there; Paula explained that her son had also come back to stay near Ed. Like Ed, Cory is a plasterer, working in the city five days, but on Worley land every weekend.

I greeted Mary. She looked tired, but still a handsome woman. I remember the last letter Ed wrote to me, a dozen years ago: he said, "I like my place; my girls are strong and healthy; I enjoy working outside, and Mary is still beautiful." He was like that. No matter the load put on him, he'd stand up under it, and smile while he was doing it.

A whirr of tires on gravel, and Marnie came dashing into the house, hair done up in flames, flawless makeup that made her look like a golden Madonna as she swept up Baby Bailee, and leaned over to kiss Andy, all grown up and six years old and too big to lift in her arms. The most beautiful of us all, she got her looks from her grandmother. Mary used to look like that when she was 17 and first married Ed. I remember hanging on her skirts; she'd comb my hair like I was her own child: then later, when I was sick, Mary sat by my bedside and wept with me when the baby died.

Rounds of laughter moved from room to room. I dandled Bailee on my knee and Andy hung on my elbow, while I promised to watch *The Lion King* tomorrow, to play on the swings, to walk in the woods.

Kim came rushing in with her two children; Paula's daughter looks like a Victorian cameo, delicate in color, frail as a raindrop. She carried Raven, then set the toddler down. My first meeting with this baby, I greeted my great-great niece on one side, as the older girl tackled me from the other. Ashley remembered seeing me two years ago,

and begged me to pick her up and swing her around as I had before.

Waves of conversation filled the kitchen: kids and babies and toddlers and young married girls barely out of their teens, and Paula suddenly turned middle-aged with her grandbabies on her knee. Amid it all, Mary preparing ice tea and Band-Aids and face washes and dinner, answering questions from every side about where-do-you-put-that, and have-you-seen, and what-should-we-d-about, and can-I-borrow-your... Awash in such life, I sat gingerly on a chair, one child tugging at my hand, and another crawling on my lap, dotting on Paula. The younger of Ed's children, she has his fire and quickness, but Mary's forgiving nature.

Ed was fiery, quick to anger too, a wild country boy full of mischief and energy. When we moved to town from the farm at Twin Springs, he was only 13 or so, and things were never the same for him again. He lost his dog; the folks said the big collie would have to stay behind, and only Mother's little shepherd Pudgy could come with us. Pango did one of those doggish miracles, and somehow followed the car 14 miles to town. But they wouldn't relent, and made Ed take him back.

School didn't go well either. Teased by the town boys, the country kids hung together, fought together, unwilling to adapt. It might have worked out, but it didn't. In singing class (an effrontery to the country boys) the teacher reprimanded him for not participating. She made him stand in front of the class, and told him "Sing your name." He refused and stood there silently humiliated; the next day she again stood him in front of the class, with the same demand.

The third day, he ran away. Mother found him down on the railroad tracks, and brought him home. And then she beat him, but he wouldn't go back to school no matter what. So she put him to apprentice with an old Irish plasterer. Ed was fourteen, and for four years, T.A. owned him: abused him, cursed him, cuffed him. On the day Ed became a journeyman plasterer, he walked away from T.A. and never worked with him again.

Life got better at 17. He met Mary, and would bicycle to see her, 18 miles outside Poplar Bluff, every evening. They married; by the time he was 19 Linda was born. That was 1949. Two years later, Paula arrived.

He went where the work was, first to St. Louis, and then to Oakland, and back to Poplar Bluff, and back into the west to Oregon. The girls grew up in Oregon and married there. When the time came to seek work elsewhere, Ed and Mary moved to Oklahoma, and so did both daughters with their husbands and children.

Like Abraham, he gathered his flocks and his family near him, and they settled in the Cherokee Strip. When Linda's marriage failed and she needed help with the kids, he took Marnie and Christopher to raise. Later, when Marnie's first marriage failed, he took her and Andy and Raven. Paula's oldest, Kim, married a local boy, so Ed took him into his crew, and Mack and Kim bought the plot of land just down the road.

That was the thing about Ed and Mary. They always stood behind their kids, no matter what. If one of them got in trouble at school, no matter — Ed stood like a rock beside them. If jobs ran out, or marriages failed, or sickness struck, each knew where home was, and knew they'd get a loving welcome. Ed once said to Mother, 20 years or so ago before her mind had gone, "It seems like just when I get ahead a little, there's another family to raise." But he never stopped, and he never reproached her that she had given up on him.

Two years ago Ed and I sat and looked through his family photograph albums, a collection of frozen moments with family members showing off or standing proud or vacationing or working... when we finished, he summed it up: "Cars, and Kids, and Dogs, and Fish... that's what it's all been about."

When he awoke, Mary and Paula led, half-carried, him into the kitchen. He sat on his chair, smiling calmly at the flurry of activity that swirled around him. As grandchildren and great grandchildren passed by, they'd stop to hug him. The baby hung on his knee, uncertain why he didn't lift her to his lap. Mary gave him dinner, and she and Paula took turns raising the spoon to his mouth.

That night, Cory and I sat stargazing in the pool of darkness beside the woods. There's a lot of air traffic out of Oklahoma City, in moving contrast to the Big Dipper and the North Star. We both were hoping to see Something, yet both too rooted in realism to dream up an alien encounter.

Cory's such a joy: a wild Indian boy, nothing but muscle and bone. We talked a lot about mystical things, and the essences one feels but cannot see, and the visions that tie the past to the present.

That entire branch of my family is very Native American. Ed's seven-sixteenth blended with Mary's half, to produce a flock of Cherokee children that could pass muster at any powwow. And it's not just their looks: for some reason, they've all turned their souls to their Indian background. Visions and feelings and herbs and artifacts and lore. With their matter-of-fact beliefs in the old ways, I was caught up in passions that seemed far from my city life.

Cory's working toward college; he plans to study computer science. "I know all about computers," he explained sincerely, although he's never owned one. Artistic, too, he has great enterprise coupled with some talent. He visited a meat packing plant, bought five cow skulls for \$25 each, then painted them with western designs, and sold them for \$200 each. I saw photos of the finished works; the boy definitely has something. My pride can hardly be stilled.

And, oh yes, he told me he knows how to build a faster-than-light space drive. I figure he'll get over it. And meanwhile, I'm ever so happy that one of my relatives knows how to do it.

We talked about Paula, and I said I thought she'd grow to be a Healer. Grandma Suzie Worley was one; she'd sit by the bedside of a sick person (I know cause it happened to me) and they'd just get better as she rocked and crooned and petted their forehead with her hand. In that wooded

Going into the West XIII

plot, at that hour, it didn't seem too farfetched that Suzie may have had a Gift, and that Paula might be growing to have Talent. She's already getting deep into herbology; I even had her recommend some for me, just in case they can help.

The next day Marnie and I walked through the woods with Andy and Ashley. Andy ran crashing through the woods, as we scolded and fretted about the possibility of snakes. Finally he saw one, just a few feet off the path, and was happy to return to stand by us as we marveled at its diamond skin. That afternoon, Marnie went to Chandler to get a wheelchair, while I played with the kids and the live-stock.

When Linda came home, after one of her problems, she brought back her cat. And when Marnie came back after her second marriage failed, she brought back a dog. Paula was visiting someone and saw an old turkey being tortured by pair of peacocks, so she paid the farmer \$25 for the turkey to save its life, and the farmer threw in a couple of guinea hens. Then Paula got four hens and a rooster to live with the guineas and the turkey in the chicken coop. The strange familial fowl group strutted and gobbled and crowed as we walked the dog round the pen. Later that weekend, Cory found an abandoned pup on the road, and brought him to the yard to become the newest member of the ménage.

That evening nine of us went to dinner. We ordered up a Chinese banquet suitable to feed two dozen. "It might be the last time," I explained to the youngsters who questioned the amount. Ed sat, looking wise and patriarchal, wheelchair at the head of the table.

I met Paula's new husband the next day: John's mangy and hippy and a tough dairy worker, and completely likeable. I kissed him in greeting, certain I'd known him for several lifetimes, he was so like the wild youths I used to run with. Within fifteen minutes he'd told me he was a Shaman, let me smoke his Cherokee tribal pipe, and played some screaming blues for me on his guitar. In return, I encouraged him and Paula to come to Vegas.

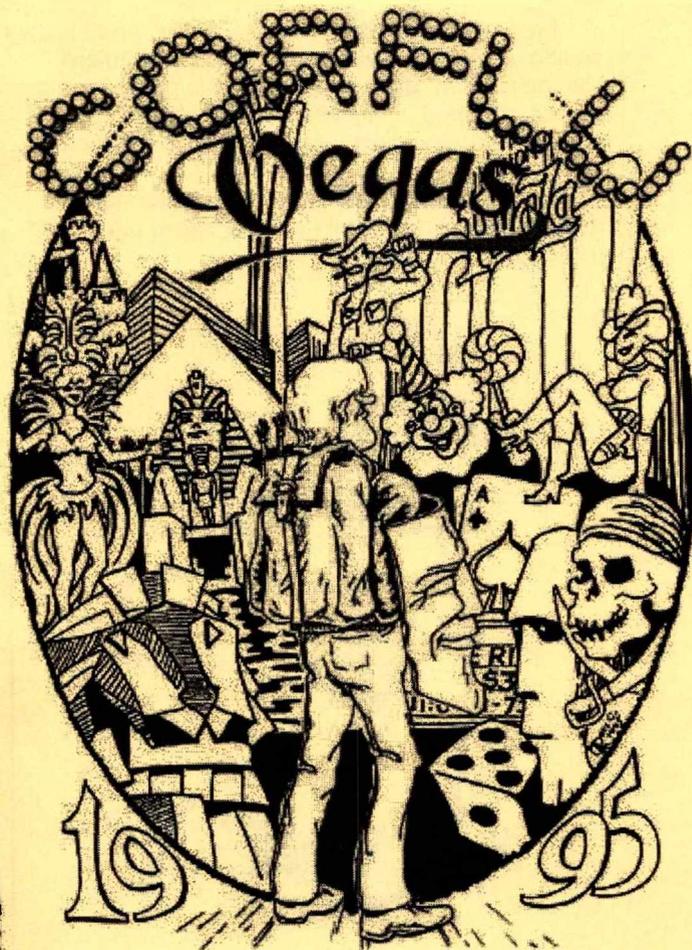
Another day, with Fern Gully and The Lion King and the inflatable plastic pool and the dog-fight and tell-me-a-story and let's-go-look-at-the-snake. The flurry of life was like a ball of feathers from a burst pillow. I tired from straining my neck to see everyone, straining my ears to hear them all. That night we visited with Kim; it was Mack's birthday, and a family gathering of the McCutcheons. Feeling like stepchildren at a reunion, we sat on the sidelines to watch these Oklahomans in their native rites. In this case, the McCutcheons are musical. After dinner, they sat up their speakers, keyboard and instruments, and had a Sing. Now, normally, this is one of my most enjoyable family pastimes; we used to gather around the piano when

I was growing up, and sing old Baptist hymns together. It was a friendly sort of activity. But the McCutcheons are from a different breed: we listened to a dozen or so songs and not a one I knew. Later I conferred with Mary and Kim, who agreed. Among my entire family of God-fearing, church-attending kin, none recognized the hymns we heard.

When I said goodbye the next day, I knelt before my brother and told him that I loved him. I told him to do what Mary tells him, and take his medicine. And I told him, "We'll meet again." And he looked at me with his blank and staring eyes, not knowing who I was or what I was telling him.

So I left him there, like a Tolkien king, age 65, and every day going further into the west. My brother, my hero, a river of goodness to his family. On his little piece of the Cherokee Strip, surrounded by his loving kin, wrapped in the arms of Alzheimer's.

He spoke only twice during the weekend. Once he said, "Jewel Jaco." That was the name of his friend, the boy on the next farm, when we lived at Twin Springs. And when one of the great grandchildren kissed him and said, "I love you grampa," he answered, "I love you too."



Something Masterly This Way Comes

I read the letter from Walter A. Willis, and I knew I couldn't let it rest. I wanted to; ghu knows I didn't want to tell him. But some sense of fair play kept razing me, trumped all my best cards that I wanted to hold close to my chest, and forced me to show my hand.

I really did have to tell him. You understand. It might have been better if he never knew, but I couldn't keep it from him.



So now he knows, and we have this Situation.

It started when I decided I'd waited as long as I could. I couldn't postpone it anymore.

"Arnie, we got a letter from WAW," I spoke quietly, deliberately keeping enthusiasm from my voice. Perhaps he'd let it pass.

No such luck. Quick as a fly ball, he pulled his head out of Bill James Scouting Report. "Walt Willis? Did you say we have a letter from Walt?"

I sighed. It had begun.

"Yes, we got a holiday letter. Actually it's mostly for QUANT Suff, but he addressed it to both of us."

That was my last ditch try to keep it all to myself. There was just a chance that he'd go back to the baseball book if he thought the letter didn't directly concern him.

No such luck. The WAW name was too big a draw. He laid the book aside.

"Well, what did he say?" asked my spouse with mounting enthusiasm. He picked up the propeller beanie that he always keeps by his side, and balanced it atop his head. Ready. Eager.

I gulped. Knowing I couldn't back down now, I decided to let it all hang out.

"He praised your writing."

"W..ha..a.t?" Arnie's question was like air rushing from a puffed-up balloon.

"Walt said your tribute to SaM in Xtreme #5 was a spectacular piece of writing." There. Maybe that would satisfy him.

"That's great: Arnie practically glowed, he was

Something Masterly This Way Comes II

beaming his pleasure. For a moment I thought it would end there. "...What else did he say?"

Now we were in for it. "He said your editorial was Masterly."

It was out of the bag now. There was no going back.

"Masterly! Walt Willis called my editorial Masterly?" The air surrounding him had an explosive glow, and Arnie began to vibrate like a tuning fork. "Masterly! Walt Willis says I am Masterly!"

I picked up my pen, hoping it wasn't too late to deflate his ego before things got out of hand. "Now, that's not right. He didn't say You are Masterly, only the editorial."

No inconsequential prick could ever pierce the swell of pride I saw before me.

"I'm Masterly...Willis says I'm Masterly," Arnie crooned it to himself like a lullaby.

He began moving the furniture around the living room, like a man possessed. The sofa and all chairs were now facing toward the East. "Toward Ireland, isn't that sweet?" I thought to myself. Then he pulled the big armchair up to the hearth, raised above the rest of the room like an impromptu throne, facing his audience.

"No, Arnie," I tried to stem the tide of swollen ego. "Willis didn't say you are the Master." I pulled down the throne and rearranged the chairs, as I tried to bring normalcy back to the room.

"You better watch this Master stuff," I growled as sinisterly as I could manage.

"I'm Masterly...Willis says I'm Masterly." Arnie didn't seem to notice my efforts.

"Perhaps I can have it printed on a t-shirt?" He beamed with excitement as he thought of it.

"Don't you think that would be a little ostentatious?" Sometimes reason works with Arnie.

"Business cards." He obviously didn't hear me, and continued to stew. "I certainly will have it added to my business cards."

You mean...Arnie 'Masterly' Katz?" I tried to imagine how this would look.

"Certainly not. It should read 'Arnie Katz the Masterly'."

I stirred my tea.

He turned to stare at me, as if he hadn't really seen me for a while. "You could get a tattoo!"

"A tattoo! - Not likely." I'm firm on this point.

"Sure, it could be nice." He'd obviously forgotten my position on volunteering for pain.

"You know Jews don't get tattoos," I countered.



"What? You're so Jewish all of a sudden?"

I arranged my Cherokee Baptist features into what I hoped was a Yiddish demeanor. "No tattoos. That's final."

He simmered for a minute, then proposed, "What say we get you a t-shirt that says 'I'm With Masterly'?"

"I think that may be a politically incorrect message." I wouldn't want to start trouble with the feminists.

He ignored me. Not the first time. "And...and..." he enthusiasm was building, "I'll get a ring!" he announced with determination.

"What kind of ring? Like Hulk Hogan's World Championship Wrestling Ring? Like a Superbowl Ring?"

"Not exactly...more like the Pope's ring."

"Oh." My Yiddisha-Baptist-Cherokee background didn't prepare me for this.

"The Vegrants...no, all of fanzine fandom..." he paused to fix the vision in his own mind, "can come to see me, to kiss my Masterly ring."

I just stared at him. Walt didn't have any idea what forces he had unleashed.

"But, Arnie," I tried to reason with him. "It may take a long time to have a ring made."

His brow furrowed with thought, as he tried to deal with this problem.

"Until it comes," said the Masterly Arnie Katz, "they can kiss the face of my watch."

Fan-Metheus: A-Tom With No Ease

Tom Springer knew this must be the desert. Instinct told him, instinct and the stinking alkali smell. Even more, the glow of the Las Vegas lights far far in the distance told him, as they blotted out the Big Dipper and the North Star. Because, no matter what had happened, Earth still had its polarity.

There was no cactus. There was no living thing. Only the long white stretch of burning sand that lay before him, and the long white stretch of burning sand behind. A line of mountains lay like a cloud of gray ash far away, trailing across the horizon.

Winds blew, and the sand whipped around him,



cutting him with its tiny blades. Rain fell, and the sand turned to mud. Then the sun baked the mud into a white cement. And still Tom crawled on.

Calluses formed on his elbows and knees. His broad shoulders toughened. His sinewy thighs turned to steel. And he kept on crawling.

A form reared up before him, and words drifted to him. "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

It was Hooper. Standing tall and mighty, his fez blotted out the sun. "Crawl, Tom, crawl. You'll find nothing but sand."

Hooper produced a cigarette lighter from his pocket. He flipped it, and a golden flame danced in his hand.

"Hooper!" shouted Tom. He raised his hands, trying to reach the fire, but pain stopped him. He fell back to the desert.

Hooper waved the flame in front of Tom's eyes, standing just out of reach from the quivering fan.

"Keep crawling," he said bitterly. "Crawl round and round this stinking desert. You'll find nothing but sand."

Suddenly he was gone.

Tom wept. The tears flowed wetly into his mouth and gave him strength. "I must go on," he swore. "I must find my way into the Valley of Fire." And he crawled, painfully, step by step, into the west.

The sand whipped around him as the wind grew stronger. He reached back, pulled out his knapsack. It held three things. There was a copy of The Enchanted Duplicator. There was a portable computer. There was a picture of the Tucker Hotel.

Fan-Metheus: A=Tom with No Ease II

He typed a few words of the next issue of **Brody**, then read six chapters of *The Enchanted Duplicator*. He lay down in the sand, eyes fixed on the picture of Tucker Hotel.

In his tormented dreams, he saw it happen. Silken voices murmured to shopkeepers about merchandise reorganization. Fleets of trucks arrived from the north, filled with replacement supplies. Stealthy figures crept over the Vegas Valley, dark in the shadow of The Great Man, as they peered under the hoods of cars.

Joyce tapped him on the shoulder. Tom knew it was her before he looked up. He could tell by the brown wooden box she had in her hand.

"Tom," she said, "You've got to hurry." He raised himself up on his hands and knees. Her voice drifted to him as he crawled away. "Hurry, Tom, we're waiting."

Tom remembered how it started. He drug himself inch by inch over the burning white sands, and thought of the beginning.

Everyone had been so happy at SilverCon III. It didn't seem like anything could disrupt the Fandom of Good Cheer. Then it happened. It was the lure of cheap shrimp cocktails that started it. But then it grew. Dan printed up membership cards. Someone invented a Secret Signal. Before anyone knew what was going on. The Shrimp Boys had become a power to deal with.

Next, Hooper started threatening people with fish. "I'll hit you with a flounder," he bellowed. It was obvious that The Shrimp Boys had gained support of the denizens of the deep.

Vegas fandom went happily on, blissfully unaware of the mounting perfidity. They pubbed their ish, baked their turkeys, and held numerous legal conferences as they discussed the important issues of the day, like the history of numbered fandom and the future of fanzines. They felt secure. Impervious. "Let them have their measly shrimp," they said to one another. "We'll roast our all-beef hotdogs and be strong."

Then it all exploded. Dinners lay icy on their plates. Fireplaces were cold; the buns were frozen. Even the sparkplugs had been removed from their cars. When they went to buy fire-starters for the barbeque, there were none. Matches disappeared from



the supermarket stores. "I don't know where they are," whined the clerk at Smith's Grocery. "Someone must have moved them."

"No matter," chirped the shopping fen, "we'll use lighters."

A large display of lighters gleamed like plastic jewels, in all the colors of the rainbow. But, across every lighter was emblazened one word, "Childproof". No one in Las Vegas, where fan hearts are pure, untroubled by vice, corruption or mechanical dexterity, could fathom how to use them.

And so Tom crawled. The future of Las Vegas Fandom depended on him.

Before him a shape began to form from the dust. It

grew larger, more ominous, crouching like a wounded buffalo on the desert floor. Its shadow fell across his body, cooling him. He raised one caloused paw, to wipe the sand from his eyes. He could barely distinguish the outline of a sign.

"Moapa Smoke Shop" it said. He eased himself through the door, and lay at the feet of a bronze idol.

"What'll you have?" said the idol.

"Must have...." Tom's throat was parched, his body wrecked. His blistered mouth formed words, but they sounded like the cackling of a demented crow.

"Speak up, white eyes." The bronze idol seemed irritated.

"Lighter.... must have lighter." Tom lay with his face turned toward the sky.

"Two for a buck," said the Indian. He picked up a big plastic bucket filled with contraband lighters, and put it before Tom. "Take your pick." They gleamed and glowed to Tom, like a femmefan's smile. None of them were approved for children.

Tom laid his dollar down, and picked up two lighters.

Fans would again gather around turkey-laden tables. Fans would again fire their barbeques, roast their all-beef hotdogs. Sidebars would gather them in dens and garages all over Las Vegas. They'd warm themselves with the flames he brought, light their candles, start their seed fires. It would all happen again.

Tom lit a pipe, and smiled up at the neon lights that danced across the sky as the sands rippled and rocked him to sleep.

Fandom had been saved.

"Thank you, Mr. Bester."

The Lighter Side

It's getting worse.

It's been a problem right from the start, but in the last year, the phenomenon has accelerated. All these years, I've kept quiet about it. But now I think it's time to end my secrecy.

Fandom needs to know.

Arnie is turning into a creature of the darkside. That's the only way to explain it.

After a statement like that, you may well understand why I've chosen to keep it a Katz secret for the last quarter century. Lots of husbands and wives have secrets; lots of wives guard their spouse's reps, keeping the kinky tendencies private, hiding the dank underbelly of a sleek exterior.

So it has been with us. Content to let fandom bask in the light of the Katzian wit, I've hidden our sordid little secret for 25 years.

It started subtly enough. When we purchased the first pair of lamps for our first apartment, way back in 1970 in Brooklyn, he chose the ones with the burlap shades. "Those are pretty dark," I warned him. "The burlap will mute most of the light."

I didn't think anything about it when he insisted; I like muted light. And the burlap shades seemed appropriate for our post-hippy yet still rustic lifestyle.

A few years later we went to buy drapes for the living room windows. I showed Arnie a few selections down at the local Korvette's: an airy open weave, some frilly lace, a deep green silk.

He chose the dark green. Floor to ceiling. They looked great, and produced about the same effect as World War II blackout curtains.

"Ah, well," I thought, "the room looks nice, and you can't see the dust when it's so dim. Plus, the curtains will probably block any fallout in case of nuclear war."

At the grocery, I'd reach for the 100-watt bulbs. He'd trade them for a pack of 60s. Finally we compromised on expensive 3-wayers. When they were in the burlap-sheathed lamps, I'd switch up to the 150 setting, to build a little island of sunny light on the tabletop. Arnie'd walk into the room and turn them back to the 50-watt setting, reducing the sunny light to a circle of foggy dinge.

Mostly I didn't say anything. It's a wife's role to be compliant, you know. But once in a while, I'd explode on him, particularly if he asked me to operate the stereo or adjust the television settings. "Dammit, Arnie, I can't see the controls! You might be able to see in the dark, or operate equipment by touch. But I need more light."

He'd "pooh-pooh" my outburst, set the controls himself, and the moment would pass. In darkness.

When we moved to Nevada, it was obviously to a brighter state of being. The Mojave Desert sun bears down like a scene from Lawrence of Arabia and produces so much light every day, that it seems the night has to glow too, to use up some of the surplus sunshine. (Some people say that glow is from the neon, but it's not. It's just left over rays from the bright days.)

Arnie moved the burlap-shrouded lamps into the window-wrapped room he'd tagged for his own office. But they didn't diminish the light level, at least not

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much. So he took to closing the venetian blinds. "Dammit, Arnie, don't close the blinds! You took this room because it was sunny and bright; why are you blocking the light?"

Mostly he ignored me. When he didn't dismiss my complaints outright, he made up lies: "The blinds have to stay closed because of the copy machine. It has to be dark because of the videogame monitors. I want it dark so I can see the computer better."

Defeated, I let him be. Now and then, I'd sneak into his office while he was sleeping, and crack the shade a little so I could see our trees.

But the phenomenon continued to grow.

Some families have televisions stacked on top of each other. When they buy a new TV, they just set it on top of the old one. I've seen, and I'm sure you have too, as many as three television sets pyramided, or even four. Why do they keep the old ones? I've never known.

The Katz household has a similar situation with lamps. They're not pyramided, but instead left dark and useless in their original spots, unreplaced. At the moment, we have burned out lamps scattered through the house, occupying the spaces where new ones should go.

He likes it like that. As long as they are sitting in their places, no new lamps can flood the rooms with bright light.

He extends this aversion to include all other light sources as well. During the cold winters in Brooklyn Heights, sometimes we'd use candles in our kitchen, which seemed to connect directly to Siberia. They added a glow of comforting light and a surprising amount of heat.

But we were quick to give this up, once we moved to Nevada. There are no candles on the Katz table. He claims not to like them for fear of fire, but we know better, don't we?

He couldn't really overcome the Christmas tree lights, but he did the next best thing. He set them to twinkle, rather than staying steady on. Twinkling means they're only on half as much; the rest of the time they're dark.

I used to leave the outside Christmas lights up year round, and use them on nights when we were having Socials. They made a cheery beacon, an easy way for arriving guests to spot the house. But I had to stop. "That's too bizarre. Too outré. The neighbors will think you're crazy," claimed this paragon of the conservative straight and narrow.

But I know it's cause he didn't like the illumination.

The latest is the strangest step in our descent into darkness. Arnie has become angry at certain light fixtures. And, because he's angry, he won't give them any more bulbs.

It's true. I know it sounds bizarre. But this is Arnie the K we're talking about.

It happened this way. Following a burglary a couple of years ago, we had a security system installed. The gun-toting-guard-who-comes-when-we-call told us that the best deterrent to a repeat crime is outdoor light. "Leave them on all night," he advised.

This put Arnie one the spot. For months, disliking it, he'd dutifully turn on the patio light every evening. But it bothered him.

Six months ago he started his dark campaign. "These bulbs burn out too quickly," he complained, as he replaced the patio light. When the bulb burned out again four months ago, he repeated his complaint, more strongly: "There's something wrong with this fixture; the bulbs should last longer."

The last time the bulb burned out, he balked. "There's something wrong with the patio fixture. It uses up the bulbs too fast."

And then he said it: "I'm not going to put any more bulbs in it."

So here we are. Blinds closed, burlap shades over the lights, burned out lamps stacked like dark cordwood, patio light off.

Where do we go from here? I can only guess, but I bring a warning. Lately he's been measuring the Las Vegas Valley on the map, carefully counting out the miles from Sunrise Mountains in the east, to Sheep Mountains in the west.

I think he's building a parasol for the city.



