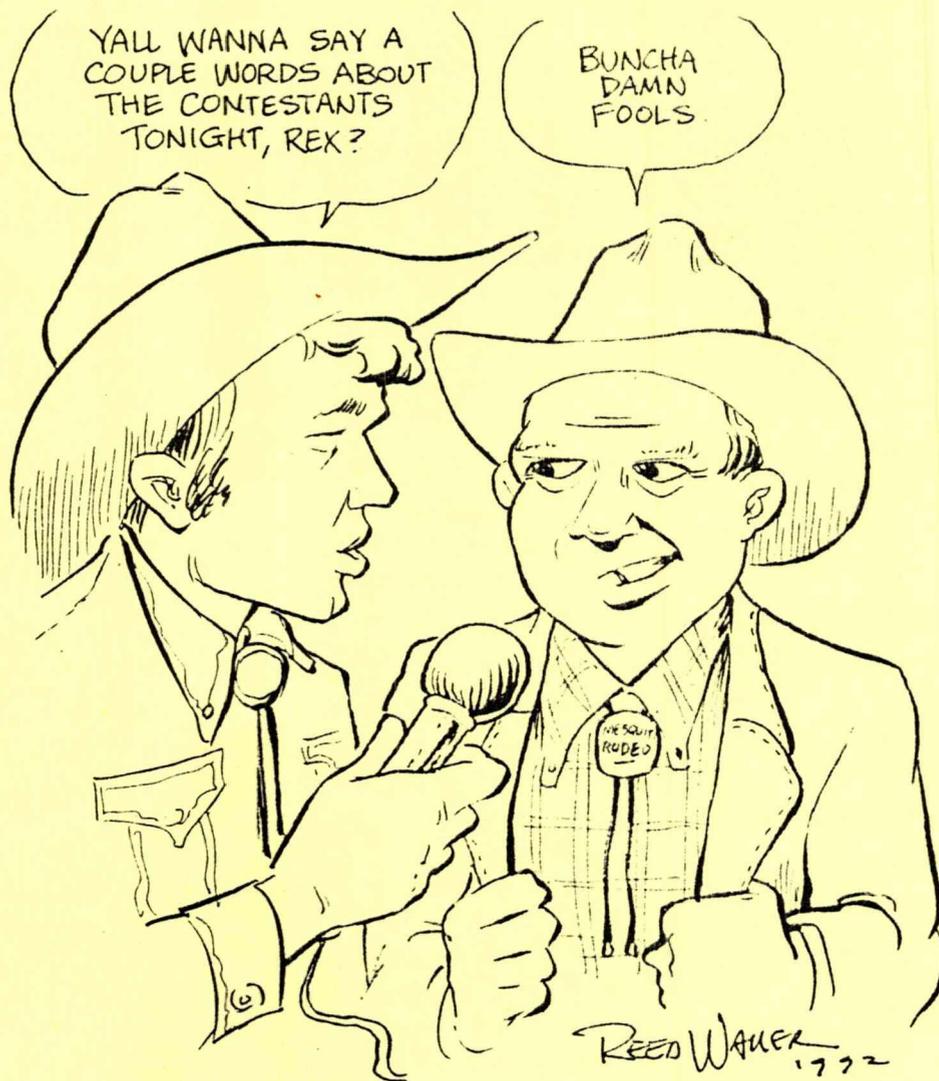
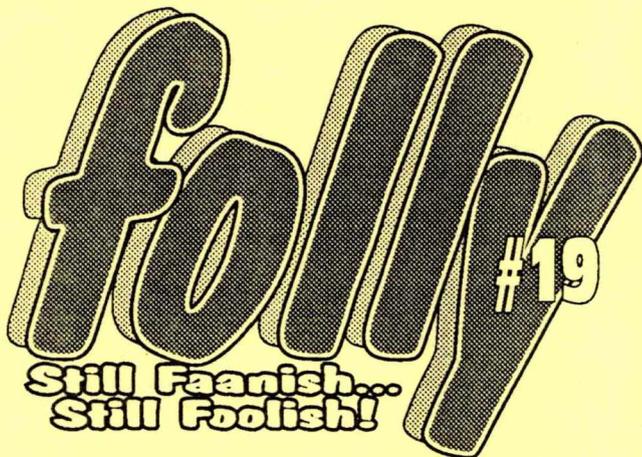
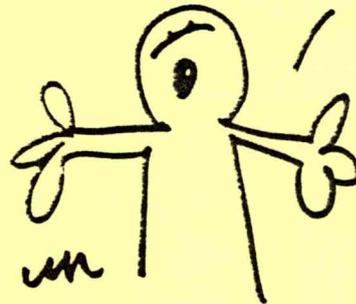
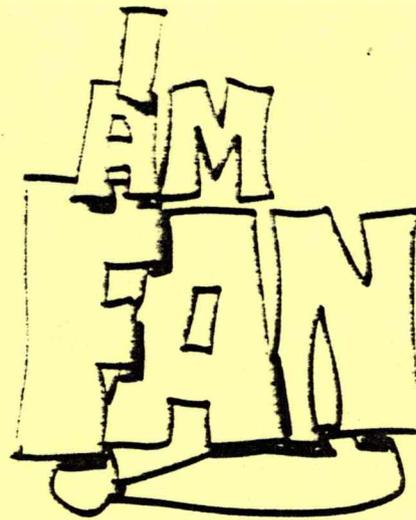


FOLLY

#19

Still Faanish...
Still Foolish!





Contents

- Katzenjammer • editorial • Arnie • 3
- Those Hazy, Laser-Crazy Days of Summer • Arnie, again • 13
- Through Brightest Fandom • trip report • Geri Sullivan • 15
- Wrestling with Fandom • modest proposal • "Elmer Perdue, Jr." • 19
- Hoax!: The Katz Conspiracy • faan fiction • "Joseph Jung Jr." (it's me!) • 22
- Charrisma • column • Chuch Harris • 32
- Pantry • column • Shelby Vick • 34
- The Ultimate Fanzine • fantique classic reprint • A. Vincent Clarke • 35
- Blue Jaunt • column • Joyce Katz • 38
- Reverberations • letters • 40

Folly #19, the first Revival Issue, November 1993, is edited by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. **Folly** is available for letters of comment, contributions of art or written material, or your fanzine in trade. It is published approximately four times a year. Publication Date: November 10, 1993.

Member fwa.

Last night I folded **Folly**.

With some reluctance, and a bit of anguish, I mentally transferred it from the "late" file to the "fanzines I once published" bin. Bruce Pelz can notify the establishment that binds complete runs of fanzines for him.

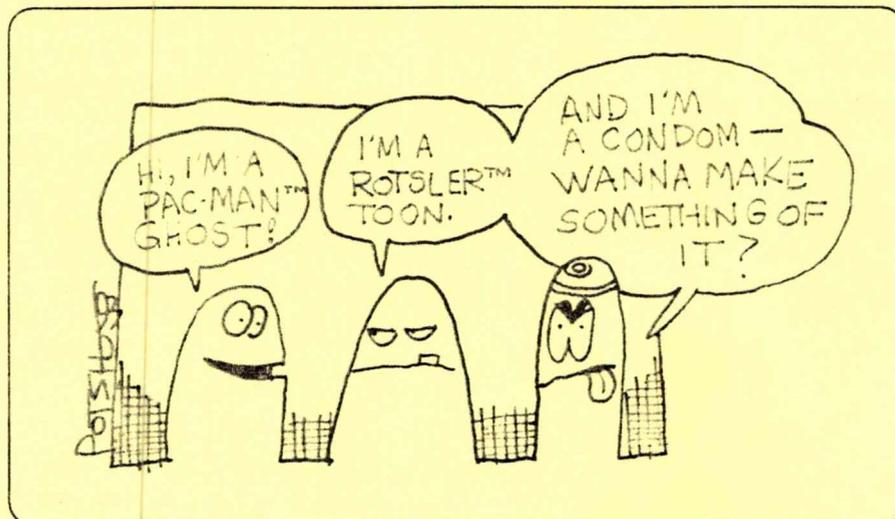
After 18 issues in a little less than two years, I haven't produced a **Folly** since October 1992. And it wasn't even a regular issue! **Folly #18** consisted entirely of "The Gist of the MAGIcon."

A full year between issues of a monthly fanzine is shameful. It was a harsh truth, but I tried to face it with maturity.

"I have mastered the art of not publishing the monthly **Folly**," I told Joyce the next morning. "I'm ready to explore new vistas."

"What does that mean?" she asked, suddenly suspicious. Joyce is ever-alert for any of my plans that might somehow result in her having to do something.

"I'm in three apas now: FAPA, SAPS, and SFPA," I began. I went on to describe my recent apac. I've been doing large fanzines for all three, about 32 pages per apazine. Each has a long editorial and mailing comments, plus contributions by myself and others that cycle through all of them.



"Sounds like you've got the situation covered," Joyce said. She beamed at me, obviously impressed with the order I had brought to my once-chaotic fanzine publishing.

"That's the point," I persisted. "I keep thinking I could improve my system and do even less work."

She nodded enthusiastically. "Less work sounds good."

"I've decided to reduce each apazine to a simple natter-and-comments format and start a new fanzine that will circulate through all three press associations." I explained that the overlap among the groups isn't extreme, and might be

KatzenJammer

partially offset by the prevalence of joint memberships. "I'll send it out to fans who aren't in the three groups, which might be 50-75 copies."

"Well..."

"Think of the savings in postage!" I exclaimed. "I'll be able to do a larger fanzine."

"Larger?" she said.

"After all, I'll only be publishing quarterly instead of monthly!" My reasoning was irrefutable.

"But you haven't been publishing any genzine for the last year," she protested, "so this is really spending more money, not less."

"But my intent was to publish monthly," I replied. "That should count for something."

"What are you going to name it?" she said, accepting the inevitable. "This is the chance you've always wanted to do a zine called **Nude Photography**."

"This is not the fated hour for **Nude Photography**," I decided. "Maybe in some apa." I rattled off a few ideas for names, none of which sounded good to either of us.

"What about **Dare**?" Joyce suggested.

"It sounds like a 1950s digest-size cheesecake magazine," I said. "I think I saw Dianne Webber or Betty Page in a magazine called **Dare**."

"**Rampage**"

"You mean, **Rampage** the friendly fanzine? Too hostile."

"What about **Big Bang**?" she proposed.

"Not bad, but I'd probably call it **Bhang!**, with a "h" for fannishness," I said. "But then it would be awfully close to **Blat!**"

That was when I told her that, in a lackadaisical way, I had always wanted to do a fanzine for each letter of the alphabet.

"Except X," I added. Since we were voyaging on the waters of incomprehensible craziness, I thought it sporting to give her all the rules.

"No 'X'?" she inquired.

"Out of respect for Dick and Pat Lupoff," I said, forgetting that they are now "Richard A." and "Patricia." "I thought 'Xero' was such a special title, I wouldn't want to pick one that diminished their inspiration with imitation."

"But you want to do all the other letters," she asked.

"All of them," I assured her. I recited the Arnie Katz fanzine alphabet for her: **Abnormal, Crossfire, DamnYankee, Excalibur (and Excelsior), Folly and FIAWOL, Focal Point, Filk, Fanzine Dreams, Fanoclast Weakly...** I love those effing zines!), **Glitz (and Glitch), Incompleat Terry Carr, Katzenjammer, Le Merde, Meow, Nemesis, Polaris, Quip, Rotsler's Rules, Swoon, Tandem, Vegas All-Stars (and for one issue, Void), Wooden Nickel (and Wild Heirs), and Zap.**

"How about Jolly?" Joyce offered. "Or Holly?"

"Holly! That's a great idea!" I said. "We could hire a local model, shoot her in the nude for each cover, and say she's Holly! Of course, she'd be Hollier Than Thou."

"Maybe, we'd better keep looking," she said.

"Don't confine yourself to the letters that are missing from my alphabet," I said. "I want a fanzine for every letter, but it's not a compulsion."

"That's different," she said with renewed enthusiasm. Evidently titles that begin with B, H, O, U, and Y aren't her forte. "Well, how about Dolly?"

"I still like that nude model idea."

"Golly?"

"Gee whiz, no."

"Polly? Volley? Trolley?"

"No, you're 'way off the track with these rhyming names," I said, holding up a

cautioning hand. "But keep thinking, I really appreciate your effort."

In other words, I was strictly on my own.

I turned to my own faan fiction for possible inspiration. I'd invented quite a few names, often with the idea of eventually turning them into real fanzines. I had hoped to do **Backfence**, a title I coined in "Willis Plays Vegas" someday, but Peggy Burke had beaten me to it. Adopted fan daughters will do that to you now and then, and it must be charged off as the price of parenthood.

Besides, **Backfence** sounds more like a newszine. If I started a newszine, I'd probably revive **FIAWOL**, in the hopes that the third try would be the charm. Unless I decided to change my luck with a new title. In that case, I already had another choice in mind. **Backfence** had been superseded in my affections by **Sphigmonometer**. The possible drawback was that I wasn't sure if I could spell **Spigmonometer** the same way twice in a row, let alone correctly.

That would be nothing new to me, you know. When co-founding TAPS with Lenny Bailes, I

misspelled the name of the organization, (The Terrean Amateur Press Association) and its monthly official publication (**The Terrean**).

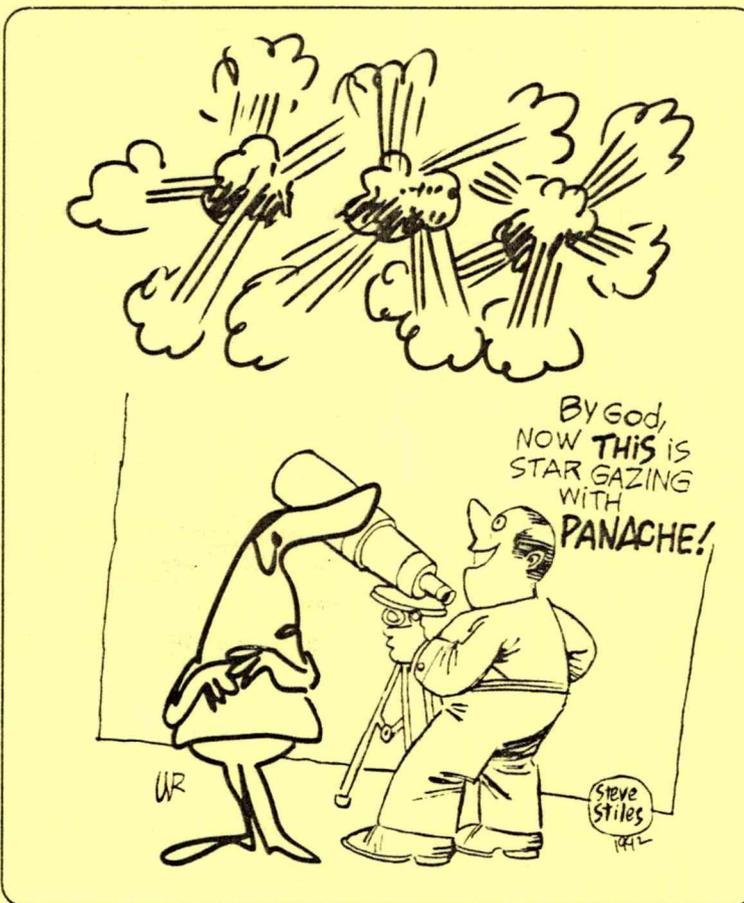
Riposte seemed like a stylish alternative to **Quip** when I tossed it into a faan fiction story two decades ago. My preferences have changed over the years, because now it sounds too arty.

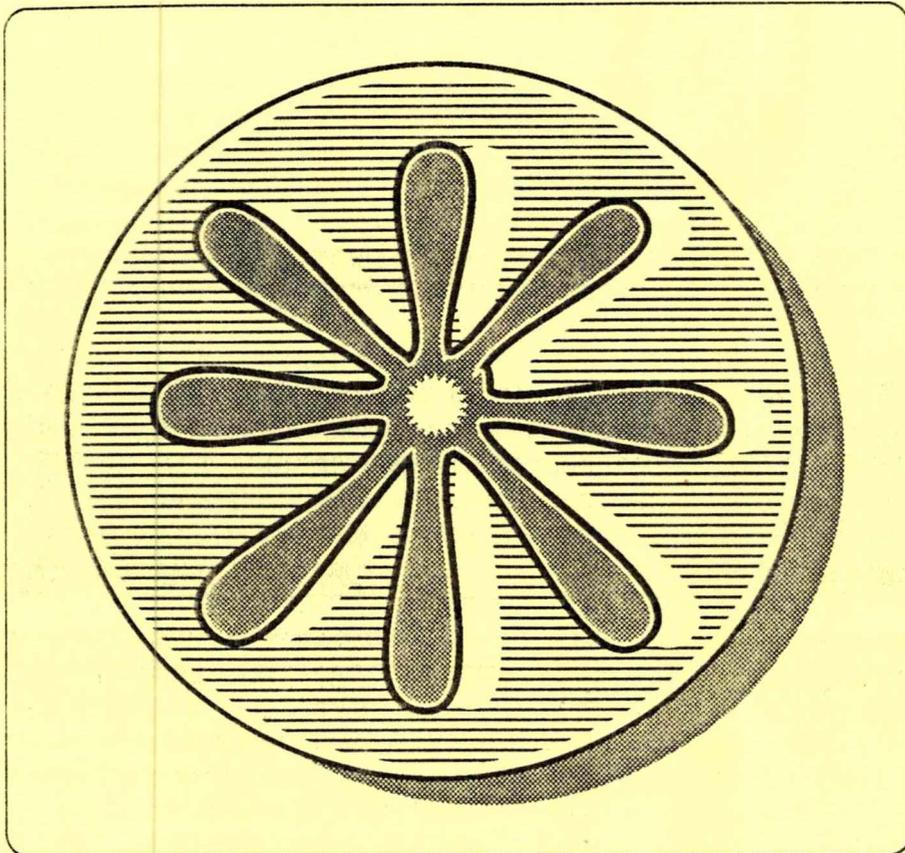
The memory of my vulgar and ostentatious fanzine of the 1960s reminded me that Vicki Rosensweig had sent me a fanzine called **Quipu**. Might two play at that game? **Hypenu? Warhoonu? En-ergumenu?** Maybe not.

A month or so earlier, I'd come up with a couple of remarkable fanzine titles.

I didn't think **Science Fiction Lightbulb** or **Outer Space Rocket Exhaust Trails** were quite right for the occasion. I may use one of them in the future, though. Unless Peggy beats me to it again.

Honesty forbids swiping a title from electronic gaming fandom. Otherwise, I'd be





tempted by Chris Johnston's popular monthly. Then I could say that it was **Paradox**, published by Irony Katz.

I keep a list of possible fanzine names. Or rather, Joyce keeps a list of the names I think up. I'm considered quite the namer in my social set. Besides my well-known talent for nicknames, local fans often call upon me when selecting the right moniker for their fanzines, columns, and miscellaneous household items. Modesty prevents glorying in the column name I created for Chuch Harris, but a short monograph on the subject is available from him, profusely illustrated on vellum.

So I was confident that my list would solve my naming problem. It yielded several promising titles: **Asterisk**, **Piffle**, **Whim**, and **Razz**.

I liked **Asterisk**. I liked it enough to do the logo on this very page. But every time I mentioned **Asterisk**, the reaction was negative. "They'll call it **Ass** for short," "They'll confuse it with the French character Asterix," and "You'll poke your eye out," my friends advised.

They can't all be wrong, I thought as I scratched **Asterisk** off my list. The remaining three all held promise. **Piffle** seemed

especially descriptive of my likely contributions, while **Whim** spoke eloquently of my editorial mood. Neither one sent an electric tingle shooting through me.

Everyone liked **Razz**, especially Bill Potshot Kunkel. He laughed when I said it sounded too aggressive, but I stuck with that verdict. **Razz** went back on the shelf. People noticed the change in me. I sat there on the couch during fan visits and club meetings, staring into space, muttering to myself, and occasionally chuckling. But what was different, what worried them, were the agonized moans.

I'd think up a name, get a little excited about it, and then discover a disqualifying objection. Actually, I got so desperate that I briefly considered Disqualifying Objection. It sounded too much like an Arthur Hlavaty title, though.

In the extremity of my despair, I toyed with calling it **Nothing**. Even that feeble attempt at wit was flawed. I thought it was too close to the classic **Cry of the Name-less**.

Then it hit me. I had done it before, so why not do it again? In the past, I'd made much bigger changes in content and format than I now intended without a new title. I didn't need a new title as long as I still liked the old one, which I did.

Welcome to the revived **Folly**.

Future Follies

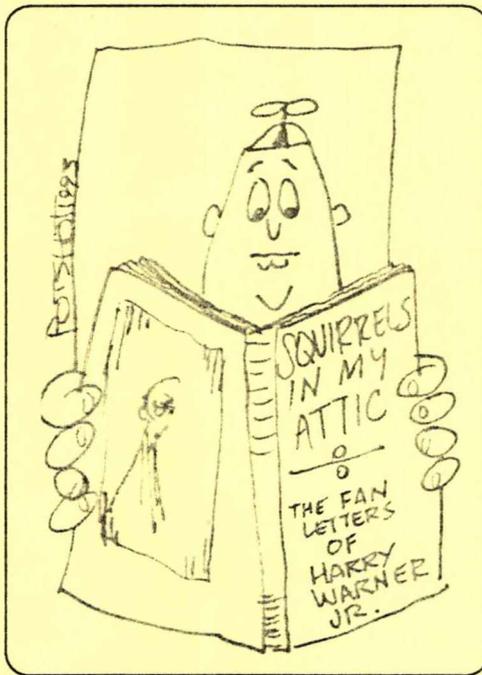
What can you expect in the revived **Folly**? It'll be

larger, less frequent, and look a little different. I'll be a bit more discursive in the editorials and will be able to print more and longer letters than in the 22-page format.

I haven't abandoned my "let's have fun" philosophy, and I hope you'll keep

supporting **Folly** with letters of comment, articles, and artwork as bountifully as you have in the past.

Otherwise, the revived **Folly** could wind up with lots of empty pages. And you know how I



get around empty pages. It could get ugly.

On the Work Front

Electronic Games, the magazine we started last October, has many fewer typos than most of my fanzines. But then, other people copy edit and proofread the publication.

The overall result must be pretty good, because it is catching on nicely with gaming consumers. Circulation passed 115,000 last summer, and we're setting ad page-count records just about every issue. Our readership is somewhat older than for the other gaming prozines. The typical **EG** is a 25-year-old male with high personal income and a voracious appetite for hardware and software. For instance, I was astounded when I learned that 48% of the readers own a Sega CD. Since only 150,000 were installed in U.S. homes at the time of the survey, that's a fairly remarkable stat.

The scarcity of female readers is less pleasing. Only about 10% of the total are

dously competitive. In several cases, Joyce, Bill Kunkel, and I are competing with ourselves. I formatted one of **EG's** rivals, **Video Games**, and others are influenced by our stuff.

One of our first decisions, when starting **EG**, was that we should try to evaluate every aspect of what we've been doing journalistically rather than just taking familiar paths. That probably doesn't sound like much, but it generates a lot of extra work.

The challenge has been good for the three of us. It certainly has made **Electronic Games** more exciting to edit than if I did it by the numbers. **EG** has introduced new features and approaches in its first year, and it's comforting to learn that I still have the creativity on tap.

Inside Vegas Fandom

Joyce, Bill, and I moved to Las Vegas in September, 1989. After warming up with a half-year in TAPS, I got back into general fandom the following summer with **Folly**. In August 1991, we met a hitherto

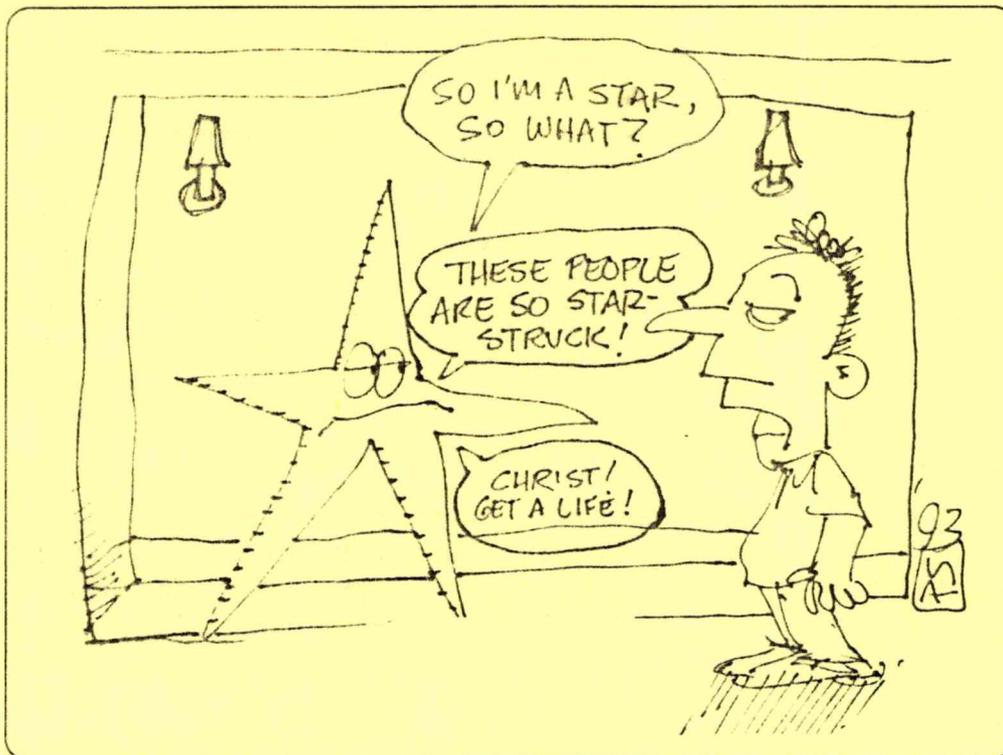
unknown Las Vegas fandom. The connection has proven mutually beneficial. They've given us a lot of friendship, and we've introduced them to the wide world of fandom.

Sometimes I yearn for a few veteran fans, but these amiable folks are fun to have around. That's probably why we entertain them so often. Besides the monthly Social, fans visit two or three times a week. And several work for us on various editorial tasks.

Last summer, we started an informal club for fanzine fans and fellow travelers. It's so informal, in fact, that we've only just gotten around to a definite meeting schedule (the first Saturday of every month). This laid-

back stance has its downside, too. One Vegrant didn't come to the meeting, although she dropped off a package outside our door, because she wasn't sure she was a member. (Aside to veteran fans: Delicacy in fandom! And you thought you'd seen it all.)

Las Vegrants meetings draw 15-18 out of a membership pool of about 25. We'll probably never get a higher percentage, because Vegas is such a 24-hour town. People work all



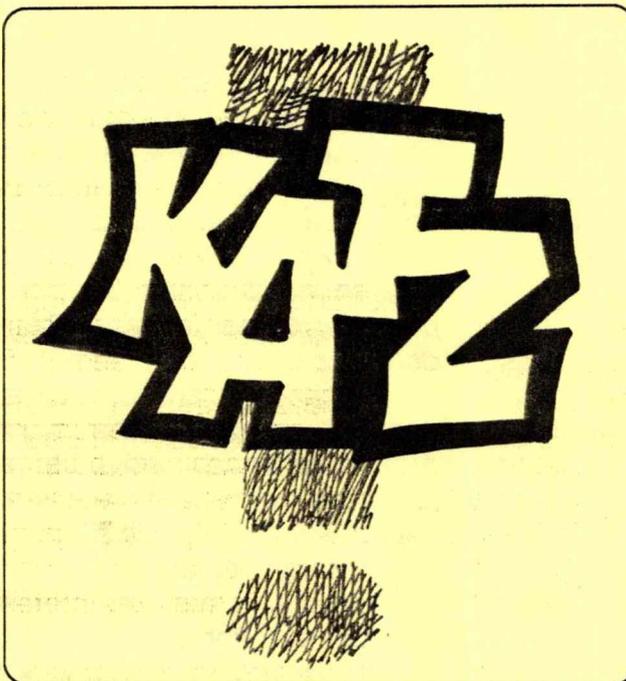
females, better than the other magazines, but still not enough. I try to make **EG** inviting to both genders, but obviously, I'll have to do better in the future.

I've enjoyed running a magazine after so many years as a freelance writer. I like molding the publication itself even more than filling its pages with my effusions. And at the risk of belaboring the obvious, I love to write.

The gaming magazine field is tremen-

kinds of crazy shifts, so rounding up everyone is impossible except for state occasions, like the Christmas Party.

This mention of Las Vegrants makes me wonder whether you would be interested in a brief survey of the geography of Las Vegas Fandom. If not, this is a warning to skip down to the next topic.



Although a University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) club has managed a marginal existence for years, most locals date the start of modern Las Vegas Fandom from February 1991. Alex Borders brought together a few respondents to his ad and formed the Southern Nevada Area Fantasy Fiction Union (SNAFFU).

SNAFFU is the formal science fiction club in Las Vegas. Changing meeting frequency and location is a major club activity. They sometimes succeed so well that even officers are unsure when and where the next meeting will strike. At this writing, SNAFFU meets every other Sunday afternoon in a private room at Skinny Duggan's, a bar-and-hamburger place. Meetings draw about a dozen fans, though total club membership is much higher.

Joyce and I host an informal monthly gathering known as the Social. Nominally part of SNAFFU, but open to all Las Vegas fans, the Socials are probably the best-attended fan functions in town. A typical Social is about 50 people, and it hits 70-80 several times a year.

One activity at Socials is the monthly oneshot. We've done 23 of them, all but the first of which was called "The Vegas All-Stars [something], [something]!". The locals who participate in the oneshots are, by extension, called The Vegas All-Stars. There is no organization as such.

And then there's Las Vegrants. Our main group activity is **Wild Heirs**, which will soon see its third issue. A fourth issue is assured, however, because Burbee is finishing an article for it. That alone is justification enough for the atrocities committed by the rest of us

in his honor. Besides, he's one of the co-editors, and we have to keep him happy.

The meetings are much like informal fanclubs everywhere, I guess. There are a few Las Vegas touches, like swimming eight months a year, but mostly it's talking, listening to music, browsing fanzines, playing video games, and swilling cola.

Sometimes, we read classic fan articles aloud to each other and laugh in many of the right places.

Pyramid Power

The fans of Las Vegas have Seen the Light!

Is it the Light of Innocence, pure and undefiled by the petty soils of the Mundane World?

No, it is not. This is Las Vegas Fandom we're talking about, not some fannish Sunday School class. Save those little homilies about Ghu and Roscoe for another audience.

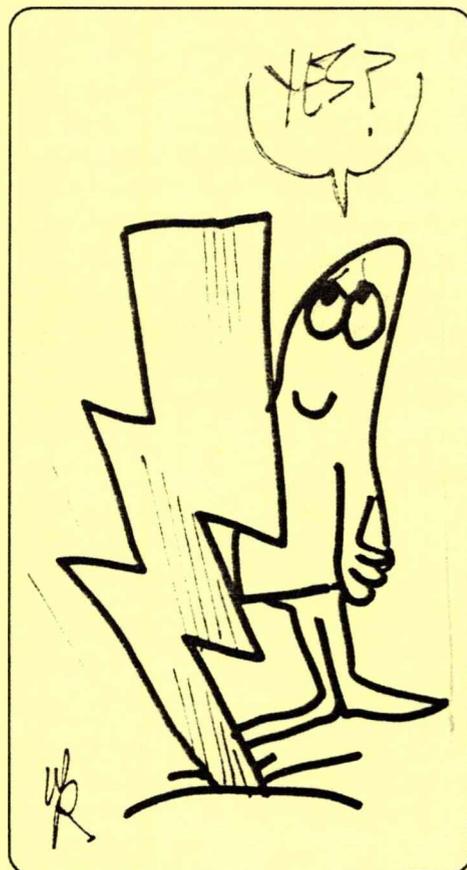
Is it the Light of Truth, illuminating the essence of all people and things?

No, it is not. This is Las Vegas Fandom we're talking about, where the hazy line between truth and fantasy blurs beyond recognition in every fanzine.

Is it the Light of Love, redly pulsing its passion into the night?

No, it is not. This is Las Vegas Fandom we're talking about, where the Wild Set has recently discovered Kissing Games at parties and where a stable couple is one that survives to celebrate the troublesome one-month anniversary.

I shall tantalize



you no longer. It is the Light that soars on high from the top of the Luxor Hotel.

In keeping with the Grandeur that is Uniquely Vegas, this is the brightest light in the world. And it is located directly above the largest atrium in the world. The owners of the Luxor Hotel Casino, the new glass pyramid on the block, turned it on Thursday night

We all loved it at first sight.

And at night, you can see it from anywhere in Las Vegas. Heck, you can see it from most places in Los Angeles!

I am currently spreading the rumor that, if the Luxor catches on, they will build a second, identical pyramid and put giant red lights on each tip.

Other Fandoms

Possibly of interest to some is that I am the godfather (mid-wife?) of a relatively new, thriving fandom. Prior to **EG**, I designed a magazine called **Video Games and Computer Entertainment**. We didn't want full-time editorial positions, so we gave the package to Lee Pappas, who added it to his group of magazine at Larry Flynt Publications. In recompense, **VG&CE** agreed to buy at least 25 pages per month from the three of us at premium rates.

In early 1989, I suggested a column about fans of electronic games. I explained the concept of a fandom in the first installment and extolled the joys of publishing. (Yes, this was while I was still totally gafia in our fandom).

After about two columns, the first electronic gaming fanzines hit my mailbox. I kept writing the column, called "Fandango" in honor of Laney. Seeing review of the first zines encouraged others to try.

The volume of electronic gaming fanzines has grown swiftly and steadily ever since.

About 50 genzines are published each month. I get that many, and I don't know if I receive the hobby's entire output.

When we left **VG&CE**, I specifically offered to help find them a new fanzine columnist, but they decided to drop the column. Evidently, there was some reader backlash, since "Fandango" has returned with a new host. Meanwhile, I started a column in **EG** called "Fandom Central" and another in **Computer Games Review**, "Dateline Fandom."

I've stayed out of the thick of electronic gaming fandom, pretty much sticking to my prozine columns. I don't think it'd be fair for me to barge into their fan-world like some self-aggrandizing Great Big Man. Some of their BNFs have started calling me for advice, and that's flattering. I guess I'm their Rog Phillips, with overtones of Robert Bloch.

The average electronic gaming fan is high school or college age, with a smattering of older and younger. Electronic gaming fandom may have one or two women at its periphery, but there are no female writers, artists, or publishers.

Fanzines maintain fairly frequent schedules, with bi-monthly the commonest. DTP predominates, though a few other methods have been attempted.

The smaller fanzines often adopt a newsletter format, but the larger publications are much like ours. Electronic gaming fandom has only just begun to attract artists, so black and white game screen photos and clip art are the most popular alternatives to pure text.

The content is pretty sercon. Reviews of games, news notes, opinion pieces about gaming and, occasionally, interviews, claim most of the space. Most of the titles reflect these concerns; many of the zines have "video game" in the name. Fannishness has already started to appear, though.

A few zines are expanding the editorial focus beyond gaming. Most popular subjects: music and movies.

They have discovered feuding, though treasured moments like the Boondoggle and



the Bergeron Wars are outside their experience. Sniping at other fanzines is more their style.

It is difficult to compare fanzines from different fandoms, but electronic gaming zines are not yet as good as ours. The writing is under-edited, and fan art is still scarce and primitive. The top strata of electronic gaming fanzines rate 7 (out of 10), a big improvement over two years ago.

Our gang should envy their 12-15-year-old wunderkinds. There are many fanzines published by fans in that age bracket, and quite a few out-class our fandom's equivalent by a wide margin.

The high school and college fans are ripe for enticement into our fandom, and we would certainly be the richer for their addition. At 16, Chris Johnston is a poised and confident fan who publishes **Paradox**, which would probably get him lionized in our branch of fanzine fandom. Toronto's Andy Saito, a year younger, is nearly as good a fanzine publisher and is about to crack the prozines as a reviewer and columnist. I won't bother with other examples, but this may be our talent pool for the 21st century.

It is fascinating to watch their fanhistory unfold. At times, it is eerily similar to ours, while at others it explores uncharted territory.

The biggest current happening is the second attempt to form a national fan organization. The first one failed when its organizers ran out of gas. They were the first fan generation, and just establishing electronic gaming fandom sapped the energy that might've gone into such a project. The new one, backed by a newer group of fans, got off to a good enough start, but I detect a nefferish propensity for drafting constitutions and political bickering. The formation of GEA (Gaming Enthusiasts of America) has sparked some healthy insurgentism by fans who don't feel the need to belong to a National Fan Organization. Privately I think these non-joiners may be right, but I wouldn't dream of interfering. It's their fandom.

Electronic gaming fandom is also grappling with its relationship to commercialism and the prozines. I have preached against pseudo-professionalism in my columns several times. I said that the personal touch is what makes fanzines so interesting and worthwhile, and that it is a foolish pretense to say that an eight-page fanzine is published by a worldwide conglomerate.

The reaction was favorable, but not unanimous. Such comments have earned a few harassing phone calls and a couple of poison pen letters. One kid ever wrote a little song praying for



my death in the immediate future.

I like the electronic gaming fans. They're a lively and talented bunch of fans. I have some hope that our fanzine fandom will, in time, lure a few of them. Ed Finkler has already made the cross over with two issues of **Mosh, Baby Mosh**, and I think there will be others over the next few years.

Many marvel at how many fanzine fans Joyce and I have recruited from Las Vegas Fandom. Out of touch for so many years, I wasn't aware that there was a general consensus that no one would want to start publishing fanzines. My electronic gaming fandom experience led me to the opposite conclusion.

Funny thing, when we told Las Vegas fans about fanzines, why we enjoyed doing them and what we got in return, they thought it sounded like a good deal, too. Although every member of Las Vegrants, the fanzine fan club here with about two-dozen members, doesn't take an active role in fanzines, most have at least dabbled.

Despite rampant pessimism in U.S. fandom in the late 80s and early 90s, I think fanzine fandom is a long way from done. To be sure, the Founding Fans are in the process of passing the torch to the post-Baby Boomers. It may be a new era of fanzine fandom by the turn of the century, but I now firmly believe that fanzines will be alive and kicking.

The outlook wasn't nearly as bright a few years ago, but things have changed. It looked like telecommunications would make fanzine fandom obsolete in the mid-1980s. Two events invalidated that prophecy: people began to perceive the limitations of electronic

communication, and fanzine-oriented technology took a huge leap forward. Some people prefer the rapid-fire give-and-take of the networks and BBSs, but there's something to be said for the durability (and literary polish of a printed publication).

Today the tools of fanzine publishers are within reach of almost anyone who wants to try a zine. It is far easier to produce a fanzine than in the Golden Age of Mimeography. And the results, especially the reproduction and typography, are much more satisfying for first-timers. You've got to work at doing an illegible fanzine these days!

That's no small matter, either. A hard dose of embarrassment over early efforts has caused more than one fanned to give up. It's guys like me, too thick-skinned to feel the sting of criticism, who persevere to become established fanzine fans.

**Don't Call
On Me
Any More**

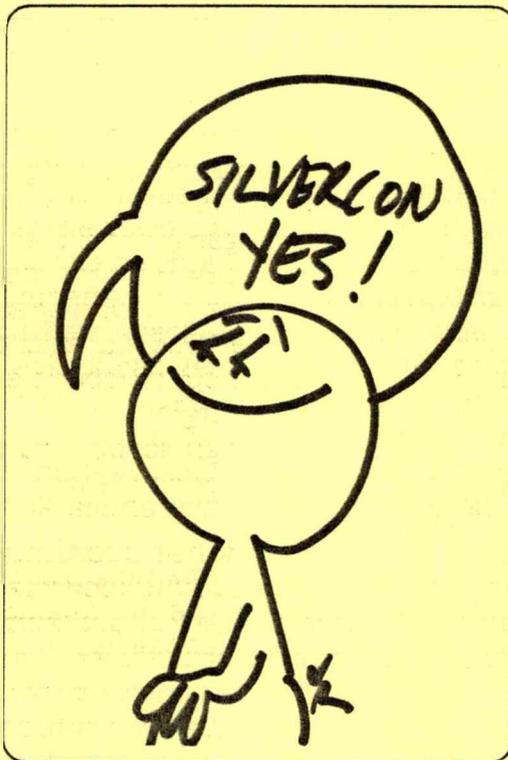
My droning voice is no longer just a 900 phone Call away. The Electronic Games Hotline is no more. I can't say that I'm very regretful. It would've been nice if millions of people had called, enriching me enormously in the process, but it wasn't much fun putting it together every two weeks for the handful of people who dialed.

The company that runs 900 lines for my publisher seemed pleased by the average time per call, but traffic never grew. I salve my wounded vanity with the thought that 900 lines are fading out, with the possible exception of those psychic scammers. They appear to be flourishing.

At one time, you could hardly turn on late night television without hearing the seductive purr of an alleged phone sex girl. ("Alleged," because there's no connection between the women on the screen and the one who picks up the phone.) Now that Federal law forbids hardcore sexlines that charge directly to the phone bill, the demand for that type of call has evaporated. I think the credit card sexlines mostly buy time on adult video cassettes and ads in nudie mags.

The commercial heavy breather services

have become very segmented, you know. Each line appeals to a specific type of man. It seems sensible for masochists to call a dominatrix, and



I can see where a woman who claims special expertise in a particular activity would be more fun for someone who has that interest. What I haven't quite figured out yet is why it makes a difference if the female voice on the other end of the line belongs to a blonde or a brunette.

I only realized how specialized the phone services can get when I heard an ad on KVEG, one of Vegas' 24-hour sports radio stations. Its honey-voiced siren offered to talk sports and sex to please her clients. She said that a caller could start with a spirited discussion of any game or event from the sports world and then segue into conversation about equally athletic, but more exotic activities.

Now its all tarot cards and floating eyes. Chicago's Superstation WGN looks more and more like a gypsy camp.

**Puttin' It
on the
Line**

If you want to see a lot of very fast, very typo-ridden text flash across your computer monitor, I'm still doing the monthly "Worlds of Computer Entertainment" forum on the national telecommunications network, America On-Line.

Bill and I started the 60-minute melange of news, reviews, previews, and analysis in the mid-1980s for QuantumLink. When that C-64-oriented service began to decline, its parent company invited us to switch to AOL. I've carried on solo for the last few years, mostly because I enjoy putting on a show without leaving my office chair.

Some sessions get pretty wild. Bill set an irreverent tone from the first, and I do my best to keep the element of unpredictability alive. Attendance has risen 200-300% in the last six months, so maybe I'm figuring out the medium.

Presiding over "Worlds of Computer Entertainment" got pretty strange during the period when I couldn't see what I was doing. At times, I was reduced to using a very high-power, but very narrow-field, magnifying glass. I couldn't type and check the screen output at the same time. Occasionally, I'd

peer at the screen through my spy glass and discover that I'd been one character off for the last three sentences.

If I haven't scared you off, "Worlds of Computer Entertainment" is usually the second Tuesday of the month, at 9 pm eastern time. Richard Brandt attended at least one and survived. Of course, I don't think he's been back since. Maybe that's because we don't award free network time as prizes to those willing to endure the whole hour, like some other on-line events.

Tube Tales

There's no use denying it, I watch a lot of television. Not compared to Bill Kunkel, who keeps one set going around the clock, but a ton of tube.

My career is the ostensible excuse Electronic gaming is a facet of popular culture. Only by immersion in the mass-pop mainstream can an old guy like me (47) stay properly plugged in. T.V. inspires many of my game ideas and new magazine proposals.

That's my alibi, but I admit that there might be other reasons. Many decry TV's non-interactivity. That's one of the things I like about it. I'm mentally depleted after a typical work day followed by a session of fanac, and it's a pleasure to sit back and let it all wash over me.

Also interactivity means different things to different people. I can watch "Laverne and Shirley" reruns and mentally bend everything on the screen in strange directions.

A slight hearing loss greatly promotes this activities. There's nothing like mishearing a line on a show to produce total surrealism. My hearing is good enough that I can correctly decipher video mumbling when I concentrate, but I have only to let my wits wander a little to strike the mother Lode of misunderstanding.

Sometimes, I derive fan articles from such auditory aberrations. At minimum, they add excitement to pallid network fare. I can't express how much it improved an entertainment news program when the host, commenting on a famous performer's travel plans, said: "Wayne Newton's a Eunuch." Two seconds

later, I realized that what he'd probably said was "Wayne Newton's in Munich."

But for those two seconds, it was a wonderful program.

Speaking of Sports

What do I watch? Primarily series and movies, but very little sports. I love spectator sports. I listen to lots of games while working, but seldom settle down to see a full game.

I love to watch those millionaires. Joyce is a polar opposite on this point. She remains as divorced from sports as possible. (She made it clear that it was my choice whether she divorced sports or me.)

I've corrupted her ignorance with sports-related human interest stories. Now when she

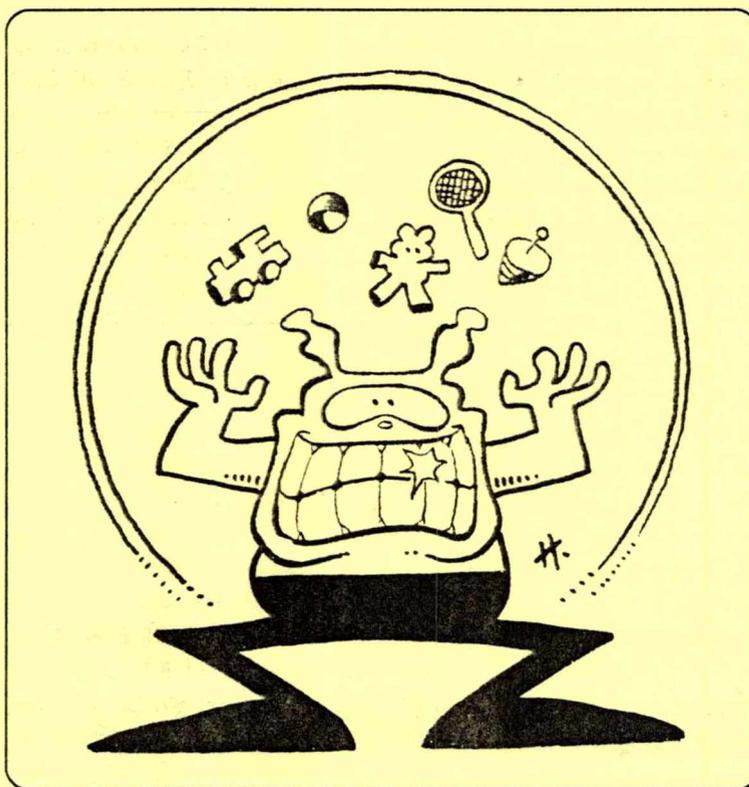
proclaims sports ignorance, Joyce has to fake it. It's there in her eyes whenever anyone mentions Michael Jordan or Wayne Gretzky. She has to pretend not to know them!

The 1993-94 television season hasn't excited me much so far. Of the new series, I only watch "Frasier" and "Dave's World," but neither is a favorite. ("Seinfeld," HBO's "Larry Sanders Show," and "Murphy Brown"

top my list.) "Civil War Chronicles" and "The Real West" on Arts & Entertainment are excellent popular history, and I put in my share of time with reruns of "Mary Tyler Moore," "Bob Newhart," and "The Dick Van Dyke Show."

Fox's new shows take more chances than those on the other networks. Fox has to, because fewer sets can tune to their programs. They've got to capture a larger share of the reachable audience to get ratings as good as the other networks.

"The X Files" may be the weirdest series on T.V. It's a feast for people who believe that aliens kidnapped Whitley Strieber. Although there's a skeptical character, Agent Scully,



her view of reality is curiously unaffected by a world in which space aliens, undead creatures, and close encounters of every kind are ordinary events.

Joyce simply can't resist the weekly foray into the *National Inquirer* universe. I tag along, protected only by my invincibly serene demeanor

against the Jersey Devil or whatever unnatural horror is on the menu for that evening.

Potshot Kunkel, who is known to women everywhere as a militant male feminist, radiated great pleasure at how "X Files" flips the stereotype by making the believer a man and the woman the spokesman for common sense.

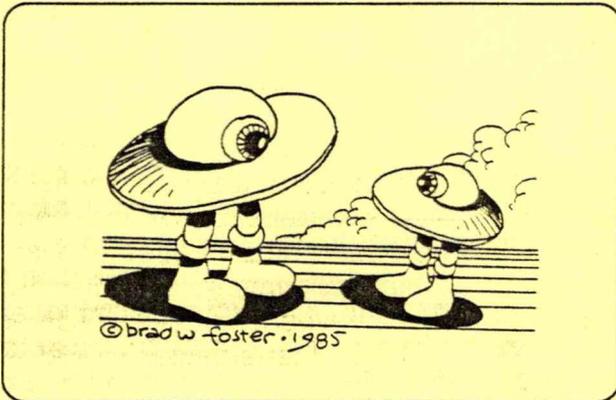
"I wish I could see it that way," I said with regret. "I think they made the guy the nutcase so female believers in the audience would become enthralled by him."

And Now a Word...

The last time we talked video, Ted White mentioned that he almost never sees a commercial. He said it with great pride, and I appreciate his achievement. He has insulated his electronic entertainment from the raucous cry of the pitchman, the insidious purr of the telephone sex call girls, and the endless program interruptions that mock the dramatist's best efforts.

I envy him. I'd probably emulate his commercial-free lifestyle if I could. I can't. So in the curious way of the disadvantaged, I try to make a virtue of my subjugation to T.V. advertising. Though I watch all that tube I mentioned earlier, a strong bladder insures that I sit through many, many paid spots.

All too often, I find myself studying them minutely. I monitor every detail in a foredoomed effort to square these minute movies with my perception of reality. This is a foolish exercise, of course, but it serves to occupy a mind that might otherwise surrender utterly to carnal daydreams.



Unfortunately, this study unearths more questions than it answers. Until now, I have pondered the commercial conundrums alone. Now that I'm producing *Folly* again, I think I'll slough them off onto you.

The commercial that puzzles me the most is from Centel, the phone company in this part of the desert. On radio, they have Kelsy Grammar (*Frasier*) saying that you should advertise in the Yellow Pages because no one really watches ads on television. On TV, Kelsy smugly informs us that companies should advertise in the Yellow Pages, because radio ads fail on deaf ears.

My question: If the Yellow Pages is so wonderful, why does Centel spend money on radio and television instead of just selling itself full-page ads in the phone book? I'll bet they could cut themselves quite a discount, too.

In Praise Of Sloth

Local fans always seem amazed by the seeming effortless with which I turn out fanzines. On my part, I am croggled by their sportiveness, always climbing mountains, river rafting and the like.



Such atheleticism goes against the Code of Fandom I learned in my Brooklyn days: The only legitimate reasons for a fan to engage in physical expertion are publishing a fanzine and sex,

Right now, I'm honoring that Code by publishing a fanzine.

Later, we'll see.

Those Hazy, Laser-Crazy Days of Summer

Ted White and I walked along the suddenly deserted corridor of the Corflu 10 hotel. He seized the private moment to ask about my vision.

"Not too good right now," I admitted.

"I noticed," he said.

I'm sure he wasn't the only one who saw me fumbling around in an ungainly manner in Madison. I'd noticed, too. From a peak (about 20/70) shortly after my cataract surgery in February 1991, my vision had slowly declined to 20/400 in June 1993.

With my eye history, it may not surprise you to know that I was unaware of the deterioration for some time after it started. Prior to the cataract, I saw the world through the myopic's coke bottle lenses, and not very well at that. I hadn't had time to get used to the improvement after the cataract surgery, so it wasn't until my vision declined quite a bit that I detected the difference.

I finally noticed problems last winter. I could no longer see print I'd read the previous month. I've used a magnifying glass for 10 pt and smaller type right along, but now I couldn't read even the 12- and 14-pt. stuff,

My virtually silent winter was one consequence of my dwindling sight. I couldn't read fanzines, and writing letters became a frustrating experience. My typing, never a strong point, worsened right along with the vision.

Like all long-time patients I have conferred quasi-doctor status on myself. My reasoning is that they've done everything under the sun to me, which should give me a nice over-view of ophthalmic practice. This is, of course, ridiculous but comforting, like religion.

My vast store of medical misinformation kept me studying and analyzing my own symptoms. Other cataract patients, including Grandfather Tucker, had warned me to watch for glaucoma. For various reasons unstated here, I'm not a strong candidate to develop this disease, but that didn't stop me from testing peripheral vision almost every day.

After attending the summer Consumer Electronics Show and finishing all of my high-priority work, I went to Dr. Westfield. It took him about one minute to confirm my self-

diagnosis: When he removed the lens, the membrane behind it remained in place. Unfortunately, it clouded up, too.

"We'll punch a hole through it with a laser!" he announced triumphantly. As far as he was concerned, problem solved.

How science fictional, I thought.

"We could do it right now, except that we're behind schedule," Dr. Westfield explained. "Make an appointment to have it done."

After ascertaining that it was not an emergency situation, I arranged to have it done Monday, July 11th. I waited until then because Charles and Cora Burbee and Linda and Ron Bushyager were all coming to Vegas the weekend of July 10th, and I didn't want anything to interfere with that. As Dr. Westfield acknowledged, no procedure is without risk, and any eye work is always riskier for me than those without a comparably dismal eye history.

I'm very proud of being a creative artist. Sometimes, though, a vivid imagination isn't a terrific asset. During the two-week wait, I thought of a lot of very unpleasant things that could happen.

I kept up a brave front for my friends. "One of two things can happen," I assured them. "Either it will restore my sight, or I'll be the first fan killed by a laser blast.

"And when you do that memorial anthology..."



"Memorial anthology?" Joyce interrupted.

"You mean you aren't going to mourn my death with an anthology of my fannish writing?" I whined. I hated to think of countless friends without this essential compendium to cushion the loss. "If I'm going to get killed by a laser blast, a memorial anthology is the least you can do."

"I don't know," she said. "I'll be busy then."

"You mean the burial, straightening our affairs, like that?" I asked.

"Well, those things, too, but I'll need all my time to look for a new husband," she said. "I'll be too busy to publish an anthology. Unless..."

"Unless?"

"Unless I can put a personal ad for a new husband in the anthology."

She wanted to put it on the front cover.

I thought a simple white cover with a burn hole would be more appropriate

We talked.

We negotiated.

We compromised.

My memorial anthology will have Joyce's personal ad on the front cover. Her picture will be available on request.

My fear and apprehension grew as the day drew near. My mind constructed comic book sequences of laser beams blowing the contents of my head across the room in a shower of crimson shards. The artwork was by Steranko. I couldn't read the word balloons, probably because I hadn't yet had the operation.

At the surgical center, we sat in the empty waiting room until a nurse called my name. It was about 10:45, only 15 minutes later than the appointment.

After taking my blood pressure, a nurse put dilating drops in my right eye. While I sat there, it occurred to me to inquire if the doctor was fully conversant with the Super Nintendo Entertainment System or Sega Genesis. That was the kind of expert I wanted to fire laser beams into my head.

I almost asked, but further rumination dissuaded me. What if the arcade ace at the controls wanted a challenge. I could see him firing madly at my head while I pranced back and forth across the room.

The nurse led me into a consulting room. Dr. Westfield and a younger assistant were there to greet me.

I sat down in front of a machine, which was evidently the one they planned to use. It looked almost exactly like the units which doctor use to examine the interior of the eye. It has a chin holder and a curved metal band against which the patient leans his forehead. There is a fairly strong white light, which can be angled to illuminate the eye in various desirable ways. The doctor sits on the other side of the machine and looks through a scope into the eye.

This gizmo is like that, except for a pair of red lights in the middle pointed directly at the patient. "Look right into the light," said Dr. Westfield. I started at it in total concentration.

With Dr. Westfield providing a lot of sideline encouragement, his associate lined up the laser and pushed a button to send a pre-calibrated pulse at the murky membrane.

As a coward, I'd worried a lot about pain. One reason for my concern was a conversation with Becky Milford at the June Social. Becky is the Vegas fan who was victimized by a drunk teenaged driver in a hit and run accident that caused her son William to be delivered a couple of months premature. Becky herself, pronounced dead at the scene, has made a wonderful recovery.

When I told her about my impending eye procedure, she replied that she'd had the same one some years early.

"Does it hurt?" I wanted to know.

"Well, my eye felt funny for a couple of weeks afterward," she said. "Yes, it hurt when they did it."

The idea that this operation was something the gallant, indomitable Becky would say hurt did not bolster my confidence.

Perhaps they've improved the machine, because I didn't feel even the slightest pain. There was a sensation of slight pressure each time the doctor tapped the button, but it wasn't even enough to make me flinch.

The two doctors talked as the lasering progressed. It turns out that the membrane in my eye is thicker than normal. They raised the power a little and increased the number of laser pulses fired each round.

It took less than 10 minutes.

"You can sit back,," Dr Westfield said, as his assistant started to ready the machine for the next session. "What can you see?"

I sat back in the chair, glad to be able to relax. I looked around. "Everything is totally black."

"Oh well, you've been staring into a light," said the assistant.

That was comforting, but Dr. Westfield then showed why he is The Man in Control. He flipped the light switch, and I suddenly saw the room and its contents with a crispness and clarity I had not experienced since 1991.

We paid, and I went home. I could've gone back to work at noon, if those drops hadn't fogged my vision.

Now I can write letters and read fanzines again.

Did ya miss me, at least a little?

"And then the sun suddenly went nova..."

Thursday, November 16, 1989 (Daventry) — Chuck Harris and I spent the morning running errands, stopping for lunch at the pub across the canal from the Waterways Museum. They had custom holiday cards, which we sent to Moshe Feder & Lise Eisenberg and Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden, knowing they would recognize the picture on the card from their previous visits to the site.

That night Sue served Chicken Kiev, jacket potatoes, stir-fry veggies, wine, and *three* desserts! I had apricot pie and bakewell tart, made from the recipe in **Delia Smith's Complete Cookery Course**, a book I still needed to get before leaving. Chuck also had a piece of fruit flan, but I couldn't possibly. If all the bloody English eat so much, *how* do they remain so slim?!!!

We spent a quiet evening, writing postcards, and watching TV. The trip was winding down, but we were all talking about when Jeff and I would return.

I was glad there was still Novacon to look forward to — more time to get acquainted with Vin¢, meet some other fans, and check out Brit conventions firsthand.

We spent Friday at Milton Keynes, a modern monument to economics. It's a 145-store mall, plus grocery and ring stores. I found Christmas tinsel unlike any to be found in the States, a gift for Jeff, a wok for Chuck and Sue (undercooked vegetables were sure to remind them of me). Sue found an elegant, sexy black skirt to wear to an upcoming golf club dinner.

We went out for a fancy dinner at The Sheaf. It was a lovely evening, dark and cozy. I had lobster soup with brandy for a starter, fresh trout with cream lobster sauce, smoked salmon mousse, and grilled mushrooms. White wine to wash it all down, and strawberry pavlova with raspberry sauce for afters. Then coffee, Remy Martin, and an After Eight mint.

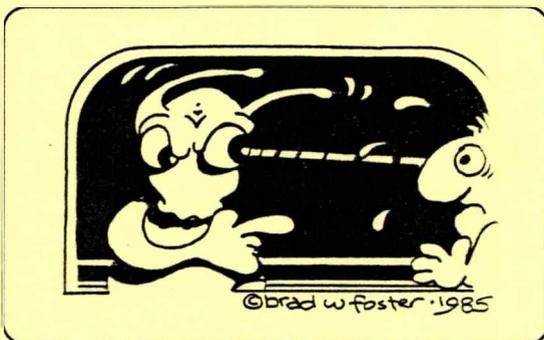
From the notepads:

Sue: "Heaven is eating afters all the time."

Gerri: "No, obesity is eating afters all the time."

Thanks to my studies at the Walter A. Willis School of Impeccable Taste and Manners, I was able to surreptitiously pick up the bill during what Chuck and Sue thought were two trips to the bathroom. I was quite proud of my finesse,

TARAUGA BRIGHTEST FANDOM with knife, fork, and spoon*



Chapter IV: Novacon By Geri Sullivan

'though I was not as successful handling Chuck after he discovered my subterfuge. A worthy effort, nonetheless.

On to Novacon...

From the notepads:

"Chuck, if you're going to be mobbed the moment we arrive, carried off by your adoring fans, and kept busy all day and night maintaining your legendary status, perhaps we should make plans now as to where and when to meet."

On Saturday, we arrived at Novacon just after noon. I spent most of the afternoon and evening in the bar, coming out only to leave Minneapolis in '73 flyers in the convention bid room and to wander through the book room — yes, the *book room*, a welcome change from the typical huckster's room found at U.S. conventions. Over 95% of the items for sale were books.

A lovely moment came while Vin¢, Chuck, and I were sitting in the hall. James White approached, Q in hand. Chuck fell to his knees obsequiously. James did the same in return, and waved Q at the great author. James asked Chuck if he liked quick LoCs, and handed him a letter of comment. Most of the letter focused on Chuck's daftness regarding my hair color and closed with compliments such as "it's very good — are you sure Willis didn't ghost it?" I met Pam Wells that afternoon, and chatted

enjoyably with Linda Krawecka and a host of changing faces. People were constantly asking "Can I get you anything?" The few times I made my own way to the bar, the bartender was quick to ask if I knew that Brit cider was alcoholic. "Yes, thank you," I invariably answered. "That's why I'm ordering it."

Dave Wood was very pleasant and comfortable to be around. John Brunner talked a lot. He showed me his membership card in the "Antique and International Order of Fully Certified Sex Fiends" and then droned on about heraldry. Vin¢ rescued me by deftly taking over the listener's role with John so I could move on to other conversations.

Hazel Ashworth was sharp, likable, and very easy to talk with. No wonder Chuck likes her so much, even though she's not a redhead.

Greg Ketter, owner of Minneapolis' Dream-Haven Books, was at Novacon. I tracked him down in the book room, a copy of *Idea* #3 in hand. It was the only one I gave away that weekend where I could check such esoteric reasons for getting it as "You're Minnesotan." I leaned familiarly over his shoulder, holding the fanzine in front of his face. Greg turned to look at me as he took it, and did a charming double-take. "What are you doing here?!?!" he exclaimed.

Lunch/dinner was a sandwich and meat pie that I shared with Chuck. I discovered the disco just as we were leaving and danced for about three tunes, grabbing hold of Martin Smith for the last. I then quite happily sank into the back seat for the ride back to Daventry, where Vin¢, Rob, Chuck, and I dove into the ham and chicken Sue had made for us and left in the fridge. Our sandwiches and afters rounded out the day, with a spot of brandy for me before turning in for the night.

I was up and ready to leave just after 10 the next morning — Rob was on an 11:30 panel on '60s fandom. (Novacon's theme was the '60s.) I garnered amazed compliments from Vin¢, Rob, and Sue for being "a woman ready to leave on time."

The convention was mellow. I enjoyed

most of the panel, and admired how smoothly Jimmy Robertson, the moderator, handled vicious comments from Greg Pickersgill, who was standing in the back of the room. I'd give Greg full points for being obnoxious and rude, but it seemed more like a grandstand play on his part rather than anything he really cared about. Jimmy wins the bonus prize, however, for fielding and responding to Greg's comments directly and forcefully, dismissing them for the tripe that they were. The audience felt the same, judging from the applause for Jimmy.

From the notepads:

"Chuck Harris, well-known as a cantankerous, boring old phart, did absolutely no fanac during the early '60s."

On the way out, I stopped by Operations to thank the committee, and met Martin Tudor. His face brightened in recognition, and he thanked me for info he'd received about the Harris Fund for *Critical Wave*.

Oh, yes, I also discovered I'd won one of the prizes in the "Spoken Books for the Blind" raffle. I chose a boxed duo of Brian Aldiss special editions. More to pack!

We dropped Rob off at the train station, then returned to the Harris Hovel, where Sue expertly prepared Chicken Curry for dinner. I called Jeff, caught up on Toad Hall happenings, then sat in the living room, reading — at last — D. West's *Performance*, and chatting idly with Vin¢, Chuck, and Sue.

Monday was my last day in Daventry. Vin¢, Chuck, Sue, and I went into town to run errands and for a bit of last minute shopping. (As though anything more would fit in my luggage!) I bought the "new, improved, illustrated," heavier, and more expensive

Delia Smith's cookbook.

That afternoon, Sue and Chuck took Vin¢ to the Northampton Brit Rail station. I stayed home to pack... and pack... and strangle and bury... and pack some more. Sue loaned me a bag she'd picked up in America. It made the task possible, but hardly easier.



Knowing how much I'd enjoyed her lamb, Sue served roasted lamb for dinner, with roasted potatoes, fresh mint sauce, carrots, pea-pods, brussel sprouts, and Asti Spumanti for our wine. Yes, my own copy of Delia Smith's was the perfect memento of the trip, even if it did weigh ten pounds!

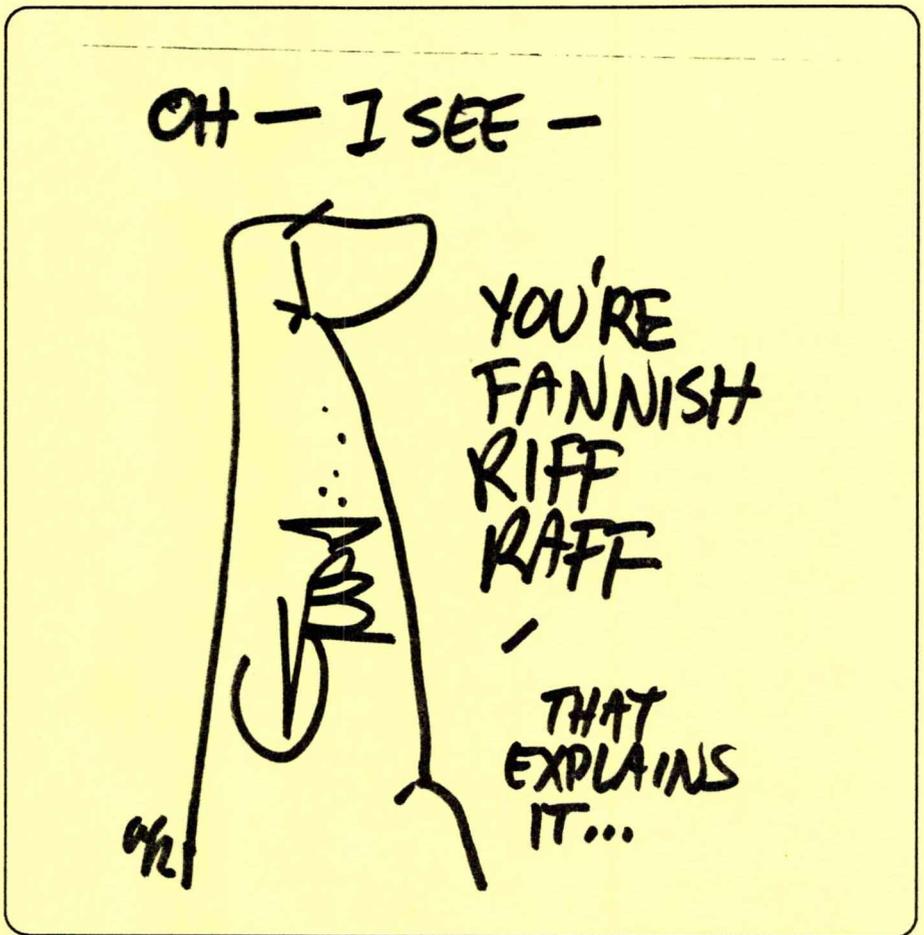
Chuck and I called Arthur Thomson to learn the results of his visit to the hospital the previous Friday, and for me to say goodbye. Arfer was in chipper spirits. There hadn't been any downward progression in his emphysema. He had some new things to try, and while there were some problems, things were obviously better than Arfer had expected.

Friends of Chuck and Sue's stopped by that evening. We drank two bottles of champagne, ate apple pie and After 8 mints, and had a fine couple of hours of conversation.

I was ready to go home — mostly to see Jeff and be once again in Toad Hall. I was also curious to see how the job hunt would go, and to return to work on the proposal that would shortly lead to me running my own business. But I was also feeling a sense of loss, mostly because I didn't know *when* or *if* I would see everyone again. Future trips were lost in the haze of tomorrow. I felt very alone in those last few hours before it was time to exchange realities of the UK for those of home.

The alarm went off at 5:15 am. With a flourish (and a struggle), I zipped the last zippers on my bags. We left in foggy darkness for Gatwick. The morning countryside was a fairyland, with foggy wisps accenting the rolling hills, sheep, cottages, and mansions. At times the tops of trees floated above the fog that obscured the trunks below.

We allowed copious extra time for traffic delays, then used every minute of it. We floated and crawled along the M25 into Gat-



wick and the considerably-located water closets right off the parking garage — some smart planner knows there are no service plazas for 85 miles on the M25.



At the Northwest gate, the questions started: "Why were you here? Where did you stay? How long have you known these people? Where did you pack your bags? Did you receive any gifts or items while you were here? What? The most innocuous items can be dangerous — do you understand?"

(Yea, right, the frog towels Chuck and Sue gave me were going to explode...) "How long have you had your cameras? Have they been serviced or repaired? Have you loaned them to anyone in the last two years?" And those are just the questions I remember. I was tagged for the



sawdust flavored/textured “meat.” Flying into the U.S., I noticed the different layout of property and city streets, and the roofs (goodbye thatch and tile, hello asphalt shingles). We landed in Boston, where I hoped to avoid explaining why I was bringing “Eat Me” dates into the country. (As Bob Berlien would say, “Do you remember your first Eat Me date? Was it in the back seat of your dad’s ’57 Chevy?”) I got off easily and didn’t even have to pay duty on the 3 casks of Tullamore Dew that filled the bottom of my carry-on bag.

Only one more flight and I’d be home. I was feeling far richer than when I left, but also a bit worn and emotionally torn. The closer I grow to friends, the more there is to miss when we are parted. And yet, what I want from life is this international network of inter-woven lives. That means accepting the physical distance that separates us while treasuring the common outlook and shared history that binds us together.

As the plane sat on the ground, waiting for strong winds to settle before taking off on the one remaining open runway, the crew seemed as worn as I was. The best airline laugh of the trip came when the cabin attendant came over the loudspeaker and asked, “please give us at least 30 minutes notice if you will be needing an electric chair in Minneapolis.” His second try yielded the more common requests for an “electric cart or wheel chair.” Everything I needed was waiting at the gate without special assistance from Northwest: I gathered a long hug

complete security check, which meant scanners, opening the bags for visual inspection (would I ever get them closed again?), and more questions. My sojourn to Northern Ireland no doubt influenced this close inspection, as may have my unconventional relationship with Chuck and Sue (inter-generational friendships with people other than relatives — what a novel idea). I didn’t mind the security — mine was one of the lives being protected after all, but I do bemoan its necessity.

After happy/sad goodbyes to Chuck and Sue, I headed for my gate, where I had one last full security check of my hand-baggage before boarding. They looked at my cameras and box of Christmas ornaments. The chances of the blown-glass icicle making it safely were falling with every inspection.

The flight home was long, tiresome, and the airplane food regrettable. The “beef lunch” turned out to be beef bar-b-que with



from my sweetie and then put him to work helping me carry those 90+ pounds of luggage. Next time I’m packing less ... and buying lightweight souvenirs!

"You know," I said to Francis T. Laney Jr. the other day, "fans could learn a lot from professional wrestling."

"I've always thought so, Elmer," he responded.

"Don't humor me, Propellerhead," I said, striking a suitable "most voldesfan" pose. "I'm serious. In a way, the process of assimilating wrestling into the fannish mainstream has already begun."

"I hadn't noticed," FTL II said, diffidently.

"In wrestling, for example, bogus sons and fraudulent brothers are more common than real ones! Look at us, 'Elmer Purdue Jr. and Francis Towner Laney Jr.!"

"In your mind, meyer, how does this relate to fandom?" I sensed he was about to stop listening to me and switch to mentally replaying his collection of alternative rock CDs. Complete with speaker hiss, of course, in the Laney Junior manner.

"What about Carl Brandon Jr. as an instance of the wrestling sensibility in fandom?" I persisted. "He's a real person, John-Henri Holmberg, who took his name from a hoax fan"

"I see a problem," he said.

"A problem, meyer?" Had he found a flaw in my grand design?

"Suppose it goes too far?" he asked. "What if some fan dubs himself 'Harry Warner Junior, Junior'?"

"We will have to depend on the good sense and self-restraint of fandom," I said. He laughed crazily, like the Joker in "Batman".

"Your new system is in trouble," he predicted between gasps.

"All right, there may be a few flaws in my system, points that remain to be honed to a proper smoothness," I admitted. "We can't let minor questions obscure consideration of the broad sweep of my idea."

WRESTLING WITH FANDOM

By "Elmer Perdue, Jr."

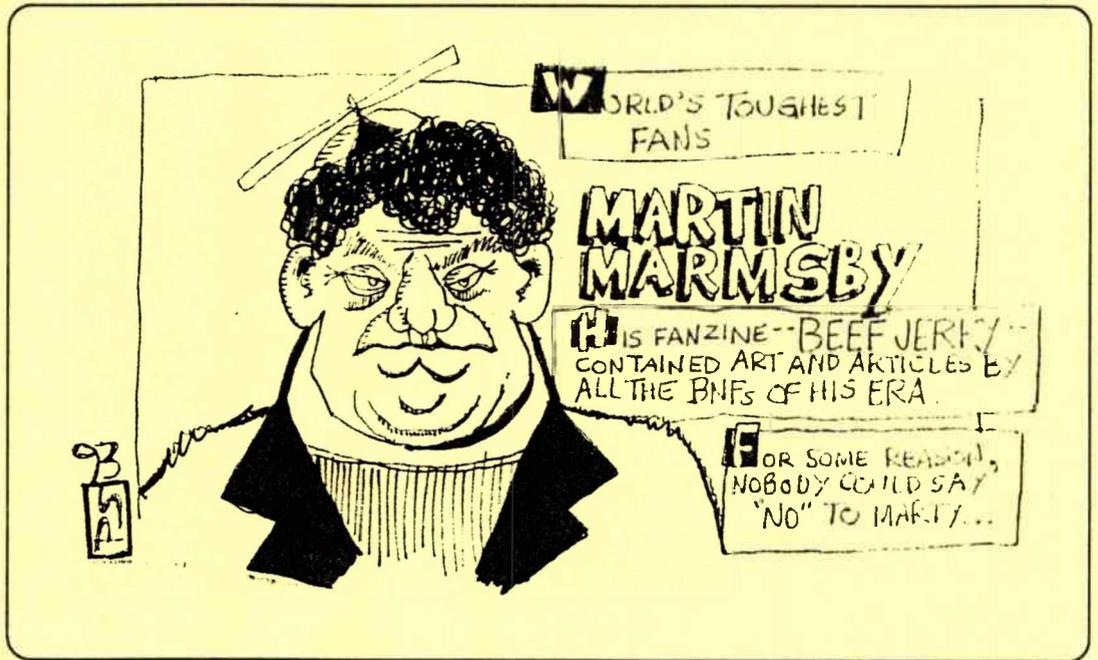
"What you say is true," Towner the Younger conceded. "We will table discussion of self-restraint in fandom for the duration of this article."

"I'm constantly hearing about this or that fan being 'brother' or 'sister' to another fan, in spite of a total lack of blood ties between them! And how many bogus 'grandchildren' does Tucker have these days?"

"He may have dozens, even hundreds," Laney Jr. answered. "Never has a fan generation been more eager to sully their grandmothers' reputations."

"And what do you think hoax characters are? They're just like masked wrestlers!" I said. "They strut around fandom until some babyface rips off the hood!"

"Babyface?" Towner ditto demanded. "What



is this 'babyface'?" Was he about to launch into a tirade on the sex habits of Las Vegas Fandom? I had to act quickly.

"A babyface is a fan favorite," I interrupted. "It's the opposite of a heel, or villain."

"I see," he nodded gravely, selling my analysis like a jobber setting up the promotion's newest star for a pay-per-view.

"There have always been fan heels," I told him. "'Handsome' Harlan Ellison was a prototype local fandom fannish bad boy, and Ted 'The Terminator' White was certainly a heel outside his own territory in the 60s. You

want faces? 'Rock 'n' Roll' Harry Warner. Terrific Terry Carr. And how about Bashful Billy Bowers and Joyce "Little Feather" Worley? People like that."

"And what, as you see it, are the advantages to fandom of adopting even more pro wrestling trappings?" he wanted to know. What a worker!

"For one thing, everybody gets a theme song," I said. *[At the end of this article a mix 'n' match quiz will test your skill to pair theme songs with prominent fans.]*

"I guess you'll enter the worldcon banquet to Dylan's "God on Their Side'."

"Or if I get my way, whoever is Walt Liebscher Jr. can write me an original," I countered.

"A theme song, I like that, meyer," Towner Two. "Eight bars, that's not too many."

"Not for me," I assured him.

"What else do you have?" he wanted to know.

"Let's say you've been a serious constructive fan..."

"In the best sense?" he asked.

"In the best sense, meyer," I assured him.

"Let's say you've been a reasonable, intelligent, and polite individual for a year or so, and you're getting tired?"

"You could quit fandom," he said, a hopeful expression on his suddenly sensitive fannish face.

"That is not an option here," I said.

"Let it pass," he said.

"Take a cue from wrestling! Turn heel! You can attack recycling, and mail your fanzines in styrofoam envelopes! Challenge Charles Burbee to a First Blood Street Fight One-shot!. Guess the weights of prominent female fans. You get the picture."

Even the irrepressible Laney Jr. was stunned for a moment by this brash suggestion.

"Yes, El-mer, but once you do those things, you can never be a face again!"

I stared through him. "Why not?"

"Because fans will hate you!"

"Of course. That's the point. You're a heel. They're *supposed* to hate you."

"Don't worry, they will. But when you want to turn back, they'll *still* hate you! You will be an outcast, forced to wander through fandom, open bidding parties your only refuge. Once you cross the line, they'll hate until the end of time, or even when the N3F stops writing new constitutions."

"No they won't," I argued. "Fans must adopt pro wrestling's attitude toward the repentant sinner. In the mat world, you can piss on the flag, kick a cripple, and publicly assault a 10-year-old child, and they'll welcome you back with open arms at the first sign of a changed heart. In wrestling, there is no crime so heinous that it can't be expiated by punching a heel manager. Fans must simply take a similar, open-hearted attitude."

Towner Mark II seemed convinced. "Anything else?"

"Yes," I added thoughtfully. "All BNFs need a finishing hold. Calvin W. *Biff* Demmon had "Only Maybe *Not*."

"Burb had a good one, too," he said, warming to the subject. "You Bastard, said Al Ashley."

"That was more of a starter than a finisher," I corrected. "But you get the drift, meyer. Each fan should have something like: 'And that's all the time I need to waste on someone who has to cram for a urine test!' Lesser fan types may have to settle for chestnuts like: 'Put *that* in your pipe and smoke it!' but for the BNFs, the sky's the limit!"

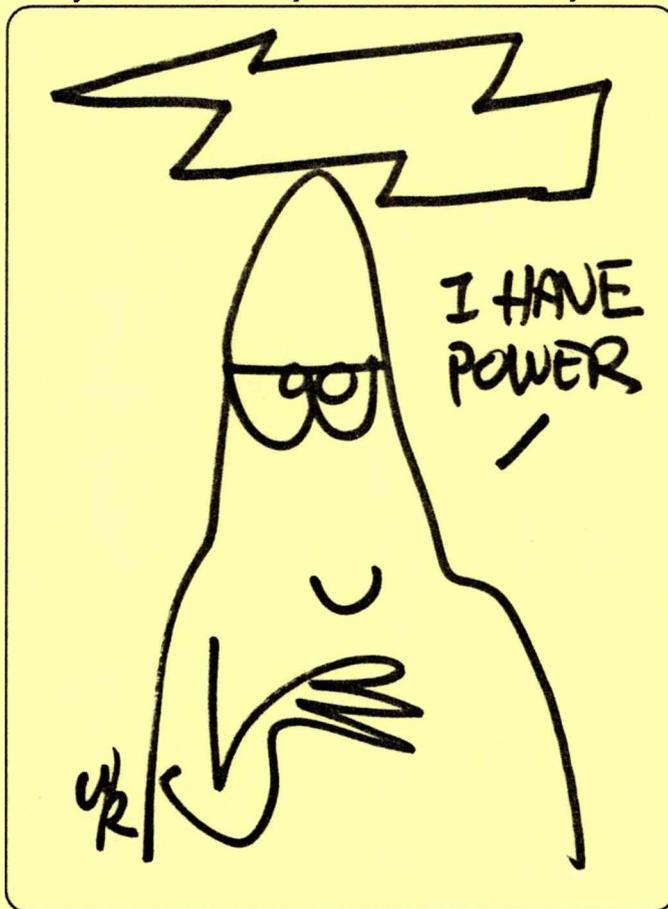
FTL Jr. nodded. "You're going all the way with this, then? Loser-leaves-fandom feuds? Fannish tag teams?"

"Get real, man! Fandom already has both! Unless he returned under a hood, I haven't seen Richard "Mr. Perfect" Bergeron around much since he did that run-in on Lady "Leather" Avedon, have you?"

"If you are right, and of course you are," Laney began, "I will now have to suspect the identity, as well as the sanity,

of every new fan."

"I said fandom would be better if it adopted the trappings of professional wrestling, not perfect."



"I never expected perfection. Not overnight. Not fandom. It would take at least a two-week mental health cruise to make a dent.

"As for tag teams, there are plenty of them," I continued. "The problem is that fans lack vision."

"This isn't going to be one of those Arnie Katz eye stories, is it?" he groaned. Personally, I marble at those Katz eye stories, but I could see that the Recycled Stormy Petrel did not agree.

"No, meyer, I mean in the philosophical sense," I explained. "Fandom has tag teams, but none of them have dynamic, wrestling-style names like 'The Valiant Brothers' and 'The Legion of Doom'. Fannish tag teams settle for bland, meaningless appellations like 'Dick & Leah Smith.' My system will change all that!"

"Oh yes," Francis Towner Laney Jr. said. "I can see that."

"We can be the Insurgent Element," I said.

"I won't wear a stupid costume," Francis II stated. "I avoided the draft for five years, and I'm not going to start wearing a camouflage ring suit now." I didn't push it. Maybe I could make back my investment by selling the outfits to Roy Tackett and Art Rapp. They could call themselves the Drill Instructors.

"Enough with the chin music, prophead," I said. "Let's get started on that Lights Out Oneshot."



We headed toward the Macintosh, our tag team anthem ("Viva Las Vegas" by the Dead Kennedys) pumping in the background. I could almost feel the invisible hands of our readers, brandishing verbal hatpins and crumpled paper cups, reaching out toward us as the bullyboy worldcon security forces herded us to the machine." The adrenaline rush is staggering! We're... the fans of the hour... the fans with the power... Too-o-o-o sweet... to be **sour!**

Turn on the computer!

Ring the bell!, Timekeeper Speer, Ring the bell.

Match the Prominent Fans With the Theme Song Win Prizes!

Column A

"Please, Mr. Postman"
Anything by the Mahavishnu Orchestra
"Smokin' in the Boys Room"
"Putting Out Fire (with Gasoline)"
"Jumpin' Jack Flash"
"People Who Died"
"Video Killed the Radio Star"
"The Boxer"
"Young American"
"Hot Legs"

Column B

Abigail Frost
Dave Kyle
Bill Bowers
Nevenah Smith
Ed Finkler
Harry Warner Jr.
Harlan Ellison
Andy Porter
Ted White
Arnie Katz

The Arnie Katz you know does not exist.

The genial host, superb humorist, and fannish *bon vivant*, is a fiction. Call him Mr. Enthusiasm, call him Mr. Warmth. Call Him Mr. Self-Effacing Humility. Call him whatever you will (and you will), he is no more real than Ivor Jorgensen.

I should know.

I helped create him.

"What?" say you skeptics. "It can't be!"

It can be. It is.

"But we have known him all these years!"

exclaims rich brown (or possibly Ted White or Dan Steffan or Jeff Schalles or even Mike Glicksohn).

"I've known him since he rode a tricycle," Lenny Bailes (pronounced "Bales") - aka Len Bailes (pronounced "Bay-less") - chimes in.

In a sense, you are correct, rich. (And Ted and Dan and Jeff and even Mike). You knew *an* Arnie Katz. So did you, when you and he were kids together in New Hyde Park, Lenny.

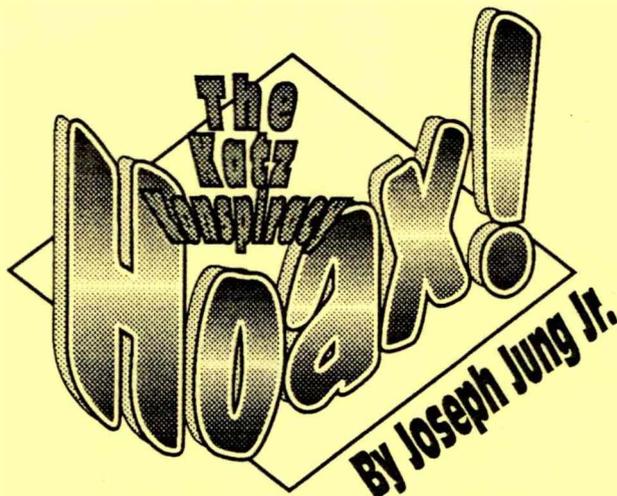
No denying it. There was an Arnie Katz, born July 2, 1946, who became a fan in the mid-1960s. He fanned until age 32 and then gafiated.

Las Vegas Fandom venerates the memory of this fine, if obscure fan. He had a talented wife. His fanzines had excellent Chamberlain covers. He was a bit combative, but he was generous and humorous, too.

Maybe that's why we decided to revive him in 1990.

Now it's time to raise the house lights, and let everyone see that it's all a play. The best place to start is at the beginning. It worked for The Bible.

Our meeting room is lined with the shelves of the club's fanzine collection. It's our pride and joy, gathered by a hundred shadowy Las Vegas worldcon attendees over three decades. We have them all: **Quandry, Hyphen,**



Innuendo, Void, Oops!a!, Tomorrow And... They are mint copies, carefully preserved, bought with profits from the club's mini-casino. During the long years of isolation, these fanzines shaped our fan community in the desert.

With no illustrious local fans to advise us, we drew inspiration from what we read in the great fanzines. We played ghoddminton - and miniature golf. We

produced fanzines by the score, and oneshots by the dozen.

Yet the fanzines in our collection carried a

warning. They spoke of feuding and jealousy. They told of self-serving greed and flagrant dishonesty. They hinted at things too dark to be put into print by even the most candid fanwriters.

For a long time, Las Vegas Fandom tried to have the best of both worlds. We distanced ourselves from the fusses while enjoying the literary fruits. It worked, but we grew dissatisfied.

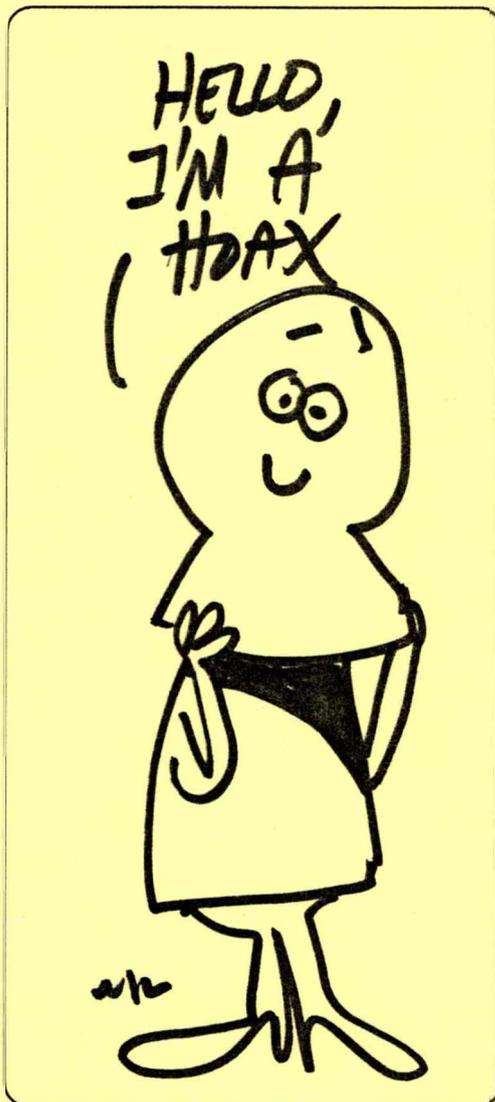
We yearned to know these remarkable fans better. We wanted to take them to dinner. We wanted to send them our fanzines and get their LoCs. We wanted the gossipy phone calls and visits from well-known fans. In short, we wanted to tap into the energy of the living fandom, not just enjoy the productions of the ages past.

Then came Topic A/The Bergeron Wars/TAFF Wars. Lacking allegiances, we took no sides. Many chose to skip the endless rehashes and explanations that filled fanzine pages for a time.

Vegas Fandom heaved a collective sigh of relief when the unpleasantness burned itself out. Now, we thought, things can get back to normal.

We were wrong.

The feud was over, but it had extinguished some of the lights.



There was no zip, meyer.

"There's no zip, meyer," Peggy Burke said. Unfortunately, Peggy had never heard the phrase spoken aloud and pronounced it "mayor". This did not detract from the validity of her point. Everyone nodded agreement.

"I think it would be a fine and commendable idea if we did something about it," said Ken Forman. A chorus of assent was the response.

"We've got to join fandom!" Su Williams declared. "If we don't..." Her voice trailed off. There was no need for Su to finish the sentence. Her meaning was obvious.

"The free ride is over," said Karl Kreder. at a SNAFFU meeting in April, 1990. "Fandom needs us."

"Sitting on the sidelines isn't our style, anyway," Aileen Forman said, summed it up for all of us.

The logic was inescapable. However unwittingly, fanzine fandom had nurtured our idyllic group. Now fandom was paralyzed by pessimism. Evidently, they had taught us well. The Spirit of Trufandom would not let us sit idly while the hobby languished.

Once we'd made the decision to reveal the Fandom of Good Cheer to the world, it raised weighty new issues. As Aileen put it, "There's no way we can explain hiding from fandom for this long without making us all sound crazy."

We couldn't have that. We wanted fandom to love us. Is that so wrong?

"If we had even one well known fan," moaned Laurie Yates, "we could claim that he or she taught us the history, traditions, and personalities of fanzine fandom."

"We are a science fiction club," Karl reminded everyone. "We should look for fandom's salvation in the bosom of Mother Stf."

"You mean claim that we're psychic superfans, like in "Slan," who absorbed the hobby via esp?" Dandi asked. "Sounds plausible to me!"

In the end, the club rejected this story as too fanciful to be credible to most fans. Our goal was nothing less than total belief. Once fandom's suspicions were aroused, the Big Lie was doomed. Fans would pursue like bloodhounds if they got the scent. Only by smothering all doubt could we succeed.

"I've got it!" JoHn Hardin exclaimed. "In

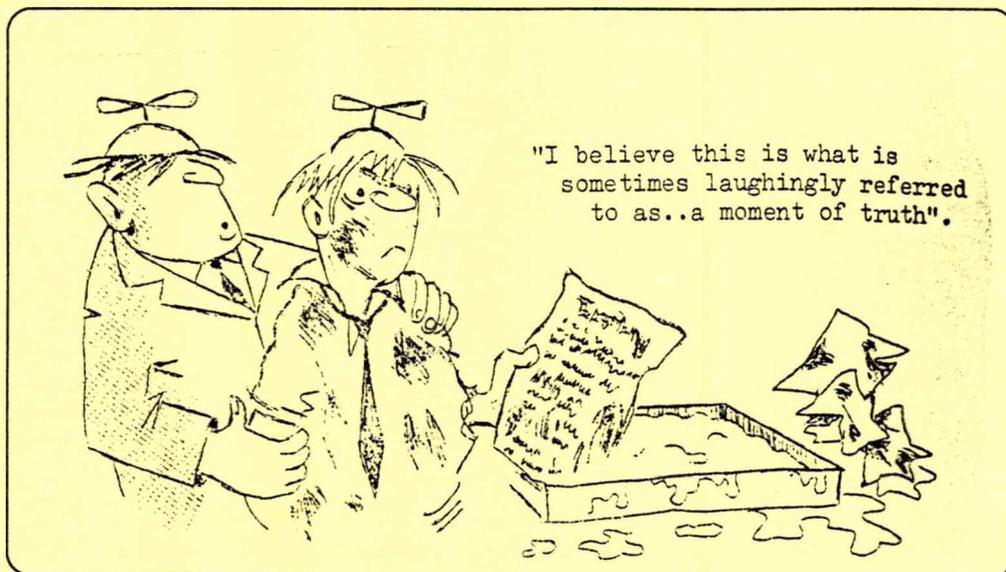
Marvel Comics' *The Avengers*, members of the costumed super group find an iceberg with Captain America frozen inside. They thaw him out, and he becomes the leader of the group. We could do that!"

"You know where Captain America is frozen in an iceberg?" Alice LaFondue asked. "Do we have enough ice picks to do the job?"

"No, I mean we need someone like Captain America. We need a big name fan!" JoHn elaborated.

"You know where there's a big name fan frozen in an iceberg?" Alice said drily.

"Come on, everybody, I'm reasonably serious about this," JoHn pleaded. "I think what we



should do is find a gafiated big name fan and talk him or her back into fandom."

"I see a problem," said Ken. "There are no gafiated Las Vegas fans, at least none that fanzine fandom would know."

"If we can't find a real fan, couldn't we just make one up?" Karl proposed. "You fanziners just write back and forth, so who's to know?"

"You mean start a hoax? Like Carl Brandon?" asked Marci Waldie.

"Carl Brandon? He the guy who played the gay Klingon lupine in that game last month?" asked Karl, who didn't know nearly as much about fanzines as he did about science fiction.

"Carl Joshua Brandon is a fictitious fan invented by Terry Carr, Dave Rike, Pete Graham, and Ron Ellik," said Peggy, whose **Fancylopedia 2.5** was on every Vegas fan's shelf. "He wrote many witty faan fiction stories which translated literary and dramatic works into fannish terms."

She continued to describe the career of Carl Brandon. "Would you like to hear about other hoaxes in fanhistory now?"

"Look at the time!" exclaimed Aileen, staring

at her bare wrist. "You want us to create a fan?"

"It would be just like a role-playing game!" said Chris Rathjens. "We could start him off as a letterhack to the prozines, and if that was all right, we could..."

"What do you mean 'he'?" Raven challenged. "Why should our hoax be a guy?" She flicked her whip a couple of times for emphasis.

"A guy would be easier, Raven," soothed Su Williams, in a bid to avert the incipient tirade. "If it's a woman, fans will show up here trying to get into her pants." Raven muttered something, but subsided.

"You're right, Chris, it would be like a roleplaying game," said Laurie Yates. "If we start a hoax, we'll have to do it for years before the fan has the stature to usher the rest of us into fandom."

"So what, pray tell, do you suggest?" Ken asked.

"The hoax idea is good, but we don't want a neofan," Laurie responded. "We need a BNF. Let's make up a BNF!"

"I don't see how we can do that," John demurred. "It takes sustained activity over a long time to raise someone to the level of a big name fan."

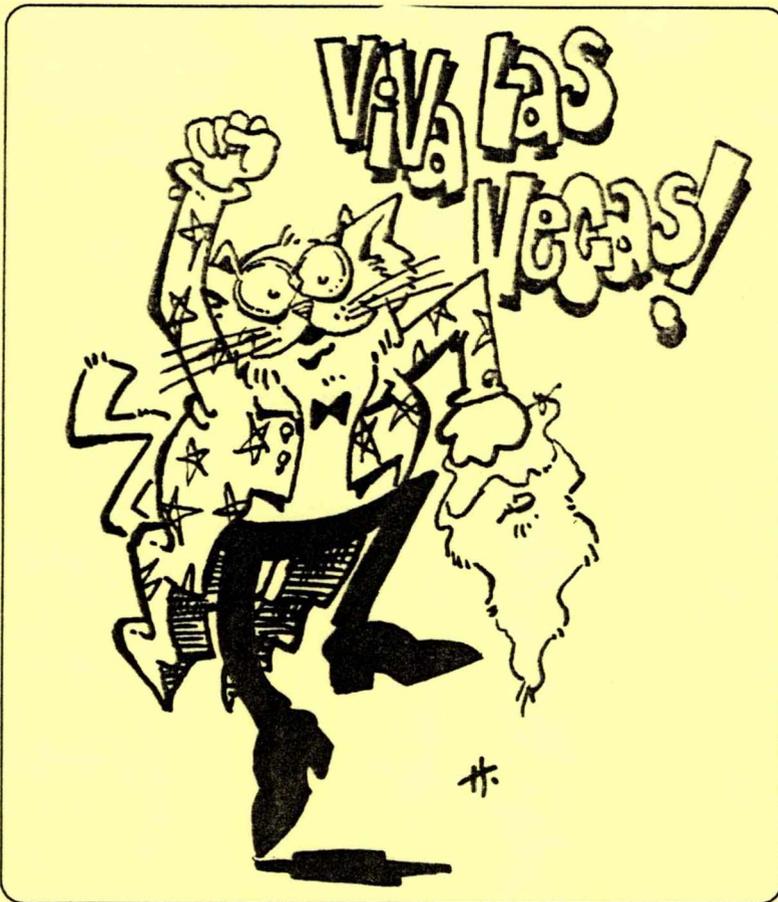
"Joel Nydahl became a BNF in less than a year," noted Peggy. "He started **Vega**..."

"We'll have to discuss that sometime soon, Peggy," said Ken. "We'd better stick to the subject."

"If we can't un-gafiate a real fan," John proposed, "why can't we pretend that we've brought a fan of the past back to the hobby?"

"You mean a hoax de-gafiation?" Su said. "Has anyone done that before?"

"Not really. Leslie Norris claimed to be a de-gafiated old fan, but he was a complete hoax," Peggy commented. "Harry Warner



guessed the joke immediately."

"That's because they made him up," John insisted. "We'll base our hoax on a real one!"

We spent the rest of the evening tossing around names. There was no shortage of strong candidates, but there was a reason against each of them.

Laney? Undoubtedly, an interesting choice, except that his death was well documented.

Stephen Pickering? The Fan of Steal was so hated we wouldn't want to be known as his friends.

Grennell? A Ghod Man, but still in regular contact with too many fans.

Jim Reuss? Who? Ian McAuley? Too far-

fetched. Irish Fandom wouldn't be fooled for a minute.

Jim Benford? Greg would blab.

Finally, unable to find a suitable candidate, we agreed to think about it overnight. Now that we had the idea, we weren't going to turn loose until we had someone.

The phone rang.

It wasn't even noon yet, so I knew it must be important. Las Vegas is a 24-hour town. As an entertainment writer for a local paper, I like the darker ones and seldom start my day until afternoon.

"Hello? This is Peggy."

"Peggy! Is everything all right?"

"Everything's fine, Joseph," she said, "but I've got our BNF!"

"Who?"

"His name is Arnie Katz, with an 'ie' at the end. No relation to David Katz, incidentally."

"And he's gafia?"

"He disappeared about 1978, Nobody's heard of him since."

"But did anyone hear of him back then?" I asked. "Is he big enough?"

"He was about your size," she said. I go 6'3", 230 lbs., so he was certainly big physically, if not in any other way. "You know what I mean... is he a BNF."

"Yes, he was," she said. "Published a lot of fanzines from the mid-60s to the mid-70s... helped run the Bob Shaw Fund in 1971... had a talented wife named Joyce who did a lot on her own... hosted a club in the early 1970s... We've got zines in the library, mostly **Quip**, **Focal Point**, **Swoon**, and some apazines."

"You may have something," I said. "When Ken wakes up this afternoon, give him a call."

That must've been what she did, because the Mainspring phoned around 3. "Greetings and salutations," he said when I picked up the receiver.

"So, Ken, did Peggy tell you all about Ernie Katz?"

"Arnie Katz," Ken corrected. "The guy's name is 'Arnie Katz'."

"Whatever," I said. I'd read some fanzines, but I wasn't wild about them. Maybe it was the lack of interactivity.

"We're going to have a meeting about it tomorrow night at our place," said Ken. "6 o'clock, if you can manage it. It's Aileen's night to run the casino."

"All right, I'll be there." I'll admit I was curious. It's an occupational disease with journalists.

Ken had made quite a few calls. A good crowd was gathered in the living room when I got there. Peggy was just finishing a recitation on the fannish life of Arnie Katz.

"... so he began to get disenchanted with local fandom. That and career demands led to gafia in the mid-1970s," she concluded.

"Was he popular?" Karl asked. "It wouldn't be good if he had too many friends. We don't want old pals to come visiting."

"Yes and no," she answered. "He's enigmatic. I think fans will take a wait-and-see attitude toward him."

"That's perfect!" Karl exulted. "And we can say he's changed in the years since his gafiaion!"

"Once the resurgent Arnie Katz introduces the rest of Las Vegas Fandom, he can gafiate again," said JoHn. "He'll just disappear, and no one will be the wiser."

"This could actually work," marveled Alice.

It turned out to be easier than anyone expected to get "Arnie Katz" back into fandom.

Peggy noticed that an apa he'd helped form, TAPS, was approaching its 25th anniversary. What could be more natural than for "Arnie" to make his comeback in such an arena?

It had advantages for us, too. TAPS had about 20 people. We could practice before venturing into general fandom. The roster included none of Arnie's old friends, though there were a couple of acquaintances. As the Mainspring said when he was conning me into writing Arnie's first contribution, "If we can't fool people who knew him slightly, we might as well forget the whole campaign. So either way, you will gain us valuable information."

Giving credit where it is due, Laurie came up with the way to establish the connection between TAPS and our version of Katz. The official-looking Post Office notification of change of address didn't cost much, since we only needed about two-dozen. We found a **Terrean**, TAPS' rotating official organ, in the collection. It was two years old, so the roster was only slightly out of date.

We sent a CoA card to every member. Some of the waitlisters had probably advanced to membership, so we included them, too. We didn't have to get "Arnie's" address to any specific person. "When the editor of the anniversary **Terrean** wants to run a message

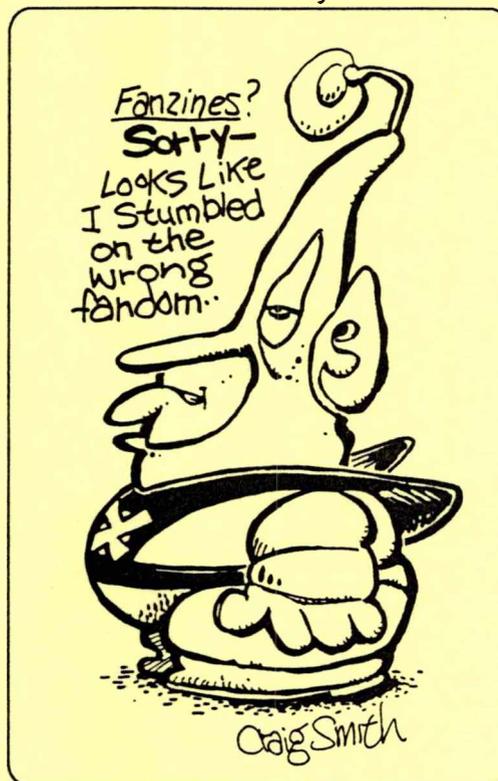
from the founder, they'll either have a CoA card, or they'll ask someone who got it."

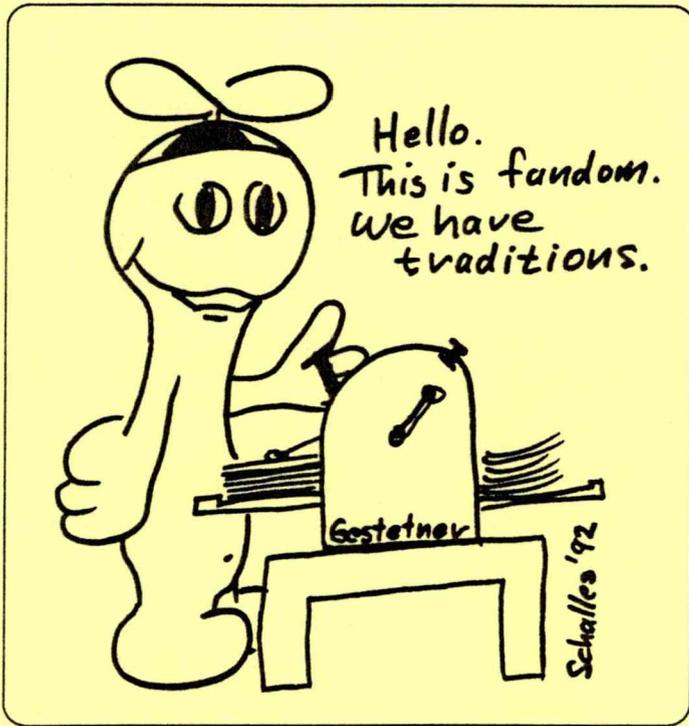
It worked like a charm. Mark Blackman asked for an anniversary contribution for the apa. I wrote back and told Mark that I would give it a shot. For the hell of it, I put my name - or rather Arnie's - on the waitlist.

I wrote a short history of the early years of TAPS, gleaned from Katz's own fanzine accounts. The 12 White Knights - that's what Katz had dubbed them in the 1960s - liked it and asked for more. I

did about five more monthly letters.

I can't deny that it was fun. Fanzines interested me more once I was writing as well as reading, them. I got into the concept of producing my monthly TAPS letter and reading





what the others had to say about it.

"It's time," Ken said. "Joseph has done a good job in TAPS, but we have to move along."

"Move along?" I asked.

"Get him into general fandom," Ken elaborated. "That's the idea, remember?"

I remembered, but I was getting worried about the direction the hoax was taking. **Crossfire**, my TAPSzine, was more fun than I'd expected, but I didn't know if I wanted to go further.

And yet I was intrigued. TAPS was nice, but it wasn't the fandom that filled the great fanzines. Now that I had sipped the heady brew of egoboo in TAPS, I thirsted for the vintage dispensed by the fans who had, without their knowledge, entertained Las Vegas Fandom for three decades.

"A genzine," Ken said. "Arnie Katz has got to publish a genzine."

"That's what Arnie Katz would do," seconded Peggy. "He'd start a genzine, publish 10 or 12 issues, get restless, fold it, and do another one."

"Or in this case, gafiate again, leaving Las Vegas Fandom firmly established," Aileen summarized.

"Sounds good," JoHn said. There were murmurs of assent. It did sound good. It set a limit to our imposture. We wouldn't do it forever, just a dozen issues, and then we wouldn't need our hoax BNF any more.

I liked it real well until I realized that everyone assumed I was going to continue in

my role as Arnie Katz, editor and chief writer for this publication.

"Wait a minute," I said. "You think I'm going to do all the work and..."

"You volunteered!" Alice said. "I distinctly thought I heard you say you'd produce a genzine."

"You must've," Karl said, "because here you are, doing the fanzine. Stands to reason you must have volunteered."

"I don't remember volunteering," I said.

"Of course you did," Alice explained. "You don't remember it because you were out of the room."

"I was out of the room?"

"You were getting a can of soda,"

"And I volunteered?"

"Sure!," she said brightly. "I remember Ken volunteering you."

Nods all around. I had left the room at the wrong time, and now Snaffu custom decreed that I must pay. No sense arguing. They would cling to this point with maniacal tenacity.

"All right, all right," I said. "I'll do it, but you all better help."

"It might even be fun," Laurie proposed.

I won't bore you with the debate over the name, or how we decided to do **Folly** monthly. Filling the small first issue was easy. Peggy wrote the autobiography, with help from me. Club members contributed short humorous bits. I



wrote the rest.

We scraped together a mailing list from the few fanzines which "Arnie" had received. We really lucked out when Linda Bushyager sent her address list, followed soon after by similar ones from Willis and Lichtman.

Artwork was harder. Ken thought we should write to the artists whose work we'd seen in fanzines. John and I thought it was best to minimize contact until we had mapped the territory better. What if we, as Arnie, wrote to someone with a big grievance and acted like they were bosom buddies? Out-of-character actions like that might lead to an unmasking.

Ken is very environmentally conscious, so it is fitting that he thought of the solution. We recycled cartoons from Katz's own fanzines, and a few others we thought were obscure enough to pass without comment. Whenever possible, we went with gafiated or deceased fans. They were less likely to bring our borrowings to light.

Putting that first issue together was one of the hardest things I ever did, in or out of fandom. It took two months of rewriting and editing to polish the material to creditable luster. I ended up going over every word. It took another month to learn DTP.

Folly #1 wasn't perfect. I'd written a little piece about being rusty, an alibi before the fact. Flawless or not, it gave me a big kick to see it printed, collated and stapled.

The response from fans was better than we'd dared to hope. We sent out 75 copies, and **Folly** pulled 20 letters, plus several contributions and a lot of fanzines in trade.

Arnie Katz was launched. We had passed the point of no return.

I was having too much fun to abandon the hoax now, anyway. By the third issue, I was writing all of Arnie's stuff, including correspondence, and wallowing in high-quality ego-boo such as I had never experienced.

The best-known journalists are virtually anonymous. An ordinary reporter like me need never fear admiring crowds thronging him on the street. No one has ever interrupted my dinner to ask for an autograph.

Groupies? Don't make me laugh. Only journalism students want reporters, and those women usually want to be loved for their Fine

Minds. When I'd tell a woman I was a newspaper writer, they'd pick up their drink and slide away, down the bar to someone who might have two nickels to rub together. Sometimes, when I wanted to impress a girl, I said I was a plumber.

Most of all, guys like me are practically invisible cogs in the vast machine that is a daily newspaper. Most people don't notice bylines, or if they do, won't remember five minutes later.

There was so little happening in fanzine fandom that a new genzine like **Folly** was an event. I tried to point out other good things that were happening, and a lot of fans began to mirror Arnie's upbeat attitude. I expanded the mailing list a couple of times, and stuff poured in from the big names.

And the letters! I couldn't figure out how the real Katz had gafiated. He may have had his little feuds, but he was also loved. Each was more marvelous than the last. I was living with Alice

LaFondue by then, and sometimes I'd call home in the middle of the day, just to find out what wonderful things had arrived in the mail.

By the end of summer 1991, we were ready to start using Arnie Katz for his intended purpose. Arnie started writing about the miraculous fan group in the wilderness which he and Joyce had discovered. (It hadn't taken long to realize that Joyce was more popular than Arnie and, to some, the better fanwriter. I made her a frequent character in Arnie's articles, but kept her off-stage most of the time.)

It wasn't always easy to pluck the right note. I wanted to make Vegas fans sound bright

and charming, but not too perfect. A city of neofen straight out of "The Enchanted Duplicator" would inspire suspicion. Suspicion would beget Doubt. Then it would be only a



short step to some fannish investigator arriving on Arnie's doorstep to solve the mystery.

Fortunately, the Vegas All-Stars proved equal to the task. With acting skills honed by a thousand RPG sessions, they didn't just play neofans, they *became* neofans. Even fans who had done a hundred fanzines for local consumption sacrificed potential egoboo by consciously encumbering their first public efforts with spotty repro and awkward art.

Anxious though they were to finish Stage One, they stayed within their roles. Some showed a genius for committing neofannish mistakes while remaining lovable.

And fandom did love them. They were young, energetic, and talented. They were new blood and fresh meat.

Everything went so well that we initiated stage Two ahead of schedule. This removed the shackles from our publishers so they could do their best work, but it kept restrictions on evidencing too much fannish knowledge.

Although we were keeping Joyce Katz out of the fannish limelight, someone had to pull the puppet's strings. We couldn't postpone this decision, either. Whoever played Joyce would have to abandon fanac under her own name, so it was best to select the actress before she got too enmeshed in fandom.

When I brought this up at a Social, everybody had an opinion.

"It's obvious," said Su Williams. "It has to be Alice."

"She already lives with Joseph, she reads fanzines, and she wrote a nice column for FAPA as Joyce," said Aileen, quick to agree with Su's assessment.

They were all quick to agree.,

"You're crazy," I said. "Alice is blonde, and Joyce had brown hair. Joyce was slim, and Alice is busty."

"Well, they won't see her right away, you know," Don Miller said.

"All right, that's true," I conceded. "But they'll see her eventually. I guess I can pass for Arnie Katz, though I'm a little younger than he ought to be, but do you really think Alice will be convincing as Joyce?"

"How convincing is Joyce?" Alice said. Maybe she could be the Gracie Allen of Fandom. It would certainly simplify things.

"A lot of years have passed," Laurie observed. "Women change their hair color and style of dressing all the time. They'll get used to her as long as we don't do something like make her radically taller than the real Joyce Katz."

"I'm 5'4"," Alice said. "That's only slightly taller than the original."

"Maybe we can say you settled," I offered.

"I did," Alice retorted. "I settled when I moved in with you."

And so Alice LaFondue, gold prospector, carnival trickshot queen, manager of the Furry Patch Ranch, and now VP/Hospitality of the club's minicasino The Flamboyant, Home of the 99¢ Cherries Jubilee, became Joyce Katz.

It wasn't long after that that we realized that we needed to revive a third fan, Bill Kunkel. He was closely identified with the Katzes, been some kind of business partner after they'd all gafiated. My use of pirated Kunkel cartoons had touched off questions from several fans about his whereabouts and

possible return to fandom.

Help came from an unlikely source. From what I've read in fanzines, every SF club has its rank and file members. They come to meetings, say little, offend nobody, and leave quietly. They never run for office, and they always pay their dues on time.

Chuck was one of those. I'd seen him at meetings every two weeks for 18 months before I found out his last name, "Ennootz".

That's why I was surprised when a voice from the edge of the room said, "I'll be Kunkel."

"Do you think you can handle it?" Ken asked, doubt hanging from every syllable. "He was some kind of firebrand..."

"... and a cartoonist," Laurie said. "Don't forget that!"



"Yes, he was a cartoonist, too, I believe," Ken finished.

"I can do it," Chuck repeated.

"You can draw?" Don Miller wondered.

"Alicia Austin can draw," Chuck amended. "I've been doing some doodling, and I think I can do cartoons for fanzines."

"But you've always so shy..." Dandi blurted.

"C'mere and I'll show you who's shy," Chuck said. Was that a leer? I couldn't be sure but I thought it might be.

So Charlie "Chuck" Ennootz, Mr. Quiet, became William H. "Potshot" Kunkel, the last angry fan.

Offbeat casting, but it worked.

Not only did Chuck rip through fandom like a modern-day Laney, but his non-fannish life perked up, too. He quit his bookkeeper job, and started a financial newsletter, he took up the electronic guitar, and it wasn't long before the condo in the Greens had a second occupant, Laurie Yates.

The next crisis arose in the waning days of 1991. That's when we almost became casualties of our own success.

"I'm getting letters," I confided to Ken. "People want to visit Arnie and Joyce."

"In a way, it's a good thing," said the Mainspring in a soothing way that infuriates me. "Fandom has accepted you and Alice as Arnie and Joyce Katz."

"That's nice," I snapped, "but we aren't Arnie and Joyce Katz, remember? We're Joseph Jung, Jr. and Alice LaFondue. They come here, and we're going to have a lot of explaining to do."

"Joseph's right," Ron Pehr said, "but the answer is easy."

"The answer is easy?" Aileen echoed. (Echo was silent as she aileened against the doorway.)

"If you don't want people coming here, go see them" Ron explained.

"That *is* good!" Ken said. "Who is the most likely to visit if you don't visit?"

"I don't think that's the way to handle it," I said, shaking my head.

"Why not?" Peggy asked. "Ron has the right idea."

"I just don't think sending Arnie, and presumably Joyce, to see one or two fans will head off all potential visits. We've had too many letters from people who'd hoped to see us at the worldcon and were disappointed. Besides, I'm not sure I could survive a stay with any of his old friends. It would be a terrific strain."

"You mentioned the worldcon," Peggy

said. "What about sending you to a con?"

"Corflu 9," I said. "It's in Los Angeles. Alice and I could even take along one or two other Vegas fans."

Alice and I spent the week before Corflu quizzing each other.

"Who is rich brown?"

"Who is Steve Shucart?"

"Who was on the cover of the Ace 'Lord of the Rings'?"

"What soft drink does Ted White prefer? Moshe Feder?"

We read and reread our Katzines. We memorized names, dates, and places.

I recounted the events of that weekend at exhaustive length, so I won't recapitulate here. My resemblance to Arnie Katz was enough to squeak by, and the woman with me must be Joyce. Everyone knew Arnie Katz couldn't see two feet in front of his face, so it was no problem not knowing Ted White from Bruce Pelz.

We got overconfident. Success will do that. Then the roof fell in: Ross Chamberlain moved to Las Vegas to accept a high security position in Area 51. Naturally he contacted his old friend Arnie, peppering the mail box with pactsarcds. Effusively friendly ones, which from our point of view were the worst kind.

When we could not delay the day of reckoning any longer, I wrote and agreed to meet him for lunch at the Rio. As soon as I walked up to where he was standing near the entrance to the All-American Bar & Grill, I could see by his expression that he knew I wasn't Arnie Katz.

I'd toyed with the idea of trying to bluster through this difficult situation, but Ross' expression pre-empted that possibility. "You got me, Mr. Chamberlain," I said, raising my hands in surrender before he could utter a word.

"So I see," he said. "At least you won't look to me for multi-page covers."

Over the meal, I entreated him to stay silent about our deception. I discovered that fanzine comments about his easy-going nature were not empty flattery. Once I convinced Ross that my imposture was harming no one, least of all the real Arnie Katz, he agreed to remain silent on the subject.

I know it was hard for Ross to live up to his promise, so hastily given to me that day, but he did. Even his mates in a private apa remained unaware of the true state of affairs in the Sodom of the Southwest.

Crisis encountered.



Crisis successfully averted.

It kept getting easier. Alice and I became so versed in our roles that we handle them as second nature, and I do think the originals would be pleased with what their namesakes have written and published.

That's why I'm writing this article. It's now or never.

Arnie Katz has accomplished our objectives. Las Vegas has merged into the fannish mainstream, and many Vegas fans are well known.

It was time for Arnie and Joyce to gafiate.

Except for one thing; I didn't want Arnie to gafiate. I had done all my fanac under that name, and made so many friends. I couldn't leave it all. I couldn't let them think their generosity and affection was all in vain. Alice felt the same way. We talked about it almost every night.

If Ken, JoHn, and the others asked when we planned our swan dive into the Glades, we answered vaguely. We dragged our feet. We thought up loose ends that we had to tie together before vanishing. We delayed one week at a time for months, but we knew the other Vegas fans felt that the hoax was now counter-productive. The longer it continued, the more chance of discovery. Finishing off the Katzes was the best way to thwart discovery. Our secret safe, Vegas fans could walk in the sunshine, secure in their place in the hobby.

"The fat lady is ready to sing," Karl told me last night on the telephone. "We're going to send Arnie and Joyce to fannish valhalla with one last oneshot tomorrow night."

I said I'd see him there tomorrow night.

I didn't mention that I was going to write this article between then and now.

I hope you admire the hoax enough to forgive the prime perpetrators. Without it, Vegas fans wouldn't have entered fandom. Rather than have it revealed that we shadowed fandom for decades, most would've elected to stay isolated. Now they are all active, and fanzine fandom has benefitted by this influx of livewire publishers.

We didn't consider the ramifications when we agreed to become this gafiated fan couple. We should've. Anyone can see that with 20/20 hindsight.

As things stand, the gafiation of Arnie and Joyce Katz will force us to leave fandom, sacrificing all the relationships we've formed in the last three years. We would have to turn away from fanzines and resign ourselves to never writing or publishing them again.

Only such drastic measures can preserve the Arnie Katz Hoax. Any attempt to revert to our real names after Arnie and Joyce gafiate would instantly reveal the secret which Las Vegas Fandom has gone to such lengths to protect.

I thought I heard the fat lady warming up as we rang the Formans' bell. In light of Karl's phone comment, I was relieved to find that the songstress was the sylph-like Marci McDowell rather than the proverbial rotund chanteuse.

It wasn't much. I called it a good omen, and it made me happy.

When it came time for New Business, I raised my hand and, upon the acknowledgement of president Aileen Forman, took the floor.

"I have heard many of you say that it's time to end the fan careers of Arnie and Joyce Katz. They have served their purpose, you say, and now should return to the limbo from which we plucked them.

"I say, 'No!'.

I do not impeach the motives of the fans, among them my closest friends, who say this. I can't argue with the logic or dispute the conclusion. Only Arnie and Joyce's gafiation can guarantee that fans will never know how we spied on them like Peeping Toms since the 1960s.

"They are right in what they say, but they don't say enough.

"They don't say that the preservation of the secret will require Alice and I to leave you all, to never see you again. We will have to walk away and never look back.

"That is a high price for being volunteered

into spending my nights writing and publishing to conjure the big name fan that Vegas needed so badly.

"And yet Alice and I would pay it, if it were the only way. You've been true friends. If this means so much to you, how could we refuse? We couldn't.

"But consider: Is it really the only alternative?"

"What else could we do?" Laurie wailed. Perhaps she had just realized that Charles "Chuck" Ennootz, better known as "Bill Kunkel" would also have to disappear before long... forcing her to choose between fandom and boyfriend.

"We could trust fandom," I said. Everybody looked at me intently. This wasn't what they'd anticipated.

"Fanhistoriography has bleak chapters, but it also has uncounted examples of exemplary words and deeds," I continued. "If fandom sometimes fails to act up to its own image, it never fails to try.

"We began with many preconceptions," I reminded them. "We knew fandom the way a member of the audience knows a favorite movie. Now Las Vegas Fandom has stepped out of the audience and joined the rest of fandom on stage. We've all broadened our perceptions, added untold bits of information, to our picture of fandom.

"Hasn't your perception changed? Mine has. I see the importance of interpersonal connections. It's a communications network that extends beyond fanzines.

"Fans know Las Vegas Fandom and its many members as people now. If the way we accomplished it was not straightforward, the people whom our mythical Katzes springboarded into fandom are genuine.

"You've made friends and acquaintances throughout the world. If these people mean so much to you that you're willing to banish Alice and I to Mundania for life, then aren't they also worthy of your trust?"

"Have faith in fandom.

"Trufannishness drew us to fanzine fandom. The Spirit of Trufandom is our hope. If these fans are really who you think they are, they will get over the shock easily enough.

"OK, they might say we're weird. Since

when has Vegas Fandom worried about a little weirdness?"

"Or a lot of weirdness," John added.

"Still crazy after all these years," Aileen sang a capella.

"We're not seers or espers. We don't really know how fans will take the news. They might laugh off the whole thing as a fine fannish joke.

"They might not. I don't know. You don't know.

"One thing I do know is that I don't want to go gafia."

"Or fafia," Alice said.

"Or fafia, any more than you want to sever your fannish relationships. And the reasons why we all feel that way are exactly the reasons why we should tell fandom the truth.

"Let me write the full story of the Arnie Katz Hoax. Let Alice and I, and Charlie, too, take our chances.

"Are you with me?"

I looked around the room.

It was unanimous.

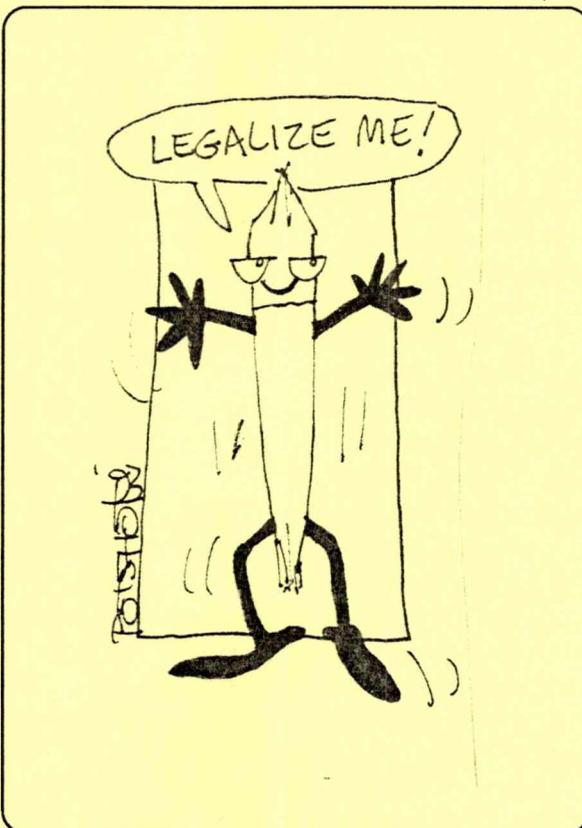
Alice, or should I say Joyce, and I have talked it over. We've discussed it with Charlie "Chicken" Ennootz, whom you know as Bill "Potshot"

Kunkel. If you people don't mind, we're going to keep these names. It may cause a little confusion, but it really shouldn't be worse than two John Berrys (familarly known as "the real one" and "the other one").

Besides, as things have worked out, I *am* Arnie Katz. I wrote 99% of everything that has appeared over his name. I published the zines, paid the dues (in more ways than one). It is my personality, allowing for a few strategic misleading statements, that you have come to love or hate. It's the same for Alice and Chuck Ennootz, too.

So I guess, what it comes down to is that Arnie Katz has returned to fandom after all.

Now that I've recounted the whole story of Las Vegas Fandom's Katz Conspiracy, please be gentle. I want to fan.



A Column by Chuch Harris

Charisma

My new filing cabinet system is marvelous, with little plastic letters on each division, multi-coloured folders, and everything so that I can lay my hands instantly on any piece of paper that I need.

Well, everything except the current copy of Rob Hansen's **Licks** with the "found wanting" judgement on "The Roads Must Roll." I have the previous copy, the one about the bungee weddings (I was going to comment on this if only to point out that the bridegroom was very well hung, but I'm afraid I've left it rather late), but I've put the one I need into A Very Special Place awaiting this column, and I'll damned if I can remember where.

Now, I like Heinlein. Rah! Rah! Rah! for R.A.H. But nowadays it seems to be almost a tradition to sideswipe his clichés, his writing style, and most of all, his nasty fascistic tendencies. I've often wondered why he gave up a good job to volunteer for the US Navy during WW II, his odd juvenile sexuality — spungy nipples indeed! — so that these opinions overshadow his real worth as a giant amongst SF writers.

And he was a giant in my eyes — and a walking cornucopia of fresh brilliant ideas. "Universe," "The Man Who Sold the Moon" — dammit, almost everything he wrote was, is, memorable, and — this might damn me for all eternity, but he was probably the Prime Mover in turning me on to SF. His future history series, so wackily logical, was truly magical for the 20 year old me.

True, I make no pretensions at Lit Crit. I loved Rene Lafayette's Old Doe stories even after I found out it was really that dreadful Elron masquerading as a bit of French. Along with EFR and Henry Kuttner (so far as I know, Kuttner is still okay, but give it time, give it time), these were the stories I searched for in Fred Brown's set of ASFs along with all the Ted Sturgeon stories in Unknown Worlds.

For me, RAH was the greatest of them all. He had that rare gift of making this reader

suspend disbelief and accept the pseudo-science bits as almost logical and understandable,

Sure, his sexy bits were hilarious (but so are Ego's), and his political bits were plain daft but he could grab hold and manipulate your sensawunda into a galactic orgasm. Rob may denigrate "The Roads Must Roll" — which is damn near twice as old as he is and still presents an almost viable futuristic idea. The moving walkways at Gatwick are a good start, but Glory! Glory! imagine an MI built of three endless belts moving at different speeds (the answer to all of Joseph and Judith's pollution problems?) — and then weaving this fairly mundane idea into an exciting (for me at that time) story.

And ghod only knows how many times it has been anthologised! How can I feel alone with all these serried ranks of editors behind me?

I don't have a solitary Heinlein book in the house to quote from, but I still believe he wrote good English that was worth reading. I only wish my kids had read some of it. But then, I wish my kids would read anything, even sauce bottle labels, instead of staring mindlessly at **Sonic the Hedgehog**.

And he could write poetry when he wanted to. All good writers can... Walter Himself can write poetry in French no less, about les papillons rouge et noir, and follically challenged A. Vincent, the best poet in fandom, can rhyme hairless with careless at the drop of a hat.

(I make no mention of my own epic "IN PUERTO DE LA CRUZ." I leave that to posterity's critics.)

Consider "Jet Song," a stray piece thrown away in "The Cool Green Hills of Earth." Once again, I don't have a copy here, and it's a long long time since I read it, but it tends to stick in the mind... well, my mind... memorable if you like... and rather more so than "The Good Ship Venus" or the "Ball at Kirriemuir." (The only bit I remember of that is "Five-and-twenty virgins came down from Inverness. And when the Ball was over there was five-and-twenty less.")

I digress again, though. Back to 'Jet Song.'
The asterisks are the bits I can't remember.

JET SONG.

When the field's all clear, the reports all seen,
When the lock sighs shut, when the lights
wink green, When the captain nods,
when it's time to pray,
*****and she blasts away.

Hear the jets.

Feel the pain in the ship, feel her strain in
their grip,
Feel her rise, feel her drive, straining steel
come alive,
On her jets.

I still think it's pretty good, and worth a bit
more than the 3 cents a word John W. Campbell
used to pay. And I still wish I'd written it.
So there.

It seems a pity, — and grossly unfair — that
fandom tends to pick on Heinlein and ignores
better and more worthy targets. Ghod knows
we've got enough home-grown ones of our own.
How about that Jew-hating fascist H G Wells?
"The Invisible Man" has a far simpler, less
interesting plot than "The Roads Must Roll."
Think of the cries of outrage if JWC had published
it in ASF with all its nasty content. And let's
quote a bit of it. Here is the Jew as landlord:
"...an old Polish Jew in a long grey coat and
greasy slippers" and his two Yiddish-speaking
stepsons with "staring eyes and thick-lipped
bearded faces." The Invisible Man is tempted to
"hit his silly countenance..." But instead sets fire
to the entire house.

Ah well. But nobody in fandom protests about
this sort of dangerous racist crap. Has any of us
ever bothered to stand up and scream about the
dirty old goat? — I tell you, give me Heinlein,
spungy nipples and all, any damn day.

And HG Wells is only one example. There are
so many cases like this in Brit Lit that it's a
wonder we're not all card-carrying members of
the National Front. Personally, the only way I can
explain this is that I think Brits are pretty
uncritical and read for the sheer enjoyment of the
story rather than the subterranean nasty bits.
Mostly we disregard the quirky stuff and personal
opinions that the author slips
into the story.

At five years old, we accept Little Noddy
slipping into bed and snuggling up with Big

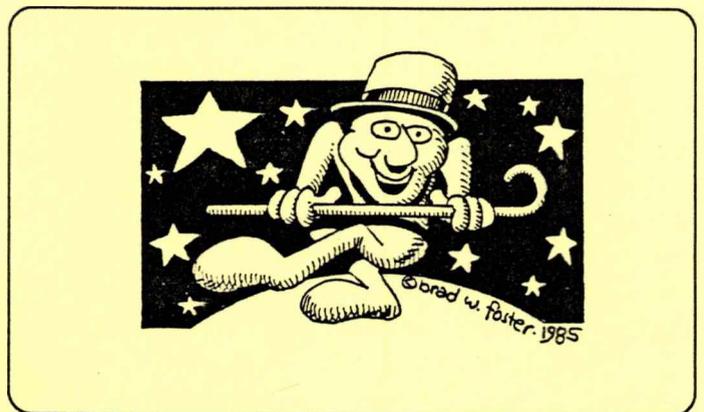
Ears. In early adolescence, we are equally
uncritical of heroic Bulldog Drummond (created
by Lt. Colonel McNeil no less), who hated "ne-
groes, Jews, hunchbacks, dwarfs or other in-
ferior beings" who weren't members of "the
Breed."

The Breed! Ghod help us all, and into the
laager quick! Or John Buchan in "The 39 Steps,"
who wrote that at the heart of any big Teutonic
business "there was a little white-faced Jew in a
bath chair with eyes like a rattlesnake."

And whilest we're at it, how about Biggles
(Sqdn. John's epic hero? Biggles, "slim, deli-
cately featured," rather girlish, was liable to get
all emotional and cry. After all, together with his
chums and fellow flying aces, Algy, Ginger and
Bertie, he saved democracy as we know it, not
only in WWI but in WW II as well.

The chums, Algy, Ginger and Bertie, were as
odd as Ol' Big Himself, but I loved the stories. I
never worried about Bertie being "effeminate in
face and manner" and never even knew that
"Ginger," as in "Beor Beer" was rhyming slang
for Queer... but it wouldn't have made the
slightest difference to me if I had. The important
thing was not their unmentioned, unmentionable
sexual proclivities, but the fact that the intrepid
Brits were always, always excitingly victorious
against the dastardly Erich von Stalheim

And that's the thing that matters. It was no
big deal; all these books, from little Noddy up-
wards, were no more than lightweight enter-
tainment. They were no more likely to warp my
fine mind and hard muscular body than a movie
featuring Tom Cruise and Demi Moore is likely to



convert as to Scientology. If the story is strong
enough, you discount the tiny worrying personal
or political bit that the author allowed to creep in.

And now, after all that, you can write back and
say you can't discount it, and it does too warp
you, and we hereby nominate you as the
Shining Example, you Vileness.

RTG

A Column by Shelby Vick

By Shelby Vick
Cornerstone of Fandom

.... or at the very least, twice an unwitting (no comments on the wit, Arnie) temporal focal point.

Now that I have everyone thoroughly confused, let me fill in some of the background. Time: Labor Day weekend. Place: Magicon (around the land of the Filthy Rodent who both made and ruined Orlando and environs).

"Magic" certainly applied. The entire affair had a golden glow about it. Had to be magic.

How else could we have found a waiter from New York who was polite, friendly, and a fringe fan?

How else could I have, by sheer chance, met Dave Kyle and Sam Moskowitz? (I met many, many other memorables, but not just standing in the hall. The others were mostly where I would've expected them; at the Fan Lounge or room parties or – pause for dramatic effect – at panels.)

"Panels". It was at a panel that I received one Great Revelation, showing the impact one Shelby Vick had on fandom – nay, not just fandom in this case. Its implications were truly worldwide.

Okay, okay, Enuf of the titillation. One panel was on Uses of fanhistory. To my left on the panel sat Bjo Trimble. As things were ending, she harked back to our meeting in '52 at Chicon II. She was a neo at the time, and that was a time when there were 40 males to every female.

"It was hectic," she recalled. "It was crazy. Everyone there seemed the other side of nuts. Frankly, I was having serious doubts about my being there and wondering if fandom was for me. Then I met Shelby Vick. He struck you as the one sane fan there, and I decided that All was Well, after all."

Perfectly innocent comment, hmmmmm? Well, remember: Bjo Trimble was the guiding

force behind the drive to Save "Star Trek." She may have irritated many with her pushiness, but she knew what she was doing; she knew how to influence the network. (One key thing I remember was her insistence that a very brief personal letter was far superior to 40 or a 100 signatures on a petition, something I have since seen proven many times.)

So Bjo saved Star Trek. Bjo is responsible for the Star Trek movies. Bjo is responsible for "Star Trek: The Next Generation". If she had dropped out of fandom at Chicon, none of that would have happened. So, distantly, I am responsible for all of the above.

It's a great weight to bear...

But remember, I said *twice*. Now we come to the Really Important Issue, the item with the most bearing on fandom.

While at Magicon, Suzanne and I had the pleasure of meeting Arnie again after... well, somewhere around 25 years. Maybe longer: in spite of the fact that I was on a fanhistory panel, dates have never been my strong point. Not only did we become reacquainted with Arnie, but we also had our first-time meeting with Joyce. We had – of course! – been aware of her for ages and had talked some on the phone and such, but it was our first face-to-face. Joyce and Suzanne hit it off at once and discovered that they had to have been long-lost twin sisters.

Anyway (I'm straying from the point again, something at which I excel) to the Event. Once, Joyce looked at me and said, "Did you know you're responsible for Arnie and I being together?"

There, that's the point! Now I'll give the explanation.

Way Back When, a young fan named Duggie Fisher showed up in Panama City. If I remember correctly, his father had combined business and pleasure to come to our beaches. I was well enough known for Duggie to look me up and – naturally – we each made a hit with the other and correspondence followed.

Well, Duggie once wrote and said he was considering starting a fanzine. I sent him a dime for the first copy. Joyce said it was my dime that motivated Duggie to begin **Odd**, and it



The Ultimate FANZINE

Faan Fiction by A. Vincent Clarke

Fandom is composed of outré characters,

but some are more outré than others. For years after they've been active, fans like Claude Degler, Derek Pickles, Francis Towner Laney, Bill Temple and such lead a sort of pseudo-existence in the minds of fans and the columns of fanzines, cropping up when an apt illustration is needed (as now) and being reminisced about at convention parties, being held up to or pointed the finger at.

And some people just miss becoming Legends. Accidents, a quirk of fate...

Let me tell you about Gus Bickerstaff.

I came across his name in an old fan-address list the other day, and it brought back the memories. Augustus Brian Bickerstaff, to give him his full name, came to the White Horse in London for 18 months or so, around the '48-'49 period. An undistinguished fringe-fan type... we thought. In his middle-twenties, fair hair brushed straight back, horn-rimmed glasses, neatly dressed, not quite sophisticated enough to be a bank clerk. An insurance clerk or an architect's clerk perhaps. Something in the clerky line of business, anyway. It radiated from him.

He would come to the White Horse every Thursday night, sitting quietly at a table in the corner, rarely joining in conversations but evidently enjoying them, sometimes buying the occasional *Amazing* or *Planet*.

He wasn't very interested in the scientific content of stories. One felt that here was the perfect case of sublimation, the quiet figure who dreamed of tempestuous adventure on other planets and in other dimensions. Bickerstaff himself was rarely disturbed; even when

someone spilt a glass of beer over his trousers, he seemed more upset at the resultant fuss than at the accident itself. He was the sort of fan of whom one only learns the given name. It was "Evening, Gus." and "Seen this, Gus?" and "Goodnight, Gus."

Then he failed to appear for three whole weeks. No one missed him. Life went on. Magazines were bought, sold, and exchanged, borrowed... glasses were knocked over, passionate arguments on Communism, Shaverism, and other topics of the day were passionately argued about. If Bickerstaff had *added* something - grown a beard, for instance - he would have attracted tremendous attention. The total disappearance of the whole just failed to register.

On the fourth Thursday, I was sitting in Bickerstaff's usual corner, making some notes for a news-magazine I was publishing, and someone sat down beside me. It was Bickerstaff again.

"Hi, Gus," I said absently, and went on making notes.

"Excuse me," he said.

There was something slightly disturbing about this. People like Bickerstaff *never* take the initiative. I put down the pencil, took a drink, and looked at him. Rather more disturbing. Bickerstaff was dressed...elegantly. Everything new, everything perfectly matched, tailored, the sort of thing that gleams glossily from the pages of *Esquire* or saunters by in Mayfair, but is never seen in a city pub. Only the horn-rimmed glasses were the same.

I paused for a moment, looking as intelligent as possible. It wasn't a cortical-thalamic pause,

Pantry Continued from previous page

was through Odd that Joyce met Dugie and got involved in fandom. Her involvement with fandom caused her after the divorce, to meet Arnie Katz.

So!

I am responsible for "StarTrek" movies

and all that followed, and more importantly, I am responsible for Joyce being Joyce Katz

And all this time I thought the Willis Champaign was my one claim to fame.

(Suzanne: Come off it, Vick. You still can't dance.)

it was just plain bewilderment. And Bickerstaff cleared his throat nervously, looked around at the crowd of chattering fans and pros, and said, "Er... I've just won a hundred and three thousand, five hundred and eighty-nine pounds, 10 shillings and four-pence."

He had, too. It was in the day when there was no upper limit to football-pool prizes, and Gus' humble two shillings had won a first dividend. He had the letters to prove it.

"Congratulations!" I said. I suppose I should have felt envious, but I was too curious. This was a *rich* s.f. fan... what would he do?

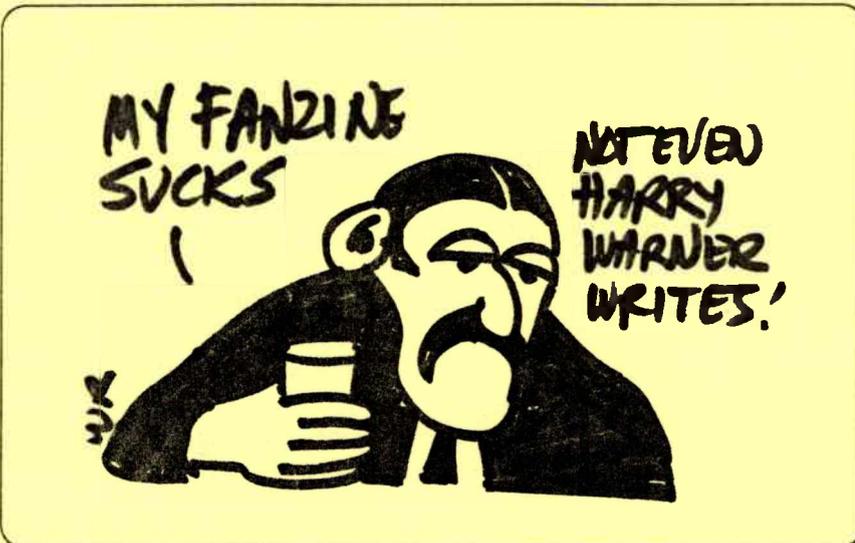
"This hasn't made any difference to my liking for science fiction," said Bickerstaff. "I still like it. As a matter of fact, I've sent away for a complete file of *Planet Stories*, and I've got subscriptions in to all the other magazines. But I want to do something for the fans."

"Why, thanks," I murmured.

"It's all very well meeting and talking in a pub like this –" he looked around. Someone had emptied a suitcase full of magazines on to the table, and now there was beginning a steady flow of fans towards us, like the gathering of vultures in a desert. "I'll write to you," said Bickerstaff, hastily, and vanished, leaving his drink half-finished in a rather ostentatious manner. He left me feeling extremely worried.

A true fan would have finished that drink.

I had a letter about a week later, scrawled on



an expensive hand-made paper with rough edges, like a pre-war *Wonder Stories*. It was a brief invitation to visit him at his "new place" the following Sunday. There was one curious feature about this letter; the letter-heading was printed, and it was badly printed. The word "HIGHBURY," for instance, appeared as "H IG H_BUR_Y," and it was in a wildly inappropriate style. But I went.

The new Bickerstaff House was a squat, three-storied edifice in a neighbourhood that had seen better days. The front garden was filled with bushes and long grass – it looked as though the gardener hadn't returned from Queen Victoria's funeral and nobody had noticed – and the drive to the front door was choked with piles of bricks, cement, sand and other builder's materials, and hand carts.

I pressed the bell-push. There was a dull explosion and the whistling screech of riven atmosphere somewhere inside the house, silence for a couple of seconds, then the same sequence of sound, then another repeat. Evidently a record.

A panel opened in the side of the porch, and a mechanical arm extended a tray on which stood a bottle, a glass, and a copy of *Planet Stories*. I didn't touch them... the bottle was champagne, and I never have liked the stuff.

Bickerstaff himself opened the door a few moments later. Behind his welcoming expressed he looked rather worried. I was ushered into a hall which was evidently in the process or being re-furnished and redecorated generally. A Bonestell original hung from a pair of rather shabby antlers, and the ceiling was half-flaking whitewash and half painted with a scene which apparently depicted *Innocence Rescued from a Saturnian BEM*.

"Er... hardly anything is really finished yet," said Bickerstaff apologetically, "but when it is... this is going to be *the* fan center. Why, we might even run weekend coaches to here from other parts of the country after we start publicizing fandom."

He showed me through some of the rooms, rather hurriedly. There were two or three libraries, all the walls lined with book and magazine shelves, all neatly labelled.

These were designed to hold complete sets of *everything*. There was an authors' composing section, divided into half-a-dozen soundproof cubicles furnished with luxurious chairs, type-writers and shelves of "How to Write" books. There were bedrooms, bathrooms with hot and cold running beer, everything. It was wonderful... and yet Bickerstaff showed it with an air of absent-mindedness. It was obvious his attention was elsewhere, and after practically running through the 13th bedroom, he stopped and said, "But the rest are just like this one. I know what *you'll* be interested in," and he led

the way to the lift.

We shot smoothly down to the basement, and emerged from the lift into an immense chamber which apparently extended under the whole house. A few yellow lights in the ceiling shot metallic reflections from the curves of great masses of machinery, and there was an almost overpowering odor of oil, warm metal, newly sawed wood and another substance which I couldn't identify immediately. Red warning lights glowed dimly on the face of an enormous switchboard, and the whine of an electric motor echoed from some distant corner.

For a few wild moments, I wondered if Bickerstaff was building a space-ship in his basement. I wouldn't have been surprised at him building one, but the location seemed inappropriate. Then he walked across to the switchboard and arc-lamps blazed from the ceiling. The mystery of those metallic bulks suddenly vanished. The alien odor was abruptly identified as printer's ink.

"Printing machines!"

"Yes, printing machines. I've got the very latest stuff here." Bickerstaff patted a platen lovingly. "Made quite a hole in the money, but it was worth it. Vince, I'm going to publish the ultimate fanzine!"

"The ultimate fanzine? With this?" My voice echoed and re-echoed among the huge machines. It came back to my ears as incredulous, awed and slightly horrified.

"Certainly with this." Bickerstaff looked a little hurt, but it vanished as enthusiasm crept into his tones. "I've got the equipment here to put out a terrific fan-magazine. It will have better stories than *Planet*, better articles than *Amazing*. It will have news from editors all over the world, photos of authors, everything. It will be better than **Fantasy Review**, **Nirvana**, and **Fantasy Times** combined."

"It...er... should be fun."

"Fun? Uh, yes, I suppose so. It will be the biggest thing the s.f. world has ever seen. It will really put fandom on the map. I'll get it distributed at newsstands; I'll have it advertised in the national dailies. It will be big business. I don't say that we'll be able to do it all at once. We'll have to watch the capital expenditure, but I can see this being *the* fanzine. All the rest will fold up and disappear."

"They will?"

"Definitely... all the fans will be writing for this. Think of it... everything printed, colored illustrations, professional..."

"That," I said, "is the point." I sat down on

a pile of chases. "Look here, Gus. With all due respect to your ideas, I don't think you are going about this in the right way. Fandom is... combined of a number of spontaneous individual efforts... at least what I call fandom. Even club organs are not usually produced because of a mutual interest of members in the club itself, but because they are given a chance to express their mutual creative impulses. Sometimes the organ *is* the club. Therefore, you'll always get individual fanzines, and you will *not* get everyone writing for you, because there's a terrific lot of pleasure in producing one's own stuff."

"But this will be so easy for them! Why, it will be *printed!*"

"And any fanzine that's printed loses individual atmosphere. Even typos have their part in creating individual atmosphere, horrible though they may be, and if you're going to have this stuff professionally printed..."

"Not *professionally* printed. I'm going to do it myself."

"You're *what?*"

*I'm going to do it myself. I've bought a book about typesetting, and I'm going to do it all myself. Then I know it will be all right. It's a bit slow at present, but I'll learn. I agree with what you say about fanzines being expressions of individualism, but there's room for the perfect fanzine, and this is going to be it."

"Run by the perfect individual, I suppose?" I said nastily.

"Why, thank you, Vince," said Bickerstaff, flicking a blob of printer's ink from his lapel.

"Oh," I said.

I left him soon afterwards. He came up to the White Horse a fortnight later and tried to get an article or two from some of the professional authors. Most of them gave him their best wishes - only. But he wasn't disheartened; he was too busy learning how to set type and how to be an editor... from the books.

He came up again about two months later, told me that color illustrations were hard to do, and then stopped coming at all. The last letter I had from him, in 1952, said that he was setting the 78th page, but he'd had to scrap a lot of the earlier stuff, because it was out of date.

The address on his notepaper spelled "HIGHBURY" "HIGHBURY," so he was learning. I should say that it's an even chance that in a couple of years that he'll either be bankrupt or will produce the most highly individualistic fanzine you ever saw as his first contribution to fandom.

An outré character..

Life Among The Neons

Living in Las Vegas has a lot to recommend it. The town is big enough that there's always something new going on, and just small enough that everyone gets involved in each new

Folks sit around and discuss food endlessly. "Where did you eat last night?" and "Where are you going for dinner tonight?" are topics that can fill any social encounter. Vegans delight in comparing one meal to another, and judge a spot's worth by the weight of their dinner plates.

A Column by Joyce Worley Katz

B L U E J a u n t

enterprise.

So has it been with the new casino-hotels opened this fall. A casino opening represents the pinnacle of Las Vegas celebrations, and its done with much pomp and circumstance combined with glitter and glitz, sort of like 4th of July in NYC's harbor, and St. Louis' Veiled Prophet Ball, and the Artist & Models Ball in Hollywood, all rolled into one.

To tourists, the casinos are Everything; they don't realize that there's more beyond the Strip than what's on it. I've had wide-eyed visitors stare at me with wonderment and gasp, "You mean people actually LIVE in Las Vegas?" as if they thought all the people who served the vacationers' needs came from under a cactus somewhere.

It's a true fact that the casinos are of paramount importance to Vegans. Oh, not for gambling (those I have heard rumors than some folk here do gamble.) But the casinos are the center of social life for all but the really strict. They provide a safe and constant topic of conversation, a built-in destination--there's *Always* someplace to go when you live in Vegas--a place to people-watch. And, they provide food.

Gambling is The Chief Vice for visitors who come here, but that certainly is not true for most of us who stay. Frankly, it's one Jones best got off the back, for anyone who expects to live here. The real Vice Of Choice for true Vegans is the coffee shop, or the buffet.

Folks start out saying, "Oh, it's cheaper to eat out than to cook at home." Of course, it isn't true, but it's the polite Vegas lie. Then folks get into the habit; it just seems to make sense to continue the cafe society whirl.

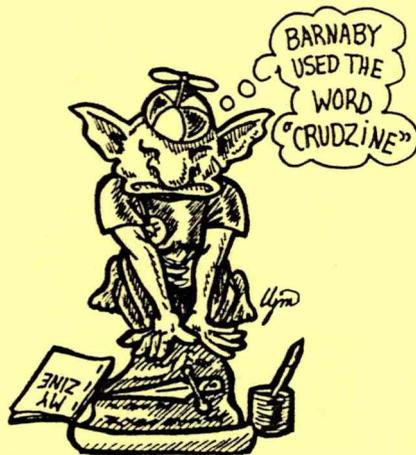
So the opening of a new Vegas hot-spot affects everyone here, not just the gamblers and the people who serve them. We all have a steak in a new casino...or plan to have one real soon.

This fall marked the opening of two Biggies. Treasure Island (which road-blocked commercials across all the networks, so gaining national attention) is a bizarre, colorful, wonderful spectacle. Once an hour every night a pitched sea battle occurs between the Britannia and the pirate ship, and once an hour the Britannia sinks beneath the waves, in a wonder of water and gears and illusions that cost something like 30 million dollars to orchestrate. Behind this ornate

sea-scape and battle, I've been told there is a hotel and casino. But so far, no one has mentioned what's inside; the pirates in the artificial lake have stolen the show.

The much-discussed Luxor, the glass pyramid rising up over the desert, is actually the more glamorous of the two new places. Vegans watched the construction over the past year, with wonderment and at least some trepidation. It was the first pyramid built for a l-o-n-g time, and there were many many construction problems, from the

scaffold to the elevators, to the plumbing. The task was plagued by disaster, and as many as six men died in the job. (The number is indefinite, because after the first one or two, the accidents weren't made public knowledge.



I suppose they feared some sort of superstitious reaction.) At one point, Builder/Financier Steve Winn actually sent to Egypt to get engineers to help....but it's been a long time since pyramids were common constructs over there, too, so the Egyptian specialists actually couldn't contribute much.

But, they finally got it up, and festooned with Egyptian art and hieroglyphics, Sphinx and Cleopatra's Needle out in front, and the River Nile flowing through the casino, circling all the restaurants.

After going as far as possible in the direction of Ostentacious Openings, Vegas then was treated to an still rarer event. The Dunes Hotel, closed in order to build something even more grand, will star in some future made-for-tv movie. The studio bought the right to film the Dunes' demolition, and the implosion was staged by some of the best special-effects men in the industry.

This was an Happening of unparalleled importance. The Strip closed down to auto traffic, and thousands of Vegans gathered in the street to see the show. It started with a mammoth fireworks display, then Steve Winn formally asked the Captain of the Britannia, "Are you ready, Sir". Then, "Fire your broadside, Sir" and the Britannia launched a shell, apparently directly at the Dunes. A terrific Boom of the cannon was followed almost instantly by the eruption of fires in the old hotel, which in only moments became a raging inferno with flames racing up the front of the structure. Then...the great explosion...and the building imploded in a roar of crashing stone and brick and masonry that sent up a blinding cloud of dust over the Strip. It was some show, although the whole thing lasted less than ten minutes.

The Duties of Office

Atop the Luxor is a laser light pointing straight up to the sky, the biggest one in the world, we're told. Visible from here to Los Angeles, the giant light has occasioned much discussion. I have wondered about its affect on the environment, for surely a light of such dimension will attract every moth from here to Los Angeles. And, if the giant laser beam is to be filled with moths ecstatically dancing in its glare, can one million birds be far behind?

I wonder, too, if Others will be attracted by the light. Certainly, if I were an alien flying through space, I'd give the swamps a pass and head for this homing beacon. Will we not become a center for all the passing UFOs in this spiral of our galaxy?

Now, with this thought in mind, I am thrilled that this very year I have been elected President of FAPA. Doesn't this mean that I should be the Leader to which all aliens should be taken? Is not meeting and greeting of passing UFO captains one of those duties this office must fill?

I certainly believe this must be true, and therefore when I looked out my car window at dusk last Friday night, I was well prepared for my Role when I saw the disk hovering low on the horizon.



"It's either a blimp or a giant fish in the sky," I told Arnie.

"It must be a giant fish," he eagerly exclaimed.

As we drove down the block, there were numerous groups of skywatchers, pointing and staring at the object. All evening it hovered in place. As the sky got darker, the orb was lit from inside and glowed a bright white just above the Strip. It seemed likely my prediction about aliens attracted by the laser might be true.

Ah, sweet idle dreams yet unfulfilled! It wasn't even a giant fish, but a balloon anchored to Caesars, to dramatize the Holyfield-Bowe fight. I folded up my "Welcome to our planet" speech, put away the chalk (for drawing solar system pix), and went indoors to watch "The X-Files" on T.V.

But, let 'em come; I'm ready for 'em, and prepared to do my Duty on behalf of FAPAns everywhere!

In Vegas, it's always a lovely day somewhere.

Reverberations

Letters from the Readers

Steve Stiles speaks from his heart (and my letter file)
8631 Lucerne Rd., Randallstown, MD 21133

By Thursday evening I had made up my mind to drop you a letter about the latest **Folly** over the weekend. But today I find "Willis Plays Vegas" in my mailbox, throwing me into confusion; Should I wait until I read the latter before loocking the former? Naw, if I did that, lord knows when I'd find the time to sit in front of the type (or computer) again, and I'm reluctant to feel fannishly guilty for that unknown amount of time.

Arnie: Now it can be told. I stopped producing **Follies** in such reckless profusion solely to give Steve time to expiate his guilt with a letter of comment. I know Steve feels better, and you will get that same pleasurable sensation immediately after you send a letter of comment on this issue.

rich brown is ready to rock

Vegetology and Vegetometry. I hesitate to cross even grass blades with such well-honed fine high-type minds as those possessed by yourself and the Geri Sullivan of the 90s, but cross them I much (even if I'm not certain I'll ever Get to the Other Side, Ahahahahaha..... excuse me; *fafia* has done more to me than you can ever guess or even ever *care* to know - just take my word for it).

Now, I count as inevitable your conversion to Geri's science, just as I accept as irrefutable your application of the ethical logic of vegetarianism to vegetables as well as animals. It all makes sense.

After all, what's good (or bad) for the goose is good (or bad) for the ganja or oleander. And Joyce, too, contributes unerring reasoning when she defines the nub of the problem you've unveiled with this revelation - namely, if ethics forbid partaking of either vegetables or meet, a hell of a lot of ethical people are going to starve.

But your "solution," Arnie... , well, the best I can say is, "Nice try!: (I make no mention of cigars. None, in fact.) At the very least, you're being unduly utopian - did they by any chance fit you for rose-colored glasses after your operations? - when you consider the marketers of DAB

meat "waiting" for accidents to happen.

I'm sure, when you stop to think about it, that that's just not how corporate America works. Particularly when you consider that there's going to be quite a huge demand for DAB meat once folks reach the inevitable conclusion when presented with the irrefutable force of your immutable logic.

I grant you these would-be DAB meat marketers might not dirty their hands themselves, for fear of repercussions, but it also stands to reason that they would have nothing to lose, and much profit to gain, by encouraging others to have... "accident."

And don't ask who would do such things - the folks who presently blow away little bunny rabbits and commit *Bambicide* with their .30-06s will find similar "sport" in chasing down and running over cows and pigs and dogs and cats in their tractor-trailers and semis. (Of course, to be quite truthful, if I ever saw a cow, pig, dog or cat in a tractor-trailer or semi, I might be tempted to chase them down and run them over myself - but I digress.) I wouldn't bring any of this up, Arnie, had I no alternatives to offer, but I do. Yes, there's a better way.

Rocks.

I must concede to you that, presented in this sudden and austere fashion, it probably does not sound too appetizing. But it's really just a matter of letting go of pre-

conceived notions and allowing yourself to be a bit imaginative. Run, by way of example, this lip-smacking little description over your mental aesthetic pallet: Broiled boulder shank a la René on a bed of white Florida sand, simmered in mercury, with pebbles sauteed in paster of paris, and a touch of spicy lava on the side, with perhaps a plate of friend sifted dirt for afters. mmmMM!! Sound appetizing? You bet!

It's just a matter of reeducation people.

Arnie: I *had* to defend those poor vegetables. Imagine people feeling superior because they eat only things unable to get out of their way. Don't doze off near any of those people.

Since you obviously recognize the brilliance the DAB (Dead Animal Bodies) culinary crusade, it won't shock you to learn that I didn't unfold my whole plan in that article. People must get accustomed to the overall theory before they will accept the



details. As you astutely surmise, favorable DAB meat prices will put pressure on the living to progress to the DAB Meat Stage. Those unscrupulous capitalists you mentioned would pose a serious threat to worthies such as ourselves – if a guaranteed, inexhaustible supply of DAB meat did not already exist!

I speak, rich, of Star Trek Fandom. So mindless... so useless... so *plump*.

I would bow before your brilliance and embrace the Rock Revolution, if Joyce hadn't told me recently that rocks are alive.

I was skeptical. She wore down my resistance with her usual persuasive logic and thinly veiled offers of kinky sex. "Maybe they're just a lot slower than we are," she said in summation. We're going to have to investigate this further before rushing in some new, untried direction, rich.

I will grant you that this "Chuch" Harris fellow you've found deserves all the encouragement you've been giving him in the pages of **Folly**, since he may *eventually* turn into a good columnist.

You'll note that I refrain from dousing him in excessive (or deserved, for that matter) egoboo here. And since I have no obviously refrained from doing so, I feel I should perhaps explain why. It's simply because I feel I should point something out to you which may have escaped your otherwise keen notice – namely, Mr. Harris has a real penchant for talking about... "s*x."

I'm not complaining about such things as his reference to "John Brunner with yet another young, attractive Oriental girl. No, I'm not even put off by his off-putting confessions regarding his various pre-versions with "pet" gerbils (although we do know, or can at least infer, what he means when he says "pet," right?). Even when he speaks of doing things (which I, at least, shall not specify) with a couple of well-known femmefans (of the opposite sex) on a little *soapbox*. I hardly blanch. I'm more of a sophisticate than that, after all.

But he hugely oversteps the leap (not to mention bounds) of propriety when he speaking unblushingly about the wife of a well-known fan/pro (both very good friends of his) winning "championship medals" for the way she "mounted" her husband (even if it was on castors) and if I read Mr. Harris' sexual "shorthand" correctly, forced him to perform like a steer on the floor! Now, I ask you, is *this* the kind of fandom Russell K. Watkins fought so hard for and bled so figuratively to establish?

... *sigh* Well, I was going to go into a real funny diatribe right about here – just tongue-in-cheek stuff, you understand – when I noticed that Chuch takes quite a different tack in the next installment. He's still on about screwing – synchronized screwing, as it happens, but says that we trufans are "different"; he dares imply that most of us would prefer clutching a fanzine to our bosom rather than the sweaty bod of someone with whom we are Doing It.

The "fun" is out of it; I'm incensed!

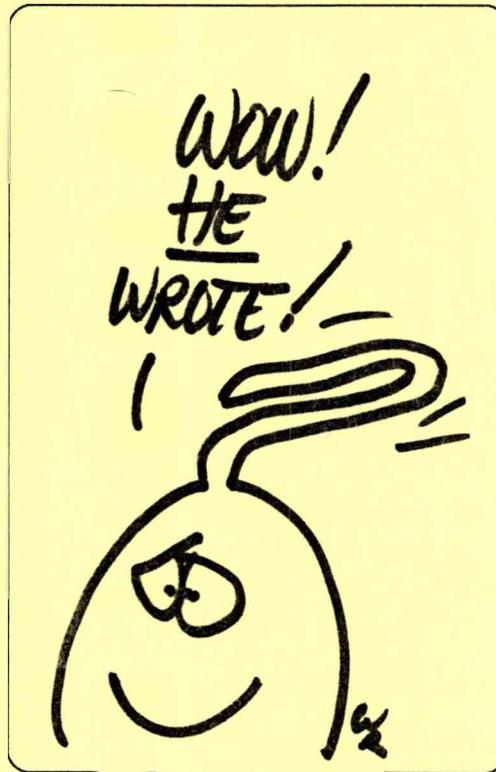
A baritone canard, if ever there was one, about the race that's destined to rule the sevegram!

How *dast* he insinuate that Charles Edward Burbee

would invent something so glorious as sex merely for the bemusement of mundanes?! Did that very self-same Charles Edward Burbee, while in the high and damned-near-sacrosanct office of the Official Editor of FAPA, implement "Shacktivity Requirements" so that fan couples far and wide who were Doing It together could share their FAPA membership just like a married couple, the only proviso being that they prove beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt to Charles Edward Burbee what they were doing together was the same thing married couples do together? Eh? Eh? I mean, pshaw and pshame.

Amie: Las Vegas Fandom proves your argument, rich. Far from ignore sex, residents of the Sodom of the Southwest have an enthusiasm and interest unknown to well-balanced humors. Why, rich, they're lives are *sex-drenched!* With my own ears, I have heard them talk for hours about nothing else – how much they like the idea and wish they could have some. I'll have more to say on the subject in an article next issue.

Mike Glicksohn grows less romantic and more perverse
508, Windemere Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6 Canada
No your eyes are not deceiving you (or in Amie's case,



his eye is not deceiving him). This is an actual written communication from one of fandom's "most beloved fans." (© A. Katz., 1992; actual proof on deposit with Price, Waterhouse & Sons for those millions of disbelievers.) I have dragged myself temporarily from my self-imposed exile amidst the grand and glorious Glades of Gafia in order to send you this LoT (That's either "Letter of I hanks or "Letter of Truth", depending on your current acronymic orientation.)

Yes, in a shameless, and yet shameful, example of fannish recidivism, I once again take pen in hand (or keyboard in lap, but that sounds somewhat less romantic and a lot more perverse) in order to relieve my feelings of fanzine fannish guilt at the (not one!, not two!)

but three fanzines I've reasonably recently received from you.

No, do not think of me as "Godfather of today's hyperactive Las Vegas Fandom." This is the most I could do. (You should be thankful that I didn't send you a horse's head. Or more appropriate to fandom, a horse's arse.)

Amie: You ought to develop that horse idea into a regular shtick. It's certainly much more impressive than one of Laney's dinky "Certificate of Fugg-headedness."

For the record, I thoroughly enjoyed "The Gist of the MAGIcon", with its clever title and all its clever chapter headings, and it's overall excellent capturing of

the essence of the fannish convention that lived and grew and was the heart of the world for at least quite a few of us. (I especially loved the way it was called "The Gust of the MAGIcon" in the same paragraph that paid homage to its sterling proofreader. You guys sure do have a droll sense of humor!) But a few weird typos aside, this was a very fine report of a very complex convention, and I'm truly happy to have a copy in my collection.)

However, Arnie's disclaimer notwithstanding (the one about forgiving him for misquoting someone) I must take at least a little umbrage at his recollection of the one conversation we had, of the many we had, that he reports on here. I might've said he was a BNF, but I sure as hell did *not* say he was right. I *insist* that in the movie version, whoever plays me (I envision Robert de Niro, myself) quote me far more accurately. Something along the lines of "You were completely and totally wrong and acted like an absolute fugghead, but eventually we patched things up and now are the best of fannish friends filled with mutual respect and admiration for each other" would come a lot closer to the mark. I'm pretty sure you intended something like that and condensed it somewhat inaccurately, right?

Arnie: Well, now we've had a full fannish day here, haven't we, Michael? You've ragged a blind man about typos, held the only deliberate typo in "The Gist of the MAGIcon" up to ridicule, and cast aspersions on the journalistic accuracy of someone who has called you one of fandom's most beloved fans. Rest assured, the actor playing you in the movie version, Bobcat Goldthwaite, will deliver the line as you wrote it.

Seriously, sorry for any accidental misreporting.

Walter Willis revisits the Ashtray Incident

32 Warren Rd., Domaghadee, Northern Ireland BT21 0PD
Fanzine Dreams is a glorious piece of fanwriting. Sometimes, I think that you, James White and I are single... well, triple...handedly reviving the grand old tradition of faan fiction.

The only cavil I have is your reference to the episode of me using an open window as an ashtray at Chicon II. In fact, this wasn't recorded in *The Harp Stateside*, but was used as a filler in Shelby Vick's **Confusion**. I am so sure about this, because Terry Carr had the same illusion about Jim Webbert being involved in the episode and bet me \$1724 that the quotation was in *The Harp Stateside*.

I'm not sure now how much the stake was, but it was the amount of money collected to take Madeleine and me to the States in 1962. When Terry found out he was wrong, he foxed the price of my copy of the next **Innuendo** at the same figure, which makes it the most

expensive fmz ever published.

Actually, the remark wasn't a putdown at all, merely a joke at the expense of Chicago's dusty reputation, and the person who offered me the ashtray was, I would guess, Bea Mahaffey, very far from being a fugghead.

Arnie: I've had a soft spot for fiction about fans since I acquired files of **Stellar** (Ted White) and **Retribution** (John Berry and Arthur Thomson). Sad to say, no one has yet submitted faan fiction to **Folly**.

"The Brief History of the FWW" was a gem of its kind, but on the whole I preferred "The Afterlife of a Fan" for its authentically poetic and upbeat ending. At first I took "Fandom in Mind" for another piece of faan fiction, and it does have a mythic quality. I look forward to its continuation.

Arnie: I'm crushed by your low opinion of my creative powers. "Fandom in Mind" is as accurate as my fuzzy memory permits; I could make up 'way better stuff.

Rob Hansen knows how to treat a fanzine
144 Plachet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB

Follys 16 and **17** arrived here recently. Since I can't spend all my time thinking up new ways of mocking Martin Smith, I suppose I ought to get it together and LoC them, though I've only really got one thing I want to get off my chest.

The whole idea of a fanzine rating system, as proposed by Andy in **Cube** and expanded by you in **Folly**, Arnie, strikes me as more than a little looney. In trying to come up with a scale to measure fanzines against, you're treating individual fanzines as though they are no more than so many lengths of lead piping.

Art, and yes fanzines are a form of Art, can't be measured by the yard or pound. Even if it could, I'm afraid I don't agree with the categories proposed at all. So no filled out form from me.

As described, the "Format" category seems to refer essentially to quality and clarity of reproduction, so why not call it "Reproduction"? I also have a problem with "Congeniality," how "friendly" is, being as important as how lively it is.

Some real curmudgeons have put out excellent fanzines that nonetheless reflected their personalities. What my unease here comes down to, I suppose, is that "Congeniality" seems to discriminate against Insurgent-type fanzines.

My real problem is with "Art" as a category. Some of the best fanzines I've ever read have had no art in them at all, and it seems wholly wrong that any system would rate them somewhat below somewhat lesser zines that *did* carry artwork. Artwork is decorative and should not be a separate category, but an aspect of graphics. As it stands, this is far too serious a flaw in the rating system for me to go along with it, even if I thought rating systems were a good ideal.

Arnie: No one wants to replace the subjective judgment of individual fans with ratings. I wanted to offer a descriptive system to help fans of separate fanzine fandoms communicate about



their publications.

Your fan art comment shocked me a little. Art may be decorative in a way that prose is not, but isn't the *content* of the art worth the same consideration as the text? While some fanzines have achieved excellence without great (or any) fan art, some fanzines (**Trumpet** and **Sata Illustrated**, for two) earned fannish admiration despite minor text.

Like Andy, I've given up the idea. Unlike Andy, I'm probably foolish enough to try it again in a year or so.

Tom Jackson has 'Fandom in Mind' in Mind

My favorite section in **Fanzine Dreams** was "Fandom in Mind: Part One." Since you threatened in your editor's note to quit publishing it unless everyone wrote to you and asked for more, I wanted to do my part.

I'm particularly pleased with the portraits of other fans, and the comments about the different subgroups of fandom in New York, and how the fans interacted/did not interact with each other. ("White, Carr, Stiles, Deindorfer, and the rest lived in a different convention. Very pithy.)

I also liked your conclusion about the Fanoclasts, and your exploration of why they seemed like such an attractive group for you.

I helped form a science fiction club at the University of Oklahoma in the mid-1970s (David Thayer/Teddy Harvia was in the group), and I was in apa-50 from the mid-70s to early 80s. I really didn't have a feeling of belonging to the kind of group I wanted until I rejoined Apa-50 a few years ago.. and it evolved into its current incarnation.

Not that I don't like FAPA. But people like Robert Silverberg don't really make a younger fan feel like a peer, though it is kind of interesting to belong to an apa that has Robert Silverberg in it. (I can't think of him as "Bob Silverberg." I don't know him.) Dave Rike is in Apa-50,00, and he is kind of our token BNF/fannish guru.

Arnie: I think you are mistaking the diffident attitude of a man with many divers pursuits for snobbishness. Agberg has always been exceptionally friendly to me, even though I must've seemed like veriliest neofan when we first met. Maybe you're creating the wall...

Your remark about Dave Rike's Apa 50 membership shook me. I'd always looked up to Dave as one of those seminal fannish fans of the 1950s from whose shaking fingers I would someday plunk the torch of trufannishness and carry it into the broad-horizoned future. Now you tell me he's in Apa 50. I'm too old to qualify for that group, but he's a member. That means he will pluck the torch of trufannishness from *my* palsied hand.

Robert Silverberg

Box 13160, Station E, Oakland, CA 94661

The reason I chose "The Ether Vibrates" as the foal point of Fourth (or whatever) Fandom was that it was read by *everybody* and contributed to by most BNFs of the period; it generated fan lingo; it was the equivalent of a Worldcon in the time when such things didn't exist.

Focal points didn't need to be mimeographed, necessarily. The *Startling* letter column was simply a continuation of fanzine fandom by other means.

Arnie: Thanks for the clarification of this point, which had always seemed like a weak spot in the Numbered Fandoms Theory. Silvercon (Las Vegas,

early April) may have a panel on the subject with Speer, Ted White and me. If they say anything interesting, I'll try to get a transcript. Meanwhile: Seventh Fandom was neither the seventh nor a fandom, discuss among yourselves.

The unexpected (but most welcome) **Bob Shaw!**

Leigh Villas, 66 Knutsford Rd., Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2PB UK

I know you never expected to hear from me after all this time, but I just had to write and thank you for the fanzines and the fannish good will. I have always been very bad about keeping in touching with people by mail, or even by phone, and - egotistically, I suppose - somehow expect them to be aware of my telepathic emanations of gratitude and friendship.

All that is totally crazy, I know, but it is only since my wife died, after we'd been together for 35 years, that it fully dawned on me that I should *communicate* with my friends while all of us are still on the same plane.

Arnie: You mean sending telepathic egoboo *doesn't* work? I've been doing it that way for years. At least I can re-use the material.

I really enjoyed the Silvercon report in **Folly 17**. It's good to see you enjoying yourselves in the full flower of your fannish maturity. I've never been to Las Vegas and am having some trouble in reconciling my image of the place with that of a hotbed of fanac.

When you go to buy a ream of Blue paper, do you find yourself standing next to people like Dean Martin and Whitney Houston? Or do they buy their paper in some exclusive store.

Arnie: The topless clerks in the copier supply store are an incentive to publish frequently, if only to justify repeated shopping trips, but Las Vegrants do have lots of energy. They collate with a filksong on their lips.

It's good to have you back, Bob. Consider this your draft notice (ask Chuch) for a revival of "Bosh Tosh" in **Folly**.

James White captains the Last Starfighter

2 West Drive, Portstewart, Co. Londonderry BT55 77D N. Ireland

Several; weeks ago, Chuck sent the exchange of correspondence about your eye problems to Walter, who knowing I was/am a fellow sufferer, passed it on to me.

I was delighted to hear of the successful outcome of your laser treatment and greatly impressed with the way you wrote up the experience in such entertaining fashion, and I could really feel your joy and relief at the end when Dr. Westfield switched on the lights. You have a lovely sense of drama, and I just love happy endings.

My laser sessions, which were to control retinal bleeding into the vitreous and began about 11 years ago. , averaging 200 to 30 minutes each, so maybe the strength was at a higher setting or something.

My feeling was of being in the middle of the climactic battle of "The Last Starfighter" (so I'm dating myself). I know light is supposed to be unsubstantial, but towards the end of each session it felt as though I was being thumped in the eye.

Doubtless, this was a psychosomatic thing and you, as the level-headed, well-integrated

FIAWOL/FIAGH psychzoid person that you are were able to convince yourself that it didn't hurt a bit.

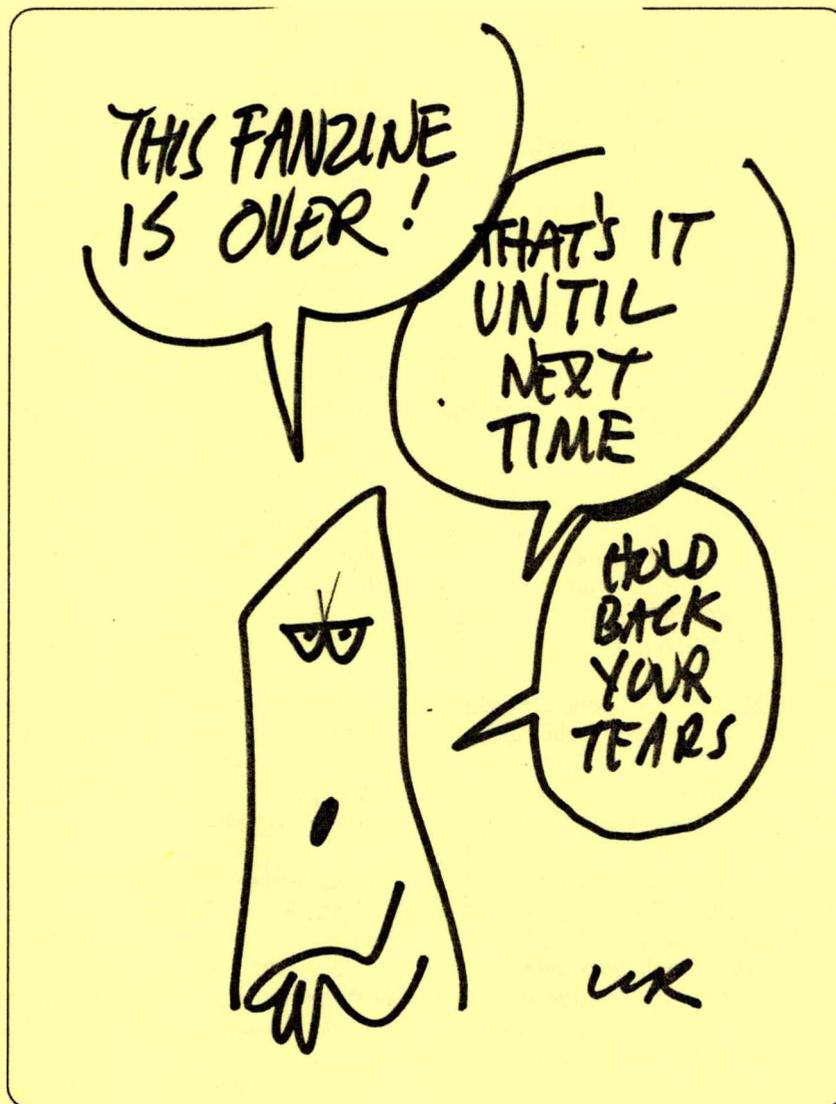
But isn't it a terrific sensation when vision returns, even if not completely, and you can see what you're looking at again? And the feeling of being incredibly lucky never quite fades.

I've read a few things from the **Wild Heirs**, **Doodle*Bug**, and **Fanzine Dreams** you sent me, principally your terrific "The Afterlife of a Fan." This was sure the Dark Side of trufandom, and you don't have to apologise to Walt, Bob, myself or anyone else for it, it was a great piece. But

isn't it funny how literally anything, and especially the good things, can be turned to nasty purposes – even the fabled Stone of Sullivan which you hold largely responsible for your recent good fortune.

Have you ever tried wearing it in your shoe instead of your wallet?

Amie: For a moment, I was scared that you were about to cite "The Afterlife of a Fan" as an example of how something noble and fine, like faan fiction, can be suborned to ignoble purposes.



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