

IMPLOSION

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Implosion: The Fanzine that proves anyone can publish a fanzine.
Member, fwa.

The Slan Slammers

By Arnie Katz

*One of the penalties imposed by **Wild Heirs'** desultory schedule is that we haven't had many opportunities to keep fandom current on all our activities. One such exploit of the Fandom of Good Cheer is described in this article, which was planned for early fall 1994 publication.*

Bill Kunkel loves professional wrestling. His interest is currently low, but the spectacle of the pseudo-sport still fascinates him. When he came over after the July 4th weekend, he was breathless with excitement about a stunt the World Wrestling Federation had presented to celebrate the holiday.

He told me that the WWF had presented a Yoka Zuna Slam Challenge on board the aircraft carrier Intrepid moored in New York Harbor. All the promotion's top names, plus strongmen from other sports, competed to see who could body slam the 500-lb. Oriental matman. A few came close, including Bill Fralic of the National Football League, but no one could hoist Yoko Zuna into the air and put his back to the mighty ship's deck.

It looked like the WWF's top villain would triumph.

A helicopter swooped down and landed. Out bounded Lex Luger, in red, white, and blue trunks. Yesterday, he had been a vain heel called The Narcissist, but the promotion's needs had instantly transformed the muscular blonde ex-football player into the embodiment of the spirit of America.

Lugar slammed Yoko Zuna to the deck.

This not only proved that Good is stronger than Evil, but also set up a lucrative pay--per-view title match between the two for the end of summer.

As Bill told me about this event, an unearthly light grew ever brighter in his eyes. The conclusion of his tale was only the prelude to a revelation. The proceeding had fired his imagination.

"The Vegrants should do something like that, something grand and fannish!" The Vegrants is what we call the informal association of about 20 local fans that has sprung up in the wake of our spring 1994 special projects and **Wild Heirs**.

"Put us on the local map," I seconded.

"We've got to have a slam contest!" He announced. "Who gets slammed?"

"Betty Huggins!" we shouted in unison. Betty is a diminutive Vietnamese woman whose physical stature is more suited to a career as a jockey. Bodyslamming her would be easy -- and fun. We could save our energy for publishing a fanzine account of our victory.

"No," Bill said coolly. Our frivolity had outraged our desert Barnum. "It must be someone who radiates power. Someone who seems... invincible!"

Names were thrown on the table and as quickly tossed away. Bill was getting frustrated, as he watched his glittering concept evaporate under the weight of our mental indolence.

The flood of candidates became a trickle. Then it ceased. The Vegrants looked at each other, hopeless and uncertain.

"Su Williams," I said softly.

"That's it! That's it!" Bill shouted. Everyone nodded. The amazonian former Michigan fan would be our champion! At 6'1", the Junoesque divorcé has become one of the most popular Vegas fans over the last year, a mainstay of the Socials, a member of the Vegrants, and secretary of the city's formal club, SNAFFU.

The usually languid Potshot bounced excited on the sofa as he outlined the flourishes. Her 10-year-old son Johnny, Bill's partner-in-pugilism, would wave an American flag while hurling insults at the defeated wimps as his mother resisted their attempts to body slam her in our swimming pool.

The Su Williams Slam Challenge would be a fannish event to remember," Bill vowed.

I forgot about it until the July 10th Social at our place. Something extraordinary happened. Su shocked me, and displayed her abundant good humor, by actually agreeing to let Bill promote this bizarre rite!

What else could I do? I volunteered to be lead announcer.

Under a cloudless summer sky, Las Vegas fandom assembles around the swimming pool. Rebecca Hardin distributes the four-page program book with Su Williams' picture on the front. It was a typical Social, so the crowd number over 50.

I step forward, portable microphone in hand. Among the Vegrants, we have a lot of audio equipment. We were using all of it to make this our new group's Finest Hour.

"Ladies and Gentlemen! Big Name Fans and Neos!" I roar into the black plastic mike. Bill's guitar amp insures that everyone at poolside, or anywhere in metropolitan Las Vegas, could hear. "Insurgent Ring Sports, Inc., in association with Las Vegrants Unlimited Limited, William Potshot Kunkel, head promoter present the Greatest Sporting Event in Fanhistory! Welcome to..." I paused for dramatic effect.

"... the Su Williams Challenge: Slan Slam Sunsplash!" I was proud. Try saying "Slan Slam Sunsplash" three times, and you'll know why. They greet this with applause. It is still tentative, more polite than enthusiastic.

"Su 'Wonderwoman' Williams, the Sultana of Slam, challenges Las Vegas fandom!

"She says a woman can be as mighty as a man.

"She claims she is the one irresistible force in science fiction fandom!

"She dares any brave fan to come forward and body slam her inside the wet and deadly

Slan Slam Sunsplash Super Pool."

It's the pool we'd found in the backyard when we bought the place in 1989. I may have also exaggerated the pool's deadliness, though it does *not* have a child-proof fence.

"And now..." I throw my arms wide, like a preacher welcoming the healing spirit into the revival tent. "...Let's.... start... slammin'!"

The onlookers begin clapping, steadily but not very loud. The outdoor speakers boom into sudden life! "I am Woman, hear me roar in numbers too big to ignore," sang Petula Clark as only she can. Fortunately.

Su Williams, in her multi-colored swim garb walks slowly from the house to the pool. She is accompanied by her manager Bill Potshot Kunkel and 10-year-old Johnny Williams. He waves an American flag bigger than he is. As though they'd been watching wrestling all their lives, the fans breakout into the chant, "USA! USA!"

"From the Motor City of Detroit, Michigan, the Woman No Man Can Slam, Su Wonderwoman Williams!" I shout. She waves to the cloud, flips her hair back with a toss of the head. They love it! Their began whistling and stomping their feet. Of course, that could be because they are all barefoot and the Nevada sun has heated the concrete decking to 120 degrees.

Kunkel grabs the microphone. He glares at everyone. "Be quiet you fakefans!" he snarls. "This is Su Wonderwoman Williams, you fat-assed faneds! You *stand* when a lady walks in! Stand up you porcine pencil pushing pukers!" Everyone is already standing, of course, because we have removed all chairs from the pool area. Bill turns a blond eye to this, and his surliness produces a few catcalls.

"That's right you grungy game nuts," he screams into the microphone. "You are in the presence of a real woman! Su Wonderwoman Williams! She's six-foot-one of twisted steel and sex appeal!

"She's the fan with the plan! The fan with the Power! Too sweet..." is that an imitation of the Dusty Rhodes Southern Lisp?

"To be a man, you've got to slam this fan!" he announced. He raises his left hand. One finger points skyward. "Remember this! When you are stylin' and profilin', it all comes down to this..."

"Whether you like it...
"...or you don't like...
"...you'd better learn to love it...
"...because it's the best thing goin'!
"...wooooooooooooo!" he howled.

The crowd yell their defiance.
I step forward and recapture the microphone. "Let the challenge begin!"

Sue Williams climbs into the pool and stands in water up to her waist. Don Miller, official poolside photographer, moves into position to capture the entire event on video tape.

At first, no one moves to join her. There's a rustle from the back, and the cry, "Woody! Woody! Woody!" spreads through the throng. Their hero approaches!

"The first challenger of the afternoon," I say, "is the Living Jophan... Woody Bernardi!" As Woody shoulders through the throng, fans reach out and touch his arm and shoulder, almost reverently. "Ghu be with you," says Marci McDowell, as Woody strides past her to his rendez-vous with destiny in the watery arena.

Woody slips into the pool and shambles through the sparkling blue water toward Su. She smiles and crooks a beckoning finger toward her. "Come here, sweet thing," she purrs with deceptive solicitude.

Woody blushes as referee Ron Pehr explains the mechanics of the contest and the grip he must use in his attempt to hoist the titanic trufanne off her feet and onto her back.

He gingerly grips Su as instructed.

He strains.

He grunts.

He tugs and heaves.

Su Williams, with no apparent effort, frustrates every maneuver.

A dejected, defeated Woody climbs from the pool!"

"Go make a telephone call, ya loser!" Johnny shrieks as Woody heads back into the house, hunched over in defeat. "Pay yer parking tickets, Richard Petty!"

"One up, one down!" Bill trumpets. "You silly boy fans will have to do better than that! Su Williams, champion supreme!"

One by one they enter the pool.

Ken Forman.

Karl Kreder.

David Alred.

They try.

They fail.

With Johnny's jeers ringing in their ears, they slink off to find Bengay to soothe aching muscles. And a can or a bowl to salve dented egos.

"Well?" Potshot crows. "Well?" Can't we get no competition in this lousy fandom?" He sounded offended at the puny attempts made to bodyslam, whom he repeatedly refers to as "The Herculean Honey" and "Super-Strong Siren".

The crowd is in an ugly mood. After hours of goading from Bill and Johnny, they are more than ready to see Su Williams slap the water back first.

But no one comes forward.

No one.

I wade to the center of the pool. I start to raise Su's hand in total victory.

I am just about to end the exhibition when the speakers crackle.

Da, da, da-dun-da. Da-duh-da-duh-da-duh-da-dun-da!" The opening strains of the heavy metal anthem "Iron Man" shake the entire yard!

The earth shakes as Frank Harwood and JoHn Hardin trot from separate entrances to opposite ends of the pool. They pause at the edge. The sun gleams off multi-colored face paint.

They leap into the air and cannon ball into the water at the same instant!

The crowd goes wild!

The competition is not over after all.

JoHn moves toward Su. "Are you ready to be slammed?" he taunts her. The crowd cheers. He cups his hand behind the ear and bends forward to listen to his public bellow their approval.

"He's a friend to the poor, you know?" Joyce says to Raven,

Under my direction, JoHn assumes the stance, seizes Su, and starts to muscle her up at of the water.

One foot free of the bottom.

Now she stands on tiptoe. The strain is written on her normally serenely pleasant face. JoHn is a serious threat, and she knows it.

The crowd urges him on to complete what he has begun.

One Williams leg clears the water. The other

is rising.

No!

JoHn falls backward, exhausted.

Ray Waldie and Ross Chamberlain rush forward with a stretcher. JoHn drags himself onto the pool desk. They drag him the rest of the way onto the stretcher and began to haul the defeated fan humorist away.

I lean down, extending the mike to the vanquished trufan.

"I just want to thank all my fans, the little Hardins, for sticking up for me," he whispers. "I will return!"

Ross and Ray haul him away, amid appreciative applause.

"Iron Man" plays again, even louder than before.

The crowd knows what is coming.

"Here comes Happy Harwood!" I declare to the audience.

In an instant, he stands beside his undefeated adversary.

"I will do this," he says, "for the greater glory of science fiction and Las Vegas Fandom!" In the background,

Aileen Forman breaks into an a capella

rendition of "The Insurgent Anthem". In this, the climactic moment of the greatest sports entertainment exhibition in fanhistory, she has at last achieved Fluffiness.

The crowd goes wild.

Frank assumes the position.

Bill nods to Su.

Frank's Valet, Joyce Katz, steps forward and says...

"Are you asleep?" Joyce's accusing voice lashed me to alertness. "You were asleep!"

"No, no, no," I replied. "I was concentrating on the show."

"With your eyes closed," she said.

"Well, I'm awake now," I said with the smugness of someone with logic on his side. I turned my attention back to the television and tried to pick up the strands of the plot.

During the commercial break, I thought about the Su Williams Challenge. "Maybe someday," I told myself. "maybe some day." But I knew this performance would never play anywhere byt in the ranshackle theater of my mind.