

# IMPLSION

**Implosion #7** is the local monthly fanzine of Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It is produced for the 7th Distribution of Apa V, the Las Vegas apa, which has as this month's theme "Jokes, Put-on, and Hoaxes." Today is May 7, 1994, **Implosion**: The Fanzine that proves anyone can publish a fanzine. Member fwa.

When I instigated this month's topic, "Silvercon Memories," I had two thoughts. That may surprise those who believed, until this fresh evidence, that my mind could only hold more than one thought, but there it is.

I guess I should admit that I didn't have these two thoughts simultaneously. I had one, savored it, and then went on to have another. After a little rest, of course. I'm getting older, you know, and I can't do it twice so close together any more.

The first was that focusing the mailing on Silvercon is a natural, a slam dunk. We're a Vegas apa, it's a Vegas convention. The connection is obvious.

The other was that the theme "Silvercon Memories" would insure that something of our little regional would linger in fannish memory. If only in one distribution of a local apa.

Sometimes reality makes fools of forecasters. I thought Silvercon would be enjoyable, but it's never wise to count on something like the wonderful family feeling that pervaded the entire convention.

I thought Silvercon 3 was more than just an entertaining small region. It came together, somehow, into one of the most enjoyable convention experiences I've ever had.

I was pleased to see how many of the out-of-town fans echoed these sentiments. Greg Benford and Ted White were fulsome in their praise of the con as a whole and the Vegas fans they met while here. The kudos keep coming, and I imagine most of the fanzine fans are planning to return next year if we are

picked to host Corflu.

As most of you know, I am writing one of my exhaustive, and exhausting, con reports. It's already pages and pages, and I'm still at the banquet. Since you'll be expected to read this epic in a week or so -- the exam is already scheduled, and there will be essay questions as well as multiple choice -- I'll leave further direct comments on the convention until then.

I did want to comment on the least pleasant Las Vegas Fandom tradition, the convention tantrum. Beth Brown remains the standard against which all Vegas fan petulant fits must be measured, but several fans seriously challenged her dubious achievements this year.

A fannish adage states that everyone attends a different convention. There's wisdom there which I commend to those who found so much to hate in a charming little convention. The saying means that each of us brings our special mindset to a con, and that the experience is created by our interaction with the people and events of the convention. Different people, different interaction.

Another way to express this idea is: everyone is responsible for their own good time. If you're in a group of a hundred fans, and they are all having fun and you are not, the logical conclusion is that you're out of step and the cause of your own unhappiness.

The Numbered Fandoms panel at Silvercon 3 helped make fanhistory an on-going conversational theme during the weekend. About 20 fans watched a group of high-calibre fanhistorians fail to either validate the Numbered Fandoms Theory or suggest any possible replacement.

Also during the convention, I showed rich brown an article, "Bones of Contention," I'd written in response to Andy Hooper's comments on feuding in **Apparachuk**. My piece attempted to categorize feuds and delve into their cause.

At the end of the con, rich told me how much he'd enjoyed the article and asked if I'd like it passed along to Ted White. I told him to do so, and about a week after Silvercon, I received a four-page letter from Ted. One of several well-founded criticisms he made had to do with an incidental rehash of an alternative view of fanzine fandom history I'd presented in an earlier essay.

Ted said fannish fanzine fandom was too narrow a focus, and that splitting fannish fanzine fandom into the philosophies of Insurgentism and Trufannishness didn't adequately describe the reality. He's right on both counts, I scrapped the theory contained in "The Two Schools of Fannishness" and developed a new concept. It isn't quite done yet, but I wanted to give you the gist of it as a preview.

Remember, you read it here first. Then forget it so you can read it with fresh ennui when I foist the Final Version on you.

I visualize fanzine fandom as a country, an industrious little nation on the continent of Fandom, bordering Storyville on one hand and across the bay from the Filkland Islands. (I carry this map in my head at all times, which is why I have trouble remembering if Maryland is East or West of Eastern)

This is a country of the mind without government or territory. That doesn't seem strange to me, since my ethnic heritage is the story of a people who wandered the world, yet stood apart from it, for thousands of years. (Are fanzine fans literally the Jews of Fandom? An interesting, if digressive question. This point is irrelevant to my thesis, but I couldn't help mentioning it. I wonder if tirades against "those fanzine snobs" are just fandom's version of the pogrom.)

As a citizen of the country of fanzine fandom, I want to know all about our culture, history, and legends. I want to read the great works of literature which my country's authors have written, and I want to see the drawings and paintings of our

artists. I'm interested in those aspects of U.S. society, and I simply carry that into the mental country of fanzine Fandom.

If I'm going to spend so much time, energy, and money on fandom, which looks like the rest of my life, I think it'd be nice to understand the Big Picture here in the country of Fanzine Fandom, the context. That's one of several reasons why I like to discuss fanhistory. (Two others: It's fun to see the connection between us and our fancestors, and that old fanzines are filled with entertaining stuff.)

I still like the philosophical approach as an alternative to the pseudo-political structure of Numbered Fandoms, Thanks to Ted's prodding, I think I now have a version that describes fanzine fandom with much more fidelity.

Four major philosophies have emerged during the history of fanzine fandom. Or rather, four philosophies have remained viable throughout the history of fanzine fandom. Five fan philosophies have attained mass acceptance, but one ceased to be a major force before World War II. There may be other distinct philosophies, which await description in future fanarticles, but none have gained widespread popularity.

Although some took longer to flower, all five fan philosophies were present at the beginning of fandom, albeit in embryonic form. I've cover them in the approximate order in which they came to the fore.

Serious Constructivism, the first fanzine fan philosophy, consists of devotion to science fiction and fantasy. Sercon fans believe that fandom has a purpose, the discussion, glorification, and spread of science fiction. Serious constructivism sees fandom as a hierarchy, with professional science fiction editors and writers at the top.

The true sercon fan wants to make science fiction their life's work. Accordingly, the idea of making money from the interest is considered highly desirable, because professionalism conveys status.

Scientism held that the aim of every science fiction fan should be to construct a home lab and blaze the frontiers of scientific investigation. It contended with serious constructivism at the dawn of fandom, but fanzine fandom was heavily sercon. Scientism, exemplified by such fans as Will Sykora, co-

chairman of the first worldcon, is now a minor philosophy in fandom as a whole, and hardly noticeable in fanzine fandom.

Trufannishness, invented by Tucker and refined by the **Quandry** circle, emphasizes the fellowship of fandom. It is an essentially egalitarian philosophy.

It is also non-judgmental. Some fans are more entertaining than others, but they extend the fellowship of fandom to anyone who makes a similar social commitment (and sometimes to many who don't. See the passages about Filking in "Beyond the Enchanted Duplicator.") Entertainment is the watchword, and there is a reverence for fanhistory as a repository of tradition and legend.

Insurgentism, also introduced by Tucker and then perfected by the LA Insurgents, is primarily concerned with truth and analysis. Insurgents believe that maintaining standards within fanzine fandom is worth bruising the egos of those who don't uphold those standards. Insurgentism is a hierarchical philosophy. (One of the great insurgents wrote that fandom is a meritocracy.)

Communicationism, (name subject to change without notice) first appeared in the late '30s and burst into full prominence during the post-Boondoggle *anomie*. Among its expressions are: Michelism, FAPA, the Cult, circa-1960 **Warhoon**, and chapter one **Habbakuk**. Cross it with Serious Constructivism and you get 1960s-era **Psychotic**; Cross it with some Insurgentism and Trufannishness you've got **Blat!**..

Communicationists view fandom as a filter which sifts interesting people out of the general population. They enjoy presenting opinions to this audience and getting reactions. Knowledge is the touchstone. The philosophy is ahistorical, because communicationists don't see the past as relevant to the current exchange of opinions. It is essential egalitarian, because it stresses the act of communication and the informational contact above writing quality.

These belief systems don't exist in pure form. Each fanzine fan incorporates all four philosophies, though one or more is dominant.

Each philosophy shares some attributes with others. Trufannishness and

Insurgentism both consider fandom an end in itself and appreciate the history and customs of the hobby. Trufans and Communicationists are both egalitarian.

There are also basic differences. For example, Communicationists see nothing wrong in getting some real-world advantage through fandom, since they see it as a means rather than an end, like the Trufans and Insurgents.

I believe that the character of fanzine fandom at any specific point in time depends on a megatrend, the ebb and flow of the popularity of these philosophies.

The weakness of the Numbered Fandoms Theory, as you said in your letter, is that when we spin a pretty tale about Sixth Fandom, we do so only by ignoring concurrent aspects of fanzine fandom that don't fit. (If Joe Kennedy had returned to fandom in the mid-1950s and stayed active, would **Vampire** have retroactively replaced the letter column of a prozine as the focal point of Fourth Fandom?)

The strength of my philosophical approach, I think, is that it recognizes the pluralistic nature of fanzine fandom. Yet I think charting the ever-changing philosophical ferment can offer some insights into the way fandom has developed.

So, what do you think?

Next  
Vegrants  
Meeting  
Saturday  
June 4, 1994  
2:00 pm