

PLASMA

I've thought it over very carefully. After considerable reflection, I have decided to blame Joyce for everything.

Well, everything connected to the skimpiness of my contribution to FAPA this quarter. For the time being, I won't blame her for bad weather, the Ills of Mankind or the things which have traditionally been Eney's Fault.

I was cruising along splendidly until a week before the deadline. I was right on schedule to produce a sumptuous **Xtreme** and a thick **Plasma**.

I hadn't done a single thing toward either publication, not even glanced at the mailing, which is strictly according to plan. Like most writers, I'm an inveterate procrastinator -- I'll tell you about it later -- and have developed a strategy that reflects this *manana* attitude.

That was where Joyce became responsible for my lighter-than-expected participation in this FAPA mailing. To the outside world, I seemed oblivious to the looming deadline. As I wrote reams for **Inside Games**, published fat weekly issues of the baseball league fanzine **Umpyre** and played with the cat, an observer

Plasma #2, is the FAPA fanzine of Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It's prepared in relative calm for mailing 241, November 1997.

The Fanzine That Remembers Wendy O. Williams is a member of the fwa and a sycophant of the AFAL.

could have come to the conclusion that I had forgotten the November mailing,

Appearance are sometimes deceiving. Actually, I was deeply, passionately involved in the entire FAPA process.

Now, I won't try to convince you that I had written everything in my head or any such nonsense. I venerate Burb, but I don't recycle his jokes. (Not usually.)

It would insult your intelligence and shred credibility to claim that a **Plasma** and an **Xtreme** were resided in my brain. So I won't.

Besides, it's not true. My brain didn't even hold a witticism for the colophon.

That witticism, and any that might follow, are the *result*, not the cause of preparation. I like to prepare for each FAPA mailing, gird my loins as it were, for about two months and three-and-a-half weeks of total inattention. Then, fully primed, I hurl the pent-up creativity at the word

processor. It's messy, but it works for me.

Well, it works most of the time. It would've worked this time, too, if not for Joyce.

I don't like to fink on Joyce. We've been together a long time, and I don't ordinarily hold her up to FAPA's scorn until I can make a funny joke or gain some other advantage.

This, however, is public-spirited altruism. Joyce has already announced her candidacy for FAPA President for next year, so her conduct must now become the subject of the FAPate's scrutiny.

Her role in this whole sad business must be exposed. There I was, finally and fully Prepared to produce two humongous FAPazines, and Joyce had the nerve to have a sick spell.

Not only did her pleas for help distract me from the actual writing, but didn't say enough funny things for me to quote to fill the pages!

I might be inclined to overlook her lack of consideration in this matter, but my outrageous on behalf of FAPA is boundless. When I think of the way her callous slacking off in humorous epigrams, monologues and fights of fancy during this

crucial seven-day period cost FAPA untold pages.

Yet let us not cry over spilt toner. (It just makes it harder to pick it up with the dust buster.) Loose a few cathartic curses in her direction if you must, but let's turn away from the glittering prospect of the FAPazines that might have been.

Despite the titanic obstacle Joyce put in my path, I *will* persevere. It's too late to get **Xtreme** ready for this mailing, I fear, but expect two in the February bundle. (You may not get them, but expectations are cheap.)

What of **Plasma**? I'll just have to limp along without scads of Joycean anecdotes, and so must you. **Plasma #2** may not seem as diverting as normal, but at least it'll still mention your name.

The Fantasy Amateur #240/Oafishaldom

A plump mailing is the right way to welcome a new Official Editor. As FAPA takes possession of Ken Forman's mind and body, it is good to produce a large mailing to distract his attention from the manacles and lull him into a false sense of security. By the time the newly inducted OE realizes that it's a trap, he's ours forever.

Joyce, Ben Wilson, Tom Springer and I were the FAPA members who got to see Forman's Famous Collator in action. Along with non-members Cathi

Wilson and Aileen Forman, we watched this miracle of advance planning unfold flawlessly as we stuffed and labeled padded envelopes at Las Vegas' first FAPA collating party.

Nearly 400 pages, though inflated by several gen-FAPazines, is a respectable total. I think the group would be more fun if more members contributed regularly. I've observed that people enjoy FAPA and similar groups more when they're part of the conversations than when they hit one mailing a year.

Fantasy Commentator #49/A. Langley Searles

The opening section of Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm II: Part Three* may've needed more explanation of one point. Fans much under 50 are unlikely to remember anything comparable to the magazine boom of the years immediately prior to World War II.

A newsstand with more science fiction prozines than you could buy with your spare change may seem as stfnal as the stories themselves to those used to the juice-less remnants of this depleted category.

I'm not currently a magazine editor, though I play one on the Internet. Nor am I privy to all the factors that caused the decay and disintegration of this once vibrant and profitable field. Still, as I look at the spavined survivors, I can't

help but feel that no one knows how to publish a money-making sf magazine with some artistic validity.

Science fiction magazines appear to survive primarily on the drive and commitment of their editors and publishers. Sales and advertising revenue isn't high enough to satisfy disinterested investors.

Over 50 million Americans say they're science fiction fans, yet prozines sell fewer copies now than 50 years ago. A science fiction magazine would have to reach beyond the remnants of the current prozine audience to become a significant publishing success.

So it would be good for a magazine to recognize that the market has changed a lot since 1940. To pull in readers outside the core group, a new magazine would have to depart from the old formula. That might mean doing a few things that will ruffle the old guard's feathers.

A contemporary science fiction magazine should be standard size, not digest, and include a lot more pictorial material. I'd make it feature-heavy, with news and interviews about electronic as well as written science fiction.

Magazines which have mixed fiction and non fiction have generally skimmed on the quality of the stories. They buy from their friends. (I could buy from *my* friends, because they

include some big-name pros, but none of the people who produce magazines like *Starlog* or *Sci-Fi Universe* seem to know enough quality writers.

I don't think such a magazine will ever come into being. Traditional publishers look at the existing field and they cringe. To an objective observer, the return doesn't appear to justify the investment. So unless some rich sf lover decides to bankroll this pipedream, I guess we'll all have to recall fondly the days when science fiction and fantasy magazines filled up a whole row at the newsstand.

QUANT Suff #4/The lamentably laconic Joyce Katz

The Tea you describe has turned out to be the first of a series of meetings involving most of the women in and around Las Vegas Fandom. The male contingent has watched the success of the newest group on the fan scene with bemused cheerfulness.

A few of us Tea widowers gather while all the wimmin-folk are enjoying one of their outings to talk about baseball, eat greasy animal protein and discourse eloquently about such important subjects as Extreme Championship Wrestling. We don't have enough participants to justify a name, but Tom Springer, Ben Wilson and I usually have a pretty good time while Joyce

and the rest go about their arcane rites.

From Artifact to Z/Catherine Mintz

I've always written non-fiction, but your comment about novice novelists reminds me that that status could alter in the next few months. Bill Kunkel and I are in line to write a novel loosely based on the computer game **Postal**. Our chapter and outline got a good reception, so now we're waiting for the agent to decide the most propitious time to offer the book to potential publishers.

Even if that whole project comes to nothing, I'm starting to believe I should try fiction. I never thought of it as "my thing," but all the practice I've had with faan fiction seems to have developed rudimentary skill. I still don't know if there's something I want to *say* in 80,000 or so words, but the challenge beckons...

As far as I know, form conversations with Lee Hoffman when we were Fanoclasts together,

Quandry was a mis-lettering job which, when detected, struck Lee positively. I never heard her pronounce the zine as other than a homonym of "quandary."

Sanseviera #4/Dale Speirs

I'm sure Jack Speer will be timely with the Real Facts, but my gut feeling is that the "Claude W. Degler" the philatelist is not the Claude

Degler" the philanderer, rambler and philosopher of wartime science fiction fandom.

The age strikes me as at least 20 years wrong. Also, Degler's real name is Don Rogers, and I believe he went by that one after he fled our hobby.

I've never actually seen a hecto in operation. I've owed or had access to most other type of fanzine production equipment, but the hecto era was long past when Lenny Bailes and I published the first, dittoed issue of **Cursed**.

Derogatory Reference 85/Arthur Hlavaty

To the short list of subjects certain to cause an argument, add "which is better, the PC or the Macintosh." I've seen otherwise level-headed computerists nearly come to blows when this interminable debate gets out of hand.

I don't think editing and proofreading those *Star Trek* books makes you a Trekkie. You're safe unless you volunteered to do it all for free. If you want to claim status as a ruthless exploiter of dimwitted *Star Trek* fanatics, I can guarantee at least probationary membership. (I joined in 1981, when I started working on *Star Trek* computer games.)

Guipu #7/Vicki Rosensweig

That's for the write-up of your tattoo experience. Since I have no desire to

have any part of my anatomy pierced or decorated, I'm always curious how people react to this experience I have no desire to undergo personally. I've seen some attractive tattoos and some acceptable ones on attractive people, but I've never felt the impulse. Closed I've ever come is having my fanzine pierced.

Galacto-Celtic

Newsflash/Franz Miklis

With just a few adjustments, I'm sure *Reader's Digest* would buy your topless story, assuming that *RD* switches to an x-rated policy. I'd title it "Got Milk?" and end it with the line: "And that proves two things: We never outgrow our need for milk, and even children have no resistance to superior packaging."

Between a Rock and a Hard Place/John Foyster

Verbal order entry fascinates me, too, because of my chronic vision problems. Although I'm not in any immediate danger, past bouts of reduced eyesight persuaded me that speech-operated word processing might someday be my only recourse.

Your experience surprised me, because I have already seen much better software packages. By coincidence, a writer submitted unedited copy produced with verbal entry about a week ago, and it was almost perfect.

I haven't switched to

speech recognition yet, but I think I might give it a whirl in the next year. The quality has reached an acceptable level, and the packages are all \$100 or lower.

As things stand now, it's neither cost nor performance that keeps me from making the switch. I'm not sure I'm ready to battle the changes that will inevitably arise from the new workstyle at a time when I'm expected to turn out a large quantity of material.

The switch to word processing profoundly altered my writing. It's tighter and briefer than before, an improvement. I've wondered how cyber dictation would change it. Given my fascination with practical new technology, I'll try it pretty soon.

Ben's Beat #47/Ben Indick

Short-term memory is overrated. Just ask the Corflu sidebar crew. Bad short-term memory is all that stands between today's exuberant and articulate

fannish fandom and a daunting pile of self-referential chitterchatter zines.

In the past, you've marveled that I can stand to spend a whole day with Las Vegas fans. One of the things that make it palatable is that my friends are trenchant wits and perceptive observers of the passing scene.

If I still had a short-term memory, I'd fill notebooks with the out-pourings of Las Vegrants' wit and wisdom. I'd have notebooks full of quips, anecdotes, epigrams and miscellaneous gems after every visit. So would the other Vegrants.

You can see where that would lead. With all that material available, we would all published two-five-ten times as much as we do now. Our tiny fangroup would

Fandom is not ready for that. I doubt fandom will **ever** be ready for that.

We know it, and we acknowledge our responsi-

"Ben Indick called you a honcho," Joyce said tome.

"A honcho?" I asked, jarred from my rapt contemplation of the new Bob Dylan CD.

"Yes, he called you a... *honcho*," she repeated. "hat are you going to do about it?"

"I do't think I need to do anything about it," I said, still entirely comprehending her train of thought.

"Well, Ben called you the honcho of FAPA, and I thought you'd want to anser him<" she said.

"Oh, that just means I'm the top guy in FAPA...." I replied. "After all, I am the President!"

"Oh well, that's all right then," she said.

See, I *told* you she wasn't turning out her normal witticisms.

bility to restrain ourselves. So we have voluntarily sacrificed our short-term memories. They are now so short, in many cases, that the various witty effusions are lost in the time it takes to write them down.

I regard loss of short-term memory, therefore, as a blessing, at least in this case. In fact, Short-term memory is overrated. Just ask the Corflu sidebar crew. Bad short-term memory is all that stands between today's exuberant and articulate fannish fandom and a daunting pile of self-referential chitterchatter zines.

Snickersnee/Bob Silverberg

And now we say good bye to William Rotsler. In a hobby blessed with one-of-a-kind individuals, Rotsler is perhaps the most unique and irreplaceable of all.

I met him for the first time in the company of Ted White and the other Fanoclasts during one of our West Coast treks in the mid-1960's. We became much closer friends after my return to fandom in 1990. He was a voluminous contributor to **Wild Heirs**, which has a big backlog of Rotsler's writing and artwork to share, and he visited here several times.

He leaves a gap in my life, and in fandom. I feel privileged to have enjoyed his talent and his company.

Green Stuff #3/Murray Moore

I'm looking forward to the Warner volume. Any honor that fandom can bestow on Harry Warner is deserved, because few fans can match the magnitude of his contributions to fandom.

It's easy to appreciate the two volumes of fanhistory, the "All Our Yesterdays" column and his fanzines **Spacewayss** and **Horizons**. Reprinting his work is perhaps the greatest tribute, so I was especially pleased by Chuck Connor's anthology of AOY columns..

Everyone knows about how many letters Harry has written, but fans too often visualize it in aggregate, rather than considering the effect of each individual letter. There are many fanzine editors, me among them, who got intelligent and highly publishable letters from Harry Warner when no other actifan would give them the time of day.

With retrospective clarity, I see that writing about some of those fanzines was no picnic. Yet he did, and often brilliantly. Of course, some of those golden pages were about squirrels in his attic. Not even kindly (but gruff) Harry Warner Jr. could be expected to write about some of the crudzines we sent his way.

Who can say how many novice fanzine editors Harry inspired to persevere, try again and improve. That's a debt fandom can never repay.

Small Wonders #3/Eunice Pearson

Most of my work is done to a deadline, so practicality cuts off my penchant for repeated revision. The turnaround is often so quick that I only get a few minutes for that final, satisfying copyedit. Usually I try to revise as I go. My overall organization is pretty solid, but I seldom leave a phrase un-turned.

I used to write by hand. I can remember sitting in French class outlining FAPA mailing comments several decades ago. I'm not sure I would've ever become a pro if I hadn't learned to type, if my hunt-and-peck flailing can be signified with the term.

Your comments about BAPA -- is that British Amateur Press Association? -- are fascinating. I hope you'll give us periodic updates on your efforts to revive it.

A web page sounds like a constructive step, since people attracted through it will probably represent a new psychographic profile for the group.

How ironic that mundane ayjays, which lost out to our brand of fanpublishing in the 1930's, have an excellent chance to turn the tables 60 years later!

Mundane ayjay dwindled in size and declined in literary merit, because it didn't get the needed new blood. Those potential recruits

"Some day, everything we've build, everything we've committed ourselves to in fandom will be as dust," Joyce said to me.

"Everything will be dust eventually," I said.

"No, I mean fanzine fandom will be finished before too long. No one will want hard copy publications, and our fandom will simply die out, absorbed by electronic publishing."

"That's very depressing," I told her. "I think fanwriting will make the transition to the electronic media," I pressed, and then outlined my scenario for preserving fanzine fandom in the cyber age.

"But the fanzines are doomed," she said. "Doomed, utterly doomed."

"That will be a sad thing," I said, overcome by feelings of impending loneliness and isolation as my beloved fandom splinters into useless shards.

"There's one bright spot," Joyce offered when she saw the tears on my sensitive fannish face.

"Oh, what's that?" I moaned from the depths of my misery.

"We'll both be dead before it crumbles and disappears without a trace," she said.

battle. Thankfully, fandom continues to generate supporting evidence for this thesis, so I will win them over eventually.

Meanwhile, the mundane ayjays can approach these people without science fiction clinging to their bootheels. As **Factsheet Five** proves, there's no shortage of people who want to publish fanzines; it's just a question of which venue.

A brand-new mundane ayjay might do even better than an established one. A new group would have no legacy of fuddy-duddy content to un-sell, but even an established ayjay could gain members. A spiel about how personal publishing is the last frontier of independence and the standard-bearer for free speech might produce positive results.

Artifact #5/Catherine Mintz

Your crumbling book ruined my day. I'd never thought of my first-edition paperback *Dune* as old, but your account is compelling proof to the contrary. On the other hand, I think my copy is in much better shape than yours, so it will be with me awhile, yet.

Horizons #225/Harry Warner

Your comment about the unlikelihood of earning astronomical sums as a writer can't be stated forcefully enough. The analogy to pro basketball may not be

published with hekto, spirit duplicator and mimeograph, all deprecated by mundane ayjay.

Our fanzine fandom flourished when it embraced those technologies and emphasized content. Back when reading science fiction was enough to brand one a social pariah, sf funnelled intelligent and talented misfits to fanzine fandom.

Now science fiction fanzine fandom has a merchandising problem. The kind of young people we want, and might otherwise get, do not consider science fiction very daring or outside the mainstream. They gravitate to other fanzine fandoms built upon more "cutting edge" topics like anime, music and video games.

Almost all publishers of

video game fanzines are as conversant with science fiction and fantasy as the bulk of All Known Fandom. They can certainly hold their own with most so-called media fans. But when they encounter our fandom the barrier is our name -- science fiction fanzine fandom. Some of them print a lot more stfnal material than, say, **Wild Heirs** or **Trap Door**, yet they rebel at getting lumped in with today's fans. They are like our classic fans, feisty and fiery and about half out of their heads. They think the sci-fi fans are just too damn normal!

I'm doing my best to convince them that we are merely psychopathic deviants with glib tongues, but it's an uphill

precise, because there are many people earning from writing who are not earnings Michael Jordon money, while basketball is substantially hit or miss (yes, I know about the CBA and European leagues, but that is only an option for a few of the many who excel at hoops in high school and college.?)

The word processor has removed "major revision" from my vocabulary. I don't say they are never necessary, but working over phrases, sentences, paragraphs and sections during the actual writing seldom leaves me facing a complete overhaul at the end.

Like you, I start with an overall plan for each piece. I seldom write an outline, but I rarely begin without some inkling of the overall shape.

I'm a writer of product, not process. Though ideas and concepts may come to me while writing, I go back and integrate these fresh thoughts into the entire piece so that it is a finished entity.

Granted, revision can depersonalize a piece, especially if it is done with a cookie-cutter attitude. I honestly don't think my stuff comes across as generic, and I also believe that thorough revision results in a more natural flow that reflects my personality more faithfully. (Arguments that more of my personality is a dubious addition are proba-

bly in final draft as you read this.) When I don't revise, I think my prose is excessively wordy and convoluted.

Sweet Jane #17/Gordon Eklund

Your knowledge of the cinema is 'way beyond mine, a humble popcorn-muncher, but I see the sense in what you say about Spielberg and Lucas' films ushering in the blockbuster era.

Special effects are great
when they serve the needs

of the film, but I prefer movies that stimulate my mind and emotions more than those which spark technological curiosity.

It may stamp me as hopelessly retrograde, but if I never see a movie described as a "nonstop thrill ride" again, I won't suffer pangs of regret.

Wizards from Space

#1/Tom Sadler

Welcome to the Fantasy
Amateur Press Association,

Five Axioms for Writers

During my protracted career as a professional writer, I have learned painful truths and hard lessons. I doubt advance warning will keep boundlessly optimistic apprentice writers from experiencing the pain personally, but at least it's grist for **Plasma**. Note that, though this is a fanzine, an amateur production by definition, this sidebar has cost over \$1 million.

1. Publishers are more honorable than child molesters, but less honest than muggers. Given time and opportunity, a publisher will cheat you. That is the nature of the beast.
2. When someone promises to pay you later, they mean that they will pay you if they make more money than they can hide in expenses or divert to their own purposes.
3. If a deal isn't in writing, it doesn't exist. If it is in writing, it is not enforceable. If it is in writing and enforceable, you have not properly analyzed it.
4. The more enthusiastic you get about a writing project, the lower the publisher will set payment. If you don't want to do it at all, you'll get the assignment at top dollar. If you'd do it for free, the chances are that the publisher will give you the chance to do so.
5. Deadlines for writing are inviolate. All other deadlines are adjustable with the writer making up the kinks in the schedule.

Tom. It's a pleasure to have your name on the roster, and I anticipate the pleasure of getting to know you better in this context.

I *never* feel funny about "starting over" with a new fanzine title. I won't bore you by recapitulating that long list of titles I've used in the past, but I'll slap a new one on any publication that looks to benefit from a fresh start.

I'm awed by fans who produce essentially the same fanzine, dependably and entertainingly, year after year. One part of me would love to slap a whopping number like "225" after the title, but that wouldn't be me.

I love to experiment with my fanzines. When I have a new idea, it seems natural to give it a new name. And when an idea appears to have run its course, either temporarily or permanently, it's time to start something else.

I don't regret stopping even my more successful fanzines -- **Guip**, **Focal Point**, **Wooden Nickel**, **Swoon** and **Folly** -- but I also don't see it as "starting over." I'm the same person, with the same friends and resources. Each fanzine is a unique (hopefully) expression of who I am, but I'm the thread that ties all those titles together.

Haven't you heard? "get a life" has been replaced as the all-purpose lowbrow

put-down by "Whatever." It's shorter and even more non-committal, so it's the perfect squelch when someone has nothing to say and feels vaguely inferior.

I saw an extreme instance on television just a week ago. While channel surfing one late afternoon, I glimpsed an episode of a TV talk show devoted to teenage girls who want to kill their parents.

It was pretty much what you'd expect: calculatedly inflammatory behavior toward their moms with lots of eye shadow. One 14-year-old girl went a bit over-the-top during her entrance and cursed the audience roundly and flipped them the bird. When audience members hurled questions and comments at her, she just kept saying "Whatever. Whatever. Whatever."

After a couple of minutes of listening to her whine "whatever," the audience began chanting it at her. It got pretty loud, and though though the girl was far too fixated on herself to care, it was one of those unforgettable moments live television is alleged to produce from time to time.

Not only do some people throw away fanzines, but others have been known to die without making adequate provisions for their collections. More than one such cache of zines has hit the dumpsters due to the misguided efforts of a well-

meaning, but ignorant relative. More *good* fanzines are lost that way than to the trash masher.

Right now, for instance, my will says nothing specific about the fanzines. I'd guess that my brother Ira, who knows something of the value I place on them, would contact a fan like Jay Kinney or Lenny Bailes and figure out something. Reading your comment has strengthened my resolve to do something more definite about them, but it may be a little while before I actually get around to it.

One thing's for sure, I won't be donating my fanzine to a college or university. I don't like restricting availability to only "serious" students, and I fear that the inevitable change of administration at whatever institution has custody of them will send the whole batch into a bunch of crates in the basement.

I haven't run out of FAPA mailing, but I can't say the same about time. My apologies to those whose fanzines went commentless in this **Plasma**. I'm experiencing a shortfall in bravado, so I won't promise *complete* mailing comments next time, either.

Best I can offer is that I'll start from the end of the mailing and work backward. That way, people who get their FAPAZines in at the last minute, like me, won't get skipped again. -- Arnie