

7/1. The third month of this fan diary starts with my first letter of comment, a brief e-loc from **Dick Lynch**, who says:

"... a diaryzine of news and commentary works pretty well for you. Hope this will appear regularly.

I **do** want to ask for a correction, however. In your entry for May 19th, you state that, "Dick's editorial discusses one of today's most ambitious fannish projects, the history of the 1960s. I'm somewhat adverse to the notion of an official, consensus history, but I admire his dedication and energy in compiling the huge outline that is intended to serve as the book's structure." I appreciate the compliment, but I don't agree that any history book that may result from this project should be referred to as an "official" history. The approach for the outline has been very subjective, and by no means the only way to approach such a project.

At any rate, this project was never meant to result in "the" history of fandom in the 1960s; it can only be "a" history of fandom in that decade. The same can be said of any other history (of any kind) that has ever been written, including the works of Warner, Moskowitz, Knight, Hansen, et. al."

I didn't say that you proclaimed it the official history, **Dick**, so no *correction* is appropriate, but I'll comment further if I may.

You're doing an outstanding job as editor. You've sought out every available source to insure accuracy and completeness. The detail in the outline bodes well for the finished work.

As a sporadic Timebinders reader, I've noticed some fans get pretty fierce about their fan historical viewpoints on topics like the first convention. I think some of your helpers have a sense that, if their concept isn't embodied in this book, it ceases to be a viable option.

You and I agree about the relationship of one book to the body of historical investigation. Every fan historical essay, whether it's your history of the 1960s, Speer's *Up to Now* or my *Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory*, it's only one interpretation.

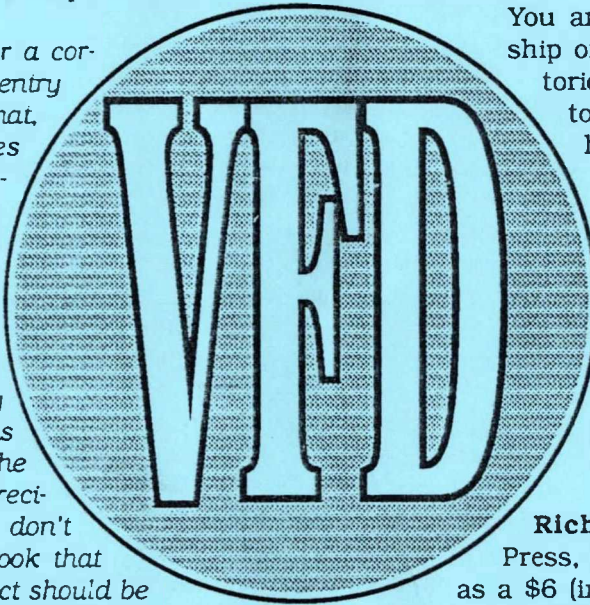
My fear is that others don't see it the way we do. Some may misconstrue your search for facts with a need to establish "official" interpretations of those facts.

Speaking of *Up to Now*, **Richard Newsome's** Arcturus Press, which has that work available as a \$6 (indulging postage) booklet, has

now done a limited edition of *Hammer & Tongs*. It's an anthology of a column of science fiction criticism authored by Clyde Beck for the 1930s fanzine **Science Fiction Critic**. **Richard** (281 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217) sent it to me in a swap for the **Wild Heirs** annish, and I think I got a good bargain. Especially since he also sent \$5, which I immediately translated into postage stamps for the second issue of **Vegas Fan Diary**.

Despite the stiff style, Beck's essays are still pretty good reading, if you like that Buck Rogers stuff. If **Richard** is accepting nominations for future titles in this series, how about Kent Moomaw's *The Adversaries*? It has been a long time since **Ted White** published it in booklet form, and I'd very much like to see it back in print.

7/2. Of greatest personal interest to me in **Ethel the Aardvark #67** (**Paul Ewins**, PO Box 212, World



Vegas Fan Diary #3 is brought to you by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur Blvd., Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). Assistant Editor: Marcy Waldie. This fanzine is available for contributions of artwork, letters of comment or unpredictable whim. It is intended to be published on a monthly basis.

E-mail address: AKatz@aol.com.

Member: fwa

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Trade Centre, Melbourne, Vic. 3005, Australia) was "Sprite," by **Frances Papworth**. It describes, in the style of a parable or fairy tale, how electronic games have brought enlightenment, entertainment and sunshine to her happy home.

Sometimes I wish I still had that "goshwow" attitude toward the field that has paid the rent and filled the larder since the late 1970s. **Frances'** idealistic view reminds me of the way I felt when **Joyce, Bill Kunkel, Charlene Komar Kunkel** (Storey) and I played endless rounds of *Air-Sea Battle* on the Atari 2600. The games have improved a thousand-fold, but I have become callused to their allure.

Turning a hobby into a career has many benefits, and I wouldn't trade what I've got. Yet there is a down-side, too. The critic's heightened consciousness is bought with spontaneous joy. I play games the way book editors read submissions.

And I can't wallow in a game when it catches me. Once the review is filed, I've got to proceed to the next title. I've managed to linger over a few games — **Tetris, Wizardry, Doom** and **MicroLeague Baseball**, for example — but two or three days is more typical.

Without denying anything **Frances** wrote, I've observed some less pleasant results when the information highway opens a new off-ramp. Anything can become excessive, including interactive electronic entertainment. More than one marriage has crashed when husband or wife spent more time with **Myst** than their spouse.

Today is birthday number 50. We had the party last Saturday (as described in **VFD #2**), but we celebrated the day itself with dinner at the Celebrity Deli with **Tom Springer** and **Tammy Funk**.

My half-century is more significant to others, I think, than to me. Oh, it's a milestone. When the next pollster asks if I'm belong to the 26-49 demographic, the answer will be "no." I see the gray at the temples, the lines around the eyes and the spare tire, and I can't delude myself about age, but I still feel the way I did at 35 or 40.

That's a trick of memory and the slow passage of time. I don't really feel the same as 20 years ago. Inexplicable pains jab unexpected places, and ankle and toe joints creak and crack like thawing ice during a winter thaw.

A recent poll of baby boomers shows that most think they look good for their age, younger than average. Medicine and physical fitness deserve credit for any real gains in this area, but perception plays a large role. Those of us in the 35-50 bracket are reluctant to swap the external trappings of

youth for those of venerable age.

Some in my generation — Talkin' 'bout my Generation — can't identify with those against whom we rebelled so strenuously in the 1960s. Like the Who, we *do* hope we die before we get old, if you define "old" as being Dead Lumps who've given up learning, loving and living as inappropriate to their status as Responsible adults.

I'm sure my involvement in interactive electronic entertainment keeps my attitude youthful, too. Popular culture, especially new popular culture, is such an integral part of my life that my tastes really haven't frozen. Nothing against golden oldie music, classic video games and such, but fresh sights and sounds get most of my attention. (This may sound strange to those who know I collect old-time radio plays, but what is an active fan without contradictions?)

Not having kids has also affected me. I see the satisfactions of parenthood, and bright youngsters are fun, but I never wanted to raise one.

And then there's my lack of emotional development. .

7/3. The Vegrants pick a theme for each Apa V bundle. Everyone doesn't always write on the subject, but it's a ready-made idea for those who either want a challenge or need a shove. Burbee was the main subject of my contribution, **Implosion #33**, but I also talked the distribution's "official" theme, "FIJAGH/FLAWOL."

What I wrote:

"FLAWOL" (Fandom Is A Way of Life) and "FIJAGH" (Fandom Is Just A Goddamn Hobby) are polar opposites in a long dialogue about the proper relationship between individual fans and fandom. Since things are seldom black and white, most fans espouse a position somewhere between these two extremes, but the rival rallying cries continue to sound through fanzines and at clubs and conventions.

Which philosophy sounds right is a function of that fan's individual experience. It is unlikely that a fan in a small town bereft of other fans will embrace FLAWOL. Fanzines without in-person contact can't be more than an enjoyable, time-consuming hobby. Conversely, a fan from a large metropolitan area with lots of in-person fanac may find fandom looming pretty large on their social calendar.

The isolated fan experiences the *hobby* of

fandom, but they don't share in the *subculture* of fandom to the same extent as someone who lives surrounded by other fans. When you dine with fans and go to the movies with fans and watch TV with fans and cruise the mall with fans, then fandom can come pretty close to being a way of life.

What do I believe? Like I said, most people are somewhere in-between, and so am I. I believe fandom is more than just an interest, that it is a complex and rich subculture. Yet there's a lot to my life that isn't even tangentially part of fandom. Maybe the answer is "FLAPOL" — Fandom Is A Part of Life. I know it's a significant part of mine.

7/4 - 7/7. I've got the notes for an extensive Westercon report, but this isn't the right place for a lengthy report on the proceedings in El Paso. Although **Richard Brandt** and **Michelle Lyons** resigned from the con committee several months previously, they did a tremendous amount on our behalf. They contributed so much to our Good Time that it is impossible to think of our Fan GoH stint without bringing them to mind.

The only fans who actually introduced themselves labored under the impression that I must be an sf writer. "It's a pleasure to meet you," said the first fan who solicited my handshake at the con. Since it was already Saturday night, his attention was as welcome as a letter from **Willis** after a tough issue.

I shook his hand warmly. **John Hertz's** magnificent romantic vision of one harmonious, well-integrated fandom filled my soul. "It's wonderful to be here and meet you," I managed. I'm a little shy around strangers, especially outside business, but I smiled my best smile.

Then my bubble burst. "I always look for your name in anthologies and magazines," he said, earnestly.

"I hope you're not too disappointed when you don't find it," I said. "I'm not a science fiction writer. I'm the co-fan Guest of Honor. Mostly, I publish fanzines." His visible disappointment made it hard not to sound apologetic. "It's really nice to meet you, though."

The word "fanzine" had a magical effect on him.

He took two steps back, executed a smart left face and plunged into another conversation.

7/7. **Andy** handed me **Apparatchik #63** (**Andy Hooper**, **Carl Juarez** and **Victor Gonzalez**, 4228 Francis Ave. N, #103, Seattle, WA 98103) at the Westercon. I don't know exactly how often **Victor**

has written about me lately, but he's hardly done a piece in the last two months without some theory about me.

This one has quite a bit of oblique egoboo. Strip away his chagrin at not being a **Wild Heirs** co-editor, his vision of fandom as a competition and the rest, and an intriguing story emerges.

Let me recap: **Victor** goes into a bar and meets a guy whom he has been trying to recruit for fanzine fandom. So far, the guy is immune to **Victor's** proselytizing. **Victor** shoves **Vegas Fan Diary** under the guy's nose. Incredibly, the guy reads every word, even though **VFD** is intended for a very limited circle. Most of it is too esoteric, and it is a stranger's diary, but he reads every word. He admits he enjoyed even sections that he says don't interest him!

If this guy becomes a fan, I'm gonna take the credit.

Victor's big gripe is that my diary is self-referential. A self-referential diary! What an innovation!

7/8. **Tom Springer** wrote our biographies for the Con Diablo Westercon Program Book. He did a good job, despite ferocious deadline pressure and a flare-up of his bad back.

A few knowledge gaps and some well-meant mis-editing partially compromised **Tom's** good intentions. Although he wrote separate articles about each of us, program book editor **Peggy Ransom** thought it better to combine them under a single heading. Here, with amendments, is the portion about me.

Arnie Katz is the greatest Jewish, left-handed, fanzine fan of our era, and I'm here to tell you all about him. This is my first opportunity to do so and quite a demonstration of trust on Arnie's part, since my last outing as a program book biographer revealed the facts about Andy Hooper's predilection for adult-oriented consumables. (Yes, everything you've heard about Hooper is true.) While I marvel over Arnie's trust, one of the many fine attributes that make up the fanzine fan that is Arnie Katz, you should know there's more to this fan than meets the eye.

This is a tactful way of saying I don't look like much.

I recommend spending time with Arnie to any fan looking for intelligent and interesting conversation. He's very approachable, espe-

cially if you have chocolate or a fanzine to offer him. Visiting with Arnie, in my book, is time well spent. (Plus you get to talk to his wonderful wife, Joyce.)

Despite my approachability, the swarms of well-wishers never quite materialized at Con Diablo. Maybe if Tom had said that I give fanzines and chocolate to those who come near...

Arnie's first curious steps into fandom resulted in *Cursed* in 1963, co-edited with his boyhood chum, Lenny Balles. *Cursed* was their search for fandom incarnate, and after successfully finding it, they changed their zine's name to *Excalibur*. *Excalibur* featured some of their first BNF contributions. Arnie hasn't looked back since.

"Don't look back, something might be gaining on you," said Satchel Paige. Since he spent the 1930s and 1940s visiting redneck towns for the Negro Baseball League, let's not think too much about who might be gaining on him. Some fans I've known are scary in their way, but they don't carry nooses.

Balles and I changed the name from *Cursed* to *Excalibur* as part of the Crudzine Relocation Program.

In 1964, Arnie joined the Fanoclasts, an active bunch of fanzine fans who shared the spirit of insurgency and trufannishness. Once again Arnie and Lenny co-edited a fanzine, *Guip*. Later, when Lenny couldn't spare the

time, Arnie and Lon Atkins continued publishing. During this time Arnie's fannish career took flight. After more than a dozen fantastic issues Arnie found himself starting another fanzine, this time co-edited with his good friend Rich Brown.

Actually, they "re-started" *Focal Point*, the focal point fanzine of the early 70s.

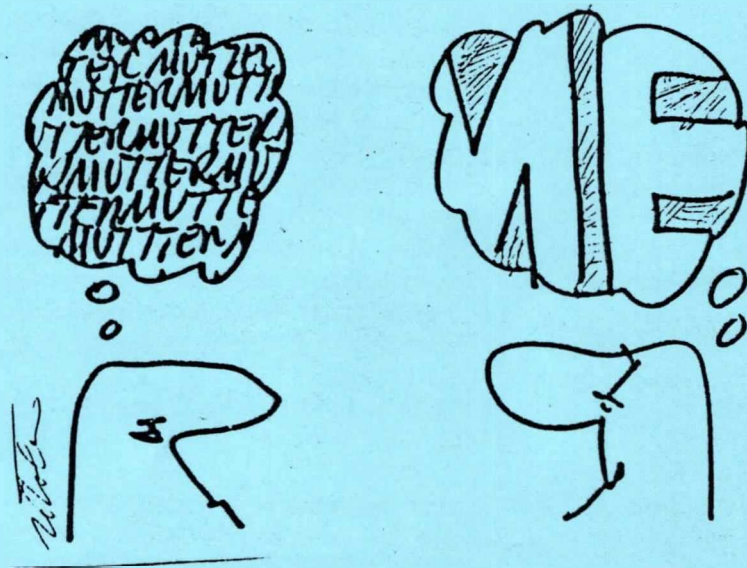
The chronology is a little off. Rich brown (sans capitalization) and Mike McInerney produced the original *Focal Point* in the mid-1960s. The second go-round was in the 1969-1971, after which I continued FP as a monthly genzine.

During this period, Arnie and Joyce met and married, and together hosted the Brooklyn Insurgents. From this bastion of fannishness, they launched several major projects. First and foremost was the Bob Shaw Fan Fund, a successful effort to bring their Irish friend over to the states for their first in-person get-together. After that, Rich and Arnie reprinted *The Enchanted Duplicator*, written by Bob Shaw and Walt Willis. This reprint featured illustrations by the accomplished Ross Chamberlain. Next, they worked on a compilation of Terry Carr's fan writings, which resulted in the treasured *The Incomplete Terry Carr*.

Colleen and rich brown and I founded the Brooklyn Insurgents, and the browns hosted it for over a year. It was called "Raymond" at first, but I successfully lobbied for the switch to a slick name.

The wording may convey the erroneous impression that Joyce and I co-produced all those projects. Actually, rich and I were co-administrators of The Bob Shaw Fund, and we co-edited *The Incomplete Terry Carr* and the Ross Chamberlain edition of *The Enchanted Duplicator*. Joyce did help with all three projects, however, as did several other Insurgents.

Inevitably, *Focal Point* ended, and new opinions, feelings, and fannishness were poured into yet another



er co-edited fanzine — *Swoon*. *Swoon* was co-edited with his wife Joyce, as was the following *Four Star Extra*, the Katz's last fanzine before their unfortunate gaffiation in 1977.

Let's not forget those two other "stars," **Bill Kunkel** and **Charlene Komar Kunkel** [Storey].

While the Katz's pursued their careers in the intervening years, fandom had not seen the last of them. In 1990, Arnie was asked to make a contribution to the 50th anniversary mailing of *TAPS*, an apa founded by Arnie and Lenny Bailes in their early actfan days. With this one request, Arnie found himself sucked back into fanzine fandom, lonely for his old friends, and as always, eager to meet new ones. *Folly*, his next fannish venture, became the instrument of his reunion with fanzine fandom.

Uh, **Tom**, that's the apa's 25th anniversary. Throughout Westercon, I imagined women checking me out and saying to themselves: "Hey, what a stud for 75!"

1990 found Arnie and Joyce freshly moved from New York to Las Vegas with new jobs, a new fanzine, and much to their surprise, a whole crop of neofans just waiting to discover fandom. After several years of fannish education, hand-holding, and careful steering, these young neos were transformed into the Las Vegants. Now, the Vegants, under the fannish counsel of the Katz's, publish the overpoweringly fannish *Wild Heirs*. Arnie and Joyce's careful cultivation of Las Vegas fandom is their greatest achievement to date.

I absolutely and categorically deny that I have held hands with **Tom Springer**, **Ken Forman**, **Ben Wilson** or other Las Vegas fans. (I've hugged **Aleen**, **BelleAugusta**, **Marcy** and **Raven** in a brotherly way at appropriate times, but...)

7/9. Robert Lichtman says about *VFD* #1...

You seem to have attended an alternate Corflu this year, held in Memphis rather than Nashville. This makes me look forward with even more anticipation than usual to your promised report.

That explains so much. I've been nursing quite a grudge about not getting invited to any of the parties. I wasn't planning on a Memphis Corflu report, because it was pretty weird there at times, but maybe I should.

You also seem to have some ambivalence about what the "average fanzine circulation" is. On page 2 it's 150-250, but by page 6 the maximum has retreated to only 200. It seems to me that the fanzines that appear on the Hugo ballot mostly have circulations above 300, and that when something with a smaller distribution gets nominated, it's because that particular zine is riding a wave of heavy-duty popularity, or the convention's location leads to voting demographics favoring a particular smaller-circulation zine.

*Thus I attribute the two nominations of **Trap Door**, in '87 and '92, to a higher concentration of "our kind of fan" attending those particular Worldcons. That higher circulation as an important factor is evidenced by the fact that **Trap Door** came in last on both occasions. (*Trap Door's* initial circulation wavers between 225 and 240 these days, but I print 15 to 20 extras of each issue.) Good thing I don't give a damn about winning one of those awards and consider having once been elected past president of fwa much higher honor.*

I don't see much difference between a range of 150-250 and a median of 200, but that wasn't my point. I wasn't as clear as I could've been, so I'll take another run at it. The question I was poking with the blunt instrument that is my mind is the size of the fanzine fan tribe.

I don't think someone who sees only one, or even two, fanzines can be a full-fledge member of the tribe. (This is the a logical consequence of the widely held belief that there is no focal point fanzine.)

If the average fanzine has a 250 circ, some smaller number of people will be on enough lists to be a full, active participant in tribal affairs. Like Jews who only attend synagogue on the high holidays, they are part of the congregation in spirit, but are seldom present.

I also love the old Max Fleisher cartoons, and have a tape containing a number of the Betty Boop cartoons—showing their progression as censorship came on heavier as

the '30s passed—and various other Fleisher wonders. Yes, I also particularly love "The Old Man of the Mountain," which is on that tape. Fleisher also made my favorite movie version of Gulliver's Trowels.

I hope you keep up VFD. If you get hard up for material perhaps you could combine it with Swerve?

I did my monthly seminar for America On Line from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. Attendance has dropped in recent months, mostly the allure of competing events, and the evening of the All-Star Baseball Game promised another sparse turn-out.

I got about a dozen. That's a far cry from the audiences I drew before the number of events caught up with aol's meteoric increase in subscribership, but it satisfied my ego.

I analyzed news, plugged **Intelligent Gamer** and **Escapade** (www.escapade.com), and answered questions. Although computer software usually dominates, people wanted to know more about the Nintendo 64 game console this time.

That's understandable. I imagine many kids are pressuring parents for a new machine. The magazines have pretty much abandoned the Genesis and Super Nintendo, so their readers are itching to move up to one of the 32-bit systems (Saturn and PlayStation). I emphasize kids, because I think most adults will be able to resist the impulse to upgrade until they see what Nintendo, and perhaps Matsushita (Pioneer), have to offer. I'm not sure any of the systems have yet tapped a new vein of creativity to go with the powerful new hardware.

Tom Springer and **Ben Wilson** came over after the forum. We had pizza while we bandied potential program items for Toner. Blame it on the pepperoni, I guess, but we swerved off the track. Though we began with serious and constructive ideas like fanzine readings and an auction, we soon regressed.

We reached the nadir with "What to Do about the **Harry Warner** Situation." We'd put this into the program, scheduled for two hours, without any further clarification. We'd send the program booklet to **Harry** and let his fine mind furnish the gory details out of thin air.

But since we are lovable Las Vegas fans, as **Joyce** kept reminding us, we decided not to play this nasty joke on the estimable Mr. **Warner**. Besides, we like **Harry** enough not to want to cause him such pain.

So you won't be seeing oblique references to "What to do about the **Harry Warner** Situation" on the Toner program. That's a promise.

I ran off **NLE Letters** during their visit. The Mighty Gestetner can duplex one **NLE Letters** sheet (66 copies, both sides) in about two minutes, so it wasn't much of a task. **Ben** and **Tom** carried the seven little stacks away with them when they left about 10:00.

I see stirrings of increased activity among **Tom**, **Ben** and **Ken Forman**. They dawdled on the **NLE** wrap-up for over a year, but **John Hardin's** move to Columbus, OH, has freed them from chains of lassitude. (Science fiction story idea: EBS mutates into a more virulent disease in one victim, who not only exhausts his own energy but sucks it from everyone around him. As the disease progresses, society winds down into an endless siesta. The last line of the story reads: "I'll write more tomorrow, or maybe the day after.")

Ben mentioned that **Bogart**, a so-far-illusory publication from the erstwhile **Nelly** boys, is moving forward again. If fandom's answer to the glacier actually appears, it may make fanzine history. Right now, people think of **Bogart** as the name of a movie star. But give this trio a few issues, and people will think of **Bogart** as....

Janice Eisen writes to answer the burning question about Claritin:

... In case no one else has yet, I thought I'd fill you in on Claritin.

Joyce came the closest: it is an allergy medicine. It's one of a new class of antihistamines that supposedly do not make you drowsy. You take it every day during allergy season and it's supposed to alleviate symptoms.

*They've been running print ads with the full pharmaceutical info, which is how I know. That TV ad is indeed bizarre. You'd think they'd at least *mention* allergies.*

Thanks for the information. By coincidence, **Joyce's** doctor wrote her a trial prescription for Claritin a few days after **VFD** went into the mail. In her case, it didn't have much effect, so her doctor discontinued it.

7/10. Michelle Lyons called in the late afternoon. "Is this Arnie?" she asked in many more words than reproduced here. (I have a page limit, you know.)

"No," I said, "This is my answering machine. How are you?"

That stopped my favorite chatterbox.

I assured her I was a live human rather than the second generation of phone-reception hardware, and our conversation bounced along to memories of Westercon and anticipation about Toner.

"Did you see the final edition of the daily newsletter?" she asked.

I admitted that I hadn't, since we'd left the con at noon.

"The Katzes are featured all over it," she said. "There's a picture of the wrestling panel and a piece about it on one side, and you and **Joyce** are mentioned in the party article on the other side. She read the party column, in which the author caught sight of **Joyce**, **Bob Vardeman**, **Roy Tackett** and I at a party.

"See, they *did* know who you are," she said, referring to my fears about being the "unknown GoH."

"Well, I already assumed **Tom Becker** and **Richard Brandt**, who wrote the newsletter, know who I am," I said. "It's the rest of the con that didn't know. And they still don't."

Robert Lichtman called as I was about to wolf down a pre-game double burger and fries. He'd heard from Burb's daughter Linda, who wants copies of **The Incomplete Burbee**. We've about run out, but the request may nudge me into a new edition if I can find the master pages. (I could print out new masters, but I need the artwork.) Linda wants a half-dozen copies, but I can't scrape up more than one.

I'll have to look through my files. Perhaps I can put a couple of other items back into print at the same time.

Trap Door still isn't complete. I don't think **Robert** is ready to write his Boggs-and-Burbee memorial editorial yet. The need to produce this piece, coupled with his strong feelings for both men, are sufficient to keep him from attacking the re-cast issue with his customary verve.

I understand the feeling. I desperately wanted to write a brilliant tribute to Burb, Bosh, Boggs and Ethel, but I had trouble steeling myself for the actual confrontation with the word processor.

The LVBA session proved an unmitigated disaster for my slumping St. Louis Aliens. The once-feared club hasn't hit, pitched or fielded with its normal ferocity for the last 20 games. (First rule of simulation baseball: When you don't win, blame the players.)

Ben Wilson rode high tonight. His Detroit Derelicts (not a type) swept the Aliens four straight. It wasn't really that close. If there'd been a 5th

game, I'd have lost that one, too.

Yet even in the middle of catastrophe, there is triumph. My superstar catcher and clean-up hitter, the immortal Josh Gibson, set an LVBA record for most meaningless home runs in a four-game series. He popped about five of them over the wall, and not one came when the Aliens were behind less than 4 runs.

7/11. Wild Heirs dominated my fanac today. I pasted in the illos and ran off **WH #15.5**, a tribute to Charles Burbee and got **WH #15**, the regular 36-page issue, ready for the Gestetner tomorrow. I'm pleased with both fanzines, as I generally am until I spot the glitches, though I wish we'd had a couple of more appreciations of Burb.

I also did a preliminary lay-out for **Vegas Fan Diary #2**. I'm going to have to refine the production process so that **VFD** glides into the mail before mid-month.

It would help if I resisted the lure of the word processor. When I contrasted the production of **VFD** with the procedure for **Log**, a long-ago Katz diaryzine, in the first issue, I lauded the time-saving blessings of technology. I still do, but I now also know that I was wrong.

VFD goes from finished copy to stapled fanzine much faster than the mimeo'd **Log**, but word processing lengthens the journey from rough entry to finished copy. When I sit down to write each day, I see ways to improve previous entries.

I see entries while they are still molten, a mouse-click from perfection. Even I can get it right after 20 or 30 tries. **VFD's** sinewy prose results from umpteen attempts to tame my prolixity. If this fanzine seems like too big a dose of me, imagine how much more there'd be if I didn't hone every phrase.

Harlan Ellison looks down on anyone who needs a word processor. He organizes and revises before he chisels the first word into that stone tablet. "It's a crutch," he says disdainfully.

That may be true for him, and for **Ted White**, too, but word processing makes an enormous impact on my writing. I went pro in the typewriter era, so I know I can live without a computer, but I hit a higher note with word processing.

I used to chew up reams of paper re-starting pages whenever I blew a line. I've always thought of copy-editing as a matter of persistence, and I could only re-write a section so many times before the fullness of the wastebasket embarrassed me.

The computer saves even more trees than my increased output pulps.

A surprise call from **John D. Berry** brought the news that he was in Las Vegas. Before I could begin to contemplate the pros and cons of getting dressed and going out at 10:30 on a workday, **John** added that it was only a brief airport lay-over. He had time before his plane left in the general direction of Readercon for a phone call.

When he said he expected to be at Toner, barring unforeseen circumstances, I mentioned other Fanoclasts we're expecting, including **rich brown** and **Mike McInerney**. **John** proposed a panel of Fanoclast anecdotes, but the world is not ready for such revelations. I suspect we'll settle for a suitably sedate sidebar during which we will bore younger, spryer fans into somnolence which will rush them to the hospital for resuscitation.

7/12. The repair service sent a genuine copier expert. The quality of the mechanics varies, so sometimes they have to send out two or even three before an actual repair is achieved.

The less skillful ones substitute "turning up the charge" to mask problems and get them back out the door with a signed work receipt. Turning up the charge — increasing the flow of Toner — is a Pernicious Evil. The copy looks nice and black for awhile, but then the machine begins depositing gobs of the stuff on the page so it gets that embossed look. Then the machine will begin depositing toner on the rollers for those smudges that **Tom Springer** says are a Vegas fan hallmark. All the extra toner eventually clogs the sensor that works the feeding mechanism, and the repairman is back for another assault on your checkbook.

While the copier slowly works itself into a state which only a major overhaul can reverse, it sucks down toner like a gothic at a bidding party.

And Toner — it deserves the initial cap — is the single most valuable substance on earth. Two mostly empty bottles cost about \$80. Under high charge, the Gestetner can kill a six-pack on one **Wild Heirs** afternoon. When the Vegrants are in full publishing stride, it'd be cheaper to get on crack.

Today's copy shop emissary turned out to be an ambassador of good will. He fixed everything in a few minutes. I've given the Gestetner a workout in the last couple of days, running **NLE Letters**, **Wild Heirs #15.5** and **WH #15**, and that guarantees at least minor trouble.

Copy shop boys know nothing of the epic struggle. They hand in the pages and lug home the fanzine. I have to shepherd the balky thing through every page. (One lamentable change from the mimeo era is that today's DIY fan publisher has worse equipment

than the commercial copy shop.)

Joyce and I saw *Casino* on ppv cable. We enjoyed it, though I don't think it'll change our lives much. The well-acted docu-drama adapts the book with fair fidelity, though I wondered about the decision to change all the characters' names.

The lesson I get from *Casino* is: People who get too chummy with mobsters wind up maimed or dead.

7/13. **Shelby** and **Suzanne Vick** called to say they expected to be on-line within the next two weeks. They've bought a 133 MHz Pentium with a 6x CD-ROM drive.

After I gave him my e-mail address, **Shelby** asked me to give **Suzanne** a pep talk about how easy the new computer would be to operate. **Suzanne** didn't sound overly daunted by the PC, so all it took was a mild assurance that **Windows 95** makes it surprisingly easy to use. **Suzanne** and I haven't had as much contact as I would like since my return, so I hope that the ease of electronic correspondence will shrink the distance.

SNAFFU sponsors a picnic once a year. It's a compromise between those who want to go rafting, and we who consider dinner in an unfamiliar restaurant a thrilling adventure. The gluttons for bucholia start Friday evening, while us day trippers arrive just in time for the barbeque on Saturday afternoon.

Until now, we've held it at Lake Meade. This stagnant, smelly, bug-ridden, sweltering mud hole is a rude surprise to those familiar with the Atlantic and Pacific. The roads to Lake Mead are a disgrace, and it's rare that the picnic didn't end with at least one car or truck mired in the sand. The Lake Mead picnics also featured late-time confrontations with drunken and pugnacious groups of campers.

So you can well understand why it took two years of intense lobbying to convince **Ken** and **Aileen**, architects of the excursion, to try the mountains instead of the shore. I think the over-nighters actually missed the hostile run-ins, and they were fiercely proud of their ability meet, and then resist, hungry bugs.

Tom Springer looked queasy as he hobbled into the living room just before 10:00 am. He hugged the blanket he uses as a back rest. "It's the bursitis," he explained. The painful ailment had flared up during his and **Tammy's** trip to San Francisco, and the unnaturally damp weather Vegas is having this week hasn't helped.

Tom drove his sports utility vehicle on the roads that connect the neon valley with the relatively

unspoiled mountains that surround it. The drive took 45 minutes, and we all gawked at the vistas. Tom and Tammy memorized the scenery, aware that their incipient move to Vancouver means that they might not motor to Mount Charleston for a long time.

We got to the camp site shortly after noon and found the grill was ready for action. Prominent among the campers was Don Miller, recuperated from a June operation. Not only recovered, but flourishing a charming new girlfriend, Joanne. This public-spirited woman has worked wonders with the reclusive and — let's be honest — daffy Don. Joanne shares some of his manias, including movies and video, but having someone with whom to share his enthusiasm has had a calming effect on him.

Everyone brought something for the meal, and Ken did his usual fine job at the grill.

Tom drove us back when Joyce had trouble breathing the thin air. We took naps and met again, this time augmented by Ben Wilson, at about 7:00. Ben rode his recently purchased bicycle. He's getting into this form of locomotion in a way that would have brought pleasure to that pedal pusher Bob Shaw.

Besides dinner, collating was the main item on the menu. With five of us working, though, we easily assembled both WH 15 and WH 15.5. Not that we were single-minded. We took breaks for dinner, sidebars and general chitterchatter, so no one was really that worn out when Ben and Tammy stapled the last copies about 10:30.

7/14. Joyce and Tammy went to Bell's Discount Shopping Morass for a glass and jewelry show. Ordinarily, Tom and I would have spent the afternoon vainly attempting to make baseball trades, watching Extreme Championship Wrestling and reflecting on the physical endowments of the women we have known.

It passes the time while we await the return of our high-maintenance women with their bags of swag. Instead, I'm working on a review, a very long review, due tomorrow.

My great-niece Kim, her husband Mac, and their daughters Ashley and Raven arrived in the late afternoon from Oregon on their way

back to Oklahoma (where the wind comes sweeping down the plain). Actually, there's a side trip to the Grand Canyon somewhere in the return to the Sooner State...

Kim wants to write, so Joyce has given her some basic "how-to" advice. Her main interest is children's books because, as she says, her life is so centered on her two daughters.

I offered only two bits of counsel: study the published books in the genre and write a lot. Fanwriting isn't directly applicable to professional work, but it does afford the opportunity to bash out a lot of text.

Practice won't guarantee improvement, but it sure raises the likelihood. Without fandom, I'd never have been advanced enough as a writer to go from editorial assistant to staff writer/editor as quickly as I did.

Fandom still provides a good workout. It isn't the main reason I produce fanzines, but I've noticed that fan writing sharpens my pro stuff. It also keeps me from settling into a comfortable rut of product surveys and game reviews. I love electronic gaming, but geez, not 24 hours a day.

7/15. NLE Letters (Tom Springer, Ben Wilson and Ken Forman) is the much-delayed wrap-up of the lively *Nine Lines Each* postcard zine. They took turns making excuses for over a year, but recently roused themselves to compile and answer this selection of letters.

A line on the back page reads: "This fanzine is more like a window back into the fall/winter of 1994 on through 1995 and is considerably dated." The first part is true, but egoboo delayed is still better



than egoboo denied. These letters are worth publishing, even after a lag. (And what's a year to a fandom in which top zines routinely print year-old letters?)

Tom wonders, in a reply to one of **Harry Warner's** letters, whether a response to a loc can be longer than the letter itself. This attractive letterzine shows there's no sin if the respondents are sufficiently ingenious.

NLE has good and bad examples. Some comments don't seem to add much beyond redundancy, but some of the zine's best moments come when all three have something to say to the same writer.

The discussion of focal point fanzines failed to settle the issue. Maybe it'll continue for a few more rounds if the trio carries through with **Bogart**. **Ken**, **Tom** and **Ben** may want to study a little Numbered Fandoms theory as an aid to furthering the discussion.

I'm less interested in finding out if **Folly** was the focal point than in testing the oft-written assertion that there can be no focal point because fandom is so fractionalized. That leads to my current fanhistorical obsession: Is the Numbered Fandoms Theory really, really *really* dead?

That's a fan commonplace today, but is it true? All Known Fandom is far too balkanized to pledge allegiance to a single fanzine. Heck, a giant slice of AKF (All Known Fandom) doesn't read or care about any fanzine, let alone dote on a specific one.

Might a fanzine be the focal point of fanzine fandom? Some will mention fractionalization again. It's a valid point of view, but I wonder if fanzine fandom is any more clique-ridden than it ever was.

One of the jewels of the Numbered Fandoms Theory is Sixth Fandom with the warm and wonderful **Quandry** at its center. I love Sixth Fandom, and you may, too. Yet there were people who didn't get **Quandry** — or couldn't perceive its magic. **The Fanscient** probably held more for sercon fans, and I'm sure there were other fanzines with substantial numbers of fervent supporters.

Some fans didn't connect with the Sixth Fandom gestalt and dismissed it all as elitist and self-referential. There is even evidence that some fans didn't care for **Walt Willis** at a time when he embodied the fanzine fan consensus in the early 1950s.

If fanzine fandom is no less or more fractionalized today, was it ever really possible to designate a single fanzine as the focal point of fandom? I'm not sure.

History is a pattern we impose on reality to make it more comprehensible. The Middle Ages didn't start or end on specific days, and you can find ele-

ments of Modern Life in the Victorian Age and vice versa.

Yet historians keep proposing theories and writing books. They strive to make a pattern that fits the facts as closely as possible and organizes those facts in a way that aids our understand of them. History is a system of simplifications.

A lot of fans expect fanhistory to be more rigorous and universal than that. Maybe we expect too much. Historical interpretation in the Mundane world is no more than a system of generalizations and approximations. A good theory is one which describes reality with reasonable accuracy.

The Numbered Fandoms Theory is such a set of generalizations, **The Fanscient** is a contemporary of **Quandry**, and **Quip** came out about the same time as **Psychotic/Science Fiction Review**. Most fan historians acclaim **Quandry** and **Psychotic/SFR** as the focal points of their eras, yet many other fans liked **Fanscient** and **Quip**. The Numbered Fandoms Theory calls **Quandry** and **Psy/SFR** focal points, because they sum up the predominant aesthetic among active fanzine fans at that time.

I called **Bill Kunkel** to tell him about the abrupt cancellation of *Extreme Championship Wrestling*. Formerly on Saturday morning at 2:00 and Sunday morning at 3:00, Prime Ticket had unceremoniously dumped it, reportedly for its excessive sex and violence.

Bill not only knew about it already, but he'd made a series of complaining phone calls to the cable service. He said wrestling fans he knew had also registered displeasure.

Despite my respect for **Bill's** grumbling talent, I decided to add my call to the rest. The number **Bill** provided put me in contact with the programming department. A very composed woman at the other end told me that *Extreme* wasn't canceled at all! "We just moved it to Tuesday morning at 3:00 am," she said brightly. "I don't know why people think we took it off the air."

Visions of a "Save Extreme" campaign evaporated. Not only was it back on the cable schedule, but the company no longer admitted they'd dropped the program in the first place!

It just shows how an informed and articulate segment of the viewing public can uphold quality television. Presumably, the manufacturers of the tables the wrestlers are always demolishing on the show are breathing easier, too.

I finally had a chance to go through the e-mail for

the A Katz and Wildheirs electronic mailboxes. I should check them more frequently, but that's the first thing I postpone when spare time is in short supply.

I got several letters from **Roxanne Smith-Graham**, the second-generation LA fan who is one of the better advertisements for fanac on the Internet. Despite **Tom Springer's** scheme to convince me her name is **Graham-Cameron**, we've worked up an enjoyable correspondence about Toner, fanhistory and related issues.

Roc will make her Las Vegas debut at the pre-worldcon event. She has prepared the way with several excellent letters of comment on **Wild Heirs**, and therefore, as I keep assuring her, she can do no wrong in Glitter City.

I've decided to accept **Roc's** proposal to put "The Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory" on line, and I will probably let her put some of my other stuff on her website, too.

I like the idea of turning **The Trufan's Advisor** into free downloads, because I want the introduction to fanzine fandom distributed as widely as possible. You can't tell where such a seed might sprout.

I'm less comfortable with posting "The Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory." My on-line experience doesn't lead me to expect slow and thorough reading of this huge essay. It may be an effect of an unappealing text format, but I've noticed that reading comprehension suffers on line. And fanzine readers are more apt to formulate a sophisticated response, rather than firing off an insta-screed.

7/16. **Joyce** had a tooth emergency this morning. She complained of some pain for the previous two days. It faded in and out, never getting overpowering. She'd medicated herself under the assumption that the pain was a side effect of a heavy sinus attack brought on by Las Vegas' more-humid-than-usual weather.

"I found out differently last night," **Joyce** told me as she protectively cradled her noticeably puffy cheek with her hand. "It really hit last night," she explained between winces. "It's definitely a toothache."

She went to her favorite painless dentist, who recently moved all the way over on the East Side, in the early afternoon. She returned, minus the complaining tooth, a couple of hours later and almost immediately retired to her bed for a recuperative nap.

"Too much gas?" I asked when she came back 90 minutes later.

"No," she answered, through wads of packing in

her mouth. "In fact, I didn't have any gas at all!"

"You refused gas?" I almost started a newszine just to broadcast this revelation to all her friends. **Joyce** normally takes every form of analgesic offered to her in the dentist chair. Ideally, she likes to get gassed into oblivion and then have a couple of Novocain pops.

"That was a funny thing," she said. "One of their gas cylinders turned out to be empty. They were out of gas and couldn't give me any."

"Uh-huh," I humped. "I guess someone had a nitrous party!"

"Wasn't me," she said morosely. "The Dentist ran out of gas. One of the big canisters was empty!" Dr. Dever, who prides himself on his painless technique, must have improvised adequately, because **Joyce** was still blown away by whatever he gave her hours after returning home.

Tom, Ben and I stuffed and sealed envelopes for the July **Wild Heirs** mailing, while a somewhat wobbly **Joyce** looked upon us benignly. **Marcy Waldie** had already prepared the envelopes, so we finished the chore before any of us felt we'd worked too hard.

7/17. **Mike McInerney** called about 5:00 to say that he was in Las Vegas for the night, leaving Thursday morning. If I got the story right, the **McI's** earned the quick trip to LV by listening to a time-share spiel.

He'd hoped to go out to dinner with **Joyce** and me, but Wednesday is League Night in Vegas. I couldn't stand up the other members. I invited **Mike** to come over. I warned him about the Serious Business of the league, but I also promised that there'd be several non-participants on hand to socialize.

Mike came over and spent a couple of hours with such LV fans as **Ken Forman, Cathi Wilson** and **Aileen Forman**, all non-members of the league who'd come over to socialize. **Ben** wasn't feeling too good and decided to take advantage of Brian Olshever's last-minute illness and talk to fans instead of manage his team.

One big entertainment item was a video cassette of Corflu Vegas **Mike** had sent week or so earlier. It was **Mike's** first foray in video camera work, and the quality improved almost frame by frame as he got the camcorder under control.

I spent the heart of the evening mis-managing the suddenly ineffectual St. Louis Aliens, but I did watch some of the tape with Mike and some of the others. I cringed at the way I kept re-formulating the rules in one of the rounds of "Fannish Feud," but I liked my auctioneering.

Tom and **Ben** took the opportunity to ask if I'd auctioneer at Toner, I agreed, assuming I can get **Ken Forman** to be set-up man, again. He's my secret weapon in the fight to separate fans from their money. When **Ken** runs the show, it makes my part of it as easy as saying whatever fool thing comes into my head.

Ken Forman celebrated his 37th birthday, complete with a cake supplied by **Aileen** at the get-together, too. Had a won a few more ball games, it would've been an outstanding fannish evening. Even so, it was a very good one.

Murray Moore (377 Manly Street, Midland, Ontario L4R 3E2 Canada) writes:

*I started to read **Vegas Fan Diary 1** with the July 15 Blue Jays -Baltimore Orioles game in the background. Bottom of the ninth in Baltimore, 6-3 Jays. Bobby Bonilla ties the game with a home run.*

*Another home run and the O's win, 8-6. Then I was able to concentrate on enjoying **VFD**.*

*Delightful, is a note I made halfway through **VFD**. My reaction ranged from mental smiles to facial reaction to one appreciative snort (page seven) and several laughs (pages one and two).*

Page one, for instance: a quick point for "So here I am, committing fanac again.." and a laugh for "What if the current fighting spreads to the pool or the buffet?"

*My score card for **VFD 1** shows a mental smile, or better, for pages 1-2, 4-5, 7-8, 11 and 14. Excellent, really, considering **VFD 1** included your thoughts on the sober subject of the deaths of **Redd Boggs** and **Charles Burbee**.*

*The only clanger was "...fell on the pool of undrafted players like a sodomite discovering the **N3F** room." I understand the **N3F** is the **Jerry Lewis** of fanzine fandom in some fan's minds, and that it is the butt of disparagement and jokes. I am not saying the **N3F**, or any other group or organization, should be exempt from ridicule. Simply, weren't funny, **Arnie**.*

Finding the line funny (or not) is individual taste, but it was not a thrust at the **N3F**. I can state categorically that I have not been sodomized by any member of the **N3F**. Nor have I, to my knowledge, sodomized anyone who is a member of the **N3F** in

good standing. Sodomy may be totally unknown inside the National Fantasy Fan Federation. The point of my alleged joke was that someone with such tastes might be enraptured to discover the **N3F** room and its many young and innocent fans.

*A burglary and an attempted burglary within the span of **VFD 1**. Obviously, the criminals in Las Vegas are not deterred by the posted warning: "Wired With Response By Plonker Armed Security."*

The alarm system and slightly heightened vigilance has restored law and order to Toner Hall. It's unlikely that our burglars were serious criminals; more likely some footloose kids attracted by the video game machines visible through some of our back windows.

7/18. Brad Foster sent a couple of pieces of art, good fall out from meeting him and **Cindy** at Westercon. He's one of my favorite fan cartoonists, so I hope this signals the start of regular appearances in **Wild Heirs**.

Joyce is on the road today and tomorrow. She is traveling a little more now than in the last couple of years, mostly in pursuit of news stories for her daily posting on *Escape* (www.escapade.com).

This time, Sierra On-Line invited her to its Oregon facility for an Editors Day. It's a chance for **Joyce** to see some new games, improve contacts at the company and talk to journalistic colleagues. She hates these jaunts, I know, but they are necessary to maintain her reputation as Ms. Scoop of Interactive Electronic Entertainment.

So I'm Home Alone and Shifting for Myself. I'm not completely helpless, though I might starve if restaurants stop delivery. Slugger is sticking close to me, partly out of fear that I'll follow **Joyce** out the door, and partly to insure that I put out cans of cat food as frequently as he feels is his due.

7/19. Over the years, **Tom Sadler** has expressed both willingness to improve **The Reluctant Famulus** (**Tom Sadler**, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221-1627) and uncertainty about how to do it. Several fans, including the estimable **Don Fitch**, have tried to help **Tom** bridge the gap between thought and action, with little apparent success. **TRF** has gotten better, but it isn't the fanzine we would anticipate from an experienced faned like **Tom Sadler**.

My previous advice accomplished nothing, but I've

been thinking about the mechanics of fanzining a lot this week, and I'm ready to try again. I hope **Tom** will forgive if I'm no more cogent.

Under the heading "Conclusion," is this section:

*Last issue, I asserted that I lead a very boring life with no fodder for interesting personal articles or anecdotes. At least one concerned reader informed me that if I thought hard enough I could think of some interesting events in my life and then he went on to enumerate some of the things he and his wife had done in the several weeks prior to his writing. I agree he had done and seen some interesting things. "All right, then," I decided, "I will concentrate my limited brain power on compiling such a list for myself." I worked hard to recall what I had done during the past few weeks other than going to work five days a week. So... I watched television occasionally, read whatever fanzines came in, read about eight or nine Anne Perry "Thomas and Charlotte Pitt" Victorian mysteries, (Damn good stores!) read a couple of Ellis Peters' "Brother Cadfael" mysteries (Also damn good books!), read a couple of old Frederic Brown books,), occasionally played with my grandson, watched some television, read more fanzines, finished up TRF 44 and started TRF 45, bought a new computer, (and am still trying to become proficient in its use), did some occasional shopping and — there must be something else I'm forgetting. Think **harder!!** Let's see... At the end of May my wife and I helped our oldest daughter and her husband from one apartment/city to another apartment/city (from Sterling Heights to Utica), but that went smoothly and quite uneventfully.*

I celebrated my 50th birthday March 3rd, very quietly with my family, but I see nothing of note there and would just as soon forget it and the fact that I am a half-century old. In April, I drove the wife, daughter and grandson to Tica so that the two ladies could go with Jennifer to Jennifer's baby shower, while I stayed at their apartment entertaining Robby. Absolutely nothing worthwhile occurred then and there, either.

That's enough raw material for a whole issue of this fanzine. It's only the corner of one page of **The Reluctant Famulus**.

The editors of **VFD** and **TRF** both observed their 50th birthdays. Compare the quoted paragraph with

the entries about my birthday in #2 and #3. **TRF** won't get to the next level until **Tom** has both the will and means to turn his passing references into fully realized articles and columns.

There's a necessary arrogance to personal journalism. **Tom** doesn't think fanzine readers want to know about his life. I assume the opposite — and try to present it as entertainingly as possible. **Tom** may, or may not, be able to write up incidents and thoughts as well as I can, but we won't know for sure until he tries it a few hundred times.

7/20. Shelby Vick managed to catch me on the phone when I was home between pre-party errands. He's having trouble with his Internet connection and asked me to look for a piece of e-mail from him.

It was waiting in my queue when I checked, so I sent him a reassuring message. **Shelby** has embraced the Internet with his full enthusiasm, and I couldn't be happier. His letters are invariably amusing and upbeat, and I haven't received so many of them in such a short span of days since we first met about 30 years ago.

Cora Burbee called from the Lady Luck. She'd decided to stay at her favorite poker casino-hotel, instead of bunking with us, to get some welcome solitude and to make it a little easier to see some of her non-fan Vegas friends.

Fortune had not smiled on **Cora** at the tables, it had French kissed her. She'd won big, had a great time and decided to quit a winner. (It's a Vegas truism that 85% of all visitors are ahead at some point during their stay. Yet Nevadans pay no state income tax, and they keep building those palaces.)

Ready to put aside the pasteboards, **Cora** arranged to come over a little early. She promised she had some interesting things to show us, and she certainly did.

Joyce, Ben, Tom and I looked at vintage fan photos, old **Burblings**, one or two esoteric oneshots and a fat wad of **Fan Newscard**, a postcard-size newszine started by **Bob Tucker** and carried on — and how he could carry on! — by Walter Dunkelberger.

"This is a fan article," I pronounced.

"Maybe a whole series," **Tom** breathed. **Cora** gave me the **Fan Newscard** file, so I imagine you'll be seeing that article (or series) real soon.

Cora also flourished a couple of Burbee articles I'd never seen. **Tom** is checking them out. If they aren't in **Jeff Schalles' The Incomplete Burbee 2**, look for them in **Wild Heirs**.

Bill Kunkel described his ideal fanzine to some of

the WH editors. "I want a personal fanzine in which the editor writes about the movies he sees, the TV shows he watches and his personal experiences." He explained that he wanted to feel he knew the editor well enough to put the opinions and reactions into an intelligible context.

I encouraged **Bill** to produce such a fanzine himself. He's got the writing ability and ever-ready opinions, and his cartoons would add another entertaining element. Since I don't read many reviews, I admitted to him, I probably would cherry-pick the material for the personal thoughts and doings, but I'm sure it would become a major fanzine.

The "Keep the X-Files on Friday" movement came up, probably because part of our birthday present to **Bill** was an X-Files book. We all wondered whether this could be subconscious emulation of the mid-1960s "Save Star Trek" campaign.

Those X-Fileers may be looking for a way to proclaim their love and devotion to the program. You can't buy Scully Ears, and the series' ratings are too high to make it a candidate for cancellation. The Fox Network has provided an outlet for the pent-up X-Files passion by switching it to Sunday evening.

I doubt the campaign to retain the old time slot will succeed. Fox is overhauling its entire schedule to weed out old shows and put hot ones on days and times that tend to generate the highest viewership.

SNAFFU is already grappling with the likely encroachment of X-Files on the monthly Sunday night dinner-meeting. The back room at Skinny Dugan's has a TV, but none of us wants to spend the meeting watching the tube.

The most likely solution is to follow the formal meeting with a smaller gathering at one of the nearby fan-homes. Those who want to see X-Files can go to the appointed place and watch a tape of the show.

This reminds me of a long-ago situation that bedeviled FISTFA when **Mike McInerney** hosted the informal open club in the late 1960s. Attendance plummeted alarmingly when *The Avengers* went on CBS's Friday night schedule.

Since **Mike** didn't have a television set at the time, diehard Steed and Peel fans stayed home to watch the program — and then decided it was too late to go out to a FISTFA meeting.

Things got so bad that **Mike** eventually went out and bought a TV. Meetings got bigger almost immediately. **Mike's** apartment, the result of knocking out the wall that separated the living rooms of two adjacent places, suited this solution perfectly. There was enough space to allow those who didn't dote on *The Avengers* to get away from those who did.

7/21. I see ardent Ranger fan **Bill Kunkel** got a terrific 46th birthday present from his adored New York Rangers (they play hockey, **Joyce**). Wayne Gretzky, arguably the Babe Ruth of professional hockey, has signed with the Broadway Blues.

That's quite a story considering that Shaquille O'Neal's \$121 million contract to miss free throws for the Los Angeles Lakers is the summer's biggest sports headline, often eclipsing the Olympics.

"It's about the jewelry," Shaq said before signing, alluding to the importance of a championship ring. Then he went out and took maximum cash from the Lakers, who are not likely to win the NBA championship any time soon. Gretzky, by contrast, said he wanted to be on a championship team, and he's probably found the right club in the Rangers. Sure it's professional sports, but it's nice to see an athlete concerned with more than the next pay check.

Alan White called today with an offer of *Quark* help. As his recent fanzines attest, he's a black belt in *Quark*, so I'm glad to have his expertise at hand. The fanzines that he's distributed since meeting LV fandom have impeccable layout and graphic design, so he's obviously talented in this area. (Unlike me).

An e-mail letter from **Shelby Vick**:

THIS IS IT!

Without warning, without advance notice, I have Bought In with much behind-the-scenes, sub rosa (by the way; does anyone know what country that sub belongs to?) and, in a word, "sneakily" I am here.

This is not a hostile takeover. It is not a merger. In a way, it is an invasion...no, it is a move of stealth, the insertion of a secret agent in your midst ...Except I'm not being very secretive, am I? No, I'm inserting myself in your midst by sheer force of wile — ah, that was supposed to be "will", but the typo might say it better.

I'm not putting myself in as a co-editor. That'd be kinda difficult, since I don't live in

**Illos this time by Bill Rotsler,
Steve Jeffery and ATom.**

See you all in about 30 days

Vegas. Not as Managing Editor, since I can't even manage my DIT room. (Translation: Doing Important Things, terminology courtesy of Suzanne.)

The whole thing is, I'M ON LINE! Let the web and the net beware.

That's it! I'll be your web editor...webitor, that is.

Now, how come? I mean, I know from nothing about On Line. Composing here is a scary thing; I can't use Spellcheck, Thesaurus, Block — I can't Search (I mean that as in the word processing Search, but I'm also lousy at web Searching), no Move or Save in the middle of things so I can come back to it later... Yeah, yeah; I know; all you E-mail geniuses are scrambling for your computers to correct me and tell me how to do some or all of the above. Forget it; I'll learn in my own stumbling way.

So what am I doing here? I'm recording the diary of a bumbling neophyte as he struggles to Learn the Ropes.

Let's start from the beginning.

To begin with, I was thinking I wouldn't get my computer (a 133 Pentium, 16 bits of RAM, 6xCD-ROM, 28.8 modem, something about a burst pipeline in a cache somewhere, lots of software, a local on-line number at \$19.95 a month, and a wife who is proofreading for me. (Is there an on-line Spellchecker?))

Suzanne just said I have an on-lap spellchecker.

Anyway, I was called Tuesday afternoon and told I could come get my computer, all loaded and on-line and everything. Wednesday I took a long lunch hour (about three of them, in fact), brought my computer home, and put it together. That night, I tried to get on-line.

No luck.

This morning, I called. Seemed the salesman who sold it to me was off a couple of days, and they thought he had set it up before he left. "Please bring it back in, and we'll be glad to get it set up."

So I took off early this afternoon, took it in and — thirty or forty minutes later — I was told, "Here 'tis, ready and eager to go." (By then it was their closing time, and they were also eager to go.)

I brought it in, started setting it back up...and I had left my computer cable down

there!

Okay, snitch the cable off my other computer and get with it.

Did so. Started things up. Looked for your address.

Whoops! Couldn't find it.

Well, no problem; I have it on my other computer. My other computer??? The one I just disconnected?

Unplug new computer (I haven't loaded WordPerfect on it) and reactivate old one. Pulled up your address. Reconnected new computer. Now to get on-line. Message: No dial tone. Is your modem connected?

Whoops again! No, I hadn't reconnected it. Now, where's that cord? WHERE'S THAT CORD???

Okay, I'll disconnect the phone and use the phone cord. (Not on me! says Suzanne.) Finally get it all done. Try to get on-line. MORE problems. Finally, by sheer accident, I got here.

Hope I'll be able to mail it...

...Ahhhh — one final "Whoops!" I don't know my **own** address! Well, I'll try to mail this anyway and then get it off to you tomorrow nite.

For those who are not frightened away by this account, **Shelby** and **Suzanne** can be reached at their new e-mail address: shelvy@beaches.net

7/22. A Mary Tyler Moore episode on Nick at Night plucked a poignant chord. The plot concerns a critic who bashes relentlessly. He cloaks himself in the truth and ruthlessly destroys everything in his path, including the news show that hires him to do a daily review spot.

His defense is the Truth. During the half-hour, his trenchant barbs hit vulnerable human targets in all directions. Ultimately, the critic is right, but friendless. By forcing people to confront unwelcome or tactless truths, the critic estranges himself from them.

7/23. **Dave Langford** writes:

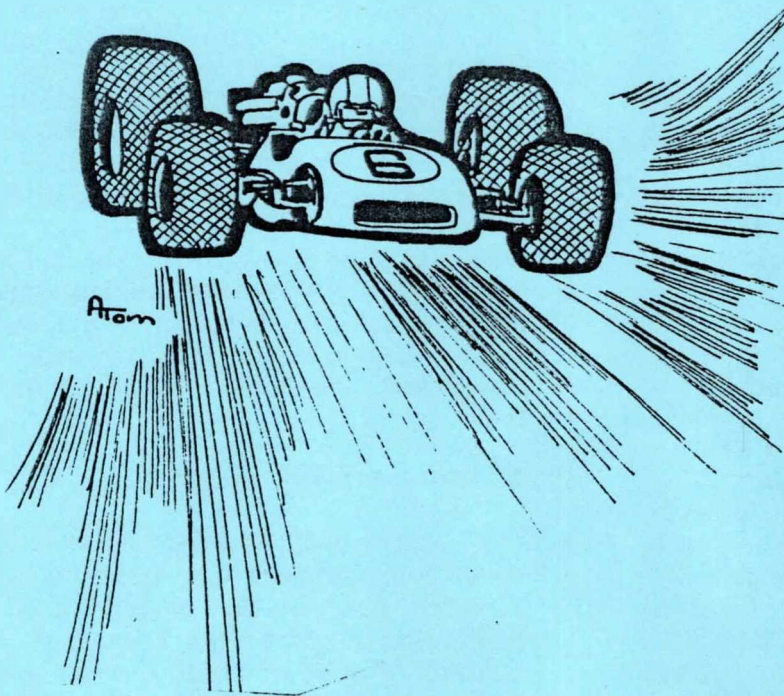
I was deeply swayed by some of the subtle semantic cues you incorporated into the Toner flyer (e.g. 'an obscene amount of beer', having almost the compulsive resonance of 'If you have read this far, you are now caught in the most intricate trap ever

devised for one individual'). But, alas, time and money do not permit. Hope you all have fun!

We'll miss ya! Meanwhile, Vegan Fan Scientists are working on a new formula that will prove absolutely irresistible. We'll get to host you yet.

7/25. The morning mail queue held a letter from **Gerl Sullivan**, which included this fascinating bit from **Chuch Harris**:

The only problem now is that I can only type one-handed. The plaster cast from elbow to knuckle is a problem but it comes off in four weeks time and then I should be okay again. I am being very careful walking — no more of the lithe mountain goat Chuchy — because after the aorta business the hospital are reluctant to give me a full anesthetic. I had to have a local anesthetic when they reset the arm and it ain't much fun. Arfer had a complete prostectomy with just a local but things are different at Northampton. I had eight people in the OT with me and it was no fun even though they let me keep my glasses on so that I could lip-read and watch the big X-ray whilst they manipulated the bones into position before plastering it all up.



You have to go back one week later for an X-ray check (I dunno how they do it thru the plaster either) and then again in mid-August when my writing/groping arm is freed again.

7/25. TV has devoted a lot of air-time in the last week or so to Roman History. For example, today I watched a decidedly unfriendly documentary, "Julius Caesar, Divine Dictator." It chronicled his rise to power and well-deserved (in the show's blatantly expressed opinion) assassination.

The program shed many tears for the Old Republic and mourned those who Died in Battle. Both are lamentable. But the show reserved the full weight of its Moral Indignation to something else, entirely. The documentary-makers are still pretty ticked off about Caesar's first invasion of Britain in 55 B.C. The narration as much as said that umpteen stab wounds was getting off lightly for crossing the channel.

I didn't see the credits for this program, something I normally try to do, but I have a hunch it originated in the United Kingdom.

7/26. There are good days and bad days — and a lot of days that fall in-between. Today ranks as one of my better business days. It bulged with promise of interesting work and financial reward. Spice with karmic revenge, and you've got the makings of a really pleasant day at the (home) office.

It started with a call from the cfo of our biggest consulting client, apologizing for recent wrongs and talking about new projects. They also promised to pay the debt they've piled up with me, which will certainly come in handy for luxuries like the mortgage and food.

Then Jonathan Lane, Ziff-Davis' man in charge at Sendai, called to solicit my help and tell me that Jer Horwitz was finishing his last day at the Illinois headquarters. That's the karmic revenge.

Jer impressed me tremendously when he sold his *Intelligent Gamer* website to Sendai and took over **Fusion** from the Lombard staff that had run it into the ground. Any 20-year-old who can sell an electronic fanzine to a publisher and get a prozine without any previous experience. definitely has a hot hand.

Lack of experience and a penchant for empire-building undid Jer. Since he was sharpening the ax for **Joyce** and me with a series of dubious actions, his departure is a hopeful sign.

An offer of new work from a prestigious first-time client topped off the good news.

Maybe my luck is turning positive again. I don't know if this holds for other writers, but my career goes in five-to-seven year cycles. Projects run their course, and then it's time to dig for the next round of work.

That's where I am now, in transition. Today's timely egoboost was like a vacation from the stress of non-stop hunting.

Ross Chamberlain and **Marcy Waldie** finally took pity on me and my collated-but-unmailed stack of **Vegas Fan Diary #2**. **Ross** stuffed the envelopes and attached the labels, and then **Marcy** took care of the mailing. That meant two trips to the Post Office, one to determine the postage and a second to dump the copies into the mail bin.

That kind of expression of friendship means more to me than a box of rave LoCs. It's not their fanzine, like **Wild Heirs**, yet they took the time to finish it for me while I was inundated with more mundane tasks.

Uh, now that **Ross** and **Marcy** have finished **VFD**, can I have that box of rave locs, too? Just asking.

The first of the new-look semi-formal **SNAFFU** meetings drew a large and enthusiastic crowd to **Ken** and **Aileen Formans** place in southeastern Las Vegas. Since a lot of fan events take place on the West side, restoring some geographical balance is a positive step. And it does allow **Ken** and **Aileen**, with eccentric work schedules, to make at least one **SNAFFU** meeting a month.

The meeting progressed from a brief formal introduction to the purely social phase via a discussion of favorite fantasy novels. (Yes, another planned subject.)

Lord of the Rings had the most widespread support, as might be expected, but I'm not sure any other novel got more than a single vote. Many **SNAFFU**ties picked fairly recent titles, while **Joyce** and I joined a vocal minority championing various older novels.

I never did decide which of several books is my favorite. Besides *LOTR*, which I picked during the course of the discussion, my other candidates include *The Dying Earth* and *Nine Princes in Amber*.

7/27. "I think fandom has the wrong idea about Las

Vegas," **Joyce** said to **Tom** and me.

"What do you mean?" I said so she could continue. We try to be helpful here in Glitter City.

"They think we're having more fun than we really are."

"But we're having fun," **Tom** insisted.

"Lots of fun," I seconded. "Big Fun."

"Yes, that's true," she agreed. "This is a lovely local fandom. But I think they think it's better than it is."

"So how do others see us?" I prompted. I braced for the truth. I can handle the truth..

"They think of us like Santa Claus and the elves in the toyshop at the North Pole!" she announced.

Whaddaya know, I *can't* handle the truth.

"I ain't no Kris Kringle, baby," I told her, leering my best leer.

"Elves?" Tom sputtered. "We're like elves?"

"Well, Ken, maybe," I admitted to dispel the looming silence. "When he has that puffy shirt with the laces down the front, but not the rest of us!" I'm 6'3", 235, not typical elf stats.

But **Joyce** was adamant (and I was **Elvis Costello**).

Tom was so *miffed* that he stopped singing "Heigh-Ho, Heigh-ho."

Not that we think Las Vegas fandom is perfect. Far from it. In fact, we devoted substantial effort to considering ways to improve it.

"There aren't enough fan floozies," **Joyce** said. "They perform a valuable service."

"Indeed?" **Tom** said.

"Yes, they keep the unsocialized, single male fans happy."

"That's good."

"Yes, and they keep the social structure of the fan group from ossifying by breaking up marriages."

7/28. My e-mail queue is full of Toner mail. Most of it is questions about the event and heartening portents of attendance. My original estimate of 50, including about 20 Vegrants, looks pretty good.

Tom Springer and **Ben Wilson** conceived Toner as a three-day party with some pre-planned (and hopefully diverting) activities. Those scheduled to attend guarantee a success, even though we'll all get wistful about absent friends.

Bernie Evans is functioning as **Martin Tudor's** on-line post office. She's relayed **Martin's** questions about the Vegas leg of his journey, and I pass along information from **Tom**.

The latest message concerned a subject dear to Vegrant hearts — old fanzines. **Martin** plans a TAFF auction for Toner, and the collectors are already salivating over choice items (like old **Hyphens**).

I expect a battle of conscience between the urge to slurp up all the classic zines and the desire to see TAFF make as much money as possible. I can almost see the little devil and little angel sitting on **Tom Springer's** shoulders, arguing the ethics of the situation.

My thoughts are more basic: how to waylay **Tom**, so he can't attend the auction. That's the only way we can keep him from bidding all the stuff I want into the stratosphere.

Too bad Toner is so close. Otherwise, I'd make this into a **VFD** Official Contest.

7/29. A line on the back cover of **Stefantasy #118** (**William Danner**, RD 1, Kennerdell, PA 16374), under the heading "English as She Is spoke," reminded me of a recent discussion. It took place after the Wednesday baseball league, but it wandered far from **Tom's** need for a second baseman and **Bill Kunkel's** trophy preferences.

The quote: "The true meaning of a person's life is the friends they keep." By printing it, **Bill Danner** is implying that it is wrong. He was certainly right at the time he published **Stefantasy #1**, but today's answer is less certain.

That depends on how you see the rules of grammar. Some folks, maybe including **Bill D**, equate the Laws of Grammar with the Law of Gravity. They see it as immutable and unchanging.

Others see grammar as parts of a language's constitution. The rules hold sway until the majority decides to change them. Correct grammar reflects the usage of a literate cross section of US citizenry.

The specific use of "they" has become standard in the US due to the heightened consciousness of gender equality. At one time, "his" was acceptable, but most writers I've asked stay away from being gender-specific in this instance. And they think "his or her" is clunky. The best thing to do is avoid this construction entirely, but most pick "their" when forced to make the choice..

And speaking of grammar, **Jack Speer** had this to say about **VFD**:

I found Vegas Fan Diary more thoroughly interesting than the round-robins such as Wild Heirs.

I don't know of a fanzine spelled Vampyre.

You're right. **Joe Kennedy's** fanzine is **Vampire**. I publish a baseball fanzine called **Umpyre**, so what do I know?

You're wrong about **Wild Heirs**. We borrowed the

method for the first two issues from the LA Insurgents (**Wild Hair**), subsequent issues, point-fives and spin-offs are pre-planned genzines. Though 1995 **WHs** featured fairly large round-robin editorials, that section only runs a couple of pages in 1996 issues.

"Some Moral Choices come easier than others" deserved a Highlights rating. So did "we Vegrants don't like to leave him unsupervised for too long."

Fans are superior to nonfans, on average. Smatter fact, when I tested fanish intelligence, the lowest scorer was at the median for college graduates.

Just the other day, **Joyce** complained about fanzine fans' unwillingness to claim intellectual superiority. "They're all wimps," she shouted loud enough to cause the rest of us to shrink back in our chairs. "Fanzine fans are smart, and they should be proud of their superiority in this area." She did not add that it is reasonable compensation for fans' short-fall in some other areas.

30,000 persons connected to cons seems high.

Jack, you're gonna get me in trouble... The fan population depends on the definition of "fan." The most popular definition (though not with me) is that a fan is anyone who does more than read/watch/listen.

That makes anyone who goes to a science fiction club or convention a fan. DragonCon draws over 20,000 to Atlanta. If two out of every three potential fans goes to Dragon, that implies a total population of 30,000. In actual fact, I'm sure that Dragoncon doesn't draw *half* of all potential fan attendees. That means my original estimate, 30,000, is probably way too low.

What is there to talk about in eg zines?

Electronic gaming fanzines discuss electronic gaming. Material includes reviews, historical articles about classic games and systems, interviews with leading pros and forecasts of upcoming releases. Does this sound like the infancy of any other fandom you know, **Jack**?

The hottest trends in current eg fanzines are non-gaming subjects and fannishness. Some top titles, and most of the neozines, stick as close to gaming as **Fantasy Commentator** does to imaginative liter-

ature. More and more eg fanzines give space to other pop cultural interests, the editor's personal doings, fanzine reviews and other types of material unrelated to games.

What happened in your fannish life on 5/25?

It is sometimes seemly to draw the veil of silence across some of my more bizarre activities. There are, indeed, some things that Fan was not meant to know.

7/30. The new Nabob of Net, **Shelby Vick** sent this message today:

There's a big similarity between driving to your very first convention and learning to surf the Net thru Windows 95. For the con trip, you have to pick your route to what hiway to start out on, which exit to take to change hiways, when to go left, when to go right, when to barrel straight ahead; when you get to the con city, you need to know which street to take to get to the hotel — and watch out for detours along the way. When you reach the hotel, then you have to decide which elevator to take, what floor to get off...and where is that room where the big party is going on?

Windows 95 and the Net needs a road map, too; which icon leads you where — and, when you reach the Net, what path do you take to get where you want to go?

There is, at least for me, another comparison, too: When you're going to your first con, you're filled with eager anticipation, concern about how big a fool you'll make out of yourself, and excitement that sends a jolt of adrenaline to your system. You're on a great high that keeps you awake...indeed, makes you forget about sleep in your eagerness not to miss anything.

Like now; I usually get to sleep before 10:00 PM. It's nearing midnight, however, and here I am.

I've learned, as I believe I've said, how to get to e-mail quickly. That route, I know! Sometimes my mail doesn't seem to get Sent properly, but I'm not sure it's all my fault. I mean, I clicked "Send", didn't I? Is it MY fault my server doesn't understand where it's supposed to go???

I've gotten replies from Dick Lynch, rich brown, Arnie, Andy Hooper — and Chuch

Harris! (Chuch's reply came after my server Returned my message, saying there was no such address. I should wave his reply in their electronic faces!

So what if I can't sleep? I'm having FUN!

Geri Sullivan took time out from earning her passage to LACon to send me some timely *Quark* suggestions just in time for **Vegas Fan Diary**. Credit her (and **Alan White** as already mentioned) for any sudden sign of improvement.

Andy Hooper writes:

The problem of finding an eastern group to host Corflu is troubling to me as well. After Pacifica, and the English experiment, it would be appropriate to have the convention in an eastern or midwestern center. But who would handle it? Some ideas: With appropriate support from parties slightly southward (i.e., rich, Ted, Dan, Lynn, Terry and Frank, perhaps Steve Stiles could be induced to host us in Bal'more? Perhaps the mysterious E.B. Frohvet could be unveiled there.

But since this is 1999 we're talking about, and Worldcon will have been there the previous year, maybe people would prefer a more central location, rather than having to travel to the East Coast twice in about seven months. Minneapolis again? Corflu Six in Mpls was one of the best to date, and we have established that it's now permissible to host the convention twice.

There are a lot of cities that I'd love to see host the convention, and the success (relative) of Lucy Huntzinger and Rich Brandt in holding the convention in cities that were A) not all that exciting in themselves and B) possessed of only one or two fanzine fans in residence. If we can take the convention where we like, why not visit Ann Arbor or St. Louis or Austin or New Orleans? Heck, maybe JoHn could get us all to come visit him in Columbus, although that's hardly a city I'd go out of my way to visit.

Anyway, I think Corflu is such a flexible event that we could hold it in all sorts of interesting places — including, I hope, Seattle again some day.

I thought your comments on Challenger and Southern Fandom were the highlights of this issue. I thought you showed great

restraint in staying away from the more pugilistic assertions which Guy made in the sections on **Samanda Juede**, and the more people who clarify Trufandom's failure to embrace her candidacy accurately, the better off we'll be. It would be nice to make more contact with southern fandom, especially since it would give us a bunch more warm places we could hold Corflu (another one I thought of — Orlando, or other Floridian destinations, spear-headed by Joe and Edie Siclar).

But on the whole, I do find that Southern Fans are frequently guilty of the regional insularity that Ted accused them of in that **Habakkuk** review, and it's hard to figure out how we are supposed to break through that. If they aren't interested in having the light and glory of fanzine fandom brought to them, our efforts are likely to be rejected as neo-colonialism and condescension. Maybe we should ask people like Joe and Edie, Judy Bemis and Tony Parker, and the redoubtable Tom Feller what they think the best solution to the question is.

"Insularity" is relative. The cross section of world-con attendees probably considers fanzine fandom pretty insular, too. I don't want to carry the Trufan

Message to southern Fandom like the Fannish Conquistadors. They've got traditions, BNFs and history of their own. I want to build some bridges, increase contact, get comfortable with each others' fanzines and maybe go to a few parties together.

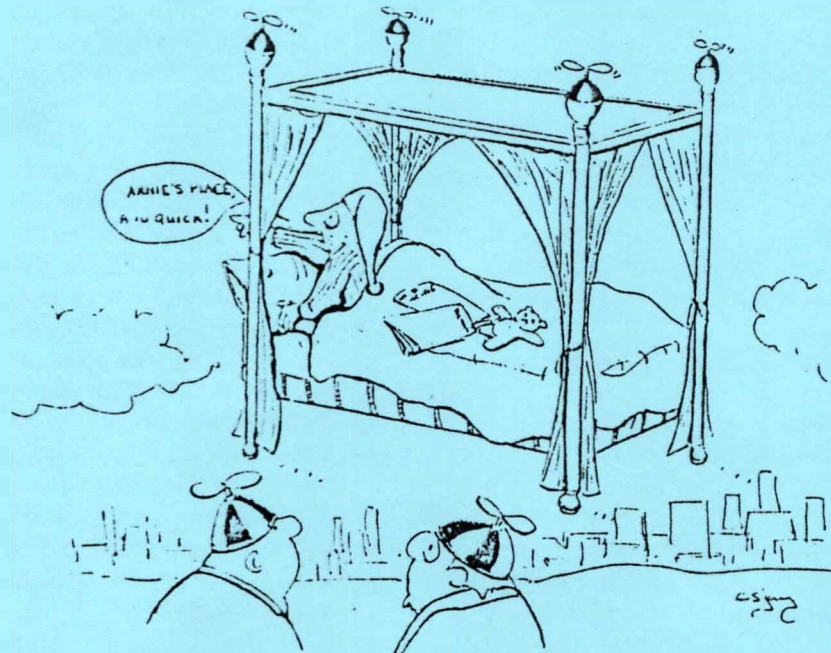
In an era in which many fans worry about recruiting newcomers, it seems a shame to waste the chance to cooperate to mutual benefit with such a large group of enthusiastic fans.

Cool stuff talking about **Rotsler** and his work, as was the description of your services for Burbee. I think he would have been pleased to know that you cared enough to drive out into the stinking desert on his behalf. When I die, I want to be cremated, and dumped into a big box of toner, which is then used to print a special edition of my favorite fan writing . . .

7/31. Thus ends the third issue. With any luck, there will come another in about 30 days. Thanks to everyone who wrote — and encouragement to those who haven't yet done so.

I hope you're enjoying this foray into my life. A couple of people who can't take a joke aside, I'm enjoying myself. And in fandom, that's pretty much the story.

-- Arnie Katz



THERE ARE DAYS WHEN I CAN NEVER GET OUT OF BED EITHER ...