

8/1. The fourth issue is always a big deal for me. A lot of my titles don't get beyond number three. That's when I pause to evaluate what I've done. The fourth VFD is an expression of confidence in the idea that got me started on it in the first place.

As **Andy Hooper** notes in his **Apparatchik** review of **VFD #1**, every year or so, I try some kind of new fanzine. **Andy** expressed his theory mechanistically, but his premise is irrefutable.

He calls each of my efforts a fanzine engine. In this metaphor, I'm a garage inventor who tools up a spiffy new engine every so often and then watches it run. Eventually, I bolt together a new engine and roll out the latest model **KatZine**.

Without negating **Andy's** perception, the process looks less like a Ford plant from my perspective. I start a fanzine when I figure out something I want to do. Although I've occasionally come back to an old idea, as with **VFD**, it's usually because I didn't fully exploit its potential. I publish until I feel I've run out of ideas for it — or I stumble onto a more compelling fanzine idea.

What I *don't* do is plan the life span in advance. If I did that, boredom would make me stop before I even started.

**Swerve** was last year's model. I scored it a technical success, but an unproductive line of development. It didn't expand the range of my fanac.

**Swerve** was too close to what I want to write for **Wild Heirs** and other Vegrant fanzines.

**Vegas Fan Diary** is this year's entry. A lot of the stuff in **VFD** would be out of place in **Wild Heirs**. That allows me to work on both fanzines without slighting either. Your support has encouraged me to continue, and it has developed some elements outside my original plan. That means you can

expect at least a few more issues while I continue to tinker.

8/2. Folks ask why a cutting-edge guy like me isn't all over the Internet. They can't understand why I greatly prefer hard copy fanzines.

One reason, I suppose, is that fanzine fandom is my top hobby priority. The circles overlap, but the Internet is not a virtual Corflu. It's a distinct segment of fandom with its own attitudes and concerns, only some of which I share. Since my fanac time is as limited as everyone else's, I'd rather devote the lion's share of it to the primary tribe.

I love the immediacy of electronic correspondence. As more friends link to the net, I've improved contact with a lot of people who mean a lot to me.

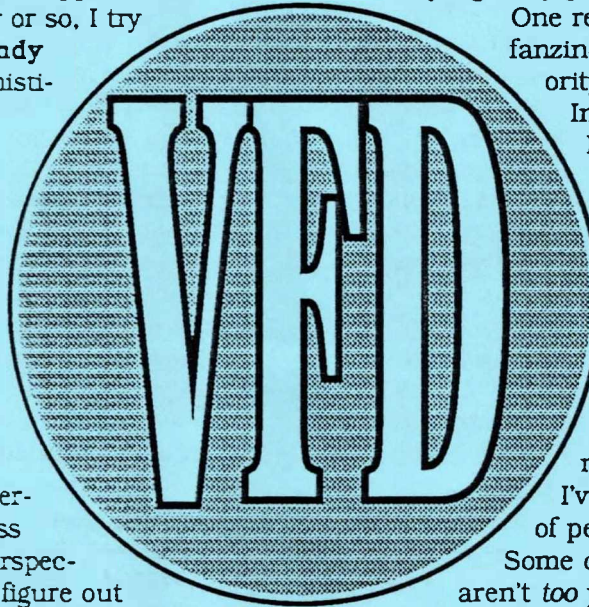
Some of the letters, the ones that aren't *too* personal, are to be found in

**VFD**. (Don't worry.. when in doubt I will ask permission.)

On the other hand, my personal experience with posting lengthy and sophisticated essays on **Rass-eff** or through listservs is fairly depressing. It seems as though the medium is not conducive to careful reading or thoughtful writing.

**Rich brown** sent this **Dan Goodman** posting from **Rec Arts SF Fandom**. Let's begin with **rich's** preface:

*I know you're not much involved, if at all, over on rec.arts.sf.fandom, so I thought I'd alert you to the fact that Dan Goodman—remember Dan Goodman?—was recently spouting nonsense about how apa hackers were going to have to “do something” about those nasty old genzine fans who “make distinctions” about apahackers not being “real” fanzine fans.*



**Vegas Fan Diary #4** is brought to you by **Arnie Katz** (330 S. Decatur Blvd., Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). Webitor, **Shelby Vick**; Assistant Editor: **Marcy Waldie**. This fanzine is available for contributions of artwork, letters of comment or unpredictable whim. It is intended to be published monthly.

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I thought he was talking about me; the "distinction" I'd made was MCs and news group threads were written in conversational mode and hence were not likely to contain the best material fandom had to offer.

So, anyway, I told Dan he was spouting nonsense, that I found nothing at all to be ashamed of in the fact that my response to him was in conversational mode and hence was unlikely either to appear in next year's BoF fanthology or to be compared favorably with "The Exorcists of IF"—it served its purpose without any \*need\* to be that good. Calvin Demmon wrote MCs that were as drop-dead funny as anything else he wrote and were worth reprinting for the humor, but that was the only real exception I could think of to the general rule. Too, a lot of excellent material has appeared (in non-MC form) in apazines over the years; most of Burbee, Laney's "Ah, Sweet Idiocy," Willis' "Wilde Heirs," appearing in FAPA, Hugo-winning SAPSazines (**Warhoon**, "Who Killed Science Fiction" [SaFari Annual]), Boggs' column in TRAP DOOR, "Carl Brandon" putting most of his short parodies through the Cult before they were picked up for genzines, etc., &c. Besides which, most of the people publishing today's best genzines either are or have been members of at least one apa—so how does Dan distinguish them from us?

To which Dan replied:

"Tell you what, rich — you get statements from Arnie Katz and Ted White that they consider people whose written fanac is almost all in APA L and/or Mirneapa to be "real fanzine fans," and I'll back down."

Amusing stuff. I'll be responding to it, myself, but I pass it on to give you a better impression of net fandom. Yes. "Better". Like the N3F of old, it's a good place for people who can't get their heads on straight — because, for just one thing, it makes it unnecessary for us to reach a decision on whether to abide with fools until we can escape them or just go ahead and put them down and say to hell with the consequences.

I don't need to defend a point I never made, except to point out that I've helped start a few apas — Apa F, Apa L, TAPS and some private groups — and have participated in many others, so I would hardly be the one to kick apans away from the Sacred Campfire.

On the other hand, one can participate in per-

sonal publishing without being involved in our fanzine fandom. **Mike Palisano** and **Tom Donoho**, two sometimes **VFD** readers, are examples. (They both publish electronic gaming fanzines, a fanzine fandom entirely separate from our own.) There are apas which are unconnected to our fandom, like the mundane ayjay groups.

The form of fanac is not as central to my definition of a fanzine fan as the person's attitude. A "real fan" is someone with a strong consciousness of, and identification with, the subculture. Without the context, there is no fandom. Without the history, traditions, institutions, culture and aesthetics that bind us together, the Virtual Country of Fandom would not exist.

The contributor to one or a dozen apas who fulfills these conditions is certainly a fanzine fan. Those who don't know **Langford** from **Benford** probably aren't.

**8/3. Ben and Cathi Wilson** came over a bit early, even for the Chicago Science Fiction League meeting that always precedes the monthly Vegrants gathering. **Cathi** had to report to Taco Bell at 7:00, cutting her out of both meetings, so we encouraged them to come in the late afternoon so we could spend some time with her.

It evolved into a fine afternoon and evening of low-pressure social fanac. We'd already written "Vague Rants" for **Wild Heirs #16**, so we didn't even have the computer going for a oneshot.

After only two months, the 8:00 pm start for Las Vegrants has become a tradition. That doesn't mean we won't change it again, but it's helping us get a good turn-out.

**Alan** and **DeeDee White** have become Vegrants regulars. They're welcome additions, a lively and friendly couple. We're also hoping that **Alan** will draw for **Wild Heirs**. His stuff is excellent, and another fan artist would be a ghu-send.

His effort to help me become an acceptable **QuarkXpress** DTPer continues. He showed me some things tonight that will make **VFD** and **WH** much easier — and better-looking. I've resisted giving up *Publish It Easy*, but I'm now better than a 50-50 bet to survive the change-over to **Quark**. **Alan's** contributions to the last two Apa V bundles testify to his mastery of the DTP medium.

They also show that there's a lot more to **Alan White** than implied by the phrase "30 years in horror and comic book fandoms." **Alan** may be at a personal fannish crossroads. His previous approach to the hobby has not brought fulfillment, and he's looking for a new way to define his rela-

tionship to the hobby. Since he and **Deedee** appear to enjoy the Vegrants, maybe he'll walk down our street for awhile.

The recent Summer Olympics demonstrated the gender gap better than anything since Gary Hart. By and large, men hated NBC's coverage and women loved it.

There's no question that the network geared its two-week video marathon to the perceived tastes of the female audience. Many *other* networks, stations and cable services evidently thought so, too, because they directed counter-programming at guys — action movies, sporting events, *MTV Grind*..

Most men, me included, felt that sports — baseball, basketball, boxing, soccer... *sports* — got less air-play than gymnastics, diving and synchronized swimming. Women enjoyed the TV bill of fare.

We got talking about the Olympics at the August Vegrants meeting, and opinion divided 100% along gender lines. **Tammy Funk**, in particular, took Great Umbrage at my assertion that a goodly number of Olympic events are not, in fact, sports.

"What's a sport?" she asked.

"A sport is something that, when it's over, you know who won without waiting for a judge." Not exactly the dictionary definition, granted, but I knew it would spark some rebellion.

I looked at the women sitting there, so smug in their adoration of The Balance Beam. Clearly, the topsy turvy telecast was Their Fault.

"A little girl rolling on a mat while she waves a ribbon is not a sport. It's a physical activity," I declared, squarely confronting the issue. "It's all form. It would be like giving a Gold Medal for the best home run trot in baseball."

Then I had a real inspiration. Why not more mature and alluring women? Why not better outfits? Why not lose the damn ribbon? "Let's make exotic dancing an Olympic event!" I've already installed friend Julia Parton as the early-line favorite, though she'll have competition from Ashlyn Gere and Jenny Jamison.

A sport is a matter of results, winning and losing. Rhythmic gymnastics and figure skating (in the Winter Olympics) are matters of form. The winners look better doing their stuff than the losers. The female hurdler medaled despite knocking over all the barriers. She crossed the finish line first. Scoreboard.

"What about boxing?" she challenged.

"Boxing, and maybe wrestling, is a special case," I explained. "In the classic tradition, boxers pum-

mel each other until one goes down for the ten-count. For humanitarian and aesthetic reasons, we don't allow fights to go that far, so there has to be a system for judging bouts that we don't allow to go the normal distance."

"Well, I like gymnastics," she said, with a defiant look that dared me to say otherwise. Some women feel the same way about gymnastics as men do about *Monday Night Football*.

"Little Girls Gymnastics are lovely," I temporized, "but it's not sports."

We continued in that vein until some other subject rescued me. I avoid vexing female Vegrants; they are a blood-thirsty and vengeful lot.

**8/4. Jerry Kaufman** observes:

*Thanks very much for VFD 1 & 2. Since we moved, we've been extremely busy. This house is a bit of a fixer-upper, and we're not experienced fixers. The process of setting furniture in place, unpacking boxes, replacing fixtures, etc. has interfered with my fanzine reading. (I did read Joyce's **Quant Suff**, so please pass along my thanks to her. I don't recall any responses I had to it except pleasure.)*

*Oddly, the moving process has somehow increased my rate of response, and not solely to pass along our new address. Responding to zines was a way for me to feel connected to the bigger fan community at a time when my major energies were devoted to fixing this nest, an activity that easily turns one inward.*

*I like the format of VFD in your hands, and I like the plainer style you've adopted for it. Seems to me you're a good writer no matter what you do, but I prefer the less baroque tone and more direct subject matter here.*

Thanks for noticing. Beyond its obvious purposes, **VFD** lets me work on my prose. I try not to go for baroque, but my first drafts can get too flowery, even for me. This simpler, more direct style results from repeated polishing. Every pass deflates sinuous sentences. When I wrote this paragraph the first time, it was 17 pages.

*The most bizarre psychic hotline, which I have seen advertised in **Green Egg**, a neo-Pagan magazine, is "The Witches of Salem Network." "If you like Talking to Psychics... You'll like Talking to Witches..." says the ad. (The Gratuitous Mid-sentence Capitals are sic.) The weirdest part of the ad is the photo (captioned) of Brigitte Nielsen. Didn't she use to be some movie action star's sweetie?*

When did she become a witch and move to Salem?  
(I really should write to **Green Egg** and ask them.)

If they were really psychic, you wouldn't even have to write.

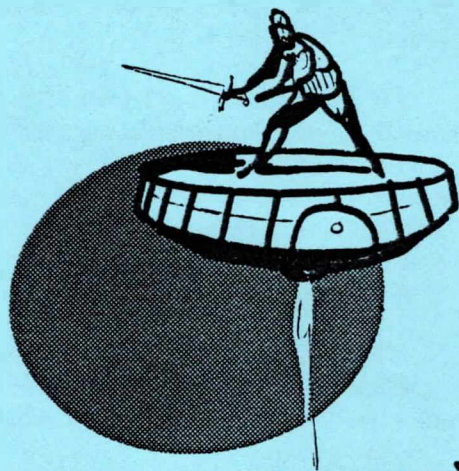
As for Victor's response to my letter in APPARATCHIK, I think both he and you are confused. (I certainly am.) If your club's membership never changes, then the average age of the membership increases one year for every year that passes. But say you lose John Hardin to a love camp in the Ozarks. Presumably, he's one of the younger members of the club. Your average just jumped. (Add all your ages together, see, then divide by the number of members.) But if you add a couple of teenagers every year to the club's roster, your average age will drop.

I think Victor was trying to say that the average age of the club (Vanguard) is increasing as fewer young fans join and more desert. But that doesn't quite match the sentence you quoted. And for several reasons I don't want to find that issue and reread Victor's response to me.

My irritation with Victor about other matters aside, I meant it as a joke. I understood Victor's point and didn't mean to imply that he said anything wrong. It sent me on a tangent. If anyone was supposed to be the butt, it was me.

I mean, guys, what I wrote was ridiculous. It was meant to be humorously outlandish. Shields of Umor....uppppppppp.

In *VFD 2*, I was very impressed and taken with



THE CHALLENGE · WR'S

your memorial service for Burbee. Lovely. I'm sure it's exactly what he wanted and would have loved to attend. The added touch of drinking the beer, then pouring the rest in his memory... "Never thirst," is certainly one of the best things you can wish someone else, living or dead. I hope you're right and he's sitting around with Terry and laughing with delight at us. (And I hope Susan, Ethel and Bob are next to Terry.)

Your piece on TAFF here is much tighter and clearer than the version I previously saw online, and I find myself much more in agreement with it than I was.

Lots of other interesting bits and pieces in *VFD*, but I'll just have to let them simmer around in my mind. (I'll be in trouble if they achieve a slow rolling boil.) Next I'll have to find time to read all the zines you mentioned... I got 'em, too, but haven't had a chance to read them except **Waxen Wings & Banana Skins**... and there's a brand new issue of that in the stack!

The important thing, and this will count heavily in your favor in Ghu's celestial egoboo poll, is that you wrote to *VFD*. I like **Claire** and **Mike**, but friendship goes out the window in the competition for those rare **Kaufman** locs.

I'm really pleased that the small bit of editing made my TAFF piece more understandable. My opinion is essentially unchanged since the first piece I wrote about TAFF over a year ago, but maybe I've articulated my feeling better. I'm glad the on-line TAFF rumble has largely abated, but I hope this calm is not prelude to a storm when the emerging majority of eligible TAFF voters starts to express its preference.

**Murray Moore writes:**

Damn you. I day-dreamed about attending Toner. I had gotten that fantasy out of my system. Too far, too much money, for too few days. I read the second issue of your *VERY FINE DIARY* and the yearning returns.

I too enjoyed **Waxen Wings & Banana Skins 2**. Unlike Claire Brialey, I don't buy lottery tickets, or the variety known here as Nevada tickets. You pull open the ticket to see if you have won. I am

my father's son when it comes to gambling. Turning a provincial government lottery ad inside out, I say, if you don't gamble, you can't lose.

*Voluntary taxation: I am all for it. The provincial government has been raking in hundreds of millions of dollars for years through a variety of lottery games. Ontario's second casino opened July 31, one hour's drive from here, on the Rama Reserve, next door to Orillia, famous as the home of author Stephen Leacock. I applied for a public relations job at Casino Rama, without success. My fantasy there was I would be sent to Las Vegas as a representative of Casino Rama and get to meet Las Vegrants.*

Sorry you couldn't make it to Toner. I just peeked ahead, and I can see that I had fun. Consider this an open-ended invitation to visit.

Though I haven't read much Stephen Leacock, I'm much more familiar with his American admirer Jean Shepherd. I think my writing style owes something to Shepherd's oratorical style on his radio show. I listened every night, and the residue shows in some descriptive passages and my reliance on dialogue.

*I appreciate being one of the half-million fan receiving your **Very Foreign Diary**. I take it as recognition that I have created a profile for myself when the first issue of a fanzine comes my way without me asking for a copy.*

*My comment note to you floating the idea of publishing a series of fannish anthologies and collections: "Yes!" Which reference allows me to nudge you that I sent you \$10 on Sept. 10, 1995, for **Fanthology '91**. And what is the status of **Fanzine Dreams**, **Willis Plays Vegas**, **A Taste Of Frap**, **Luck of the Fannish**, titles announced, if my memory serves, in **The Ted White Sampler**?*

Slightly fewer than a half-million fans get **VFD**, which is at least one (of several) reasons why I have the time/money/energy to get it out even as regularly as I have.

A mailing list adjustment is coming, however. I can't expand the list beyond the current 80, but I'd like to make sure that **VFD** goes to people who really want it. On the other hand, I have a lot of trouble cutting people off without warning, so I've held off the mailing list revision until after this issue.

**8/5. "Want to be FAPA President?" Robert Lichtman** said to me on the phone. He went on to explain that the job is mine for the asking, since

no one else has filed for it in the upcoming election of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

I've been FAPA president before, for a year, until **Joyce** defeated me in the next year's election. In fact, this office has become something of a Vegas preserve, since **Ross Chamberlain** has held the post for the last two years. (There is a two-term limit or we might've forced him to continue.)

The **Wild Heirs 16** letter column is shaping up. **Tom Springer** told me on the phone. When he called, we talked about the mounting pile of locs and the last news of Toner. He's in charge of the thing, of course, but I forward e-mail messages to him since he isn't yet connected to the Internet.

**8/6. "It's your nightly phone call," said Robert Lichtman.** He then asked me to relay the message to **Ross Chamberlain**, FAPA's soon-to-be-ex-president, that he is the Teller for the forthcoming election.

Vegrants often speak of **Robert** as one of us, albeit at geographic remove. This is further evidence of the link. This appointment was **Robert's** homage to one of Las Vegas Fandom's most enduring and notable traditions: Anyone not in the room is fair game for appointment to any post, position or office.

I hope I remember to tell **Ross** about his appointment before the votes pour in. All seven or eight of them.

**Rich brown** had this to say:

*While I like the originality and insight that went into your historical model (although I still think you should add "amateurism" to your list, given that Laney first urged fandom in that direction and **Willis** brought understanding to the term by pointing out that "amateur" comes from the Latin "amare," which means "to love." The amateurs do what they do for the love of doing the thing, and hence are held to a higher standard than are professionals, who must do what they are paid to do. Anyone who believes otherwise would (to coarsen up a bit what **Willis** actually said) prefer the ministrations of a prostitute to those of a willing and imaginative lover.) ...excuse—I got lost in that digression. I meant to say that as much as I like your model and feel it is an improvement over the Numbered Fandoms theory, I have to admit that the latter has one thing going for it, and that is that sequence can never be in doubt. That is, First Fandom is followed by Second Fandom, which is*

*followed by Third Fandom &c.; even people who could not tell you off-hand anything ABOUT those Fandoms are unlikely to get the order wrong.*

*Your system, while much better as a descriptor, does not have the obvious sequence which the Numbered Fandom theory does.*

*What I prefer about your theory, and find troubling about what the Numbered Fandoms theory has become, is that yours provides descriptive tools to identify the temporary supremacy of certain forces over other forces, whereas the Numbered Fandoms theory has become a pattern to which everything must conform.*

*The evolution of the "focal points" is a case in point; it is noted, in early exposition on the theory, that certain Fandoms have a single fanzine at the center or at least one which can be said to "typify" that particular Fandom, and over time this has been extrapolated to mean that since most Numbered Fandoms have focal point fanzines, then it followed that **all** Numbered Fandoms must have focal point fanzines. Mind, I don't think this is necessarily wrong, either — but it **does** illustrate how we go combing through the reality of what happened until we "find" those patterns we are looking for.*

*This still leaves a lot to be desired. In a time when there is major feuding as the predominant factor in fandom, the focal point may often take one side or take no side, but in any event, it is the feud and not the fanzine which is the focus of attention—even on the part of the people who refuse to take part.*

*There are certain fanzines which have had a powerful impact on fandom that do not get recognized, because, while they may have had an impact that lasts through **several** Numbered Fandoms, they were never a focal point — **Hyphen, Warhoon and Skyhook** come immediately to mind.*

*But...it still has the advantage I cited and remains valuable for that reason.*

Your opinion about "amateurism" is reasonable, but maybe it isn't a full-fledged fan philosophy. I'd say that it was one of the prime tenets of the two major fannish philosophies, Insurgentism and Trufannishness. Amateurism is an attitude that fans get when they see fandom as an end in itself rather than as a mere enabler.

My repetitious statements that the Philosophical Theory can't replace Numbered Fandoms and that it is simply one tool are crucial to my view of fan-history. The Philosophical Theory is a hammer. It is a terrific hammer. If you need to pound a nail

into a board, the hammer is perfect. If you want to cut a board into two measured pieces, though, you'd better use something else.

History is not chronology, but positioning events in chronological order sometimes clarifies things. That's a strength of the Numbered Fandoms theory. The Philosophical theory doesn't do that, but it has other virtues. Other fanhistorical theories as yet unborn could illuminate our subculture in other ways.

**8/7. Bill Kunkel's** New Orleans Cruisers met my St. Louis Aliens in a renewal of a decade-long rivalry. We split our four-game series. Since both teams lead their respective divisions, it may well come down to an Aliens vs. Cruisers world series.

America On Line and part of the Internet went dark today. AOL ran into trouble while performing a software upgrade and left the net for nearly an entire day.

The crisis was instructive. It reminded me of all the sitcom episodes in which the family's TV breaks, and they have to endure a whole evening without it.

The horror! The terror! Conversation dies in three minutes. They can't read a page before tossing it aside. The parents hate the pop swill the kids find on the radio. Endings vary, but I like the family standing in front of a TV display, gawking at 100 repetitions of the same video image.

Their tribulations don't impress me. Since Prime Cable fails about once a month, I have a lot of experiences in coping without television. We work on our fanzines, have kinky sex or wish that some Seattle friends were less thin-skinned.

Or we play with our computers. This option would've been impossible today. Waiting for my AOL account to negotiate its sign-on routine made me as tense as a junkie waiting for the Man. For those unfamiliar with AOL software, a visual cue accompanies each step in the connection process.

Between milestones, the cursor turns into a clockwise-rotating disk. As long as the disk whirls, Hope remains alive. The sense of personal failure when it freezes and then goes counter-clockwise is crushing.

The AOL crash brought home to me how far the computer has insinuated itself into my life. Cut off from the cyberspace, I couldn't send copy to clients, receive and answer most of the fan mail, check the baseball news and statistics or trawl the Internet for potential fanzine fans.

Our work is the best example of the impact of the Internet. Not only is a lot of what we do for rest stops on the info highway, but everything is geared to the instantaneous delivery *in digital form* of our writing. Fax or mail won't do the job. AOL's shutdown didn't paralyze our office, but it postponed a lot of stuff for another day.

**8/8.** The FAPA mailing deadline is two days away, so **Joyce** and I are rushing to get contributions to official editor **Seth Goldberg** in time for the bundle. Besides publishing **Lesser Feats** for **Shelby Vick**, we've copied the second issue of **Joyce's Grant Suff** and the premiere number of my new FAPA title, **Xtreme**.

The title is the product of my compulsion. Several eg fans have asked my opinion about changing titles, and my reply generally stresses my own penchant for dropping a name when I feel it has run its course. Throw in titles coined for apas and special purposes, and I have accumulated quite a list.

It made me wonder, again, if I'd done a fanzine for every letter of the alphabet. When I mentally sorted my fanzines, I found that I'd come close. An un-researched list (with annotations):

**Abnormal.** I did a couple of issues of a local Las Vegas newszine intended as an alternative to then-dweebish **Situation Normal**.

**Bugsy.** The Vegrants, and a few guests, did this oneshot for FAPA about two years ago.

**Cursed.** This was my first fanzine, co-edited with **Lenny Bailes**.

Also **Crossfire**, my 1990 TAPSzine)

Also **Catalyst**. My contribution to Secret APA, another of those private groups in the 1970s.

**Damnyankee.** My first SFPAzine (in the 1960s) had a different title, but I switched to this for my second contribution. I did about 20 issues, a rather long run for me.

**Excalibur.** **Lenny** and I changed to the title after **Cursed #4**. It signaled our switch to mimeo and increasing shame over our first efforts.

Also **Excelsior**, my 1960s SAPSzine. I didn't know about **Lee Hoffman's** outstanding, short-lived genzine. I think she took the title from the packing material, while mine was humorist Jean Shepherd's motto.

**Focal Point.** **Rich brown** anointed me co-editor of the revival of the of the late-1960s revival of the newszine he did with **Mike McInerney** a few years earlier. My contribution was to make it into a mini-genzine with columns and articles as well as

news. It became an allegedly monthly genzine in 1971.

Also **Folly**. My early 1990s genzine brought me back into the fannish backwater eddy.

Also **FLAWOL.** **Joyce** and I did two three-issue runs of this newszine, but we were too tired to carry through properly.

Also **Fanzine Dreams**. I got too prolific when I resumed activity. This was a collection of previously unpublished articles, faan fiction and memoirs.

Also **Four Star Extra.** **Bill Kunkel, Charlene Storey, Joyce** and I did this in the mid-1970s. Each issue had a pre-set theme.

I really love those effing fanzines, don't I?

**Glitch.** When **Joyce** and I went to our first in-person meeting with Las Vegas Fandom, I distributed this zine as an introduction.

Also **Glitz.** **Joyce** and my FAPAzine in the 1990s.

**Heirlooms.** The Vegrants have done three issues of this fannish reprint fanzine. Look for at least a couple more this year.

Also **High Roller.** At the first LV Noncon in 1971, unsuspecting neos produced this oneshot, their first fanzine.

**Implosion.** My Apa Vzine has had more issues than any other title except **Focal Point**.

Also **Incompleat Terry Carr.** **Rich brown** and I co-edited this Terry Carr anthology.

**Katzenjammer.** The title of this perzine, and my longest-running column, was given to me by **Andy Main**.

**Le Merde.** This is the only use I have ever made of my umpteen years of French language classes.

Also **Log.** I did three issues of this precursor to **VFD** in the 1970s. Fan diaries are lovelier the second time around.

Also **Luck of the Fannish.** This fan novel describes what happened to **Willis** and friends when they stopped in Las Vegas in 1952 on the way from Chicon II to Los Angeles.

**Meow.** This title graced my N'APAzine, when I was a little neffer.

**Nemesis.** In my first SFPAzine, I told all those southerners what I thought of racist statements in the previous mailing. Being right is not enough when accompanied by arrogance and tactlessness.

**OO.** This was the not-too-surprising name for the official organ of a private apa called APA.

**Polaris.** I did two issues, mostly reprints of then-recent articles, for SFPA a couple of years ago.

**Quip.** **Lenny Balles** and I came of age as fanzine publishers with the *Vulgar and Ostentatious Fanzine*. The debt to **Void** is obvious, though later issues owe much to **Oopsla!** and **Aporrheta**.

**Swoon.** After **Joyce** and I folded, respectively, **FP** and **Potlatch**, we pooled our efforts on this fairly regular fannish fanzine.

Also **Swerve**. I did two issues, had a third written and gave it up as not quite what I wanted. (Maybe not quite what anyone wanted.)

**Tandem.** **Joyce** and I did one issue of this large gen-FAPAzine, partially inspired by **Lighthouse**.

Also **The Fanoclast Weekly.** **Gary Deindorfer** raved over the story of my encounter with a stripper in one of the issues of my *Apa F* contribution.

**Umpyre.** This is a current fanzine devoted to baseball simulation and the doings of Las Virtual Baseball Association.

**Void.** For one shining moment, #29, **Ted** let me be co-editor of my favorite fanzine.

Also **Vegas Fan Diary**.

**Wild Heirs.** It started as a oneshot and became the monthly genzine of Las Vegants, glitter city's invitational fanzine fan club.

Also **Wooden Nickel**. I did 21 issues of this weekly humorzine. **Ross Chamberlain** did front and back covers to bind the run.

**Xtreme.** Now that **Joyce** has a separate FAPA membership, this is my contribution to the group.

**Zup.** Puffed-up *Apa* 45 kids insisted that I produce a credentials zine expressly for the group, so I parodied the entire mailing in about six pages. Then I quit.

Have I really never published a fanzine with an initial "R"? I have several times considered **Riposte**, but I don't think I did one. And I don't know what I'm going to do about "Y"...

**Rotsler** called to discuss his book of practical jokes and quick comebacks. We're going to run some of this material starting in **WH #18**, along with a request that people write up their practical joke stories for him.

**Bill's** project dredged up memories of my brush with a mammoth practical joke. It happened when I was a University of Buffalo freshman in 1964.

New Yorkers filled about half of the freshman class. SUNY had no dorm space on campus, so it put most of the first-year boys into the *Allenhurst Garden Apartments*, a complex about a half-mile

from the Main Street campus. They also installed upper-classmen as resident advisors and put a dorm office there, too.

We felt abandoned by the school and, paradoxically, free of authority. The well-to-do Buffalonians who lived on adjoining streets didn't appreciate the youthful invasion. The general feeling in that benighted, depressed city was that we were the spawn of the devil. This made it all right for pious folks to loose their rotweilers on kids walking home from classes and fire shotgun blasts into the campus.

The students battled hatred with merciless condescension. The epitome of Buffalo's ineptitude was its mayor, Chester Cowall. This confused and melancholy bureaucrat couldn't even pull off his suicide. He leapt out of his City Hall office window, intent on a sidewalk splashdown, but he forgot the ledge a couple of floors down. There was nothing to do but haul his bruised butt back to his desk and finish his term.

One first semester evening, students gathered in *Artie Shine's* apartment to whine about the hostile townies. Somehow it was decided to teach Buffalo a lesson.

Thus was born the *Thallis of Marcantia*. The name referred to the reproductive system of a simple plant, but we made him a Mideast potentate on a state visit to the United States.

The first victim was a local call-in show. One of the students phoned in, representing himself as an activist. He alerted the public to the *Thallis'* impending stop in Buffalo — and warned that we students didn't want this bloody-handed despot to come to the city.

Another student became *Lincoln Abdul* — or sometimes *Abdul Lincoln* — the *Thallis'* press secretary. He minimized the importance of unruly children and encouraged the populace to turn out in support of one of America's staunchest allies in a strategically sensitive region.

The hoax took on a life of its own when an officer of the local American Legion post rose to the defense of the *Thallis of Marcantia*. He promised counter-pickets at the airport, because "he is a visitor in our land" and "we need their oil to maintain a strong national defense."

The radio whipped up the natives while it covered our bogus royal with a patina of credibility. The next morning, both local newspapers and a couple of TV stations carried the story. Typically, the staid *Buffalo Evening News* deplored the incipient protest. The *Courier-Express*, which proudly flaunts its association with Mark Twain, carried



the banner for the students. TV news, clueless as usual, contented themselves with covering every ramification of the event in exhaustive, and redundant, detail. One radio station even started a "Thallis Watch," complete with on-the-spot bulletins from the airport every 10 or 15 minutes.

We'd passed the hat the previous evening to bankroll the prank, so Artie flew to Newark International Airport early in the morning. We also booked a flight from Newark to Buffalo.

So on a fine, cold Buffalo morning, hundreds of chanting, sign-waving students converged on the airport to protest the Thallis' numerous and sordid civil rights violations. "Back to the Palace with the Thallis!" and "The Thallis Beats His Wives!" were the slogans of the hour.

We'd been agitating for an hour when the police arrived. Since Chicago had not yet shown the way in treatment of dissenters, no one broke out the hoses, dogs, mace cans and truncheons. Instead we got a lecture.

"I know you don't agree with his policies," the captain shouted above the din of our chants, "I understand your deep convictions, and I agree with a lot of what you kids are saying here today. But the Thallis is an official visitor and must be respected!"

All was in readiness for the grand arrival of the Thallis. Taken aback by the protest, Mayor Cowall decided it would be more discrete to send the Vice Mayor and police escort. He stayed back at City Hall, waiting for the Thallis to travel there by motorcade for the Official Reception.

The plane swooped out of the sky, taxied down the runway and came to a stop on the tarmac. The crew pushed the staircase up to the plane, the Vice Mayor and other dignitaries got into position. The police escort drove the car right out to the plane so the Thallis would not have to contend with the boisterous crowd.

The door opened and down the ramp came Artie Shine as the Thallis of Marcantia!

Greetings and hand-shaking all around. We were too far away to hear, but the Vice Mayor evidently had a little speech about US-Marcantia friendship and solidarity.

The rest of the denouement I heard from Artie Shine a few days later. The Vice Mayor led him to

the police car, then Thallis got into the back seat, and it sped off toward City Hall.

"So, how do you like our country, your majesty?" one of the policemen in the front seat asked, anxious for a few words with this Personage.

"I think it's a wonderful place," said Artie, making no attempt to disguise his New York accent.

"You speak very well, your majesty," the officer replied. "Have you been here before — or perhaps studied at one of our universities?"

"I was born here," said Artie.

"Born here? but.."

Artie interrupted the question by pulling out his wallet and showing his SUNY student ID card. "I'm Artie Shine," he announced.

Once the shock passed, the patrol car veered off the pre-determined route and carried Artie off to jail. They made the students pony up for some alleged property damage in the airport. The full-page feature on the protest against the Thallis in the *New York Herald Tribune* was some solace for Artie as he passed a single night in the lock-up.

**8/9. Rich brown**, responding to my comments on amateurism, says:

*I can see the point of what you're saying. At the same time, though, I can say that "Amateurism" is a contrast to "Professionalism" that is easier to understand than either Trufandom or Insurgentism. But even more important, while "amateurism" is an outlook reflected in both trufandom and insurgentism, it is also the thread which effectively sews the two together.*

Trufandom has its advocacy in **The Enchanted Duplicator**; it is not absolutely formulaic but if you are a new fan and you want to be a trufan, **T.E.D.** is going to be your best and most authoritative source and guide on how to get from here to there.

But the prospective insurgent has nothing similar to go by, merely a set of individuals who stand as examples of insurgency as it has existed in fandom (Laney, Burbee, Rapp, Raeburn to name just a few); if it has a manifesto, it would probably be Laney's "Ah, Sweet Idiocy," and in this day and age we have to pick and choose what we want to "learn" from it.

Laney the Pioneer was stalking off in various directions, seeking a path that was better than his previous FIAWOLism, but it's safe to say that he sometimes got off on the wrong foot, as his pointless gay-bashing indicates. It was his ridicule of pomposity and pointing the direction toward the philosophy of amateurism that made his and Burbee's brand of insurgentism worthwhile.

I admire Laney, **despite** his gay-bashing and in part (at a weird angle) I admire that too, not for bashing gays but for demonstrating that he was out there, clay feet and all, reacting with the unvarnished honesty of the true critic, no matter what it said about him, and when he stomped on the earth, the echoes sounded and resounded through fandom, and indeed we're still hearing some of them nearly 40 years after his death. Besides ASI, Laney's best post-Insurgency piece was "Syllabus for a Fanzine" in one of the Insurgent issues of **Spacewarp**. And what was that, in good part, if not advocacy of "amateurism" over "professionalism".

There's plenty of good advice on how to get people to contribute to your fanzine, but a large part of it is devoted to the logical outgrowth of acting on what everyone knew but did not want to admit—namely, there are these things called "fanzines" and these other things called "prozines" and the two are **NOT** the same thing! That seems to me to've been the thrust of many of the points he made there but certainly one such which stands out is where he pointed out that fans are mostly going to receive your fanzine through the mails and not by walking down to their neighborhood news stand to browse over your and other peoples' fanzines, deciding which ones they will purchase and which they will reject. Thus, there's no point in putting a price on the front cover, or a listing of the authors featured inside for that matter. There is no sense in not recognizing the existence of other fanzines, there is none in thinking of fanzines as "rivals"—either for egoboo or subscription dollars—both of which were

unnecessary "holdovers" from trying to pretend that fanzines were prozines.

And then, of course, there's the Willis I cited. Willis, who positively disliked Laney—but admired Burbee. Willis, who saw the need to synthesize a middle ground. Laney was the first to advocate amateurism but Willis was aware of what it really was. Laney, mind, wasn't **totally** mistaken in his notion that "amateurism" was a step back from totally serious pomposity, but Willis locks it in by providing its actual definition and winds up giving one of the most profound explanations of "why" we are fans that exists in the history of our microcosm. I don't have my **Warhoon** handy, and I only quasi-quoted some of it—but look it up. It should stand out because it cites, a paragraph or so into the piece, a plaque given by the Lunarians to some sf author, which is all in caps and has "centered" lines.

Curse your cleverness, **rich!** You've backed me into a rhetorical corner in which I must disagree with, and even refute, the ideal fan, **Walter A. Willis**.

You're welcome to introduce a brownian variation to my Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory. It's the same thing as you, Ted and I each offering interpretations of the orthodox Numbered Fandoms Theory. After all, even **Speer** and **Silverberg** don't entirely agree.

Although each of the philosophies in my scheme is independent, there are overlapping tenets. Trufannishness and Insurgentism both take fandom as an end in itself, not a stepping stone or conduit, so they share a belief in the worth of amateur effort.

Similarly, both Insurgents and Trufans favor reprints. Insurgents like reprints because they hold the standards of the past up to current fandom for instructive comparison. Trufans like them because reprints contribute to the myth-making process and are entertaining. They reach the same conclusion — Reprints **\*Good\*** — from difference premises.

And remember, no fan is a pure expression of any one philosophy. Each of us encompasses in ourselves elements of some, or even all, of them. Thus **Willis** sometimes takes an Insurgent stance, and Laney once wrote an article ("Syllabus for a Fanzine Editor") designed to help neos.

Culture reigned supreme this Sunday. **Ben Wilson** and **Tom Springer** came over in mid-afternoon to join our Culture marathon. World

Championship Wrestling, the Ted Turner promotion, scheduled a pay-per-view card to coincide with the annual biker rally in Sturgis, SD. Since WCW has a two-hour Saturday afternoon show on TBS, they decided to hold it live in Sturgis, too.

The company made this mat marathon especially enjoyable. Watching the latest permutations of the current plotlines unfold in the ring to the accompaniment of revving hogs created a unique atmosphere.

My only disappointment is that none of the cycle guys jumped into the ring. Who can forget the Hells Angel interrupting the MC at Woodstock? I thought something like that would add spontaneous gusto. Ah well, maybe next year.

**8/10. Shelby Vick** had this to say:

"Fix it!" I said to the computer tech, a mixture of pleading, insistence, and impatience in my voice.

"What's wrong with it?" the tech asked, taking the computer from my trembling hands.

"IT DOESN'T WORK!" I said. I didn't exactly shout but my voice was strained and tense. "Fix it!" I said (quite reasonably, considering the urgency of the situation).

He picked up his diagnostic pad. "What were the symptoms, Shelby?" he asked. (We had gotten on first name terms when he was setting my computer up originally. His name is Ziggy.)

"It...doesn't...work!" I repeated, thru clenched teeth. What was wrong with him, anyway? How many times did I have to tell him?

"I understand that," he said, patiently. "What happens when you turn it on? ...It does turn on, does it not?" he added.

So I told him about loading the game and getting nowhere. I told him about trying WordPerfect and getting error messages.

"There!" he exclaimed, with the enthusiasm of Watson discovering a clue.

"What did the error messages say?"

"They just told me there was an error," I replied, trying to remain calm. "It didn't work! Then I tried to get On Line — and I couldn't!" I tried not to show tears. "I couldn't get On Line! Error messages!"

I bit my lip, trying to avoid breaking down and groveling at his feet. "Fix it! Please!"

"What did the error messages —" Seeing the look on my face, he stopped.

"Just leave it with us, Shelby. We'll fix it." I shook his hand gratefully, and made my departure.

I was elated when, shortly after lunch, they

called to say everything was all right; I could pick my computer up at any time. I felt like a new father told that he could pick up his infant son from the hospital.

Now, my employer would have gladly gone along with a new father, but I feared I had already come close to stretching his discretion taking off to turn my computer in.

I did take off from work fifteen minutes early, however.

At home, I plugged all the wires into their respective holes and turned on my computer. As advised, it worked! ...Until I tried to get On Line. This time I noted the error message. "The computer you were dialing has disconnected you."

**Disconnected???**

I called my server and got a recorded message inviting me to leave my phone number. I didn't want a recording — I wanted a **person**. I noted the time. Good! Computrends, where Ziggy reigned, was still open.

"Bring it back in tomorrow, Shelby," he said.

"But I'm **off line!**"

"You have fifteen free hours on Microsoft," he said. "Try getting On Line with them."

Ah, such an admirable man! He had an answer for everything!

Quickly, I signed on to Microsoft and sent off urgent messages to **Arnie, rich** and **Chuch**. (I should explain that I had been having continual problems getting thru to **Chuch**; I kept getting "Undeliverable" messages, and "Cannot locate Compulink.uk.co", and such. I tried everything, including the "Cc" setting for copies being sent. I bombarded him with yards of \*scintillating\* [thanks, Chuch] prose, not only in duplicate, but triplicate and quadruplicate. Multipuplicate. Chuch's box must have been running over with stuff from me. (He was electronically Vicktimized.)

I was Back On Line! It was a real heady feeling...but what about the messages I was getting to beaches.net???

The next day, I was again there when they opened.

"Just take a couple of minutes, Shelby," Ziggy transformed me. "You might as well wait."

It's a good thing I have a tolerant employer. A full half hour later, Ziggy (sweating, by now) said, "There! NOW you're ready."

And I was. And I am.

**8/11. Steve Davies** and **Alyson Scott**, who sent me the second **Plokta** are on the **VFD** mailing list this issue. (They already get **Wild Heirs**. If my

quaint fannish ways don't immediately alienate them, I hope they'll enjoy this zine's more personal approach.

I certainly enjoy **Plokta**. The newsletter layout is unexpected, and plays against the lightly humorous content, but the package is quite attractive. It reminds me of some of the better eg fanzines which are styled this way, except that **Plokta** has much better illustrations. It also resembles eg fanzines in its use of photos, though again, **Plokta's** result is better.

The most interesting item to me in this altogether entertaining issue is that **Steve Davies** preferred a rented Gestetner to a free copier for his Intersection newsletter chores. This instantly earns respect for his fortitude, if not his intelligence, because it shows that he is a real fan and not some effete copyshop boy.

I can almost see **Steve** hunched over the rumbling Gestetner, sweat dripping down his face and staining his shirt. He beams at the pages shooting out of the machine.

I'm also impressed with the way he weathered the crisis of not having the right computer equipment in place at the start of the con. I was particularly impressed with the way he kept his calm when he discovered that the rental 486 with windows didn't have the proper control device. If I have no mouse, I must scream.

**8/12. Rich brown** injects this note of levity:

*The TONER flyer that accompanied **Wild Heirs 15** and **15.5** lists the dates of the convention as **JULY 23-26**. I considered sticking my tongue firmly in cheek and perhaps causing severe apoplexy by pretending that I believed this and was canceling out my reservations, since "obviously" I got the dates mixed up somehow . . . but decided not because I might be believed.*

*As I'm sure you are aware, July 23-26 were actually the dates of the meeting of the SBOF executive committee, and **Tom** will no doubt be censured for confusing the two. The Society of Boring Old Farts (a.k.a. the Secret Bastards of Fandom) is the true power elite of fandom, as I have long since revealed, and we do not take lightly to \*jokes\* like Mr. **Springer's**, which might have brought scores of fans to attend one of our secretive closed-door elitist meetings (in which, as I've revealed elsewhere, we plot the course of fandom's future, ensure that our policies are followed and, whenever necessary, arrange to run undesirables out of fandom on a rail).*

*Do inform **Tom** that I don't believe him to be in much danger — it is, after all, a first offense, and the flyer was distributed late enough in July that no one rescheduled their plans to attend Toner and thus it did not result in any of fandom's Wrong Thinkers and Troublemakers making discoveries about SMOF activities.*

*What is surprising here is that this little ploy \*reveals\* **Tom** to be a member of SBOF—unless it was \*purely\* an accident. I admit that I am unsure about this, as **Tom** does not strike me as being quite, ah, "jaded" enough, but WDIK? Alternatively, the lettering guide work \*might\* have been done by someone else. In which case it is I, and not **Tom**, who is Giving Away Too Much . . .*

I want to appeal to all SBOF members on the **VFD** list — and how could anyone be a member without getting **VFD**? — to be lenient with **rich**. As you all know, he missed the last two meetings, so his ignorance of the true situation is understandable.

**8/13.** A frequently broadcast commercial for the local cable company, Prime Cable, worries me. It shows a couple in bed looking at their bedroom TV set.

The announcer says: "When you're in front of the set, we're behind it!" What worries me is the company's incessantly quoted motto is: "You can see it all from here."

Has 1984 come at last?

Speaking of Aldus Huxley's dystopian novel, the Republicans are meeting in San Diego in the most carefully scripted event since last year's Wrestlemania. Adding a ludicrous touch to a gathering that does not seem to require additional gilding are the commercials for the telecast.

The traditional Republican disrespect for the "average American" comes to the fore in its "unconventional convention" ads. Promises of "total access" conjure up images of *Current Affair* and *Entertainment Tonight*.

**8/14. Bill Kunkel, Tom Springer and Ben Wilson** came over for the baseball league tonight. Several members couldn't make the session. That sparked a hurried flurry of phonecalls from here to Seattle to tell **Alan Rosenthal** and **Andy Hooper** that they weren't going to get to play.

**8/15.** I watched a documentary about Qin, first sovereign emperor of China, the one who ordered

the building of the Great Wall. After 25 years of struggle to conquer the warring states, Qin put together an empire.

Qin believed that his success gave immunity from criticism. He found the scholars particularly noxious. He not only burned as much writing as he could lay hands on, but he torched over 400 historians as a warning to the others. In fact, Qin declared history at an end.

This impulse is alive and well in the modern world, including fandom. The dread phrase, "Oh, that happened before I was born," with its condescending implication that anything before their nativity could not be important, is not unknown in our hobby.

I enjoy history because it helps me understand the past, and its relationship to the present. I've always enjoyed figuring out the "why" of things. My study of fanhistory is a search for insight.

Others may not share this motivation, but another reason is relevant to every fanzine fan. Fandom is a subculture. Its subcultural context distinguishes it from other subcultures and from the big culture.

The study of fanhistory helps fans learn about the subcultural context that underlies everything we do as fans. Therefore, a better knowledge of fanhistory promotes awareness of the context.

**Shelby Vick** writes:

*I'm on to your tricks, Arnie —*

*"Vegas Fan Diary" indeed! You just wanted to put out a zine where "self-referential" couldn't stick! I mean, no one could say such a thing about a Diary, since such an item is only authentic if it is self-referential.*

You'd think that would be the case, wouldn't you? And yet...

*...And, I'll have to hand it to you, you really make it work.*

*Collating. (Yes, I'm now writing a LOC to VFD about WH, but that's how the fan cookie crumbles. Besides, you brought it up.) Haven't you folks ever heard of collating racks? Just insert your pages in order, then slip out the pages in perfect order. (Suzanne reminded me you need some Tacky Finger stuff to make it easier; avoids a lot of finger licking. Of course, if you've been eating fried chicken...) We had collating racks way, way back in the days of Vick Mimeograph Service.*

*Just a simple, collapsible and lightweight rack. Need to find one. Check your nearest Office Depot. Or some-such.*

You're the second person to suggest collating racks, so **Joyce** and I are actively shopping for them. Do you recommend a sorter with vertical or horizontal shelves? I saw a gargantuan vertical sorter set-up at Corflu in Los Angeles, but I imagine there are benefits to an arrangements of horizontal slots, too.

*Got to finance Cora to a blackjack game. We'd even let her keep ten ...twenty-five...heck, **fifty** percent of the take.*

*Shucks, we'll keep TEN percent and still beat my luck (absence of skill?) at blackjack.*

*The Poconos sound great for a Corflu, but sounds like the Vegrants would have to do all the work. If you're going All Out like that, why not bring all the crew to The World's Most Beautiful Beaches at Panama City and hold one here? I'd even agree to chair the committee and do a little work myself. **Suzanne** volunteered to write the Do's and Don'ts about the beach. "After years of tourist watching," says she, "I know a lot."*

Panama City would be an appealing site for Corflu, if we could really put together a big enough group to handle the event itself. I wouldn't want to have Las Vegas fandom hog the work, though. There's plenty for everyone.

I'm a little nervous about **Suzanne's** do's and don't's. Knowing fanzine fans, there'd be a lot of sentiment for trying all the don't before giving the do's a shot.

*Sounds like **Karla** had her own fantasy commune created internally with no reference to reality. Like catching a train to go somewhere, positive it would take you to Utopia, with no regard to the actual destination.*

**8/16.** A bunch of **Wild Heirs** ago, **Ben Indick** wondered what we Vegrants find to do with each other that causes us to spend so much time together. He drew on his only experience, a day with a sercon collector, and asked how we could endure non-stop STF and Nonsense. The answer is that fandom provides the context, but we're all pretty good friends.

**Tom Springer** and **Tammy Funk** came over about 7:00 for a pleasant, if not heavily fannish, evening. The fannish part consisted of finalizing a

few Toner details and planning the 17th **Wild Heirs**, the Toner Memories issue. We're going to try to publish by mid-September so we can share the pre-worldcon bash with absent friends.

After a lot of gourmandizing and some, we sat around and talked to the accompaniment of a clutch of new CDs. They seemed to like the three-disc blues box, cullings from the Decca, Chess and Duke labels, and tolerated the two additions to our Jimmy Rodgers collection.

From **Calicat**, somewhere in Panama City:

*Rowr, fsst, fsst, Slugger —*

*You're taking my people away from me for DAYS!!! I'll have to stay in some cat kernel, eating lousy food (not that my people ever seem to get the idea of the food I want, either) while YOU get to scratch whoever is within reach.*

*ROWRRR!*

*CaliCat*

Don't worry, I'll make them and their tasty friends pay. — **Slugger**

**8/17.** Fans thrive on adversity. Matter of fact, they love that put-upon, junior martyr feeling. Fanzine fans, ever-thirsting to exercise their verbal abilities, exhibit this tendency to a pronounced extent.

In fact, I advise future hosts of Ditto or Corflu to schedule one major disaster for the first night. There's nothing like having hotel security shut down a party to encourage fans to submerge their egos and pull together.

Hosts who scruple at interrupting a fan party can instead circulate a rumor that attendance is lower than expected and the con committee has over-spent. Will the con break even? Will the chairman lose his or her house? These engender the same spirit, plus they provide a ready topic of conversation when the host isn't in the room.

Preparations for the August Social began badly. Everything took long, because **Joyce** has been ill this week. We got the shopping done and put away, and then I discovered that the printer needed a new toner cartridge before it could print **Vegas All-Stars #59** and the flyer announcing the next Social.

The Iceman cameth. The door bell rang shortly after the Social's 4:30 start. **Tom Springer** strode in, with two, five-pound plastic bags of ice cubes in each hand. I got four more from the back of his Broncho, and his second, two-bag trip made it pos-

sible to fill the tub in the master bedroom with cold beer and soft drinks.

This is a complex engineering project. The ice and cans must be precisely layered to permit an even flow of super-cooled air and ice water. One misplaced cube could result in a potentially serious case of WCS. And when Warm Can Syndrome strikes, can the aggrieved voices of guests be far behind?

With the liquid refreshment situation under control, I ran into my office and set up the Macintosh for the night's oneshot. The quality of these small, locally circulated publications is spotty, but many locals have written their first fanzine contributions for it. While some Vegas never carry their fanzine interest beyond that point, **Vegas All-Stars** has printed the debuts of **Laurie Kunkel**, **Tom Springer**, **Ken Forman**, **BelleAugusta Churchill**, **Woody Bernardi**, **Aileen Forman**, **Ben Wilson**, **John Hardin**, **Raven**, **Tammy Funk**, **David Wittmann** and many others who have not yet attained national visibility.

When I was satisfied with my kick-off contribution, a spiel about Toner anticipation, I went into the living room to find a new couple sitting on one of the couches. "Guess who this is?" **Joyce** said to me.

I looked at them carefully. Attractive, maybe in their late 20s or early 30s. The guy had dark hair and a beard, and the slim woman wore her sandy brown hair in a ponytail.

"Here's a hint," said the woman, as she stood up, turned around, and showed me that her tresses hung to the small of her back.

"You've never met them," **Joyce** said encouragingly. That took a load off my mind. It would have embarrassed me if they'd turned out to be **Rob Hansen** and **Avedon Carol** or some other pair I should recognize on sight.

"You must be **Alison** and **Derek**," I blurted. Everyone smiled. I'd met her on line in an AOL chat room called "Las Vegas." On running her profile and discovering that she's a science fiction fan, I told her about the local fan scene. Although a protracted seize of kidney trouble delayed their

**Illos this time  
by Bill Rotsler  
See you all  
in about 30 days**

first appearance, they'd finally worked up their nerve to actually meet our disreputable lot.

They had to leave in time to use a pair of free Las Vegas Stars tickets, but they seemed to enjoy the conversations. I gave them the most recent **Wild Heirs**, and they evinced some interest. (What they will think when they actually *read* it is in the hands of Ghu...) I think they'll probably come back another time or two, minimum, and by that point our flickery charm will have done its work.

Speaking of our flickery charm, **Aileen Forman** threw in the towel tonight. She admitted that she is, too, a fanzine fan. She had blurted out the contrary, embellished with a few choice comments about the species, over a year ago. Understanding and sensitive as we are, her Vegrant buddies have never let her forget it.

I spotted **Aileen** as a fanzine fan the first time I met her. I think it's something like the way the Highlander spots humans who are due to attain immortality.

How could someone so well-spoken, and with writing interests, resist the paper party? Sure enough, **Aileen** now edits the monthly SNAFFU newsletter **Situation Normal**, writes at least one article for every **Wild Heirs** and — this is the true mark of her capitulation — is about to spring the first issue of a new personalzine on the rest of us.

"OK, guys," I said to the Vegrants seated around the buffet in the dining room. "Now that **Aileen** has admitted that she's a fanzine fan," I think we could all stop referring to it."

"That would be very nice," she said.

"From now on, no more references to how **Aileen** isn't a fanzine fan," I reiterated. "From now on, we're gonna talk about how she's a bitch."

I think **Aileen** likes this change. She seemed almost playful as she smashed me across the forehead with her truncheon.

Several fans brought up net computers, which got a lot of TV coverage this weekend. One story, on *CNET Central*, positioned the ceo of one of the net computer manufacturers as a serious rival to Bill Gates. While I understand the basis for the enthusiasm about net-cruising hardware, I don't think the World's Wealthiest Mortal needs to fear for his fortune.

The idea behind the NCs is that home computers haven't won over lower middle and working class consumers. Despite the dramatic increase in market penetration in this decade, rich folks still buy most of the machines.

Some companies feel that Internet mania creates a niche for a cheaper, less powerful machine. The NCs have limited RAM and ROM and a token memory storage capacity. They can run the info highway and not much more.

A couple of video game companies, Bandai and Sega, have already announced machines, as have several computer companies. The Sega unit connects to the Saturn and offers little more than point-and-click web browsing. E-mail is possible, but difficult. The user picks one letter at a time from an on-screen keyboard, which discourages any communication longer than a telegram.

The Bandai unit, based on the Apple Pippin, is linked to a network service called "@world." The keyboard is atrociously cramped and tiny, but the system delivers pretty much what it promises in terms of Internet access. The other NCs, priced at about \$600, look more like conventional PCs.

The potential problem for NCs is that makers of conventional PCs are now readying low-end, but relatively full-featured, PCs to appeal to the under \$1,000 crowd. In a recent speech, Bill Gates called the thousand-buck computer an achievable reality. Of course, it's easy for a software guy to say that, but I expect to see companies that have had success with \$1200-\$1500 machines to streamline them to fit under that \$1000 cap.

**8/18. Tammy and Joyce** went to a jewelry and antique show today. When **Tammy** came over to get **Joyce**, she dropped off **Tom**. The two of us passed a couple of low-key hours, mostly talking about Toner and baseball, the Vegrants' twin obsessions at the moment.

Here comes that **Calicat** again!

**Slugger** —

*I'm getting better at this e-mail business — would do more, if this man in the house would stay off the computer! In fact, if they'd just leave me at home instead of putting me in a cat kennel, I could send you all kinds of mail! I could feed myself; I've seen Him open those fliptop cans dozens of times.*

*I wonder about the intelligence of my people; they keep talking about a mouse by the computer, but there's no mouse there. Believe me, I know a mouse when I smell it! They have some kind of toy they play with a lot, but they have never tried to kill it. Bet they wouldn't even know how!*

*Sorry I sent my last letter to the Man; I really knew better. But forgive me; I'm still learning.*

## **CaliCat**

PS

—So maybe I don't know as much about this as I thought. My missive didn't hit target. Trying again, with a copy to the Man.

Bad news, the Mouse near the computer tastes terrible! I'm going back to ankles.

**Slugger.**

**Richard Brandt sez:**

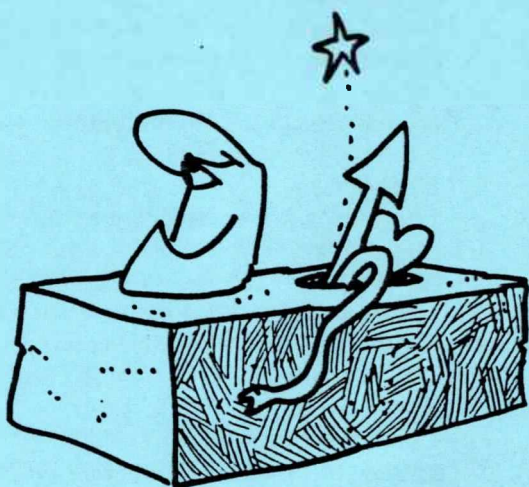
*Thanks for VFD #2. (Horrid confession: I cannot locate VFD #1 or the zine that came in the same envelope. No doubt it lies next to the Lee Jacobs zine I was looking for to take to L.A.)*

*I hope your LeBaron hasn't been giving you any more trouble, noting here that it's gone into the shop twice in two days....*

No, no more trouble. We traded it in and bought a Chrysler Cirrus, candy apple red.

*Well that Westercon thing is all behind us now, and rest assured Michelle and I are no worse for wear. If anything, we'll have stories to dine out on for decades. (Now on to Ditto in October...)*

*I hope you enjoyed your visit and felt suitably*



## **THE GOOD & BAD REMEMBERED**

accoladed. I'm particularly perturbed over any seeming slight of **Joyce**. If anything, I'd think the Austin branch of ConDiablo, naughty smofs that they are, would be impressed that **Joyce** had co-chaired a Worldcon. Whereas, you, **Arnie**, are, how shall we say, naught but a footnote, an afterthought in the history of Worldcon running...

In my ransackings I uncovered a daily newsletter from the 1969 Westercon. "Westercon Largest Yet—650 in attendance!" it declares.

Oh, look on my works ye mighty, and despair!

I had a great time at the Westercon, though it's good that I set small store by institutionalized accolades. There weren't even any groupies.

**8/19. Tom** came over and finished up the letter column. It's likely that I won't start running **WH** until after Toner. I didn't want to pass out copies at the con, anyway, and I doubt I'll have the time for work and Toner and copying 225 copies of a 46-page fanzine.

**Joyce** went to the cardiologist. Her gp originally diagnosed her intermittent chest pains as heart-burn, but a dubious ekg led to the appointment with the specialist.

She came home with a date for further tests and some nitroglycerin patches. Her symptoms grew worse during the evening. Weakness, body aches, nausea... **Joyce** had a bad night. And since I can't sleep when she's restless and ill, I'm writing more **VFD** entries than is probably good for either me or fandom.

**Cora Burbee** called. She is in town for a poker tournament. She arrived Sunday and will be gone by Wednesday, thus falling between the Social and Toner. We made tentative plans to get together the next day, but I fear **Joyce's** state may prevent this.

I dropped a note to **Shelby Vick** with an idea. Here's what he said: **ShelVy** wrote:

*"...you as assistant editor of 'D?' you ask?*

*Try to go on without me! Why do you **THINK** I've been deluging you with all those letters? Why do you think CalCat has been trying to*



butter up *Sluggo* (but don't let *Sluggo* know.) (And she says she would love a bit of BNF; has to be better than what WE feed her!) As I said, I'm your Webitor. Distantly related to *Spidey*, says *Suzanne*.

Welcome aboard, **SheIVy**! Your copious contributions promise relief from uninterrupted me. **Victor Gonzalez** will thank you... though it may raise worries about the status of assistant fanzine editors everywhere.

*Suzanne* says she has a couple of projects she could work on if I'd ever turn loose the computer and let her get it written. But I should tell you — she gets lots of time on the machine, and plays *Solitaire*! (And, I must confess, I play *Hearts*.)

Besides, **Suzanne** adds, she doesn't yet know how to *Word Process*. **Arnie**, let her tell you about her projects this weekend, and then I'll teach her how to *Process*. ...Words, that is.

One of them concerns how she and *Tucker* first met, when she was a mere slip of a girl, barely thirteen, and the vile things he did. I think *Tucker* would love the expose, but let *Suzanne* tell you all about it when we get there.

Strangely enough, though we spent a lot of time together at *Toner*, **Suzanne** never did discuss her projects. I'm looking forward to reading, and perhaps printing, them.

**8/20.** **Joyce** felt better this morning. She put on another nitroglycerin patch — and abruptly got much worse.

"How much does one of those patches cost?" I asked as we sat together on the couch.

"About a dollar."

"Take off the one you're wearing," I told her. "If the doctor tells you to resume using them, we're not going to lose much."

She seemed a little reluctant to discontinue the prescribed regimen, but she did it, anyway. Then she went to throw up about eighty-six times in the next 10 hours.

When the doctor's office — not the man himself, mind you — called, the nurse told **Joyce** to remove the patch and go back to the nitro pills.

Not that she needed the pills for the next couple of days while the patch overdose washed out of her system. **Joyce** has always been sensitive to drugs, and the patch simply delivered much too much nitroglycerin. I'm sure they can diagnose and treat her medical problems if the cures don't finish her off.

**Richard Brandt** called, asking for the *Corflu Vegas* mailing list. Unfortunately **Ross Chamberlain**, who knows its whereabouts, is training for a telephone sales job this week and isn't here to retrieve it. Well, we can take care of this the day before *Toner*.

**8/21. Michelle Lyons** — what a sweet person! I guess **Richard** told her about **Joyce's** illness, because she called this morning. I assured her that **Joyce** still has some kick left in her, and that we didn't need to cancel Friday's party. It wasn't until I pointed out that she could help when she arrives in mid-afternoon that she relented in her concern.

**Tom** arrived for a pre-league dinner. We ordered instead of going out, so we could review last-minute *Toner* stuff. **Ben Wilson** bicycled over early, too, so we got a lot accomplished before the other managers showed up. I printed the arrival time data I'd compiled for some of the out-of-town-ers, and **Tom** allocated the trips to *Vegrants* who'd volunteered.

"I like to pick up people at the airport," **Ken Forman** explained later in the evening. "You get 25-30 minutes of quality conversation with whomever you've got in the car." The *Mainspring's* right; some of the best fannish bullfests I've had have been with a carload of fans on the way back from the airport.

Ferrying people to the airport has its points, too. I like arrivals better than departures, though, because there's no sadness of impending separation.

**8/22.** Good to find a letter from **Chuch Harris** in the mail queue this morning. He gracefully declined my exhortation to join *FAPA*, which could certainly use his talent.

**Chuch** made it extremely hard to argue with his excuse. **Chuch** said he feared joining an *apa* because it would distract him from other important fanac, like returning to **Wild Heirs** on a regular basis.

After hauling a heaping cart of groceries home from *Smith's*, I decided to take a nap. I'd started work even earlier than usual, and I had a hunch I'd be up extra-late.

I awoke to find **Robert Lichtman** had arrived. He fed **Joyce's** mania for tiny fanzines by giving her one with postage stamp-sized pages by one-time Virginia fan **Phil Walker**.

It wasn't long before we'd embarked on the kind of wide-ranging conversation that makes hanging out with **Robert** so much fun.

We tried to correlate recent polls on the most affordable and most livable US cities. Undaunted by not having either survey at hand for reference, we speculated freely about overlap between the most affordable and least livable home towns. Doesn't it figure that hell on earth would be cheap? **Robert** didn't succeed in wooing us from the desert to the lush green of North California, nor could we entice him to relocate in glitter gulch.

**Robert** still isn't on the Internet, but he's been exploring. "It's boring," he said. He feels traffic may be too heavy on the info highway. The bad overwhelms the good.

Sometimes, electronic fanac is like being at a football stadium. The 50 people with something to say are scattered through the crowd of 50,000, which is dancing the Macarena. All 50 fans speak whenever they please, often overlapping each other, which would make a difference if the crowd wasn't performing hand gestures in unison to thunderous music.

I'd hate to lose e-mail, upload/download and favorite web sites ([www.escapade.com](http://www.escapade.com)), but it's hard to argue with the assertion that the Internet generates too much *stuff*. Two other fans have lamented to me, via e-mail, that they spend hours wading through [rec.arts.sf.fandom](http://rec.arts.sf.fandom) and e-mail from fannish listservs. Those who enjoy this milieu should go right ahead, but it doesn't thrill me as much as fanzines, or small fanzine fan cons.

**Tom** and **Tammy** met the three of us at the Celebrity Deli for dinner. It's not **Robert**'s cherished Cantor's, but they still make a damnfine Arnie's Special (corned beef [extra lean], pastrami [extra lean] and turkey on rye).

Back at Toner Hall, we shared a judicial, if not judicious, interlude which somehow led **Joyce** to announce her impending death. (She is not about to die so far as we know.)

**Joyce** was unnervingly cheerful as she planned her own send-off. "It's scheduled for Toner," she explained. "Fans are complaining about weddings at cons. Fan weddings are played-out. Maybe this will start a new trend!"

**Joyce** laid it out for us. The death will occur at the con itself as part of the opening ceremony. This will give me the whole weekend to, as **Joyce** so delicately put it, "pick out your next wife." Then I could introduce my new bride at the con-ending funeral on Monday.

She went on to list her requirements for the next Mrs. Katz. The most important is that I have to marry a fan. "No one else will put up with you," she advised.

"Can I have a fan artist?" I asked. Look, as long as we're setting parameters...

**Tom** had an idea. "We'll scatter your ashes at the con!" he proposed.

"I don't want to be cremated," **Joyce** said.

"So we'll scatter your body parts," replied the ever-helpful **Springer**. It's because of thinking like that that the Vegrants put him in charge of Toner.

**8/23-25. Tom, Ben Tammy and Cathi** made Toner an unforgettably pleasant experience for the 50 or so fans who partied through the weekend before the worldcon.

The Fab Four scheduled to begin Friday evening with a kick-off party at Toner Hall and end after the Chicago Science Fiction League meeting on Monday night. Out-of-town arrivals and departures dictated otherwise. Toner really began with several small parties on Thursday and climaxed at the pizza party the following Wednesday night.

That's a lot of in-person fanac for a sometimes bumbling desert tribe. The Las Vegas fandom we met in 1991 wouldn't have stayed the course. Five years ago, Las Vegas fans commonly believed that seeing fans for three straight days required a week or two of recuperation.

Now they sail through a week like this and loudly wish it would continue. Envy of **Tom, Ken** and **Aileen** ran high, stoked by tales of **Gerl Sullivan**'s wonderful LACon III fan lounge.

My biggest fear about Toner was everyone's high expectations. Nothing strangles spontaneity like pre-planned fun. And pre-planned Significant Fannish fun, at that!

Over-anticipation ruins things. A writer friend became so wrapped up in what Future Ages would say that he couldn't write a rent-paying sentence in the here and now.

Toner could've been an ossified zombie-fest. Thanks to the Fab Four, and their winning ways, it proved to be one of my favorite fan events. Toner featured an unusual mix of people and an ambiance refreshingly different from either Corflu Vegas or the last two Silvercons.

Partying was the main activity, the light program ignited many conversations on fanhistory and related questions. TAFF made about \$250 in its auction, Toner about the same and DUFF (which had less to sell) about \$50. The prices weren't up to usual Vegas expectations, so I encouraged

**Martin** to hold the best stuff for LACon. Even so, I landed a couple of faunched-for items, including *Fancylopedia II* and a run of **Pulp**.

9/26. I've never attended a convention that ended more distinctively than Toner. Usually, **Joyce** and I slip away in the night after brief, agonizing good-byes. **Ted White's** "See you in the fanzines" impressed me so much when he said it to me at the Los Angeles Corflu that I've used it ever since.

Except with **rich brown**. To him I say, "See you in the fanzines — or on the Internet." I see lots of people on the Internet, but I don't say it to other electronic correspondents. Maybe it's because **rich** knows the depth of my skepticism about the infotainment highway.

Toner has been slowly drifting away. Fans are still in town, spending the pre-worldcon days here instead of LA, so we're missing a lively social day in and around the Four Queens. A few, including **Martin** and **Helena Tudor**, went to Hoover Dam, and a party led by **Geri** and **Robert** chose the high culture option, a tour of the Pez Museum.

I wouldn't have minded either trip, but I returned to work instead. We got up at 6:30, checked out of our room at The Four Queens and went home while Toner slept the impenetrable sleep of the sated.

Still wired from the con, I started work immediately to insure an early quitting time. Things went so well that we had time to break for lunch at the Rocky Cola Cafe with **Robert**, who teased us about his (and **Geri's**) impending trip to Cantor's and the Diamond Bakery.

I agree with his opinion of Cantor's, surely the best deli West of the Hudson River, so my laugh held a trace of envy. No one equals **Robert's** devotion to the LA landmark, but I've gone out of my way to eat there a couple of times. If you can't find **Robert** in the fan lounge at LACon III, you might want to check that little table in the corner.

**Joyce** needed a restorative nap after she finished, but we still reached the consuite by 4:30. **Ken, Woody, Don, Ben and Cathi, Richard and Michelle, Karl, Rotsler, Paul and Cindy Lee, Ron and Raven, and Christina** were talking animatedly when we got there. Must not have been about us, because our arrival didn't stem the burble. When **Tom, rich, Tammy, the Tudors, Perry** and others showed up, the two-room suite sprang to mid-con life.

**Woody** knotted his tie and went off to work at the movie theater complex, and most of the rest piled into the car caravan to the Chicago Science

Fiction League meeting.

When our group — **rich, Richard and Michelle, Joyce** and me — reached the clubhouse, the Pez contingent was waiting. A record attendance of 18 commandeered a chain of tables along two walls and took up the CSFL agenda. It's always the same: we devour as much of the menu as possible and exhort each other to greater efforts in our campaign for just compensation. As the single, authorized science fiction fan club in Chicago, it is only reasonable for groups that sponsor conventions in our area to share the profits with the city's leading fan organization. It's time for these free-loading wimpyzone leeches to pay up.

This huge CSFL meeting strengthens our resolve. We're the power in the Windy City now, you betcha. Speaking of which, Windycon owes us major cash. Some of our new members will be mighty helpful getting our money, too. **Martin** will write the next round of dunning letters, and **Perry** is planning to sucker the whole lot of them into a winner-take-all Australian Rules Football match.

The party resumed at the Four Queens after dinner. Mellowed by food, and sercon by nature, most of the group relived the counterculture years of the 1960s and early 1970s, while the rest attempted to achieve new highs in inebriation. I liked this balance of fanhistory and contemporary fanning, though I'm not sure it's what the disparagers of fanzine fandom's timebinding tendencies have in mind.

The cumulative effects of high voltage fanning got to **Joyce** about 8:30. We said "good nights" and went to the valet desk to retrieve our car. First they brought out **Ben and Cathi's** ride. We reminded the valet that we had a red Chrysler Cirrus. He came back with **Tom** and **Tammy's** big white Broncho. The third try was the charm, and we went home and to bed.

8/27. I finally ran off **Vegas Fan Diary** today, and **Marcy** will pick up envelopes later today. **Robert** glided into my office, saw the 10 piles of **VFD #3** pages and immediately collated the first copy for himself. I noticed that the fastidious **Mr. L** frowned at the sheet on top of the 17/18 stack and took the second one.

"Didn't like that one, eh?" I said.

"The collator's privilege," he said as he jogged the 10 sheets to perfect congruence. Then he stapled it with one of the three manual staplers on the corner of my desk. He selected the medium-sized one and pumped three staples into his copy. Not one, or even two. Three.

**Robert Lichtman** is a careful man.

Today we go primitive. Something's wrong with the cable box, and the service can't repair it until tomorrow. Fortunately, we have a marvelously pleasant house guest whose entertainment value easily eclipses *Murphy Brown* reruns. We also have a pile of still-unwatched cassettes and a zillion electronic games to tide us over.

We shall play the role of Video Martyrs.

The cable company will give us a credit slip.

All will be well.

A note from **Shelby**, home in Florida after Toner:

*Problems, Arnie —*

*Got back safely; not that. BUT — I lost all the e-mail addresses I had collected! I remember Bill Kunkel's — potshotk@aol.com, isn't it? — but I lost Ray & Marcy's and Geri Sullivan's and (I think) Dor Fitch's. Does Art Widner have one? I spoke with him a lot. Does Ken or Tom have one?*

*The only thing other than that which we lost was a lot of sleep. Tell Tom we had a w-o-n-d-e-r-f-u-l time. (You and Joyce deserve much of the credit and thanks, too.)*

*Suzanne says she will divorce me if I don't successfully teach her to write on my computer. Not e-mail; she's improving on that — just WRITE.*

*Pleading illness, I have taken the afternoon off. True illness is a state of mind, and that's my trouble; my mind is still in Vegas.*

**Shelby** has long since received a partial list of addresses from me, but some of you may want his so you can bombard him with electronic fan piffle. It is: shelvy@beaches.net

Here also is a note from **Calicat**:

**Slugger** —

I hope my people go to visit you again *Real Soon Now*. I was *badly* mistaken about the kennel — they *LOVED* me there! I got so much attention and affection (and GOOD food!) that I want to go back!

Love and affectionate licks,  
**CaliCat**

Glad to hear you have control over your people again. I have embarked on a reign of feline terror to punish them for going to a whole bunch of Strange Rooms and not taking me. I hear they

have tuna there and lots of ankles. — **Slugger**

**Robert** and **Gerl** came to Toner Hall after their Japanese dinner. It reminded me of **Walt Willis'** Impeccable Taste in sending me directly to **Gerl** when I came back to fandom. There's something about this **Sullivan** woman that makes people feel good to be around her.

The four of us didn't tackle any burning questions, so there's nothing fandom-shaking to recount. We sang the virtues of the fan lounge, reviewed the health of absent friends and discussed the difference between filk and Minneapolis music.

**8/28**. "Seven pizzas, that's not too many," I said. Or I would've said if this wasn't the seventh day adventure known as Toner. What I actually *did* say was, "sausage and pepperoni please."

Toner: The Final Party gathered 14 slightly shell-shocked fans: **Ben** and **Cathi**, **Tom** and **Tammy**, **Martin** and **Helena**, **Richard** and **Michelle**, **Ron** and **Raven**, **Ken**, **Karl**, **Marcy**, **Joyce** and me. Now, you may count 15, and so do I, but **Tom** repeatedly assured me that there were 14. Of course, he is one of the 14 slightly shell-shocked fans. Except that he is more than slightly shell-shocked after running his very first convention.

We ordered pizzas, seven of them, from the Bulgarian. He's back in business after a month in the motherland, and he's already back in form.

**Michelle** sidled up to me as we waited for the delivery. "I'm really looking forward to this," she said. She looked up at me with those captivating eyes, now lit by feverish enthusiasm. A little too much enthusiasm for the situation, I thought.

Everyone was hungry. I knew that. For understandable reasons, our six o'clock dinner slipped back to 7:00. Stomachs set for one time were rumbling. Yet a bunch of pizzas didn't explain **Michelle's** excitement.

"Why is that, **Michelle**?" I asked.

"I've never had... Bulgarian pizza," she said through a smile of incandescent happiness.

"It's just *made* by a Bulgarian," I told her. "It's regular pizza."

"It's made with potatoes, right?" she asked, hopefully.

"No, no potatoes," I said. I was sure she was teasing me. Well, pretty sure. "Just tomato and cheese and toppings like pepperoni."

"Oh," she said. "No potatoes." She said it the way a little girl might say "No Santa Claus."

I tried to cheer her up with an explanation of

how we came to order Bulgarian pizza from a place with the delightfully ethnic name "Pay-Less Pizza." After a couple of pizzerias dropped off the bottom of the Katz Rating System, we dug the Pay-Less menu out of the drawer. We ordered despite misgivings and enjoyed the New York-style pies. Six months later, at the end of July 1995, the telephone order-taker told us that Pay-Less was closing for August so that the owner and chef could visit his family in Bulgarian.

She smiled, but the wattage was lower. I think she was really looking forward to the potatoes.

Seven pies *were* "not too many." It works out to half a pizza per person, since **Marcy** had eaten dinner with her family. She nibbled at one wedge.

Toner Hall was nearly empty when the delivery man rang the bell. Almost everyone was outside, enjoying a warm Vegas evening. The boxes barely hit the dining room table when 15 fans pounced like a pack of wild dogs on a trapped rabbit. I might not have gotten my share if I hadn't clipped **Tom** behind his bursitic knee and hit **Brandt** on the back of the head with my newly purchased *Fancylopedia*.

**Marcy** approached my chair at the end of the table nearest the door to the garage. "Do you think we need more pizzas?" she whispered. I looked at the remains of the seven Bulgarian pizzas. Torn boxes and sauce-smearred paper plates covered the entire surface. I counted two pieces, plus the one I'd just taken.

I threw the question open to those still clustered at the table. Our pooled mathematical talent determined that each fan had an inalienable right to three pieces. "I have my third piece right here," I said righteously.

"I had four," said **Tom**.

"I only had two," **Christina** said. She aborted **Tom's** apology with murmurs about the sufficiency of that portion.

I couldn't let matters rest there. To permit an amicable resolution would compromise the idealistic declaration I'd made to **Martin** a half-hour earlier. I'd expressed my heartfelt desire, **Allison Freebairn's Wild Heirs #13** review notwithstanding, that US and UK grow closer together. "Some of the best eras of fandom included close cooperation between the two fandoms," I said. "I'd like to see that again."

"There's a lot of energy coming into British fandom just now," **Martin** observed.

"American fandom needs to tap into that energy," I admitted. I told him about the **WH** outreach. We've added three-dozen UK readers, courtesy of

**Pam Wells**. The results are very heartening so far. We've gained contributors and received some entertaining tradezines.

"There's a lot we can learn from UK fandom," I conceded. "And there's quite a bit you could learn from us." I told **Martin** how funny it was, for someone whose fanning temporarily ended in the mid-1970s, to see that the two fandoms have swapped at least one aspect of their group personalities."

"In the '50s and '60s UK fans slagged American fans as brutish barbarians."

"That's true."

"British fans set the standard for polite behavior," I rhapsodized. "Urbane, well-mannered, well-balanced, mature — that was British fandom."

"Now, it's reversed," he said, before I could.

"In general, yes," I conceded. "And American fans are too nice. We honor the social conventions, while truth still reigns supreme in the UK." We ended by agreeing that both fandoms would also have to make some adjustments to facilitate the *rapprochement*.

"This pizza controversy threatens US-UK fannish solidarity," I said jovially. "Isn't that always the way with those Americans?"

A low buzz of muttered assent.

"When it comes to sharing, American fans think 60-40 is an equal split." A few cheers and scattered applause broke out among the guests. "American scum!" For a moment, I felt like a Leeds fan.

But the Pizza Feud of 1996 never got off the ground. Despite my best efforts as a *tummeler*, everyone decided to have a sidebar and go swimming.

**8/30. Ben** bicycled to Toner Hall about 3:30. He brought with him Chapter II of **Martin Tudor's** TAFF report, the section about Toner. In response to an e-mail inquiry, **Martin** had offered **Wild Heirs** the opening section. When I discovered, during casual conversation with him during his visit, that no one had claimed the second part, I grabbed that one, too.

You'll be able to judge for yourself in **Wild Heirs #17**, but this is definitely one of my better coups. The opening section, which **Martin** distributed at Toner to the crogglement of all, is very good, and I think his Toner report is outstanding. (Yes, it helps that he had a good time, or at least was too polite to say otherwise).

**Ben** read the piece to us. He's not especially known for reading aloud, but I thought **Ben** did an excellent job with the TAFF piece. We'll have to

encourage him to do this more frequently.

Our rambling conversation turned to Toner, and I was somewhat incredulous that **Ben** is rip-raring to mount another one next year. He claims that **Cathi** is semi-eager to preside over the Toner Kitchen again, though how we'll fill the void that **Tammy** will leave if she and **Tom** move to Canada is yet unknown.

We didn't get bogged down in details, of course, but the general idea is another intimate partycon-with-a-dash-of-program for fanzine fans.

8/31. I don't know why I should've expected anything different, but **Gary Farber's** e-mail about the retro Hugos caused me to gnash my teeth. The

note contained the results of just two awards, "Best Fanzine" and "Best Fanwriter," both won by **Forry Ackerman**.

I like **4e** personally, and there is no gainsaying his contributions to fandom in the 1930s and 1940s, but I don't think his 1946 contemporaries would've voted this way. This confirms my feeling that awards voted on by an electorate that has not seen the material are bound to be frustrating.

Thanks again for all the feedback. As you see, I print letters as they arrive, and I'm hoping more will arrive now that it's obvious that they won't languish in the bottom of my desk drawer.

See you in about 30 days!

