

IMPLSION

Implsion #18 is the local monthly fanzine of Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It is produced for the 18th Distribution of Apa V, the Las Vegas apa, which has as this month's theme "Trash & Sleaze." Today is April, 1995.

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

Perhaps it's the nervous excitement of Corflu distracting my attention from weightier topics, like the subject of this month's Apa-V, Trash and Sleaze.

But "trash and sleaze" makes me feel like a man dying of thirst while treading water in the ocean. Here I am, living in the city which many would unhesitatingly call the center of the trash and sleaze universe.

Where else but Las Vegas could one find museum-quality painting of Elvis on velvet or dogs playing poker? You think even the legendary Sodom and Gomorrah had nightlights shaped like giant phalluses? Absolutely not. They had a Lott, but not light like that. And S & G have long been recognized as the benchmarks against which all sleazy and trashy municipalities must measure themselves.

I don't mean to denigrate Sodom and Gomorrah. They were cesspools of trash and sleaze in their day. They are to lurid ostentation what Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell are to professional basketball.

Las Vegas is the Michael Jordan of sleaze. Like Michael, Vegas plays above the rim.

And when alien archeologists excavate southern Nevada, centuries after the last retired person flushes their Social Security check down the

Keno machine's coin slot, what will they find? Imagine their surprise and delight when they discover that little area that has a sphinx diagonally opposite a larger-than-life lion and near a pyramid. Not too far away, they will stumble upon those giant stone statues. Will they assume that Las Vegas was a colony of the ancient Middle East powers?

My favorite Las Vegas sleazoid is Fred, the man who is ready to deal when you are. "If I can finance him," Fred might say to a masked man holding six hostages with an uzi, "and I vill... I can finance you."

Stan the Inferno, our flaming neo, has actually participated in a couple of Fred's commercials. Imagine my surprise at seeing a familiar face inches away from Fred's? I will not soon forget the sight of this jolly fellow, wearing a tux complete with cape, doing his fire magic as Fred promises him a good deal on a used car.

This wasn't the right strategy for Fred. Not only did he flinch at every fireball, according to Stan, but the situation doesn't make Fred sound all *that* generous. If a guy steamed up to you, throwing fire balls, wouldn't you pretty much give him whatever he seemed to want?

Another favorite trash and sleaze attraction on the local airwaves is a half-hour show named something like "The Sports Advisors." It's on a couple of times every weekend on channel 33, and it's also simulcast on Sunday by Prime Ticket.

The format is simple. A moderate sits with four sports betting touts. They go through some possible betting interests on upcoming games, interrupted every 10 seconds or so with with motormouth commercials for one or more of these touts.

The ads hew to a tightly structured format. There is a static screen, with the tout's record and the phone number. The service's owner appears in an inset box and never stops talking until another commercial wrests control of the screen.

Each has an "800" line which dispenses information of possible use to gamblers. The services charge \$10-\$20 for a call, though all of these guys offer free games or even entire calls at intervals to attract new customers.

My favorite tout is Stu Feiner. He favors an oratorical style derived from evangelist preachers, "Crazy Eddie," and Jerry Lewis in the last fifteen minutes of the Cerebral Palsy telethon.

Stu may be the most upbeat man West of the Rockies, if not the northern hemisphere. "This is the greatest weekend of my li-i-i-fffffeeee!" he shrieks, throwing his head back in ecstasy. He does this about three shows out of four, so either Stu is having some great weekends, or he has taken leave of his senses. After watching him for several weeks, I am reasonably sure it is the latter.

It occurs to me that there is a vicarious cast to my recitation of trash and sleaze that might not have been there in My Younger Days. Both of my examples came from The Tube. I think it's because in my real life I associate mostly with people whose idea of trash and sleaze is drapes that don't match the carpeting. •

The Chicago Science Fiction League

Las Vegas Fandom is a happy people, a contented people. We live in the nation's most electrifying (and electrified) cities, we have good weather just almost every day, and there is fanac a-plenty all the time.

John Hardin named Las Vegas the Fandom of Good Cheer. What they called themselves before he had this brainstorm is lost to fanhistory, but it couldn't possibly be as appropriate.

Of course, Las Vegas has its personality clashes, power grabs and fuggheads, just like every large fan community. ((Insert in-group reference that puzzles everyone outside LV and insures that people will take the author to lunch to get the gory details.)) To pretend otherwise surrenders to fantasy, the Shangri-LA attitude Ackerman fostered in Los Angeles in the late 1930s and early 1940s. But day in, day out, Las Vegas Fandom really is pretty much the happy-go-lucky place its fanzines depict.

Yet there are two topics, and only two, which can wipe the smile off the sunniest Vegrant's face: frozen dew and Chicago. I've seen the mood at a Vegas

fan party go from festive to funereal in a nanosecond, caused by nothing more than an offhand comment about "the process of freezing; temperature at or below the freezing point." Even a passing comment about "putting icing on a cake" can start the more sensitive locals twitching and shaking in a most alarming manner.

Vegan reaction to "coldness of manner," bizarre as it may seem, is more readily understandable than the aversion to Chicago. I confess; I have exaggerated. That admission will shock the thousands -- well, dozens -- of fans who believe in the extraordinary accuracy of my accounts. Unlikely as it may seem to these trusting souls, I have slightly stretched the truth in this instance.

All Second City allusions don't cause outbreaks of Twonk's Disease. We admire many things Chicagoan. We cherish the highest opinion of Chi-fans like Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein. We love the episode of *M*A*S*H* in which Hawkeye orders from Adam's Ribs. We even enjoy an occasional deep dish pizza.

No, what drives Vegas fans crazy is the Chicago-spawned world con bid for Las Vegas in 1999. The image-conscious ones worry that these no-nothings will drag Glitter City's reputation in the mud. The earnest ones complain that their names are being used without permission. The fan politicalones mourn the negative effect on our Australian friends'; bid for the same year. And the fannish ones fret that the carpetbaggers will somehow win the bid and bring 6,000 semi-fans to our doorstep.

The mere mention of the ersatz Las Vegas worldcon effort makes even the

most lackadaisical Vegrant froth at the mouth and threaten farfetched schemes of grisly revenge. These stratagems are mostly a way to harmlessly vent anger instead of accumulating it. They don't mean any of those threats, and I don't know where they'd get a wire-guided missile, anyway.

So Las Vegas Fandom bore their disgruntlement in silence. Yet beneath those warm smiles Las Vegrants plotted and planned.

It all came together one fateful Saturday night. We'd had a banner Las Vegrant meeting that afternoon, and many of the fans decided to go out for dinner. This consensus led to a meandering discussion about where, exactly, we ought to go.

Joyce mentioned a little place barely a mile down the Washington Avenue hill. Mounting hunger brought quick agreement, so we piled into several cars and headed for the hot dog emporium.

When they saw the sign on the restaurant, they almost turned back. "Chicago Hotdog?" Ken snorted. "Is this another invasion of our beloved Las Vegas by forces from Chicago?" There were muttered grumbles from several others. The Mainspring had spoken for them all.

"It's the hot dogs that come from there," I assured them. "The owner moved here from California a couple of years ago. I guess he once lived in Illinois, but I don't think there's any connection with the con bid." They eyed the Chicago memorabilia that decorated the restaurant with blatant distrust, but they allowed my words to sooth their agitation.

Mollified, they lined up to enter their orders for the various permutations of hot dogs on the menu. The dozen or so

fans pushed together a bunch of smaller tables and we took over one whole side of the place.

"I know what we ought to do," I told them between bites of one of my kraut dogs. "We ought to form a fan club." My fork dove into the basket of delectable greasy fries like a kingfisher swooping down to snare a fish.

They affected to not have heard me and continued wolfing down those oh-so-good Vienna Beef products. I repeated my comment, boosting the volume slightly to puncture the single-minded absorption of this company of gourmands. "We ought to start a fan club."

I felt this was The Answer. Of course, if you examine the history of Las Vegas Fandom, "we ought to start a fan club" has been The Answer more often than anyone has the right to ask the question. New clubs are as common in Las Vegas Fandom as divorces are in some other fan-centers.

"We don't need another new fan club," Joyce said, her fork dueling mine for an especially long and crispy french fry.

Unexpected resistance! No Vegas fan had ever before turned down an opportunity to found a new fan club. Frankly, I was unprepared for this turn of events. "Ah, but this is not a new fan club," I corrected.

"We just came from a fan club.," she reminded unnecessarily. "Isn't there a law against more than one fan meeting per day?"

I indulged in a brief, victorious smile. True there was either a law against two fan club meetings in one day -- or at least there should be. Yet I didn't think she could prove it.

Yet her quibbling itself was a positive sign. I had her now! "Las Vegrants is

Las Vegrants," I said. I like to start on firm ground. Building on an unassailable foundation of irrefutable tautologies, I can sometimes get two or three steps into la-la land before they realize I've taken leave of my senses. "This is a different kind of fan club."

Joyce looked at me. She shrugged. That meant she was ready to hear my latest crackbrained idea, especially if she could decimate the french fry basket while my mouth was full of words instead of potatoes.

I looked around the table. One by one, the giants of Las Vegas Fandom met my gaze. None of them slowed their inexorable demolition of the heaps of food on the table, but I knew they were ready to listen. Especially the ones who hoped to get a lift home in our LeBaron.

"Our next mission in fandom, as I see it, is to revive the venerable and celebrated organization known as The Chicago Science Fiction League!"

They gasped. I preferred to think it was in awe at the audacity of my plan. Maybe the muffled laughter was significant. Maybe it wasn't.

As they sat there raptly attentive, or perhaps just stunned, I pressed my argument. It began with a fanhistory lesson. "The Chicago Science Fiction League was an important early fan organizations. It was supposed to sponsor of the 1941 Worldcon.

"They didn't."

"Why not?" Tom Springer asked.

"The Chicago Science Fiction League suffered an internal schism shortly after the 1939 NYCon. Midwest fans, including Bob Tucker, formed the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers to put on Chicon I in 1940.

"They never met again," I finished.

"Never?" Ken Forman echo'd.

"Never until today, here in Chicago

Hot Dog," I replied. "We will pick up the fallen, tattered banner of the Chicago Science Fiction League and carry it proudly into the fandom of the 1990s."

"If those wretches can bid for a Las Vegas worldcon from Chicago," Joyce said, "then we can start a Chicago fan club in Las Vegas!"

We can, and we did. By a unanimous vote of those present -- I would have their names at my fingertips if we had thought to elect a secretary prior to this vote -- we constituted ourselves the Chicago Science Fiction League.

We spent the rest of that meeting, and several more, working out a livewire program of activities for the revived Chicago Science Fiction League. Working out a livewire program of activities and scarfing hot dogs. Lotsa hot dogs. Jordan dogs, kraut dogs and dogs that have a bite. Chili dogs. coney dogs and jumbo dogs just right.

"What does this mean for fandom?" Chuch Harris may be thinking at this moment. Considering Chuch's experience with Las Vegas Fandom, his wariness is entirely understandable. We have, successively, drafted him as a columnist for **Folly**, forced him into honorary membership in Las Vegrants and shanghai'd him onto the editorial panel of **Wild Heirs**

As director of the CSFL, I am pleased to assure you all that you have nothing to fear from the revannant organization. Go on with your fanac and be not afraid. We want to become an integral part of modern fandom and regain the lofty station that our fancestors lost through petty personal feuds.

A few matters have cropped up since

while the CSFL was dormant that we feel we need to address. We hope, and expect, that high-minded fans everywhere understand the importance our revitalized group attaches to these long-neglected questions. Events may have slipped past the Chicago Science Fiction League *at the time*, but we're ready to repair our omissions.

The most important, which is why I am mentioning it first, is that there have been a whole bunch of worldcons held on our turf in the last five-plus decades. We are pleased that other, lesser combinations of Chicago fans stepped into the breach and brought the annual event to Chicago a record five times. While we thank these fans, it would be hypocritical not to remind them that the Chicago Science Fiction League is the only Windy City fan organization official blessing by Hugo Gernsback. That's as close as it gets to Divine Right in fandom, bucko.

Hard as it may be for fans in other cities to believe, all of the aforementioned Chicagos were held without our permission. Amazingly, no one bothered to ask.

I don't like to make a fuss, but this cries out for justice. The fair thing, say we of the CSFL, is for the committees of these unsanctioned Chicons to remit part of their proceeds to the group that started the ball rolling. We can figure out the percentages and amounts later, but for now we must insist on the principle. And speaking of principle, I don't see how anyone could object to a modest rate of compound interest on these heretofore unpaid, and therefore delinquent, payments.

Not that the Chicago Science Fiction League's aims are all pecuniary. We are as altruistic and righteous as only a do-

nothing fan club can be. The CSFL has been silent on too many controversies, but that's a thing of the past.

Let's begin with questions on which the sloth of our predecessors as sponsors of the Chicago SF League passed without appropriate comment. For example, we are unalterably against the Shaver Mystery, Miss Science Fiction, the Clean Up Fandom Crusade, GM Carr's attack on Walt Willis, and the Exclusion Act.

Please don't construe the preceding to mean that the CSFL is merely a negative, reactive organization. There are a lot of questions we want to approach in positive, fanac-affirming way. We're in favor of resuming the world science fiction convention after

the end of World War II, non-US consites, Southgate in '58, women in science fiction, and Dan Steffan for TAFF. Actually, I could give you a whole list of things the Chicago Science Fiction League staunchly supports, plus several dozen things we're against, but those who want complete particulars should subscribe to the forthcoming **Chicago Science Fiction League Proclaimer**, the organization's official bulletin.

We're going to get around to that bulletin, destined to be a landmark in the annals of fanhistory very soon, so please watch for it. We'll start just as soon as the guy behind the counter runs out of hotdogs. And those artery-stopping fries.