

Implosion

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

The following is an account of the Fanoclast cross-country trip of 1966 in support of the club's bid for the 1967 worldcon.

The bid was ultimately successful, and became the NYCon 3. The trip went down in fanhistory as The Greater Trek.

On the Road Again

It was a foregone conclusion that the Fanoclasts would make a second crosscountry "trek" to support the NYCon 3 bid. We'd all had fun, gotten a great reception, and picked up lots of backers for the bid.

By early June, we knew it wouldn't be just a rerun of the summer '65 trip. Dave and Cindy Van Arnam wanted to go, as did Andy Porter and Lee Hoffman. Rich Brown wasn't in much of a mood for fanish socializing -- or three weeks with the happy new couple -- but that still left eight fans. The Whites' Greenbriar held a maximum of five, which left non-driver me in a somewhat precarious position. As "cargo", I was in danger of getting replaced by someone able to take the wheel during the long journey.

My parents solved both problems by offering Ted the loan of a '62 Rambler. Unfortunately, my mother's car started showing alarming signs of decay the moment it became the second car in the Fanoclast caravan. They decided to trade in their American Motors lemon at the end of summer, so they were reluctant to spend the money to make the Rambler roadworthy.

Things looked bleak for "The Greater Trek". My folks came to the rescue by generously offering to pay for a rented car. Kinney Rent-a-Car provided a 1966 Rambler with negligible mileage. The Fanoclasts were ready to roll!

Ted decided to drive the Rambler for the first leg of the trip, New York to Cincinnati for the Midwescon. Mike McInerney and I rounded out the crew. Ted gave Van Arnam a lesson on the Greenbriar and concise travel directions ("It's West, Dave!") so that he, Cindy, LeeH, and Andy Porter could take the van.

A restless night on the Whites' couch wasn't the best preparation for the journey, but anticipation wouldn't let me sleep. I'm an easy riser, a guy who greets the morning with a cheery "hello" and a

happy song.

Ted and Robin are not easy risers. Mike and I tried to attain invisibility as fandom's sweethearts clumped and bumped around their apartment, slamming doors and glaring balefully at anything in their paths. Time inched slowly forward in complete silence, except for Mike's and my frightened whispers. I shuddered at the prospect of three weeks as a minor character in this sitcom. I could have kissed Robin when she raised the blinds and thawed out the cold war with a few well-placed smiles.

On the way to Cincinnati, Robin and I got into a discussion of the pitfalls of Jewish Life in America. After the usual hair-raising Hebrew School stories, I told them about a club which Jon White (editor of *Inside/Riverside Quarterly*, before he turned the digent-sized printed fanzine over to Leland Sapiro) and I had founded in a burst of silliness -- Jewfandom. Ted like the motto, "Jew Fandom is True Fandom" so well that I made him an honorary *landsman* somewhere in western Pennsylvania.

Once inducted, Ted wasn't content to huddle in a pew and worship "Ghugalah". He wanted to make Jewfandom a livewire outfit by actually doing something. This was contrary to the original philosophy of Jewfandom. Christians "celebrate" their holidays, while Jews "observe" special occasions. But the ecumenical spirit was running high, and Ted could have dropped me somewhere on the Ohio Turnpike, so I decided not to be dogmatic. With prodding from Ted, I declared Robin "Jewgirl of the Year". She promised to be worthy of the honor.

Lack of sleep ground me down badly by the time we reached the mammoth Midwescon motel. All I wanted was the wipe the road grit off my skin and generally freshen up. I plowed through milling fans, mumbling "hellos" as I doggedly made my way to the room which Mike McInerney, Andy Porter, and I were to share at the con.

One largish guy kept trailing along next to me, asking for a "NYCon 3 in '67" button. Much as I loved the bid, I couldn't make myself say anything more than a terse "Ask Mike, ask Mike."

One wash-up and several deep breaths later, I was again fit company for the rest of the world. I emerged from my room, made a beeline for those milling fans, and found that I had virtually snubbed the one fan whom I most wanted to meet at the Midwescon, Lon Atkins. Just call me the Cary Grant of fandom.

I liked this big, happy Southerner from the first minute. I couldn't get over how unassuming, even self-effacing, Lon was. That he could write and was a demon publisher was obvious from his short-lived genzine *Clarges* and big

SFPazine, *Meliphkafkaz*. But Lon was highly accomplished in a number of other fields, and it took some heavy digging over a prolonged period to coax forth his credentials. For instance, he was a tournament level bridge player and a ranking chessist who gave simultaneous and blindfold chess exhibitions against groups of opponents.

Lon and I talked about two subjects, the general state of TAPS and something potentially sensitive. The issue in TAPS was a young neofan named Steve Barr, whose TAPS debut made my SFPA escapade read like a Dale Carnegie lesson. Lon told me that Steve, much to his credit, had written a letter of apology to the group, and we agreed that mercy was the proper tactic.

The possibly disagreeable subject was Lon's oneshot-itis. This otherwise sensible gentleman could not get together with a couple of fans and a couple of cases of brews without emptying the latter into the former and committing a Drunken Oneshot.

I've read good ones and bad ones, and I say with all affection: Lon's were near the bottom. It pained me to see the best new fan to appear in at least two years exhibit this fatal weakness so regularly.

I told him about an (imaginary) organization called One Shotters Anonymous that offered help for people caught in the dreaded addition to one shot fanzines. "And when you have the urge to publish a one shot," I summed up grandly, "you have a friend, a fellow sufferer. You can call that OA member. He'll come right over. The two of you can get bombed out of your skulls and forget fanzines."

He took it with what I would come to know as his usual good grace and mature perspective. And he did thottle back on the oneshots a bit.

I'd been ogling a nice looking female fan across the room, so I wasn't unhappy when Lon said the kind of one shot he needed now comes in a glass and went to the open bar for a drink. I was downright happy, when the femmefan turned toward me the minute Lon moved away and came toward me arms extended in greeting. That's part of the adventure of not being able to see very well. How else could I have the fun of meeting Cindy Heap (Van Arnam) for the "first time" all over again!

Lon returned with two fans I was pleased to meet for the first time, UK fan George Locke and Baltimore's Ron Bounds. I always thought Ron might have become a major faanish fanzine fan had he lived in any fan center except Baltimore. Even at the height of con bid fever, Ron had good rapport with Fanoclasts. Baltimore fandom was an arid place for anyone more interested in Laney than Lovecraft, so he passed through fandom to other hobbies.

Our group merged with one composed of the Whites and Alexei Panshin. We lucky seven scaled the gastronomic heights of Frisch's Big Boy, and returned to open the NYCon 3 party suite for the evening.

Considering the ready availability of booze in all forms, outrageous behavior was the exception at the Midwescon. We had a doozy of a drunk before the

party even got going strong.

A confan drunkenly roared that the only way to open a bottle was to bang it on the edge of a formica counter. "no," said Ted with infinite gentleness and patience, "that isn't the way to open a bottle." He shook his head emphatically from side to side. "There's an opener in the bathroom."

We walked gingerly at Midwescon. We knew the older, more sf-oriented fans there would lean toward Baltimore or Syracuse, and we didn't want to undermine our shaky position among the folks most likely to be in Cleveland at voting time.

The inebriated confan made a few feeble gestures toward banking the bottle against the counter again, but Ted's soft-spoken words finally penetrated. He nodded and lurched away on some unguessable mission.

He returned about 15 minutes later. Smash! Crash! Tinkle! Ted stepped over the pile of glass splinters on the rug and again he spoke to the disruptive fan as calmly as only someone restraining total fury can speak. The fellow cocked his head to the side in his impression of an attentive attitude, but Ted's message wafted away on alcoholic fumes.

Slowly he turned away from Ted, raised the bottle in his hand, and brought it down on a tray of glasswear. Conceding this vote to our rivals, Ted forcefully conducted him to the door.

In those days, when con-going was less than the science it has become, many didn't arrive at a relaxacon like Midwescon until Saturday morning. See the morning arrivals as they hweel into the parking lot is one of the minor pleasures of being an early riser. My morning encounter wasn't quite a pleasure, but it still held my interest.

I was walking along when I saw Harriet Kolchak, suitcase in hand walk onto the motel grounds. "Are you a fan?" she asked. I have enough trouble recognizing people that I am the last one to throw stones when someone forgets my face.

"Of course!" I replied brightly. I was always polite, especially to women more than three times my age. "Hello, Harriet," I continued. "I guess I haven't seen you since last year's Midwescon." I thought it tactful to provide her with a comfortable excuse.

"That's right, Arnie, I guess you didn't come down for the noncon," she replied, placing me at last. The Noncon was a small annual Philsdelphia event, which I think may have been connected to the PSFS annual open meeting or the like. She looked at me some more. "I'll bet you didn't even recognize me," she taunted.

"That's why I called you 'Harriet'." She changed the subject abruptly. As I was explaining why I would not be a good choice for a roommate for the weekend, George Nims Raybin materialized as if on cue. I knew an exit opportunity when I saw it.

Lon entreated Ron Bounds and me into a singularly disastrous three-handed game of bridge. I protested that that I did not remember more than the rudiments, but Lon wouldn't be budged. He seemed surprised when I proved my claim of ignorance in spectacular fashion.

Ron and Lon finally put me out of my misery and

broke up the card game so we could check out Howard Devore's Midwescon book and magazine table. It was a simpler day, and the Midwescon reckoned one huckster-in-residence was enough. The only logical choice was Big Hearted Howard. Some people feel his nickname is ironic, others believe it's descriptive. I never had any reason to think it wasn't the latter. Howard's fannish roots were in the fabulous Detroit fandom of the 1940s and 1950s, and he maintained a steady, if low, level of activity in addition to his retailing. BHH and Dick Schultz were the only Detroit fanzine fans in the mid-1960s. I knew the taciturn Devore from our mutual membership in SAPS and some nice bibliographic on the history of science fiction awards.

After looking at Howard's wares, I lingered behind when the other two finished their business. I sat quietly in a corner, a rapt listener as Tucker, LeeH, Devore, and Rusty Hevelin raked up sidelights of fanhistory like the Order of Dagon (a secret mid-1940s FAPA political party). What a pity there is no oral history of fandom comparable to baseball's "The Glory of Their Times". Some of the best fannish times I remember involve listening to fans recall the triumphs and vicissitudes of fandom's younger days.

After Lona and I helped Ron Bounds open the Baltimore bidding party, we retreated to the NYCon 3 suite to join festivities there. I'd brought the recently arrived SFPA mailing with me to read on the trip, and seeing it induced Lon to try that group's current sport: rating the members in order of writing ability.

The normally affable Atkins ripped through the SFPA roster like a mad surgeon, slashing reputations right and left. He ranked me about fourth, which satisfied my vanity. Carried on a tide of sudsy euphoria, Lon proclaimed himself the apa's leading writer. I immediately began telling everyone in earshot that Lon Atkins had become "The Burbee of the Sixties!"

Jean Bogart lurched into the main room. I noted that her convention badge had migrated from her shirt to her hair, a sure sign that she had attained the zombie-like drunk, which was her habit at Midwescons. After doing various unsober things, she waddled into the bathroom, where we'd filled the sink and bathtub with ice, beer, and RC cola.

She went in, but she didn't come out. We waited for signs of life from within the bathroom, but still she did not come out. Lon wanted a beer, and his thirst and agitation grew with equal speed. And yet Jean Bogart did not come out.

"I think she's passed out in there," said Cindy Heap.

"Yes," I replied. "I can see the soles of her shoes through the crack under the door."

"Someone's got to go in there and get her out," said Cindy. The implication was definitely that that "someone" would not be Cindy Heap.

"It's your room," Lon said, helpfully, as he led me out the door. We went down the hall to the quiet my the place I shared with McInterny and Porter. When

the conversation turned to the NYCon 3 bid and I didn't hear a little groan, I realized that Ron Bounds wasn't with us. Lon and I decided to remedy the situation and went to the Baltimore party.

We found Ron surrounded by people singing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". It wasn't exactly "party down" music. Ron had the look our cat gets when Joyce dresses him up in doll clothes.

"Let us take you away from all this," we said.

"I can't do until Jack {Chalker} get back," Ron wailed. His eyes brightened. "And here he is," Ron added as he led us out the door. Mike McInterny joined the group, and the four of us talked about fandom until the early hours.

The last day of the convention was very low key, as might be expected after a couple of days of round-the-clock partying. After wishing Lon a good drive back to Huntsville, AL, I joined a group which included Ted and Robin, Bob Tucker, and Rusty Hevelin by one of the pools. Bob described his efforts to sell his "fan novel", which he said was too faanish for mainstream publishers. At the time, he was talking to Advent, which published Bloch's "The Eighth Stage of Fandom", but that apparently never worked out. I wonder what happened to that novel?

On the second day of the trip from Cincinnati to San Diego, LeeH and Mike swapped cars for the sake of variety. We were far ahead of the other half of the caravan when we saw a farm with grazing elk and bison. We stopped to get a closer look at the beasties. One smallish bluu fell in love with Lee. Although the animal didn't care for any of the food she offered, it kept poking its snout through the spaces in the mesh fence so that she could pet and stroke it. When Lee turned her attention to another animal, the little bull trailed along behind her on his side on the fence. Robin took pictures of Lee and her new pet, and I think she was a little sad that the Rambler didn't have enough room for a fifth passenger.

A serious attack of clumsiness struck our band Tuesday night.

It started innocently enough...

"Don't knock over my glass of Pepsi," cautioned Ted, as I sat down beside him after making a sandwich. As I absent-mindedly trailed my hand on the floor between our chairs, I knocked something over. But I followed Ted's instructions -- I knocked over the bottle. Knocking over the Pepsi reminded me that I wanted one myself, so I went to the freezer.

"OO hope you didn't knock over the bottle in here," said Lee.

"Which one?"

"The one you knocked over," she said with a sigh. Actually, due to the impeding effect of the ice with which it was surrounded, the bottle was merely knocked to an oblique angle.

"Say, Dave," I said, thrusting a bag of potato chips under his nose, "would you like me to knock over some of these for you?" To cap the evening, Andy spilled a can of milkshake on the bed."

Ted, Robin, Lee, and I were in the Rambler on

Thursday when we saw a sign announcing the Arizona Border Inspection Station. We all fretted about whether they'd let us haul our liquor supply over the state line, which reminded Ted of the fruits and vegetables in the portable freezer. Ted is not a man to let food go to waste. Robin went to work on the grapes, while Ted tried to polish off the bunch of scallions he'd bought to accompany sandwiches. It isn't every

"What if they smell your breath?" I asked.

"They'll lose on the deal."

Thursday night we stayed in Phoenix, a city I've never enjoyed. The dreary neighborhood around our cheap motel didn't contradict the negative comments about the city. Even in the early morning, it smelled like the inside of bowling shoes.

Lee and I, both early risers, sat in the not-quite-fresh air and traded stories about even worse places we'd visited. Our chat came to a hasty end when Lee caught sight of Dave and company in the Greenbrier. We flagged them down, and we were surprised to learn that they had stopped for the night in the motel next door! We didn't have time for a major reunion, but it was good to see our fellow travelers again.

We drove from Phoenix to San Diego during the day. It looks like a joyride on the map, but the desert is endless in a car without air conditioning. It was 116 degrees in the shade at El Centro, CA., and the thermometer hogged all of it.

We stopped briefly when Robin looked ready to keel over, but this was a pause not a rest. Soon, Ted reported flashes of light in his head. Lee lapsed into sub-vocalized giggling, and I went quietly but completely out of my mind. I didn't fully regain my senses until Saturday afternoon.

A crowd of fans clapped and cheered as the Rambler pulled into the San Diego's Stardust Motel at about 7 pm. Leading the delegation were Greg Benford, Andy Main, and Don Fitch.

The mood abruptly shifted from elation to outrage when Greg handed Ted a copy of *Focal Point* #23. It purported to be by rich brown without actually naming him, and it savaged Cindy. It pegged her somewhere between Jezebel and Christine Keeler, but not as moral as either. Interlineations referred to her with quotes from a then-popular rock tune, "Red Rubber Ball" by Cyrkle. It concerned a woman who bounced "like a red rubber ball" from man to man.

We all agreed that it wasn't rich's work. He would never unleash such vitriol against Cindy, even though the break-up wasn't as smooth as some imagined. Rich would have plastered his name on the front page and left no doubts about authorship. He was a hothead, but never a sneak.

Ted swung into action to find out who was behind *Focal Point* #23. There wasn't a clue, though I still have my suspicions, but he did discover that the con committee was handing out a copy of this disgusting little rag to each registrant along with a name badge.

Nothing can erase my memory of the look on Cindy's face as she read *Focal Point* #23 shortly after the Greenbrier got to the convention. I am rarely violent, but my heat-addled brain couldn't have stopped me from wringing the nameless coward's neck

if I could have reached it. That was the only time I ever saw Cindy cry.

Still reeling from the desert and the FP #23 incident, I hardly paused before plunging into a humbling encounter with Young Love. I'd corresponded with Jean Berman, younger sister of long-time Minneapolis fan Ruth Berman, for most of the preceding year. Things had gotten somewhat heated on both sides, so my mind was on romance when word of her arrival at the convention reached me.

Her letters showed great intelligence and some writing flair. Meeting her was a succession of surprises, pleasant and otherwise. The first and best was that she didn't look much like her fannishly better-known sister. Despite her Jewish ancestry, Jean was petite, blonde, and slim, with expressive eyes and a slightly troubled look certain to arouse macho protectiveness.

The first jolt was her confession that she was about two years younger than she had said. It took some time for me to detect the unspoken corollary: Jean wrote and said many things, in her pose of maturity, that she did not understand.

The next shaker was that Len Bailes was as smitten by Jean as I -- and she was encouraging him, too. Jean had just discovered her ability to fascinate men, and she made the most of it at that Westercon. She led us all a merry chase, supposedly worldly fans stumbling over each other to do her bidding.

The light of self-realization dawned early the next (Saturday) afternoon. I was sitting in the Bermans' room, along with Len Bailes and one or two others, and Ruth turned to me and said something, "If you were reborn as a fish, which one would you like to be?"

I took my turn and gravely picked a finny surrogate. It was worth it, I figured, to stay close to Jean. Then Ruth asked me something like, "Of you were reborn as a metal, which one would you like to be?"

Well, I pondered that one for a minute. Not only didn't I care whether I was zinc or titanium, but I was sitting at a fabulous Westercon giving the subject serious consideration.

Once I got a better perspective on Jean, I began to have a much better time at the Westercon. And I got a shameful kick out of watching Bailes make at least as big a fool of himself as I had.

Most of the San Diego committee gaffed during the year, so it took one of L.A. fandom's patented rescue missions to make the Masquerade come off right. Bruce Pelz, who spearheaded the save, asked me to pick a Fanoclast to serve as a judge. I naturally chose our leader.

This was the Westercon of Luise Petti. The energetic little blonde's pirate costume was a hit at the masquerade, especially when she undulated through her erotic dance in the revealing costume.

Ted stepped forward to announce that the judges had decided they needed to see certain costumes again. It was no surprise when one of the curtain calls went to Louise. She gyrated and bump around the stage to the crowd's delight.

After an early stop at the NYCon 3 party, Hilda Hannifen and I wandered the motel's spacious layout

looking for another gathering. We would have struck out entirely if the sharp-eyed Hilda hadn't spotted the inscrutable visage of Don Fitch through a window. We knocked on the corresponding door and joined a quiet party of about 10 people, including GBenford and Bailes.

Greg Benford delivered an impromptu explanation of his theory of professional science fiction writing. Greg, who'd just begun selling pieces, claimed that while he tried to write innovative and fresh stories, he had remained among the unpublished. Stock science fiction, he insisted, was his ticket to prodom. This is exactly the kind of cynicism everyone expects from Greg. It makes provocative listening, even if the theory has more holes than it took to fill the Albert Hall.

I'd begun to get the idea, from little things noticed around the Stardust, that all was not right with the convention hotel. I got a stronger piece of proof when I took a short walk. The party was over when I returned in a few minutes. The hotel had broken it up on no discernible pretext.

Further investigation revealed that the Stardust had quite a string of prostitutes, mostly the young wives of officers at area military bases. The fans didn't patronize the professionals, preferring the enthusiastic amateurs at the convention. The hotel struck back with minor harrassments, including hounding parties, to show its displeasure.

The next day, after his banquet speech, GoH Harlan Ellison showed the pilot for a proposed TV science fiction series called "Star Trek". Fans made many sarcastic remarks and some openly jeered during this presentation. In a convention report for *Quip*, my judgment of what would become the most successful science fiction series in history was uncanny. I summed up with the comment, "I guess it's a few cuts above *Lost in Space*."

An attraction of a different kind was presented just outside the banquet room. L.A. fandom decided to raise money for one of its local fan charities by having Louise Petti stand on a table and do a clothed version of her go-go dance routine for quarters.

Two groups bidding for the next Westercon, Los Angeles and Berkeley, wanted to throw parties that night, so the Fanoclasts decided to soft-pedal our own bid. The rival suites were directly across the hall from each other, so it had the effect of one big party. People circulating between the two large rooms. After a little nocturnal wandering, I returned to the bidding parties to find a row of police. "Anonymous complaints", the cops said.

After dinner at a Chuck Wagon restaurant with the Trimbles, Louise Petti, West Coast Al Lewis, and a young fanartist named Johnny Chambers, we all went to a party thrown by Earl Kemp. Largely out of fandom by this point, the man who won the fanzine Hugo for "Who Killed Science Fiction?" was a generous host. His sprawling place was big enough to prevent the party from congealing into a single clump.

Bill Rotsler collected a crowd in the backyard. Unexpectedly, because he usually keeps things light, Bill got into a deep analysis of the evils of mutual back-

patting. I agreed with his distaste for people who want to blackmail others into liking their artistic output by laying on the praise with a trowel, but I didn't have much to add. Being in favor of critical integrity is as exciting as taking a stand in favor of motherhood.

I returned to the house, where Andy Main was defending vegetarianism against Ted White, Alva Rogers, and Greg Benford. They sidetracked him into picking which he would save if he was certain to hit one with his car, a human or a dog. The argument got very emotional before Ted, Alva, and Greg realized the commitment Andy had to his principle. When the usually mellow Mr. Main showed extreme agitation, his three opponents profusely apologized, and they wound up the discussion on a friendly note.

We drove from San Diego to Rotsler's house in Los Angeles on Tuesday. It was a workday for Bill, but he invited us to use the pool and stay until he could join us. The theatricality of the place fit well with Rotsler's reputation for sophisticated hedonism.

The large house clung to the side of a steep hill. An agoraphobe's nightmare of a stone staircase went almost straight down to a broad terrace on which Bill had decreed a pleasure dome. This gaudy tent's decor was strictly "Thief of Bagdad". If those cushions could talk, they would have told some lurid stories.

Rotsler eventually arrived with his lady of that moment, Robin concocted a dinner out of a refrigerator full of leftovers, and we sat around talking and looking at Bill's mountain of art. Of particular interest were pages of an abortive S.F. newspaper strip and a sheaf of cartoons he was preparing for professional publication. As *Quip* editor, I had to fight the urge to shove a double handful under my shirt, but such greed seemed ridiculous in light of Rotsler's open-handedness with his fan art.

Lee, Ted, Robin, and I accepted the Trimbles' offer to host for the night, while the other four Fanoclasts lodged with Ron Ellik. The next morning, the two groups, augmented by Len Bailes, Louise Petti, Fred Patten, Jerry Jacks, Don Simpson, Jack Harness, Jock Root, and Johnny Chambers, combined for a mammoth expedition to Disneyland.

Fred Patten served as a guide for Andy Porter, Harness, Simpson, Chambers, and I. Johnny wandered off to find the squad that included Louise, and I wasn't a bit sorry to see him go. A meteoric rise, propelled by his cartoons in the weekly *Apa L*, had made the large 17-year-old an instant BNF. L.A. fans were fiercely proud of their newest star, the West Coast's answer to Steve Stiles.

The attention and adulation were too much. Immature and socially awkward, he couldn't deal with his status and took refuge in a brand of blasé condescension that made him a joy-draining companion. He took Disneyland as a challenge to his ability to be bored and jaded, and his drone of wet blanket remarks was a cloud in an otherwise sunny sky. It was particularly galling to me, because there were several rides my eye condition made inadvisable. Here was a kid who could ride the Matterhorn and the other attraction I was forever denied. Yet he was too

busy being snide to enjoy himself. I figured it was his loss.

It was a wonderful, if tiring, experience, and I decided to stay behind when most of the other fans went back after dinner for another session. My reward was terrific bull session with John Trimble and Steve and Sylvia Tolliver.

We somehow got onto the subject of fanwriting. I said, and John agreed, that Calvin W *Biff* Demmon was a seminal figure. JT thought that there were few modern fanwriters who had not been touched by his novel approach and style.

One thing's for sure, I was strongly affected by Calvin's writing, and I was hardly the only one. For more than a year, Gordon Eklund and I did our impression of Dueling Demmons in SAPS. The elegant simplicity of Calvin's prose, coupled with his off-center viewpoint, made him almost impossible for me *not* to copy. The way other Fanoclasts venerated his every sentence didn't make him any less irresistible, either. Eventually, I integrated the Demmon element into my style, but It Wasn't Easy. No.

I was alone in the Trimbles' livingroom the next morning when I heard a knock. A bizarre character with bleached blond hair and a dark five o'clock shadow walked in. "I'll bet you don't recognize me," he challenged.

"My ghod, it's Calvin!" I shouted. Calvin told me a long story about falling asleep under a sunlamp. Besides some minor skin burns, the strong light had bleached the front of the hair bone white. He'd decided to give in to fate and dye all of his hair a garish, yellowish blond.

Ted returned from getting the Greenbrier's gas tank iced and was suitable shocked by Calvin's flamboyant locks. Calvin repeated the sun lamp story

"You look queer, Calvin," Ted said brightly. "How do you feel?"

"I feel queer, Ted." He asked if we could talk about something other than his coiffure.

"Anything interesting happen to you lately, Ted?" I asked.

"No," Ted said.

"How about you, Calvin," I asked, returning my attention to him. "Dye your hair lately or anything?"

Forrest J Ackerman invited us to dinner, so we headed to the Ackermansion after Calvin left. I've always seen 4e with double vision. I first encountered him when I was a kid, as the editor of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. It was years later that I learned about fandom and discovered that he was America's first science fiction fan in the sense that we use the term.

Even his storied collection pales beside his personal generosity. While we were looking around the rooms lined with books and mementoes, two young monster film fans came to the door. They wanted to repay money that Forry had given them when he saw them outside a theater, looking longly at the marquee.

We went to an all-you-can-eat place, where Dave Van Arnam did his best to make the restaurant live up to its boast. Only the realization that we were in

danger of missing that evening's LASFS meeting. We'd had to forgo the one the Thursday before the Westercon, and we had wanted to be sure to get to this one.

Laney would have been proud of me. I never actually got in the door of the Silverlake Playground meeting room that served as LASFS headquarters. I ran into Dave and Katya Hulan, new parents, and talked to them until the second they had to rush home.

A few rides and baggage transfers later put me at the Lab Duquesne, the slanshack home of Jack Harness and Barry D. Gold. I arrived to find several local fans gloating over having just expelled Jane Ellern (Gallion) and Brandon Lamont from the Lab. I know they had their reasons, but it all seemed like fuggheaded fan politics to me.

Ted and Robin motored up the coast alone on Friday, while the rest of us spent the day with the Hulans. They gave a party that night which included Ed and Anne Cox, Lee Jacobs, Bjo and John Trimble, Al Lewis, and Louise Petti.

I spent part of the evening catching up on personal events with Kathy. I was still smarting from my brush with Jean Berman, and she gave me just the right amount of good advice.

Al Lewis put us up for the night and sent us toward the Bay area fortified with a bacon-and-egg breakfast. We actually reached the Rolfs' home before Ted and Robin, who'd stopped to see Andy and Barbara Main. I was happy for the chance to spend a little time with Felice. Our magazines -- *Quip* and *Niekas* couldn't have been much different, but we always had lots of conversational topics apart from fandom and science fiction.

Jerry and Miri Knight, Bill Donaho, and Bob Lichtman threw parties in our honor during our weekend in San Francisco. Perhaps we'd been over-honored, because none were memorable, though I recall enjoy them all at the time.

We began driving East. The night we crossed the Mississippi, I called my family to tell them I was all right. I got my brother Ira. "How was New Zealand?" he asked.

"New Zealand?"

"Alan Shaw called today," my brother elaborated. "and he said you'd gone to New Zealand."

"Oh," I said. "And what did mom have to say about that?"

"She was angry that you didn't call." When I got home a few days later, I asked my mother about it. She admitted that it didn't sound right that we'd gone to New Zealand by car and without passports, but, she added, "they're fans, so I wasn't sure."