

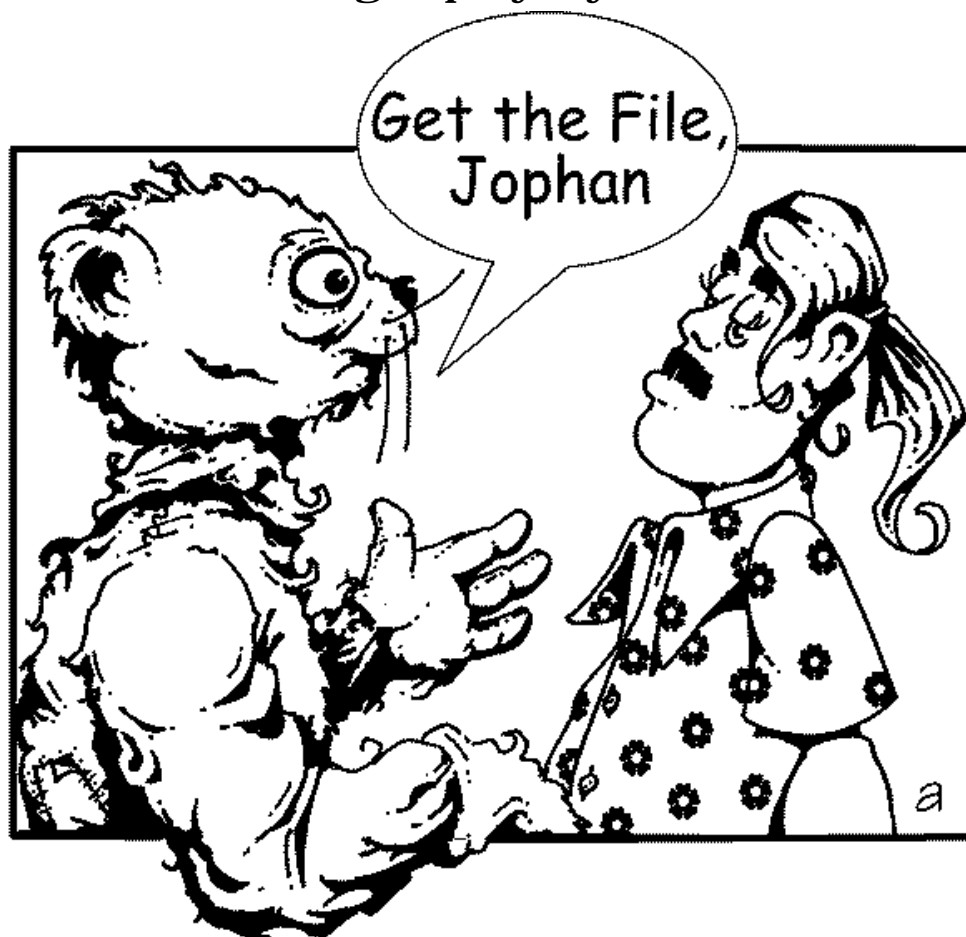
C o r f l u B l a c k j a c k



Fanac Time in Glitter City

B y A r n i e K a t z

A r t & P h o t o g r a p h y b y A l a n W h i t e



Finally, the Fanzine Worldcon Has Come *Back* to Las Vegas!

Corflu Blackjack



Fanac Time in Glitter City

Author's Warning

Oops... I Did It, Again

Sometimes, Fandom is a prolonged, deeply felt heartache. When fans whose after Hugos or fixated on fan politics, it can be acutely painful to see supposedly intelligent people make such fools of themselves.

And then there's Corflu. I have never had anything but a good time at every Corflu I've attended, even ones (like Corflu Nova) where the event might not have passed the critical eye of those who measure conventions with calipers instead of their hearts.

Still, there are good times and better times. Corflu Blackjack, chaired by Ken Forman and Ben Wilson with the incredible support of Aileen Forman and Cathi Wilson, may just be my favorite one of all time.

Am I biased? Yes, indeed. Seeing four fans from the group Joyce and I introduced to Trufandom step forward and handle their faanish responsibility so beautifully would be

enough to plaster a smile on my face. So would the fact that Corflu Blackjack proved to be a festival of egoboo for me. This was particularly remarkable since the Formans and Wilsons didn't ask us to do much more than attend. (We did *Progress Report #2* and some copying immediately prior to the con, but they did all the planning and implementation and told us to have a good time.)

Which we definitely did — and much congratulations to my fellow Vegrants for hosting a gathering that made that so very easy to do.

Of course, there were fans I'd hoped to see who didn't make it. Frank Lunney got snowed in, the Steffans had a family emergency, Victor Gonzalez was broke and some of the British fans canceled for a variety of reasons. Hopefully, some or all of them will be there next year when Corflu comes to the Barea, courtesy of Tom Becker and friends.

If you're reading this, you're a fanzine fan. And if you're a fanzine fan, you really should come to the Fanzine Worldcon.

You'll never regret it.

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**All Art and Photos
by Alan White**

Corflu Blackjack: Fanac Time in Glitter City is written and produced by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107).

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Thanks to **Joyce Katz** and **Alan White** for their invaluable help..

Member: fwa Supporter: AFAL

The escalating excitement over Corflu Blackjack first impinged on my consciousness about half-way through January. That's when a few of fandom's worrywarts began sending letters to the listservs, metaphorically wringing their hands about Corflu Blackjack details. That's not the best kind

of Corflu reminded, to be sure, but I had no trouble looking past the squealing to the Good Stuff coming my way.

Ken Forman and Ben Wilson, the co-chairmen, hadn't done the second Corflu Blackjack progress report – the first was the pass-out at Corflu Badger – and its non-appearance legitimized a certain amount of questioning (and carping).

I volunteered to do a progress report. A couple of early evening fanac sessions, and some help from Joyce, got the job done fairly quickly. Once it got posted around the net and mailed Corflu members, it more or less satisfied those who wanted information.

Unfortunately, I also created unintended controversy when I put together the ballot for the Fan Achievement Awards. As the person most responsible for reviving the FAAn Awards (at Corflu Vegas in '95) and several-time pollsters back in the 1970s, I was happy to get the assignment and gave the thing considerable thought.

Chapter One On the Horizon

Based on the precedent that the ballot categories *have* been changed numerous times, I assumed that I had a limited right of revision.

I rejected my first impulse to add another category to give more fans a chance for

recognition. I don't mind taking a little extra time on a ballot to give a little praise to people I like and respect, but I know that is a minority view. Fanzine Fandom has shown a consistent, strong preference for simple and easy voting forms. I didn't feel that I should reverse that trend.

Of the categories on the sample ballot given to me, only "Best Letterhack" was not a perennial. That made it the logical place to

institute any change. Since Corflu Badger gave a "Best Letterhack" FAAn Award, it seemed reasonable to give a *different* group of fanzine fans some egoboo.

I want to make it absolutely clear: Fans who write letters of comment will always get abundant egoboo and appreciation from me, but it's a sub-category of "Best Fanzine Writer," like "Best Humorist," "Best Critic" or "Best Columnist." Letter writers are worthy of honors and rewards, but there are



Joyce Katz with the FAAn Awards Ballot box.

other subdivisions of fanzine fanac that have equal claim to such awards.

Humor is one of the most important ingredients of fanzine fandom, though you might not guess that from the dryness of this section of the con report. (I promise to go crazy later, so be patient.) At a time when the hobby seems especially in need of the cleansing fire of satire, I liked the idea of giving the comics and comedians their turn. I figured that the next Corflu committee, in its wisdom, could go back to “Best Letterhack” or select another aspect to honor.

Andy Hooper has written a great deal about his desire to handle the FAAn Awards in the future. I have no doubt that Andy would do a fair and equitable job. If I advocated giving *any* individual such control, I would have no problem with Andy being that person. Frankly, I don’t think anyone can offer a legitimate reason for *not* approving Andy Hooper as the Czar of the FAAn Awards, if we give anyone such authority.

I don’t believe we should set up things that way. I feel the same way about the Fanthology – you remember the antediluvian epoch when Corflus produced them – where Robert Lichtman has done such great work as Selections Editor.

The last thing fanzine fandom needs is more bureaucracy. We already have more of it than is healthy and we are now attraction people for whom clerking is their favorite form of fanac. That’s great for them, but my interests lie more with people who are creative in the arts of writing and drawing. Just a personal preference, of course, but it’s mine and I live by it.

Creating a structure that persists from year to year is the first big step toward the kind of time-wasting machinery that craps up the Worldcon. Far better, I say, to make each Corflu committee serve as custodians of the FAAn Awards and the Fanthology.

My argument is more than philosophical. Andy Hooper has excellent judgment, as does Robert Lichtman. I consider them the two top current fanzine fans and my friends. Yet don’t we want the FAAn Awards and the Fanthology to reflect the broad spectrum of taste in our subculture?

If Andy makes the decisions on the FAAn Awards every year, then they are going to reflect his taste. I know he’ll duly consider all opinions, but he *must* make the final decisions if he is to be responsible. That’s only fair.

I don’t want *anyone*, not Andy and not me, to make that final decision every year. The fact that Andy would not have made the change I did shows that putting the Awards in the hands of any one fan would not keep the awards evolving and adapting, elements that promote their continued good health/

Any Corflu committee that didn’t listen to Andy’s thoughts on the FAAn Awards or any other facet of fandom, is stupid. The role of Corflu Advisor is a proud one and Andy should certainly be counted as among the most important ones, based on his experience and accomplishments. Let’s not rush to over-organize our corner of fandom.



The Corflu Cake/

The argument about the ballot — or at least my interest in it — safely in the past, I turned my attention to the more positive aspects of Corflu in general and Corflu Blackjack in particular. Thoughts of seeing all my fan friends after much too long, the parties

and the associated fanac soon had me fanning away as energetically as at any time in my time in the subculture.

I am possibly biased, but I got a kick out of Joyce's Corflu Countdown, which she distributed to five fan listservs. The daily Corflu Blackjack boost kept thoughts of the convention in my mind. I hope Joyce will do something similar in the future. I'll be interested to see what she could do with this if she didn't have all the distractions of con and party preparations to distract her.

Alan White, Joyce and I got both *Smokin' Rockets* and *Crazy from the Heat* #2 ready to print by the Sunday before Corflu. We'd had a full maintenance call, including a new drum, so the copier was ready for the job. I began running *SR* on Sunday before Bill and Laurie Kunkel came over to watch *WrestleMania*, paused during the pay per view and went back to it later in the evening.

The machine worked perfectly, which is more than can be said for its operator. I hadn't copied anything since before our move in September and it took me a while to figure out the combination of settings needed to produce duplexed (double-sided) copies of the desired quality. I threw away a few sheets of paper re-learning the machine, but soon started to

Chapter Two The Big Countdown

get more comfortable with it.

"I think I'm going to write a con report about Corflu Blackjack," I told Joyce as we sat in the living room on a warm Vegas Tuesday afternoon. We were waiting for

Ben Wilson and Ken Forman to arrive by van from California. The Corflu co-chairmen had spoken confidently of early departure from Uceipa, speedy travel and arrival in Vegas by noon. When Joyce told me that the pair planned to leave at "9:00-9:30" and reached our home by



Arnie contemplates the infinite..

“12:00-12:30,” I told her we could look for them at 1:30 or so.

“I’m going to write a con report,” I persisted. “At least I think I am.”

“Is there a problem?” she asked.

I told her how hard it is, with my eyes, to take legible notes these days. She suggested that I dictate notes on the mini-recorder I use for that purpose while watching wrestling.

“That’s a good idea,” I said, “though I hope the recorder won’t creep out our friends.”

“Well, if you’re going to sit there and whisper into it...”

“I wouldn’t do that, “ I promised, “but I am worried about one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“Short term memory,” I said, obliquely referring to the state in which me and most of my buddies attend Corflu. “I can see myself bolting from an especially good conversation and dashing for a secluded place to make my recorded notes. I visualize myself shoving aside the unwary in my quest for suitable privacy, all the while muttering, “Is that the Chattanooga Choo- Choo? ... Is that the Chattanooga Choo- Choo? Is that the Charleston Chewy Yoo- Hoo?...” By the time I am suitably solitary I blurt into the little gizmo, “Is that the chap who used to do you?”

Still, that’s the way I’m going to try to do it.



Lenny Bailes, who inspired the cover...

“You still don’t seem entirely happy,” Joyce guessed shrewdly.

“No, there’s an even bigger problem,” I confessed, “one so daunting I almost hate to mention it.”

“You can conquer it,” she said loyally. “I know you can.”

“I wish I was as sure.”

“Are you afraid you’ll be too rusty?” she asked.

“I think I can cover it,” I told her with somewhat more confidence than I felt. “But I am afraid that there is going to be something very wrong with any report I might do.”

“What could that be?”

“Every real, important, official con report has to start with an account of the drive or flight to the convention,” I reminded her. “The author is compelled to recount the trials and tribulations he or she endured enroute to the actual event.

“Yes, they all do that,” she conceded. “How will they know it’s a con report without penetrating commentary about the obtuseness of the stewardesses, the lousy meal and the intrusive boarding procedure?”

“Ahhhhhhh, you see the problem clearly,” I commended. “I thought about writing up an imaginary flight, but I know it won’t have the indignation so necessary to make it seem real.”

“We’re going by car,” she offered. “Maybe you could describe your car trip to Corflu Blackjack.”

“We’re going maybe 10 miles,” I said, a bit sourly, I must admit. “It doesn’t have the panache of one of John D. Berry’s cross-country jaunts.”

“Give it your best shot,” she counsels. That’s what I’ll do. When the time comes.

About 1:25. the sound of a car door cut through the quiet afternoon. I flung open the front door to Ken Forman and Ben Wilson. They didn't have their wives, but had seemingly brought most of their earthly possessions. As they carted bulky computer systems into

the living room, Ken explaining that they required some piece of software I don't have. With amazing speed, an impromptu Corflu Blackjack business office opened in my living room.

We probably spent more time on greeting and socializing than was prudent, but we couldn't resist. It had been a while since both Ben and Ken were here and Joyce and I were very glad to see the, over and beyond their leadership role in Corflu Blackjack.

Sooner than I'd have liked, if later than I should have, I returned to my duet with the copier. By the time Joyce unveiled her dinner of corned beef sandwiches and French fries, I'd copied most of the 44-page *Crazy from the Heat #2*. (Alan White is responsible for the full color covers on the copies distributed at Corflu Blackjack and in FAPA.)

The collating of *Smokin' Rockets* began once the four of us had eaten enough to fill our bellies and satisfy Joyce's ego as hostess. The corned beef turned out really well, except that Joyce carved a slice in her finger (instead of a likely piece of meat). Ben and I went to work on the 20-pager and soon assembled the 200-copy print run into the usual criss-crossed piles for stapling. Ken replaced me at the collating table. I then started

Chapter Three

The Boys Are Back In Town

shuttling between my office (to staple copies) and the garage (to print more pages of *Crazy*).

I didn't mind moving from room to room. At the risk of sounding like Kramer on *Seinfeld*, I have

top say that it got pretty weird in the garage. The structure holds the copier, laundry machines and about 500 piled up cartons and is illuminated by a fixture with two, two-foot-long fluorescent lights.

All appears normal when the copier is on, but not in actual operation. The garage looks as serene as, if messier than, the idyllic opening scene of a slasher movie. A strange metamorphosis occurred when I pushed the button to start a print run.

The two fluorescent lights began to strobe at different frequencies, going light, dark and several degrees of illumination in-between, as the copies called upon the house's electrical current. Sometimes, both lights blazed and the world seemed bright and safe, but mostly objects appeared and vanished before my eye as I fought to keep from surrendering to the hypnotic flickering.

I stood there, fighting to maintain mental and physical equilibrium in this private pulsating panic room I'd inadvertently created out of this ordinary two-car garage.

Returning to the snug safety of my home office, I guided our brand new, powerful, ominously black Bostitch stapler as it blasted metal through *Smokin' Rockets'* 10 sheets. This technological

marvel is so powerful that I ran out of staples but didn't realize it. The force the stapler applies is sufficient to compress the pages almost as if the metal wire bound them.

While I worked the stapler, Ken and Ben demonstrated their collating prowess, which is considerable. Robbie Cantor is still probably the fastest collator I have ever seen, but the coordinated Wilson-Forman tandem is a beautiful thing to behold. They zoomed through a 200-copy run of a 46-page fanzine with methodical precision that soon replaced the piles of pages with crisscrossed heaps of completed fanzines.

I spent part of Wednesday running off the program book, restaurant guide, FAAn Awards ballot and other odds and ends of convention materials. I guess I was getting used to the strobing and pulsing in the garage, because I hardly noticed this time, except for the voices telling me to kill... well, maybe I'd better not say. It's better if it's a surprise.

As Ken and Ben finished a publication, I'd run it off, so publishing went on intermittently through the day. While I took care of that, the others went to various stories and bought the provisions the consuite needed for the four-plus days of revelry ahead.

Tom Springer arrived Wednesday afternoon to join the party and lend his assistance to pre-Corflu preparations. Even though Tom had visited only about a month earlier, I was very glad to see him. Because of his move to Oregon and subsequent relocation to southern California, Tom hadn't come calling for several years before that, so another visit this soon seemed like a bonus to me.

Not only did Tammy have to stay home due to baby and job, but a business meeting required him to be back in Cali-

fornia on Saturday morning. That meant Tom's Corflu was scheduled to end Friday night and he was determined to pack a full convention=load of fun into the allotted time. Given his exuberance, I figured he had a decent shot at achieving his goal.

It was a disappointment to know he'd have to leave so soon, even though the reason could not be denied. My campaign to bring Tom Spring home to active fanzine fandom required the full Corflu experience. I'd have to hope that Tom could, indeed, pack the whole thing into half the time.

Tom, Ben, Ken and I hadn't all been in the same place at the same time for longer than I cared to remember, so the convergence put me in a really good frame of mind for the impending convention. (Karl Kreder will play Bub in this skewed production of *My Three Sons*.)

The six of us did a lot of partying, with Tom in his customary role as chief instigator, but nothing could derail the Corflu Express.

Sometime before dinner, Ken announced that we'd completed all necessary pre-Corflu tasks, except getting the beer for the special tasting. (They already had the beer for the con suites and our Thursday party.)

Just when Corflu Blackjack was about to become the first convention in Las Vegas fanhistory to be fully ready a day early, Joyce reminded us that it was St. Patrick's Day. That postponed the beer-buying expedition, because no one relished hitting all those pubs on this particular night.

Las Vegas may not celebrate the occasion with quite the gusto of New York City, Boston or Chicago, but we have more than enough drunks to populate the city's watering holes.

When Ken, Ben, Karl and Tom returned with the gourmet beer, they also brought back JoHn Hardin. Suddenly, we had at least half a Vegrants meeting and only the need to transfer an enormous amount of stuff from our house to the con suites

stopped the first party of the convention from breaking out right then and there. We settled for a quick sidebar and then buckled down to loading up Ben's capacious van and Tom's Jeep.

Although the two-vehicle convoy also took most of our heavier and bulkier stuff, we still had enough to fill the trunk and part of the back seat by the time we picked up Dee Dee White and headed to the hotel. (Alan planned to meet us at the hotel after work.

The Spirit of Trufannishness, aware of this report's deficiency in the area of road stories, evidently decided to make it up to us at the registration desk. For the first time, after many stays at the Plaza, we encountered a serious problem.

Since my vision makes things like signing hotel forms a chore, I tend to hang back and let Joyce take care of check in. A large, middle-aged man with a forbidding expression on his face walked up to the window to process their reservations.

"We have a single room for you," he said, "in the North Tower."

Joyce pointed out that we had reserved a suite far in advance and had checked on it just two days earlier.

"Well, we have a single room for

Chapter Four The Day Before It All Began

you," he said smugly. "It's in the North Tower."

"But we reserved our *suite* though the convention so that it would be located in the block of convention rooms in the *South Tower*.

"Well, what

we have for you is a single room in the North Tower," he said, as though Joyce had not spoken. Dee Dee looked frightened as she gazed at his stone face. "I might be able to give you a handicap room in the South Tower," he told her as though he had just rescued her from certain death in the deep Mojave Desert.

Some fan friends scoff at my involvement with professional wrestling, but sometimes its lessons have real-world pay-off.

As I psyched myself up and set my faces in the most menacing look possible for a man with dimples, I hoped I had learned those lessons well. I know it would take all that knowledge. Thank Ghu I'm a slant.

I stepped to the desk, my face a mask of menacing grimness. (Or so I hoped.) Steam came out of my ears. I got very close to his face and looked into his eyes with a fierce, unblinking stare. "What you just said is unacceptable," I informed him.

He started to give me the malarkey about the North Tower and the handicapped room."

"We didn't reserve a single room and we didn't reserve a handicap room," I growled in a penetrating baritone. My buddy Uptown Frankie Capone would've

been proud. "We reserved a hospitality suite in the same block of rooms as the Corflu convention."

"But-but," I saw it in his gaze. He had become my bitch.

"Act like a professional," I admonished. "Give us what we are supposed to get."

He was backing away from me by this



Cathi Wilson, the Vegrants Master Chef, shared hospitality duties with the ever-gracious Aillen Forman.

point and could no longer meet my eyes. He suddenly discovered that a lot of things needed to be done right then at the extreme other end of the registration area.

When another clerk came to the desk at my station, I politely refused her invitation to wait out of the way of other patrons. "No, I'm going to stay right here until I get satisfaction," I said. I thought even Cuban Assassin would have smiled at the audacity of *that* one.

The second desk clerk told me that the

convention manager would be with us soon. When she arrived, I obligingly moved to a less central desk position, where the manager who had booked the con with Ken and Joyce tried to tell me that she just didn't know what to do.

"If you don't know what to do," I said, sympathy dripping like icicles from my throaty tones, "then I guess we'll have to bring your boss into this."

To my utter shock, she did not want her boss to be called. Clouds of indecision parted and she suddenly saw how she could give us a suite in the North Tower. "It will be one floor down from the convention suites," she said, a little shakily.

"Thank you very much," I told her. "I appreciate your efforts."

They had to calm me down just a little when we got to our suite, but they had quite an arsenal of methods and I soon popped *out* of my Andre Casino character.

Living faan fiction! What a way to kick off Corflu!

The "official" pre-Corflu Party in our room 2331 gathered steam as fans arrived by car and airport shuttle and various Vegrants arrived at the Plaza for what was also our mid-March Vegrants meeting.

We got the sad news from Dan and Lynn Steffan even before we went to the hotel. The death of Lynn's mother had, understandably, caused some sweeping changes in the couple's plans. Expressions of sympathy for them mingled with comments about the disappointment of not seeing them at Corflu Blackjack.

Frank Lunney's problem was more prosaic and transitory, but the result turned out to be the same. Due to stormy weather in Pennsylvania, Frank couldn't get plane connections to Las Vegas and went home to wait out an expected blizzard. A number of the UK fans also had

problems that prevented them from attending – and we lost some other to the seductive sights and alluring amenities of Las Vegas.

Andy Hooper nearly knocked me out with the news of a hush-hush Seattle fan project he had spearheaded. Under Andy's direction, eight Seattle fans had brought forth *How Green Was My Vagrant*, an anthology of *Wild Heirs*. Understandably, he didn't want to show it around until Corflu members received it at registration on Friday, but the simple fact of its existence was plenty enough to stir up my sense of wonder.

What a remarkable thing for Andy and his cohorts to do! I was particularly touched by Ulrika O'Brien's participation. Her periodic outbursts have caused many Vegrants wary. Let's hope this is a harbinger of better relations.

Art Widner distributed the new *Yhos* at the kick-off party. Sensibly, he told me to expect my copy in the FAPA mailing, so I avoided the temptation to browse through it right then. Later, Aileen Forman told me that Art has finally completed a piece of faan fiction for her fanzine *Hairy Eyeball* after several years of promises. That means we can look for it reasonably soon.

Steve Stiles and I caught up on each other's doings. He's working for a bookstore that sounds like a crypto-fannish place. I'm glad he's comfortable with the job situation, but I feel strongly there is something wrong with a world in which Steve Stiles is not an acclaimed cartoonist/humorist.

Fandom has benefited from some fine cartooning talents, but Steve is a rarity, the master artist who is also a fine writer. In my opinion, no cartoonist in the history

of fandom has a better balance of artistic merit and humorous content. I wasn't at all surprised when Steve took the 2004 FAAn Award for "Best Artist" (and thought Dan Steffan and Alan White earned their lofty finishes in that category, too).

Fans kept showing up throughout the evening, including Lenny Bailes, Sandra Bond and Ted White. Each arrival had a big significance to me.

Lenny is my oldest friend in the world, someone I have known since I was four years old. I've always thought of it as one of fandom's greatest recommendations that it has enabled us to not only stay in contact, but keep our *friendship* alive and current.

I occasionally see someone from the same distant past that holds the roots of our friendship, but I don't feel anything like the same connection. Those others and I have a link way back there, but only Lenny and I have that strong link in the present.

I'd never met Sandra Bond, but I looked forward to this Corflu as a chance to get to know her a bit better. I enjoy *Quasi-Quote*, especially its staunch upholding of the fannish spirit. Many contemporary UK fanzines, while of interest, don't have that special spark that identifies them as *fanzines*.

I later learned that Sandra had to choose between Eastercon and Corflu. Her decision to come to Vegas probably won't win her a lot of bouquets from other Brit, so I hope she enjoyed Corflu Blackjack as much as we liked having her here.

Joyce and I have only made one fan trip in the last three years, to LA for the Westercon that honored Robert Lichtman and Ross Chamberlain, so I hadn't seen Ted White since Corflatch in Seattle in 2000.

It is perhaps a bad idea for someone who has already written 5,000 words of a Corflu report without yet reaching the official start of the convention to report on someone *else's* obsession. Maybe it's the same lack of proportion that makes such out-sized fanwriting projects possible. In any case, let's deflect the readers' potentially censorious stare in the direction of the ordinarily careful and conservative editor of *Trap Door*.

"Careful and conservative" are adjectives that suit Robert Lichtman. Although his somewhat adventurous life belies this image, his calm and balanced personality have a soothing presence in any fan group.

Yet beneath that façade of good-humored Insurgentism seethes a caldron of roiling passion, an unfathomable hidden sea of obsessive desire. At one time I thought the object of this un-Lichtman-like mania was his wife Carol, a classy woman of many talents and graces. Truthfully, I think that probably is the case, but it'll make this piece much more interesting if we all agree that there is also Something Else.

And what is that something else? Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the answer is that Robert Lichtman is a slave to a pernicious addiction that has subtly molded his entire life. And it is only because I am his sincere friend that I feel it necessary to expose his weakness to every participant in All Known Fandom capable of reading these pages.

Yes, hard as it is to believe, Robert Lichtman is addicted to...

Chapter Five The Strange Obsession Of Robert Lichtman

Canter's.
The venerable Jewish delicatessen in Los Angeles, which also has numbered fans like Bill Rotsler and Alan White among its enthusiastic patrons, exerts an almost palpable lure for the usu-

ally strong-willed Lichtman. He can't get within 50 miles of Canter's without being drawn to it like an asteroid to the immensity of Jupiter.

Imagine then, if you will, the joy that suffused the mind and body of Robert Lichtman when we informed him that Las Vegas now boasted its own facsimile of Canter's. Knowing this might seem like the gastronomic equivalent of Methadone maintenance to someone so enmeshed in Canter's magnificent menu, I sought to quicken his interest by imparting a piece of information: The Las Vegas Canter's imports its meats and even some menu items direct from the original restaurant in LA. His audible intake of breath was a sure sign that his craving had overtaken him, particularly since I heard it although I'd given him this news in an email.

Robert began planning his excursion to the Las Vegas Canter's. With the cunning of the confirmed addict, he invited us to breakfast with him at Canter's on Friday morning. Not only would our innocent delight cloak his compulsion, but going there early Friday would reveal whether he would return there for all subsequent meals or would need to make alternative meal arrangements.

Joyce and I fell right in with these plans, because we really enjoy Robert's

company, but the course of Robert's obsession suddenly met an insurmountable obstacle. After repeated, anxious prodding from the Sage of Glen Ellen, Joyce called Canter's to find out whether a reservation would be required to insure Mr. Lichtman a place at a morning table.

The good news was that we didn't need to book a table in advance. The bad news was that Canter's was closed "for renovation." I couldn't face Robert with this disaster, so I let Joyce convey the ill tidings. I don't know what she said to Robert, but I understand that suicide is not considered a threat.

Robert researched the matter, no doubt hoping to discover that the renovation would be complete by Corflu. He learned that the original 75-seat restaurant had proven inadequate to satisfy the needs of Canter's zealots such as himself. The restaurant's website promised a reborn Canter's with twice the seating capacity. An uncharacteristically sullen Lichtman predicted that this, too, would prove insufficient.

He's probably right. I intend to be there the day it reopens to have one of Canter's famous corned beef on rye sandwiches in honor of Robert's thwarted yearning.

How this helps him is still unclear, but I'll enjoy it. I may send him a picture or possibly a pickle, just to mark the occasion. Unless I pick a pickle and then decide to eat it before I get around to sending it. Canter's has good pickles.

Fortunately, this crisis occurred a couple of weeks before Corflu, so Robert had plenty of time to recover his composure. (I do not believe he

went into the Shecky Green Center for deli withdrawal, but it is possible, I guess.)

Although Robert enjoyed my story of the Arnie's Special sandwich enough to publish it in *Trap Door*, he wasn't nearly as thrilled by the restaurant that made it, Celebrity Deli. Rather than try to convince him that his previous trip had caught Celebrity on a bad day, Joyce instead suggested we show Robert our new home and then accompany him to a place we'd recently found, The Bagel Café. (Her decision was made easier by the fact that Celebrity Deli closed its doors about six months ago.)

Despite the plonking name, The Bagel Café serves decent food in old-fashioned, sterile deli décor. They have an on-premises bakery, so the bread is extremely fresh and, I must admit, makes the sandwich clearly superior to the Celebrity Deli's fare.

Robert has not yet published his review of the meal, so I don't know his opinion of the place. We await his verdict.



Robert Lichtman, in a red shirt at the lower left, carried on bravely despite the Canter's situation....

The Wetlands Hike, which proved to be one of the con's most popular features, had commandeered the Third Floor registration area, so the committee wisely moved registration to the main con suite. I collected my badge and membership packet from Cathi Wilson and paused to admire *How Green was My Vagrant*.

Andy and friends produced a volume that exceeded even my fondest expectations. The fact that the table of contents listed *three* Arnie Katz articles was not lost on my ego, but I also noted the excellence of all the selections. (I didn't read, and thoroughly enjoy, Andy's introductory article until later in the con.)

A small group of fans decided to go to the coffee shop downstairs and watch Ted

Chapter Six

He Sil ped His Mal t In the Insurgent Manner

White eat. Joyce, Robert Lichtman, Lenny Bailes and I decided that this was an interesting enough prospect to go with him, though not before stopped by our room for Friday's inaugural sidebar.

That, and not a devotion to the chocolate-malted-loving memory of Walt Willis, is probably the main reason I had one while the five of us chattered away like the old friends we are.

After frittering away the early afternoon, we joined the rest of the convention for a 3:30 PM program item. This was a little unusual, in that Corflu Blackjack didn't official open for several more hours, but the item itself proved even more out of the ordinary.

I'd made a mild squawk when I heard about the intention to play "Get the File, Jophan," the latest permutation of a pastime that has dogged Vegas Fandom like a stalker for more than a decade.

It didn't seem like a very good fit with Corflu and it wasn't. Ken Forman and Karl Kreder explained the rules, as delineated in a one-sheet flyer, and demonstrated the play-routine. Fans listened politely, but no



Ken Forman (L) and Ben Wilson ® kick off the official opening.

one volunteered to participate. (When I tried to slip up to the front for a hasty parlay with Ken, several mistakenly took the movement to indicate that I was volunteering. It took a lot of head shaking and hand waving to convince everyone that I wasn't going to disrupt the unanimity.

Ken moved decisively to prevent the disinclination to play the game from turning into something that would harm the start of the convention. After a few hushed moments passed without anyone offering to give the game a try, a broadly smiling Ken grabbed the microphone and cheerily suggested that this would be a great time for everyone to go to lunch!

A tidal wave of gratitude flowed from the back of the room to the front. Fans, freed from what some may have considered a sticky situation, responded beautifully. I heard more than one proclaim what a good idea it was to bring everyone together before the actual start of the convention to make it easy to get the partying started. Really, Ken and Karl swallowed their disappointment so manfully and with so little resentment that it turned the whole thing into a big positive.

We had all confronted the horror that was "Get the File, Jophan" and survived. The fans went to the two con suites on the 24th floor to celebrate their liberation.

Analyzing the failure of "Get the File, Jophan," Lenny theorized that it might have been the lack of an appropriate venue. This quickly led the ever-obliging Mr. B to theorize about that hypothetical venue.

"There a room... at the Worldcon, down a hallway, off the beaten track" he began. "The room can hold maybe 100 fans."

"Go on, go on," I encouraged.

"Fans silently file up to the door, where their credentials are checked by a

man wearing an animal head All of them are wearing animal heads!

"They take their seats in the room and the Boss, wearing a full animal suit, explains the rules. Then they play."

Everyone returned to the meeting room for the 6:00 Official Welcome and Opening Ceremony. Ken Forman is a natural master of ceremonies who handled introductions of the rest of the committee with skilled smoothness. If Corflu ever decided to add an MC at the banquet, they could do a lot worse than The Main-spring.

The committee presented a playlet with a Ben Wilson's-eye view of the history of Las Vegas Fandom. What it lacked in historical accuracy it made up for with good-natured fun.

Ken called Joyce to the rostrum to pick the Guest of Honor's from the hat. Her first pick, Alan Rosenthal, weaseled out of the honor, because he wasn't in Las Vegas. Joyce drew again and this time came up with a choice so unbelievable Right that many at first thought the fan in question had already been Corflu GoH. Once fact replaced erroneous surmise, Ken announced that Ted White was the Corflu Blackjack guest of honor to the cheers of the crowd.

Corflu Blackjack, like Corflu Vegas before it, adamantly hewed to the Glitter City tradition of honest gambling with regard to the GoH lottery. It's hard to see how gaffing the drawing could've resulted in a better selection than TEW.

Cash bars aren't always a big hit with fans, but they flocked to the one immediately outside the meeting room on the 3rd floor. The committee had thoughtfully arranged for some very tasty -- and free -- sandwiches as a go-with. Fans dug into the sandwiches and washed it down with potables from the cash bar.

Several fans vied for the privilege of buying the newly anointed GoH a drink. Ted thought this might be a good embellishment of the Corflu GoH tradition, though I think there'd still have been competition to buy him a round even if Joyce hadn't plucked his name as Guest of Honor.

After the Meet & Greet ended, fans went upstairs to parties in the Main and Smoking Con Suites that lasted until well after 2:30 AM. We talked about old days and old friends – my inspiration for the *All in the Family* theme song parody on the title page – but topics like music media formats also came in for discussion.

Ted White announced that he had scheduled a Freak Out for between 10 and Midnight. This was quite surprising to many of us, especially when it developed that Ted had scheduled this freak out for himself rather than planning something of the sort for someone else. For a moment there, I thought perhaps Ted had a new, higher order of fannish power that he wanted to demonstrate, but it turned out to be a comment on his surprise at finding himself Corflu Blackjack's Guest of Honor.

I watched carefully, eager to sample this new and unexpected form of entertainment, but Ted failed to exhibit any striking symptoms of mental disorder while in my company. (The next day, he reported that he had enjoyed quite a splashy freak out, but no eyewitness



Aileen Forman speaks to the tribe..

observers have come forward with credible accounts.)

With Steve Stiles, Ted White, Ross Chamberlain and I all at Corflu Blackjack, the chatter eventually drifted to the Fanoclast legacy.

In retrospect, it is obvious that the Fanoclasts' philosophy has become a touchstone for similar clubs in several fan centers. "A Vagrant or s member of Second Friday [the Falls Church club] could walk into a Fanoclasts meeting circa 1965 and feel comfortable," I told Ted. "No one would have to explain the rules or the philosophy behind them."

The Fanoclasts begat both the Brooklyn Insurgents and St. Louis' Saturday People. More recently, both Las Vagrants and Second Friday are largely the same system, too.

The rules, basically unchanged since the Fanoclasts' founders agreed on them, are few and simple. The first covers the frequency, day and time of meetings. The second declares that the group is an invitational group with an emphasis on an interest in fanzine fandom. The third rule confirms the host's irrevocable right to exclude anyone from his or her own home. (A fourth rule could be said to exist: an out-of-town fan known to members of the club is invited to visit when in town.)

More important than these four points is the attitude that underlies them. The Fanoclasts always felt that we could discuss anything with each other like adults and friends and that, through such discussion, a consensus would eventually emerge. I don't think we ever voted on anything, even new members, though everyone got a chance to air an opinion.

Saturday started earlier for us, I think than most Corflu Blackjack participants. We were on the road to our house by 8 AM, so we could take care of the cat, haul empty garbage cans back from the curb and other domestic chores.

It's funny, in a way, that we do this when we go to cons in Vegas. We let go of all those chores and duties on every out-of-town trip, but we perform them religiously when we are close enough to do so. Since our cat Foggy hides under our bed most of the time, I'm not sure how much our visits really do for him. I think they are more for our comfort and peace of mind than his.

Although the conversations in the con suites were highly enjoyable, I wanted to get to the meeting room on time, 10:30, because I had a vague feeling that I was supposed to be on a panel at that time. I could've looked in the program book, I suppose, but that would have reduced the thrilling uncertainty. (I attend just about every Corflu program item, so I would've gone to the 3rd Floor meeting room in any case.)

When I got there, I discovered that the scheduled program item was not my panel on what fans need to know about fanhistory, but "To Know and Know Not," Corflu Blackjack's trivia challenge. The committee applied its gaming skills to fanzine fandom to produce a contest that is simple, fun and involves everyone in the action. Ken and Ben prepared 14 questions, including a couple of tie-breakers, and fans seemed eager to play a

Chapter Seven

To Panel . Or Not . To Panel

second round if questions had been available to do so. A few rough spots, mostly in the scoring system, will go better the second time and I hope another Corflu will try this format.

"To Know and Know Not" featured four expert fanhistorians – Moshe Feder, Robert Lichtman, Sandra Bond and Ted White. Well, to be honest, the designated participant was "Richard Lichtman," according to the slightly imperfect sign created earlier in the week. Each member of the audience had a scorecard with the names of the panelists across the top and a line for each question in the contest.

When the moderator, Ken Forman, posed a question, members of the audience marked their ballots to indicate whether each of the fanhistorians would get the question right. There was also a column in which the audience member could get points for marking "None" to indicate that the panel would all go down to defeat.

Late nights and late breakfasts put this fine plan in peril before the Quizmaster of Good Cheer could ask the first question. All panelists except Sandra Bond still hadn't reached the meeting room by the time the panel was supposed to start.

Since Ken had talked to me about this panel before Corflu, with an eye toward having me participate, I volunteered to stand in for Robert Lichtman. Specifically, I volunteered to be *Richard* Lichtman, whom I described as the absent one's "younger, smarter brother."

Just about the time I got the disappointing news that the mislabeled sign had not made the trip from my house to the con, good news arrived in the form of the One, True and Authentic Robert Lichtman.

That's when I did what half the con may have been hoping and praying for... I volunteered to "assail" (not "assay") the role of Ted White. "This is a dream come true," I gleefully told the crowd with mock confidentiality.

On the whole, I rather enjoyed my stint as Ted White. Still, I think I'll stick to being Arnie Katz in future. I so much more enjoy the company of the one-and-only *real* Ted White than my feeble attempt to evoke his character.

Later, in the con suite, Ken Forman went over the questions and answers with Ted to see how he would have fared. I was also curious to find out whether he'd miss the same ones I had. I'm pleased to say we got the same ones right and wrong, so I felt my imposture was a success.

That "None" option proved the golden

road to success for audience members who played it early and often. Unless, of course, they bet against Sandra Bond. She didn't have the answer to every question, but she was the only one who got *any* of them right during about the first half of the competition. Her knowledge of US fanhistory is as good as any American fan and she knows her UK fanhistory better than most of us on this side of the Atlantic.

The trivia contest led to a *lot* of fanhistory talk when fans returned to the con suites to socialize. The committee had wisely designated Harry Warner's *A Wealth of Fable* as the official source for authenticating questions. Several questions drew objections from panelists. Citations from the book seemed to vindicate the original answer in some cases, but Harry had erred in a couple of instances, too.

That led to a post-contest discussion of the quality of fanhistorical reference works and the need for more and better ones. It's wonderful that Harry Warner

wrote those "All Our Yesterdays" columns (for *Oops! Focal Point* and others) and put together the two history volumes, but it is impossible to look at his work without seeing its limitations as well as its virtues.

The most glaring is that Harry only knew fandom through fanzines (and correspondence). He tended to accept what is written in zines as true and did not always perceive that there are many truths that are *not* mentioned in fanzines.

Another defect is that



The Fanhistory Panel has veered off-course, but the fans seem to like it. Or are they plotting revenge?

Harry was a very cautious man, a person who often sat on the fence rather than risk saying something controversial. His early 1940s fanzine *Spaceways* diligently pursued a “no controversy” editorial policy and Harry largely continued it until the very last years of his life. His comments about Degler in *All Our Yesterdays*, he reportedly told fans, are designed to avoid the highly remote possibility that Degler/Don Rogers might come out of the woodwork to sue him! I sympathize, but I also think that introduces an additional level of distortion on top of the distortions already present due to Harry’s incomplete knowledge.

Rob Hanson gets higher marks for his ability to weave the chronicle of events into an illuminating analysis. Yet Rob ran smack into the problem that every would-be fanhistorian encounters, except that he was honest enough to write about it in his introduction to *Then & Now*.

The difficulty goes right to the heart of fanhistory. Writing the history of such a small group inevitably forces the historian to make statement and conjectures about individual fans. It’s one thing to speculate about public (and dead) personages like Napoleon and Pol Pot, but fans are not public personages – and many are still lively enough to kick like mules if they don’t like the way they are portrayed.

An intelligent, sensitive person like Rob Hanson is going to think twice before he tattles family secrets. So Rob, as Harry before him, made the decision to tell the truth but not all of it. Alas, the minute that decision is made, truth flies out the window. I greatly enjoyed Rob’s history of UK fandom, but inaccuracy is implicit in its construction. It is the best we have, and I congratulate Rob on a mammoth undertaking, but it is not the true equivalent of a mainstream history.



DeeDee White, one of several Vegrants making Corflu debuts, pitches in at the Consuite.

I’m not even sure a true history of our subculture is even possible. I don’t think it is feasible to write it until all of the early fans have gone to the Ultimate Side-bar and by that time it will be very difficult to get complete, accurate information.

“I think this is where we are supposed to have a huge clash of egos over who auctions what and so forth,” I told Jerry Kaufman and Andy Hooper just before the three of us began Corflu Blackjack’s auction. I like to help out with the auction, but I had seen some upsetting incidents at previous Corflus and did not want to get into meaningless wrangles.

Fortunately, Jerry and Andy felt exactly the same. We took turns huckstering items. Andy, with some input from Ken, set the pace and also helped me track the bids on items I introduced.



Andy Hooper, my favorite fanzine auctioneer, works his money-making magic on a receptive crowd.

It was as successful as it was pleasant. Despite the unexpected and inadvertent competition from Richard Brandt's spectacular fanzine sale, the live auction, Andy Hooper's silent fan fund auction and direct sales of special publications pulled in over \$1,500! The quality of the "live auction" items wasn't quite as good as in some previous years, so the high total is especially impressive.

My favorite item in the auction, donated by rich brown, was a beautiful copy of Jack Speer's *Fancyclopedia*. The number on the edition and the intact mailing envelope showed that it had originally belonged to Bob Tucker, which gave it an added dollop of fanhistorical interest.

Thanks go to Sandra Bond for paying \$15 for a copy of Joyce and my *Tandem*. I think it's probably time to stop auctioning that one for a few years. There's been at least one copy for sale at every Corflu I've attended and the market is probably

saturated for some time to come.

A bunch of *Wild Heirs* also came up for bid, but we agreed to hold them for some future year. Everyone at the auction already had copies, so trying to sell more would be a waste of everyone's time.

The auction went into overtime and it looked like few people wanted to stick around for "What Fans Need to Know about Fanhistory," including some of the listed panelists. I told Ken that if he felt we should skip the panel, I wouldn't be upset. He went up to the con suite to find both participants and audience. He sent back word that neither were to be had on the 24th Floor.

Yet when I announced that the panel wouldn't take place, fans materialized and overruled this decision. So we bowed to popular demand and held it, after all. And with considerable assistance from Ted White and Sandra Bond, it came off at least semi-interesting.

The bottom line for the panel was that fans who know a bit about fanhistory and understand the fannish context have more fun and often contribute a lot more to others enjoyment of the subculture. We also agreed that, though this knowledge is valuable, it is unrealistic to expect neo-fans to study the material like a college course. It's a hobby.

When Ted White encouraged me to relate theory to practice, talk veered to how Joyce and I helped develop Las Vegas fandom. I explained our strategies to get Vegas fans to try things for the m-selves in an embarrassment-proof environment.

Rather than "teaching" fandom, we let curiosity carry the load. The key to getting Vegas fans involved in fandom outside Glitter City required them to know and care about fans from other parts of the country and the world.

So when they met someone at a Silvercon or *Wild Heirs* got a letter, Joyce and I told them anecdotes, scheduled fanzine readings and so forth to make that fan more than just a disembodied name.

I also stressed the pivotal roles Ken and Aileen Forman played. When Joyce and I discovered the infant local fandom, Ken and Aileen had already established their leadership. Instead of vying for that control, an effort that surely would've failed, Joyce and I concentrated on proving that we were good local fans while we helped the Formans discover the joys of fanzine fandom. Once Ken and Aileen were onboard with the whole thing, it made it much easier to get others to follow their lead.

Ted said that he didn't think it would be easy to repeat the miracle in the desert in other fan centers. I'm forced to agree, much as I would like it to be otherwise. It won't work, because it is so rare to find a group of new fans that has not already accumulated counter-productive prejudices.

One sad consequence of the balkanization of fandom is that there are a lot of established club fans who have little or no experience with any other aspect of fandom and are extremely distrustful of fans who are not at their particular campfire. As All Known Fandom continues to fragment, such fans may be very different in interests and temperament from the kind of person likely to enjoy fanzine fandom.

Just as Joyce and I exposed Vegas fans to what we enjoy in fandom, those club fans do the same with the fans who come into their orbit at the club. A fanzine fan hoping to entice local fans will often find that the older fans in the group have in-

oculated their neofen against the blandishments of literate outlanders.

Since Las Vegas Fandom was so new when we encountered it in 1990, the locals hadn't absorbed all that negativism. There was one fan in the group, Ken Gregg, who hid his knowledge of fandom from the rest in an attempt to build himself into a local BNF, but Vegas fans turned away from him when he became antagonistic toward Ken and Aileen.

After dinner with Alan and DeeDee White and Lenny Bailes, we returned for "Futurama 3004 AD," Andy Hooper's latest play. Andy's willingness to write and produce these plays shows both his restless creative spirit and his generosity to Corflu. He's doing a hell of a lot of work and accepting a lot of frustration. It takes a special kind of internal fortitude to write a one-hour play and then turn it over to the not-so-tender mercies of a cast of amateur actors who read their lines and have only one short rehearsal.

This play sent the characters in Matt Gruening's "Futurama" on a fannish mission involving the preserved heads of famous fans of the past. Keeping alive the *Derelicti Derrogation*, Andy drew much of the dialogue from actual quote from the famous fans his play portrayed.

I thought it was one of Andy's better efforts. The characters are widely, if not universally, known and the use of actual quotations gave the whole thing an extra fanhistorical spin. It was pretty funny, too.

Lur imitations were numerous on Saturday night.. Can a spate of fanzine covers be far behind?



Jerry Kaufman, in mid-auction, combines salesmanship with likability.

Knowing it was the last day of Corflu made us get out of bed and over to the house a little earlier than we might've after the usual exhausting round of Saturday night parties. I thought my hair looked especially ratty and paused long enough to shampoo it at

home – I'd showered at the hotel – before we zoomed back to the Plaza.

After a suitable amount of preparation, we moved with the throng to the meeting room, now tricked out as a banquet hall.

My tablemates included all four members of the Corflu Blackjack committee, Ted White, Robert Lichtman, Lenny Bailes and Karl Kreder. Talk about being at the epicenter of the con!

"So, Ted, who are we voting for as past president of FWA?" I asked the keeper of that eternal flame.

"I think we're just going to let it play out," came the unexpected response. I didn't press the subject, because Ted is seldom evasive, especially with me. I knew something must be in the works, but I decided to follow Ted's lead and let it play out/

At Ken's prompting, Ted did his annual review of the meaning of the Fanzine Writers of America and the signal honor that is its Past Presidency. No sooner did he call for nominations than Andy Hooper rose to put forward – Joyce and me!

Okay, I was a little stunned, so my reportorial skills may have become momentarily befuddled. It seemed to me that everyone at the banquet immediately ral-

Chapter Eight A Feast Of Egoboo

lied to Andy's pronouncement and they proclaimed Joyce and I fwa Past President for 2003.

I have always considered this one of the highest honors that one can receive in fanzine fan-

dom. Folks may whore after Hugos and even FAAn Awards and rare is the fan who "stands" for TAFF or DUFF these days. But Past President of fwa is one award you can't ask for, because the act of asking almost automatically leads to *not* getting it. Thank you, everyone, for conferring this distinction upon Joyce and me.

Eric Lindsay and Jean Weber, two members of Las Vegrants who persist in propagating the absurd fiction that they live in Australia, entered a non-bid for their (alleged) hometown. I was initially bothered by even the suggestion of bidding competition, but Eric and Jean handled the whole thing so that it was clear they were not expecting Corflu Blackjack's attendees to give them the con.

They used their presentation time to advance the *idea* of taking Corflu to Australia. I fear very few North American or British fans would be able to make that trip, but that doesn't bar it from further consideration. I've always wanted to see Australia and this might, if everything went right, provide the pretext to go there.

Tom Becker then took over with the real Corflu 2005 bid for San Francisco. He's got some very good helpers and I think everyone was glad to see Tom get

The committee plans to hold it in on a weekend adjacent to Potlatch, as Seattle did in 2000. Although Tom had few details, fans showed their confidence in him by quickly approving San Francisco for next year. I am definitely hoping to get there. It should be a very good take on Corflu, made even better by the addition of Bruce Gillespie.

I'd like to thank everyone who voted for me in what was a rather quiet fan year for me insofar as fanac was concerned. I'll endeavor to be more worthy of such egoboo when it comes time to vote FAAn Awards for 2004.

One of the fanzines that went up for bid during the con, at the silent auction for the fan funds, I believe, was *Fannish II*. It had a complete write-up of that year's Fanac Poll and the legendary "I

My first thought, as one of the editors of *Crazy from the Heat*, was that the *Fanzine II* cover would make an incredible subject for a future issue. I even had a woman in mind for the essential role of in the photo, but a canvas of fans at Corflu Blackjack revealed a preference for the nude to be a real fan. They didn't specify "fanzine fan."

Hey, guys, don't you get it? That divine form would be *naked*. You remember naked, don't you?

Seeing *Fannish II* also made me realize how much I miss those annual detailed reports on the latest poll. The write-ups, though interesting at the time, grow more fascinating with the passing years. Such annuals are a wonderful ways to commemorate fanac while also giving out tons of egoboo to the many deserving writers, artists and editors who enrich fan-

dom with their contributions.

Doing it right requires more than the five categories used in the last FAAn Awards, yet there's resistance to lengthening the ballots. I hope the next Corflu committee retains "Best Humorist" when it restores "Best Letterhack" but expansion beyond that appears unwise. (It is, of course, the committee's call for '05.)

Likewise, it would be a mistake to start another poll. FAAn Awards voting is light enough now that a second poll is not only likely to fail, but take the FAAn Awards down with it.

Maybe the FAAn Awards could develop a secondary, supplemental ballot with additional categories. Then someone could produce a volume based on the full results of the major and minor categories. Or maybe it would be simpler to establish a "FAAn Awards Annex" with categories like "Best Column," "Best Single Publication," "Best Critic/Analyst" and so forth.

In a subculture that runs on feedback, I have always felt the impulse to give out egoboo to as many of the deserving as possible. Some kind of FAAN Awards expansion is one possible way to accomplish this.

Ted White's Guest of Honor speech spotlighted the fanzine review column he syndicated among six local club publications for a couple of years. He talked about the reasons he began the column, the results he had with it and what the outcome might mean to fanzine fandom.

Ted hoped that planting upbeat, explanative reviews of current fanzines in club publications would provide a path to fanzine fandom for club fans who might



Marty Cantor gave ended the banquet with a "feel good" moment.

otherwise not have had the opportunity to make contact with our merry band. Much to his disappointment, Ted reported that the columns did not draw any response from local club members. He got a little more action when he began posting the reviews on efanzines.com, but all the effort didn't generate many new fanzine fans.

(Subsequently, it developed that one or two club members *did* connect to

fanzine fandom, but that doesn't obviate Ted's point.)

In a way, Ted's experience seems to speak to comments made earlier in the convention about how hard it would be to repeat the Vegas Fandom phenomenon in other US fan centers. On the other hand, I would expect that fanzine reviews and other guideposts made available through efanzines.com could have a significant effect on fans who go there out of curiosity but don't know exactly where to start their exploration.

Marty Cantor spoke after Ted. He informed fans that he now has charge of the Rotsler cartoon hoard and that he will disburse the drawings to faneds. (He asked for help with the postage, a reasonable request.) Marty then began to dump illos onto a table that the committee had set up for that purpose.

It was an electric moment as fanzine editors swooped down on the treasure trove. I got a lump in my throat, thinking about how this special moment brought Bill so close to us. I looked over at Aileen Forman, who had tears in her eyes. I gave her a hug as we watched the happy fans collecting their bounty of Rotslers.

With the closing of the Smoking Con Suite, our slightly less convenient suite became a party hot-spot. We still had plenty of stuff to eat and drink, so a large group that included Ted White, the Corflu Blackjack committee, Robert Lichtman and Catherine Crockett spent most of the afternoon and early evening setting fanzine fandom to rights and banishing evil from this plane of existence.

Andy Hooper spoke with great eloquence about the need for a small, frequent online fanzine to serve as a rallying point. Joyce and I have discussed the idea quite a bit since and are still groping toward a proper niche for such a publication.

I'm not sure a newszine is the right

Chapter Nine Corflu's Over But the Party Lingers On

approach, because the listservs do such a good job of disseminating the latest happenings just about as soon as they occur. There'd be an advantage to pulling together a lot of information

in one place, but to be valuable, such a fanzine needs to offer analysis and commentary, humorous and otherwise, about the events of the day.

Does fandom want something like that? I'm not yet sure. Rather than jump into the thick of it, more thought may be the best course. It's less tiring, too.

One of my favorite parts of Corflu was sitting down with Ben Wilson, Ken Forman and Cathi Wilson – Aileen had to

return to Uceipa, CA, in the afternoon due to work – and telling them how great they'd done on Corflu Blackjack.

I told them that things could hardly have gone better. Even the things outside their control, such as the choice of GoH and the FAAn Awards, had gone exactly the way fans wanted.

Sunday's dinner companions were Ted, Robert, Lenny, Ben, Cathi, Ken, Sandra and Joyce. No one felt like



Las Vegrants members **Eric Lindsay** and **DeeDee White** flank **Lorraine Tutihasi** as they chatter away on a consuite couch.

shlepping too far, so we went to the Plaza's coffee shop. It may have actually gotten better since they moved it to its present location in the hotel a year or two after Corflu Vegas.

Lenny spoke up strongly for LiveJournal.com. There's no question that a lot of names familiar to fans have embraced this form of writing and its burgeoning popularity testifies to the reward that many obviously get from writing in that venue.

LiveJournal.com is fine for those who want it, I responded, but that isn't what I seek. The world is full to overflowing with people writing their opinions, attitudes and observations. Time to read them, however, is quite limited. I prefer to read personal writing within the fan-nish context, so I read fanzines, fan websites and listservs that acknowledge that context.

LiveJournal.com reminds me of some publications *Factsheet Five* used to review. They were *like* fanzines (in some ways) and you could *call* them "fan-

zines" (for convenience), but they differ from fanzines in at least one way: our fanzines are done within an interrelated network, a subculture. A lot of those "fanzine" in *Factsheet Five* weren't part of any network. Each was a closed universe with its editor at the center.

LiveJournal may be fun and it may even develop a spirit of its own, but I'm primarily interested in fanzine fandom. The kind of thing I like is more apt to be found on efanzines.com.

I divided the evening between the remaining con suite and our suite. Everyone seemed tired, but determined to party as long as possible.

Billy Pettit had some fascinating things to say about electronic fanzine formats and features. I've tried a few little things with *Jackpot*, but Billy's vision of electronic publishing is way ahead of mine. A lot of what seems so ordinary a-b-c to him opened unexpected new vistas for me. I pleaded with him to write an article based on his ideas for *Crazy from the*

Heat and this is another, more public entreaty.

I was also glad to get the opportunity to talk to an authentic early members of Southern Fandom to get his views on the factors that led to its formation in the early and mid 1960s. As our branch of fanzine fandom attempts to reconnect with our publishing brothers and sisters who work within the Southern Fandom context, knowing more about them may lead to a better understanding of who they are.



Marty carefully scrutinizes **Arnie** and **Andy**,
Who are strangely quiet... maybe *too* quiet.

Thanks to the timely arrival of Su Williams, who'd been away at an SCA-style event for the weekend, packing up was even easier for Joyce and me than getting to the hotel. Not only did we have less to take home, thanks to everyone's heroic consumption of party food and beverages, but Su's van was large enough to hold most of what we still had.

It was hard to say good-bye to Ken Forman and the Wilsons, some of the best friends I've ever had or expect to have in my life. Only the knowledge that Joyce is already angling for them to visit in April made it less of a wrench.

Dropped off at home, I went through the house to tidy up things, turn on the air conditioning, feed the cat some more and so forth. Joyce rolled onto the driveway with Ted White in tow, but it developed that they had to go right back to the hotel to reclaim Ted's leather jacket before someone found it and converted it into chips.

While Su Williams took Colin Hinz and Catherine Crockett on a sightseeing tour of Las Vegas, Ted, Joyce and I passed a very low key day. We hung out like in the old days, ate a leisurely dinner at our local place (Boodles) and then closed the door on Corflu Blackjack with a small party that included the three of us and Su, Colin and Catherine. (We later found

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out that Andy Hooper and Carrie Root had changed their flight and could possibly have joined us, but they were tired and most likely just as glad to have some time to themselves and start their post-

Corflu recovery.

I'll leave the ranking of Corflu Blackjack to others who are capable of seeing it with more objectivity, but I can say with certainty that I had a terrific time. I came out of the convention as energized and enthusiastic about fandom as any time in the last couple of years. I may have to re-read *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* Just to calm down.

A lot of folks sloshed on the egoboo to me for my role in bringing Vegas Fandom to its current high estate. The ability of Ken Forman, Ben Wilson, Aileen Forman and Cathi Wilson to host such a great con shows that Joyce and I had plenty of help every step of the way.

I hope the committee will take this con report as my "thank you" for everything they did for me and for fanzine fandom. I hope you enjoy it. I wish it were better, though it would have to be a fannish masterpiece to truly level the balance.

--Arnie Katz
Las Vegas, NV
April, 2004



Mr. .Elegant exudes fannish charm. .

