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CRAZY FROM THE HEAT!



Hey... that's not VOID! It's...

CRAZY

from the

HEAT

Issue #1

January 2003

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Crazy from the Heat is published on a frequent, but as-yet-undetermined scheduled. It is available for contributions of artwork or written material, your fanzine in trade or — especially — letters of comment.

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The Pictures

Cover: Ross Chamberlain

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Bill Kunkel: 17, 34

Bill Rotsler: 3, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 25, 26, 30
Alan White: 3, 7, 18, 22, Bacover



Blowing Off Steam...

The Crazies Riot in the Nuthouse

Joyce Katz:

A funny thing happened to us on the way to Westercon this July.

This is a Strange Tale of a desert tribe that lost its way, but then was taken across the Mojave by the Prophet Arnie. The reader will learn how these Children of the Sand were nourished during the Exodus by Manna from Canters, allowed to eat the flesh of Sacred Cows, led by puffs of White Smoke, and given the Pillar of Fire. And somewhere along the way, they rediscovered the Spirit of Trufandom. Glory Be!

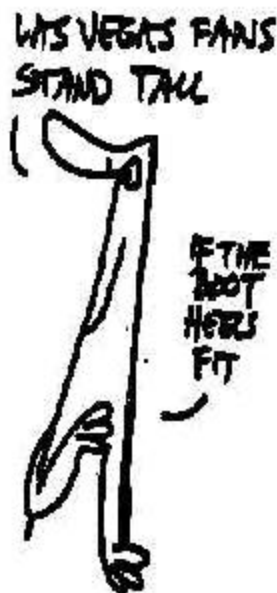
Westercon was special for the Vegants this year. Not only was Robert Lichtman, long-time friend to the Vegas group, named as the Fan Guest of Honor for the convention, but Our Own Ross Chamberlain was tagged as the Fan Art Guest of Honor. With these two trufen in attendance, Westercon was an attractive destination, and we made plans to car pool,

caravan, and otherwise get as many of us to Los Angeles as possible.

I think a group road trip always kicks up the excitement level, no matter who's going along. But populate the trip with your own posse of crazies, and there are bound to be some surprises in store. The crowd of Vegans descending on the

City of Angels might have struck fear into lesser hosts, but Good Squire Marty merely smiled when he saw us in our Numbers, and offered us a cheese plate.

Not everyone could go, of course. Bill & Laurie Kunkel had to stay behind, Derek Stazenski lost track of the dates so couldn't make the trip, Alan & Dedee White couldn't leave town that weekend, while Ray and Marcy Waldie were pinned beside a relative's sickbed. But it was a good-sized crew that headed into the rich brown



smog of California -- Eric Davis and Belle Churchill, Roxanne Gibbs & Michael Bernstein, Ben & Cathi Wilson, Ross Chamberlain, Arnie Katz and me, Joyce Katz.

Cathi decided to drive herself and the baby to her mother's home in Chino, CA in the Wilson's truck. She'd leave Megan with her grandmother, then Ken & Aileen Forman would pick Cathi up and take her to the hotel. Ben Wilson drove the Katz' car -- I'm not up to Los Angeles driving. Passengers were me, Arnie and Ross.

I guess it was some kind of Mojave Mojo, a touch of the sun coupled with incipient Road Rage, which started the madness. But it was already brewing by the time we reached Yucaipa, where we detoured off-road to visit the Forman's new country home.

Aileen Forman

I remember the last time that I was a Californian. I was twenty years old and when I left I was sure that I would never want to move back to the Los Angeles area again. I was disillusioned. I was tired of Angelinos and looking forward to moving back to the Midwest where folks were normal. I was a young Iowa girl who, for the first time in her life, realized that people who lived in a different part of the world didn't necessarily act just like the folks back home. Now, twenty years later, I'm back, baby! And this time, I'm proud to be a Californian!

It's especially nice when we get to show off our new house to visitors, like the entourage that arrived from the East. I eagerly dragged Joyce around the house and yard. (Arnie carefully stayed within the realms of "civilization," i.e., the house.) "Look!" I burred. "Here's where we tore out all the filthy, urine-stained carpet!" Joyce looked suitably impressed and politely showed none of the natural impulse to levitate upward that others have shown. "Ken wanted to put in a rich brown carpet, but we went with a rich purple instead. The only bad thing about it is that our wall colors are limited."

"And here's where we gutted the kitchen!" Things went on in that vein for quite some time as I showed off the house that had truly certainly been more of a tearer-downer than a fixer-upper when we first bought it, more than a year ago. I

explained that the rich brown vegetation filling our 3½ acres was just due to a drought and would be much more green next year.

We all sat around and enjoyed the novelty of the Forman's (relatively) new house until, at last, Arnie announced that it was past time for us to get to the convention, particularly as we were keeping one of their Guests of Honor from some of his well-deserved accolades. So off they trundled and we packed up to head off to pick up Cathi (and, of course, grasp the opportunity to spend a little time with the Wilson's adorable daughter, Megan).

Cathi's Mom lived right off the Route To WesterCon, so it was relatively easy to pick her up. However, due to the need to bring the enormous quantity of old FAPA mailings (Ken believed that they could sell them in the fanzine lounge and bring FAPA a few easy bucks), we had to take the truck, which comfortably holds only two in the cab. I volunteered to ride in the back, laying down on the bed, protected from the wind and sun by a low camper shell. What the shell didn't protect me from was Ken's enthusiastic driving (hey, he was going to a convention, after all) and I pitched from side to side, narrowly avoiding the dangerous dolly perched precariously on one side of the truck bed while attempting to hold a conversation with Ken and Cathi through the little window to the cab. I gave this up as a bad idea when ashes from their herbal sharing pelted me in the face. But even this couldn't cause me to lose my excitement for the weekend ahead. I couldn't wait!

Ken Forman:

I keep forgetting that we have a country home. It doesn't seem like it to me. Redlands is only 8 miles away, although the local librarians call it Dead-lands because it's not exciting enough for them. Laurraine Tutihasi declared Yucaipa (and by association, my new home) to be on the Edge of Nowhere. Nevertheless, moving to Yucaipa provided me with a whole new perspective on fandom. Think about it. How many WKF's are from Yucaipa? That's okay. Hagerstown, Gualala and Glen Ellen aren't exactly hosts to large fan groups either. But the point is that I cut my fannish teeth in Vegas, that

instant fandom that sprung forth whole and thriving from Arnie Katz' mustache. A lot of the folk I like hanging with were/are fans.

Living on the edge of nowhere, I have the pleasure of experiencing fandom from the perspective of the lonely fan. I suppose I could go to LASFS meetings, but 70 miles each way tends to diminish my enthusiasm for the club. Right now my fanac is primarily receiving and producing fanzines, being FAPA OE, and visiting Vegas once in a while. It allows me to appreciate some of the older fanzines I read; from an era before virtual fandom. It may be a proud and lonely thing to be a fan, but it does have its rewards.

Eighteen months after my move to California, I was feeling a little homesick. No, that's not it exactly. I *am* home. Rather I missed being part of the fannish village known as Vegas fandom. The visit from the Elite of the Vegrants was like a dive into a cool, fresh spring. Diving deep, and then arching your back to break the surface.

Okay, it was more like seeing four dear friends whom I hadn't seen in far too long.

Ross Chamberlain's cheery smile was the first thing I spotted outside my kitchen window when the foursome rolled out of Joyce's car. "Honey, they're here," I called to Aileen. We had been dusting, straightening, organizing the house. Of course the place was spotless, but Aileen likes to make a good impression, even if it's the fifteen-hundredth. I'm glad she does.

Ben, Arnie, Joyce and Ross all took the nickel tour (beverages included). After sufficient oo-ing and ah-ing over the improvements Aileen and I have made to our country ranchette, the Elite of the Vegrants settled down onto our couches and chairs as if it happened weekly. The six of us sat around and dipped our feet into the pond of fannish friendships.

We couldn't dip our skinnys in the water too long, however. Ross was an honored Guest of the convention, and we didn't wish to deprive him of any more egoboo.

Much of the convention blurred by in that "I'm riding on a fast carousel" way that many big conventions have. This is neither the time nor the article to report on the con. What I would like to do is share with you *Crazy from the Heat's* origin.

A bunch of Vegrants, and a couple of the convention's guests of honor were ensconced in the Katz' hotel room overlooking Los Angeles International Airport. The city was especially smoggy that Independence Day evening, or at least it seemed that way from my position in the back of the hotel room. The curtains were opened wide so we could watch the fireworks at Dodgers' Stadium. Between bursts of fiery chrysanthemums, the conversation continued in a fannish vein.

Someone (it even could have been me) lamented that they missed the ghodd feelings we all shared during the *Wild Heirs* days of Vegas fandom. Damn it, we were the Fandom of Ghodd Cheer! But times change; people move away; and a fandom not willing to change will end up sharing a footnote with the Chicago Science Fiction League in Harry Warner's next book.

"Let's do another *Wild Heirs*," someone suggested.

"It's been done before," was the reply. "And besides, there aren't enough Vegrants left in Vegas to be editors."

"What about the internet? Aren't we all *connected*?" was the counter.

"You're crazy!"

"Yea, crazy like a fox."

"More like Crazy from the Heat."

The rest shall become history.

Cathi Wilson

In a room filled with haze, not the rich brown, asphyxiating kind that L.A. is infamous for, more like the grey, smokey kind where fans are most agreeable, I heard Arnie Katz suggest to the Vegrants assembled, Joyce Katz, Ken & Aileen Forman, Ross Chamberlain, and Ben Wilson & myself, Cathi, that we do a fanzine again. Another multi-editor one, but we'd keep it down around a dozen or so this time, half the size of *Wild Heirs*.

Maybe it was visiting with old fannish friends, or the excitement of the trip that got the talking started. Perhaps, it was seeing all the other branches of fandom at Westercon that made us long for our roots in fanzines. But most likely, it was fatigue and the source of the haze. We all thought it was a great idea.

There was much eager discussion then. What shall we call it? I think that Joyce and I loved *CftH* instantly. We both lobbied for it at the discussion and I think the rest agreed to appease us.

Now we had a name, who would be our editors? Well of course those assembled. But, would seven be enough to carry this awesome responsibility of starting another *Vegrantszine*? The answer of course is, no way.

We would have to invite our Washington branch, the Springers. And since Tom & Tammy have a new bundle of joy, Natalie Lynn, to absorb every spare moment, we would help them with their burden of responsibility.

Now let's see, that makes nine. Not near enough. Is one artist enough? Yeah, Ross is great and all, but he isn't Ghod. We'd have to ask Alan White. He brings the total to ten. Not quite the golden number. We'll have to think on the rest.

Ross Chamberlain:

I'm *not* Ghod? I'd thought... But no, it's true I don't recollect tossing off that many miracles, lately.... Especially at the con. Where were the water brothers there, I want to know? Or am I thinking of some other deity...um, I mean fan.

I was all in this under false pretences, you know. Nothing to get into a rich brown funk about, but Bruce Pelz had had an odd moment before he won the bid on the con, and asked, and I'd had an odd moment and said okay, and, after several hours on the Interstates of Nevada & California including a pleasant stop-off at Ken and Aileen's neat (and getting neater) new home, now here I was, in fabled LA, watching modernist/ surrealist surroundings of LAX through upper-floor windows as I move through intermittent throngs of fen I don't know, thrust into a kind of anonymous prominence just because I like to draw stuff. [*deep breath*] So there was a kind of haze I wandered through throughout the long weekend, with intermittent moments of unaccustomed attention breaking through.

Thus, I have to acknowledge the insidious development of a plan for me to participate in

this new instrument of *Los Vegrantes* as a kind of front guy.... Well, okay, the idea is I'll do the covers for change, that's a -- oh. You *did* get it -- Well, anyway, the scheme must have developed practically under my nose while my mind was elsewhere. Bad image. Never mind. So now I must add a kind of forgery to my resume... Contributing to the delinquency of what I suspect is bound to be a fanzine designed to stir up the heat in more ways than one.

Arnie Katz:

Never let it be said that we dogs are too old to learn new tricks. To the contrary, we're always ready to swipe a good idea and turn it to our ambiguous purposes. With thoughts of this new fanzine already percolating through my system like some fannish drug, I saw what LASFS did at Westercon in lieu of a sensitive tribute to Bruce Pelz. It seemed only natural to take the concept LASFS pioneered and adapt it to *Crazy from the Heat*.

In particular, my imagination fastened on the Pillar of the LASFS. Prior to his death, Bruce suggested recognizing the club's great contributors by a plaque bearing their names affixed to the center pillar of the LASFS club house.

At first, it shocked naïve, from-the-sticks me that the Pillar of the LASFS award costs \$4,000. No, not the plaque, the award. You pay the LASFS Four Large and they make you a Pillar of the LASFS.

"So much for Ted White's Meritocracy," I mused as they held the auction to buy Bruce Pelz this accolade. I was familiar with the concept of honors based on the level of contribution, but I never associated it with fandom. It always seemed more like a Rotary Club or Church Charity Drive sort of thing.

That open LASFS meeting opened my eyes. So I'm proud to announce that, with the approval and connivance of my nine co-editors, *Crazy from the Heat* is going into the Glory for Gold business.

Why has no one done this?

Good taste aside, no fanzine doer had the time. They were too busy whoring after Hugos

Blowing Off Steam V — A rich (brown) history.

to think of extolling anyone else, even for a tidy profit.

We at *Crazy from the Heat* do not have the glittering prospect of a Fanzine Hugo to distract us from the Great Work of providing our subculture with purchasable honors that bring fame and egoboo within the reach of even the most untalented.

We at *Crazy from the Heat* are secure in the knowledge that All Known Fandom will give us the Hugo the year *after* Real Soon Now no matter how wide we spread our legs and try to look enticing.

With nothing to lose, we are free to ignore the Fanzine Hugos and prostitute ourselves in this new, more lucrative way. And you, the fanzine fans, are the beneficiaries. Not only are we going into the egoboo-for-hire business, but we're going to go right at our chief competitor. We plan to be number one in ersatz ego-inflators or kill the lot of you trying.

That's why I am particularly proud to introduce, in this momentous first issue, our flagship award, the lynchpin of our bogus award line... The Pillar of Fire. This honor can be yours for just \$5,000.

"What?" you say. "\$5,000? I can be a Pillar of the LASFS for \$4,000!"

And *that* is exactly my point. For only a little more than the price for having your name on a plaque in the LASFS clubhouse, you can have your name repeatedly mentioned in an issue of *Crazy from the Heat*.

Really, there's no comparison. The Pillar of Fire is the Cadillac of unearned accolades.

The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society is a very impressive group and all, but it is only *one* group in *one* city. What happens if *one* big fat LASFS member stumbles into the pillar and takes down the whole building? Where's your Pillar of the LASFS then? It's gone, that's what.

Lost amid the rubble. *Crazy from the Heat* lacks the rich history of the LASFS. True but then, we haven't got an award named for a child molester, either. *Lack of tradition*, you see, is not always a bad thing.

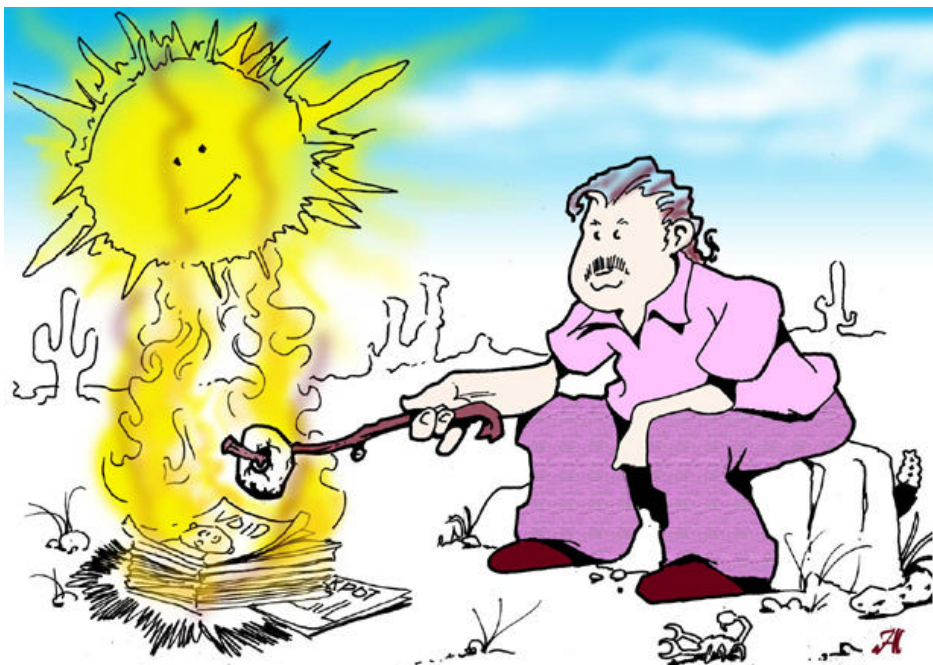
Unlike the LASFS clubhouse, which is subject to all manner of disasters from earthquakes to filking, *Crazy from the Heat* is everywhere at once, dispersed through the world on the wings of the Internet. (And if the Internet fails, there's always the copies we're depositing in FAPA mailings.) With the Pillar of Fire award, your egoboo is eternal, timeless, immutable.

By now you're probably convinced to spend you vainglorious dollars with *Crazy from the Heat* instead of that risky southern California venture. I always said fans were slans and this proves it. So you're probably wondering what you get for your \$5,000.

If you purchase the Pillar of Fire award, you'll become the focal point of an issue of this fanzine. From front cover to back, your name will be mentioned, often favorably, by our skilled cadre of ass-kissers. We'll even underline your name so you can pick it out more easily.

We've thought of everything. We're ready to go, ready to give the affluent their place in fanhistory.

It is fitting that we start off the Pillar of Fire



award with someone of genuine merit, someone who could actually deserve an award. Therefore, it is with great pride that we announce the recipient of the very first Pillar of Fire Award...

rich brown!

Congratulations, rich brown, on being the first to qualify for this sure-to-be-coveted honor. May you burn brightly for all eternity! If we had any reams left from Pace Paper, we'd run this issue off on that rich brown twiltone so many Fanoclast and Brooklyn Insurgent fans used so long ago. (Those who'd like an incredible recreation of this visual from a bygone age are invited to spill Diet Coke on their printed out copy of *Crazy from the Heat*. Now send us the \$5,000, rich brown, and no one will get hurt.

This just in. Our legal counsel, Barry the Law Guy, has just informed us that there is a problem with the Pillar of Fire award. (Barry is not an attorney, but he has been sued more than any other three guys we know.)

According to Barry the Law Guy, the fact is that rich brown actually published a fanzine called *Pillar of Fire*. Since Las Vegrants pride themselves on not stealing from anyone still capable of defending their rights, something must be done.

As a gesture of good will, and admitting no legal responsibility for our actions, *Crazy from the Heat* has decided to wave the \$5,000 fee *this one time only*. This will never *ever* happen again.

Who will be the next issue's Pillar of Fire? Keep watching the bank accounts and see!

Ben Wilson:

It was hot, really hot. Sun beating down on a red, not a rich brown, but a red car, shooting across the desert at high speeds. Four fans headed back to Sin City after a full weekend of ignoring the Crazies, eating Canters and being in an altered state of mind. Man, was it hot.

Here we were full of fannish energy in full discussion over *Crazy from the Heat*, the very same fanzine you are holding. Should we do this... or how about that?

"Will it all be for fun or are we going to use

CftH for some higher purpose?"

It was a passing comment that struck a cord, well actually it was more like a full stanza. It came floating up from the back seat to stick on the windshield like a thought balloon. There it sat, for me to look at for 150 miles. "What higher purpose could there be?" I thought to myself, for by that time only the driver was awake. "Is there a higher purpose? Surely not TAFF and The Vegrants have no feuds now that the Shrimp Brothers have disbanded. So what could there be?" Did I mention that it was hot?

Mind drifts...

Westercon would have been better if Frank Lunney, Ted White, rich brown and a whole slew of others, could have been there. Man, I've got to find a way to go to Madison for Corflu, to a fannish convention.

How nice would that be, I mused as I drifted back to Corflu #12. Smoke filled rooms, conversations till 2 in the morning and all that good food.

"Ben, you ok?" Joyce waking up, asked me.

"Want me to drive for a while?"

"I'm fine." I mumbled back, as I adjusted myself to a more comfortable position. "Just thinking."

"About..." I hear from Arnie, after a short pause.

"Oh, I was thinking how I missed some of the fans I'm used to seeing at conventions. Wondering when the next time I'd get a chance to be in their company." Looking to see if Ross was also awake.

"With *CftH*, we can be back in contact with all of fandom." Arnie encouraged. "Speaking of which, let's get back to discussing *Crazy from the Heat*. I was thinking..."

"And there's always Corflu." Joyce squeezed in.

I heard Arnie, Ross and Joyce talking about *CftH*, I think I even threw in a comment or two but the same thoughts keep running through my head. *Corflu Madison. Number 20. East side of the country. Following year it comes back west. Number 21.*

Then somewhere near the Nevada, California state border a different line of thought started running through my demented brain. *Maybe we*

should have another Corflu in Vegas. Everyone would come to Vegas, right? This had to be from the heat.

So we all took a few weeks to recoup, especially me, and now we're forging ahead with all our half-baked plans. As you can see *CftH* was not just a lot of hot air from the desert, along with the thoughts of hosting Corflu, which have grown stronger. In fact, Ailene and Cathi have given Ken and me permission and agreed to join us in the fray. So if you'll have us, The Formans and Wilsons would like to host Corflu Blackjack for our tribe in the spring of 2004.

Flavor of Corflu Blackjack, well, pretty traditional, with heavy focus on hospitality. Located on the Old Strip, Fremont St., in order to take advantage of lower room rates, walking distance to other attractions and eateries. With the new Mall opened on Fremont there are now movie theaters and shopping for your pleasure, without having to face the traffic.

So let us know what ya' all think. I flash back to that trip across the desert just a few long weeks ago, and I see that thought balloon. "Will it all be for fun or are we going to use *CftH* for some higher purpose?"

I guess the answer would be, we're going to have fun with our higher purposes.

John Hardin:

I have that feeling you get when you miss the beginning of a conversation.

Or maybe it's the feeling you get when you start to read a fanzine in the middle. In this case the fanzine would be titled *WesterCon considered as a series of semi-precocious stoners*.

Yes, I had no *WesterCon*. I wanted to go, but I've wanted a lot of things lately, and you see where that's gotten me. I *do* have a rich brown tan, or at least what passes for tan after six years in pasty-white land.

It feels good to be back, but I have missed a lot of conversations. My fellow Vegrants invited me to play along despite this handicap, and I don't have to try hard to feel the renewed fannish *esprit de corps* they found in LA. I hope we can transmit some of that same spirit; some of Ben's higher purpose, in these pages. If not, well, console yourself with the cover by

Ross "Ghod-like" Chamberlain. The illos are good, too. And we throw a party just about better than anybody.

So get a cool drink, find a shady seat, help yourself to a sinfully rich brownie and you'll be pretty close to where we're coming from.

To get closer, bean yourself in the head with a ball-peen hammer once or twice. Now you're *Crazy from the Heat*.

Arnie Katz

The meds kicked in and the 10 editors and their helpers are all quite placid, at least for the moment. But don't worry, they wrote plenty of articles and columns before they were returned to their secure rooms. It all happens on the next page.

Ed Cox, Doodle in This Space

Back in the day, the harried editors of mimeographed fanzines sometimes found themselves with awkward little spaces at the ends of articles. They were unsightly.

Since drawings were practically impossible to re-size, the spaces often remained blank. Until, that is, Lee Jacobs began dedicating them to the doodling propensity of his buddy, Maine's gift to fanzine fandom, Ed Cox.

There's no doubt that we could have filled this spot with an illo, digitally sized to perfection. Some of you may even point out that this is a rather substantial place that could've taken almost any illo we cared to place here. (We needed the extra space for this explanation, without which some might not have understood the true meaning of "Ed Cox Doodle in This Space".)

We could've put an illo here, true, but this is our first issue and we wanted to do something Very Special.

So accept, with out compliments, this delicious retro taste of fanzine fandom's bygone era:

Ed Cox Doodle in This Space



THANKS FOR SHOWING UP, ROSSI!

Parching Zone

Column by Ross Chamberlain

Conagerie Daze

One day in the spring of 2001, Bruce Pelz told me he was bidding to host the Westercon fan convention in Los Angeles over the 4th of July weekend, and asked if I'd like to be Artist Guest of Honor if he won the bid.

Now Bruce, a bit more than half a year older than I, had been a mover and shaker in fandom for longer than I've been associated with it, which is 35 years or so. I only met him a couple of times in that time; he was based on the West Coast and I hung out most of that time on the East Coast.

The first time I met him he asked if I'd like to participate in a project he had in mind, a Fannish Tarot deck, in which each card would be illustrated by a different fanartist. Sure! I did the Four of Cups; I thought it fit me. I was happy with the result (though looking at it since I might have done a couple of things differently), but I was in fantastic company.

Sadly, Bruce passed away in early May, two months before the convention, which became, in

effect, a striking—and so appropriate—memorial to him.

I understand Bruce was nicknamed "Elephant"; he was a big (not of pachydermal proportions, but imposing), charming fellow—when he wanted to be; I'm told he had another side to his personality, but I never bore the brunt of it.

Anyway, I was reluctant about accepting that honor, even while glowing with the egoboo—I'm not much of a convention-goer, and awkward in social situations—but he convinced me when he pointed out he was asking Robert Lichtman as Fan Guest of Honor.

Well, Bruce won the bid, and I was committed. Over the intervening time I'd write and discard things I might say in a speech and stuff like that, and try to think of cartoons or illustrations that would be appropriate. I did agree to do a cover for the program book, and I've had positive comments on the result of that effort. As it turns out, I never had to use any of the speech ideas; I did do a set of 8.5x11 color printouts—one

each—of a number of my illustrations, many of which I grabbed from my website galleries, and when the time came displayed them in the convention's art show. They were much outshone, both technically and imaginatively, by most of the items in the other displays, but my collection, if low-tech appearing in comparison, was at least more eclectic!

Not being a fan of flying, I rode to Los Angeles with Arnie, Joyce and Ben Wilson (who drove). I'd had earlier thoughts about driving it myself, but as we drove westward along I-15 through Death Valley, superbly comfortable in the Katz's air conditioned car, I was grateful that everyone who'd ever heard me mention the possibility said *no*, don't do it. My car does not have a working A/C...

I had not selected or requested participation in any particular events at the convention, and left it up to Mike Glycer, who with Shaun Lyon headed up the programming team; as a result I found myself scheduled to be on five panels, one each day of the convention but Saturday, when there were two. As it turned out, the first, on Thursday, the 4th, was scheduled at 1:15 PM, and we were still driving into town about that time. Needless to say I was a no-show. The topic was "Book Covers as Eye-Candy: How do artists and publishers get you to pick up *this* book? Is art better that way?" I would have shared it with Editor Guest of Honor Beth Meacham, fanartist and early *Star Trek* activist Bjo Trimble, and John Hertz, a fanwriter and scholar. Though I've never had any of my art work published in the professional SF field, and thus wasn't really qualified for the topic, I regret missing that one just for the company I'd've been keeping on that panel. At least Bjo, whom I've never yet met. I did meet Hertz later.

The evening was given over primarily to an open meeting of LASFS, which was largely given over to a memorial to Bruce Pelz, but also included an auction and some other things. It went on so long that it essentially pre-empted another scheduled event, a kind of mixer entitled "A Voyage on Noah's Ark," intended as a welcome to the convention.

The next day I was in the audience for an interview with Robert Lichtman, conducted by Ar-

nie Katz, which was fun, and then joined a panel with the two of them and Greg Benford on the topic of "The Void Boys and Friends: the legend of the *Void* fanzine, its history...and future?" Of the four of us, Greg was the only representative of the original Void Boys, who along along with Ted White, the late Terry Carr, and Pete Graham, had published the mimeographed, and, yes, legendary, *Void* in the 1960s. Arnie subsequently published *Quip*, initially conceived as an homage to *Void* and went on in its own way over the next few years. I had never contributed to *Void*, but did covers, generally multi-paged (one of *Void*'s innovations), for *Quip* during its span. Initially, my work also paid homage to the work of Bhob Stewart, who did covers for *Void*; I, too, went pretty much my own way as *Quip* continued publication. Some years after the apparent demise of that fanzine Arnie and John D. Berry compiled a last edition of *Void* #29, from materials, stencils, etc., that had been intended for that number, supplied by Ted, and thus they could lay some claim to Void Boyishness. Arnie and Robert contributed a lot to the overviews of *Void*'s place among other fanzines, but for the most part this panel turned to Greg's reminiscences of those days; a good thing, as among his many talents he is an excellent raconteur.

That evening many of us joined the Locus Awards Banquet. I got to sit at a forward table with Elayne Pelz, Bruce's widow, who before he died had already worn several hats in the administration of the convention, including treasurer and membership coordinator. She was clearly only getting moments to relax at this dinner, but she was charming and amusing— For example, she noted that in addition to the standard banquet fare of rubber chicken the hotel had also provided rubber mousse for dessert. On her left was Author Guest of Honor Harry Turtledove, with some of his family. On my right was Fuzzy Pink Niven, wife of author Larry Niven, who was on her other side. I'd met her earlier, as she headed up the art show; she's almost as sweet as her name would imply, and no, I don't know if that's really her name or a fannish cognomen. Her husband was elegant in Regency costume. I've never visited any of the Regency dances at fan conventions (one was scheduled for after the banquet),

but I understand they're very popular among some.

One feature of the banquet was the awarding of commemorative plaques to the guests of honor. I mumbled something on receiving mine, just after Robert's—I was introduced as Robert Chamberlain by the presenter, who apologized unneedfully (I'm easy-going), but it had thrown me off balance and I couldn't remember the few words of gratitude I'd intended to say. Robert and I had a good chuckle afterward as we left, before the speeches began, to join Arnie & Joyce and others at the fan lounge, which was where we mostly hung out when not otherwise occupied by convention events. Fan friends whom I got to see at the convention that I don't get to see that often otherwise include Belle Churchill and Eric Davis, Ken and Aileen Forman, Art Widner, and Toni Weisskopf and Moshe Feder (editors at Baen Books). From the Las Vegas contingent (whom I see a bit more frequently) there were also Cathi Wilson (Ben's wife), Roxanne Gibb and Michael Bernstein. I suspect I've blanked on some other names.

On Saturday I shared another panel with Arnie, plus Charlie Brown, publisher of *Locus*, Moshe, and film editor Norm Hollyn, on the topic "New York, New York: What a Wonderful Fandom: talking about fandom in the Big Apple." Moshe is a long-time friend from my days in New York, and is the only one of the panel still living there (okay, in Queens) but I think this was the first time I'd met either Charlie or Norm. This panel consisted mostly of reminiscences (for all but Moshe) of our days in and around New York and (including Moshe) our introductions to fandom there. Moshe updated us on what seems to be currently the pretty low-steam activity of fandom in the metropolitan area, though he and a few others maintain informal monthly gatherings.

The second panel for me was one called "Capturing the Feel of Space: If you've never been there, how do you know what space really looks like?" Among those scheduled were author David Gerrold and artist and costumer Sue Dawe, neither of whom showed. Those who did were Todd McCaffrey (author Ann McCaffrey's son, I learned later), a space buff and engineer who has interviewed astronauts, and John Hop-

kins, a professional artist. Todd took over the moderator job that I assume Gerrold should have had; he did well enough but we all came at the question from different angles. John (who bravely accepted and quickly went on from someone's joking reference to the hospital) took the title question very literally and tried to explain how he had to bypass the reality of no atmospheric perspective in space in order to capture a sense of distance, while Todd aimed at telling how astronauts reacted subjectively to the experience of being Out There. Someone from the audience amplified this with a remark about how some astronauts claim there's a "smell" to space. I went more with John's approach, but said that what I tried to do was capture strangeness or difference in my images, either with odd subjects or perhaps multiple light sources that wouldn't normally be familiar to those of us confined to Earth.

To sum up, Todd asked us what art materials we'd take with us into space. John mentioned particular paints and equipment and stuff. When it came to me, my reply was: "Digital camera, Photoshop." I was pleased with the quick grins, nods and chuckles I got from that answer.

That evening, in the fan lounge, we had a retrospective and reminiscence session about the late Bill Rotsler. Bill Morrow, friend of Rotsler and with him in his last days, pretty much took over the gathering and I'm afraid the session turned rather downbeat as he discussed the final days, rather than a celebration of Rotsler's legacy. I suppose there was room for that, but some of us felt we would have liked the other approach as more appropriate to Rotsler's zest for life.

(I've recently begun re-reading his novel, *Patron of the Arts*. I remember enjoying it a lot the first time around. I still like it as a story, but now find it a bit preachy about art and attitudes about art. That's cool—who better to discuss the topic? And it certainly serves its purpose—those preachy Heinleinesque dialogues between the first-person protagonist and the woman who becomes his obsession establish their rapport in the first chapters. But still...)

On Sunday, I was scheduled for a panel on "All Time Greatest Comics: the best of the best" along with Marv Wolfman, Dennis Maloney, Len

Parching Zone IV — You can go home again.

Wein and Chris Weber, all professionals in the comic books field. I was not qualified to join that group; I don't even keep up with what's happening in the field these days—it's a far cry from the comics I used to devour as a kid.

The best I might have done was to reminisce about some of my favorites from back in the '40s and very early '50s, pre-Wertham and the Comics Code.

Ben, Arnie and Joyce were anxious to start for home—so was I for that matter—so I came into the panel room, a bit late as it happened (the previous session, with Robert and Art Widner reading favorite selections from fanzines, had run overtime) and advised the panel that I would not be joining them, explaining I really didn't belong there.

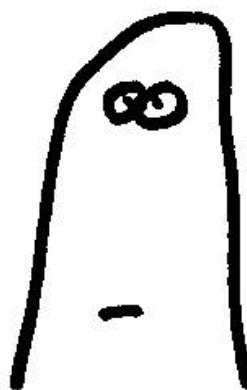
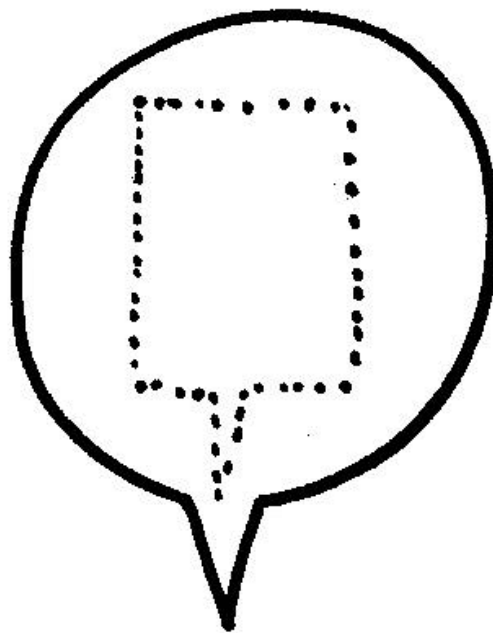
I'm not sure who was the moderator, but after the initial look of surprise, I heard him being very gracious about it as I left. It almost made me sorry I'd opted out, actually—almost.

I was glad, though, when we got under way, and through the balance of the trip home, Death Valley and all.

Westercon 55: Conagerie was an interesting experience. Again, I'm not that fond of conventions, and in general they're only useful to me as opportunities to see people I haven't seen in a long time. I got to meet Marty Cantor at long last, after getting quite a mental image of him in e-mail group postings that turned out to be quite erroneous and yet reaffirming.

A number of people weren't able to attend that I wish had been able to, such as Ted White, Frank Lunney, Hope Leibowitz, Steve Stiles, Dan Steffan, all of whom would have had to come from distant places, and more locally, Alan and Dedee White, and Bill and Laurie Kunkel. Well, maybe next time?

Huh? Shut your mouth, Ross. Conventions will have to come to me from now on. Fortunately, some of our local folk are working on that!



AMNESIA



Muy Caliente

Column by Aileen Forman

You Too Can Learn Three Phrases of Spanish in Only Twenty Years!

I was a mature adult before the realization that I had no talent for Spanish hit me in the face. I never even heard Spanish spoken until I was almost twenty. (You have to remember that I grew up in the Midwest area of the United States. The only “furrin” language that we were exposed to was that weird-ass pseudo-Southern accent that so many of the local yokels from the inbred region of Iowa, where the rich brown soil produces tall corn but few intellectuals.)

¡Rico marrón está muy guapo!

I moved to the Los Angeles area when I was nearly twenty and immediately started what would become my lifelong struggle with Spanish. The city and street names were tongue twisters and I had no idea how to pronounce them. It didn't help that LA folks tend to slur their speech, making El Segundo sound like Elsigudo while La Cienega became Lawsy-enga. Still, it didn't impact my life that much until I started working for

Continental Airlines as a reservations agent.

¿Te apetece venir a mi casa a hacer lo que de todas maneras diré que hemos hecho?

My boss told me that if I got a call from a customer who spoke a foreign language, I was to go to a specific screen on the computer, where I should read a phonetically spelled phrase that essentially said, “Hold the line, I'll pass you on to someone who speaks your language” would allow me to put them on hold politely. And, fairly soon, such a thing came to pass.

Da-me los cables puente de batería, los polos se han secapados.

“¡Hola!” Chirped a voice on my incoming line. “Er... Hello!” I responded, trying desperately to remember how to get to that damn screen. The lady on the line continued to babble happily in my ear, not realizing that I had absolutely no idea what she was saying. At last the screen came up and I started to follow the phonetic spelling. “Seenyor Seenyoreeta, sobrey-see-eye-mee-ento...” But by this point, my little Spanish lady was giggling hysterically.

Flustered, I started over again. “Seenyor Seenyoreeta, sobrey-see-eye...” Too late. She started laughing uproariously. Holding my finger grimly over my place on the screen, I persevered onward in a flat Midwest accent. “Mee-ento en el tele-phon-o poor faver.” Shrieks of laughter assailed my ear. “Oosted Oostedes...”

By this point, the lady was laughing so hard that my cheeks were flushed with shame. Obviously, I was doing something very wrong. Acknowledging my failure, I finally just put her on hold and transferred her to the Spanish desk. It was years before I would realize that I was essentially saying, “Mister/Missus, please stay on the telephone. You (male) You (female) will be helped by someone who speaks Spanish.”

Tu aliento ole como líquido de corrección.

That was not a good beginning but it got worse from there. I decided a few years later that I would take an adult course in Spanish at our local college. Interestingly, the teacher was from Spain. It was a fun course, in which I learned to say such sparkling conversational pieces as “My name is Aileen” and “I do not speak Spanish” with a wonderful upperclass lisp.

Quién corte el barco de Courtney?

I visited Puerto Vallarta armed with my Castilian accent and a phrase book. (My favorite phrase was “*Perdón amigos, es que se me reventó la cabeza*” which roughly translates to “Pardon me, friends, but my head just exploded.”) I soon learned that everyone in Mexico apparently speaks English. Even people who only knew enough English for “My name is Maria” and “I don’t speak English” suddenly managed to learn English when faced with the possibility of me actually speaking my horrible Spanish at them. Ashamed, I resolved to continue taking classes.

Quiero mucho ver las diapositivas de vuestra operación de hígado pero en primer lugar necesito ir cortar mi cabeza en pedazos pequeños con mi peine.

Twenty years, seven trips to Mexico, and many, many Spanish classes later, I can now say “My name is Aileen” and “I don’t speak Spanish”. Oh, and “Where is the bathroom (female).” Why? Why?? ¿¿¿Porque??? Apparently I am one of those people who can learn the accent per-

fectly (I eventually even acquired a good Mexican accent) but I cannot retain the actual words. In class, I can count to one hundred, recite the names of the week, learn how to claim a pen in the name of my aunt and order a surf and turf dinner. Once I leave the classroom, I remember only that my name is Aileen and I don’t speak Spanish.

¿Quién es ese hombre raro mirándome por la ventana?

Strangely, I can almost understand conversational Spanish. After all those classes (not to mention the tapes, films and friends who tried to help), I can now listen to most Spanish conversations and figure out what they’re talking about. Sadly, I cannot respond. So does this imply that I’m a weird sort of Spanish mute?

Vale, puedes quedarte a mi lado, siempre que no hables sobre TAFF.

I guess it could come in handy for eavesdropping, but I’ve not yet been in a position to exploit that. I can see me now, sitting in some sleazy Tijuana tavern, covertly listening to Mexican spies and then reporting to the FBI. “They said something about a horse. Or was it a shrimp? Anyway, they’re definitely going to be borrowing my aunt’s pen.” Anyway, I’m not going to give up because...

¡Soy muy loco porque el calor!

Or something like that.

Translations:

Rich brown is very handsome.

Fancy coming back to my place and doing the things I’ll tell everyone we did anyway?

Hand me the jump leads, the chickens have escaped.

Your breath smells like correction fluid.

Who sawed Courtney’s boat?

I would very much like to see the slides of your liver operation but first I must go and hack my head into tiny pieces with my comb.

Who is that strange man looking at me through the window?

Okay, you can stand beside me, as long as you don’t talk about TAFF.

I’m Crazy from the Heat!



Sunstroke

Column by Cathi Wilson

All this talk about Corflu Blackjack has got me thinking about the last time the convention was in Las Vegas. Ben and I happened to get married the first night of the con.

Ben got this bee in his bonnet that it would kind of be our initiation into fandom. He was so enthusiastic about it, I couldn't possibly say no. Anyway, it didn't really matter to me. I just wanted to marry him.

He pitched it to the Katzes, who were throwing Corflu and they loved the idea. We would have our nuptials sometime after the opening ceremony on Friday night. They were very generous and offered to supply our cake.

The guest list was easy. All convention goers were invited, along with any relatives that could make it. That done, now to decide about the attendants. I wanted my daughters, Nikki and Cassie, to be my bridesmaids. A friend of mine,

Ann, would be my maid of honor.

Ben's groomsmen were of a much more fan-nish assemblage. Arnie Katz and Ted White would walk my daughters down the aisle. Ken Forman was to be best man. And Charles Burbee would give me away.

My first wedding I made the mistake of being with the groom all day before the wedding. We did nothing but argue. By the time we got to his parents house all I wanted to do was kill him. I wasn't going to go through that again. I decided to stay with Ann the night before.

My friends took this opportunity to throw me a bachelorette party. There were huge amounts of alcohol and a stripper. We started consuming the intoxicating beverages early in the evening. By the time the "exotic dancer" got there, I was far past three sheets to the wind.

Now, I don't know if anyone else has had the

experience of a chiseled male specimen gyrating his naughty bits in front of you solely for your pleasure, but it sounds better in theory.

I'm sure I might have enjoyed it more, one, if I were not so ragingly drunk that I couldn't see straight. Two, if I was even remotely attracted to this man, who I might add was trying to shove his tongue down my throat. And, three, if I weren't getting married the next day.

It ended up that my friends went out to celebrate while I stayed back and expelled the lethal amounts of alcohol still left in my stomach. I then passed out on the couch until bright new day came to greet me.

My wedding day. Hung over and the nuptials only hours away, I still needed to get my eleven and thirteen year old daughters and *me* ready for the big day. I won't go into the details, but with a lot of yelling, and screaming, and begging, and finally a little bribery, we were at last on our way to the hotel.

We were, of course, late. Everyone was rushed to get this thing started. Ben had made a recording of our music for the ceremony. I was to march to "Return to Innocence" by Enigma, our song, but there were two songs on the tape.

The first was to get everyone in their seats before the wedding party entered. I couldn't hear and when we were cued to go, we did. Burbee walked me down the aisle to melodic strains of Tom Petty crooning "Let's get to the point, let's roll another joint".

The wedding ceremony was lovely. The man I loved and I were standing up in front of our fannish and blood related families to share our joy.

The groom couldn't string two words together to save his life. It didn't help that Raven, the officiator, was running all the vows together instead of breaking them up in more easily digestible bites.

The reception was the usual stuff. A cake fight between the bride and groom. An emotional toast by the best man, Ken. The tossing of the bouquet and garter respectively. (Before the ceremony, Cora Burbee gave me her garter from her wedding. I kept that

one.) Lots of picture taking and posing.

Now that the formal stuff was over it was time to start the honeymoon. The rest of the evening was spent partying with other convention goers. My groom had come to me to say that he was going with JoHn Hardin to run some convention errands and that he would be back shortly.

A couple of hours later he was still not back. I was starting to fear that I might have become a widow before we started the marriage.

He finally appeared somewhere around midnight and told me not to go to our hotel room without him.

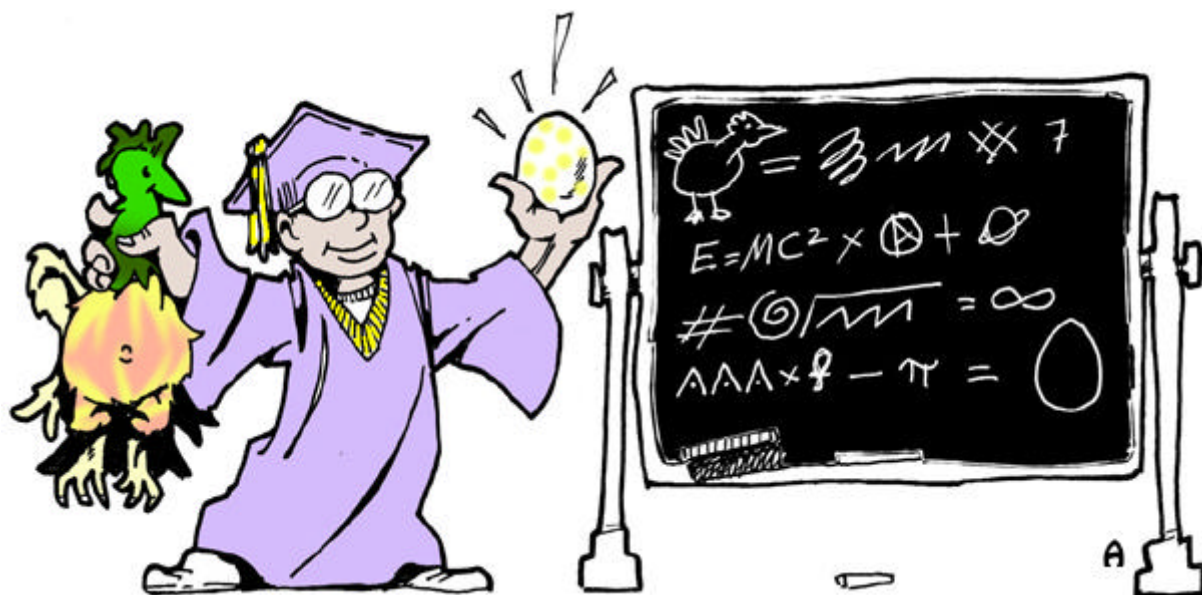
When we were sufficiently partied out for the evening, we went back to the room to end our night. I walked into the room to find my wedding bed covered in multi-colored rose petals.

It seems that he and JoHn went around the city pilfering the fragrant flowers from the yards of its unsuspecting residents. They were lucky they didn't get arrested for vandalism or aggravated herbicide.

The rest of the weekend was a blur of lots of great company, late night partying, intriguing conversations and enormous amounts of Vegas hospitality. (I'm still full.)

I hope that Corflu Blackjack will yield as many hazy recollections.





Hot Spring

Column by Ken Forman

Living on the edge of nowhere (Yucaipa California), I find myself with much time to sit on my veranda in a nice comfy chair. My gaze tends to wander across the pastures and open fields behind my house; the hillsides covered in a rich brown layer of dead vegetation; my mind is free to associate whatever thoughts it wishes to follow. Sometimes the results are entertaining, sometimes fanciful, sometimes...you know the rest. We've all done it.

This particular time, just a week or so after Conagerie (Westercon 55 in LA), I was slowly rocking in my comfy chair, watching a hawk fly overhead, his feathers glinting a rich brown/gold in the sunlight. My mind started drifting on mental thermals.. Suddenly I knew! I knew the answer!

You cannot imagine the all-consuming satisfaction I experienced when I realized I knew the answer to a question that has plagued mankind for many years. I know **the** answer, and I feel it's necessary to share this with all my friends.

I know what it's like laying awake at night

pondering imponderables; tossing and turning without ever finding resolve – not even enough of a solution to allow you to ignore the question. I want you all to know that *I know* the answer to at least one of life's persistent questions. So you can all just cross that one off your list. You're welcome.

What's that? Which question?

Are you ready for it?

"Which came first, the chicken or the egg," of course.

Aren't you excited? Aren't you reassured? Aren't you relieved?

Think of it, the next time some pompous, ignorant ass tries to impress some skirt by presenting that query in a party, you can speak right up and say, "Oh that one's been answered. You're obviously a bohemian." The girl he was trying to impress will be so moved by your verbal repartee that she'll be yours for the remainder of the evening. Don't worry about being hard on the twit, he deserves it, even if he were wearing a lovely jacket made out of a rich brown tweed, and

Hot Spring — What sound do mathematics make?

matching belt and oxfords made of rich brown leather.

So, yes folks, there IS an answer to that age-old puzzler.

For you skeptics out there, I want you to know the answer is sound mathematically, biologically, metaphysically, ethically, and physically. The solution is robust and likely to stand up to harsh scrutiny. Q.E.D.

I took the time to write down the solution — all 14 pages of it. I was thinking about sharing the details with the fannish community, but thought better of it. It's not very entertaining, pedantic, and makes for dry reading. It's simply not as exciting as sharing with everyone the *concept* of having the solution.

I just wanted you to sleep better.

I care!

Now that we've licked that one, I think we should all turn our attention to another question that begs an answer. In this case, I don't think it'll just come to me like the last one. I'm enlisting everyone's help with this one. Simply put, what are we going to do about fandom? Are we going to allow it to go gentle into that good night? I'd rather not, and I'd wager you're not either.

Oh, I know what you're thinking, "It's just post-convention hyper-fanac talking." You may be right. That's a chance I'm willing to take.

When the Vegnants published **Wild Heirs**,

we communed, we communicated, we connected with each other. Fannish Fandom requires interaction to supply grist for the mill. When we did things together, we'd then share that event with the rest of our friends through fanzines. I think this may be the underlying tie that motivates fandom. And, conversely, it's the explanation for fandom's apparent anemia.

Consider, if you will, Irish Fandom. I'm speaking of the Willis/Shaw/Charters/White/Berry era. Their fanzines almost always told the tale of two (or more) of them doing something together. Whether it be a feisty game of ghoddminton, jerry-rigging a typewriter, or going to the seashore.

Fans in the twenty-first century are interacting electronically, but not in person. It's not that the source of material has dwindled; rather the quantity of quality material has diminished. "Bob and Sally emailed each other," doesn't make good reading.

So what's the plan?

Occam's Razor cuts swift and deep.

The solution needn't be difficult.

Take advantage of every opportunity to be brilliant and interesting. Especially around fans, but it's okay to practice on other people, too. Be fascinating, and the fannish scribes will write about you. That's your goal, make them want to write about you.

Q.E.D.



UH-OH,
REALITY'S
COMING...



The Toasted Bagel

Column by Arnie Katz

The big, longhaired man lurches to his feet. Murmurs from the audience urge him on. His expression is complex and unreadable, though his eyes contain a secret knowledge of infinite sadness. With great deliberateness and much obvious hesitation, the man address the circle of expectant faces...

Hello, I'm Arnie... and I'm a Zinoholic.

Crazy from the Heal makes it semi-official: Las Vegas Fandom is back. Well, the part of it that was here (fanzine fandom) and then went away is back. We've started this fanzine with every intention of producing quite a few issues and it's just possible we may actual do it. I'm a science fiction fan and I believe in possibilities.

Not only is Las Vegas Fandom back, but I am back, too. I'm probably as rusty as an old hinge, after building up an Internet site

(ProWrestlingDaily.com), but I am back.

The final issue of my most recent general circulation fanzine, *Jackpot*, is well over a year old. I knew when I did the last one that there'd never be another. I enjoyed *Jackpot!*, which I consciously intended to be a departure from my usual fanzines, especially in content.

Although I don't think I've ever received a finer or more bountiful crop of letters than I did for *Jackpot!*, it had more than its share of drawbacks. The one that's germane to the first installment of this column is that I couldn't stay away from warm, lovely, luscious faanishness for too long. (Too long for me. Whether it's too long for you remains to be discovered.)

Some fans, occasionally even including me, thought it might be a long time before I

marshaled my dwindling mental and physical forces for another dance with the Spirit of Trufandom.

My return to active status may surprise some, especially those who didn't notice I'd left.

True, this hiatus is like a fainting spell compared to the probnged fannish coma that was my 1976-1990 gafiation. And true, the timely appearance of an occasional article and a couple of FAPazines camouflaged the interregnum to some degree.

Yet I was... detached. I felt disconnected from fandom as other things gobbled up my time. I still kept in some contact with some friends, but fanzine fandom played little or no role in my life. Even Las Vegrants, which continues to meet regularly on the first and third Saturdays of the month, had become so unfannish that it offered no stimulation

At the time, the trip to Westercon seemed no more than a brief junket to this quiescent fan. The con had selected Ross Chamberlain and Robert Lichtman as, respectively, Art and Fan Guests of Honor. I wanted to support two of my dearest friends, bask in their reflected glory.

Going to Westercon was a *friend* thing, not a *fan* thing, I assured myself. That was the argument that won my internal debate about going to such an event. I put aside my too-often-repeated disinclination to attend large conventions. A great deal of help from the Formans and Wilsons made the idea feasible, so Joyce and I went to our first Westercon since the one in El Paso at which we were the Fan Guests of Honor.

You'll likely encounter details about the convention elsewhere in *Crazy from the Heat*. Who knows, I may even write a con report. (Probably not.) There is one thing that's germane to my theme.

Maybe it was the benign influence of Robert Lichtman or the rousing FAPA party, on Friday night. It might've been the Rotsler reminiscing that took me to the edge of tears before I fled or Moshe Feder's gracious comment about the role Joyce and I played in his fan career during the New York Fandom

panel. Maybe it was the three visits to Canters.

It might have been a lot of things and most probably was all of them rolled up together. The weekend made me face what I had willfully ignored: I was manifesting the same symptoms that led to my gafiation from 1976 to 1990.

Westercon reminded me of all the things I would miss in a life without fanzine fandom. That's when I recalled a line from a Joan Armatrading song, "I may look over my shoulder, but I will never leave your side." She could've been writing about fandom and me. (She wasn't, so I am.)

Maybe we weren't thinking clearly by Saturday evening, after several days of marathon partying, punctuated by sumptuous meals at Canters.

The fact that rich brown cast the deciding vote that we do a fanzine is somewhat suspicious in that rich brown didn't attend Westercon so far as we know.

In any case, I proposed a fanzine as a project that we could all do together. Everyone liked the idea, liked it better than I expected. And their enthusiasm fed mine..

I threw out a name, just to get things rolling. To my shock, they loved *Crazy from the Heat*. They shrugged off my offer of other names and busily invented column and department names to go with the new title.

It's hard to fault their logic. We are "from the Heat" and we are certainly crazy. It's a natural – and it'll look lots better on the page than *Maladjusted Maniacs from the 21st Century Sodom*.

It's hard to predict what to expect from *Crazy from the Heat*. Allowing for the overlap between this editorial group and the one that did *Wild Heirs*, similarities are inevitable. Much as some of us may need new personalities, you're pretty much stuck with the old ones.

Still, it's no longer the mid-1990s. Time and changes pretty much guarantee that *Crazy from the Heat* won't be a rerun of *Wild Heirs*. We've got a new look, some fresh ideas and maybe a few extra Insurgent impulses.

We hope you like what we're doing, because we'd very much like to hear from you.



Walking on the Sun

Column by John Hardin

Notes from WesterCon.

Thursday, (or was it Friday?) Got off the plane in LA, with no memory of getting on it and no luggage except for a carry-on bag that I didn't remember packing. Found the hotel shuttle without looking. Had to double-take at first sight of the big, black shuttle bus.

First thought the sign said "Charon." Looked again to read "Charter One." The driver was tall with long, bony hands. I wondered if I needed exact change to place on my eyelids.

Once I got to the hotel, I took the elevator straight to Ken Forman's room. "Come on in," said Ken. "I'm just unpacking my bags." I sat down on the bed where Ken was unloading his stuff. The rich brown bedspread was littered with an array of handcuffs, condoms, enema kits, ball gags, latex facemasks and several large vials of amyl nitrate. "So you're planning to spend some time among the media fans," I said. "No more than strictly necessary," Ken replied.

He then pulled a dangerous-looking, CO₂-powered dartgun out of his bag. I knew what that was for. Normally, I'm opposed to trophy hunting. But when it comes to Furry Fandom, I sup-

port it within limits. That particular gene pool needs some filtering.

When he was done unpacking, he put the dartgun and a few select items in a small bag. Then he slipped into something black and slinky and tossed a length of rope off the balcony. "Well, I'm off," he said. An understatement.

"Tom Springer's in room 235," he added as he climbed over the balcony and began rappelling into the darkness, so that's where I went next.

Once you smell opium, the fact that it's dried flower sap ceases to be abstract. One whiff and you know; it's glaringly obvious, nothing could smell like that *except* a flower.

Tom Springer's room smelled like a burning flower shop.

"John Hardin!" Tom exclaimed when he opened the door. A thunderhead of cloying, floral reek poured from the doorway. "I didn't think you were gonna be here!"

"I'm not sure I am." I said.

He laughed "Oh, you neither?"

Just then a bellman pushed a room service cart around the corner. He walked through the smoke cloud rushing from Tom's room, then

slowly collapsed to the floor, sighing deeply. His cart hit the wall with a merry tinkling sound. I looked at Tom. "Maybe you should come in," he said and disappeared into the cloud of smoke like a jinn returning to a lamp. I followed after, waving my arms in a vain attempt to see where I was going. I heard the door close behind me.

After a few steps I stumbled into a chair and sat down abruptly. The sweet smoke cleared enough for me to see a coffee table, littered with fanzines, and another chair.

Someone was sitting in it.

I was not surprised to see Andy Hooper. He was holding an elaborate hookah in one hand, and a fanzine in the other. His T-shirt was printed with Cyrillic characters; I could only make out the words 'Uzbek' and 'sheep.' The smoke from the hookah lofted angrily to the ceiling and then back to the floor, filling the room. It rumbled like a dwarf volcano.

Hooper handed me the hookah wordlessly.

"So. Heh." I laughed weakly. "You guys made sure to get a smoking room, right?"

He said nothing.

"You know," I went on, "I've learned that opium smoking is more of a morning drug. Smoke it too late at night and it's a real party killer."

Hooper leaned forward, his eyes burning with a fierce light. "Smoke it, Hardin."

So I did. I gave a pull on that pipe like it was the teat of Kali. Then I coughed so hard I wanted to throw up. When that was over, my head felt as if my eyes were spinning like slot machine wheels. Far off and deep, like vibrations through the earth, I heard a low 'ca-chunk, ca-chunk' repeating endlessly; a heartbeat in the land. Hooper had grown a few extra arms and his chair transmogrified into a large, colorful toadstool. He now wore a fez with a propeller on top.

This was some seriously good shit

I blinked my eyes a couple of times, and Hooper went back to normal. He reached across the table and gingerly pulled the hookah out of my palsied hands. The propeller fez was still perched on his head.

When I was again capable of speech, I said "So, Andy, what are you doing here?" He gave me a morose look.

"I'm not here. Neither are you."

The propeller on his hat began to turn as if in a strong breeze, but no wind disturbed the wall of smoke around us.

"So, where are we"? I said.

"Well," replied Hooper, "I'm at work. You're watching your kids."

"Ok, so why do I think I'm here talking to you?" I asked.

"You're not really here, but you really want to be here." Hooper answered. "That desire to be with other fans creates an echo; that echo takes your shape, powered by your desire, in this place."

I gestured at the fog filled room, and the vast hotel beyond.

"And what is this place?"

"This is backstage," said Andy Hooper.

"Backstage?" I asked brightly. "Like at the masquerade?"

"Kind of like that, Meyer."

For a second Andy's image wavered and he was somebody else; older, frailer, familiar from years before, but it was gone before I could place it.

"What did you call me?" I asked.

"I said, 'kind of like that, Hardin.'"

"This is backstage for reality, or as close as fans get to it" he continued. "This is the fannish dreamtime." Now the propeller was spinning as if in a cyclone; it buzzed like a radio-controlled airplane motor. "The locus from which all fandom emerges, fandom being echoes of the vibrations of this primal, this nexus eoplace and end place where all that is good and bad in fandom finds origination; this land of the enchant..."

Tom appeared out of the fog and snatched the hookah from Andy's hand with a laugh. "Jesus, Hooper, I think he gets it." Andy fell silent. I watched Tom take a hit off the pipe.

What do you know, your eyes really do spin.

"Right, I get it." I said.

"Hooper's saying this is the dreamtime, and if I ever find the lobby and get out of this place, I'll see Ayer's rock and space wallabies and shit like that, right?"

Hooper looked at me as if to ask if I was stupid.

"Are you stupid"? he asked.

Tom disappeared back into the smoke.

It seemed prudent to change the subject.

"Wait a minute" I said. "I saw Ken Forman here, and I know he really *is* coming to Wester-Con. What about him?"

"Oh, Ken's coming," said Andy "but he's not here yet. The Ken you saw and talked to was just as not-here as you aren't."

I took a moment to digest that.

"So I guess Victor Gonzalez is not here either?"

"Oh, he's here. Victor's in the dealer's room, trying to trade a never-opened *Best of Fosfax* for the soul of E. Everett Evans."

That sounded extremely unlikely.

"Best of Fosfax? They never printed such a thing," I said.

"See for yourself." Andy pointed to the fanzine-littered table. I took a closer look and saw that it was crawling with abominations: *Favorite LASFS Amateur Poetry*; *Complete Meeting Minutes of the N3F*; *Dalmation Alley 5 Yearly* and too many more to name; too horrible to be named. Fanzines that should not be. Their weird, inhuman cover illustrations overflowed with non-Euclidean shapes and Teddy Harvia cartoons. I spied one, thick as a telephone directory.

"Oooh, Abbie Frost's North American trip report." I reached for it, but Hooper's hand stayed me from cracking the cover, which radiated cold like a block of ice. "That was not meant for human eyes," Hooper said. "Britfans only."

"What is this?" I asked. "Where did these, these *things* come from?"

"I told you, all things good and bad in fandom come from this place. God-awful fanzines come from right here, the Coffee Table of Despair."

"It's horrifying."

"Not really" replied Hooper. "Like all things here, it serves a purpose. Without it, where would the average first fanzine come from? And how would we know good 'zines from bad?"

I was pretty sure I could tell the difference, but kept my opinion to myself. "So where do the good fanzines come from?" I asked.

"The fanzine lounge, of course."

"How do I get there?" I wanted to know.

Another morose look from Hooper. "You don't."

"But why not? Why am I here if I can't get to the fans and their fanzines?"

Andy spoke slowly to me, as if explaining something to a dull child. "How many fanzines have you read lately?" I paused. "Well, um, not very many..."

"And of those, how many did you LOC?" Andy interrupted.

"None, but..."

"Published any fanzines lately?" Now his tone was one of regretful inquiry, as if he were asking about my dead mother.

"You know the answer to that, Andy. I would've sent..."

He cut me off again. "There's the problem, Hardin. You don't do fan stuff. You're not really a fan anymore, so you cannot find the fanzine lounge." He paused. "Well, at this convention, *nobody* can find the fanzine lounge, but you're disqualified from even looking for it."

"So what can I do?" I asked.

"Well" Andy said, "if you want to be a fan, *act* like a fan. Read fanzines, write letters of comment."

"I can write letters of comment" I said.

"You have to mail them, too" he replied. It was my turn to look morose.

"Get right with Roscoe" Andy intoned. "And get current with fandom today. For Ghu's sake, you're in a story featuring Andy Hooper and Tom Springer. We haven't been in the fannish limelight for years. Next thing you know, the Shrimp Brothers will show up."

There was a knock on the door.

"Don't open that" barked Andy Hooper.

Suddenly a great gout of smoke leapt out of the hookah and obscured Hooper and the coffee table. The knock came at the door again, more insistent this time. There was a roaring, rushing sound in my ears, but I heard Andy Hooper repeat "Get right with Roscoe, John."

Now there was a pounding at the door, and the fog and roaring in my ears conspired to block the room from my senses, and all I could hear was the rushing sound of... water?

I leapt to my feet and heard water splash. Someone was still at the door, and I could hear my

name being called. The fog was thinning now, and it was raining.

Wait. Raining, indoors? I shook my head, and water ran down my brow, onto my bare shoulders. The rushing water was coming straight down on my head.

Someone was knocking on the bathroom door.

I stumbled out of the shower and hastily wrapped a towel around myself.

I opened the door and a cloud of steam rolled out of the closed bathroom. Karla was standing there, a look of concern on her young and beautiful face.

"John, are you okay? You've been in the shower a long time."

"Yeah, yeah. I'm fine" I mumbled. "Just uh, a little daydream."

The concern turned into annoyance. "Well, we live in the desert, right? Don't daydream with the water running."

"Alright, sorry" I managed to say, and shut the door again.

I turned around. The bathroom air was steamy, not at all like the narcotic fog in Tom's room. *Tom's room?* "I wasn't there. I was never there" I said to myself. Then I looked into the mirror.

I screamed.

Jesus, I'm a sight to see naked.

Then I saw the writing on the mirror; a fingertipped epigram in the condensed steam. 'Get right with Roscoe' it said.

I screamed again.

"What's *wrong* with you?" came Karla's voice from the other room.

"Uh, stubbed my toe?" I called back.

I stood there and stared at the mirror for a while. Then I went and got dressed and came back to look at the mirror again. The writing was gone, evaporated.

All I could see in the mirror now was a fringe-fan.

But if I concentrated, I could still feel the low vibration, like a heartbeat in the ground.

So I went in and sat down at the computer and began to type:

"Thursday, (or was it Friday?) Got off the plane in LA, with no memory of getting on it..."





Return to Vegas

Article by Woody Bernardi

It started back in the fall of 1997, after my 94-year-old grandfather had a massive stroke at the end of August. He had turned 94 in May and was as healthy as the proverbial horse up until the end of August. He was so strong, it took the better part of the next three months for him to finally let go of this life, which he did on November 13, 1997.

In October, he planned a dinner party for 12 to 15 immediate family members at The Country Inn, a favorite restaurant on Las Vegas' eastside. He and my grandmother were to celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary. It was a complete surprise to my grandmother.

He died in his own home (a small one-bedroom apartment he had shared with my grandmother for the last 17 years of his life) on the Las Vegas Strip. My grandmother, my mother, her sister, two of my sisters, three of my cousins, my two nieces, two of my nephews and I all worked together to provide him with the most comfortable and dignified ending to his life as possible.

We had a nurse and an occupational therapist coming in once or twice a week each. They kept saying "he won't make it through the night" or

"he won't make it through the weekend" and the next morning or on Monday, he would still be with us. Towards the end, he had lost all of his power of speech, but it was clear he could still recognize each of us.

Those of us who were living in Las Vegas (10 in all) traveled with my grandmother back to Boston to bury Grandpa in the plot that he will eventually share with Grandma (who will be 91 years old in October and is still living independently in their apartment). It's located in Wyoming Cemetery in Melrose, Massachusetts, the town in which my mother and her sister were born and raised.

My grandparents had only two children, each of whom had five children; thus my grandparents now have 10 great-grandchildren. At the time of his death my grandfather had six grandsons and four granddaughters. Normally the funeral home would not allow any of the family members to carry the casket up the steps into the church. But when we six stood by the rear door of the hearse before entering the church, they didn't argue with us. We carried our grandfather up the steps and into the church in which both of his daughters were married and at least two of his grandchil-

dren. One of my cousins was not there as he was at the hospital with his wife learning of the impending birth of my grandparent's 10th great-grandchild, so one of my nephews stood in for him.

I had been called upon to do one of the readings. Now, I grew up in the Eastern Orthodox Church and am well used to reading Old and New Testament passages in church. But when I got up to the lectern for my assigned reading, I saw grandpa's casket there at the center of the church and simply broke down and sobbed like a baby. Everyone waited patiently for me to compose myself and I read my passage. At 32, I was selfishly not ready to lose my grandfather. He was 37 when my mother was born. The fact that I had been able to spend 32 years of my life in the world along with him should have been enough. The man had 7 great-grandchildren who were teenagers, at the time of his death. You'd think I'd have been willing to let the man get some rest!

Initially I had planned a 10 day trip to encompass Thanksgiving in the land of the pilgrims, literally the land of my fathers (ever since the turn of the 20th Century anyway). But on Thanksgiving Day I announced my intention to remain in Boston. This decision had been based primarily on the fact that I had managed to get a job, through a temp agency in the city. Since I didn't have anything waiting for me in Las Vegas, I chose to remain in Boston.

At first I stayed with my father's brother and sister in-law in Waltham, a suburb northwest of Boston. They have a spare room that had been built as an in-law apartment for Auntie Fran's parents. Auntie Fran was my Godmother but she died in 1965 (when I was six months old) after living with leukemia for five years. Uncle Leno remarried five or six years later to Auntie Sue. When I was six or seven years old I asked Auntie Sue if she would be my new Godmother. She was so delighted that we have shared a special relationship ever since. Uncle Leno's three kids were very slow in accepting her after the loss of their mother. My request was an important sign of her acceptance in the family ("out of the mouths of babes...").

Unfortunately Waltham is a tad remote from Boston, thus making it a bit more difficult (not

impossible) to commute into Boston to work. So my grandmother asked her cousin in the North End (Little Italy of Boston) if she had a spare room. Cousin Frances owns the building in which she lives and offered me the 4th floor walkup, which was unoccupied at the time. So in early December I moved into the North End. This was vastly more convenient as it was just a seven minute walk to the North Station Orange Line Subway Station. From North Station it is just five stops to the Back Bay/South End Station and from there I needed only to cross the street and I would be in The Copley Place Mall (the site of NorEascon 4). The Boston office of Sun Life of Canada is located in one of the office towers at the center of Copley Place, along with the Canadian Consulate.

I worked a receptionist/security position; part of my duties was assisting two of the Human Resources Recruiters with processing the many resumes they received on a daily basis for the many positions available within the corporation. I worked this job for three months through the temp agency, until I found a permanent position in the Sales Office of Service Corporation International (SCI), Eastern Massachusetts Region. SCI is one of the largest funeral home corporations in the world. They are England and Australia's largest funeral provider.

They had placed an ad in the *Bay Windows* newspaper. *Bay Windows* is a weekly periodical serving the LesBiGay Community of Boston. I worked in an office located inside the J. S. Waterman and Sons Funeral Home on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston's Kenmore Square. This was also very convenient from my apartment in the North End, as the Green Line Subway was also accessible from North Station and it was just six stops on all three of the four Green Line trains. The E train changed tracks at Copley Place and continued in a different direction taking up Huntington Avenue past Symphony Hall, The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Northeast University and several other stops until it reached Cleveland Circle at the end of the line.

Each year on Patriots Day (No, this is not a special holiday commemorating the New England NFL Franchise) we would all stop working and peer out the windows on the Comm Ave side

of the building and watch the Boston Marathon participants run right through Kenmore Square. Kenmore Square was also hellish place to be during baseball season for anyone not a Red Sox fan whenever there was a home game at Fenway Park. Fenway is located just beyond Kenmore Square, making this a major stopping off point for anyone taking the subway to a home game.

J. S. Waterman & Sons is located within a building which was built in the early 18th Century as a private home (Victorian Mansion). In the mid-19th Century J. S. Waterman purchased the building for his family run funeral home business.

After a year and a half, during which time my workload and responsibility had been increased three different times while my salary was never changed, I was fired. They actually put in writing that I was not demonstrating a willingness to do my job. What I had in fact done was ask for a pay raise on two different occasions. Each request came after I had been working for well over a year.

After I had been with SCI for over a year with no pay raise, I decided to start looking for something else. I realized the possibility of getting a pay raise was very low. So, I again turned to the want ads in *Bay Windows* and found an ad for a loan assistant at a local real estate office. I went and met with the owner of the office (Arnold Silva) and discovered that it wasn't quite what I had thought.

The wording of the ad led me to believe that there was a salary involved. But Arnold explained it was 100% commission. I took it anyway. Unfortunately Arnold would only give me a few loans on which to work so he wouldn't have to share the commission on everything.

Eventually I went to real estate school and got my license to sell RE in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In January 2000, I began working as a real estate salesperson. Here again I had some difficulties since I am not your average hustling salesperson type. I cannot take rejection very well and do not like to bother people, so building my own customer base proved to be a difficult chore in itself.

Don't get me wrong, I am not a shy person by any means. Unfortunately many people do not

believe that the work we do is worth the commissions which we are paid. The fact is we provide a valuable service, not the least of which is ensuring that a seller gets true fair market value of their property and that buyers do not get taken for a ride on a purchase price.

In most cases our commission will not even cut into the net return a seller can expect, as they very often get a much lower than fair market value for their property if they try to sell it themselves. Buyers typically don't even have to pay anything out of pocket, as their purchase price would be essentially the same whether or not a licensed agent is involved in the deal.

So, after I was fired from SCI, I was back doing temp work. I was assigned to ARCHIBUS, Inc., a software development firm based in Boston. They used me for about a year and a half as a temp. They did invite me to submit a resume for a permanent position which was available. They wanted, apparently, to determine if I could do the job. The fact that I was doing the job as a temp didn't seem to have much bearing. In the end they hired a woman who was totally new to the firm—I had asked for too much money. The amount for which I had asked was still below the local cost of living. They chose to pay the new employee more than I had requested. However, they liked my work so much they had me stay on as a temp.

During the three and half years I lived in the North End, I managed to reconnect to some extent with my Italian roots. Both of my parents are Italian, on my mother's side her grandparents immigrated here from Sicily at the turn of the 20th century. On my father's side his parents and older brothers and sister came here when his siblings were teenagers in the early 1930s.

I pubbed three issues of *The Gay Pilgrim*, produced for GAPS, a Gay men's APA. I also attended each Boscone and Arisia, which occurred during the time I was in Boston. I staffed and/or volunteered during those cons and became a General member of NESFA and a member of Arisia. I also attended a few meetings of RISFA North, the Boston chapter of the Rhode Island Science Fiction Association (RISFA, a fannish group about which, I believe, Arnie and Joyce told me.

Also, during this time I became very active in

the Dormition of the Mother of God (known in the vernacular as St. Mary's) Orthodox Christian Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At first I attended the Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Boston, as this was the tradition with which I had been raised. But having been referred to St. Mary's in Cambridge, I discovered it was actually faster and easier to get there via subway. St. Mary's is located in Central Square Cambridge, midway between Harvard and MIT. The Redline Subway goes right through Central Square. So, I attended services on a semi regular basis and took part in the scripture readings during the prayer and worship services.

After three and a half years at the same address (a record for me), it became necessary to move. Since I couldn't find anything in the City in which I could both afford and would want to live, I moved into a 3rd floor flat in Somerville. Somerville is one of the inner Suburbs of Boston just North of Cambridge, just across the Charles River from Boston.

This was a dank and literally dirty 4-bedroom apartment, which I shared with three other guys. Except for the 20-something German graduate student who was in this country for a few months on an exchange program, it was a rather unpleasant living situation.

I think his name was actually Gunther—I'm really not sure if I've remembered it correctly—but I will never forget his tall lanky figure with blond hair and blue eyes, and deep voice with his accented English. He constantly walked around the apartment clad only in his underwear. Gunther (???) owned a nice variety of different types of underwear. *SIGH*, I have always had a thing for attractive men in their underwear. But alas he remained loyal to his girlfriend back in Germany. She came to visit at the end of his stay and was just as warm and friendly as he had been, *SIGH* But I digress...

This arrangement lasted only five months and in October (after Gunther returned to Germany, of course) I moved into a duplex with my sister in Revere—another suburb of Boston just North of Somerville. This turned out to be a very grave mistake and in March of 2002, I returned to Las Vegas.

I immediately began a correspondence course

in real estate to prepare me for the Real Estate Licensing Exam for the State of Nevada (each state regulates its own real estate licensing). In June I took and passed the exam on the first try (no mean feat, I'm told) and subsequently filed my application for a Real Estate Sales License in the State of Nevada (on June 20th). As of this writing on September 8th, I'm still waiting to hear from the State.

I also began to once again attend meetings of SNAFFU & and the Las Vegrants and have re-connected with some old fannish acquaintances and friends here in Las Vegas. Currently, I'm working on starting a new LesBiGay SF club in Las Vegas and hope to eventually become an affiliate of The Gaylactic Network, a confederation of LesBiGay SF clubs around the country. A few of us Las Vegas Fen are also interested in possibly planning another SF Con. However, since neither SNAFFU nor the Las Vegrants are interested in this concept, there are serious doubts as to whether or not we are going to be able to do this.

Since my return, I have discovered so many changes in Las Vegas. They have opened no less than five "Megaresorts" (hotel/casinos with more than 1500 rooms; in this case they all exceed 2500 rooms), and The Palms, which is a luxurious upscale property, but fairly small by Las Vegas standards. Two major resorts, the Rio and Caesars Palace, have each added a large new tower of rooms. The Desert Inn Resort—the location of Howard Hughes' reclusive last years—has been torn down, and the 215 Beltway has been greatly expanded.

Additionally, Ben and Kathy have not only had a child but have already raised her to a size at which she can actually walk and talk. I do think Joyce was kidding when she said Megan has already read the Foundation Trilogy and was about to begin Foundation's Edge (wasn't she?).

I don't know if it's safe to leave town again, I did go to the WorldCon last weekend and I don't think anything untoward happened while I was away.



Baked

Column by Ben Wilson

Broken... What??!!

Back in May, Cathi and I decided to take the trip down to WesterCon, with much twisting of arm. We decided to tack on a little camping vacation to escape the Vegas heat along with the hustle and bustle of city life. That's right, we were going camping, something we'd like to do regularly but really only get a chance about once a year. So we try to make the most of it.

Last year we spent our week up in Big Bear not too far from the Forman's place in Yucaipa. Megan, at the time a year and half old, much to our delight, loves camping.

This year we decided to head to southern Utah. A little camp ground called Pine Lake, just north of Bryce Canyon.

The plan was simple, drive down to L.A. spend the weekend of the 4th at WesterCon, with all our pals. Spend an interim day in Vegas then head north to our campsite. Vegrant buddy Derek

Stazenski missing out on WesterCon made arrangements to join Cathi, Megan and me on our little camping trip of four days three nights.

Derek and I are not in the best of shape but we are fairly active and like to be. Back when Cathi and I were starting out, only having one vehicle and two destinations for work, a cheap mode of transportation was needed. So, I purchased myself a mountain bike. It's been quite awhile since I've had to ride it, and a bit shorter period of time since, deciding to get back in shape, I had ridden it.

I talked Derek into purchasing one of his own so we'd have biking partners. Thinking it was a good idea Derek did indeed buy himself a mountain bike, and was able to swing it before taking our little trip to Utah. Thinking back on some of the conversations prior to going, I recall my wife asking if this was such a good idea. She's been a sweetheart and has not mentioned that fact.

We were going to load up bright and early Tuesday morning. Be on the road by 7 am. Drive on through with as many breaks as Megan might need. Set-up camp. Have a late lunch. Then when Megan took her nap Derek and I could take a short afternoon ride, giving Cathi some time to relax. Spend a day in camp.

One day driving down to the north rim of the Grand Canyon for a half-day visit. Back to camp for an evening of conversations and chasing Megan. Then tearing down in the morning and an afternoon drive home, with Derek and me squeezing in rides whenever we could. That was the plan.

It was a nice plan. For some reason though, plans often have a way of getting off track. It started even before we left, before we started packing even. Thinking just a bit, with all the forest fires this summer I thought I'd call the park service in Utah to verify that the campground was open, or had a chance of being closed. Good news, no danger of wild fires in the area, bad news, to keep it that way, no open fires. These meant if we were going to eat, it would need to be cold cuts or buy a propane camp stove. Minor problem, taken care of.

We didn't leave too late, making it on the road by 7:45am. Drive was nice; Meg only needed to stop twice the whole way, about 400 miles. Once past St. George the temperature became bearable. Once off the highway in Cedar City the windows were rolled down. Weather in Utah was a bit different than in Nevada, there were clouds.

Heading east out of Cedar City, it didn't take us long to see why there were no open fires allowed any where in Southern Utah. Dixie National Forest is a forest made up primarily of 50 to 60 foot Ponderosa pines with groves of birch and aspen. I would say more than half of the population of pine was dead. Reddish tan, not rich brown, match sticks standing intertwined with the lush green of healthy growth. Hovering not far above this forest were darkening clouds.

Now the next hour or so was a test of patience. Here we were in the middle of one of the worst droughts the southwest and for that matter the entire nation has seen in some time. Middle of a drought and no open fires and it looked like

we were going to have a soggy start to our camping trip.

No wait, looks like we're going to be ok. As we turn from our northerly path and head on our final leg east, the clouds that looked as though they were waiting for us, moved off. The clouds that had been coming down from the north were breaking up into nothing.

The Wilson Weather Effect (WWE?) was in full operation for, just as we approached the campground not 15 miles away the clouds gathered forces and it starts sprinkling. Having too many encounters with foul weather, I pull over and grab the sleeping bags and blankets out of the back of the truck. Even if I have to sleep in the truck I want my blankies dry. I yell at Derek, who has followed us in his nice rental, that if it really started raining I was going to make a run for the campground.

Guess what? The rain started to pick up a little and it didn't look promising. So, with 6 miles of dirt road between our campsite and us, I felt a bit of urgency to get our food and gear covered up before the skies really let go. Wipers going, we pulled into our site and had enough time to get a tarp over the bed of the truck to save the cardboard boxes our cooking gear was packed in.

It rained, hard at times, for near an hour and a half, but mostly it was a light patter on the roof and tarp. We made a dash to set up camp when the rain had slowed to a mere drizzle. Fearing rain, we set up camp in record time. Luckily our campsite made it easy for us, in a way. Half the site had drained well; after all it was mostly rock. The area was flat, with the rocks small and worn; this made pounding in the stakes a bit of a chore.

Once we had camp set up, it was time for a look around. Great campground, for not only does it have large sites, spaced widely apart but we had a stream. That's right, our site backed right up to a two and half, three foot wide, six inch deep grass lined stream. Next to the campground was a wildlife study area for one of the Utah colleges. The "lake" in Pine Lake is more like a largish pond, man made and stocked with pan fish, not sure what kind. Around the "lake" wandered grazing cattle, along with the deer that spent a bit of their time showing off by visiting the spaces in between sites. Then there was the

bonus of checking it all out on our fat tired bikes.

We did a bit of exploring before dinner, looking for that ride for tomorrow. I found a run that I thought would be a bit of a challenge, then came to my senses. I decided that the bottom of a shallow ravine with golf ball size rocks, a natural meandering path around boulders and deadfall, was maybe more work than fun. We found several roads that could be fun and would be easy to negotiate. After all they were roads. The one that caught my eye was exceptional. It was on the other side of a stream, skirting a clearing as it disappeared up the hill and into the woods.

The sun came up early but that's ok: when you're camping with no fire bedtime comes early. We did stay up long enough to see a sky packed full of stars. It was a cool morning but between the sun and the breakfast Cathi made us jackets came off fairly quickly. Although getting cleaned up was a bit chilly. According to all the literature we had located the campground was suppose to have showers. Wrong answer. Water from a spigot next to a campsite is where we washed up.

After breakfast was cleaned up Cathi spoke up, “Meg and I need to go to the store, we forgot a few things.” Cool, time for Derek and I to go for a ride.

“Hey hon,” with Derek looking at me, “before you take off, could you take us up the hill?” I like to mountain bike but trying to ride up hill is far too much work for something that is suppose to be fun.

Cathi's a great sport, we loaded the bikes in the back of the truck and off we went. Past the meadow and through the woods, it wasn't to grandmas's that we were headed. Derek and I off loaded at a junction in the road, nice flat area with a place to turn the truck around. Both roads headed up hill. Heads won so we headed off on the road to the right. With the low gearing, the climb up hill wasn't too bad and the road was smooth, pine needle covered, hard packed, rich brown dirt. Only problem was that the road slowly faded out of site once it reached the top of the ridge. Oh, you could still see where the road had gone, but it was overgrown and had many deadfalls crossing it.

After being startled by a deer while commun-

ing with nature, we headed down hill. This down hill plunge was pretty nice but it wasn't enough. The easy ride up meant we needed to actually peddle to make it back down to where we started.

“Derek, you ready to go back to camp or do you want to head up the other way?” I'm not even sure if I heard a reply, I assumed and headed up in the other direction. We didn't ride far, this way was steeper. So we spent some time walking our bikes up.

On the way up we found a rough patch in the road. Someone had taken a four-by-four up this way when it was wet. They had created some ruts but the center of the trail was rather smooth, the major issue was that this area was also on a bend in the road.

My brother in law is ranked 7th in the state of Nevada and 16th in the southwest for mountain biking. I've spent a little time riding with him and he's taught me how to read a trail. I thought it would be wise to share what information I had with Derek.

“Hey, when we come down through here make sure you slow down before reaching this spot, for if you are on the brakes through the corner, you'll wash out and drop into one of these ruts.”

We walked our bikes up hill until we had out distanced our breath. Break Time. Five or 10 minutes to sit and commune with nature, while our breath caught up with us, then it was a down-hill plunge to the campsite.

Who was to go first? I asked Derek if he wanted the honors hoping that he'd take the lead. “I'll just slow you down, I don't want to spoil your fun. You go first.”

Off we went. Started out cool, but it was time to slow this down a bit. I hit a rocky area in the road and had to get off the brakes, then I was right back on them. Now, at this point I should have stayed on the brakes. But the road was straight for a hundred yards or more, plenty of time to slow down before the next corner.

Problem was, as soon as I let loose of the brakes gravity played a cruel joke on me. The steepness of the road increased considerably, and catapulted me downhill. Where did that drop come from? I don't remember that going up.

Back hard on the brakes, here comes the cor-

ner need to slow down. I need to get off the brakes, but this was still too fast. Can you guess what happened next? Of course you can, but let me tell you anyway. I washed out of the corner and fell into a rut in the road. Gravity again raised its unforgiving hand and smacked me down. I don't remember much of the actual spill. I do know I fell behind the seat before the bike and I slammed into the ground. I recall thinking, "Damm, I hope Derek paid more attention to my advice than I did."

So there I sat, clutching my ankle and foot, when Derek reined in his bike. Derek was duly concerned. He helped me test my pain threshold, felt my ankle for breaks, along with mobility. Then there was the fact he wanted to take my shoe off. Now I spent a lot of time running amuck when I was in boy scouts, but I did remember some thing about leaving shoes and/or clothing on to keep the swelling to a minimum. Plus every time he touched it, it hurt like crazy. We laughed. I bitched.

It hadn't been that long and I was sure Cathi had not returned from the store, so it was up to Derek and me, to get me and my bike back to camp two miles away. Time to see if my bike had faired any better than I did.

I could barely stand. I was now sure I had sprained my ankle, wasn't sure but thought I might have broken a bone or six in my foot when it slammed into the ground. Derek picked my bike up and handed it to me for support, tires were straight and contained all their air. Looked like my bike got off lighter than I did. The odometer was pushed out of position and the frame received a few additional scratches.

My odometer keeps track of the rider's Max speed, average speed, trip distance, total distance, the time and elapsed time. It was the Max speed I felt a need to check, I wanted to know just how fast I was going before the ground stopped me. 19.6 mph.

I cannot remember how I got on to my bike but I do recall sitting there trying to figure out what I was going to do about the stream at the bottom of the hill. The road was going to be rough, but the streambed is in the bottom of a mountain wash, rock city. In addition, I would have to contend with the hundred and fifty yards

of uphill peddling or walking before I could resume my downhill travels.

It was rough. I remember the downhill parts of the return. Before the stream was bumpy and slow. I was on both brakes all the way down with my left foot held out to the side, like some outrigger riding high above the waves. After the stream and uphill climb, of which I remember nothing, we were back on a graded road. Here I had a bit of fun; no brakes, tucked my leg in but still not on the pedal. 27 mph.

It was mostly flat, maybe slightly up hill, into the campground, so I was required to peddle or walk in. I'm not sure which I did. My memory has me crossing the cattle grate at the entrance, then taking my shoe and sock off sitting in my camp chair.

When my shoe came off, you could see my foot swell. Oh yea, it was broken, it had already started turn pretty colors. I put my sock and shoe back on fairly quickly for I wasn't sure how much longer they would still fit.

I could see that Derek was bummed and my wife wasn't happy about having to end our trip short. So I toughed it out, it was a short trip to the restrooms and I sat around with my foot up for the afternoon. This gave Derek a chance to use his new bike a little more before we packed it in. Cathi was able to take a couple of walks with Megan, although I'm not sure if those were all that relaxing for my wife. Oh, how I owe her.

Trips to the bathroom were the worst, 200 foot walks with a make shift cane Derek ripped out of the ground for me. Still have it, I've taken a dremal to it, cleaned it up, with a finish it might look pretty snazzy.

What I wasn't looking forward to was the night of sleeping in the tent. Even though we can fit a king size air mattress into our tent it still can be tight quarters when you've got a three year old bed hog that likes to wedge herself between mom and dad at the same time.

Surprisingly, the night was actually pretty good, I had forgotten how sleeping out of doors relaxes me. I always sleep better when I've got contact with nature, whether it be an open window in the city or immersed in the wilds of Utah.



Boiling Point

Column by Derek Stazenski

From the day Ben and Cathi asked me to go, I was very excited. Camping in the woods in Utah, bitchin'. Four days out of Las Vegas. The smell of the great outdoors, laughter, good company, and, oh yeah, mountain biking.

These thoughts bombarded my brain for weeks before the trip. I was a little bummed out about the fact we couldn't have a campfire. I love FIRE!! FIRE!! FIRE!!

Finally the day of the trip arrived. I woke up early. Not by choice, mind you. But because of the shift I work, I'm up 'til 4:00 a.m. most nights. I was hoping to leave a tiny bit later, but Ben said The Boss (Cathi) wanted to leave early, so early it was. No problem. Lack of sleep dampen my quest for fun? Never. My rented car awaited me. A nice big boat car with A/C, cruise, the works.

I was looking forward to the drive. It was fantastic. Then something strange happened. The closer we got to the campsite, the darker, cloudier, and rainier it got. No, it couldn't be raining. There has been no precipitation in the west for 6

months. "Drought, fires, and its raining?" We waited for a couple of after we arrived for the rain to stop and to set up camp.

With camp set up, the rain stopped, and Cathi preparing a delicious dinner, Ben and I decided to ride our bikes around and explore for roads and trails to ride the next day. We found a nice steep dirt road, which looked like a lot of fun. Yeah, right.

I slept on the ground, in a sleeping bag, for the first time in almost fifteen years. I snoozed like a baby.

The sun spilled into my tent the next morning, brighter than a cop's flashlight at lover's lane. I got up, ate breakfast, and brushed my teeth. "Going riding", I could hardly wait.

We had formulated the plan at dinner the night before. Cathi would take Ben and me in the truck to the top of the road we found. She and Meg, the Wilsons' 2-½-year-old daughter, would drive to the local store, which was a ways away.

They were to buy a few things we had forgot-

ten, while Ben and I mountain biked down the road. Great plan, huh?

After Cathi dropped us off, Ben had suggested we walk our bikes up the road a little bit further, so we'd have a good long ride back down. As we continued to climb, we commented on how particularly treacherous this stretch of road was. A short distance later we grew tired of walking our bikes and decided to start down. Ben asked me if I wanted to lead or follow. I told him to go first since he was more experienced on a mountain bike. I would probably be a little slow.

Off we go! Ben in front, me right behind. Within a few seconds he was already way ahead. Soon I lost sight of him completely. Around the next corner is the bad spot in the road we had commented on. I began to slow down. Rounding the corner, I saw a scary sight. Ben was sprawled out on the ground holding his foot, his bike a few feet away.

In an instant I had two thoughts. One, Ben was hurt. And two, the trip was over!

Turns out I was right on both counts. Ben's foot was broke in more than one place. We left for home the next morning.

Ben was a trouper through the whole. He got on his bike and rode back to camp. *OUCH!* Then hobbled around camp the rest of the day. Just so I/we could have one more night under the stars. I took one or two more rides by myself, stopping on one of my evening excursions to sit in the quiet forest and just think. It was nice.

Thanks to Ben, Cathi, and Meg for letting me tag along. It was wonderful!! Even with the *breaks* we had. Hopefully we will do it again soon.

Baked

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Meg was good, she cuddled but did not crowd, I found a position that minimized the pain to a throbbing ache. Getting up in the middle of the night to visit a tree was a ridiculous experience.

Cathi fixed a great breakfast before we tore down camp (a day early) to head back home for me to see a doctor.

Now I helped as much as I could, but got

yelled at a lot. "Go sit **DOWN!!**" was the one I heard the most. So I tried to keep the little one occupied and out of Cathi's way, I didn't succeed so well in this endeavor.

It was a long ride back to Vegas, no comfortable position for my foot. The best we could do was to throw a couple of blankets on the floorboards and bury my foot in them. I felt every bump on the way home, luckily with the exception of the road out of the campground the rest was pretty gentle on my foot.

Made it to the medical center somewhere around 4pm. They took some X-rays found I did have a break but made it seem like it wasn't too bad. They put me in a splint, wrapped it, gave me a prescription and sent me on my way with a referral to a podiatrist.

The state of health care sucks here in Nevada like the rest of the nation, but we have a complete mess here. The Medical Center instructed me to contact the specialist to make an appointment. Now the doctor I went to see is employed by the same company as the Medical Center, but yet seem to have a different set of procedures than the Medical Center. What a joke. What actually needed to be done was for the emergency center to send referral to the podiatrist, and then they call me for an appointment. Well it took four days for the paper work to travel 600 yards.

Once I got in, after being instructed that it was fine to walk on the splinted foot, I found out that I had a bone that was broken clean off and another that had been crushed and might need a plate. After a MRI they felt I only needed a screw to connect the broken bone. So after surgery they cast me up from knee to toe. When was that? Oh yea, the middle of July.

Not everyone wants to torture themselves, cast up their leg, grab a pair of crutches and spend the two hottest months in Vegas. I'm out now, and I'm healing well.

Out of it all I think the worst was not being able to drive. I know a lot of people look at driving as a chore, not me. I've been driving regularly since I was 12 (more about that later) and going two months without is like not eating for three or four days; my chauffer is also very, very happy.

