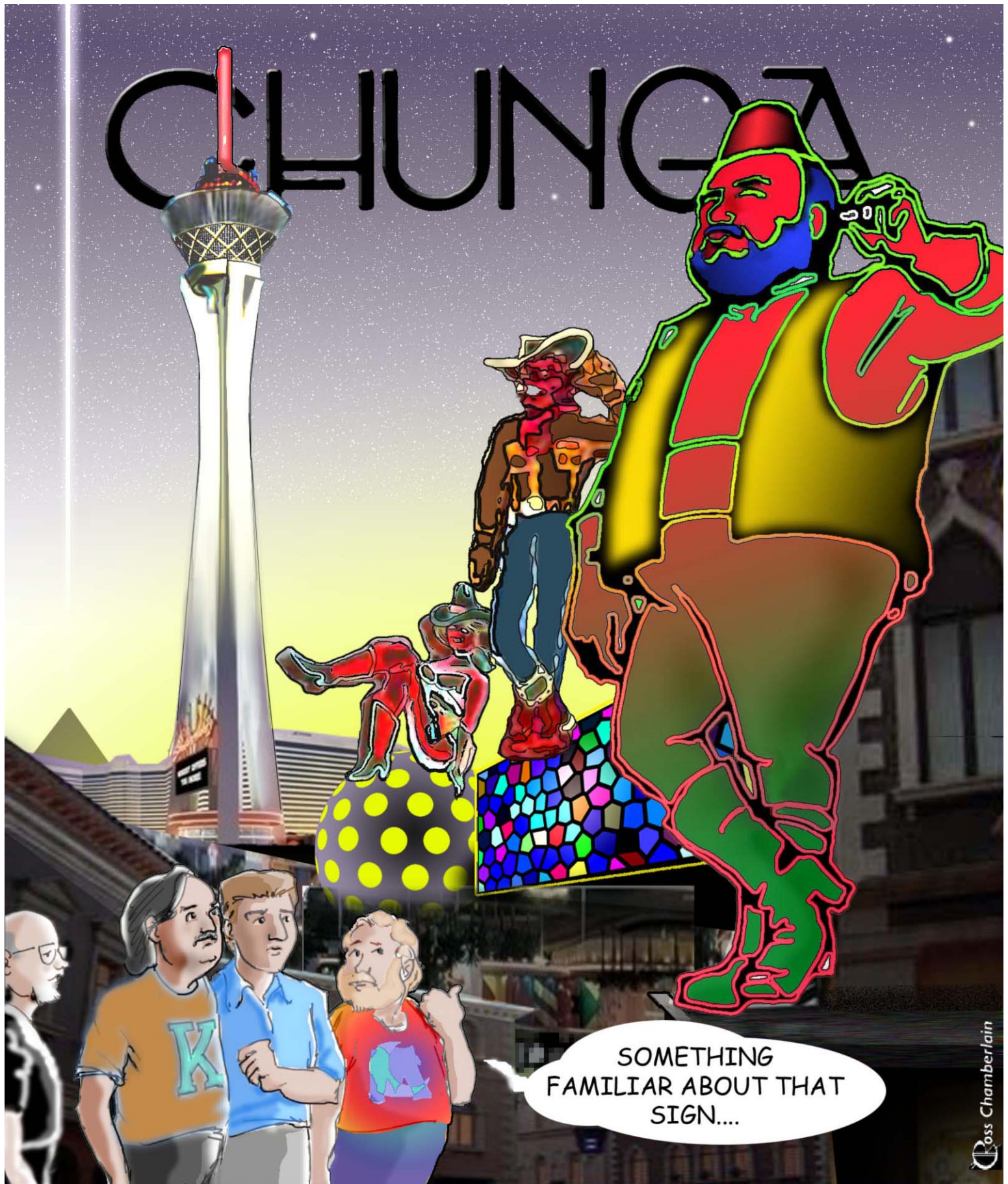


CHUNGA



But Wait! This isn't CHUNGA! It's...

CRAZY

from the **HEAT**



Issue #3
February 2005

The Stories

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Crazy from the Heat #3 is produced by the Trufan Ten, with considerable help from the semi-committed men and women of Las Vegrants.

Crazy from the Heat is published as often as manageable by the cheerful, if clumsy, remnants of Las Vegas Fandom.

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Don Miller: 3

Georgie Schnobrich and Jae Leslie Adams: 28
Rotsler: 7, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 33
Alan White: 16, 20, 23, 25



Blowing Off Steam...

The Crazies Riot in the Nuthouse

Ken Forman

*Welcome back my friends
To the show that never ends,
We're so glad you could attend.
Come Inside! Come Inside!
There behind a glass is a real blade of grass
Be careful as you pass.
Move along! Move along!*

Presented for your edification, education and entertainment is yet another issue of *Crazy from the Heat*. Predictably, Corflu Blackjack energized the Trufan Ten.

"Arnie," I said. "I want to start off the editorial this time." He seemed skeptical. Arnie typically starts off the editorial.

It's not so much that he is especially good at starting a topic (although he *is*) and it's not so much that he provides a wonderful jumping-off point for the rest of us to run with (although he *does*). Personally, I think he usually starts off the editorial because for him, the words flow from

his fingertips like sap from a maple tree. (Now there's a movie special effect I'd like to see David Cronenberg create.)

For most of the rest of us, writing is a little more time consuming than just slicing open a grammar vein and bleeding ink all over the page. But does that stop us?

Hell no!

Diligently, one syllable at a time, we commit our thoughts, ideas and dreams to the proverbial page. But think on that a bit, dear reader. Take a moment to ponder the task set forth by our desire to communicate with our fellow fen.

Most fanzines have one or just a few editors. The beauty and simplicity of such a scheme is, I'm sure, not lost on those of you who produce a perzine. Even if you're part of a *tria Chunga in uno*, the freedom to quickly and decisively come to editorial conclusions is certainly a joy.

Yet consider the task of supervising ten free-spirited, outspoken-yet-endearing gentlefen who all want to play. It's a fannish feline roundup. The cacophony of ideas is somewhat akin to Me-

morial Day Weekend at Camp Ditch-the-Kids – lots of happy, smiling people running around, shouting, cheering, clamoring to receive some attention. While all the while, any hope of connecting two coherent thoughts are dashed to the ground like yesterday's leftover goulash.

You *might* think that – Oh, best Beloved – if you'd never been in the presence of the Las Vegrants when they get their groove on. For reasons that I'm incapable of quantifying (without obscure mathematics or judicious use of Finagle's Variable Constant), the Las Vegrants seem to have all the pieces necessary to propel forward the juggernaut that is Vegas Fandom.

Last ish, Arnie offered up some insights on the Trufan Ten (or the Council of Ten, as we are sometimes called). I'll not be one to dispute his observations or descriptions, but that doesn't prevent me from wondering who that tenth person might be since only nine were mentioned.

I can think of several alternatives that just might fit into that final slot to complete our decatorialship. Try these on for size:

JoHn Hardin – King of the Mud People.

Foggy – The Katz' Cat, master of platter sitting, swiftest of the slow.

Megan Wilson – Ben and Cathi's scary-smart 4-year-old daughter.

No, I prefer to apply a wholly unrelated part of quantum physics to the problem. *You*, dear reader, are the tenth (and some would say most important) member of our Trufan Ten. You see, we could write prose and poetry beautiful enough to make the muses cry, but it wouldn't be worth it unless the words were read (measured, as it were). By reading *CftH*, you add that all-important link that continues the thread.

Don't rest on your laurels, dear reader. You have the awesome responsibility of responding, and thus closing the loop. By contributing The Usual, you help us complete that never-ending circle of fandom. [Cue the Elton John music. Now quick, somebody hold up the kid.]

Corflu Blackjack gave us the chance to meet, to talk, to timebind like no fanzine can. However, without the papernet that is fanzine fandom, it would be difficult to have the social connection

that makes the face-to-face meetings so memorable. Case in point, before this year's fanzine worldcon, Sandra Bond was simply someone whose writing I enjoyed. Now that we've met, she's a friend I look forward to seeing again.

Speaking of friends I look forward to seeing again, I have the honor of introducing this issue's recipient of the prestigious Pillar of Fire award.

This fan truly deserves the massive amounts of virtual egoboo that comes with such an award. He is kind to animals and hardly uses harsh words to express his point. He is gentle spoken and wise in all ways obscure and ephemeral.

A hush of anticipation falls over the crowd...

So, without further ado, I present *Crazy from the Heat's* 3rd Pillar of Fire Andrew P. Hooper.

Cathi Wilson

What day is it? Oh, back to reality. Being at Corflu seems like nothing but a dream now, and real life has set in. Since the last issue of *Crazy from the Heat*, Ben and I have been seduced by the Formans' siren like call. In fact, we moved in with the Ken and Aileen. We've (at least our stuff has) only been here less than a month. They live in a small community and have three acres of pasture and a small meadow for our daughter, Megan, to roam. The horse, Muerte a.k.a. Morty, seems to like her. I think she must smell like candy, since when he sees her he has this overwhelming urge to nuzzle into her hair. She just giggles in that delightful little girl way when he comes near. Actually it's quite a sight when she goes out to visit the horse. The Formans' dog, Pooka, feels the need to protect "her" little girl from the overbearing horse, and Morty needs to defend "his" little girl from the (world's sweetest) ferocious dog.

We are, or at least Ben is, looking for jobs. I have encountered all sorts of trouble of my own doing. I had lost my social security card when I lived in Vegas and refused to go to the SS office there. They have one location for the entire city of Las Vegas, over a million people but only one office. I was not mentally prepared to sit in a building thronging with people all day with my

Blowing Off Steam III — Aileen Forman achieves enlightenment.

four-year old just to get a new card. Also, my driver's license seems to have expired in February. I didn't even notice until after the fact. Since most of our stuff is in storage and it is impossible to even know where I had hidden our important papers, I am forced to send away for the necessary documents that prove that I am who I say that I am.

We have also just had a visit from Ken's father, Jim, his lovely bride, Robbie and their entourage, Pepe and Sadie. Pepe and Sadie are their Pomeranian dogs. Sadie is a recent rescue and one of the yappiest dogs I've ever spent any time with. She would go off if someone entered the room. She would go off if someone left the room. She would go off if there were any sudden movement in the room. There was one morning when Jim and Robbie needed to run some errands and left the dogs with us. Sadie would not shut up the entire 2-1/2 hours they were gone. Ghu love small dogs, because someone has to.

We now have the great privilege of Joyce Katz' company. She fell badly and broke both her ankles. Her home has narrow passages and bad angles, which makes it difficult to maneuver a wheel chair. We begged her to come here to recuperate since there was room at the Formans' and four eager adults to wait on the High Priestess of Las Vegas Fandom's every wish.

We are hopeful that our current situation will set the fannish juices flowing and get some of our procrastinating members (the men) to publish. Maybe with two women encouraging (nagging) we might be more effective. We can always hope.

Joyce Katz:

The fannish juices are flowing fine, just not providing the flesh we need. Instead of Meaty Substance and Meaningful Moments, all we seem to have is some fannish fluff. Well, that's ok. Hopefully there's no one left who looks to Vegas Fandom to solve the world's problems, nor even fandom's.

Blame it on Corflu, of course. It produced such a rosy glow that we've not settled down to the meat and potatoes yet. And meat and potatoes we must have! If we are to deliver the answers to the Great Mysteries and provide the substance of

meaningful fannish dialogue, we'd best find some Verities to believe in.

This then covers the willy-nilly mind set of our determined band. Wheelchair tenaciously clinging to the Yucaipa hills, I am poised for Enlightenment. The knowledge that our awesome Pillar of Fire is Andy Hooper elevates us. I may not have read the latest sf novel, but Andy has; I may not know the name of the GoH of the next worldcon, but Andy surely does. I probably don't know where to buy the best beer in Vegas, but Andy could tell me. Through him, I am made even more Superior than ever before. All reading this are probably equally Raised by their association with me.

Corflu was a blast. And my month of recuperation in Yucaipa has sharpened my fannish wit to a dull bludgeon. Some days I'm just too good to exist.

Aileen Forman

I certainly feel more enlightened by Joyce's presence! I can't tell you all how much fun it's been to have not just the Wilsons here but also Joyce. I'm going to be so sad when they all pick up the threads of their lives and move on.

I was very saddened when we moved away from Vegas and our friends three years ago. Slowly, though, we're seducing our friends to move here. First came former Vegas resident Karl Kreder and his wife Allison. Then Tom and Tammy Springer moved from the inconvenient distance of Portland, Oregon to Tehachapi, California, which is within a few hours drive of us. Then Ben and Cathi moved here for a bit and fell in love with Yucaipa. Now we're working on the Katzs to move here. Don't know if that will work or not, but we can wish. Next we'll work on our great good friends, Andy and Carrie. If we can just get them to visit a couple times, they'll be hooked on the "life of the lotus-eaters," as Joyce calls it.

We really do have an idyllic life here. We have interesting weather, which is mostly pleasant, and we spend a good deal of time on the patio or porch, watching the birds and the horse, throwing balls for our Lab/greyhound mixed pooch, Pooka (she of the irresistible eyes), smoking and chatting. Even Andy Hooper would soon

be seduced into the easy life. And Carrie would be a snap to convince!

It's funny how comfortable I felt at Corflu Blackjack. I sometimes feel a bit of an imposter at Corflus, as I don't commit fanac nearly as frequently as my friends. And yet I am welcomed, encouraged to join in any circle of fans I run across and generally remembered as someone they know, although not always well, and like. Yes, I do so enjoy fandom. And I adore seeing those who I do know well and love, like Adorable Andy and Cuddly Carrie.

By the way, if this editorial seems a bit on the rambling, incoherent side, it's because I had ankle surgery earlier today and am on somewhat heavy-duty painkillers. I broke my leg about 2 years ago. The surgeon attached 2 of the bones together with a plant and 5 screws. One of those screws worked loose about eight months ago and was removed. Then I found myself in yet more pain and just had all of the remaining hardware removed as well. I'm hopeful that this will alleviate the pain and allow me to ride, hike, walk, etc. with more ease. Anyway, welcome to *CftH* #3. I hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoyed writing it.

Arnie Katz

"Without further ado," wrote my esteemed co-editor Ken Forman as he introduced the Pillar of Fire recipient for this issue, Andy Hooper. (I was glad that Ken used Andy's full name, because I don't think I would've recognized him from Ken's description.)

I read that phrase, "without further ado," and I tell you my heart just broke.

You try to teach them, you try to lead them down the path of righteous fannishness and sometimes you feel the sting of failure. "Without further ado," pierced me to my fannish core and caused a tear to replace the wild look in my eye and put several new

worry lines on my sensitive fannish face.

Perhaps it was Ken's joy at obtaining a new, better job or the distraction of having the High Priestess Joyce Katz in residence for over a month, but he somehow forgot the essential tenet of this fanzine: We are 100 per cent about "further ado." Without "further ado," *Crazy from the Heat* would be a front cover and a return address.

How drab and colorless it would all be without "further ado." Imagine, if you will, what the delightful Corflu Blackjack report by Cathi Wilson in this issue would be like if she did it without "further ado." Instead of magnificently sprawling across several riveting pages, she would've blown off the whole thing with a paragraph, maybe only a sentence. I can see the report, recast to eliminate all "further ado":

"Ben, Ken, Aileen and I hosted Corflu Blackjack in Las Vegas. Yadda-yadda-yadda, everybody went home happy."

I hear mutterings of "hypothetical, hypothetical" so let me give you an idea of the kind of "further ado" that makes this fanzine what it is. (A matter better left un-pondered...) Ken makes it seem as if we just willy-nilly and without any deliberation, conferred the coveted Pillar of Fire Award upon Andy Hooper. Not only does such seeming haste fail to do justice to a marvelous friend and fan, but it just makes the whole project seem like something we dreamed up to nose-

thumb the LASFS and comment on its money-oriented approach to fandom.

Despite what fans might infer from Ken's "ado"-less announcement, the Pillar of Fire award is not the product of one sercon moment's random thought. Frankly, that's an



Blowing Off Steam V — With further ado...

insult. You'd better salve that guilt with a letter of comment after you finish reading *Crazy from the Heat* #3 – or at least my contributions to it.

We would never give out this prestigious award on an addle-pated whim. On the contrary, we involve as many of the editors as possible. So it wasn't unusual for there to be a telephone call between Las Vegas and Yucaipa involving no fewer than *six* of us – Joyce, Ken, Aileen, Ben, Cathi and me. It took place about a month before Corflu Blackjack and the main subject was the recipient of the next Pillar of Fire award.

Truth to tell, this idea has not proven to be the moneymaker we all envisioned. I'm blind in one eye, so I envisioned only half the profits, but even my modest goals have not been met.

To give it to you straight: not one single fan has forked over the paltry \$5,000 it takes to win the Pillar of Fire award and receive all the benefits that go with that awesome honor. This baffles me, because it's a much better deal than having your name written on a post in the LASFS clubhouse. Fans being as clumsy as they are, how long before someone takes a header into the post that has your hard-bought nameplate? "Damn [YOUR NAME HERE]! I got blinded by the gleam from the plaque and walked into the pole." An unbiased observer might well conclude that your nameplate had nothing to do with this accident, but that won't matter to the alibi-minded fan who stumbled into the pole. Soon, hatred for you and all your works will seep into Apa L and LASFapa. It'll die there, too, because no one outside Los Angeles will ever read about it unless John Hertz mentions it. (And John is so damn nice that he would never repeat such a scurrilous story.)

Just as you breathe a sign of relief, some LA media fan who saw the whole thing blabs it around at LOScon and soon everyone on the Internet knows that you contributed to the injury of another fan. Shame on you.

Not that we expect fans to plunk down \$5,000 for a Pillar of Fire Award just because the Pillar of the LASFS Award isn't the greatest. That's a good reason not to buy their empty honor, but it doesn't say why you should invest your money in *our* empty honor.

As I told five of my co-editors, we needed to



make the advantages of winning the Pillar of Fire award more widely known and appreciated. These are:

1. Your name will be frequently mentioned, often pointlessly, through the issue of *Crazy from the Heat*.
2. Each mention of your name will be underlined to promote rapid and efficient egoscanning. No more need to wade throughout all those references to *other* fans.
3. You get to be the subject of our group editorial. Next to being roasted by Rich Little, what could be more fun?

Everyone agreed that these were marvelous benefits and none of us could provide a reason for the failure to sell even one single Pillar of Fire award.

I don't recall who suggested that we needed to further prime the pump. In this crowd, I'm not even sure they were talking about the Pillar of Fire award. But it did get me thinking. Perhaps fandom needs another demonstration of what it means to acquire this award.

"Let's pick someone worthy," I suggested, "and fans will see the exhilarating honors and get in a better mood to purchase future awards."

Once we resolved to try this form of advertising, the question remained: who should be the Pillar of Fire for *CfH* #3. We tossed around a few names, but found no consensus. Ultimately,

we decided to hold off choosing an honoree until after Corflu Blackjack. “Someone will leap out at us at the con,” Aileen observed. That made so much sense that we decided to wait until after Corflu 21, confident that we’d all agree on the same fan.

As, indeed, we did. During our first phone conference after the con, we all quickly agreed that the fan of the hour, the recipient of the Pillar of Fire Award and all that goes with it, is...

Andy Hooper.

Known affectionately to his many friends and vassals as “Fan Face #1,” Andy Hooper has always been a special fan to Las Vegrants. We have always cherished him and thought of Andy as a kindred, if occasionally scary, spirit from afar.

He is always in our hearts and our thoughts. And we can’t help it if our thoughts sometimes get a little rambunctious. It’s no wonder that so many of us have written so many imaginative articles about him. It is just our way of demonstrating our deep affection, like dipping a pigtail in the inkwell or burning down a loved one’s home in the middle of the night.

Now he has achieved the apex of his fan career – only to this point; great triumphs doubtless lie ahead – with his ascension to the awesome accolade that is the Pillar of Fire award. Long may he burn!

And *that’s* the “further ado” about *that* tune.

With all the talk about fannish energy in the editorial, you might reasonably pause to wonder how an issue begun right after Corflu Blackjack could still be unpublished until late February of the following year. What may look to some like our usual sloth is actually the result of a titanic expenditure of energy and several overpowering forces.

In what can justly be described as a freak accident, Joyce fell in our hallway and broke *both* ankles, the right one in three places. That siphoned off a lot of energy, fannish and otherwise, at the Katz house.

After her operation and a stay in a rehab facility, Joyce went to Yucaipa to recuperate under

the loving care of Aileen, Cathi, Ben and Ken, as chronicled in Joyce’s piece in this issue. This gave me a lot of free time to turn out fan stuff, including my piece about my pseudo-bachelorhood you’ll read (hopefully) a little later in this fanzine.

Joyce’s presence in Yucaipa increased the already high level of fannish energy in that household. Alas, they expended it mostly in spirited sessions of fourth-dimensional mental crifanac, but the place fairly crackled with fannishness when I visited Joyce in May. In a thrilling crescendo of hypothetical fanac, I was even witness to a conversation about 100-page annishes. (I know it occurred, because I distinctly recall starting it.)

Once Joyce returned home on June 4, though, the pent-up firestorm of fannishness broke and the Yucaipa Fab Four created most of this editorial and at least a couple of the articles. That’s when I *stopped* writing as cake-taking consumed leisure time and more.

At the same time, troubles befell our two Resident Artists, Ross Chamberlain and Alan White. Ross’ computer turned its screen to the wall and died. This not only retarded production of his fine artwork, but it insulated him from kvetching emails from me. Ross and I have worked hand in glove for 40 years and I don’t think he feels his work is really *wanted* unless I wheedle and threaten at appropriate intervals.

Alan, normally our most prolific illustrator, has suffered a succession of conditions and mishaps that has kept him from the drawing board since he produced the issue of *Black Cat* with his Corflu Blackjack report and the fascinating adventure in the movies. (You can download it on efanzone.com.)

Put together all these factors, plus still others too boring to mention, and what you’ve got is unusually strong Good Intentions. Not that I am complaining. The gap between the first and second issues is four times longer than the one between the second issue and this one. Maybe frequent publication is just around the corner. Or maybe it’s seven people in funny animal suits. You just never know – and sometimes, it’s better that way.

Meanwhile, here comes the rest of *Crazy from the Heat* – The Fanzine of Further Ado!



Blackjack Diary

An Insider's Journal by Cathi Wilson

March 18, 2004

Day One

My sister went to Buenos Aires for a convention for professional movers and the people who sell them their equipment. Not the most exciting of convention subjects, but a good excuse to go to Argentina on the Company's dime. Her husband would actually be attending the convention. She would spend her days marathon shopping.

I was stuck out in Simi Valley, California attending to her three children, along with our daughter, Megan, and a very energetic 4-1/2-month-old black Labrador pup, Rocky. They would be gone 2 weeks, in the middle of which I was to help host the consuites at Corflu Blackjack. The plan was to have my mother release me from my sisterly bondage on Thursday afternoon. Dear, sweet Aileen Forman would drive 2 hours, on a good traffic day, out of her way to whisk me away to

Las Vegas, bringing along Karl Kreder.

I cannot tell you the excitement I felt that morning. Not only for the respite it would bring from my servitude, I had much anticipation for meeting and greeting new and old friends like Andy Hooper. There was one particular old friend I was dying to spend time with, my husband Ben. Because of familial obligations (my family) Ben and I have spent precious little time together the past month. At Corflu we would be *sans* child and I was hoping to squeeze the most couple time that I could out of the weekend.

Aileen and Karl arrived just a little before my saintly mother. After confirming that the children were happy to be spoiled by "Nana" for the duration of my absence and would not be traumatized by my departure, we were off towards the desert.

This little joy ride would



Cathi Wilson



take about 5 hours on a good day. It was nice to have pleasant company to squander away the hours with.

Karl noticed on one of the overpasses on the way out of Simi Valley, that someone had affixed a sign that simply said “JESUS”. He thought that they should’ve finished the job with more expletives on subsequent overpasses in a Burma-Shave-esque way. This joke being made, we could not help but use this particular exclamation for the rest of the trip.

It was a good ride. There were many jokes made at each other’s expense. This set us up for being in a very jolly mood when we arrived at the

hotel. We met up with JoHn Hardin who informed us that there was a “happenin’ party” with Andy Hooper in Suite 2331 hosted by the Katzes and that we should go forth and make merry. Aileen and I just wanted to find our husbands who had gone to Vegas earlier in the week. When we arrived it was still early and the party was not quite yet in full swing. I don’t even think Andy Hooper was there yet. There were many old friends there that I had not seen since we had moved away from Las Vegas, but not the one I had especially looked forward to seeing.

I figured he was off doing con stuff and would show up very soon. An hour went by before I started asking what would be my most frequently asked question during Corflu, “Where the hell is my husband?” Two hours later and still no sign of Aileen’s spouse or mine. I started grilling the people at the party. “Had anyone heard from our wayward men?” “What were they off doing?” All that was known was that Ben, Ken, and Tom Springer went off to get more supplies. No one had a satisfying answer for me, not even Andy Hooper. Another hour passed and I was having *deja vous*. My husband also disappeared from the last Corflu, held by the Katzes, in Vegas, on our wedding night. I was really starting to worry. Then finally Tom and Ken entered the party but without Ben in tow. And again I asked Ken “Where the hell is my husband?” “He went to the room to freshen up.” Ken answered. It seemed a year since I’d seen him, I

couldn’t take much more. Then he appeared with a great cheer from the crowd, and an overwhelming sigh of relief from myself. We embraced for a while and went on to enjoy the hospitality in Suite 2331 for a small while. Tom, Ken, and Ben needed to go to the airport to pick up the vans



Blackjack Diary III — Cathi goes husband hunting!

for the nature hike on Friday and to give Ted White a ride to the hotel. That was fine. We'd have plenty of time that evening to spend with each other.

When they returned Ben asked if Tom Springer could have our extra bed for his abbreviated stay at the con. He was only staying until early Saturday morning. He needed to leave for a business meeting back in Southern Cal. It was up to me. Tom would understand if I said no, but how could I? I wasn't going to turn out one of our oldest and dearest friends into the unseemly streets of Sin City. I of course said yes. We spent a little more time chatting, smoking, drinking and, of course, eating with the likes of Andy Hooper. We also got the chance to catch up with the Vegrants in attendance.

Then my husband announced he was off again to Ken's room to stuff envelopes with fanzines and try to get one published. I insisted on coming along. I wasn't going to let him out of my sight again.

The NLE Boys were there assembled, Ken Forman, Ben Wilson, JoHn Hardin, and Tom Springer, along with Derek Sti Stazii Stzeen Derek S. and me. Andy Hooper stopped by to drop off *How Green Was My Vagrant* and to have a bowl of hospitality before he went off to party away the rest of the evening.

You would think that publishing a postcard couldn't be that difficult, but these boys do their best to discourage the creative process. They constantly harass and goad the person trying to think of some witty repartee, much to the amusement of the rest gathered in the room, but not very conducive to writing nine lines of brilliance.

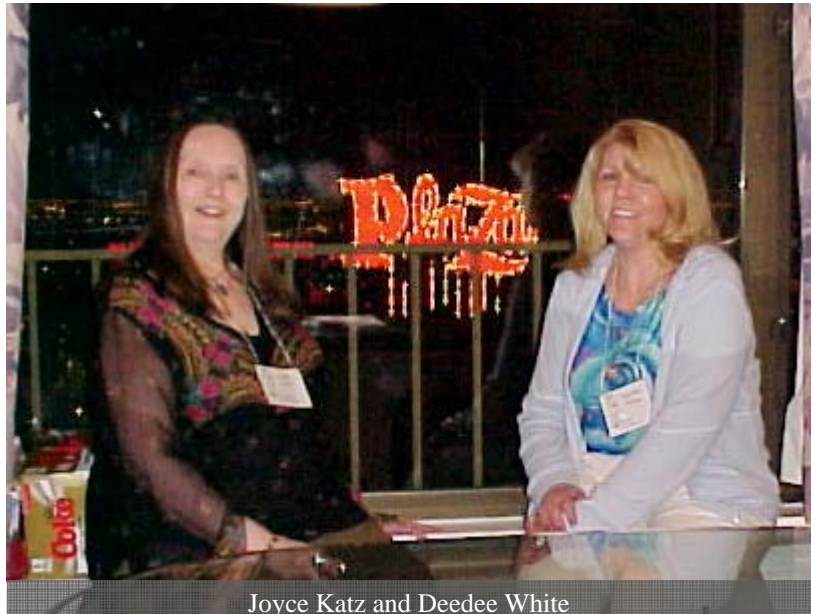
March 19, 2004

Day Two

Both Ben and I had very early mornings and could not continue past 1:30 a.m. so we called it a night. We also knew we would need to set up the con-suites first thing in the morning. The nature hike was to follow after that. I was to lose my husband for a few more hours again. I

needed to stay in the hospitality suite and help with registration and T-Shirt sales.

After the nature communing trip Mr. Forman appeared, yet again without Ben. And again I asked Ken, "Where the hell is my husband?" I found out he was showering off the bits of hot desert he collected on the expedition and then helping set up for the silent auction, held by Andy Hooper, and others selling off bits from their own collection. We would meet up at the



3:30 programmed event. True to his word my husband was there. Almost twenty-four hours in Vegas and I had spent very little time with him.

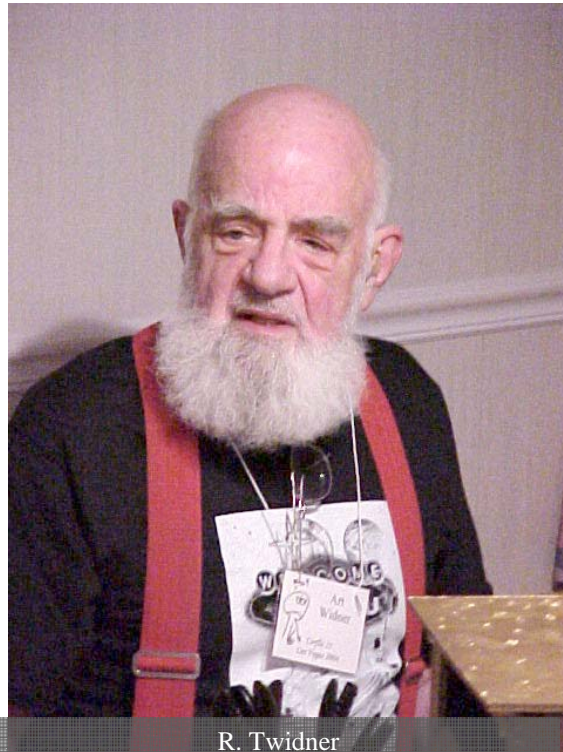
The programmed event "Give Me the Files, Andy Hooper" uh... I mean, "Give Me the Files, Mr. Jophan" went up with a fizzle. No one felt like participating, but they were very happy just to hang out and chat. So, it was decided that we would adjourn for lunch. Ben and I went for something to eat. After much discussion about what we actually felt like having we finally decided to have an obscenely large hot dog. By happenstance we ran into Karl Kreder eating from the golden arches and sat with him. Derek Stzenski wandered by and we flagged him down. We were the first fans that he'd seen all day. He wanted to know where the party was. We promptly guided him to the Katzes suite and dropped him off in the embracing arms of trufandom.

Ben had much to do before the opening

ceremonies, and he was off. Abandoned again by my spouse, I went to the con-suites to check out what was going on. There were many fen enjoying themselves with conversation and *food*. A quick check on the cold drink status and I was off to get ready for the opening ceremonies myself.

When I entered the program room for opening ceremonies, I was informed by Ken that there was a slight emergency and my help was needed. The smoke machine was misplaced and I was to be its replacement. I was to hold up two sheets of paper with squiggly lines and “COUGH” written twice on them. I thought I could handle it. The thing that was hard to take was the sight of my beloved husband of nine years in bike shorts. I could not stop laughing. It had been ten years since I’d seen such a sight.

Ken Forman was the MC for the event. He did a great job and got everyone in the mood for a fun time. There was the GoH selection pulled out of the hat by Joyce Katz. Ted White was the lucky winner. Ken had introduced us to the con-goers, Ken and Ben Wilson as the co-chairs for the convention and Aileen Forman and I were the hostesses with the mostesses



R. Twidner

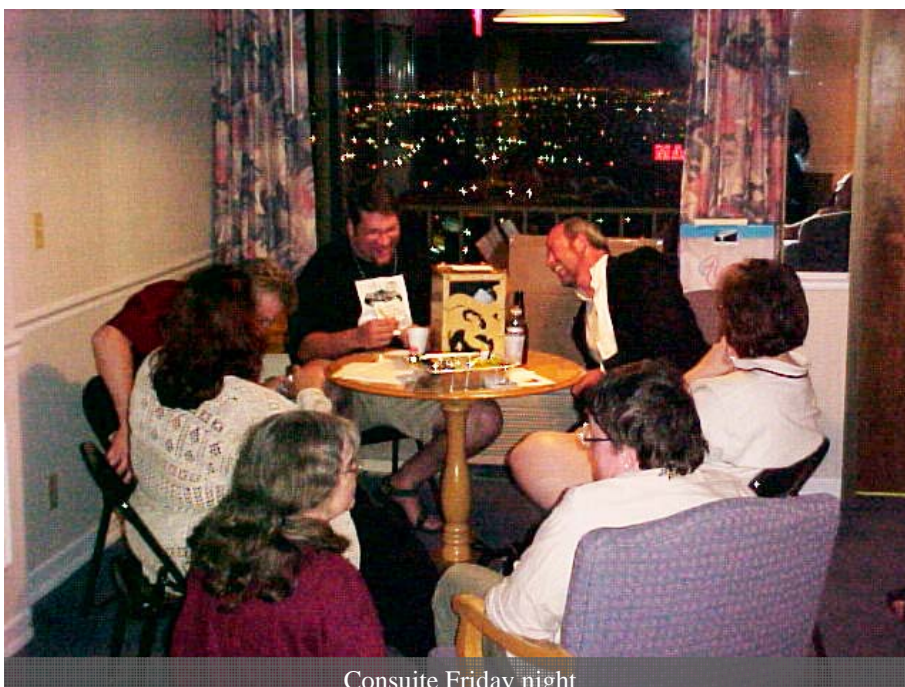
and in charge of the con-suites. At this time I took the opportunity to implore the bodies assembled to eat more. Then there was a little skit done by the co-chairs of the convention, with a little help from the Vegrants.

“Transformation of a Neo-fan” was a summarized version of Ben’s journey through Las Vegas fandom. Very funny. I enjoyed it immensely and proudly played my part. *Food*, of course, followed and we encouraged all to go forth and enjoy.

After the cocktail reception all headed to the con-suites to indulge heavily in all types of decadence and to eat

more *food*. The party was still going strong at 1:30 a.m. when the Formans decided they could enjoy no more. Ben and I made a deal with them that if they would be the early birds and open the con-suites in the morning we would set up the crock-pots for Saturday’s luncheon.

March 20, 2004
Day Three



Consuite Friday night

Ben and I stuck around to clean up the con-suites. We finally managed to chase off the last stragglers with our domestic demeanor about 2:30 a.m. The con had acquired an extra unneeded room for the evening so we offered it to our roommate, and were finally alone.

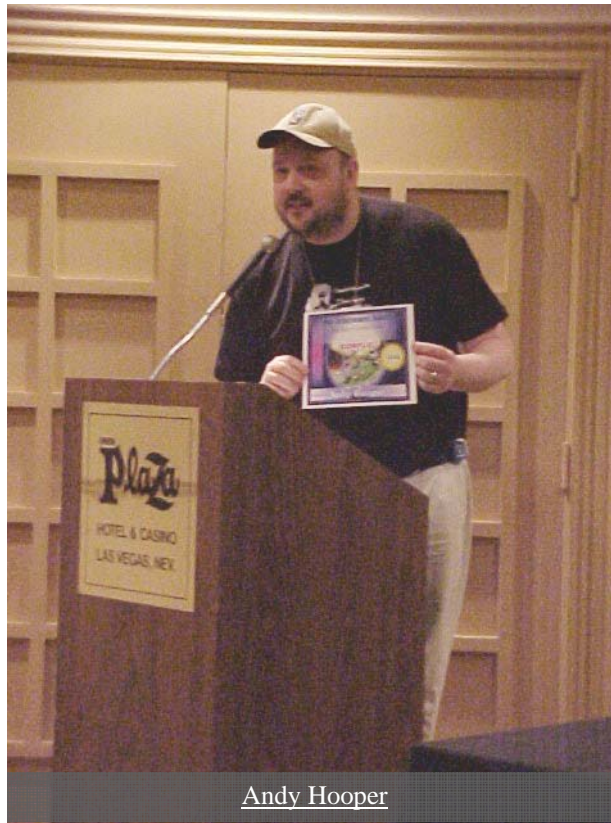
Blackjack Diary V — The Care and Feeding of trufans.

We finished up the hospitality rooms around 3:00 and went to enjoy our privacy.

By the time we were done and showered, we knew there was no way that we would get any sleep before we had to get up at 5:30 a.m. to set up for lunch. We decided to just head on down and get it over with. Thank Ghu for our deal with the Formans. We got to bed around 5:30.

We arose somewhere around 10:00 a.m. and were immediately aware that Ben had somewhere to be at 10:30. The trivia game was to start then and could not possibly go on in the absence of one of the chairs. I went to investigate what was doing in the hospitality corridor and to check on the meal progress. Aileen and I finished setting up for lunch and announced that it was time to eat more *food*. Everyone seemed to enjoy him or herself and heaped on compliment after compliment. Much more than was deserved. Andy Hooper even made a point of letting me know what a bargain he thought it was to be fed so much for his \$45 contribution.

Now that everyone was completely stuffed, it was time to head off to the auction. Aileen and I had to run an errand. We were out of water for the consutes. We forgot how much water one needs when visiting the desert, and were down to our last cigarette. The water was no problem, it took only minutes to find, the smokes were another story. Aileen smokes a particular brand of clove cigarettes not easily found at the corner grocers. I knew of a smoke shop close by, so we went to investigate. No luck, but the clerk knew of another store that might have what we were looking for. We



Andy Hooper

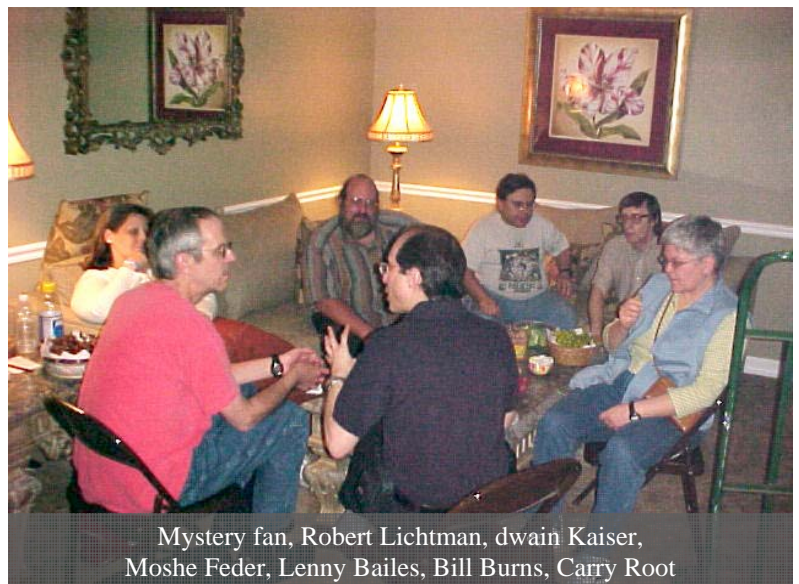
headed off to this store, which happened to be near a Diversity.

In Las Vegas there are a chain of stores, called Diversity that has smoking paraphernalia, tattooing and body piercing. I had mentioned to Aileen that I was interested in some body piercing and she promptly offered a belated birthday gift of an impalement of my choice. I accepted. Two hours later, much more time than one would expect, I had a brand new sparkly stud in my nose. I love it.

By the time we got back to the hotel it was time for the dinner break, but it would have to be a

quick one. Aileen had to run off to be in Andy Hooper's play, "Futurama 3004 A.D." at 7:00.

The play was very funny, with a large cast, and more parts than actors. It was a spoof on the television series created by the makers of the "Simpsons". It was true to form with a fan-nish juxtaposition. The actors, Aileen, Karl Kreder, Steve Stiles, Carrie Root, Ross Chamberlain, Robert Lichtman, Lenny Balis, Jerry Kaufman, and the ever effervescent Andy Hooper, some



Mystery fan, Robert Lichtman, dwain Kaiser, Moshe Feder, Lenny Bailles, Bill Burns, Carry Root

playing dual roles, did a great job of imitating the shows characters, some with more zeal than others. "It is the will of Lur" rung out from one of the actors, I don't remember which, but my friends immediately hung that on me for ordering fen to eat more *food*.

The play ended, and I was off to check the ice and drink supply before the hospitality suites opened for the evening. Everything was going well and I found much time to get to know the people I had only briefly met the day before. I really enjoyed spending time with Sandra Bond. She's very sweet and funny and she got and laughed at all our jokes. I hope that she had as great a time as I did, especially because she chose us over Easter-con.

At 9:30 that evening, there was a beer tasting. Ben, Ken and Tom went to local micro-



Aileen Forman offers bbeer

breweries and picked a large sampling of gallon jugs. Aileen and Karl Kreader were your hosts for the event. It proved to be great fun since Karl's taste leans to darker beers, e.g. Guinness, and Aileen more towards pale ales, e.g. Bud Light. Of course they could not agree on what a good tasting beer was, but Carrie Root seemed to enjoy them all.

You must forgive my memory from this point on for this evening. I just remember speaking to many people, smoking, not as much as I could have, but more than I needed. I

do remember helping the NLE boys harass Andy Hooper, who was impersonating Tom Springer for Nine Lines Each. I also remember hitting my pillow at 5:00 a.m.

March 21, 2004

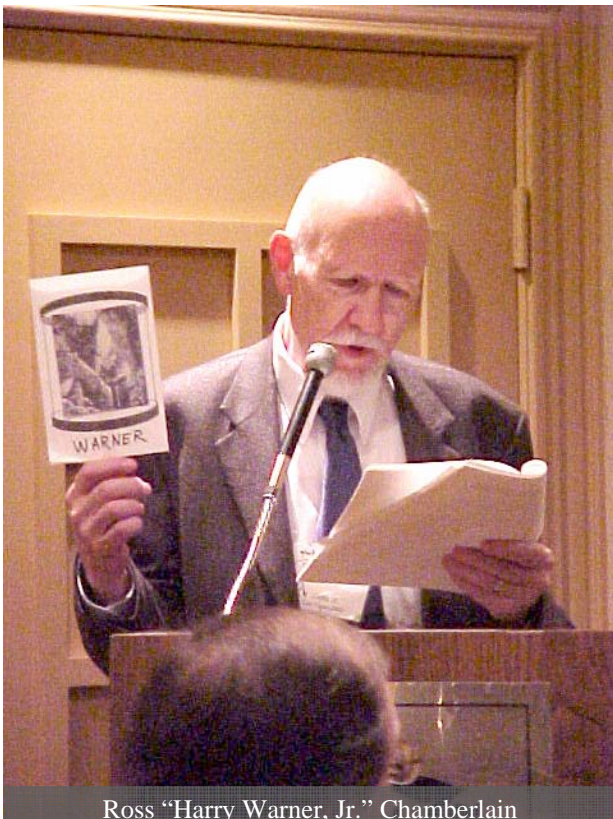
Day Four

Thank Ghu it was Sunday, only consuites and the banquet this day. There weren't too many faces this early, especially since the banquet was an 11:00 brunch, but lots of requests for coffee.

There was a lot of *food* at the buffet, of course, but I think we managed to put a dent in it. Ted White gave his speech and I think I got the gist of it, but was *sooo* bleary eyed and over-partied that I could not possibly, or would even attempt to, give you anything verbatim. There were the FAAn Awards, but you'll have to find out from someone else what the outcome was.

Aileen and Karl had to head back to California. We were sad to see them go but duty called.

The thing I think most sticks in my mind about this day is what happened after the con was "officially" over. People were gushing over their time with us. I couldn't believe how appreciative everyone was for our little effort. I had had a



Ross "Harry Warner, Jr." Chamberlain



Ted White, Robert Lichtman, Steve Stiles, and others sample the Sunday Brunch

great time also. I felt a little, but only very little, unworthy of all this praise. Are you suppose to have such a good time running a convention?

I spent a long afternoon of visiting between the hospitality suites and the Katzes “and smoking room”, just having long conversations with Sandra Bond, Andy Hooper, Ken, Arnie and Joyce, Richard Brandt, and many many more that I cannot recall. I’d sneak out to the balcony for a cigarette and some quiet time reflecting on the weekend that we’d just had. I’m so glad that so many people had just as good, or maybe even better, a time as I had.

The con may have been over but the party sure wasn’t. It went on into the wee hours. Ben and I left about 1:00 a.m., with choruses of “We Love the Moon” being heard down the hall as we left to collapse for a few hours before the pack and long ride in the morning.

March 22, 2004

Day Five

A call from Ken at about 8:30 got us motivated out of bed. We packed up our room, called a bellhop, and while Ben packed up the van, I would go to the con-suites and help Ken.

Ken had a nice surprise. Carrie Root came down and helped him finish cleaning and organizing everything for quicker packing. We were just waiting for Susan Williams. She had kindly volunteered her truck to help us take supplies back to the Katzes, and to also hasten our getaway from the clutches of Sin City.

Carrie left and Ben came to join Ken and I amongst the ruins of the weekend. We were sitting around patting ourselves on the back, longing for Aileen’s company, and feeling very sated with good cheer. I can’t say this enough. We all had a great time too. We couldn’t have asked for a better Corflu. Thanks for coming to our party.

— Cathi Wilson



Line of Fire

Column by Joyce Katz

The Month-Long Con: Yucaipa-rating in CA

I was still wrapped in a rosy Corflu glow for weeks after the convention was over. I had the expected mild case of post-con flu, and it occurred to me to hope I hadn't passed the bug to my friend Andy Hooper, but even that discomfoting thought couldn't dampen the fine spirit the convention had produced.

After struggling through the post-con house cleaning, Arnie and I began to settle back into our normal habits. We both had our work up to date, the house had been scoured, and Sunday afternoon, April 18, we settled down to watch the pay-per-view wrestling card. Afterward I was feeling a bit punk, like Andy Hooper might feel after a week of fan politics, so Arnie urged me to sit on the sofa while he cleared the room of soda cans and snack debris.

A rush of discomfort passed over me, and it seemed to me that I'd be better lying down. "I'm going to the bedroom," I called out to Arnie, with no more foreboding than Andy Hooper might have over announcing the next TAFF candidate.

"Stay there," Arnie yelled to me, "I'm coming to help you." But by that time I was halfway down the hall, yet seeing the error of my plan (just like Andy Hooper finding typos in *Chunga* after the issue is already completed).

"I'm fainting," I whimpered, and as Arnie ran toward me, "I can't stay up." I slid downward into momentary blackness. As pain shot through my body, like the electricity from an Andy Hooper caress. I saw my ankles lying akimbo, in strange angular poses.

We'll discretely turn away and fast-forward a few weeks, past the emergency ward, the hospital, the surgery, even past the rehabilitation hospital, the Evil & Cruel receiving witches, the Good and Kindly Glendas who wiped my tears and rebuilt me with kindness, hugs, encouragement and expert care. Andy Hooper would not want me to expose my weakest moments in this venue, so I'll discuss disgusting medical details in another article.

On Wednesday evening, May 5, Su Williams wheeled me out of the rehab hospital and

Line of Fire II — Joyce is Counting Crows.

helped me slide into the front seat of the car – my own car, since we'd determined that I'd never be able to get into a truck or van via my newly learned skill with the medical "sliding board" (That's a nearly-miraculous device that lets me heft my body from bed to wheelchair, wheelchair to car seat, never allowing my feet to touch the ground. I know that Andy Hooper would beam at me in pride if he could only see me in this maneuver.)

First we stopped by the house. I didn't budge from the car seat while Su went inside to pack a few clothes for me. Arnie, Bill Kunkel, and Derek Stazinski left their simulation baseball games in progress, to stand around the car and pass the pipe to me. (I know Andy Hooper wishes he were still a member of their computer baseball league so he could have sent me greetings, as well.)

Through the front window, I could see our glowing lamp in the bedroom and beyond that, my ruffled hand-made pillows laid out along the bay window. My heart yearned toward home, and I felt like a little match girl, staring through the window at the warmth inside on a snowy Christmas Eve.

Su came out of the house with my lovely Flash Foggy and placed my darling cat in my arms. But he was too terrified to recognize me. He cringed and struggled, until I put my face directly in front of his and cooed to him. For just a moment he seemed to know... he stared at me with almost a smile...but it passed quickly back into hissing fear, so I asked Arnie to take him back inside to safety.

Swiftly the little visit to home and loved ones was over. The car was loaded with wheelchair, potty-chair, sliding board, a bag filled with supplies and drugs, and a suitcase with a few changes of clothes. Andy Hooper will be proud to know I did not cry as I said my good-byes, and the car headed west, to California.

Four hours later I was safely ensconced in Ken & Aileen Forman's third bedroom in Yucaipa, staring at a balloon that whispered "Welcome Home."

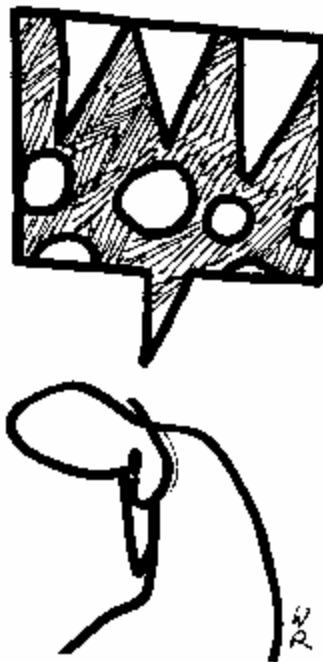
Morning slid over the mountains on cool breezes, and Aileen and Cathi Wilson helped me dress for the first time in over a month. They tucked a lap blanket around me and brightly asked, "Would you like to sit with us outside on the patio?" As they wheeled me outside into the sunlight, warmth and health seemed to lie all about me, pushing back the shadows of confinement, just like Andy Hooper pushes away the gloom from any room he enters.

Huge black crows glided over my head, with raucous greeting. By my feet, Pooka, the Formans' fabulous dog, bounced in expectant joy at my presence. Staring at us through the sun-porch windows, three furry cat faces, and out in the pasture Horse Morty stopped munching hay long enough to nod courtesies my direction. A mug of coffee and the morning sun drove away the chills, and I began to feel like there could be, might be, a return to life lying just over the hill.

Aileen, Ben and Cathi sat with me, and when Ken returned, he joined our row of watchers. Now and then one or the other would throw a ball across the lawn for Pooka. Now and then a crow would yelp some birdish indignity, or Mort would gallop a few feet from here to there. Pretty soon Cathi passed me a plate of something delicious. And always, loving fingers pulled the blanket over me, adjusted my position into the sun, or later, into the shade.

"This is how we spend our days," one or another said to me. "We never actually DO anything... we just enjoy the sun." Seemed like a damnfine idea to me, as I watched the mountains turn colors. Not even Andy Hooper could have wanted more.

A hawk flew over the pasture, and Ken and Ben noted it with enough excitement to make them rise from their chairs. The crows saw the



hawk and a squadron of five or six mounted an attack to drive the interloper away from their nests.

The afternoon wore on; eventually we moved into the house for a meal, and then to the back porch to watch twilight's approach. "This is what we do," someone explained again. "This is how we pass our time."

On Saturday afternoon, Su returned, bringing Arnie along for a 24-hour visit. Amid a flurry of activity, a couple more chairs were added on the patio, and mental crifanac filled the too-brief hour, like Andy Hooper and his friends fill a hospitality suite with chatter.

Later that afternoon, Karl Kreder came by, and joined out séance with the sun and view. Cathi cooked a meal of chicken and pasta, and the evening stretched long into the night, as we smoked, talked about Corflu, and planned future fanac. Ken and Ben took over the chore of counting the FAPA Pavlat Egoboo Poll, and Ben entered the results the next morning into an Excel Spread Sheet.

Arnie and Su left Sunday around noon to drive back to Vegas. It had been my first lengthy time with Arnie since the accident, and I sighed to see him leave, not knowing how long it would be before we'd be together again.

One morning, someone announced the crow eggs in the nest atop the tallest tree had hatched. On another day, someone taught me to use the throwing stick, the *atl-atl*. It scooped up the ball, so I needn't touch the dog-slobber-covered orb, and helped sling it even further than I could throw it alone. Pooka appreciated this refinement to our game. Another morning I noticed two lizards taking turns chasing each other along the sidewalk, and watched them for hours in their game of tag.

And then there was the mighty effort spent in keeping me socially acceptable. The problem, of course, was the casts, which had to remain dry. Aileen wrapped my legs in Saran Wrap, swathed them in towels, then wheeled the chair as near the shower as possible. Using the sliding board, she helped me maneuver from the wheelchair to a plastic shower chair in the stall. Then she placed the wheelchair in position for me to rest my cast-heavy legs on it, outside of the

shower enclosure, and draped the shower curtain over them. The soap and warm water felt heavenly on hospital-parched skin, and especially on my attention-deprived hair. Then, when Aileen and I were both scoured pink and clean, the entire process was reversed to get me out of the shower, into the wheelchair, and (eventually) dried and dressed. These were the most labor-intensive baths I'd ever had, and of necessity could only be done on warm sunny afternoons since it involved so much movement while still wet. Once or twice a week was as much as either of us could handle, which is not up to Andy Hooper's standards, but I know he'd understand.

One evening one of Aileen's co-workers joined us for nickel-ante poker. Unlike the card-shark Andy Hooper, I had not played since high school ("The last time I played," I informed the others, "it was for kisses.") If I ever had any skill, it was over 40 years past...actually, I seem to remember I lost quite a few kisses while playing with my high school sweetheart. I lost all my money (upward of three whole dollars) and showed not even one whit of improvement for the lesson.

One Sunday afternoon, Arnie's brother Ira and his wife Carol, came to visit and joined us in patio-sitting. Another Sunday, Cathi and Aileen bundled me up, slid me into the car, and took me to the Yucaipa Iris Festival, a delightful hometown fair with kiddy rides, art show (there were about eight paintings), quilt show (4 quilts), flower show, and a surprisingly large gem and mineral show. The midway featured a dozen or so vendors. The newly founded Eastern Inland Empire Science Fiction Organization, the latest creation to spring from the Awesome Mind of Ken Forman, was participating in the Hillbilly Chili Cook-Off. Eschewing the hillbilly tag, Ken and Ben decorated the booth with science fictional posters, decked out all the club members in head bands with bouncing alien skulls on springs, and made green chili with pork, a soup-like concoction with remarkably good flavor. The booth attracted a lot of interest, and they managed to give away club flyers to a lot of potential members. And the chili was well received, especially when accompanied by Cathi's excellent homemade yeast rolls, though the City Firemen won

Line of Fire IV — Joyce hopes Andy Hooper will understand

with much less exotic cooking.

Weekly, I improved. The pain lessened; I needed fewer pain pills, so slept less and assumed my rightful share of the Great Work of bird watching, ball throwing, and cat petting.

One Sunday, Ken and Aileen again maneuvered me into the car, and took me for a driving tour of the surrounding area. The highspots were a trip to Redlands, a charming city that looked like it belonged in the Midwest, filled with Victorian houses, lush landscaping, and a stop at Dairy Queen for a Butterfinger Blizzard.

That same night, Karl and Alison Kreder brought over shish-kabob fixings, Cathi and Ken made couscous, and the group topped off this fine meal with a game of "Settlers of Catan." By that time, I'd wearied, so I passed up my chance to play, and instead cleared out my mail queue.

DeDee White stopped by one afternoon, on her way to visiting her family in Hemet. She brought greetings from Alan, plus a stack of magazines and fanzines he sent to keep me entertained. As she patio-sat with us, the former Yucaipa resident agreed that it was a fine way to pass the time, and a great place for recuperation.

As the end of May approached, I began to think of going home. Andy Hooper will understand my mixed emotions: this had been the longest separation Arnie and I had in 33 years of marriage. I missed him; I missed my cat, and I missed my own home. But at the same time, I dreaded the ordeal it would be to care for me there until I relearned to walk. Our house in Vegas is not wheelchair-friendly. There are places, such as the kitchen and both bathrooms, not large enough for maneuvering. And Arnie's cooking couldn't compare with the great fare I'd become used to. (He had, by this point, mastered making (1) toasted bagels, (2) hotdogs, and (3) hamburgers on the George Foreman Grill®.)

But the month-long convention was closing. I had to get x-rays by June 4, to take to the surgeon on June 7. The patio hours grew more precious, as they grew fewer. I dreaded the goodbyes, with Pooka whom I'd grown to love, with the cheerful Morty, the trio of cats, with the lizards and the doggy ball games, and the endless conversation, mental crifanac, movies, and music. I dreaded saying goodbye to Ken & Aileen,

and Ben & Cathi and Megan, the four-year-old-going-on-eight (brightest child I've ever met!)

On my last day there, Wednesday, June 2, Tom and Tammy Springer and their two-year old Natalie showed up for a visit. This really crowned the visit royally, to spend time with the Vegas Veterans. Sadly, my casts and chair frightened Natalie, who'd take one look and start screaming "no-no-no" until she was carried out of view. Whee. Now I frighten small children.

You know how Andy Hooper feels at the end of a long convention? You know how it is to be ready to leave, yet to hate going? That's how I felt. I loved passing the time, loved the way the long slow days slid into warm evenings of gaiety and conversation. I loved the stream of visitors, and the great meals. But I missed Arnie; I missed home.

Heck, I'll admit it: I loved being waited on hand and foot, spoiled and petted and cared for by the kindest and best-natured hosts in fandom. I hated being hurt, and I hated being helpless. But being so, there was no place I'd rather recuperate than right there, in the Yucaipa Insurgents Commune (YIC), enjoying a month-long convention party with my closest, most caring friends.

Andy Hooper knows just what I mean.





The Toasted Bagel

Column by Arnie Katz

The Bachelor

One of the innumerable “reality” shows that clog up today’s broadcast TV schedule is *The Bachelor*. Like its near cousin *Joe Millionaire*, it’s a competition among gold-digging attention-whores to see who can gain title to all of the bachelor’s worldly goods. While this hunt is underway, the bachelor preens like a rooster and takes the kind of liberties only hinted at in *Betty & Veronica Summer Annual*. If he makes a few of the women look desperate, foolish or vulgar along the way, so much the better.

Like most of today’s reality programs, *The Bachelor* is about as real as William Shatner’s hair. It portrays the *fantasy* of bachelorhood

Even *The Bachelor*’s most basic element is at odds with real life. The show focuses on the sexual frenzy of bachelorhood, when in reality, bachelors don’t have nearly as much sex as married men. While it’s true that no one has less sex than a married couple that isn’t into it, it is also true that no one has *more* sex than a married guy in a couple that likes a lot of action.

It only makes sense. While the single guy is out looking, the horny married guy is giving it to his wife. While the single guy is casting lines and couches, the married guy is giving it to his wife. While the single guy is arranging meetings and mutually convenient times, the married guy is *there* – and giving it to his wife. It’s possible

The Toasted Bagel II — Arnie's talkin' to himself

that this arrangement gives the single guy a minor edge in variety, but even that can be handled by a pair of lively imaginations. The married guy whose wife is into sex is likely to be doing it a whole lot more often.

Just recently, my wife Joyce told me about her computations in the field of marital intimacy. I think it's part of her (unnecessary) campaign to convince me not to remarry while she recuperates from double ankle surgery. Anyway, she announced to me with some understandable pride that she and I have had sex 15,000 times, *minimum*. A number like that makes you think—and much less likely to envy the bachelors on TV.

I haven't been a bachelor for a very long time. Joyce and I celebrated our 33rd wedding anniversary in April and we are approaching 34 years together. I was a bachelor for a very short time before Joyce stole me from the cradle and taught me the true meaning of sexual perversion. My bachelor skills were minimal then and, frankly, time has dimmed all memory of such things.

April 19, 2004, a day that will truly live in infamy, marked my reluctant return to the bachelor life. That's when Joyce broke both of her ankles, one in three places, and began a couple of months of surgery, recuperation and recovery. Recognizing the limitations of both the house and its male occupant, our friends bundled Joyce off to stay with the Formans (and the Wilsons) in Yucaipa, CA., where four people doted on her just about around the clock.

Su Williams, Alan & DeDee White and Marcia Waldie head a long list of people who rallied around Joyce and me. Their friendship and support have been inspirational. I'm not sure whether either of us would be alive if not for their copious help and tender ministrations. So I don't want anything I am about to reveal concerning my bachelorhood to reflect badly on anyone but myself. Keeping me fit enough to write and publish this article is the biggest humanitarian rescue mission since the 1948 Berlin Airlift.

Despite all that incredibly valuable

and much-appreciated help, though, I am largely living alone and coping with the nuts and bolts of life unaided for the first time since about 1970. It's not exactly *Survivor*, but I am having quite a few household adventures.

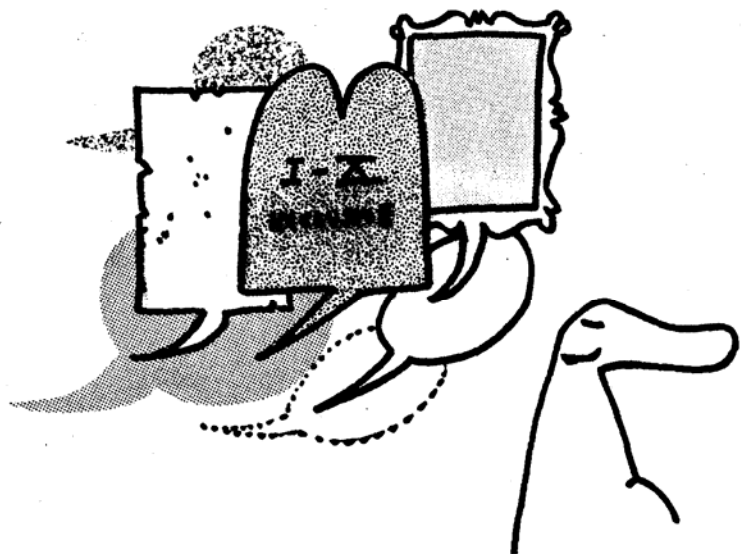
It didn't take me more than a day or two to realize that sex, so central to *The Bachelor*, runs a distant second to food. And though I cherish a belief in my mastery of the former activity, I must acknowledge complete ineptitude in the latter.

Cooking is *terra incognita* to me. When I was single, the height of my culinary aspirations was frying water. I am pleased to say that I fried up a week's worth just yesterday and will be drinking it between sentences of this article.

OK, I know better than to fry water. It should be baked, like a Corflu Blackjack sidebar, because everyone knows you should restrict your consumption of fried foods.

After a couple of months of solitary living, I can make a shrewd guess that most bachelors would take a beefsteak dinner over a blowjob if they had the choice. Mostly, of course, they don't get either.

Here I must pause to give thanks to the George Foreman Grill®. George may be an over-fed phony without the imagination to come up with a name for any of his sixty-seven kids besides "George," but he sure knows cooking for



VOICES FROM THE PAST

idiots. This appliance, which comes in several sizes and models, is designed to make cooking a hamburger no more difficult than taking out the trash – and considerably tastier.

We already had a George Foreman Grill®, the big one with the bun warmer, before Joyce's injury. (I sat on it for three hours when the temperature dipped into the 40s and I can testify to

chalked it up to experience. Pasteur and Edison must've had experiments that didn't pan out right. At least I was in good company.

Careful questioning by Joyce revealed my error: I should've defrosted the meat. I received directions for using the microwave oven, a device that did not exist the last time anyone allowed me into a kitchen.

I put the frozen hockey puck that was my burger-to-be into the microwave, set the timer and 30 seconds later had a defrosted patty. I waited a long time for the Foreman Grill® ready light to send forth its ruddy beam. After I'd waited an inordinately long time, I began to worry that the problem lay with my eyes. Maybe I couldn't see the light because the kitchen was so bright. I cupped my hands around the light to shield it from Vegas' daytime glare, but I couldn't see a glimmer.

When the light finally

came on, I shoveled the defrosted patty onto the grill and closed the top. Convinced that I had things under control, I decided to go to the max and use the Foreman Grill®'s bun warmer to give the burger that extra bit of distinction.

And it was... underdone. I felt like Jason Alexander trying to create a new TV series.

It took me several failures before I summoned the courage to suggest to Joyce and Su that something was wrong with the unit's heating elements. Ever the sleuth, I figured that out after it took 45 minutes to achieve cooking temperature – and then didn't actually get hot enough to even harm anything.

Su loaned me a smaller, but definitely working, Foreman Grill®. My victory was complete. I even oven-toasted the bun. The next night, I successfully repeated this process with hot dogs. Those waiting to hear about the hot dog that exploded in the microwave can relax; aware of this potential problem, I poked more holes in each frankfurter than it takes to fill the Albert Hall.

So now I have the know-how to make salami



THE TALKER

the fact that it works.)

With some coaching from Joyce and Su, I grimly approached my first confrontation with The Grill. I couldn't have been more frightened if I was about to confront George Foreman himself, in the ring.

My apprehension wasn't unfounded. The Grill scored a first-round knock out when I tried to prepare my first hamburger. Although it took half of forever to get it hot enough to trigger the red light on the top. (Why a red light means "Go!" on The Foreman Grill® is a question for philosophers to ponder and debate.)

I dumped the hamburger onto the grill and closed the lid. I heard sizzling, a sweet sound to a protein-starved bachelor. I timed the cooking as Joyce instructed me, but the results were disappointing when I opened the grill.

The meat looked underdone. Well, to be accurate, some of it was stone cold raw and other parts had a blackened, ashy appearance. It averaged out to "underdone" – and that's close enough to edible to be almost a moral victory. I

The Toasted Bagel IV — Arnie has the know-how but wants to forget.

(and turkey) sandwiches, hamburgers, hotdogs and calls to the local delivery places. It's not a permanent solution, but it's a lot better than fighting the cat for his bowl of food.

That's just as well, since the cat really isn't that keen on me in the first place and might get pretty riled up if I intruded on his food supply. It's a sad fact that Foggy only really likes Joyce. He hasn't scratched or bitten anyone, unlike his two predecessors, but he gives me as wide a berth as possible.

The only thing he likes about me is that I open cans of cat food for him. He can actually counterfeit a mild feline affection for me when I am actually in process of opening the can and serving it to him. But he doesn't even want me to be in the same room and once he is fed, he goes back to pretending I am a stranger who has stumbled into his world.

The thought that I was gradually training Foggy to be more of a pet gladdened the first few days of my bachelorhood. Then I realized he was training me. He got me to where I'd open about a can of cat food an hour just to get some trivial sign of approval – or at least semi-tolerance.

To give Foggy the real, if feeble, credit he deserves, he is not just foraging for himself. My cat has a pet cat. A somewhat scrawny gray kitten comes around to the back door and Foggy insists that I feed him. Sometimes Foggy even demands food, turns it down without even tasting and then shrieks until I put it out for his pet.

The kitten is also much in favor of the idea. He's a bottomless maw of hunger. No matter how much food I put out, he eats it, licks the plate clean and cries for more. And that is no exaggeration, either. He never reaches "enough."

That's pretty remarkable, considering that he belongs to another family. I have to wonder what they feed him and how they think he subsists on it. Of course, it's possible that they feed him just as much as I do and that three other households do so as well. Nothing would surprise me about this machine for converting food into excrement.

Living things don't represent the only dangers to the feckless bachelor. There's a cabinet in the kitchen, for example, that has my name on it. It likes to position me so that its big, heavy wooden door is at the ideal height to deliver a

stunning blow to the temple. Sometimes, I fear the cat is cooperating with it.

Even though I'm especially careful, since the Katz family can't afford to have both Joyce and me on the disabled list, the cabinet continues to get in its licks. I have not yet passed out from one of these collisions, so I figure I'm behind on points but still with an outside shot at victory.

I wouldn't want to give bachelorhood a totally negative spin. It has been an opportunity to make many discoveries about myself. I found out that I can operate several simple kitchen appliances, I can recover from a cabinet door blow to the head so violent that my ears ring and I am one of those people who is going to end up talking to himself.

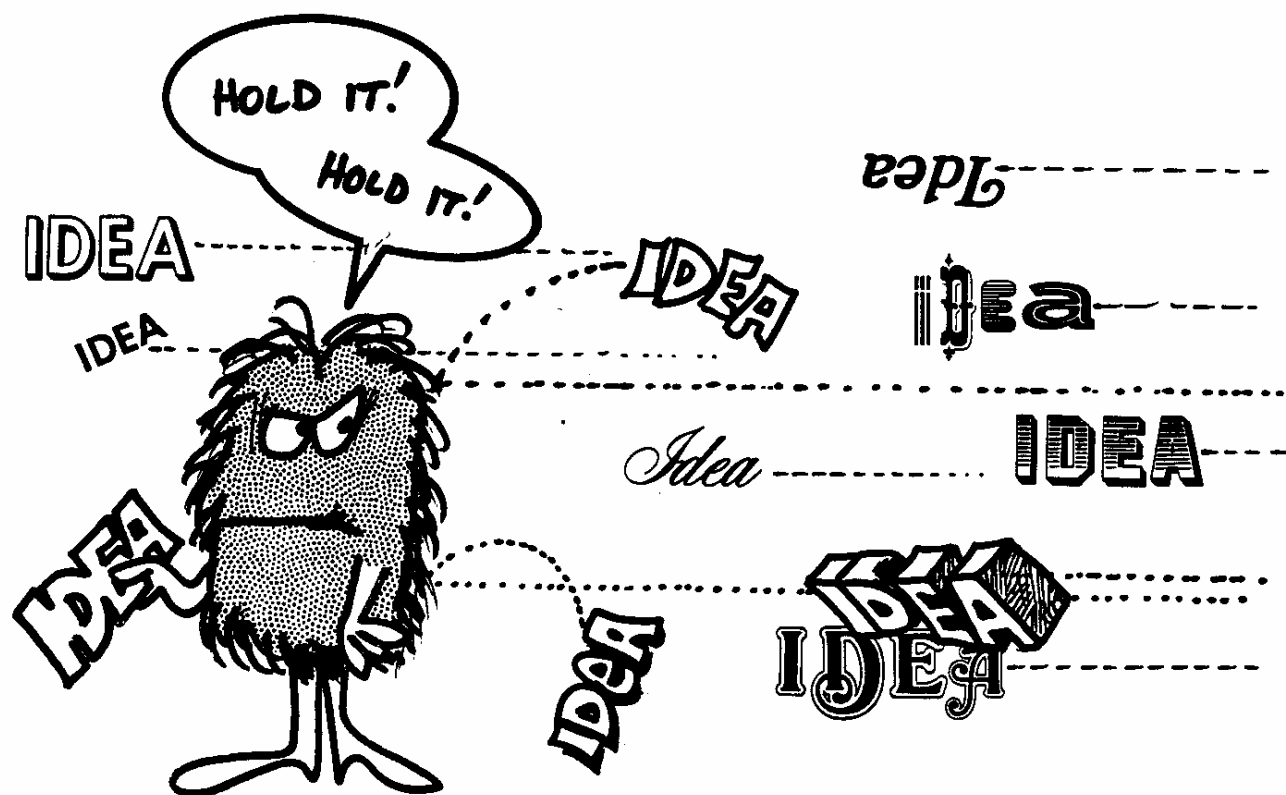
It wasn't more than two weeks into my mandatory bachelorhood that I discovered I talk to myself. Not just a word or two; complete sentences. This is a glimpse of what I will be like in lonely old age. It would worry me a lot if I weren't so *damned* interesting.

My life differed from that of actual bachelors in one important way: I knew almost to the day when it would end. Once Joyce was ready to move into the next stage of her recuperation, physical therapy, she returned home and ascended her domestic throne again. Me? I'm trying to forget.

— Arnie Katz

A BOY AND HIS PAL





Sizzle

Column by Aileen Forman

I'm Smokin'!

I'd like to preface this article with the usual disclaimers. Tobacco has been found to damage any and all organs, seduce your wife, put holes in the ozone layer, turn your speech pattern into that resembling Andy Hooper on a rant and kill you deadier than a penguin on Interstate 10 during rush hour.

By this, I don't mean to make light of those who lost loved ones to the use of tobacco. I choose to live my life in a less than safe manner, well aware of all the dangers. If any of your family were forced to smoke, chew or slather on tobacco, I think you should hunt down the person

who forced them and do the same to them.

I used to work for the online magazine, Collecting Channel, along with such stellar fans as Arnie and Joyce Katz, rich brown and Andy Hooper. The days were long and I worked at home. I often found myself wandering aimlessly out in the backyard, trying to clear my head enough to write. In an effort to find an aim, and because I didn't have enough vices (shut up, Ken!), I began smoking clove cigarettes.

Most people who discovered that I smoked cloves all said the same thing. "Hey! I used to smoke those in college (or high school or, in one disturbing case, elementary school). Wow, I

Sizzle II — Aileen's the Leader of the Pack

haven't smelled that smell in forever!" It makes me feel a little like apologizing for not smoking a more "mature" cigarette. But, as I tell them, if I'm going to kill myself, I'll do it smoking what I like.

I found a brand that I enjoyed, Wismilak Diplomats. One of the benefits of smoking an unusual cigarette is that not many people want to bum one from you. Those who do usually regret it.

Anyway, I've been smoking about, what, six or seven years now and, naturally, I'm very fond of my own brand. They have a sweet filter and a very smooth tobacco that you don't find in American clove cigarettes. I'm usually able to keep up with my supply (from one of two preferred online sources in Indonesia) but since we've had ex-Las Vegas fans Ben and Cathi Wilson (and their fabulous four-year-old Megan) living with us, my estimate of when I'd run out was a little short last month.

Cathi found out she liked Wismilaks too, and I was more than willing to share. However, when I ordered, I neglected to realize the company I ordered from was the one that doesn't charge shipping and takes forever to get to me. I should have ordered from the company that mails promptly and charges an arm and a leg for shipping.

When we were down to the last Wismilak pack, Cathi and I were smoking them like hardened criminals in cell block B, drawing a lungful and holding it while passing it on to the next person, so as not to waste the smoke.

By the time we smoked the last one, I was watching for the mailman like I was expecting a check from Publishers Clearinghouse or a LoC from Andy Hooper.

I broke down and took a trip to the nearest cigarette store. I stood there, sadly perusing its limited choices of kretek (clove) cigarettes. No, I'd tried

that brand in the past and it sucked, I thought. So did that other one. With no good choices available, I just picked up a pack of Djarums and paid more than twice the amount that I normally pay and headed out the door.

When I got home, I cracked open the pack, sat on our back porch with Cathi and silently handed her a Djarum, keeping one for myself. We lit up.

Cathi's face went from hopeful to horrified. My lungs protested the intruder and I quickly set down the offending horror.

"Well, that's not a good substitute," I commented dryly. Cathi agreed. However, having spent \$5 on the pack, we slowly smoked them one by one throughout the next two days.

Soon I ended up back at the cigarette shop. I looked over the selection again. Well, there were cherry-flavored clove cigarettes. Maybe these would be better tasting. I brought them home.

Cathi was optimistic. She said she liked cherry-flavored cigarettes and lit one up. I watched her face carefully. Oh, dear, I thought, as she grimaced.

**THIS VERY FANZINE WAS ONCE
INVOLVED IN A WIDESPREAD
FANNISH SCANDAL!**



**IT WAS MIMOED
BACK THEN AND
USED DISMANTLED
HYPHENS AS
SLIPSHEETS!**

"No, huh?" I asked, knowing the answer before I asked it. She shook her head sadly and slowly.

This time we didn't even finish the pack. I went to find another cigarette store. This one, like the other one, was run by a Middle East gentleman. I asked him if he knew which of the kretek cigarettes had the most cloves in them,



since I had ascertained that the inclusion of whole cloves was what had made the Wismilaks so good.

He looked a little panicked. "Um, I don't smoke," he admitted sheepishly. My eyebrows raised involuntarily. Okaaaaay, I thought. That's interesting.

"These are the most popular," he said helpfully, pointing at the same Djarums that we'd tried before. Sighing, I thanked him and grabbed the pack next to it, Djarum Specials. I headed home.

They weren't all that special but they were smokable. Next I tried the drug paraphernalia shop that masquerades as a smoke shop. They had plenty of pipes, screens, liquids that guarantee to help you pass a drug test, incense and t-shirts with marijuana leaves on the front (exactly where could you wear one of those shirts, I wondered) but they only carried Djarums. I bought a

pack of Djarum Sports, which had a kicky little picture of a surfer on the front.

The salesgirl, who was slightly difficult to understand through the multiple piercings in her face, mumbled something unintelligible when I asked her if she knew if this type of kretek had a lot of cloves. It sounded like she said it was like water for chocolate.

Turns out what she probably said was that the filter tasted like chocolate. It did, but that didn't make the tobacco taste any better. We quickly turned thumbs down on that one.

I was getting somewhat desperate for Wismilaks. I searched the freezer and the glove compartments of the cars, pockets of my coats and the drawers in the kitchen, feeling like Andy Hooper at Corflu Blackjack when he realized that one of his actors wouldn't be able to be in his play. No luck.

Ben and Ken were way too amused by all this. "You could always quit, you know," Ken said helpfully.

"Sure," I said, "But as soon as the cigarettes I ordered come in, I'd just start again. Do you really want me and Cathi to go through withdrawals together?"

Ken and Ben thought this over briefly. They suggested another cigarette shop farther down the boulevard.

This particular shop was more of a mini-mart but it did have clove cigarettes. There was one style I hadn't seen before – Djarum Kings. I once again asked the salesman (a Middle Eastern gentleman, naturally) if these had a better flavor than the others.

"Well, I don't smoke," he said shamefaced, "but these are the most popular." He pointed to the same Djarums that I'd tried before. I thanked him and bought the Kings.

This time, it turned out a little better. They weren't Wismilaks, but they were better than the other crap we'd been smoking. I went back the next day to purchase another pack. They were sold out. With a silent scream and an audible sigh, I bought a pack of Sampoernas. They sucked.

By this point, everyone in the household was getting tired of hearing Cathi and me bitch about the cigarettes.

Sizzle IV — Aileen turns Surly

“Order them from a different supplier,” Ken urged, watching me grimace over yet another icky puff. This was tempting, but I just knew if I did that I would get my package from Indonesia the very next day. Hey! Wait a minute! Maybe that would work!

So I went online that night and ordered a couple of cartons (the minimum order) from a company that promised delivery to the U.S. within 3 to 10 days.

That was on a Wednesday. Saturday morning we were all sitting out on our porch and I noticed something strange. Our mailman was just sitting there in the middle of the block, nowhere near any mailboxes.

“What are you watching?” Ken asked suddenly. I glanced over at him.

“What?” I asked, immediately turning my eyes back to the road.

“You’re looking at something the same way a jaguar watches a wounded tapir,” Ken said worriedly.

Ben and Cathi craned around to follow my gaze. “It’s the mailman,” Ben commented with a smile. “She’s waiting for him to come with her cigarettes.”

“He’s taunting me,” I gritted out between my teeth. Cathi laughed her famous, contagious laugh, which, of course, caused the others to laugh too.

However, I didn’t catch her bug. Instead, I mentally willed the mailman to, for Ghu’s sake, move it! For at least 35 minutes, he sat there, flaunting his ability to deliver my cigarettes!

At last he started up the motor and headed for my mailbox. I raced out to the end of the driveway, but he was gone before I got there. I yanked open the mailbox and slumped in disappointment at the sight of bills, a Newsweek and Ken’s menswear catalog.

By Monday I was dejected. By the following Friday I was downright surly. I emailed the company that had so cruelly advertised a 3-10 day delivery. The next day I received an email that said something must have gone wrong, since they had no record of my order.

That’s when I remembered something that I couldn’t believe I’d forgotten! When I was in the middle of ordering for the second time, our inter-

net connection went down and I’d made a mental note to go online the next morning and complete the order! Aaarrggghhh!

This time I did scream, long and loud.

However, upon calming down (and smoking another rotten cigarette) I told myself that the order from the first company must *surely* be here soon. Besides, I was definitely cutting back on cigarettes and that had to be good for me.

The next Monday I came home from work and flopped into a patio chair on the porch, next to Cathi. I reached over for the package of, what were they by that point? Djarum Inspiros? Something like that. Anyway, I opened the top of the box and gasped.

“Hey!” I crowed. “We’ve got Wismilaks!!!” I leapt off the chair and did a little happy dance around the patio. Cathi laughed like a lunatic at the sight of me and the trick she’d played.

“How long have you had these,” I asked, fumbling for a lighter.

“They arrived this afternoon,” Cathi said, still chuckling. “I hid the cartons and replaced the icky Djarums with a few Wismilaks. Ben suggested I not do that and instead just light one up when you got home to see if you noticed, but we decided that was too cruel. We wondered how long it would take you to realize they were Wismilaks, but damn! You noticed right off that they weren’t Djarums just by the look of the top of the filter.” Hey, what can I say?

I inhaled deeply. Ah! Smooth tobacco with whole cloves! I treasured the taste of it, after my enforced abstinence. Cathi lit one too and we sat on the porch, two happy campers sitting in a smoky haze.

— Aileen Forman

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Fund**



Hot Spring

Column by Ken Forman

Corflu Badger Bits

When I first mentioned to Aileen that I wanted us to attend Corflu Badger in Madison, WI, her response was somewhat underwhelming.

“Okay,” she said, “but *you* have to make all the arrangements.”

I was somewhat taken aback since she usually handles such details. It’s not that I don’t want to make hotel reservations, or seek out the most reasonable airfares. Rather, she was a travel agent when we first met, and continued working in the travel field for a number of years (before moving on to more *Glamour*-ous occupations like dealer or writer). Her ability to ferret out remarkably low prices for flights and amenities has saved us thousands of dollars throughout the years.

Undaunted, I hung-ten on the net and found the fares that suited our budget. Aileen promptly focused on her job and we got back to the business of living our lives.

The day before we left for Madison, I reminded her that she needed to pack that night.

“Honey, we’re all set to go. Don’t forget to pack this evening.”

“Great! What time tomorrow is our plane leaving?”

Consulting my various pages of printed con-



Our host, ConChair Bill Bodden

Hot Spring II — Ken forges ahead

firmations, I looked into her beautiful brown eyes and sanguinely said, “Around seven a.m..”

“WHAT? Are you insane?” Had my hair been longer than my usual half-centimeter cut, it would have been blown back by the ferocity of her exclamation. My dear wife is not well noted as a “morning person.”

[An historical aside is necessary here. There was once a time that neither of us could be found awake any earlier than late morning.]

We were both of the opinion that “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man miss all the best parties.”

This habit of sleeping late plays a large role in the anecdote of our very first fannish contact – Arnie Katz having the audacity to cold-call us at the crack of noon.]

Undisturbed, both mentally and follicularly, I forged ahead.

“It’ll be fine, I’ll drive, and you can sleep on the way. By the way, with all the security in place, we need to be at the airport around six...”

“WHAT? Are you insane?” She says that to me a lot, so I continued.

“...which means we have to leave around five...”

“What?...” (you get the idea).

“...so how much time do you want to wake up, brush your teeth and hair, and get ready to go?”

Her answer told me that she was still reeling from the notion of a 7 a.m. flight. She asked for 30-45 minutes.

“Then I’ll set the alarm for 4:15 in the morning.”

When I could breathe again, after unclenching her hands from my throat, I explained that with the combination of time zones and airline schedules, I’d had the option of leaving way-too-early



Faanish Fued with Ian Sorenson, Bill Bodden (particularly hidden), Colin Hinz, and Orange Mike Lowery

and arriving at a reasonable time, or leaving at a reasonable time but arriving way-too-late. I’d chosen the former.

Next morning, the alarm startled me out of a disturbing, yet somehow compelling dream (something about Andy Hooper in a miniskirt, but that’s the subject of a different article or at least an intense therapy session).

I bounded out of bed to start some coffee for our much-too-early drive to the airport. (Yes, I said “bounded.” Unlike a decade ago, countless mornings of working the early shift at Hoover Dam have taught me to wake quickly and enthusiastically.) After the requisite four snooze alarms – every 9 minutes, just like clockwork – Aileen shuffled her way to the kitchen. Amazingly, she was dressed, brushed, and in almost all ways ready to travel. Her grimace told me that there was a problem.

Being the sensitive kind of guy I am, I quietly asked her, “What’s up, baby? Are you okay?”

She mumbled something about waking with a migraine, taking appropriate medicine, thanking me for the coffee I pressed into her hands, and asking to stop speaking so loudly. To the uninitiated, her speech sounded a bit like someone trying to gargle peanut butter, but I was able to discern her meaning.

Anyone for a strip search? — Hot

The hour's drive to the airport allowed the various drugs (caffeine, sugar, sumatriptan, nicotine) to return my darling wife to the world of the living, but did little to improve her disposition.

"They'll probably want to strip-search me when we get to the airport," she grumbled.

Her pessimism wasn't misplaced. Last November, while flying to Iowa, her baggage was searched four times. When she travels alone, she is often searched by security. I guess she has the look of an international terrorist – that Midwest, wholesome face sprinkled with freckles, that toothsome smile like a jaguarondi about to disembowel a tapir. I, on the other hand, am rarely stopped or searched at airports. Well, there was that one memorable time in New Orleans when they found the rope, handcuffs, and plastic fruit in my luggage, but that's the subject of a different article, or at least an intense therapy session.

Aileen's dire prediction nearly came true. Airport security searched one of our bags; testing

it for unusual chemicals, and checking all the nooks and crannies. This time, I'd left the plastic fruit at home. The flight, although uncomfortably full, was otherwise uneventful.

After visiting nonfannish friends who live in Wisconsin, we snuggled into bed around 3 a.m.. I promised Aileen that we would sleep as long as we could. That was Thursday.



Guest of Honor Dan Steffan



Corflu Badger Banquet —

Hot Spring IV — Where's the Beef?

The following morning, after sleeping a gloriously full 8 hours, we stumbled down to the hotel's coffee shop for some breakfast. Lo and behold, who should we spy just finishing his meal but none other than the irrepressible Don Fitch himself. Come to think of it, Don's is usually the first fannish face I spy at conventions. I used to think he must attend every convention out there, but now I'm beginning to formulate a hypothesis about cloning. In true fannish tradition, we joined his table, chatted with him a bit, and bade him *adieu* as he was just leaving when we arrived. The change of table occupants only temporarily confused the waitress who was kind enough to bring us both coffee and menus.

I find it fascinating to peruse menus from other cultures (Midwest v. California). Unlike what I might ordinarily order for breakfast on the Left Coast (fruit and cereal, or waffles), I opted for the Meat, Meat, Meat, Meat, Meat, Cheese, and Meat Special. ("I'll have *your* meat; too. I *like* meat.") We were later informed that Wisconsin had a law that required at least one ounce of cheese to be served with every meal costing more than 60¢. "Yessir, I'd like to order the *Hot Fudge & Cheddar Ice Cream Sundae, please.*"

Moments after we ordered, we spied recent

Las Vegas immigrants Ron & Linda Bushyager accompanied by recently slimmed and halfway to svelte Hope Liebowitz. (*Way to go, Hope. I'm really proud of you.*) We chatted for a while, comparing the Bushyagers' impressions of Vegas with our own. Just like conventions, it seems that everyone lives in a different Las Vegas.

After breakfast, Aileen and I found a conveniently located conversation nook to relax and observe the fine fen checking into the hotel. Ted White shared his adventures of driving behind a vehicle labeled "Jonbon." (A story surprisingly similar to Lynn Steffan's adventures of driving behind a vehicle labeled "Jonbon," but that's the subject of a different article, or at least an intense therapy session.) As fans came and went, the circle expanded and contracted. Old age and impaired short-term memory prevent me from remembering who all was part of the circle.

At one point, Ted White stopped a passing blur that turned out to be Bill Bodden (convention coordinator and all around great guy) to ask where registration might be found. His vaguely pornographic answer of "Beyond the Green Wall, look for the door" did little to answer Ted's question. Since registration had yet to be set up, the question was moot, albeit entertain-



ing. Moments later, Frank Lunney made a similar inquiry. My response only served to confuse him, although I’m unsure which word (green, wall, or beyond) he didn’t understand.

The evening’s programming began with Ian Sorensen hosting **Beneath the Valley of the Family Feud**. If I were wearing a chapeau, I’d have to doff it to Ian. He masterfully and amusingly emceed the game show based on the popular television show, **Family Feud**.

I suppose it *could* have been based on the game show **Fannish Feud** from 1996’s Corflu Vegas in which the NLE Boys soundly trounced Falls Church Fandom, but he didn’t mention it.

What he *did* mention, though were the sources for the questions and answers. Spike Parsons attended a recent British convention where she ~~coereed~~ asked fans to answer her queries. As Ian kept reminding the contestants, “We asked one hundred *drunk* British fans this question...remember, these were *drunk* British fans.”

Some of my favorites were:

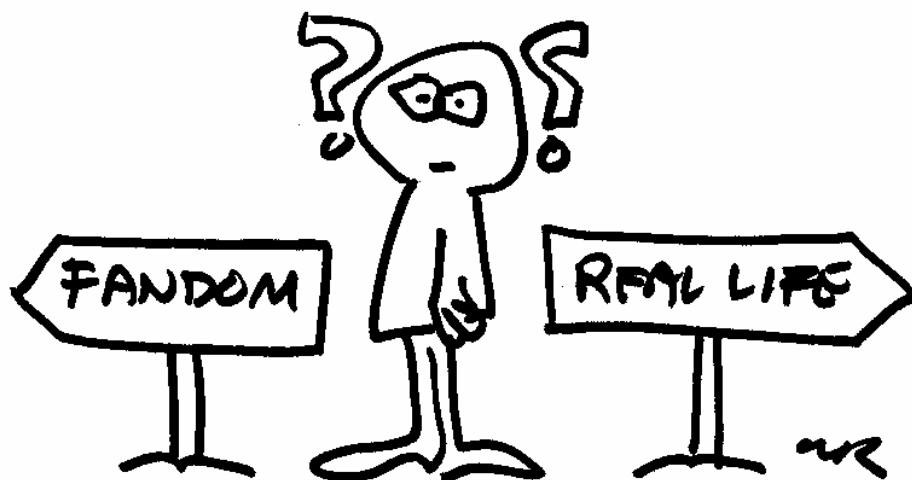
Name something made of rubber. Top answer, “condoms,” followed by tires” (remember, these were one hundred *drunk* British fans), and “clothing”.

Name something you *wouldn’t* eat at a convention. Top answer, “healthy food”, followed by “sushi”; later on the list “Alison Scott”.

Name something made of leather. Top answer, “clothing”, later on the list “Alison Scott”.

Two side episodes associated with this program item also come to mind.

About 30 minutes before the beginning of the game, Dan & Lynn Steffan arrived at the convention after driving for a day and a half (and following Jonbon). Dan was scheduled to be on one of the two teams, but called Andy Hooper and pleaded with Andy to take Dan’s place. It’s hard to be in the mood for frivolity after a long drive. Mr. Hooper, being an all around great guy, agreed. When the game started, though, one team included Andy, Art Widner, and *Dan Steffan*. When I later mentioned this to Andy, he seemed as confused as I.



The other was a quick discussion with Yvonne Rousse on the optimal location for positioning oneself in the audience. As she so aptly put it, “It’s important to be close enough to the action to *actually* experience the nuances of Ian’s wit, yet far enough away to avoid becoming the target of same said wit.” I guess it’s much like going to a Gallagher comedy show. Now there’s an interesting image: Ian Sorensen, the Gallagher of Fandom. He has the slick patter; now all he needs is a big, wooden mallet. “Step right up, folks. *This* is the handy-dandy device I like to call the **Fan-o-matic** – the fandangle that’s first on everyone’s list, and I mean *everyone* – fan, and fakefan alike. It slices <WHAM>— it dices <SMASH>— it even French fries fuggheads, but

Hot Spring VI — An intimate little meal

you gotta hit those sucker *just* right.”

What followed the game show was a program item found at every modern convention, yet rarely mentioned in the program book. It was the first round of “Who wants to go have dinner?” or as I like to think of it, “The Fan-dinner-tango.”

I tried hard to write this particular soiree as the transcripts of a Congressional Committee hearing, but I couldn’t make it work. It seems that Congress is so rarely funny that even pastiches are flat. Nevertheless, I’ll include some of the more salient points.



- 1 Total duration of the meal (from first words to arriving back at the convention) – 2 hours 17 minutes. Not bad time when you consider the whole process involved more than a dozen people, and almost one whole block of distance to be covered.
- 2 Minimum number of people involved – two. Also not bad except that it started with only two, increased to a small group, dropped to two again, grew again, dropped to two a third time, and finally grew to a more normal sized group of eight. I’ve never personally witnessed a Fan-dinner-tango that changed scope so wildly so quickly.
- 3 Maximum number of people involved – The exact number is unknown, but I believe at one time we were considering the wishes of about sixteen fen.
- 4 Range of cuisine choices considered (in order) – Italian, Japanese, Italian, Korean, American Grille, Japanese, and finally Korean.

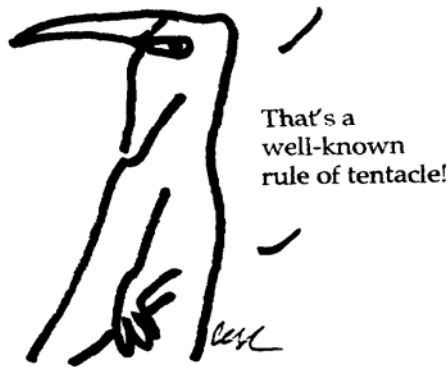
Everyone in the dining group wanted to make it back to the convention to witness the Opening Ceremonies. Those of us who *weren’t* going to be selected (either because they’d paid the “Take-My-Name-Out-Of-The-Hat” Fee, or they’d already served their time as a previous Corflu GOH) seemed less hurried, but we still wanted to see whose name would be selected.

The intense dinner negotiations coupled with a slow kitchen caused us to miss the beginning of the ceremony; nevertheless, we slipped ourselves into the audience for the already-in-progress event. Oddly enough, we made it back in time to hear Bill Bodden announce Dan Steffan’s name. Odd because he and Lynn *were* part of our Fan-dinner-tango, but somehow got lost in the reshuffling.

The rest of the story – as they often say – is his story.

— Ken Forman

NO FANZINE MAY BE PUBLISHED
IN THE KNOWN FAN WORLD
WITHOUT A ROTSLER
DRAWING.



Backdraft

The Hotheads Have Their Say

Erika Maria Lacey

I found myself curious, I must admit. So I downloaded. Is it truly warm where you lot are, in Vegas? Just recently I met someone on the train up from Melbourne and she was from Vegas. She lamented that the clubbing scene wasn't the same over here as in her home town. It sounded hot. Temperature-wise. I keep thinking of Brisbane as hot, but I realise truly that we don't get extremes over here; you poor Yanks get the freezing winters and the scorching summers while we idle along in our temperate zone and complain that we're dying.

Probably road trips do get people excited. To begin with. The last one I went on was with my brother and a bunch of his friends; on the way to the place we were going (a resort and lovely beach up high on the Sunshine Coast) everyone was chirpy and excited. A week in blissful fun!

People ought to know better. It was a week of absolute hell. (For them, anyway. I just took off and walked around on my own, meeting up with backpackers and other itinerants in the area while my brother and his friends screamed at one another.)

The way back was ... an experience. First came the fight about who was going to take the gas guzzler. Then one of the boys took up with a bad case of flatulence. Then one of the cars overheated and we were stuck in the middle of woop woop. It didn't make it any better with constant stops because I was drinking a lot of water. Then came the stop at a servo to get more water for everyone ... and it was unpalatable. No, not what I'd call fun overall. At the end of it all they said to one another, "Man, I love you, but I don't want to see your face for a week." I didn't want to see their faces either!

No road trips with fans, alas. I'm sure that would be interesting. The last one was a very short one to a beach and I hid in the back while those in the front catcalled all the men going by. I sure was glad I could cower in virtual anonymity. Some people are mad behind the wheel of a car, I swear.

Doodles are funny things. I was at a meeting last weekend (fannish meeting, in the way of organising all things...) and someone began doodling. By the time he'd finished (he was going to leave) it was quite complicated, and I kept trying to make some

BackDraft II — Erika Maria Lacey doesn't want to tape a boob

sense out of it. I kept wanting it to be a representation! Myself, if I'm handed a writing implement and a piece of paper, I generally write- instead of picture-doodle. Chunks of conversation, radio, music, anything I hear gets written down. I've found old doodle paper from time to time and wondered what on earth some of those conversations were about; they've gotten downright surreal with time and context loss.

Ross Chamberlain was going to go across something called Death Valley in an unairconditioned car? That's pretty phenomenal. Well, it would have been a very representative thing of himself if he had. A warning to future generations of fans. "Do not go across there in a car. Look what happened to poor ol' Chamberlain."

The assertion of taking a digital camera and Photoshop into space—that's one I've heard from a number of people, but wouldn't one also need, say, a laptop? To download the digital photographs to, or the memory card would quickly get filled, and also to run Photoshop. While one was at it, one of those pads to draw on so one doesn't have to use the mouse feature and can instead draw using a stylus. Handy stuff for a digital artist—can fit it all in a backpack (assuming a tripod as well) whereas someone with a more "traditional" approach would have to cart a room full of stuff and still not have what they wanted when they came to the end of the day. It also looks a hell of a lot more expensive to me. Since I do work in an art gallery I get to see "traditional" art (or so most of the elderly tell me...) and it seems like they're shelling out their life savings to get that particular tube of oil paint and then buy stretch canvas. Not a hobby for the likes of me. (There's also that I have no talent for drawing or painting, but I shall summarily ignore this.)

I don't think that Aileen is some sort of Spanish-learning mute; a lot of people can't speak the language but can understand it. I went to university to learn French for something like four years? I don't quite recall. But whether I can talk in French ... you've got to be joking. I can read it, I can listen to people talk and get a pretty damned good idea of what they're saying, but if I have to actually talk to someone in French it's just not going to happen. Pronunciation, happily enough, is something I don't have too much trouble with, but that may be because I've spoken Spanish most of my life.

Learning a language is something about being immersed in it, and also situational. You tend to remember a language in a situation—since Aileen was learning it in classes, that's where she'll have associated it with. If she ended up in some little country where nobody'd even heard of English and had to speak Spanish ... it'd probably come to her in a jiffy. My brother couldn't speak a word of Spanish, having forgotten it all, until he went to Peru a couple of years ago. He came back speaking terrible Spanish but at least he could make himself somewhat understood! The funny thing about listening to people speak a second language is an accent -- some will have accents from where they picked it up from, like a local guy I knew who'd speak Spanish with an Argentinean accent. Argentineans swallow not only their consonants but their vowels, making it hard to understand ... and to hear it from someone for whom English is their native language is just a hoot.

These days I find even the idea of strippers of great hilarity. My brother decided some time ago to become a stripper. He thought it'd be fun, seeing as he'd followed a friend of his (a stripper) around at work and videotaped him a few times. Everyone thought they were boyfriends. It still amuses me greatly. So off he went, training. Not long afterwards he retold to myself and our father, who stared at him with disbelieving eyes, of the great hordes of young women throwing themselves at him. Ripping their shirts off so he could sign their breasts. Lowering their trousers to a great degree—what panty line?—so he could sign them, lifting skirts so he could again sign their very, very upper thigh. He was agog. He didn't believe it, all because he was a stripper.

Before long he decided he'd better add some dancing to his repertoire, and began doing choreography lessons. Watching him flail around the room in attempt to grow liquid enough to gyrate is very funny indeed. I'm still waiting for the invitation to go watch him do his thing in a room filled with women after him (and the others). Of course I'll be taking the digital video camera with me to tape this thing; it'll be good for something down the line, to laugh at maybe. First I'll need to get a few lessons in video camera usage, though ... I don't want to accidentally videotape a boob when meaning to get something afar!

What came first, the chicken or the egg. I once had a couple of hours of argument with myself over

that one, before I decided it wasn't worth the bother and chances are it was the chicken. My reasoning went thus: obviously eggs didn't suddenly start up one day, so there were chickens and probably they expelled very undeveloped offspring in little sacs. Then over time their bodies went wait a second, I could just toss them out with a bit more covering and a little less development! So came the egg. There's fault in my reasoning, but I was about ready to kill the other half of my annoying brain by that point so it was a mutually (hee) acceptable answer.

Just recently at Continuum in Melbourne there was a panel on fanzines, with two bunches of people on it—old-time fanziners and some rather newer ones with more ties to zines than fanzines. Fanzine fandom seems to be getting more of the ... clubzine, or perzine with very limited distribution, or the other sort -- fanzine put together and looking almost semi-proish and then sold for a few bucks. So it seems to me, anyway -- in Australia. I tried this philosophy upon someone local and was disagreed with, but I think it still stands. I should work the logic out of it a bit more thoroughly at some point! Then there's the whole blog/mailling list thing as well ... now that's another tie in fandom. It seems like fannish connections are a lot more complicated these days, and because it is so that makes pointing at what fannishness means is a lot harder.

Faanish fiction! Faanish reinterpretation, or some such like. Fringe-fan. I liked that punch. Write more letters of comment, write more fanzines. Yes sir. (I'll do at least one of these. I think it's going to be 'letters of comment'. Cheaper on me, and plus I get to gabble more.)

The great thing about PDF fanzines is the ability to see colour when people do their thing. The addition of colour illos was wonderful -- some of them truly lovely. The cover itself I enjoyed very much. The illo, 'real life' and 'fandom'; sometimes I wonder at just how much I allow different parts of my life have effect on one another. I just passed up a holiday up north because I wanted to spend more time on fannish activities, which I gave up for a few months and now decided that too many people were forgetting I was around so I'd better remind them. What better decision, hmm? Plus I wanted to go dress up in bright orange overalls and go pester the people at the state emergency service. My calendar looks rather

full these days. I await the day when every day has got something marked on it -- booked weeks in advance. It'll happen, no doubt. How scary.

Just thinking about creation of a LesBiGay SF club in Brisbane—I think it'd be kind of odd, actually, because all of the people in it would be those I socialise with anyway. I didn't even try and I found a bunch of bi, lesbian, and gay fans in Brisbane! It must be something in the water up here. Similar groups of fans down south are all predominantly straight. I'm sure glad I live in the gayer end of Australia at this point.

Bicycles are wonderful things, but boy you do need to get a fair bit of experience on them, and every bicycle is different and you have to take time to get the hang of all over again. I don't know what the fastest I've ever gone was; I had a speedometer when off on my brother's mountain bike once and I was at 45kmph ... but I have the feeling when I was going down a very very steep hill indeed; without applying the breaks I may have gone higher than that. It's rather scary. On the one hand feeling the wind rush by you is exhilarating, but it makes you all the more aware that if there's something in front of you and the wheel goes out, you're pretty stuffed, all the more so if spilling into the middle of the road and a car comes rushing down that very same hill. I don't go down that one very often!

I've been lucky to date that I've not had any trouble with bicycles -- fell off the front once, but that was because I was standing up. My brother had a nasty spill one morning (I figure he's mad to go riding at 4 am) and scraped up his entire leg. At least he wasn't on a motorcycle. I've seen rather horrible accidents with those, and considering he's a nutcase I'm glad he never did go for the motorcycle licence he once wanted. Too many maniacs with licences out there on the roads these days! I swear cars are absolute killers. I've yet to be in a car and see people obey all of the traffic rules. Nobody ever does. No wonder there are so many accidents out there. But! I don't drive, so I won't be responsible for another one, not yet anyway...just for the kind of car-accident letters of comment I produce, much like this one.

Aileen: Actually, I've been immersed and still wasn't able to communicate successfully. It was hell. If I were a true masochist, I'd spend longer than a month

BackDraft IV — Lloyd Penny pities ineffective evangelists

in such a situation but unless circumstances force me into it, I'll pass.

Ken: *What an interesting bit of irony. You commented on road trips. True, they can be "hellish", but I've been fortunate enough to have experienced some excellent road trips. In fact, Ben Wilson and myself are finishing a road trip from Southern California to Las Vegas and back. It's about 4 hours of driving each way. Taking advantage of Ben's new laptop, we're able to respond to Crazy's lettercol. You gotta love technology.*

The trip was capped off by a party at the Katzes. Well, perhaps not so much a party as a meeting of the local faanish contingent of Las Vegas fandom. Road trips for me usually represent something of the sort. I've driven across the country to attend a Corflu in Florida, and also to the Pacific Northwest to attend Seattle's version of the same said convention. Next year will see me taking another road trip to San Francisco to attend Corflu 22. I'm especially looking forward to that trip since Ben and Cathi Wilson will be providing the van that we'll be taking, and we're going to try to persuade Tom Springer to come along, too. It's not quite Ken Keasy sort of stuff, but how could I not have grand associations with road trips? Give it another try, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Lloyd Penny

I'm finally getting around to loccing issue 2 of *Crazy From The Heat*; sorry about the delay. The reason I'm doing it only now is that I've been to four conventions in five weekends, interrupted only by Easter, and I am now fully employed. I'm at a printing plant just north of Toronto, where I proofread all WalMart flyers for all of Canada, but it takes me two hours to get there, and two hours to get back. So, my free time has been severely limited. Weekends may be my only time to get this done.

Issue 1 was full of mistakes? You got done the one thing many fans don't do...you got it out. And if you think it was a crudzine...well, you got it out, and with the dearth of fanzines these days, who's complaining? You're communicating, and it's better than a blog hidden in the depths of the Web.

Aileen, you're a small-town reporter? I couldn't even get to do that, me with a degree in journalism.

Etobicoke is just one area of Toronto, and it has its own paper, the Guardian. One of the senior reporters of the Guardian is David Nickle, who also just happens to be a science fiction writer. Perhaps that's his therapy for having to write articles on the utter nonsense that just happens to be city politics in Toronto.

Hello, Joyce, and bless you for the mention in the article. I will need to take some time to build up my finances, so I fully expect to print the contents of my Zines To Print folder. Soon, I hope. I may not be old enough to have indepth knowledge of the origins of many fannish traditions, but at least I've tried to live up to them. Writers need readers and respondents in order to keep writing.

I am agreeing with rich brown on the third Lord of the Rings movie...there were a few minor problems, but in the long run, the story was well-told. The triumphant end to such a movie was well-shot as well, and few could keep back tears of happiness when King Aragorn told his hobbit companions to rise, they should bow to no one, and knelt himself. Even though there some glitches here and there, the story itself made up for it.

I will not comment on Aileen Forman's piece on her family wedding, except to say there's plenty of reasons why I left home when I did, and several of those reasons are in her article. At our wedding, my grandmother just about knocked the bride down the front stairs of the church. That's just one of the highlights, except for the most alcoholic wedding cake in known existence...

Nothing is more embarrassing than seeing an unsuccessful evangelist...no one wants his brand of salvation, no one wants to donate heavily to his ministry. Let's all go to hell! We'll know what to expect, it'll always be warm (a welcome change from a Toronto winter), and to be honest, it won't be much different from what we usually get in this current life. I have no illusions about who will and won't want my own fanzine collection. I expect to donate them to the Merril Collection in town, and we'll see what they do with them. The shredder comes to mind... For many of the local fans, they see fandom as their own group, just a bunch of people who party and go to conventions together. They have no idea of the dimensions of fandom, especially its breadth geographically and depth historically, and I gather that if they knew, they'd probably not care. So, those of us who do

have to keep that not-so-eternal flame lit, for no one else's satisfaction but our own.

I should welcome Jason Burnett to the asylum... I've downloaded his first zine, and I intend to comment on it. We seem to get an active newcomer only every few years, and that adds to Joyce's comments about the death of fandom. I don't think it will die; it will shrink until it comes back to the levels of its population in the 40s. The mediafans will dissipate as well; I find they are finding that the personality cult of media SF is indeed shallow. They are finding this out as they age and mellow, and I find them much easier to deal with. They are becoming responsible businessmen and people in general, and any past animosities seem to have evaporated.

In about an hour, Yvonne and I will be meeting with other local fanzine fans to meet up with Chicago fan Neil Rest. He is in Toronto to attend seminars with the Dalai Lama, who just happens to be in town, and we will meeting with all these good folks at a downtown Ethiopian restaurant to chow down and see what wisdom Neil can impart to us. In the meantime, I have all the latest zines from eFanzines, and the .pdfs scattered over my desktop, not to mention the stack of paperzines in my IN box, will be read, enjoyed and answered, and usually in that order. Take care, and I will look for issue 3 RSN.

Ken: "Attending seminars with the Dalai Lama"? I've always wondered what it would be like to play cribbage with the Dalai Lama.

Aileen: Well, now I'm a small-town newspaper's assistant editor. Fewer hours, better pay and a title. However, I still find myself running out to the car with a camera in hand when I hear the sirens. I feel like one of Pavlov's dogs. With luck I should be able to break myself of that habit - particularly as they've taken away my camera.

Jan Stinson

Ye gads, what a heckuva fanzine this was! You folks appear to have hit a major fannish vein in your quest to unearth some Vegrantesque shiny stuph-- everyone was on form, and that letter from r.b., yikes, I felt like tugging on a tux, jetting to Vegas and the nearest show stage and announcing, "And now, from the fantastically fannish pages of *Crazy From the*

Heat Number Two, the one, the only, the fabulous...riiiiiiiiiich broooooooooowwww!" Thunderous applause follows. Or am I, like Ross Chamberlain, just stressing out? No matter, it was a faboo read, and I'm happy to have experienced it while I was still able to comprehend it. I'm sure Robert Lichtman has likewise praised it, and I haven't even finished reading the loccol yet.

Ulrika O'Brien's LOC brought me to an abrupt halt, wherein I am prompted to ask: what is a FI-JASOI, and is it anything like a vegetable from an island other than one belonging to Japan?

Robin Phillips

Crazy From the Heat 2 is the best-looking fanzine I have seen yet. Got a big charge out of you using some of the things we have talked about in it. Elvira, the Luxor. When I come to Vegas, and if I get to stay at the Luxor, I'll write the name on the bathroom wall for you if you get any takers. And answer me one thing... "Are you talking about Challenger from NASA, or something else?"

Joyce really outdid herself. Both of the pieces by her are outstanding. Her descriptions of Poplar Bluff are so vivid. She must've come from a town more like where my Grandma used to live. The nearest store to her was five miles away. It was a convenience store that closed at 6 every evening. She had a creek that ran thru the land her house sat on. The water was always very cold and completely clear. My dad used to make me a boat every now and then. He would cut the base out of wood, then put a dowel or nail in it and a paper sail. Finished it with a string attached to the front. The creek bank had huge, flat, smooth rocks on it. Enough stepping stones were lodged in the creek itself to hop across and back without falling in if you watched what you were doing. I had a lot of good times on that creek bank. Jane (one of the foster kids my grandma raised) and I spent some of the time down there every time we visited.

The BBQ thing must be something we Southern folk all have in common. Though ours is pulled instead of sliced. If you don't know what the difference is, ask Joyce. I'll bet she will.

I was absolutely rolling reading *Muy Caliente*. This woman has a great sense of humor. Her talking about the Maid Rite sandwiches made me think of

BackDraft VI — Mark Plummer treads carefully

when I visited my cousins in Fort Worth. They fixed hamburgers like that, but without the sloppy, like Aileen said. Momma said that they were just too lazy to make them into patties, but I thought they were great. Tasted better that way to me.

Aileen: *Gosh, I'm blushing! Or I would be blushing if I still remembered how. The Maid Rite sandwiches are just one on a long list of Iowa specialties at which Ken goggles. This list includes drive-up telephone booths, vend-a-bait machines and pronouncing Washington as "Warshington."*

Mark Plummer

Most of what follows relates to Joyce's 'Death of Fandom'.

I'd not actually seen any of this on-line discussion about how fans react to on-line fanzines, which is unsurprising really as at best I'm an incredibly passive and infrequent observer of the lists. Major debates of this kind can fly past in a couple of days or so it seems, and if you happen to be looking the wrong way at the time...

Still, as somebody who's so demonstrably not really Up With It on e-stuff, it'll probably come as no surprise when I tell you that I'm a dedicated 'printer' over at efanazines.com. I've not seen much sign that others have followed John Foyster's lead and posted fanzines which are *designed* to be read on screen, and that does seem odd given on-screen reading seems to be the preferred mode of many. An interesting mismatch between creators and readers, there. But most of the stuff that I see looks to me as if it's envisaged as a print fanzine by its editor(s) and is thus optimized for reading in hard copy form. The fact that the editors have chosen to make the wholly sensible decision to outsource the printing to the recipient isn't relevant; by turning them into paper, I am simply fulfilling the potential of these print-fanzines-in-waiting. Of course it helps that my resolutely Twentieth Century mind-set prefers reading from a printed page to looking at a computer screen; and my only internet access is at work where it's easier to download and print a 44-page fanzine rather than sit there with large colourful pictures of axe-wielding dwarves on the screen which are altogether more conspicuous. It seems to suit all round really.

So an efanazine pretty quickly becomes a print

fanzine in these parts and thus receives the same treatment --which is to say that I either read it immediately or bury it underneath the less interesting parts of *The Guardian*, a mound of *Private Eye* back issues or *Uncut* cover CDs, holding it in reserve against the great day when I no longer have to engage in paid work and sleeping and when I can finally Catch Up which will happen any day now, oh yes. Which of these treatments it receives is dependent on all sorts of considerations—who produced the fanzine, who's in it, whether the sun is shining at the time—and I respond to it, or not, irrespective of whether it was delivered to me in an exotically stamped hand-addressed envelope or simply parked on a website somewhere for me to find if I chanced to look that way.

Essentially, I don't think I'd be any more or less likely to be writing this if *Crazy from the Heat* had come in the mail.

But—and here's where I need to tread very carefully—I do get a the general impression that the quality bar is somewhat lower with electronic fanzines.

Now, before anybody else does it, I will concede that this is a sweeping generalization with all sorts of flaws. For a start, I know that there are some fine fanzines—I can immediately think of *SFC*, *Littlebrook*, *Chunga* and *Trap Door*—which are available in e-editions but which I see on paper and which I therefore think of as paper fanzines although they could as easily be claimed for the e-medium. And the day after I'd started mentally framing this theory I logged on to efanazines.com and found the latest issue of *Smokin' Rockets* which—no disrespect to you Heatsters—is the most impressive addition to the e-cannon I've seen in a good while. There's an awful lot of good stuff available in electronic form, including several fanzines like *eI* which don't offer print alternatives and which I certainly wouldn't want to be without, so I'm certainly not rubbishing the whole e-approach.

But before I completely undermine my argument, I should say that I do also think that the fanzines that leave me cold, that leave me wondering what the point is, are *more likely* to have come from the web rather than the mail.

And I wonder whether they contrive to lower the overall standard of electronic fanzines somehow.

Or maybe I'm imagining it. The more I think

about this, the less convinced I am by my own theory. Probably best to ignore me.

I also wonder about the relative lack of comments attracted by efanzines. I think that their increased popularity roughly parallels the rise of the discussion lists like Memory Hole, Wegenheim and Trufen, and also the drift into weblogs and Live Journals. Is it possible that all these other fannish time-sinks are also contributing to a lack of direct fanzine response generally?

And have you noticed that relatively few British editors are making their fanzines available in e-editions? I'm really not seeking to suggest that this has any bearing on the quality point but, setting aside things like the back-issues of *Attitude*, I can't remember the last time that a British title appeared on efanzines.com. Is it perhaps because so many British editors rely on in-person distribution at conventions? I suppose I'm better placed than you to work out why we're collectively eschewing the potential the technology offers, but really I've no idea so your guess is as good as mine.

Oh and Arnie: sorry, mate, but I'm afraid that, irrespective of the merits of the concept, the acronym PUFF is already taken for the Pissed Up Fan Fund. The idea is that we all chip in some money and then we send our nominee to the bar. Been running it at British conventions for years now...

Ken: *Mark, I think you've hit spot on with your assessment of efanzines v. the papernet. I'd like to add a corollary, if I may?*

The diminished aggregate quality of efanzines represents not a diminished level of available quality of efannish output. Rather, the relative ease with which one can pub one's ish makes it correspondingly easier to publish dreck. When pubbing required significantly more sweat equity, the publishers that received enthusiastic responses were more likely to pub again. With efanzines, the effort to get out the next ish isn't modified by the enthusiasm (or lack thereof) of the readership. It's a Darwinistic natural selection driven system that's been circumvented by technology.

Jerry Kaufman

Thanks for including *Crazy from the Heat* in our Corflu membership packets. I enjoyed it. I had no idea the Vegrants still published fanzines, having never seen issue #1. Was it only available electronically? Did you send us a paper copy that we managed to bury in some stack?

Great cover, both as a parody of Alan's *Challenger* cover and as a thing in itself. It cries out to be animated.

Joyce's thoughts on electronic zines are interesting. I admit that I pay less attention to zines that arrive as electrons than as paper, but I'm more likely to print and read the ones that are formatted, like *Smokin' Rockets* than those that come as emails plain and simple, like Bob Devney's zines. Adding the Best Letterhack Award back to the FAANs won't encourage me, either. I like hearing my name read aloud, but I don't remember that pleasure inbetween Corflus for long.

I meant to take rich brown's mutterings about *Lord of the Ring: Return of the King* seriously, but after he referred to "Ian McCallum" (David's brother, perhaps) instead of "Ian McKellan" (the actor who played Gandalf), I gave it up. I agree that Boromir should have disarmed Frodo. After that, I leave rich to grouse.

Does Aileen's niece-in-law Shalome own seven veils, by any chance? That is, does she pronounce her name to rhyme with Sa-lo-me, or does she pronounce it Sha-loam?

I'm a little baffled by the Parts Unknown Fan Fund. Arnie explains it all, then gives us the ballot - and his name is on it. The ballot says that none of the candidates know anything about the fund or that they were nominated. This might be funnier if there wasn't such an obvious contradiction. (Or maybe not.)

So another issue in, what, another year? That schedule works for Robert Lichtman, so it should be fine for you, too. Hand it to me in San Francisco.

Arnie: *Despite some extra delays caused by Joyce's injuries and some computer troubles, this issue appears "only" about a year after the last one. Making no promises, we are shooting for another one before the end of this year.*

Aileen: *Shalome is far too serious to own such frivolous things as veils. Besides, she's an Iowan. The only thing she has seven of might be fishing rods! And THAT'S why I left Iowa. Oh, and she pronounces it "Sha-loam." No, she still has no idea why people think she's Jewish. Sigh.*

Ben: *I've always taken a more relaxed approach to deadlines in fanzines. I figure you'll see it when you'll see it and there's little I can do to alter that schedule.*

BackDraft VIII — Eric Lindsay reminisces about MAFF

Eric Lindsay

Thanks for *Crazy from the Heat* #2, which for all I know is the only issue to reach Australia, considering I was given it in Las Vegas at the wonderful Corflu. I note the issue number is in some disarray, with the cover showing 15, the contents showing 2, and Arnie mentioning 6. That isn't all that irrational. Pi and e are irrational, 2, 6 and 15 are just a little mixed up.

I hadn't realized you were a small town reporter. Given my only experiences with reporters were the fictional kind in the comics, I sort of expect you to turn up in a flowing cape and tights and go rescue someone from a falling building. No, small town, no tall buildings, maybe from a flood?

Oops, I just saw the 45,000 population figures, and the 7,000 for Calimesa. Given Airlie Beach has a population around 4,000, I think of them as mid sized towns. A small town to me is Torrens Creek, where we will probably stay overnight the first night when we set out on our long awaited drive around Australia. It has the distinction of having the smallest golf club in Australia (5 members). This is because the town has a population of about 18. We like it because the caravan park store (which is actually also the post office, pharmacy, film developer, bar and restaurant) serves the largest hamburgers in Australia.

Arnie certainly can spread a little material about excuses across a lot of word, and make it all sound so very reasonable as well.

Having just returned from Townsville, where I got some fanzines copied, I can relate to the Death of Fandom, as presented by Cassandra Joyce Katz. I had 5054 sides of paper copied for just under A\$300, which is the lowest price I have had for copying in the last 6 years.

Due to great luck, the Office Works staff somehow gave me the bulk rate double sided price for 2500 copies, rather than the 100 copy price I was expecting, which would have near doubled my costs. However I printed only sufficient paper copies for FAPA, ANZAPA and FLAP. I don't even have a paper file copy. Had I printed copies for the fans in my address book, I'd need three times that count. So at the normal copy price, that makes \$1800 before postage, although this is spread over three (low page count, small typeface, narrow margin and cramped) fanzines.

Postage on those three fanzines would run around \$1140. I don't know how fans are affording to do frequent fanzine. I especially don't know how fans are

affording to do large, frequent fanzines with good margins and lots of white space. I'm very impressed when it happens.

So I do ezines also. Response is poorer than paper. But I also know my response to ezines is poorer than my response to paper zines. I figure I manage to write to maybe 90% of the people whose paper zines I see (it is easier with shorter zines). However I doubt I get around to reading more than 50% of the ezines, since I don't read any fan newsgroups (I hate Yahoo) and usually don't notice ezines when they appear.

Just yesterday I finally encountered Victor's trufen.net attempt at a SlashDot style fan forum. Victor had mentioned his ideas to me at a Potlatch bag packing party earlier in the year, and it sounded good. Having seen it (albeit briefly), it still looks like a good idea.

Isn't Arnie's PUFF rather like MAFF (Mid Atlantic Fan Fund)? As you will know, that sank without a trace.

Arnie: *Those numbers you cited are truly horrendous, far worse than the hypothetical example I gave in a piece I did in Flicker on the ultimate impossibility of sticking with hard copy fanzines in the face of soaring costs.*

Ken: *As I mentioned to Erika above, Ben and I are responding to the lettercol enroute from a fannish trip to Vegas. I'm reading aloud the lettercol and using advanced technology to record our responses. When I got to the part you wrote about Arnie "spreading a little material about excuses," Ben nearly swerved off the highway from laughing and spurring out a freshly masticated potato chip. Thanks Eric, for that little jolt of adrenalin.*

Ben: *But seriously, we're doing a lettercol on a fannish roadtrip. I can just see Burbee sitting in the back of the car tapping away on a typewriter. And didn't Laney smoke a pipe? I think I'll join him.*

Aileen: *I simply don't have the mild manners associated with tight- and cape-clad small town reporters. Also, we only have one telephone booth in Yucaipa, so I would have a hard time changing into my spandex suit. I mean, what if someone was on the phone and didn't want to leave?*

And wasn't Clark Kent a big-city reporter, anyway? After all, he worked in Metropolis. Makes you wonder...

