

flicker

March, 2004

Third Issue

SONGS IN THE NIGHT...

Flicker Lives!

Were you to read the opening paragraphs of this issue of *Flicker*, committed to Word file in April, you might be struck by the misplaced optimism and bravado. Had I left that brief section intact, I'd have become the first fanzine writer to simultaneously write and eat his words.

As I confidently started the third *Flicker* mere days after distributing #2, I had no idea of the twin terrors awaiting me.

One was that my friend Robert Lichtman volunteered Joyce and me to be co-chairmen of the Bring Bayside Fund to convey Bruce Gillespie from his native Australia to the Corflu and Potlatch convention early in 2005.

The other biggie was Joyce's April 19 fall

in which she broke both ankles, the right one in three places.

I'll say more about both later in this issue, but suffice to say for now that they both gulped huge hunks of my time that might otherwise have caused *Flicker* to appear in May. Well, maybe June. Late June.

Not that I have neglected my fanwriting. Besides several articles for various fanzines, I've written a big Corflu Blackjack report (*Fanac Time in Glitter City*), a faan fiction story (*The Science Fiction League of Extraordinary Fuggheads*) and a pair of analytical biographies that will be seen a little later this year.

You can read both *Fanac Time* and *Extraordinary Fuggheads* in free download-

Flicker #3, July, 2004, is the latest effusion from Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It is as available as an aging streetwalker at the end of a cold, "no sale" night. Letters (email: crossfire4@cox.net) are very much desired as are fanzines in trade. Member: fwa. Supporter: AFAL.

Don't sing it... bring it. If you don't like me... bite me. — Rick Steiner

able editions at efanzone.com. Bill Burns free fanzine newsstand also has all issues of the *Bring Bruce Bayside Bulletin*, 13 at this writing.

There's also an issue of *Crazy from the Heat* that's less than two weeks from distribution. We are starting to pick up a little momentum, so I hope you'll watch efanzone.com for it.

Epicenter of Fanac

Our biggest fear, when we left Toner Hall, was that our new location would prove too inconvenient for our co-conspirators. The ever-sybaritic Vegrants are not easily inspired to make any but the easiest journeys. Whereas New York fans will go to deepest Brooklyn, the Grand Concourse in the Bronx or even to quaint and exotic Staten Island in search of fannish society. A lot of guys in Vegas won't even chase women from the other side of this geographically compact town, let alone travel that far to a fan meeting.

Yet Corflu Blackjack generated enough fannish energy to, however briefly, turn our new home into a fan center every bit as busy as Toner Hall. Not only did the phone rung more regularly, but we got a lot of company before and after the big event.

The copier, dormant since our move, returned to life after some expert maintenance and a new drum. The machine survived the move pretty well overall, but it was due for overhaul when he trundled it over to 909 Eugene Cernan.

Even if it was clean and in order, our garage would not be

the ideal place to spend hours running off fanzines. I have often mentioned to fan friends that I have fond memories of several publishing sessions from my past. The two most prominent in my recollection were the day Ted White ran off the issue of *Quip* he basically rescued from the Forces of Evil and the Saturday at the old Livingston Street place in Brooklyn Heights when I ran off three genzines for Brooklyn Insurgents on the same 90-plus-degree day.

On the latter occasion, I will never forget the rivulets of sweat that poured down my fevered brow as I hunched over the Rex Rotary in a marathon of obsessive-compulsive fan activity.

With my current set up, I think I can recreate at least the climatic environment. It is *hot*, and close, out there. It's also fairly dark and there is no counter space to set out the piles of finished pages.

Prior to her injury, Joyce had a grandiose plan to change all that, but it involves getting some combination of Ken Forman, Ben Wilson and Tom Springer to help us go through every carton in the garage. And that, of

course, requires her to get some or all of these strong gentlemen to visit here from their homes in California's Inland Empire.

Ben and Ken, who are like brothers to me, scheduled such a trip — for two weeks after Joyce's accident. So instead of coming to toil in the garage, they and wives Aileen and Cathi hosted Joyce for quite awhile after she emerged from the rehabilitation hospital.

I can hardly express my gratitude for the abundant care they gave her, but it did not actually improve the copier/garage situation. I might lose heart entirely if Joyce hadn't already begun



Joyce Katz with the FAAn Awards Ballot box.

to spin her Byzantine web to entice them here as soon as the summer heat breaks enough to make possible work in the non-air conditioned garage. Alas, that's December.

Visitors to Little House often remark on how well we have unpacked and settled into our new residence. We deftly deflect all attempts to peek into our garage so as not to shatter their illusions.

What we need to do is unpack cartons filled with stuff that should be inside, discard the boxes of stuff we don't need, store a few cartons against the wall and sell/give away the contents of the rest.

There are a *lot* of cartons. If Joyce can pull off this shanghai scheme, it'll reunite us with quite a few favorite possessions including elements of the fanzine collection, our science fiction ^ fantasy library, the videotape collection and much more.

It is only when this first Herculean task is done that Joyce's real plan gets underway. She wants to use the cartons we will retain in the garage to build a semi-enclose for the copier and install an air conditioner and a lamp to keep it cool and well lit.

Meanwhile, I toil unendingly in the stygian gloom of the sweltering garage and think of Ted White running off that issue of *Quip* on a steamy Brooklyn Saturday.

Here Comes the Iceberg

It feels a little strange to be writing this between trips to the copier to check on the progress of the fanzine I'm printing, but fanzine fandom is at a crossroads. The increase in the number of printed fanzines produced in 2003, as chronicled by Robert Lichtman in *Trap Door*, should not lull anyone into com-



placency. Fanzine fandom is sailing along serenely — as serenely as the *RMS Titanic*, about 100 yards from a big old iceberg.

I wish I could say the problem is simple and easily cured, but it isn't. And if we don't find a way to do something in fairly short order, the few fanzine fans left will be drawing straws to see who gets the dubious honor of turning out the lights.

Part of the problem is that economic forces outside the control of fandom now make it impossible for all but the richest hobbyists to produce a frequent fanzine of any size.

The economics are frightening. Traditionally, the backbone of the fanzine field was the 30-page monthly and bimonthly fanzine. Quarterlies and even less frequent titles are also important, but it is the more frequent

fanzines that provide the continuity and, often, the spark.

A 30-page fanzine with a circulation of 200, not outlandish these days and far from "complete coverage," requires 6,000 copies. At 10 cents a copy, Kinko's current price,

production takes the sweat equity out of fanzine fanac. Back in the days of the mimeograph and the spirit duplicator, a fanzine editor could buy cheap paper and ink in quantity and repro a fanzine for a small fraction of today's cost to have the same fanzine copied.

Few current faneds have the option of mimeograph, because those machines are nearly impossible to maintain and even harder to repair. Supplies aren't too widely available, either.

The answer is electronic publishing. There's a hitch, though. Actually, there are a couple. The less important one involves attitudinal difference between fanzine fans and those drawn to the subculture by the Internet, but that's another rant for another time.

Let's focus on the biggest problem: lack of response.

Fanzine fandom's classic paradigm is a small, high quality audience that responds

creatively and voluminously to fanzines. Since few of us charge a subscription fee, those letters of comment are the pay-off for a lot of work. (Fun work, to be sure, but work all the same.)

What happens when that pay-off never comes? I got excellent response on *Jackpot!*, but that was a special situation. I published *Jackpot!* to show doubters that I could produce a completely different type of fanzine from my usual offerings. It's non-fannish, general-interest material drew tons of letters — but mostly from outside the fanish circle I normally inhabit. Meeting new, interest fans is always great, but you'll forgive me for pining for a little feedback from the people with whom I have traveled this long and winding road for about 40 years. (Robert Lichtman, *trufan* and *tastemaker*, is the happy exception; a classic fanzine fan who treats electronic fanzines with the same respect as the ink-and-paper variety.)



that's a hideous \$600. I here are places that charge less, if you can find one that doesn't also skimp on quality, but most fans would be hard pressed to get that 30-page fanzine copied for less than \$400.

And then there's the trifling matter of postage. I don't have a chart here, but that 30-page fanzine is liable to cost close to \$1.20 to mail, over \$2 each for copies heading overseas. A fanzine editor could easily spend \$150 distributing an issue.

That's \$550 an issue! Hardly sounds like something most people can afford to do six-12 times a year, does it?

Some may claim that this is a worst-case scenario and that a few little adjustments will sweeten the situation. Well, a 24-page fanzine would still cost \$350-\$480 to print and at least \$100 to mail if there's any foreign circulation. That still looks like a *lot* of money to spend up to a dozen times a year.

The price is so high, because copy shop

Once I stopped *Jackpot!*, I learned first-hand how little response most electronic fanzines get. Frustratingly, many of the people I most wanted to hear from turned out to be the least likely to participate. I'll name no names, because the list includes many of my closest friends, but it breaks my heart every time one of them airily dismisses a fanzine that took me months to create with a comment that they didn't even look at it!

And a special place in Fan Hell should be reserved for the haughty fans who boast that they didn't download my fanzine because "it costs so much."

I don't remember any of them moaning about the cost when I spent \$3-plus each to print and mail about a thousand fanzines to each of them. Me spending the money on top of the effort is fine, though. Some of these people need to get over themselves.

I do see a glimmer at the end of the tunnel. So many fans have wailed about lack of response to electronic fanzines that some of our leading lights are making a special effort to overcome years, even decades, of fanzine habits. As you'll see later in this issue, *Flicker #2* drew a decent number of LoCs.

That's what it's going to take, a special effort by leading fans. Fanzine Fandom must go electronic if it wants to endure.

It's gonna be a grand adventure. I sure hope we've all going to share it together.

My Big Mouth Does It Again

Perhaps a wee bit tired of hearing me extol the virtues of the Special Fund (versus continuing organized travel charities), Robert Lichtman called my bluff and volunteered me as Chairman of the Bring Bruce Bayside Fund. The idea, which sprung up on the Trufen listserv right after Corflu Blackjack, aims to bring noted Australian fan Bruce Gillespie to Corflu (and Potlatch) in San Francisco next February.

I accepted with thanks, because this is a worthy idea. More importantly for the success of the BBB Fund, I shanghaied Joyce as Co-Chairman. If I'm gonna spend a year on the griddle, her fannish fanny is gonna be

right there and taking heat, too. So before you write that well-reasoned critical essay about how *you* could do this oh-so-much-better, remember that Joyce cries easily and bears grudges forever.

One of the things I'm doing to help the fund is publish a weekly newsletter called *The Bring Bruce Bayside Bulletin* (or *4B* for short). You can get copies in .PDF format at efanzines.com.

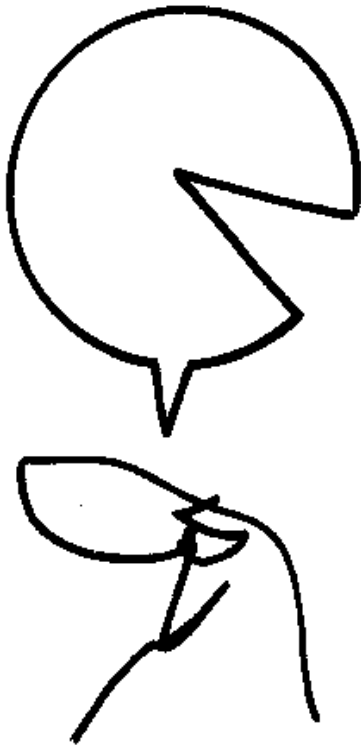
I also decided it would be a good idea to distribute an email version through some of the fannish listservs — Trufen, Nurofen, Fmzfen, Wegenheim and SouthernFandom-Classic. (Volunteers are doing the same for



Timebinders, Pulpmag and other listservs to which I don't belong.)

Despite my best efforts, admittedly sabotaged by the flu, and support from Robert Lichtman and Joyce, I still managed to make two offensively dumb typos right at the top of the second issue of *4B*. In my fevered delirium, I not only forgot to change the issue number, but I also somehow introduced an error into the fanzine's very title. Suddenly, it was *The Bring Bruce Payscale Bulletin #1*.

When three members of Trufen — I think I caught the errors in time for the other list-



sevs — pounced on the miss-numbering, I knew I'd have to do something.

My first thought was a retreat to legalism. I could point out, as I stood on *Roberts Rules of Order*, that in this case two wrongs do make a right! The change in title (to "Payside") makes the numbering correct. It is the first — and last — issue of *The BBP Bulletin*. Though likely to succeed with the typical, rules-happy netfan, it's not something I could slip past Ted White, Marty Cantor and Earl Kemp.

As I pondered the wisdom of this strategy, I realized I had, in fact, made the same title typo in the *first* issue's listserv edition! Ever lazy, I'd pasted the text for the second issue into the format I created for the initial one, much as I did with the .PDF version. The process perpetuated the early mistake.

That shredded the cloak of legality, but I didn't care. What did that matter when I had achieved the goal of every slew-fingered typist since the Great Sneary: I had created the first invisible typo!

Walter Willis predicted I would do it, eventually. He once complained that some of my typos were like crouching tigers. Given my penchant for humor, Walt said, he some-

times puzzled over my orthography, trying to figure out whether I'd made a pathetic typo or a brilliant pun.

Now that I had fulfilled WAW's hopes — or was that "fears?" — I faced my present dilemma with renewed confidence and a strengthened resolve to weasel out of my embarrassing flubs.

I wrote to Ted White, the first to point out the miss-numbering, off-list to confess my culpabil-

ity. (No sense sullyng Robert's or Joyce's reputation.) For good measure, I revealed the existence of the other, invisible typo and promised him that I would claim it was a pun if he ever revealed it.

I sent that email and waited, confident that TEW would rise to the bait. Sure enough, it wasn't more than a few minutes before Ted told Trufen about the typo in the title. As Ted probably knew it would, that cleared the decks for a much more flamboyant response calculated to promote more chatter about the BBB Fund.

So with that preamble, here's what I wrote...

A Conspiracy -- Revealed!

It seemed as innocent as a neo at his first convention when we started. It was just a little idea, another flourish on the Bring Bruce Bayside Fund to import Bruce R Gillespie for Corflu and Potlatch in 2005.

Maybe it went *too* far, even in such a good cause. In my defense, for it is I who bear ultimate responsibility, I felt there was no better way to meet the rapidly developing crisis situation.

"Something has gone horribly, horribly

wrong," said a familiar voice on the phone. (If I told you who it was, you'd know his name.) "The BBB Fund is in trouble!"

"How could it be in trouble?" I said, incredulous. "We have the fan of the hour in Bruce Gillespie, we have money coming in, we have publications coming together for sale, we have an auction ready to take bids..."

"Yes, I know all that," he snapped. "Yet despite all those good things, there's a problem on the listservs."

"The impeccable first issue of the Bring Bruce Bayside Bulletin drew very little comment."

"Well, there's not much for fans to say about it," I countered. "They just have to read it and send their donations."

"Donations are the bottom line, but the BBB Fund needs some buzz, too!" He insisted. "We've got to get fans talking about it. On one listserv, they've even talking about someone ELSE named 'Bruce,' Bruce Sterling. You can see where *that* could lead, I am sure."

I did, indeed. Next, someone might post a nostalgic essay about Bruce Pelz, Bruce D. Arthurs or even Bruce Telzer. Andy Hooper might even introduce an analysis of the failed baseball career of once-promising pitcher Bruce Chen. Lenny Bailes may turn his discussion of old movies to the films of Bruce Dern and Frank Lunney is only one post away from an exploration of the music of Bruce Springsteen. "Before we know it," I said, realization staring right into my sensitive fannish face, "posts about *other*, infinitely less important Bruces could overwhelm our efforts to talk about Bruce R Gillespie."

Hell, for all I knew, there were phalanxes of Bruce A through Bruce Q and Bruce S through Bruce Z Gillespies just waiting to horn in on our man's rightful place near the center of the listserv universe. It may sound farfetched, sitting here in the calmness of an reading session, but tell me this: Why else would Bruce Gillespie feel the need to use that middle initial? Plainly, it's his justifiable

fear of inferior imitators who might usurp his good fannish name.

"We must take action," he insisted. "And these desperate times call for desperate measures."

"What do you mean?" I asked, eager to stem the tide of distractive Bruce-oriented discussion.

"We must make use of fandom's foibles, capitalize on them to incite BBB Fund chatter to spur donations," he told me.

"Yes, but how?" I responded, willing to be the straight man in my own story.

"The answer is obvious," he said with ill-disguised impatience. "What are you famous for?"

"Being tall?"

"Half the Vegrants are taller than you -- and you've probably started to shrink."

"Is it my talent for outliving all fannish humorists except Andy Hooper?"

"Yes, you've done that," he conceded, "but I don't think a Gillespie Death Hoax would do us much good. If he's dead, that pretty much shoots the reason for the BBB Fund." I thought about mentioning the idea of bringing his body to lie in state at Corflu, but decided it wasn't worthy of fanzine fandom's second-funniest humorist.

"It's my intense sexual magnetism, right?"

"I'm not sure enough fans can detect that," he said. "Besides, we want to bring Bruce to Corflu and Potlatch, not cause All Known Fandom to converge on Las Vegas."

"So, what are you getting at?" I said, thoroughly tired of this game.

"Well, uh, er, ah... what about your, well, penchant for... typos?" he whispered the last word, clearly unsure how I'd take it.

"I guess I do make some doozies," I acknowledged, "but how will that help the BBB Fund?"

"Fans love to nitpick and make corrections," he declared. "Let's turn loose your typo demon and give them something to talk about!"

"That's a good idea," I agreed reluctantly, "but there's one problem. Or rather two."

"What are the problems?" he demanded.

"Robert Lichtman and Joyce Katz," I said. "They both thoroughly read and correct every line I write for BBB Fund." I heard his grunting assent. We both knew that two serious con-

structive fans like Robert and Joyce would never allow a typo to sneak through.

"There is a way. You've heard of recallable email?" he queried.

I had. A paid service offered by Big Screen and other companies makes it possible to erase/recall email letters even after they are received and read. "Yes, but how does that help us."

"A friend of mine has developed a 'next generation' program that not only recalls emails but allows one to retrieve email after receipt but even permits the sender to change the text."

"That's brilliant!" I exclaimed. "I'll steer a typo-free version through the Robert-and-Joyce gauntlet and then, using your program, we can introduce a couple of glaring typos to get those nitpickers talking about 4B and the Fund itself!"

That ended the conversation. After that, it was up to me.

I tried to do it the easy way and just slip a couple of mistakes past my wife and my friend. Their vigilance utterly frustrated that attempt. They caught everything I threw at them, plus a couple of typos I made by accident.

"It will have to be the hard way," I told myself as I dispatched 4B #2 to Trufen,



Nurofen, Fmzfen, Wegenheim and SouthernFandom-Classic. I spent a nail-biting day, waiting for Yahoo Groups to get back into gear and actually deliver the posts to several of those organizations.

Once they hit my mail queue, I knew it was time to strike. I quickly used the prototype software to change both the title and

numbering of the new 4B. Then I waited.

It didn't take long -- and it worked like a charm. Several fans immediately spotted the miss-numbering and triumphantly rushed into print. I smiled at the ripple of chatter that ensued.

I waited for the other shoe to drop, but my second past-posted typo nearly drew no comment, apparently as undetected as my intense sexual magnetism.

Honestly, I didn't know what to do at first. Clearly, a wrong issue number wasn't going to keep fans blathering for long. I couldn't just write to the listservs and acknowledge the mistake, because that would have robbed the nitpickers of their change to chew it over and over like a two-buck steak.

So I wrote off-list to Ted White, who'd pointed out the wrong issue number. I accepted blame for that and offhandedly mentioned the typo in the title. Ted needed no additional prompting and soon the listservs had several posts that pounced on the typo and even tried to wring a little humor out of it.

People were talking about the BBB Fund! Success was ours!

That's when I got another call from my friend. "Are you ready for Part B of the plan?"

"Part B?" I said, surprised. "The plan worked. That's that."

"No, it isn't," he corrected. "Remember the bottom line. We have to get those donations."

Then he told me about his plan. I was to write a piece and post it on the listservs and reprint it in *Flicker*. The gist was supposed to be that it takes a very special type of person to make fun of a nearly blind man who makes an occasional typographical error. I was supposed to compare such fans to the kind of person who'd yell "Duck!" seconds before swinging a bat at the back of a deaf man's head or who would dig a pit trap in a wheel chair access ramp or write nasty graffiti on the face of a coma patient.

"Make them feel guilty and ashamed," he stated. "They'll swell the fund with their conscience-salving contributions."

"That's just wrong," I replied. "These nit-pickers don't mean anything by it. They're just keeping alive the tradition of pointing out every stinkin' one of my typos. They don't mean anything sinister and I won't be a party to shaming them into giving to the Fund."

"Besides, the BBB Fund doesn't need to use such tactics. We have one of the truly outstanding fans of his era, a fan who elegantly combines stfnal and fannish interests, the heir to Baxter, Foyster and Bangsund."

My friend verbally battered me, but I stood firm. The BBB Fund will not, cannot, take the low road to extort contributions. I am committed to the use of only the very highest forms of extortion for this noble cause.

That's why I'm telling you all this. The Bring Bruce Bayside Fund can stand on its own outstanding merits and I want to make sure that my friend doesn't implement some even more treacherous version of his evial plan. ("Evial" is not a typo; it's a piece of archaic fan slang.)



Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Now, send that money before I tell your families the things you did at Corflu Blackjack.

Beating the Bushes

George W. Bush – the middle initial is so important in order that we not confuse the current President with his wussy, lying father – said that torturing Iraqi prisons is “not the America he knows.” That stopped me in my tracks, you’d better believe.

Could it be, I wondered incredulously? “Could he of some other America than the one I know which he and his co-conspirators have befouled so thoroughly? How wonderful to think there is another America, perhaps on another Earth that circles third from another Sun. Wouldn't it be something if, in that other America, the guy who got the most votes got to be President? Maybe that *is* too farfetched, but the thought of an America that actually lived up to its hot air rhetoric was just plain exhilarating.

It's great that George Bush knows another America, perhaps one that hasn't turned a legitimate grievance (9-11) into an excuse to play power politics in the Mideast for the benefit of the Haliburton Company. (Halliburton, in case you did not know, is the political party affiliation of Vice President Dick Chaney.)

I wish his name was *Lon* Chaney. Then there'd be at least one thing he's good for, besides terrifying friend and foe alike. Wasn't the Threat Index – or whatever the Homeland Security Department calls that system of color-coded terror – a lot lower back when Chaney was in seclusion? (Do you know what the letters “D-N-R” mean?)

Getting back to President Bush -- the current one, not the wussy liar -- a lot of people have been

heard to say, upon one occasion or another, that George didn't seem like he was from this planet. What if he has more than voyaged to this other version of our Blessed Land?

Let us be bold and ask what could become the question of our time: Is George W. Bush a strange visitor from another planet?

This question must now be investigated until we know the answer for certain. According to the United States Constitution, if he's a space alien, he isn't eligible to be President. This could throw Al Gores trip to political oblivion off schedule.

My Dizzy Wife

What do you give a woman who has everything? Apparently, an injury on top of a two-week illness.

Joyce and I both struggled with some

kind of tenacious flu during the first two weeks of April. I recovered, more or less, though I was still enduring a clogged ear, the malady's signature symptom.

I felt a little weak on Saturday, but we had the Vegrants meeting anyway and Joyce seemed fine, if still a bit congested. She continued to improve on Sunday, April 19, though she required a few extra trips to the bathroom as we watched the WWE wrestling pay per view in the late afternoon.

I'm guessing that she lost a little too much fluid a little too quickly, because she suddenly felt faint. I told her to stay on the couch while I got her some water and a cold compress for her forehead.

Telling Joyce something and actually having her do it are not the same thing, alas. She decided, for unguessable reasons, to leave the couch and walk down the hall to the bedroom to lie down. She got about six steps and then collapsed in a heap on the floor.

I rushed to her aid and found that she had injured both ankles in the fall, which had also left her shocky and on the edge of a swoon. I did what I could for shock, but I found I could not lift her without hurting her and she could not stand on either leg.

I called friend and fellow Vegrant Su Williams, who rushed over and helped me get her to the bed. Su went to the drug store and returned with a couple of Ace bandages. Su wrapped both ankles and we put the icepacks into play.

When Joyce felt a little better, we used a rolling desk chair as a makeshift wheelchair and gently steered her back into the living room so she could watch some TV. I repeated the chair trick going the opposite direction when she was ready for bed and she passed a fairly comfortable night.

The next morning, one ankle



appears to be all right, no more than bruised. The other was swollen. It could've been a break, a sprain or only a severe bruise. It's hard to tell with Joyce, who marks as easily as a ripe peach.

Su helped get Joyce to the emergency room a little later on Monday. They diagnosed two broken ankles and checked her into the hospital. After some tests, she underwent surgery on both ankles that Wednesday. A couple of days after that, she transferred to a rehabilitation hospital.

When she had mastered the art of the wheelchair, they discharged her. The Fab Four — Ken, Aileen, Cathi and Ben — volunteered to give Joyce the rather intensive care she required. It was a tremendous offer and much appreciated, because our home is not wheelchair-friendly.

It didn't get any friendlier, but I moved around furniture and figured out ways to negotiate enough tight spots to let Joyce get into our bedroom (though the bathrooms remained impregnable to wheelchairs).

As of third week in July, when I'm writing this section, Joyce has left behind the wheelchair and perambulates with the assistance of a walker. She can walk unaided inside the house for short distances, but she really still needs the device to steady herself.

Joyce has also started driving again. Not long distances, which cause her ankles to hurt too much, but enough to get us to the UPS Store, the bank and other nearby destinations.

The Wheel Comes 'Round

As a member of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA), not to mention a frequent office-holder, I am amused to see the group come full cycle to a role very similar to what its founder Don Wolheim intended.

When he presented the idea of FAPA in the mid-1930s, its main reason for existence was as a cost- and time-effective alternative to general circulation fanzines. The printed fanzine field dissolved when Conrad Rupert no longer had time to set the type at bargain-

basement prices. As Wolheim pointed out, even the most successful subscription fanzines, including *Fantasy Magazine*, lost gobs of money.

Instead of individually mailing copies, FAPA members would mail 50 copies of their publication to *one* address. A participant in FAPA could expect to receive a quarterly mailing with 40 or 50 publications.

Sensible as that may have sounded, events didn't go that way. FAPAns tended to publish fanzines expressly for their group, reserving their genzines for other purposes. Instead of becoming the hub of fanzine fandom, FAPA became a circle within it, the first of many amateur press associations. It has existed since 1937 and I've been a member, off and on, since the late 1960s.

In the last few years, FAPA has gradually assumed a new role. It has become the repository for a goodly number of the remaining paper fanzines. Oh, there are still plenty of fanzines produced solely for FAPA, but sending copies to FAPA has become more popular.

This goes back to my comments about response to fanzines. When you send a publication to FAPA, you can be reasonably sure of 50 or so comments in the next mailing and perhaps a second wave in the bundle after that.

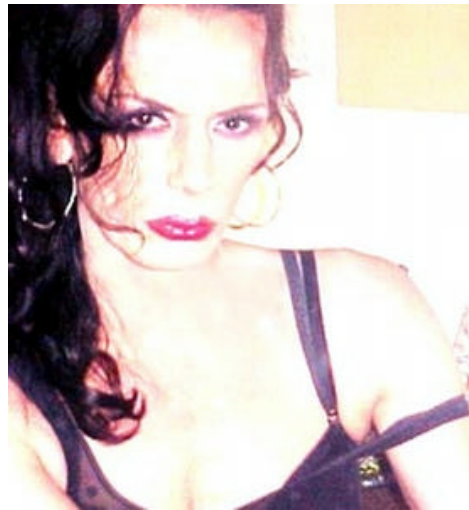
Compared to the feedback most fanzines get these days, that's a lot. Throw in a whole bunch of fanzines in trade and it's not a bad pay-off. You be right in thinking that not all the mailing comments are gems, but then, neither are the LoCs.

Basically, this is a recommendation that those who distribute their fanzines primarily via electronic means should investigate FAPA. It's a nice secondary distribution and there are quite a few members who know what they are doing.

Hunting with April

BIG RED'S IN A RAMBLING MOOD

I'm moving. I hate moving, it just sucks royal, hairy ass. I think I hate packing and unpacking more than just about everything else, except for monthly cramps.



Nah, even *that* is more tolerable. I'm so lazy about it that when I travel, I get two of everything so I don't have to unpack my overnight bag. I wasn't going to even do an installment of this column, but at this point I'm so far behind with packing it doesn't really matter.

And I knew you'd miss me.

Trying to look on the bright side, one of the cool things about moving is that you find things you thought you lost. I'm probably the only person who's found stray knee pads, a garter belt, package of lollipops, MRI scan, sweater, pom pom and spike heeled thigh hi boots when boxing up, though.

Even funnier are the assump-

tions about why Connecticut. As to why, I've heard: a) escape from the Boston weather/over priced living; b) split up with my boyfriend/girlfriend; c) been signed to a contract by WWE; d) met an amazing boy/girl in CT; e) have a persistent stalker in MA and f) all of the above.

As for me, I'll never tell. It's 'way more fun to keep you guessing.

Kill Bill

I used to think that there was no real interest in women's wrestling; that people really didn't want to see girls fighting and there just wasn't a market for it. Well, a few billion dollars later, I now know I was wrong.

When you mix hot chicks and action-packed ass-kicking, you get one of the highest grossing movies series of this year and last. *Kill Bill* proves that not only did people love the first *Kill Bill*... even more paid for **Kill Bill Vol. 2**. Obviously women's wrestling could be a big money maker if it were allowed to be.

It would abso-freaking-lutely rock if someone did a *Kill Bill*-spawned idea for their women's program. Classic good versus evil, women beating the crap out of each other,

chicks fighting men... the potential is all there.

KB can't be a fluke, because the recent crop of movies featuring women kicking ass seems to be a building trend: *Matrix*, *Charlie's Angels*, *DareDevil*, *Bend It Like Beckham*, *Once Upon A Time In Mexico*, *X Men*, *Frida*, *Underworld*, *S.W.A.T.*, *Resident Evil*, *Tomb Raider*... *T3* ... Ok, skip the latest *Terminator*. I didn't buy the whole chick Terminator thing, either, but you get my point. (However, Linda Hamilton rocked.)

It's not by mistake so many women are featured kicking ass in films lately. Movies cost a *lot* of money to make, with a lot of investors to make happy, so females are starring in them for a reason.

If women's wrestling was marketed in a way it hadn't been done yet, there could be even more money in it than traditional mens. Why? Because the men - ever the appreciative perverts - can be counted on to watch. And for once, you can count the ladies in, too.

Think I'm out of my mind? Get your hands on an all-women's wrestling tape from Japan and check out THAT crowd. Mind you, I'm not suggesting a crop of all-female federations need pop up...I'm just suggesting that women in the ring can make people money and the fans happy.

As always, this is just my opinion...and we all know opinions are like assholes...

Feel the Burn

The movie documentary *Farenheit 9/11* was amazing.



I had to travel 40 minutes to find a (little) theater playing it, but it was worth the hike.

It's refreshing to see that Americans are obviously smart enough to realize they're not going to get this information anywhere else. All shows were sold out and there wasn't a dry eye in the place when I went.

From my trips to the UK and Japan, I always knew our news was censored because I'd see things there that never made it to the TV at home. Opinions on Moore (producer) vary, but it'll be very hard to argue that he's "full of sh!t" after the footage shown.

Even if you hate him, see it anyway with an open mind. I'm sure the video and information he obtained for this must have cost him a fortune. I definitely recommend it to everyone

Thanks for reading, have a great weekend & hope to see you at a show!

--April Hunter

**You Can Sleep With A Blonde,
You Can Sleep With A Brunette.
But You'll Never Get Any Sleep
With A Redhead!**

Check out April's website: <http://www.aprilhunter.com/ccbill/index.htm>

The Readers Speak

SIGNALS IN THE DISTANCE

Erika Maria Lacey

Hmm, so *Flicker* is meant to be a ... flicker ... in time? I can't say that I noticed there wasn't another of *Splotch*, but then again I did notice when you didn't do another *Jackpot!* and thought, aww.

I find it ironic that you speak of fans in the future twiddling around with any kind of reproduction machinery when the medium you've chosen to distribute your fanzine with is electronic, PDF! I think it's far more likely that people'll continue in this manner, although perhaps choosing other electronic mediums like e-mails and whatnot.

Arnie: Fanzine fandom certainly seems destined to move to all-electronic distribution, but most of us still have lingering affection for the way we did it when we were young (and the only problems with our reproductive systems involved Gestetners and Rex Rotaries.

Perhaps you're right in saying that a lot more fans feel connected to the mainstream, but on the other hand I know a fair few people in real life (not fanzine fans) who struggle to find anything to talk about with people who aren't fans. They breathe, live, fannishness, and even if there *are* "mundanes" who may share some interest, ultimately the lines of communication just don't match.

I do find it funny that people keep trying

to say I'm marginally odd, because I do identify with the mainstream; I have no trouble in most circles, but I do find myself gravitating towards fans because mostly they're smart. That's just about my main sticking point for people: gotta be smart.

Fanzine fans just ... it's different. Most of the fans I know nowadays keep blogs, usually livejournals, and keep in contact that way. They write their daily encapsulations or their latest review or any number of things and keep it that way -- their own style of perzine, if you like, without the strength of being able to pick up a perzine later down the line for a poke about, considering what a mass of text blogs are.

Still, I do understand what you mean when you say you feel alienated from fanzine fandom. For me it's not fanzine fans I feel alienated from, but general Australian SF fandom -- they're all pro writers wanting to get published, whereas I have no concern in this at all. I almost wish I was born twenty years earlier, to have skipped this preoccupation with stories in print. Media fans are so much easier to be around. They read, they watch TV, they watch movies -- and there isn't any tedious must-get-published air about them. Now them, they're the fans who need fandom, who feel alienated. I suppose it's because you can only get so weird about your love before mundanes start looking at you oddly.

Arnie: Communication is an important facet of Fanzine Fandom; but there's something beyond just "staying in touch." There is the art and science of creating something entertaining, sharing it with a close circle of articulate friends and getting their feedback. Email and listservs are great for "staying in touch," but they seldom have much artistic merit.

I like to think of Fanzine Fandom as a paper party with all of friends gathered in a big circle in my virtual living room. When I'm doing a fanzine, it's my turn to entertain, to bring enjoyment to the room. And when it's done, it's their turn to entertain me with their reactions and responses.

It's rather amazing to read of the science fiction bookshop people getting their knickers in a twist over something published in a fanzine, for goodness' sake. We're not talking national distribution here, nor even something which probably most of their customers had seen.

From time to time I think about getting rid of my book collection, for although they're wonderful for the things which are hard to find (small press stuff, for example) the rest ... not quite so hard. I'm considering selling off the epic fantasy novels, for example, since the libraries all seem to have thousands of copies of them, whereas trying to find Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* was bloody hard. I have this theory that three years from now I'll have bought another 300 books and that'll be up around 1,000; if I go at the rate I am now give me ten years and it'll be up again. Not without judicious weeding, of course, but even so.

Getting rid of some of the stuff I've had for years would be hard. I am not particularly attached to music, instead opting for a song here, a song there, on my computer or the radio. Doesn't mean I don't like them any less, but when buying a second-hand CD costs \$15 and buying a second-hand book 50c, well, it's easy enough to see

where I gravitate. (Although, stupidly -- a book's a few hours worth of entertainment and music endless. Still. I don't know.)

Seeing that the download of this ish was less than 60kb, I was thinking it'd be a page long. Not so! Just not many graphics. I don't think it's too hard to not notice that there aren't any illos in a fanzine when the writing's interesting and it was. Good stuff.

Arnie: Since producing Jackpot!, the electronic fanzine with the most memory-intensive pages, I've tried to go in the opposite direction. I don't keep it quite as simple as I could, because that would disrespect the medium, but I try to hold down the size of the download as a further inducement to actually look at the zine.

Lloyd Penny

Thanks kindly for *Flicker 2*. Do I believe what I hear, and think that response to online fanzines is nearly nonexistent? Wow, I figured that many people would just read the zines without response, like most things found on the web, but now Joyce tells me that there's now almost no response to fanzines at all. Are lochacks nearly extinct?

Arnie: I can't be sure, but I think Joyce was referring to electronic fanzines when she complained of no response. Letters of comment to printed fanzines have fallen off a little, but the critical problem is getting fans to read and react to the digital fanzines.

How's the new place working out? I never saw the inside of Toner Hall, but I miss it. Famous fannish homes seem to be a thing of the past.

As with most fandoms, Vegas fandom just isn't what it used to be. Local fandom here has had some changes, as you might anticipate with having had a Worldcon recently, but it has changed in a good way. Those who worked hard on the convention have been rewarded with more hard work on

future Worldcons and NASFiCs, and with more responsibility. Those who ruined the show with petty politics and refusing the help of other fans have earned their just rewards, namely obscurity.

I'm glad your faith in fandom has been restored. I've had my own doubts after the Torcon debacle, and gafiation has looked pretty good from time to time, and I am hoping I can have my own restoration soon. Yvonne and I plan to work on a few more big one-shot conventions, like this year's Bouchercon in Toronto, and a big Tolkien con in Toronto next year, but once we're done, we're done for good. We've been working cons since 1982, and we're tired. We've made some hard choices lately...I've dumped most of my involvement online, and I'm having a hard look to see what else I can get rid of. Glicksohn's Maxim comes into play...IF(3), If Fandom Isn't Fun, It's Futile.

AARP has its own Canadian counterpart, namely CARP. Yvonne is a member of CARP, and by marriage, at the ripe old age of 44, 45 in June, I am an associate member. I can feel my arteries hardening... When it comes to First Fandom, I qualify for associate membership in three short years, if indeed the requirements I was given, involvement in fandom for at least 30 years, are still in force. I have also looked at this group with a mixture of respect and astonishment that they're still around, that fandom has to have something to keep these folks around for 70 years or more.

Corflu Blackjack... once again, the money gods have conspired against me, and have ensured, with a mixture of chronic unemployment, unforeseen expenses and a complete lack of cheap airline flights from Toronto to Vegas, that I cannot go. I wish you all the best of times...I suspect that even if I had been able to go, my presence there would not have been all that welcome.

April Hunter...outside my own experience, I'm afraid. About all I can say is that I met Trish Stratus before she got into the WWF. She was a fitness model with some calendars and glossies to sell, and she was

a GoH at a local convention. She's a native of Toronto, although I don't think she lives here any more. Sweet girl, and very health-conscious, which is more than I could say about anyone else at the convention that day. Maybe April could save her physique for the gym, and become a bodybuilder. There seems to be a demand for boobs and biceps these days.

Keep up the zines, Arnie, and I promise I will respond to them. If such response is so rare these days, I've got a niche to fill. Take care, and see you nextish.

Arnie: I'm guessing that you didn't get very far past the photos that accompanied April's first column for Flicker, which is a shame. She writes very well and expresses herself both strikingly and cogently. Let's not write her off just because she's sensationally beautiful.

Jason Burnett

I just finished reading Flicker 2 and I am amazed. Falling at an awkward age (born in 1973), I slip between the cracks of fandom - too young to have been around for the early days that seemed so great when I read about them, too old to embrace the fringe fandoms that came along after (anime, furies, etc.)

I thought I'd missed the show entirely. The fact that, if there is a bright center to the fannish universe, I live in the city that it's furthest from (Metairie, Louisiana, suburb of New Orleans), didn't help matters any. I thought there had been a grand party, but by the time I showed up, it was over and all that was left were a few die-hards looking for an aspirin to ease their throbbing heads.

But then I discovered eFanzines.com (I honestly don't remember how - it was one of those serendipitous things) and saw that the party was still going on, I just needed directions to the new location. Recently I've been spending every moment I can spare reading fanzines. I've read all three issues of Steven Silver's *Argentus* (and even got up the nerve to submit a couple of things to him), about

half of John Foyster's *eFNAC* (and wished I'd discovered it a year earlier so I could have written to him), and any number of other things.

Then today I read *Flicker* and was so impressed I had to write to you. The writing was exceedingly personal. I feel like I know you already. You just drew me in, so that what started out as "I'll just have a look" ended up with me sitting glued to the screen, reading the whole issue.

While going to Corflu Blackjack is out of the question for me, I am definitely going to have to go to Corflu as soon as I can and when I do, I hope to see you there.

Arnie: Thanks for the kind words. Knowing that something I did helped ignite your fanzine activity feels great. Glad you enjoyed Flicker, though I hope you have by now realized that there are many better fanzines – Hyphen, Innuendo and Void are my all-time favorites – that drink headier drafts from the same deep well of faanishness. (Woulfn't it be wonderful if someone emulated Bill Burns' efanzone.com, but with classic fanzines?)

Robert Lichtman

A somewhat belated semi-LoC on *Flicker* No. 2: Having the air conditioning go out at your new house during the move certainly must have contributed mightily to the "lifting, pulling, pushing and sweating" involved, especially the latter. You say it's left you "in somewhat better shape" than your usual regimen of "sitting on my butt in front of the computer and tapping the keys." This makes me wonder if you've considered adding a few minutes a day of Actual Exercise to your life?

After all, you make some portion of your living writing about wrestlers, who certainly get their licks in exercise-wise. Why not emulate them without having to get a special outfit? Take a walk. Get a small exercise device and use it. I say this because having gotten into fandom five years before you and thus having you to look up to me as one of

the Old Pharts, I want you to keep your earthly body together so you can do it for years to come.

Also, my doctor recommended More Exercise to me and I think it's something more fans could do. For a number of years I've had a Sharper Image small "stepper" around and devoted an hour or more a week to plodding away on it in addition to as much walking around as possible.

Arnie: Subsequent events suggest that your excellent advice should've been directed to Smokin' Rockets rather than Flicker. I mean, how many other people do you know who've fallen on themselves and broken both ankles?

As for me, I continue to try to do as well as someone with a note from the doctor that says I don't have to exercise can be expected to do. Taking care of Joyce has definitely improved my physical condition. Wrestling the wheelchair around tight turns and through narrow doorways has added inches of Manly Muscle to my Mighty Forearms.

I'm not an Associate Member of First Fandom, although sometimes I think about it. Nor am I a member of The ossils, although I qualify under its rules as well.

The latter organization has watered down its entry requirements considerably in recent years. Now anyone who's been active in any aspect of amateur journalism for a mere three years can be a full member. That's really making it easy. At that point in our fandom, people are still being considered for Best New Fan in the FAAn awards voting.

My own dabbling in Fossil-like ayjay dates back to the early '60s, when I was part of a group of faans who joined the National APA and other similar organizations for a few years to check them out. I of course immediately fell in with what in our fandom would be the faanish crowd.

After publishing a couple of mimeographed contributions that circulated in NAPA mailings (copy requirement: 450),

they began corresponding with me and sending me huge back issue files of some pretty impressive and quite fannish publications.

The ayjayer I remember most fondly is the late Alf Babcock, who for many years published ALF'S CAT, a very easy-reading perzine. He also published self-authored travel and children's books, hardcover in editions of 30-100 copies, that he sent me. They were wonderful volumes.

I also visited an old-time ayjay person in Los Angeles, who laid on me a huge quantity of miscellaneous top-flight amateur journals and a real rarity... John Travis Nixon's HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION, published in 1900.

He told me that this copy, which had warped cover boards, had survived the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. When I left ayjay in the mid-'60s, I passed all this stuff on to a woman in Virginia with the wonderful name of Willametta Turnipseed, who was assembling an ayjay library.

In recent years I've reconnected to a limited extent with amateur journalism and through the book search engines got a "fresh" copy of the Nixon history, plus Truman Spencer's HISTORY OF AMATEUR JOURNALISM (published in 500 copies by The Fossils in 1957) and his CYCLOPEDIA OF THE LITERATURE OF AMATEUR JOURNALISM (published in 1891). The latter is a sort of fanthology publication, rather thick with poetry but interesting in places.

Another ayjay fanthology I acquired is YOUR THOUGHTS: THE STORY OF AMATEUR JOURNALISM, a thick paperback published in 1983 by The Fossils under the editorship of Ralph Babcock, brother of the above-mentioned Alf. (Ralph also sent me a large pile of his old publications, WEAKER MOMENTS and THE SCARLET COCK-EREL.) I also acquired THE CAREER AND REMINISCENCES OF AN AMATEUR JOURNALIST by one Thomas G. Harrison, published in 1893 and a sort of AH SWEET IDIOCY of ayjay in many ways though n where

near as biting or as revelatory as Laney. Most of these publications would be of little interest to fans except as a sort of "parallel fandoms" adventure and they are mostly hard to find.

For instance, for several years I regularly entered the particulars of the Nixon history into the ABE and Bookfinder search engines and came up blank. Then one day, miraculously, a copy turned up. It was described quite reasonably as being in only fair condition, not surprising for a book printed in 1900 on the cheapest of newsprint. The seller stated quite honestly that it might not survive a reading unless handled very gingerly.

He was also asking a lot for it. There ensued an e-mail conversation in which I said that I really, really wanted to get the book but could in no way justify the price he was asking. After a number of rounds of this, he conceded that he'd rather have the book in the hands of someone who knew it, would value it, and most importantly wouldn't come back to him complaining that the pages popped out of the binding and then crumbled into dust.

And he lowered the price to his cost, charged me minimal postage, and for good measure threw in at no charge a signed paperback of Avram Davidson's *The Phoenix and the Mirror* after I noticed it in his listings and said I'd known Avram.

When it arrived, I saw instantly that he was right about the condition, but definitely don't begrudge him the price of the sale. I may have one of only a handful of copies still in existence. Only six libraries in the world have copies, all in the U.S.

Well, I've wandered off on a tangent, one I hope is interesting to you.

Can't end the letter without heaping praise on April Hunter's column. Loved her description of the day as "ever-so-slightly nippy" and her rant about Kit-Kats and the whole column was an ample demonstration that intelligence lurks everywhere.

Arnie: Fanzine fandom's historians haven't paid enough attention to amateur jour-

nalism. Just as surely as our quaint subculture arose from those who loved science fiction so much they wanted to do more than read the newsstand magazines, fanzine fandom also has roots in that impulse to produce a little magazine for a select audience.

What we need is some stalwart fan – how about you, Robert? – to either republish the seminal volumes you mention or synthesize them into a cogent history.

Mark Plummer

The wind was fairly whipping around the Nestlé Tower as I sat waiting for a bus and reading *Flicker #2*. All around me, giant posters showed Trinny and Susannah thrusting enormous jars of Nescafé at the passers-by. You've probably been spared these people, a couple of style gurus who host a TV show in which they teach their victims how to dress in a stylish manner which to my non-stylish eye invariably looks absolutely dreadful.

To be honest, I'm not absolutely sure which one is which; I think I need a Charles Shaar Murray explanation akin to the one that helpful enables me to distinguish Ant from Dec (Ant always stands on the left and, bizarre as it may sound, actually looks a bit like an Ant).

Anyway, one of these women -- I think it may be Susannah, but I'm not really sure -- looks particularly scary at this inflated size; it'd almost be tempting to buy a few jars of instant coffee if I thought it would make Nestlé take the posters down, except that I know that they wouldn't, and anyway I don't like the damn stuff and of course all right-thinking people are still boycotting Nestlé products because of the whole baby milk thing and that issue with overseas debt relief a year or two back. It's tough living in a place that gives every appearance of being a corporate town.

So, bus stop, scary woman with ideologically unsound instant hot beverage and I'm just thinking that, what with the wind and everything, it is

actually bloody cold right now and then I read about the Katzes moving house in *110 degree* heat.

Good grief! That must be about the surface temperature of the sun, or maybe even of the filling of a McDonald's apple pie. Britain *just* managed to top 100 last summer, the first time it's ever happened ('since records began') and the whole place was pretty much grinding to a halt. It was, as I recall, at about that time that *Flicker #1* appeared and I'm sure that can't be coincidence.

Still, for what it's worth, I can tell you that reading about it was all pretty reassuring on a personal level as I'm currently contemplating a move myself -- one of the reasons that, sadly, we can't make Corflu this year -- and at least I can be confident that, whenever this finally happens and whatever the hardships it entails, I will not be moving in 110 degree heat.

So thanks for *Flicker*, even if you do include the kind of photos which are guaranteed to roll out the office printer just as my boss has wandered over to ask me some obscure question about his email...

Arnie: Your comments about current British television are as reassuring to me as you say my description of moving was to you. US television is currently mired in an obsession with two kinds of shows: Make-overs and "Reality" shows. I'm a video junkie who doesn't like either type of program, so the schedules are now full of show after show that incites little more than a cringe and a reflexive stab at the channel-changing button on the remote control.

And now that I have caught up on all the letters, I can admit that this issue has exceeded its intended length and so must now come to a close. I hope you enjoyed it and will drop me a LoC about anything that piqued your interest. — Arnie

